

Personal Best Practices in Developing and Improving CDI Applications

Ryan Bockmon

Graduate Research Intern - Lawrence Livermore National Labs.

Communication is key when developing and improving CDI applications. CDI application users are typically early adopters and knowing what issues that current users are having will help lessen the learning curve for later adopters. Having good communication with your users helps form a stronger bond and thus allowing them to feel more comfortable with reporting issues. Having a strong connection with your users will provide you with some great feedback. Always strive to shorten the time that an user identifies an issue and how long it takes to fix it. Strive to keep communication personal. If possible set up regular in person meetings or online video calls. Regular phone calls are also a good way to keep in touch with your users.

Empathy, if you care for your users they will care for your product. This also goes along with communication, ask and find out if your users have any disabilities that could impair their use of your application i.e, color blindness or dyslexia? If so how can you improve their experiences? If your application uses a bunch of graphs that have a lot going on, try picking colors that are colorblind friendly. Try using or adding images for buttons and links instead of plain text, we all know what the save icon looks like. Always be asking how you can improve the experience for your users. You are building a tool for them.

Thinking ahead, what are some things that they might need in the future to help increase productivity? As a data scientist collecting and gathering data is a pain. I would like to spend as little time as needed collecting data. The time it takes to download large datasets can be frustrating and if I already had what data I needed downloaded it would cut time down dramatically. Are there ways that applications can minimize the time it takes to download or transfer mass amount of data? What are some issues that the user doesn't know that they are having?

Another good practice when designing and updating CDI applications is, making sure that the application is easy to use and easy to adapt. Can you improve the application without having to change the look and feel of it? Nothing is more frustrating than having to relearn an application after a major update. Minimize the steps it takes to complete a task while keeping interfaces clean, having a busy or noisy interfaces can cause frustration when trying to learn a new application.

Each of the practices listed above are all just a few of many personal practices that you should keep in mind when developing and improving any application. Each of them will not only help you form a stronger connections with your users, they will allow you to grow as an individual.