

User Research

Purpose:

To enable public sector organisations to understand the users of their cloud services, enabling more successful cloud service design.

Overview:

A user-centred approach to the design of cloud-hosted digital services is essential for alignment with the Service Standard and the Technology Code of Practice. Success of service design depends on an in-depth understanding of your users, gained through targeted user research.

Planning:

Actica will provide experienced user researchers throughout all service delivery phases, including programme initiation, to improve your organisation's understanding of your users. The outputs of our user research can be used to inform programme planning and service roadmap development; only by understanding the users and their needs can the correct set of services be identified, prioritised, and planned to enable incremental delivery in a larger programme. We follow a three-stage process to research during the planning phase of your cloud-hosted digital service:

Preparation:

Includes working closely with project sponsors to bring structure to the broad set of potential users of your service by identifying relevant user communities and types based on known distinguishing characteristics, and creating a research plan to set targets and manage expectations for the amount of research that will be possible for each of the selected user types in the time available. Analysis of these user types then allows a representative cross section of users to be selected and recruited for research. Prior to researching, we prepare research briefs for agreement with the service stakeholders. The purpose of these is to agree purpose and scope of the research, establish boundaries for the line of questioning, plans, and agree the research objectives.

Research:

We employ a number of research techniques, including contextual enquiry, face-to-face and telephone interviews, shadowing and workshops. For the best results, user research should be undertaken in the user's own environment where they are most at ease, able to describe their needs more readily, and where the researcher can learn not only from what the user is saying but also how they are behaving. However, we tailor our approach to best suit the nature of your cloud service and your organisational setting.

Analysis:

When analysing research transcripts, our preferred approach is for our researchers to work collaboratively with the whole service design team, including business representatives. This creates a shared ownership of the insights into the users, improving the quality and value of the research artefacts going forward. Thematic analysis involving stakeholders improves buy-in, that can develop meaningful insights, personas, needs, pain points, user journeys and recommendations. The outputs of our user research can be tailored to meet your requirement but will usually include:

- A comprehensive record of research undertaken
- Documented Insights, User Needs and Pain Points
- User journeys mapped to associated pain points and user needs
- User personas
- Documented User Stories
- Recommendations for how best to meet the user needs

Information Assurance:

Digital strategies and roadmaps can be developed for services of any classification. We employ security cleared personnel who operate with information at all levels of the Government Security Classification Policy (GSCP). Our systems are approved to hold classified information.

Pricing:

This service is priced based on anticipated resource requirement. Resources will be charged in accordance with the agreed SFIA day rates. Two pricing options are available:

- Firm price. The firm price will be based on the anticipated resource requirements including provision for risk. Provision for travel and subsistence cost will be made. Payment will be required against achievement of agreed milestones. Customers may request clarification of the number of days by SFIA grade for their specific deliverables, which will be confirmed by Actica for contract award.
- Limit of liability. The limit of liability will be agreed based on an anticipated resource requirement. Charges will then be made monthly in arrears against resource effort expended. A limit of liability will also be agreed to cover travel and subsistence. Travel and subsistence costs will be charged at cost monthly in arrears against cost incurred.

Service management details and constraints:

Our service is subject to ISO9001 certified quality controls. A lead consultant shall be appointed who will have responsibility for liaising with the client and managing the Actica team providing the required services. In addition, a Project Authority will be appointed who is normally a Director within the Company who will act as the point of escalation. We support our clients on-site, via email or by telephone, during standard office hours and with a 1 business day response time to acknowledge support requests.

Data backup and recovery:

Where our staff use infrastructure and information provided by our clients, it is the clients' policies and procedures that prevail. Ordinarily, our consultants are supported by our own infrastructure up to, and including OFFICIAL, and we have facilities for higher classification information to be received, stored and transmitted. Our consultants' laptops and our corporate systems are backed up regularly and our corporate Disaster Recovery Strategy and Plan ensures that we are able to continue to provide services to our clients in any event.

On-boarding/off-boarding:

For all of our assignments we operate our standard on-boarding/mobilisation activities. At assignment closure, we undertake a review and ensure that skills have been transferred to client staff where appropriate.

Ordering and invoicing process:

Specific details of the clients requirement should be sent to cloud@actica.co.uk. Following discussions about your requirement, Actica will send a fully priced proposal detailing the services to be provided. Once approved, a valid purchase order should be sent to finance@actica.co.uk for processing. Once the work is completed and accepted by the client, Actica will invoice the client for the work. Payment is expected within 30 days. We are able to use a range of electronic purchase and payment systems (e.g. CP&F).

Consumer responsibilities:

To liaise with the Actica lead consultant and ensure access to existing information and key stakeholders.

Contact Details

Actica Consulting Limited
4 Stirling House
Stirling Road
Surrey Research Park
Guildford
Surrey, GU2 7RF

Telephone: 01483 484090
Email: info@actica.co.uk
Website: www.actica.co.uk

Registered Office in England as above
Company Number 03396854