Approach

User-centered design

An approach born in human-computer interaction that puts the person using a system at the center: their tasks, their abilities and their errors.



In Spanish
Diseño centrado en el usuario

Origin
Kling (1977) uses the term; Gould and Lewis (1985); Norman and Draper (1986)

What it's for

It keeps systems from being designed around technology, with people forced to adapt to them.

Principles

Early contact
Get to know users and their tasks before designing.

Measure
Observe and measure real use, rather than giving opinions.

Iterate
Test, fix and test again.

How it's done

1 

Get to know the people and their tasks before designing.

2 

Observe and measure how they use a prototype.

3 

Fix it and test again until it works.

Applications in design

When to use it

When a system has to help people do specific tasks effectively and without errors.

Avoid

Leaving user testing for when nothing can be changed anymore.

Don't fall for it

Measure whether people complete their tasks, not just whether they like it, and also think of those who don't use the system but are affected by it.

Connections

Builds on

- Human-computer interaction (HCI)
- Usability

Used by

- Game design
- UX design

Related to

- Agile UX
- Contextual Design
- Human-centered design
- Usability testing

Authors and works

1977	**Rob Kling**	First used the term "user-centered", in a report on software design within organizations.
1985	**John D. Gould and Clayton Lewis**	Summed it up in three principles: early focus on users, empirical measurement and iterative design.
1986	**Donald A. Norman and Stephen W. Draper**	Popularized the term with a book about designing systems from the point of view of the people who use them.

Sources

Original sources

- Kling, R. (1977). The organizational context of user-centered software designs (Informe técnico). University of California, Irvine. View source (https://escholarship.org/uc/item/56h8893b)
- Gould, J. D., & Lewis, C. (1985). Designing for usability: Key principles and what designers think. Communications of the ACM, 28(3), 300–311. View source (https://doi.org/10.1145/3166.3170)

- Norman, D. A., & Draper, S. W. (Eds.) (1986). User centered system design: New perspectives on human-computer interaction. Lawrence Erlbaum.

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