User Involvement

In my opinion the best influence of Software Engineering has to be “user involvement”.

User involvement is the use or involvement of users during the creation or design of a software product, this has been necessitated by the fact that software has infiltrated human lives and has become more important, so as a result stakeholders need to be involved at different stages of the development of their product. This has been true for many other fields of development and now in software engineering. User involvement is one of the most influential concept in software engineering because its effect are responsible for delivering a software products that users expect from requirements gathering, since it clarifies most of the issues both users and developers may have during any stage of the development life cycle.

Given what I have mentioned above, user involvement is has fast become an important component in the development of effective software engineering systems. This assay will look at study to find the facts and assumptions to establish the involvement of users in influencing the software requirements gathering on the system as a whole and development life cycle. I will also analyze the effects of different characteristics of the users in the requirement process. I will look at what influences software engineers to take up the route of involving users or not involving them at all. I will look at the disadvantage and advantage of using user involvement. We will also look at what projects are most in need of the user involvement and what others don’t need such high user involvement.

Involving end users in the development of interactive systems increases the likelihood those systems will be useful and usable. User involvement, however, is both time and resource intensive. Internet and World-Wide-Web-based software release models have magnified these problems. At the same time, these practices have begun to blur the distinction between development and use and, in so doing, have
provided developers with unprecedented, and currently underutilized, opportunities for increasing user involvement [5].

In my opinion no software development team can confidently undertake a project without constant user involvement, this makes user involvement the most powerful force in any development life cycle because it give developers the road map to create and develop a product that the user has paid for and that the user expects. Most of the time developers get too ambitious and do things that are not in the requirements document [2], sometimes they are not sure what the user requirements document really what’s them to do, so the introduction of users correct these errors and guarantees the successful developments of the product or software.

According to David M. Hilbert, user involvement solves some fundamental problems for developers. Usability breakdowns occur when developers’ expectations about system usage do not match users’ expectations. Several benefits can be realized when these mismatches are detected and resolved [5] and this can only be done with the aid of users being involved in the process.

There are a number of important and unavoidable reasons why user involvement is imperative, especially in some development life cycles, one such being the agile principle, here is a short and highly abstract list: a) Requirements are clearly communicated and understood (at a high level) at the outset; b) Requirements can be clarified on a daily basis with the entire project team, rather than resorting to lengthy documents that aren’t read or are misunderstood; c) Emerging requirements can be factored into the development schedule as appropriate with the impact and trade-off decisions clearly understood; d) The right product is delivered; e) The product is more intuitive and easy to use [6]. These five points some up the importance and heavy influence of “user involvement” in software engineering.

In this essay I discussed the importance of user involvement and its advantages to any software life cycle. So having seen the importance of user involvement it is therefore necessary to have regular user participation on projects in order to reduce risk and to provide the development team with additional resources to help them design with user requirements in mind. It is imperative to have a senior and experienced user representative involved throughout the rest of the development for consultation and reference.
Reference


