Better Decision Management with a new Meeting Tool

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What challenges regarding decision-making exists when team members from different expertises work collaboratively in projects? This question was the starting point of this thesis, which resulted in designing a new feature for meetings in the digital tool Yolean.

The value in being able to move work processes to a digital platform was especially recalled as the corona pandemic hit the world. The construction industry has for long lacked in digitalization of their processes, but it is on the way up.

Yolean is a digital tool for visual planning, that improves the communication within collaborative projects. Visual planning is precisely what it sounds like: using visual tools, such as colorful post it-notes on a large board, to plan projects, and it is a concept that has been used in construction projects for many years.

This thesis studied how decisions are made during collaborative construction projects, and found that there was a gap in how the decisions were documented. Some decisions lacked information such as who was responsible for the decision. Other decisions were not even documented at the same place as the rest, making it hard to get an overview of all project decisions. The decision-making meetings were often ineffective since not all decisions were properly prepared, and time consuming discussions occurred during the decision-making meetings.

Why does decision documentation matter?

First of all, decisions lead the way for further action. Without knowing what decisions have been made, nothing can be done. Secondly, if something in the design is questioned after the project is finished, showing when, why and by who a decision was made can avoid further conflicts. Proper decision documentation saves both time and money.

What did the thesis result in?

To target the problems found, prototypes of a digital tool for decision-making meetings was designed in order to improve the decision documentation in Yolean. The aim of the design was to gather all decisions in Yolean, and make it easier to find all information about the decisions.

The prototypes were tested on real users from the construction industry, and was well received. It was considered to be simple to use and to both make decisions better documented and easier to find, and the meetings more effective.

This thesis helped improve the decision management in the Yolean tool, and make it more appealing to the users.