Minutes of the employer panel meeting, Service Systems Design

Monday, 5. oktober 2020

MS Teams

Participants: Runa Sabroe (RS), Anders Tolborg (AT), Aureljia Rupsyte (AR), Amalia De Götzen (AG),

Cancellation: Klik eller tryk her for at skrive afbud fra faste medlemmer/deltagere.

Other participants: Annette Erichsen (minutes taker)

Minutes

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved

AG pointed out that the crucial point to be discussed today is the capability/competences of the graduates needed in the market. Referring to Nis Ovesen's slide with the numbers of graduates, the numbers of SSD graduates has increased so it takes a little bit more time to get a job. This says something about the capacity of the market in terms of absorbing the graduates and it will be nice to have some feedback from the panel about it.

2. Welcome to the group and brief introduction to the education

AG started with a short presentation of the Service System Design Lab and the people working in different research projects related to service design. Their research builds on 3 pillars: Data Driven Service Design, Strategy and Service Design, Civic Service Design. These 3 pillars also form the basis for the education.

3. Description of curriculum

AG went through the structure of curriculum:

The first semester focuses on 'Service as Interaction'. Last year the panel discussed how to change the User Experience Design and the Programming courses, and also how to make the programming course more relevant for the students. The focus has been moved from designing apps to teaching programming getting the students able to design websites. The panels' advisories last year have been followed and the two courses are now better connected.

In the semester projects students are working with real issues and they write two types of reports: a process report (the academic part) and a product report (the practical part).

The second semester focuses on 'Service as Systems' and it scales up more about systems. The second change from the panels' advices last year: until this year the Services Representation and Prototyping course consisted of 2 workshops one about video sketching and one about prototyping. Prototyping with Arduino boards and sensors is fun, but it is not attractive to the job market, because it is very specific. The fo-

cus has now been changed and we have engaged with companies giving a week workshop about prototyping in the field of service design, with real cases from the industry.

The panel found the changes very positive.

The third semester: the students have 2 possibilities: Internship in a company combined with a 'course in Strategy and Business in Services' or a theoretical project at AAU combined with the same course. In addition some students take a semester abroad or at another university in Denmark (CBS or ITU). Most of the students prefer internship and we have contacts to many different companies.

The fourth semester, the students are writing the Master's thesis often in collaboration with a company.

Student data:

106 students have graduated so far, but the unemployment rate is raising with the numbers of graduates. The employment rate is a strategic question that we need to discuss: do we need to equip our students in a different way, so they are more suitable for the market or is there not a need of 40 new SSD every year?

Half of the students come from 'Professions Bachelor' educations and the other half from Bachelor educations at Universities. We would like to reach out for me more students coming with a BSc background from Danish universities.

AT asked why we prefer students with an academic BSc. AG: There is a tendency that professional Bachelors more often are dropping out of the study as we are asking for an academic level, which they are not use to. The academic BSc have a critical view and understanding of the work load. The professional Bachelors have to educate themselves to reach the same level as the bachelors from universities. This means that we have two groups of students.

The panel found it interesting, with AG's description of the two groups in mind, to see the employability of the two bachelor groups.

23% of the graduates from 2018, were unemployed after 1 year – a problem we have to work with.

80% female –perhaps we should investigate this and promote the education in a different way.

4. Collaboration with Industry

We have collaboration with companies in

- Semester projects where students can work with real life problems.
- Internship where students work in a company for a semester
- Thesis projects
- Research projects

5. Employability

Labour market 2025 – what are the important competences for the graduates?

AG pointed at 3 headlines to be discussed:

- How can the curriculum cover the skills that are required in the job marked?
- Trying to Imagine 5 years ahead – what are the important competences?
- How can we strengthen the collaboration with the industry?

AT pointed out that the master does not have a real or recognizable T shape, meaning that the horizontal line is wider than the vertical line, giving to our students a generalist profile, more than a expert profile, which can be a little bit of a problem in terms of employment, but also in defining what the master contains.

AT suggested that the students should be introduced to theories on anthropology, ethnography and theory on language, which he found very useful in his every day.

AT found the question 'what are the important competences for graduates 2015" wrong. We should rather focus on what are the ever enduring competences of service systems designers – part of this deep empathy in people and also the craft part of digital interfaces, UX etc.

AR – digital interfaces is one thing, but last year we also talked about the need of facilitation skills and design facilitation skills, with deep knowledge of the topic, but also guiding and helping to get the consensus between business, technology and design. It is very crucial. Facilitation should happen both on operational mode (project owner) and also on the strategic level (stakeholders).

The panel found it very constructive to split the semester report in two parts. The process report is very much facilitation and how you go through the different steps. Good skills for students' future work.

The programming skills were discussed. The programming course has been changed and the goal is now to give the students help to talk to and understand technological people. The students are working with java to provide them with skills in interface design, which are skills they can sell to the job market. But AT found it a waste of time to provide a service systems designer with programming skills. Code learning has faded again – there are so many good professional programmers. It would be better to give the students some knowledge about the analysis of services ontologies. This would help them also in better understanding data modelling. Modelling is a very nice skill to have.

AR pointed out that it is though very important that graduates understand the technical language and different solutions because of the position they will often have inside big organizations: very often in between the technical department and the business/strategic one.

The panel found that the collaboration with the companies was pretty good so far.

6. Completion and evaluation

We did not have time for this item.