

## Position Paper for: Toward usable usability research: Building bridges between research and practice

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### **My background in the research-practice gap**

I have been working in the private sector as a User Experience Researcher for about 10 years. I work very closely with designers, product managers, marketing, developers, etc. I also attend conferences and do my best to keep up with UX research articles published in HCI/HF related journals. I do this because I believe that research provides strong support/guidelines to my practice. However, I find myself struggling to 'connect the dots' between how to apply the learning from published/presented research articles to my work as a practitioner. Aside from this, I also would like to be able to share them with people who maybe unfamiliar with HCI/HF (product managers, directors, developers, etc).

### **My current work or interest in the field**

I now lead a team of UX practitioners and I would like to encourage them to keep up with the HCI/HF related research. However, because of my struggles with bridging the gap between our practice and research, I find myself unable to articulate its importance and why we should do this. I definitely would like to learn how I can encourage and facilitate this.

### **Critical issues that I would like to see addressed in the workshop**

I would like to be able to understand how to bridge the gap between literature and the application of these researches. I would also like to learn how to translate research articles so that it is 'digestible' by those who may not be in the field but are consumers of the information (e.g., product managers, etc.).

### **Issues to avoid**

None. I think in order to have a good dialogue between researchers and practitioners; there should not be any issues to avoid. However, I expect that the moderator will guide the discussion so that we avoid over discussing one particular aspect/topic.

### **My view of the issue (and possibly some preliminary solutions) ....**

I feel that there are silos between researchers and practitioners. How can we 'soften', if not eliminate these silos? Perhaps one of the ways that we could do this is by starting to change how each approach the term 'research'. I believe that many practitioners consider themselves as researchers even though it may not be perceived as that outside their practice. For example, there were times when I heard someone saying 'You're doing usability testing... we're doing more of hard core research type.' ☺ Interestingly, I understood what they were trying to say at time! Usability testing may not be considered as 'research' although some practitioners might argue that it is since it follows the basic protocol of a research methodology. From a practitioner's perspective, while it is great to have statistically significant findings, there are budget, timing and other company's constraints that do not allow them to conduct a more statistically sound research. However, they still need to conduct research activities that will allow them to answer the questions that they are investigating.

There are certainly lots of value in bridging the gap between research and practice. The way I see it, research provides a solid foundation for practitioners. Practitioners can then provide researchers insights on what to consider or include in their investigations/researches. Therefore, how can we change our attitudes (or should we?) so that practitioners and researchers can work together and leverage each other's work?

Finally, I sometimes feel that it is quite difficult to translate the information extracted from literature and share them to my colleagues and stakeholders (since there maybe instances where some practitioners are not well versed with research). How can we work together so that we can make the learning from researches more 'user friendly' (i.e., apply them in design recommendations, use to support information when communicating with PMs, developers, management)?

I hope I can participate in this dialogue.