



Leveraging Technology for Legal Empowerment

Technology for operations, programs, and networks

Agenda

- > Context
- > How we think about technology
- > Delving into legal empowerment tech
- > Project design principles
- > Reverse engineering exercise
- > Project design applied
- > Reflections

Spectrogram

Thinking About Tech

1. Technology is generally a good thing



Thinking About Tech

2. Technology is everything that's wrong with the 21st century



Thinking About Tech

3. Technology is just a tool. How it shapes the world will depend on how it's used



Thinking About Tech

4. Digital technologies are the most revolutionary



Thinking About Tech

5. Technology is neutral



Thinking About Tech

6. Technology can be anything. Sometimes a piece of paper is enough



Community First

Best practices
in **human centred design**



Community First

- In-depth testing with users
- Connecting people with pro bono advice
- Using low-tech solutions to gather data (or tech agnostic)
- Connecting with other services
- Using existing networks

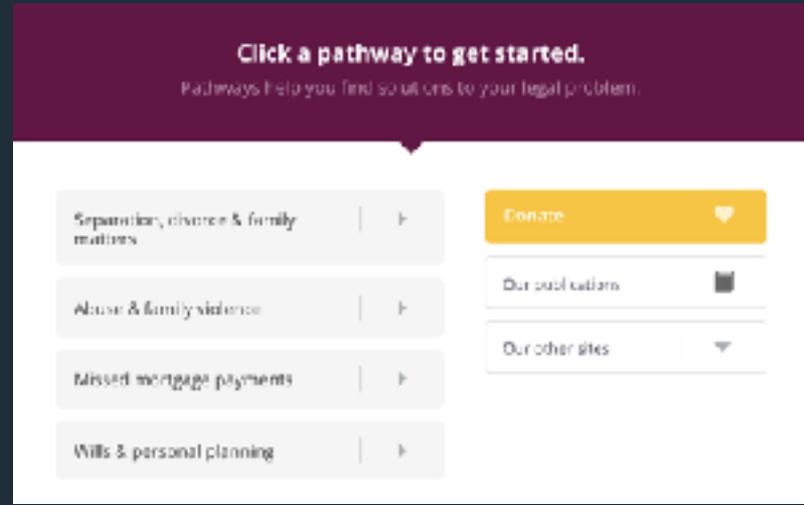


What's possible? What's new?

MyLawBC

- Guided pathways to legal advice, information, and representation in low-income British Columbia
- 2 years of user research and testing (defining users; assessing their usage of technology; creating content; creating prototype and continued interaction)
- Focus on ‘what is going to be more useful to a user, rather than what’s more legally accurate’ (challenging convincing legal experts to do this)
- Insistence not on sweeping the field (or language of “disruption”), but on involving justice system stakeholders.
- Ensuring flexibility and scope

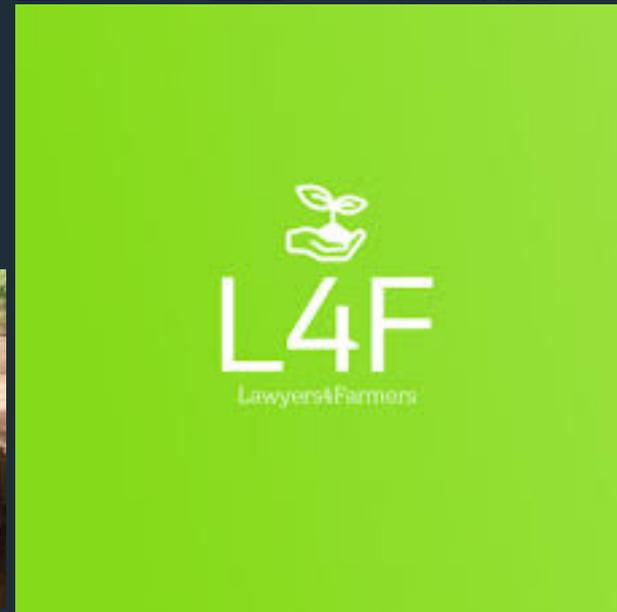
In-depth testing with users
Using existing network



Lawyers4Farmers

- Making complex law accessible to farmers in Uganda
- Questions asked, answers delivered through and interactive SMS-based platform
- Educational approach; knowledge for capacity building in justice

Connecting people with pro bono advice
Low-tech/tech-agnostic approach

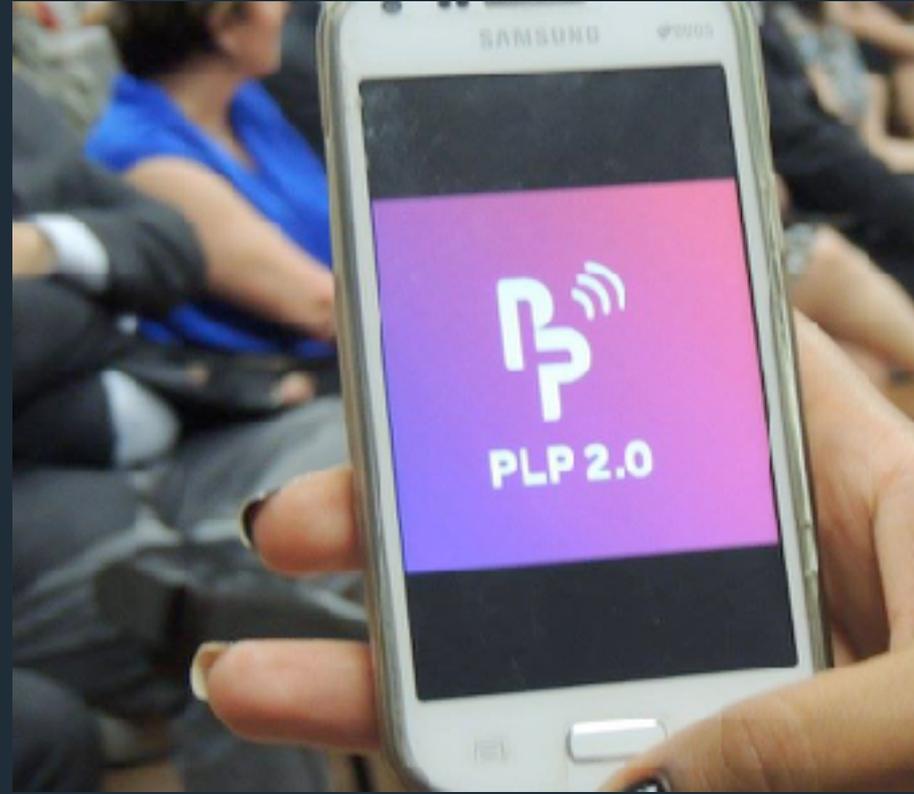


PLP 2.0

- App designed based on existing program by Themis, designed to reduce violence against women (Promotoras Legais Populares) (PLP)
- Structured data collection for use in existing legal cases; allows women to record abuse as it occurs.
- When the app is triggered, police commissioners and PLPs in the local neighbourhood are alerted and can help bring the woman to the safety.
- Relationship established with existing networks of judges, police, public defenders

Connecting with other services

Using existing networks

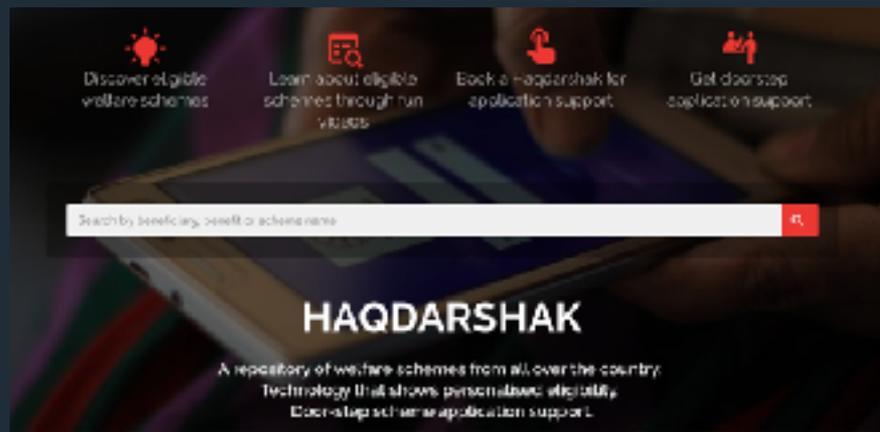


Haqdarshak

- Android app allowing community-based advisors to assess eligibility for welfare and help individuals apply.
- Haqdarshak gained an understanding of how low-income women approached legal problems while working in slums in New Delhi: **“I saw rickshaw drivers paying thousands of rupees for a form which costs 10 rupees in government offices, just because they didn’t know.”**
- Initially app-based, but found that people wouldn’t download app due to storage limitations
- Initiative was revised to community-based advisors providing the advice, using Haqdarshak as a repository

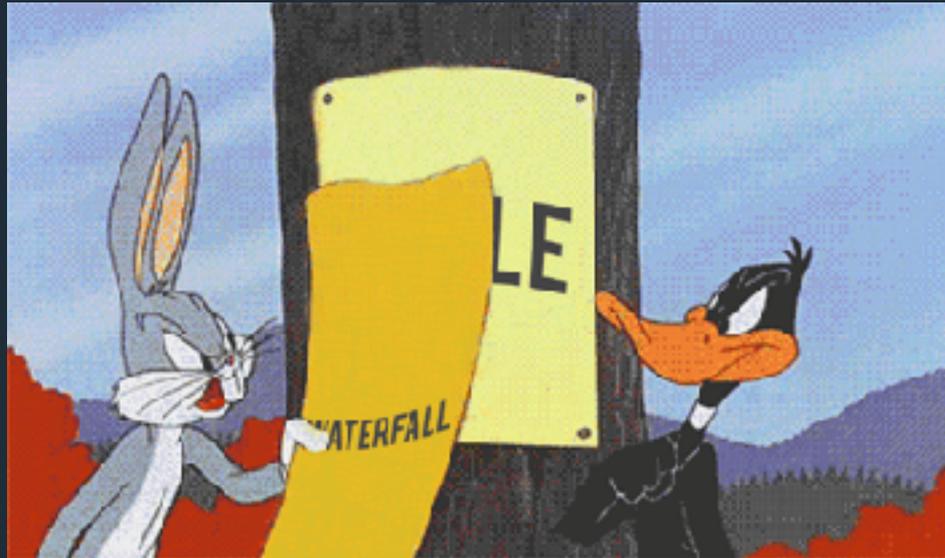


Using existing networks
In-depth testing with users



Project Design |

'Waterfall' or 'Agile' approach?



Project Design |

'Waterfall' or **'Agile'** approach?



Linear
approach

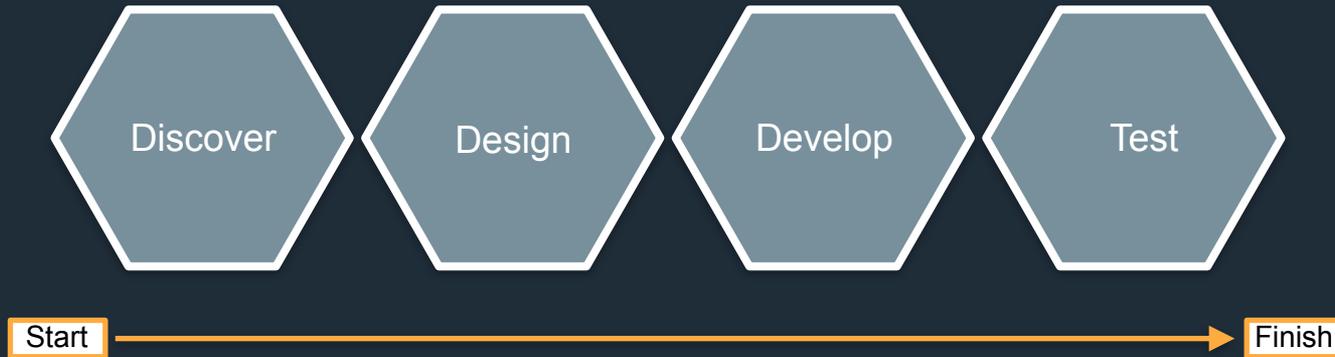


Iterative,
co-creative,
rapid approach

Project Design |

- Rigid structure
- Problem addressed is usually fixed and known from onset; not subject to change
- Changes and mistakes are costly
- Feedback from community not necessarily required past discovery

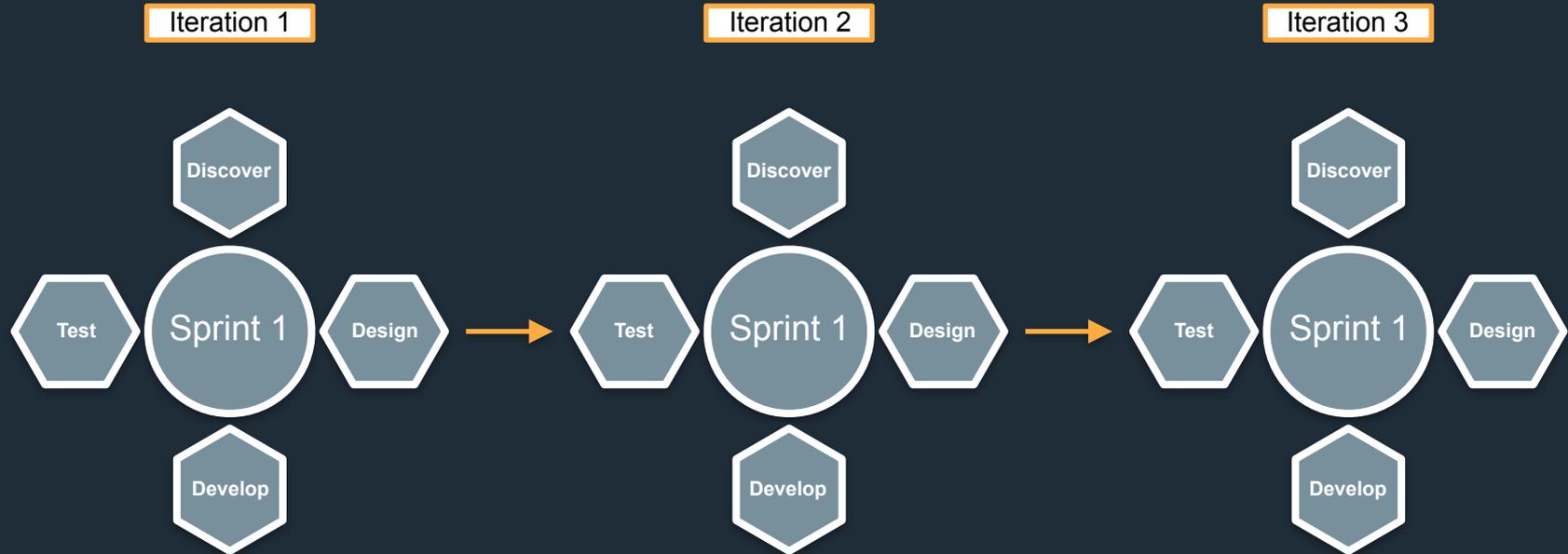
'Waterfall'



Project Design |

- For speed
- Low cost
- Quickly identifying mistakes
- Incorporating feedback at every stage
- Problem addressed is evolving
- But, lots of blind angles

'Agile'



It's not just 'what works'...

....But also 'what matters'...

...Think of the community you serve
not as subjects, but **experts**

Community First

Build in structures for
usability feedback

(e.g. Haqdarshak)



User centred design = consistent user feedback

Amplifying Community Expertise

At every stage of the
design process



Be smart about iteration...

1. SOLUTIONISM IS NOT OUR FRIEND:

It is not about the technology; but about prioritising *what matters*.

Focus on the major pain points experienced by the community. They might not be what you think...



Don't waste time being hung up on your original idea, and don't be afraid of coming up with new ones

2. DATA COLONIALITY:

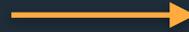
Involve the community and expose yourself to hard questions. Are you *facilitating* or *colonising* local knowledge?



Refrain from enforcing hegemonic organisational and operational logics e.g. in the name of 'efficiency', if it doesn't accomplish **what matters** to the community. Sometimes profound solutions take time, are small in scale, but novel and impactful.

3. HYGIENE:

Keep in mind that privacy asymmetrically affects the most marginalised.



What are the community's concerns with regards to potential threats to data compromise? What hierarchies of power might your project introduce, and what are the risks?

4. ONE OUNCE OF PRAGMATISM:

Do you have the capacity (financial and otherwise) to get it done, or would you need to extend a hand to funders/partners?



Reverse engineering

Instructions

- Develop a **plan** for one of the mentioned projects
- The plan should include:
 - What **inspires you** about the project?
 - If you were to plan the project, how would you go about it?
 - What skill sets would you need to get started?
 - What would you need to know to budget it?



The power of networks

Instructions

- Spend 10 minutes by yourself thinking how you would go about designing for a problem
- Taking turns, practice **critical friendship** with a partner.
 - Present your idea
 - Expect feedback on
 - 1) whether the project is feasible?
 - 2) Does it make sense based on the objectives?
 - 3) Does the project owner have enough of an understanding to be able to do the project well?



Reflections and next steps

Reflections - discuss in group

- What did you change about your project?
- What types of questions were challenging to answer?
- What next steps do you want to take to improve the project?
- ... And to use technology to power your work?