



# EMPATHY IN DEVELOPER-USER INTERACTIONS IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

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## At a glance



### Goal

Identify empathy enablers and barriers in the interactions between software developers and end users.



### Strategies

Determined empathy enablers, empathy barriers and strategies to overcome these barriers. Support IT practitioners and researchers with recommendations.



### Partners

This project involved:

- Healthcare professionals from Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation
- Students from Monash Art, Design & Architecture Faculty
- Students from Monash Faculty of IT

## Key outcomes



### Enablers of empathy

Enablers of empathy include developers' ability to reflect on a situation, closeness to code, familiarity of user issues.



### Barriers to Empathy

Barriers to developer empathy include limited interactions, unfamiliarity of users and technology, difficulty to resonate with user experience. Nervousness of users was also an empathy barrier.



### Strategies to overcome empathy barriers

Asking more followup questions is a strategy developers plan to use in future to enable empathy. We provide recommendations to practitioners and researchers including a practical guide which can be used to enable empathy and overcome empathy barriers.

# Methods and tools



Empathy is beneficial for improving human connections. Having a healthy connection among software practitioners & users may positively influence the success of software projects.



We administered an empathy test: A Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy.



We conducted interviews with developers & end users, which focused on the experience of the participants during the usability testing sessions, in particular what made them empathetic or what inhibited their empathy towards the other group.



We observed developer-user interactions during the usability testing sessions and identified empathy cues demonstrated by developers and users.

## Learn more

To discover more about this project, contact [Hashini Gunatilake](#) or scan the QR code.



## Acknowledgements

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