Iterative Design Process

We employ a variety of design techniques and strategies as we build the Platform Cooperative Development Kit, and we tailor the processes that we use to suit our co-designers and the particular kinds of systems we are designing. In general our iterative design process involves:

- **Horizon Scans**: Assessing other websites and applications that may be relevant or related to the artefact we're designing. This includes looking at the technologies that co-ops currently use, open source technologies, technologies that achieve similar goals to ours, and technologies used by competitors
- **UX Strategy Sessions**: Team meetings that help to align each other on different perspectives, ideas, and visions for the project. We each brainstorm answers to questions such as "who are we building this for?", "what are the goals and unmet needs of these people?", "what assumptions are we making about what people want and need?", "do we have design ideas for this?". Collaboratively, we complete a UX strategy canvas which contains our ideas.
- **Community Co-design Chats**: In order to gather diverse perspectives on the goals and needs of the people we are building for, we hold one-on-one conversations with folks in the co-op and platform co-op community. The intention behind these chats are to challenge our assumptions and figure out the spaces we are not considering so that we can feed these ideas into our co-design processes.
- **Generative Sketching Sessions** provide a way to quickly gather a diversity of ideas and sketches for the project. They provide a basis for further co-design and collaboration. Using the UX strategy canvas that was built by the team and the results of community co-design chats, we begin sketching initial ideas individually. We then come together to share our various ideas and sketches.
- **Wireframing** takes the initial diverse sketches and puts them into a form that is easier to talk about in co-design sessions and community chats. We take the sketches we have created, merge them where is makes sense and refine them just enough to provide a cohesive vision of the project being built. These are intentionally kept low fidelity in order to garner more feedback from community members.
- **Facilitated and Embedded Co-design:** The practice of co-design allows users to become active participants in the design process by facilitating their direct input into the creation of solutions that meet their needs, rather than limiting users to the role of research subjects or consultants. When a diverse group of users can participate in the design process, a broader range of needs can be considered throughout the process, from conception to completion. The entire team can participate in quick testing and feedback cycles, and design decisions can be made more quickly. We contextually plan and organize co-design sessions based on the particular group of people and the project we are working on. For co-ops we've found that embedding co-design in the context of work and meetings the co-ops is already doing is particularly effective. In this process, members of our partner communities facilitate the co-design sessions themselves, with guidance from us as needed regarding the structure and activities. People who are not part of the community or co-op do not participate in the facilitation or in the activities of the session at all. In this way, leadership comes directly from the community, and from those who will benefit most from the things that are created in the co-design process.

Platform Coop
Consortium

ongoing input and
feedback

one on one conversations
community forums and
hangouts

Coop Community

Platform Coop
Development Toolkit

Project Partners

iterative cycles of co-design
identifying common needs

design synthesis
community critiques

Design and
Development Team

IDRC

The New
School