

Solving communication problems in the transportation sector

Claire Huijnen¹ & Ilse Bakx²

¹European Centre for Digital Communication, Hogeschool Zuyd
Heerlen, The Netherlands

²Centrum voor Usability Onderzoek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Leuven, Belgium

Abstract

The methods and results are presented of a study within the “Virtual lab for ICT Experience Prototyping” (VIP-lab). This case study deals with communication problems and limited comprehension of safety instructions caused by language barriers in the industry sector. An interactive application is proposed as solution.

Introduction

When developing (ICT) applications the emphasis is increasingly put on the experience of the end-user. Related to this trend, User-Centred Design (UCD) techniques are emerging and applied more frequently in the development of ICT systems. Moreover UCD eventually found a place in an ISO standard 13407. Norman (1988) introduced and defined the term “User-Centred Design” as: “a philosophy based on the needs and interests of the user, with an emphasis on making products usable and understandable”. The “Virtual lab for ICT Experience Prototyping” (VIP-lab) is a project and a virtual lab where different research groups have integrated their knowledge and know-how with respect to designing the user’s experience (Coninx, Haesen, & Bierhoff, 2005). VIP-lab is a project that tries to make companies aware of the advantage of ICT Experience Prototyping by providing a multidisciplinary, profiled, and accessible service for enterprises by means of conducting User Centred research and design. The project consists of five pilots in different application domains: media, e-government, health-care, services, and industrial settings. Each pilot delivers one or more prototype(s). In this contribution the focus will be on the industrial sector.

Bridging language barriers

In industrial and transportation contexts, safety instructions often play a crucial role. With the disappearing (formal) borders between European countries, more and more diversity is encountered in the languages that are spoken by truck drivers that are visiting (Dutch and Belgian) industrial company grounds. This encounter often causes (severe) communication problems. A great potential risk arises when safety