



UX
Design
Institute

Industry Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2018



Industry Advisory Council



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Rabobank





The UX Design Institute's first Industry Advisory Council meeting took place on March 22, 2018, in the Sky Suite, Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin.

The aims of the meeting were to:

- Inaugurate the first Industry Advisory Council meeting
- Agree the role and objectives of the Council
- Outline the partnership between the Institute and Glasgow Caledonian University
- Introduce the syllabus of the Professional Diploma in UX Design

There was also an opportunity for a roundtable discussion on the UX skills gap.

The Industry Advisory Council members in attendance were:

Tansy Murray, Director CX and Design at Mastercard

Goran Peuc, Principal UX Designer at SAP

Denis Cullinane, Consultant User Experience Designer at Dell

Mark Mulhall, Senior Product Designer at Distilled Schibsted

Ronan Costello, Online Platforms Manager at Virgin Media Ireland

Frank Gaine, Design Strategy Manager at Frontend

Dara Boland, Principal Consultant at Morgan McKinley

Tim Bicknell, General Manager at RaboDirect Ireland

Conor Normile, Head of Design at Wipro Digital

Chiara Henderson, Head of Customer Experience (EMEA) at Slack

John Dennehy, Founder and Executive Chairman at Zartis

Garry Cleere, Managing Director at Q-Validus

Anthony Quigley, Chairman at UX Design Institute

Colman Walsh, Founder and CEO at UX Design Institute



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Colman Walsh
Founder and CEO
UX Design Institute



Anthony Quigley
Chairman
UX Design Institute



Council summary

1. Welcome

Anthony Quigley welcomed everyone to the inaugural Industry Advisory Council of the UX Design Institute and thanked them for their time in attending.

He referenced the fact that technology is moving fast and that whatever the technology is (digital marketing, coding, UX etc), traditional education can't keep up. He said that whenever there is a supply shortage, it has a massive effect on how business is done.



Anthony invited Council members to introduce themselves around the table.

Several of the attendees spoke of the challenges recruiting UX professionals into their company (something that was revisited again during the roundtable discussion on the UX skills gap).

Another point that came up during introductions was the importance of senior management understanding the value of UX and the need to drive this into the mainstream culture of companies.



2. Background to UX Design Institute

Colman Walsh, CEO of the UX Design Institute, gave an overview of the meeting's schedule and explained how the company (formerly UXTraining) was initially created to meet the UX skills gap in Ireland and then throughout Europe.

He spoke about the company's credentials - including delivering courses to more than 2,500 classroom students and more than 750 online students. Companies that have benefited from UXTraining's courses include Accenture, Dell, Deloitte, Ericsson, AIB, Salesforce and SAP.

He said that while the courses have been successful and well received, there is more to be done. After attending courses, students ask what they can do next to continue their learning path.

He said that customers want:

- Genuine knowledge
- Deeper content
- Validation and recognition
- Certification
- Career path
- Community





3. Institute objectives

Colman said the Institute's overall objective is to be the "global leader in UX education and certification."

Further to that overall aim, the Institute's objectives are to:

- Define global standards
- Deliver high-quality education
- Promote consistency via certification
- Develop a qualifications roadmap
- Set the benchmark for the UX industry

He said it was really about "putting a stake in the ground that sets the standard for UX education throughout the world."

He said there were other UX education providers but what distinguishes the UX Design Institute is its five pillars:

- Content focused
- University accredited
- Exam and certification
- Industry validated
- Accessible

Colman introduced Council members to the qualifications roadmap that the UX Design Institute has created - focusing first on the Professional Diploma in UX Design but with future plans for a Certificate, Ordinary Degree and micro programmes e.g. Design Thinking, Design Strategy.



4. Council role and objectives

Colman said the Industry Advisory Council members are at the coalface of UX every day. This gives them an important role in steering the programme in terms of what is relevant, what is current and what is necessary.

He presented the Council objectives and spoke on each of them:

- Validate programme
- Define standards
- Maintain relevance
- Maintain currency
- Oversee quality
- Inform programmes
- Serve the industry



5. UXDI and Glasgow Caledonian University

Colman explained that UXDI is developing a partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University and is in the process of getting the Professional Diploma accredited by the university.

This would give students a globally recognised qualification, with an assurance that their qualification has achieved an accredited standard. He said the Industry Advisory Council has an important role to play in the validation process.

Members were presented with an overview of the syllabus and introduced to the programme objectives:

- Mindset
- Process
- Skills

“People come on to our courses and may have vague ideas about what UX is,” said Colman. “They go away really understanding the UX mindset and how important it is to achieving your end goals. There is a penny drop moment when people can see that clearly and have the UX mindset.”

Understanding the process is also vital, he said.

“We want people to understand the process. People can miss steps because they don’t have a firm grasp of the process. Process is really what underpins UX.

“Through each step of the process, students understand what the skills are and are given tasks so they can practise their skills e.g. exercises, projects. They’ll learn skills such as how to do usability tests or create wireframes that they can apply straight away in their job.”



6. Roundtable discussion - the UX Skills Gap

Colman Walsh said the UX skills gap was the reason why UX Design Institute exists and “why we’re all here today.”

He referenced an email that Council member Tansy Murray from Mastercard had sent to him in response to the invitation to join the Council. He asked her to recap on that email as it was very clear on the UX skills gap.

“From a multinational perspective, UX has gotten incredibly complicated,” she said. “We don’t just have one product - we have thousands of products and thousands of touch points. With the complexities that are there, it’s very difficult to hire people for roles in UX.”

“This is particularly true when you’re looking for distinct skill sets. For instance, there are excellent UX researchers who are not good designers. The most difficult part of our jobs are hiring people capable of synthesising huge amounts of information.”

Goran Peuc from SAP said it can work very much the other way in terms of skill sets.

“Sometimes there are great designers who are not very good at research. We see this big split - that’s why we have researchers on our team who go off and do the research. They’ve no emotional connection to the design as they aren’t involved in that side of things.”

“I do think both sides need to know what the other is doing. But realistically, they are separate.”

Colman Walsh said, “We hear that a lot - stratification of roles. That you can’t expect to have it all in one role. The course is there though to provide that foundation into all the different aspects of UX - so someone has a thorough grounding.”

Chiara Henderson from Slack said the type of UX that someone is practising depends very much on the industry and the company.



“At Slack, our whole being is user experience. I don’t even talk to ‘UX people’, everyone is UX.

“My team is the customer experience and support team. The reason they’re so strong is that they inherently speak the language of UX. So many companies in Ireland need to be sold the idea of UX and be convinced that they should be hiring people with these skills.”

Tim Bicknell from RaboDirect agreed that there is still work to be done in convincing companies to buy into UX.

“So many senior people talk about it but don’t back it up with action,” he said.

Frank Gaine from Frontend said that someone working as a UX designer not only needs to be a good designer but needs to be a persuasive individual in a business environment.

Chiara Henderson from Slack said she’d like to see course content covering why a company needs to do UX from a commercial perspective e.g. what are the KPIs, what are the return rates, conversion rates.

“It shows that UX is not pie in the sky - it has immediate results,” she said. “Dell is a great example of this, the number of tests that they are running on their site. Maybe it’s even showing that this exists - people are making tiny tweaks that have a big impact on UX.”

Ronan Costello from Virgin Media said he’d also like to see this reflected.

“As budgets shrink, it’s not about introducing new technologies or platforms, it’s getting the most out of these tiny tweaks that are being done through optimisations. What you can say to management is that ‘we’ve spent close to nothing but these small tweaks have made a big difference’.”

Tansy Murray agreed, “Yes, being able to say to management, these are the UX changes we implemented and they’ve resulted in this many new calls, new sales and so on.”



John Dennehy from Zartis said that the skills gap in UX is making it hard to find people. He said that UX team leads can develop skills in communicating with recruiters about what it is they are looking for in new hires.

“A lot of companies don’t have any UX function so they need guidance in who to hire first and when they need to make that first UX hire.”

7. Conclusion

Colman Walsh thanked everyone again for their time, outlined the next steps to be taken and confirmed that the Council will reconvene before the end of Q3 2018.

