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He rangi ta matawhaiti
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A person with narrow vision has a restricted horizon; a person with wide vision has plentiful opportunities

Beyond stickie notes: if it's not tracked did it happen?

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Abstract

Human Factors (HF) practitioners can be drawn to the more visible aspects of the discipline: end user engagement, task analysis, usability assessment, design innovation etc. Lesser attention is given to the less glamorous, and often less celebrated, work that occurs after the data collection is concluded and the analyse is complete.

Yet for many HF practitioners, a significant proportion of HF effort can be dedicated to reporting, assurance, issue management, compliance demonstration, audit responses, and evidence gathering. These activities are sometimes perceived as administrative overheads rather than core HF practice. This presentation challenges that perception.

Drawing on experiences from a large rail-based transport project, this presentation explores how assurance reporting, HF issue registers, requirements traceability, verification evidence, and audit processes contribute to achieving required HF outcomes. It argues that these mechanisms can provide organisational memory for complex projects to manage risk, demonstrate due diligence, and maintain focus on human-centred design decisions over long project lifecycles.

The presentation examines project frustrations associated with documentation and assurance activities, including stakeholder resistance, perceptions of bureaucracy, and the challenge of communicating HF values through formal project governance processes. It also discusses practical approaches for making reporting more meaningful and effective.

Ultimately, this presentation proposes that the influence of HF is often measured, not by the quality of a workshop or analysis, but by whether recommendations can be traced, defended, verified, and sustained through project assurance frameworks. While reporting and auditing may lack the excitement traditionally associated with HF, they may represent some of the profession's most important and enduring contributions.