Newsletter 3 – An experiential Workshop

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Designing for Emotion – An Experiential Workshop

Ahmad Beltagui leads workshop in Barcelona

Ahmad Beltagui from University of Nottingham led the first D-facto Designing for Emotion workshop in Barcelona (itself sometimes called the Design Capital of the World). The workshop was devised by Ahmad and Dr Johann Riedel to provide participants with an experience of the power of emotion in design.

The workshop in Barcelona was a pilot of the concept which was tested on the D-Facto project partners. This will ensure that the workshop and its content will work in the many different European countries participating in D-Facto.

Uros Jovanovic of Xlab also ran the workshop in Slovenia and the project manager of the team that attended the workshop was very pleased, saying:

"Overall I am very pleased with the outcomes of the workshop and the timing - that just couldn't have been better!"

Project Manager participant

The key topics discussed in the workshop were:

- discussion about the targeted customers and their profile
- importance of focusing on addressing their personal needs
- what are their values
- why the reflective process is so important and how it works
- how we can promote the feeling of connection with the service and end product

To emphasize the experiential and polysensory emotional aspects of design participants had to talk about and eat some chocolate!

Johann Riedel, Nottingham University Business School, with acknowledgements to Ahmad Beltagui.

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Technical Overview

In recent years, mobile revolution has really taken off. Having access to needed information at any time is now common mostly due to powerful devices like smartphones or tablet computers. Touchscreen technology enables very personal interaction between the user and the application, one of the key principles of emotional design, one that we just had to harvest. However, web presence is still required; however, web pages designed for the desktop are not scaled well on the mobile, neither by form nor the functionality. Therefore the D-FACTO partners decided, to support both web and mobile, by developing content platform for the web and application for the Android platform.

Even though initial prototypes of the application were made for the iOS platform, mostly due to better UI effects that reflect the emotional design principles, we've decide to go with Android due to simple risk management in order to avoid a few weeks of approval time by Apple, which could put the progress of the project in jeopardy. However, as described at the end, we've taken the iOS user into account as well.

The web interface was built as a content aggregator, where users can publish information as well as browse exiting database. On the other hand, the mobile application is only a content reader, meant for users to consolidate and search for information.

Figure 1: Web interface screenshot.

The content is composed of *information buckets*. Each bucket holds a title, has a dedicated image, short description, full description with links to either web pages or internal files, and a list of tags used for categorization. The tags are the building blocks for navigation.

The navigation tries to reflect flow of thought of a person that explores new topic - start with concepts that are familiar and explore available content that is related to these concepts. By exploring the content, new concepts are introduces and learned, and can be used to navigate to new content, diving into the topic even

further. This process is non-linear and can have thought-jumps over wide range of subtopics.

Figure 2: Information bucket form.

We've mapped this process with two levels of tags. High-level tags describe the initial topics, ones that represent entry points to the content about emotional

design. Selecting one of the high-level topics, the list of available content containing the selected tag is shown. The user can either browse trough a given list or select to see another list that contains the union of all possible tags represented by the content in the list. The user can than select multiple tags, the ones of interest, and narrow the content. By selecting some item of the list, the complete content of the information bucket is shown, along with the tags that serve as entry points to search similar topics.

When a list with short descriptions and titles of information buckets in shown, the user does not know how much that information bucket is related to the high-level tags. Therefore, we've added another component to the representation in the list. We've mapped each of the high-level tags to distinct color. We've

than calculated how much the information bucket is similar to other content within all high-level tags and used a part of the list item as colored indicators. The more the information bucket is related to high-level tag, the more it is marked with the color that represents that tag. The order of the coloring is the same as the order of the high-level tags that are used for initial navigation. In this way, the user not only sees what the information bucket is about but also how much it relates to the different content sections.

Figure 3: Color-mapping of main topics.

As described in the introduction, we do not want to exclude iOS users. Although the content is accessible by using the Mobile Safari browser, we are developing the service which will map the content on the net to non-linear navigation enabled ePub, supported by all mobile devices. The service is in alpha stage of development at the moment.

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Figure 4: Color-mapping of content when *Topic 1* **is selected.**

"Rule of thumb: if you think something is clever and sophisticated beware-it is probably self-indulgence."

"What makes something simple or complex? It's not the number of dials or controls or how many features it has: It is whether the person using the device has a good conceptual model of how it operates."

Donald A. Norman

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