

Social Change in Science and Technology

SESSION 12: INTERSECTIONALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES IN CHANGING ICT PRACTICES

**Maren Haag und Nicola Marsden, Hochschule Heilbronn:
Gender-sensitive use of personas in software development**

There are several methods of including the needs of real users in the software development process. The aim is to interrupt the dynamics of an i-methodological approach in which the software developers create products for themselves or base the requirement specifications on their own needs, abilities, mind frames and values. The persona method is used by designers, developers, and other stakeholders to mentally engage with users – helping everybody involved to identify with the users and ideate, design, and develop from the users' perspectives instead of their own.

To avoid stereotyping and reproduction of common social hierarchies personas have to represent the diversity of the users whilst being based on empirical data. On the other hand the software developers working with the persona set have to be able to read them and handle them respectfully in a non-stereotyping way. In qualitative group workshops we have confronted students with persona sets and used gender swapping to create multifaceted personas. The discussions were analysed and revealed gender and identity constructions of the IT-students. Additionally their own identity performance during the creative part of designing a software product became apparent and showed a core issue of approaches to include users in the software development process: To put on a successful performance as a competent IT expert one does not need to show understanding of users' needs.

Contact details:

Maren Haag
Hochschule Heilbronn
Max-Planck-Str. 39
74081 Heilbronn
Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)7131 - 504 6703
Mobil: +49 (0)175 -1087393
maren.haag@hs-heilbronn.de

Prof. Dr. Nicola Marsden
Hochschule Heilbronn
Max-Planck-Str. 39
74081 Heilbronn
Germany
Tel.: +49 (0)7131 - 504 565
nicola.marsden@hs-heilbronn.de