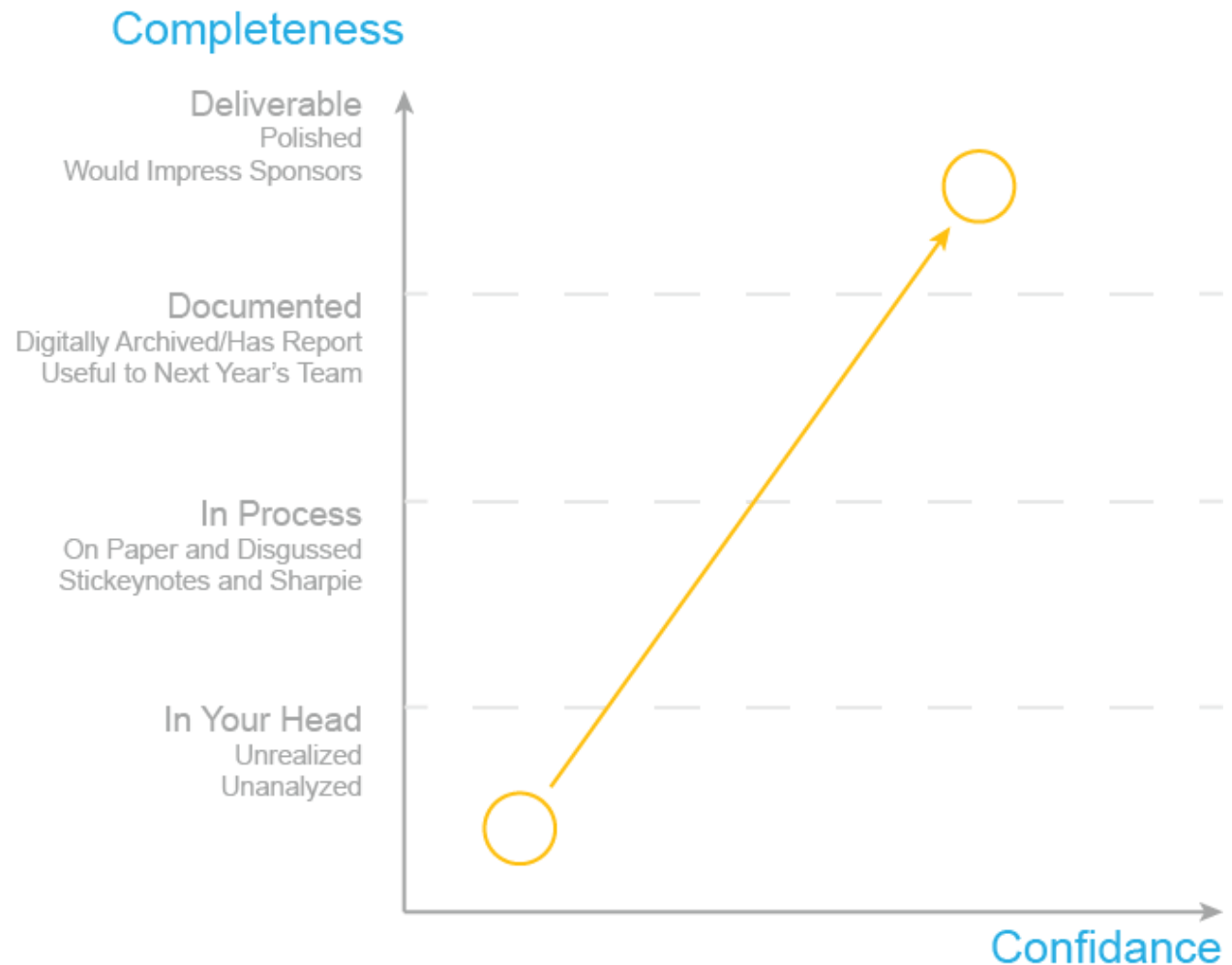


Confidence VS. Completeness Framework

How to convey the status of your work in a simple image



The Confidence/Completeness Framework (CCF) was developed by Kat Brookshire and Dante Santos in the spring of 2014 to convey in a simple and intuitive image, the status of a portion of work.

The Axes

To use this framework to the fullest of its potential, you must understand what the axes really mean.

Completeness

There are four stages of completeness delineated in this framework. Of course, this is a very coarse resolution for this continuum, but it provides easy benchmarks to tell at a glance which stage a project is in.

The stages are: In Your Head, In Process, Documented, and Deliverable.

Whatever you are working on, be it a business model, or menu bar on a website, or a design for a dress, **it starts as an idea**. At this point you may or may not have voiced the idea, or written it down anywhere. It's just in your head (or an idea parking lot, nudge nudge, hint hint), waiting to get out.

The next step is to **let that idea loose**. Release it into the world. Have some conversations, send some emails, post it on a forum, write it down, draw it, brainstorm about it on sticky notes, whatever gets your creative juices flowing. You haven't committed to anything, it's still pretty rough, but you're beginning to work out the kinks. Aspects of it are either falling into place or falling off entirely now that you're thinking about how it interacts with the rest of whatever system you're designing for.

There comes a point when Sharpies and Sticky Notes just aren't good enough any more. You have to start **actually building the thing**. This is the largest, on the time scale, of any of these steps. You're building the product, and documenting as you go. For every new feature, there's probably a diagram or picture or write up. These are artifacts of your progress on the work.

The final stage, deliverable, is not a point, but a continuum. Your work can be barely deliverable (a few bugs, unclear wording, muddy design) or extremely deliverable (designed to perfection, no bugs, perfect flow) or anywhere in between. It's impossible to reach the maximum on this scale, because no product is perfect. The 80:20 rule plays a huge part here, the last 20% of your work on making your work deliverable, or shippable, is 80% of the effort, and most of the time, it's just not worth it. You want to push your work as far up this scale as you can, so that both you and your investors and stakeholders can appreciate the work you've done. Nobody will appreciate a functional product until it is **polished, documented, and usable**.

Technically, a sprint/semester/period of work on a project could finish anywhere on this scale, but the product isn't done until it's pushed as far up this scale as it can reasonably go.

Confidance

At first, "confidence" might be a weird attribute to be assigned to a portion of work, but that's because it isn't the work itself that is confidant, but rather, you. **This axis measures your confidence in the precision and accuracy of your work.**

If you've been proceeding with a lot of assumptions and placeholder numbers, you are low on this scale. If your design decisions are based off of first-hand testimony and data, you are high on this scale. This is a way of telling your team, and the people who come after you, how much they should trust the specifics of the work you've done. Remember, this is about the success of the project, not your own ego.

Remember, this is a very subjective metric. You could be 100% sure of the validity of a set of data, and then a month later, your successor finds out there was a fundamental flaw with how it was gathered, nullifying your insights. Be bold when making the statement of how confident you are, and be cautious when viewing how confident someone else says they were.

Implications of the Quadrants

You can tell a lot about a person's work from where they put it on this framework. It can be broken down into infinitely small step sizes, but you can get a significant insight from a simple quadrant check. Let's divide the available area into Lower Left, Upper Left, Lower Right and Upper Right, and see what work in those four areas is like.

Lower Left: You haven't done much work yet and that which you have done isn't based in fact or reason, and you know it. This is where projects are born, the unconstrained realm of imagination.

Upper Left: You've made a piece of platinum-coated bullshit. You've made a great product (visually stunning, all the intended functions work like a dream) that delivers no value to the user. The only time you want to have anything in this quadrant is if you are making a shell for data to go into later, with placeholder nonsense data. If this isn't what you're doing, and you're in this quadrant, you need to do some serious data gathering and user design.

Lower Right: You've ruminated for a long time. Your idea has been stewing, but you just haven't had time/willingness to put effort into developing it. You're confident that it'll turn into a great winner with some man-hours thrown at it. This is a dangerous area because frequently your confidence in your conclusions, and therefore the accuracy and precision of the product design, goes down as you develop, and you have to do more research and user design to bring it back up again. Try not to get attached to undeveloped work, because it will change.

Upper Right: This is where you want to be - polished, functional, and useful. it's perfect for your user, you've based all your design decisions off of data instead of pulling them out of thin air, and you could sell it for whatever you wanted.