Agile working to adapt the usability of swisscovery

SLSP
Swiss Library
Service Platform

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Session abstract

Thanks to good experiences in the past, the Swiss Library Service Platform (SLSP) decided to keep on working with an agile approach for preparing its view (swisscovery) for the go-live of Rapido.

This presentation aims to show how this agile approach was structured, its advantages and its limits, and how this allowed the team to both work on the re-design of the view and, at the same time, fulfill the stakeholders' punctual requests.

The speakers will also describe the benefits of the method of prototyping to support the iterative process.
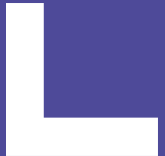
Overview

1. Introduction

2. The Agile Primo VE Customization Project

3. Prototyping to support the iterative process

4. Conclusions

5. Questions

1. Introduction

SLSP and swisscovery

SLSP
Swiss Library
Service Platform

National platform bringing together the academic information in Switzerland

SLSP runs the national library platform

swisscovery

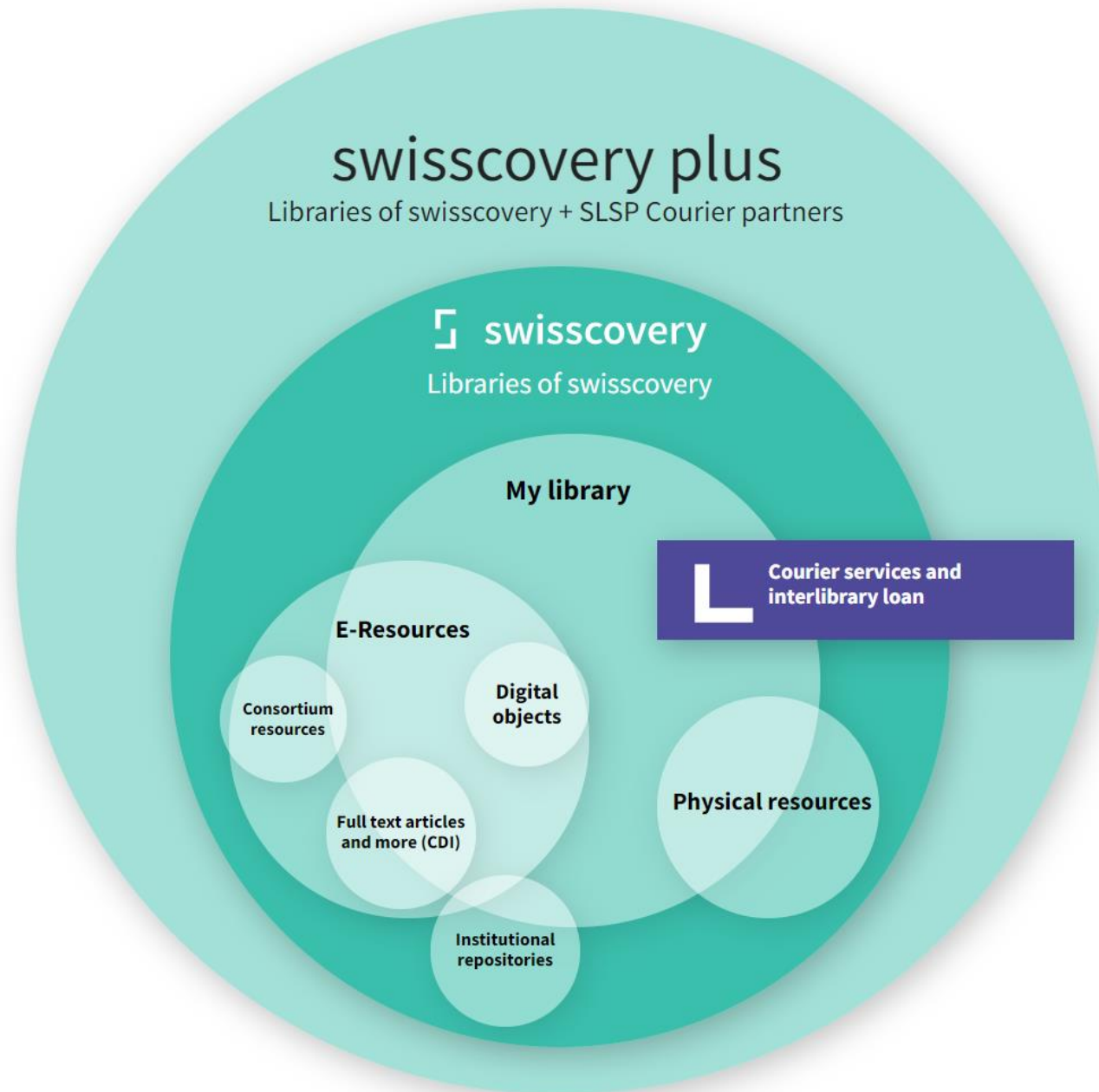Launch of swisscovery in December 2020

Over 490 affiliated libraries in 31 IZs

SLSP and swisscovery

swisscovery.slsp.ch

swisscovery plus
Libraries of swisscovery + SLSP Courier partners

swisscovery
Libraries of swisscovery

My library

Courier services and interlibrary loan

E-Resources

Consortium resources

Digital objects

Full text articles and more (CDI)

Physical resources

Institutional repositories

Agile projects

- Agile/traditional project management at SLSP depending on the project scope and organisational context
- 2021, shortly after go live of swisscovery: Agile Primo VE Customization Project (APC)
- discovery configurations (features, local fields for display and search) 3 times per year after decision process and definition of SLSP standard settings and according services
- Continuation of the APC in 2022 and 2023

2. The Agile Primo VE Customization Project

Context

Before the APC:

- „In house" management: collection of requirements and attempt to fix them
- Irregular and time-consuming updates of the swisscovery and the central package
- All pressure and responsibility on a few people

Roles and Composition

3-4 people working for SLSP
3-4 people working in libraries

Product owner

Representative of the stakeholders and customers

- Define the product vision and manage stakeholders
- Manage the product roadmap and prioritize the backlog
- Release management

Team

Developers

- Build the product: Programming, testing, debugging the product
- Design the product and its user interface

Scrum master

Responsible for the implementation of the methodology

- Facilitate the scrum project management
- Ensuring the team works together to achieve their goals
- Remove blockers for the team

Roles and Composition

Special functions inside the team

Role	Description
SLSP manager	Ensure the link with the Management Board
SLSP web developer	Prepare and manage the customization packages and guard its latest version
Discovery coordinator	Ensure the coordination between the different areas of the company

Tools: Kanban

- Differs from the "classic" Kanban: more columns to have an exhaustive overview of open points
  - Backlog, Sprint, Archive, Rejected items, items handed over or awaiting a development by Ex Libris

Backlog	To do	In progress	Testing	Done
Item 1	Item 5	Item 3	Item 2	Item 4
Item 7		Item 6		

Scrum framework

- Daily Scrum -> Weekly Scrum
- Sprint Planning
- Sprint Review
- Sprint Retrospective

Unified in one meeting

- Sprint length –> variable and longer (at least 4 weeks)

Organization

- Items' priority and points assignation
- Items' description

Sprints: choice of the items and number of points

Releases

- 9-10 sprints a year for the NZ view (swisscovery)
- Every 2-3 sprints, update of the central package (2 weeks for testing)
- Published in Github
- Communicated in the community Blog

Primo VE: New Configurations and Customization package / Neue Konfigurationen und Customization Package / Nouvelles configurations et pack de personnalisation / nuove configurazioni e pacchetto personalizzato

Creato da Fabiano Fiero
Apr 18, 2023 • Visualizzato da 85 persone

Dear Colleagues,

the second cycle of configurations updates and the third sprint of the Agile Customization Project for 2023 are ready. This update also includes a new version of the central customization package.

The current version of swisscovery' customization package is available here, while the central customization package can be consulted here.

All new configurations and customizations are available for testing in sandbox 4, view VU1. Sandbox 4 can also be used to test the inheritance from the new version of the central customization package.

Rapido previous loans

In the list of previous loans available in the library card, titles contain a clickable links that lead to the record's full display. For requests made via Rapido and "classic" Ill, links lead to an empty page, for this reason they have been removed.

The directive prm-loan-after and the module slsp-hide-rapido-loan-link has been added. The css section /*Remove link for Rapido previous loans*/ has been added.
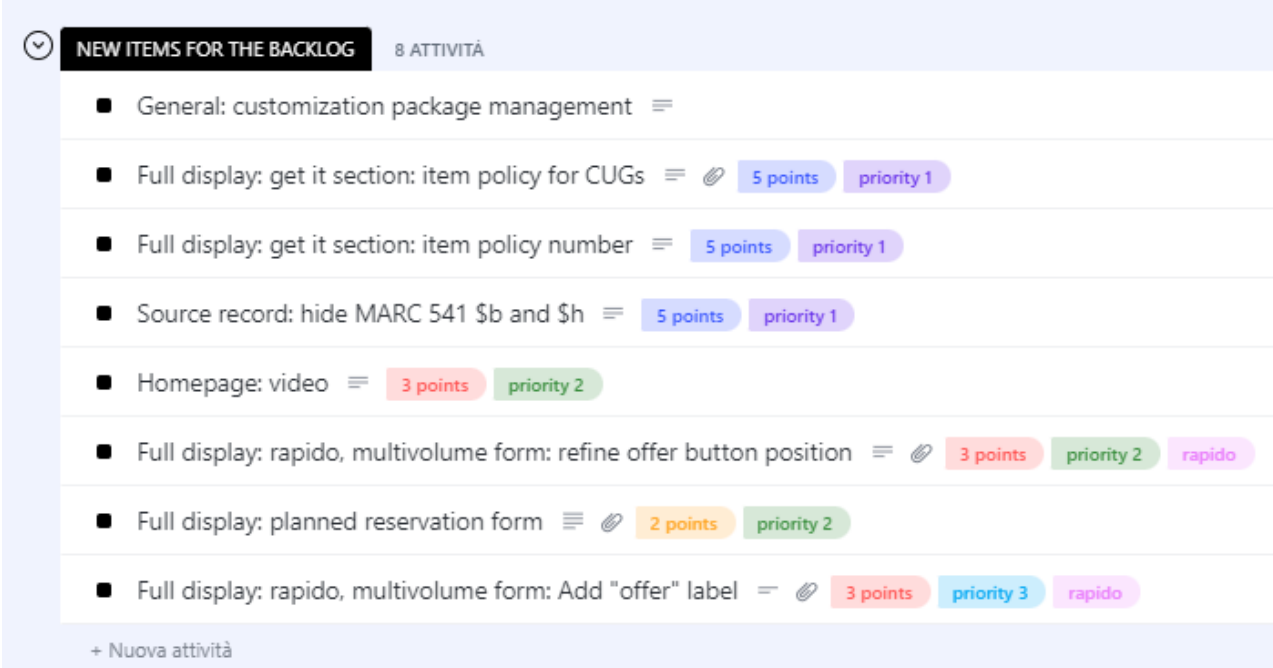
Hoover effect on full display titles

The full display titles had a hoover effect, this made the feeling that they were clickable. This error has been fixed.

Stakeholders requirements

- Stakeholders: Colleagues, libraries, patron users, SLSP Management board

- Collection of the requirements
  via different channels and storage on Kanban

- At the end of the sprint the new items were discussed, prioritized and added in the backlog or in the following sprint

- Communication via blogpost and direct message

Re-designing swisscovery

- To make the cost of the services transparent
- To stress the existence of different types of services
- To give visibility to different search profiles

Re-designing swisscovery

Re-designing swisscovery

before UI customization

after UI customization

Advantages

How an agile project allows taking in consideration both Stakeholders requirements and the re-designing of the view?

- Ordinate management of a project
- Responds to urgent requirements while working on a general improvements or adaptations
- Work in small and efficient groups
- Have a visual representation of the process
- Work with the customers
- Give and receive rapid feedbacks
- Create a routine

Limits

- Organise and complete a sprint every month might become stressful

- Item with low priority are rarely taken in consideration

- Need a regular cleaning of the items, often similar or double or contradictory or outdated items

- Scrum framework has been designed for software development, adaptations are needed

3. Prototyping to support the iterative process

Prototyping in general

Prototyping as helpul method from the field of UX to determine and validate the requirements and visualize ideas

Creation of explorative prototypes (mock-ups) e.g. on medium-fidelity level

Later successive transfer of the ideas into evolutionary prototypes -> in the test views

Prototyping in general

benefits:

- visualization of something what was not visible in the test environments views
- intuitive and understandable by all stakeholders
- avoidance of misunderstandings
- better clarification of use cases
- previously undiscovered use cases and requirements can come to light earlier
- easy decision taking
- easy communication with software developers
- fits well into the agile method
- It's fun!

Prototyping and the agile process

- excellent method to support the iterative process

- constant validation of the requirements , e.g.
  after usability walk-throughs, at a very early stage

- dynamic handling of requirements changes
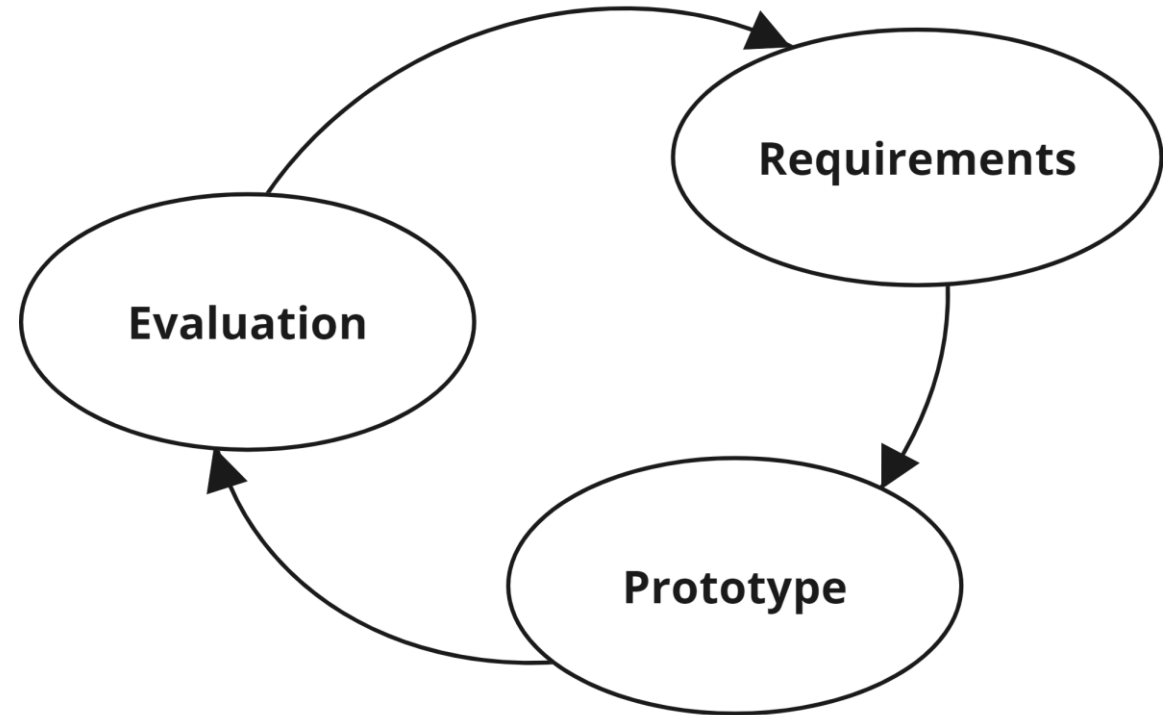
UI prototypes and evaluation of requirements in an iterative process, inspired by:Richter, Michael, and Markus D Flückiger (2013): Usability Engineering Kompakt: Benutzbare Produkte Gezielt Entwickeln. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin / Heidelberg, 2013. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-34832-7
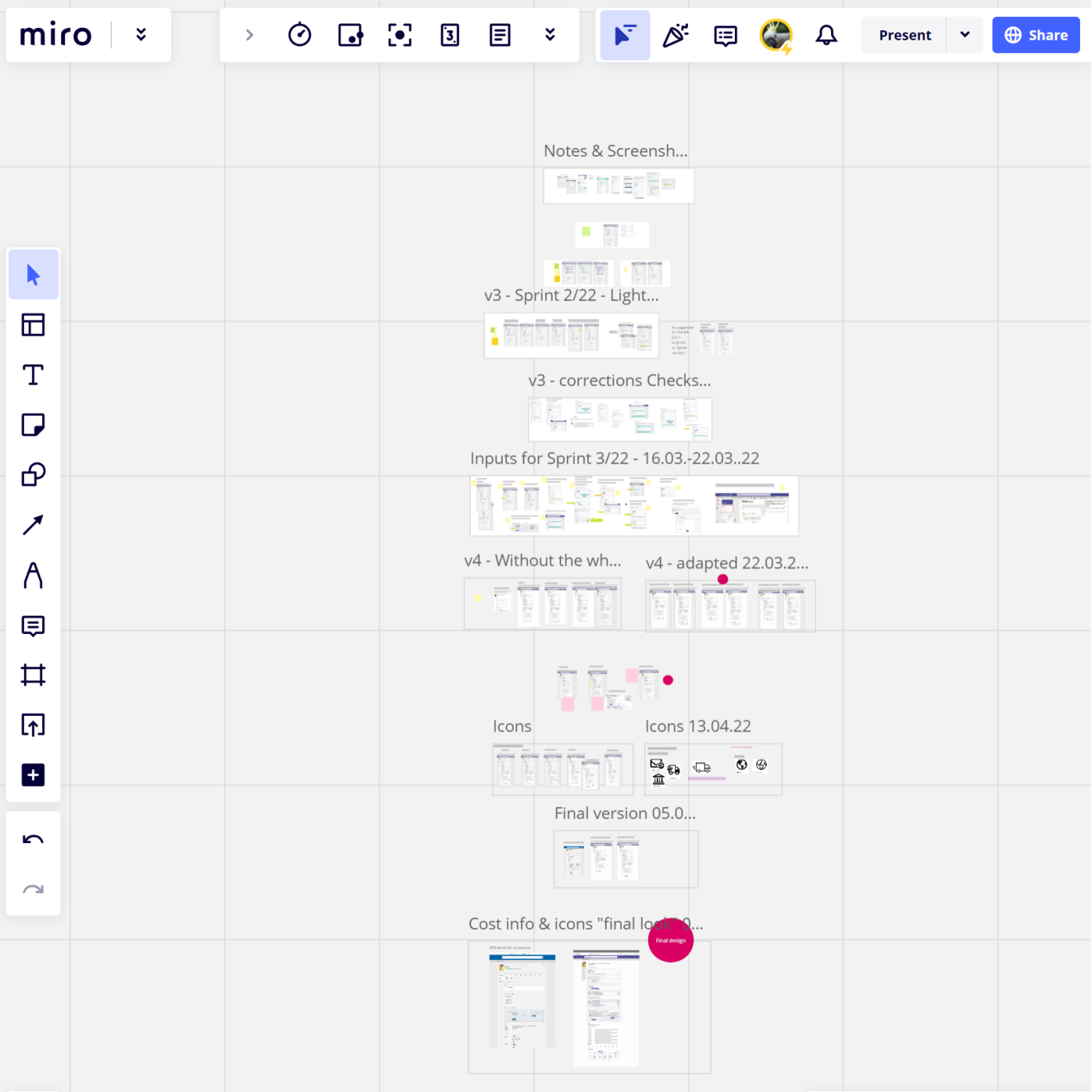
Tool and examples

 - Visual collaboration platform
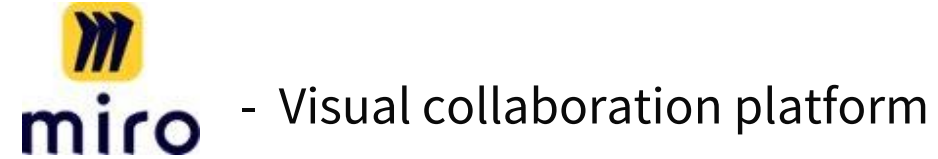
✓ Intuitive handling
✓ many templates available
✓ collaboration functionalities

Tool and examples

Entire board
reflecting
the evolution of
the full display
design

Tool and examples

Full display design

Display of services

Tool and examples

Some more examples

4. Conclusion

Conclusion

- To succeed, not only the project must be agile, also the project team's mindset must follow this approach by
  - clearly articulating the values of collaboration
  - constantly reflecting the collaboration and process
- Prototyping is very helpful
- Usability is and will be a major topic for SLSP and swisscovery

5. Questions

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https://slsp.ch

Thank You

Literature

Stepan, Nikol, Mattmann, Beat, Fiero,
Fabiano: Die Usability des Suchportals swisscovery.
Die nächste Etappe der agilen Expedition. in b.i.t. online (1/2023)