

Name

Stavros Garzonis

Job Title

User Experience Designer

Company Name

Harvest Digital

Member of UPA or Not

Member

Position you are standing for

Professional Development

Goals for UK UPA

UK UPA as an arm of a global organisation is already the most established and respected usability association in the UK. As such, it has the responsibility to maintain and expand its presence, and gain the trust and respect of even more professionals and affiliates. UK UPA members enjoy, and should continue to enjoy, various ways for professional opportunities and development, as well as a community of support, cross-pollination and fruitful challenges.

In the near future the UK chapter could also focus its efforts in structuring the variety and diversity of usability practices and accreditation bodies in a way that will bring more clarity and standardisation to the UK industry. The end goal of all these efforts should always be the aim of our discipline: to make technology accessible and interacting with it a rewarding, enjoyable experience.

Goals for the position you are standing for

Professional development is often confused and identified with either just “getting the next job”, or as a path of continuous specialisation in a single direction. Although this necessary, our field is one that requires not only expertise and specific skill sets, but also demands from us empathy and understanding of the specialists we constantly interact with: business owners, analysts, developers, visual designers, copywriters etc. Therefore, UPA should offer a programme of professional development that is tailored as much as possible to each individual’s needs, such as:

- finding the right job/employee (by maintaining and expanding the network of employers and candidates, and presenting opportunities in an accessible and structured manner)
- gaining academic rigour or acquiring a wider view of the usability world (by suggesting and offering discounts to resources such as books, conferences, and university courses)
- sharpening skills in a particular technique (by suggesting vocational courses and through the newly found mentoring programme)

If moving upwards in the professional ladder, means moving away from practising the subject we love, then, it’s time to start moving laterally.



UPA volunteer experience

Apart from attending almost all UK UPA events in the last year, I have volunteered and enjoyed organising one of the 4 booths at the last UK UPA careers event. I dedicated the booth to my ongoing interest and efforts to bring reflective insight to the industry, and map practitioners' skills against employers' requirements. This effort was met with enthusiasm and keen interest by practitioners and employers alike, who were happy to start a conversation about the skills and personality traits most useful in usability professionals. Should this be within the interests of UK UPA, I intend to extend my initial pilot study (questionnaire at the careers event) in an effort to describe the employer and candidate trends in the market, to create a model that can aid the employment process.

Professional Experience & Biographical detail

Stavros is a scientist trapped in user experience designer's body. His career has been a series of happy lateral accidents: in the early years he studied advanced mathematics, and taught science, along with the programming principles and the everyday use of computers. Later, fascinated by psychology and computers, he successfully completed an MSc in Human Communication and Computing with his main interest around the apparent conflicts between network security and usability. Then, he went on to complete a PhD in Human Computer Interaction, investigating context-aware computing, mobile service awareness and intuitiveness of sound notifications. After 5 years of teaching HCI principles and leading student projects on novel interactive paradigms, he moved in the fast-paced life of agency-side UX. He has been enjoying doing all the nitty-gritty dirty work of UX, from wireframes and ethnography, to managing projects and practitioners. When he grows up, he wants to strengthen the bridges between academia and industry and help bring User Experience to its next level.