

Improving Multi-Regional Data Access Services Through a User Experience Lens

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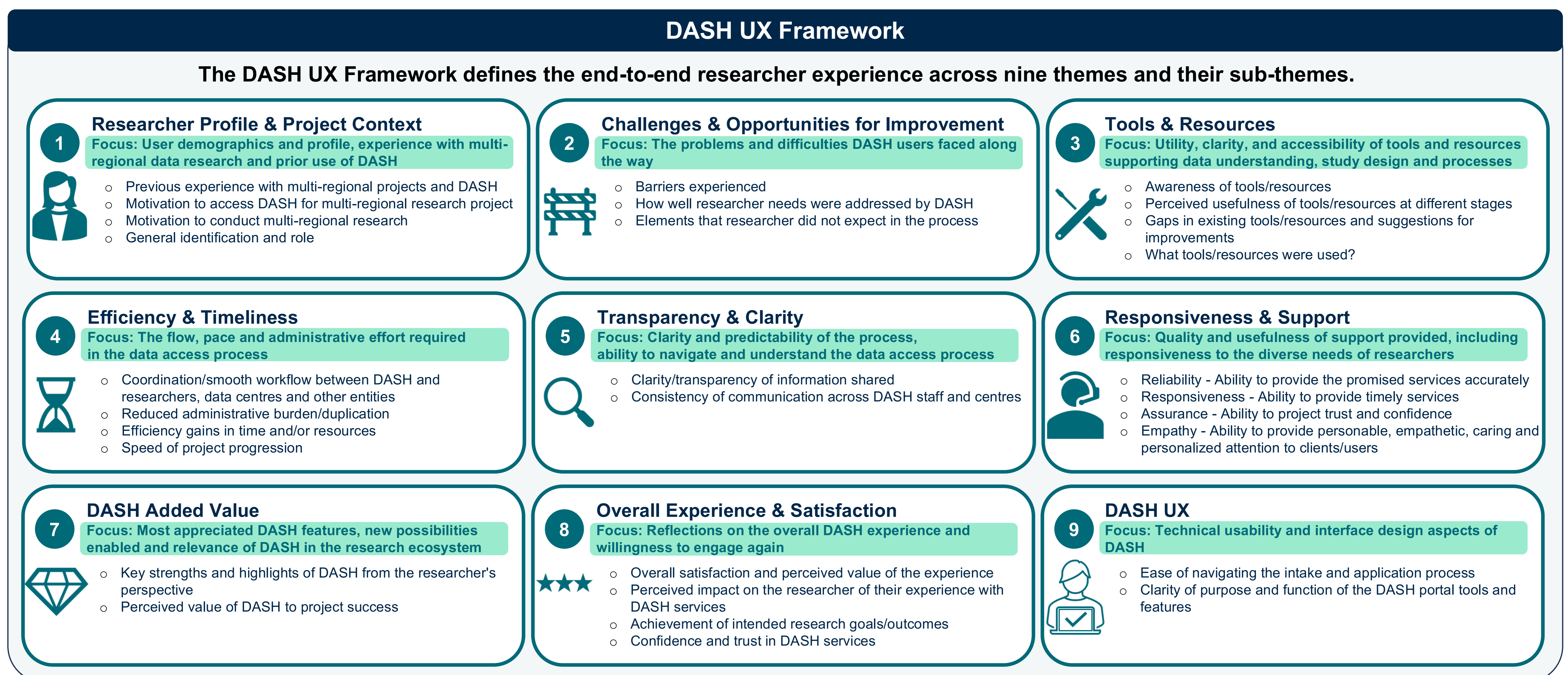
Background

Health Data Research Network Canada's (HDRN Canada) Data Access Support Hub (DASH) supports multi-regional health research within a federated data environment. While DASH plays an important role in helping researchers access data across jurisdictions, the process can be complex and involves multiple steps, systems, and partners. To better understand and improve this experience, a DASH User Experience (UX) Working Group was formed with members from across the Network and Data Centres. In this context, "users" include researchers, their teams, analysts, and others who directly engage with DASH services. The group's goal was to define user experience in the DASH context, understand what users need and value, and develop a practical framework to support performance measurement and service improvement.

Methods

The UX framework was developed through a collaborative and step-by-step process. The group began by reviewing DASH documentation and mapping the full researcher journey to identify key stages and touchpoints. They then held virtual sessions to define user experience in the DASH context and identify main themes, which were refined into more detailed sub-themes.

These themes and sub-themes were brought together into a draft UX framework. The draft was reviewed through internal feedback, including a short survey and an in-person session with members of the DASH Working Group. This helped improve clarity and ensure alignment across the group. The framework was also linked to potential indicators to support performance measurement.



Results



The UX Working Group developed a framework organized around nine main themes as shown the figure above. Each theme includes sub-themes that capture specific parts of the researcher experience across the DASH journey. Overall, the framework captures both how DASH services broadly work (e.g., timelines, coordination, tools) and how the user perceives them (e.g., trust, satisfaction, confidence, and value), and how the two come together to shape the user's overall experience. During the development of the UX framework, a few key insights emerged:

- ✓ **User profile matters:** Different types of researchers have different needs and expectations, which shape how they experience DASH.
- ✓ **User experience and performance measurement:** User experience is a key part of service quality and should be assessed alongside performance indicators.
- ✓ **Customization:** At the time, the framework was a draft meant to explore priorities, user groups, themes and indicators, with further refinement expected as HDRN Canada evolves.
- ✓ **IDEA principles are important:** Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility should remain central to how services are designed and delivered.
- ✓ **Enhanced measurement:** This framework strengthens performance measurement by incorporating the user experience.

Conclusions



This work provides an early, practical framework for understanding and measuring the DASH user experience. The framework creates a shared foundation for identifying what matters to researchers and translating these into measurable outcomes and indicators.

The framework is intended to inform the development and refinement of tools used to support DASH services and evaluation. As HDRN Canada services continue to mature, the user experience framework is expected to evolve through ongoing engagement with diverse users and internal HDRN Canada members. It will also be refined and adapted over time to support practical application as services and contexts continue to evolve.

MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS
Considers the experience across nine key themes.

FLEXIBLE APPROACH
Can be adjusted based on priorities and user groups by focusing on different themes and indicators.

ENHANCED MEASUREMENT
Strengthens performance measurement by balancing outputs with outcomes and user experience.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION
Links themes and sub-themes to potential indicators for monitoring and improvement.

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