Editorial

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Biographical notes: Åsa Ericson is Professor in product-service systems and scientific director of Effective Innovation and Organisation, leads and conducts research in innovation and development projects. She brings her knowledge of innovation techniques and user involvement into research topics related to new product and service development.

Johan Lugnet has a PhD in product innovation and conducts research in innovation and development projects. He brings his knowledge of innovative technology and enterprise into research topics related to experience sharing and collaboration in engineering design.

In the special issue of user experience and agile innovation for a future of servitisation, the ways the service-oriented business challenges new product development to become both agile and human-centred are in focus. It contributes with empirical studies of how user involvement and agile innovation, for example in form of design thinking and value orientation, are found important in industry. The emerging rationale of servitisation is identified both in research and industry as a precondition and enabler for sustainable development and the introduction of new digital business models. Servitisation in practice, promotes engaging clients, customers and/or users in the early stages of development, basically because value in service actions is co-produced. Approaches based on an agile logic put a user perspective first, and is appropriate when the problem to solve is complex, i.e., not precisely formulated from start. Thus, also opens up the processes for innovative types of solutions across firms.

Since servitisation and service orientation emphasise value creation, the inclusion of real customer or user needs into the development processes is critical. Such needs are not easy to express by users, and are embedded in problematic situations, that are more qualitative in their nature. Engineering requirement-driven development is typically grounded in quantitative measures, since it mainly manages the manufactured goods. The transformation into service-orientation thus confronts the established logics, and by that also the organisational structures, cultures and leadership. Today, this is often spoken of as 'the mindset shift' in industry. A future of servitisation hence calls for a broad view on product development.

The industry is widely represented in the studies of this special issue, for example creative industry, construction industry and IT consultancy firms. The original research studies include discussions, problematisations, descriptions and/or prescriptions of a range of user involvement and agile innovation in service-oriented development.

The contribution by González-Cristiano and Sandberg presents a case study demonstrating how a freelancer and the client ended up in a creative, but not desirable product. This was due to a mistake to not engage users in the concept stages, i.e., by blocking external input on the ideas.

Bhatnagar and Grosse provide a study on how agile IT teams work when using Scrum as a method. The study suggests location independent access and workplace communication as two additional characteristics to a job satisfaction model for global distributed work.

Frank et al. present the results of applying design thinking in the development of a communication platform for human-machine interactions. The study prescribes a number of domain-related requirements, and exemplifies how human-machine trust can be supported if following a human-centred design approach.

Lynch et al. present four narratives, or success stories, for how the training in agile, innovative and entrepreneurial leadership, has changed work procedures. They conclude that such training has to be sustained by a change in organisational culture and structures.

Panarotto et al. have interviewed professionals in manufacturing companies. The analysed material has thereafter been used in a comparative study between value models and a requirement-based approach. It was found that developers spend the necessary time on the qualitative parts of problems, if they are following the suggested value model in the conceptual design.

The study by Kim and Hong underline the attention that service-oriented business strategies have achieved in the era of the fourth industrial revolution, and in the digital transformation. A proposed design strategy for servitisation is illustrated by two product-service systems cases.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all authors and reviewers that have made an extensive effort. The main editorial team of the journal has provided support in the publishing process, and we are grateful of their aiding us in the role of guest editors. We hope that the special issue will be of great interest to readers, inspiring to researchers, and useful for practitioners.