Towards Perfection Step by Step
– User Experience Design and Evaluation in the Context of Digital Libraries

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Approach: Review on digital library research reports

Emerging themes

- Constantly changing user needs
- Useful information about non-users
- Local viewpoints
- User involvement in design
- Evaluation methods and criteria
- New viewpoints

Constantly changing user needs

- User experience should be the focus when a digital library is developed. (Ji, 2009)

- Digital library designers should not copy solutions (such as Google-like search) preferred by users but use them as inspiration to their own design. (Khoo and Hall, 2012; Case: IPL)

→ Design principle: Design aims for possible futures, not for the present or the past. (Krippendorff, 2006)

Useful information about non-users

- In order to prevent users abandoning the service, developers should pay attention to users' habits and the appeal of the interface, and study motivations for using the service. (Agosti, 2010; Case: TEL)

- Users may perceive the service positively at the beginning, but their experiences may discourage using the service further. (Dobreva and Chowdhury, 2010; Case: Europeana)

Local viewpoints

- Resource-based requirements dictate the usability design and evaluation. (Phiri, 2012; Case: Bonolo)

- Idetification of local digital library users and their needs helps in specifying design challenges for the library. (Sastry et al., 2011)

→ Design principle: Know your users. (E.g. Krippendorff, 2006)

User involvement in design

- Involvement of users in the design process provides better information on users' preferences. (Birrell et al., 2010; Case: Europeana)

- Participatory design approach and iterative improvement of design concepts and activities provide good results. (Somerville and Brar, 2009; Case: Cal Poly systems)

Evaluation methods and criteria 1/2

- Logs alone cannot provide sufficient data of users and their preferences. Combination of methods provide better insight into users' needs. (Agosti et al., 2009; Case: TEL)

- Usability goes together with usefulness, and thus the criteria and metrics should include both aspects. (Buchanan and Salako, 2009; Case: health service portal)

Evaluation methods and criteria 2/2

- Development of a universal measurement instrument for assessing the usability of digital libraries. (Joo and Lee, 2011)

- General user preferences and appreciations based on comparison of digital library user interfaces. (Miller et al., 2012)

- The heterogenity of definitions and lack of methodological consistency make it difficult to compare the quality of digital libraries and construct common criteria and measures. (Heradio et al., 2012)

→ Attitude on the field: making is more important than measuring.

New viewpoints

- The scope and purpose of new discovery service tools may not be in keeping with users' actual needs and contexts of use. Well-tried design or evaluation techniques can be applied independent of the type of service. (Fagan et al., 2012; Case: EBSCO)

- The mental model of the evaluator affects the final result. Users could also be involved in the evaluation process. (Khoo et al., 2012)

- For measuring impact: the Impact-ED framework. (Kostkova and Madle, 2013; Case: medical digital library)

→ Effective user experience design and evaluation is a long process.

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Case: Finna

- Public interface of the Finnish Digital Library

- Shared online service of Finnish libraries, archives, and museums

- Status: test version published in December 2012

- Use: the National View for every citizen, tailored organization views for specific user groups

→www.finna.fi

Finna's usability activities 1/3

- Constantly changing user needs
  - Status: Service concept systematically re-designed and re-evaluated
  - Plan: Studies about actual use
- Useful information about non-users
  - Status: Need for interface appeal acknowledged
- Local viewpoints
  - Status: Local users' preferences studied

Finna's usability activities 2/3

- **User involvement in design**
  - Option: Partners involving users in design activities
- **Evaluation methods and criteria**
  - Status: Dynamic inclusion of methods and criteria
  - Status: The Usability Plan as a framework for evolving activities
  - Status: Collaboration with external user experience design and evaluation experts
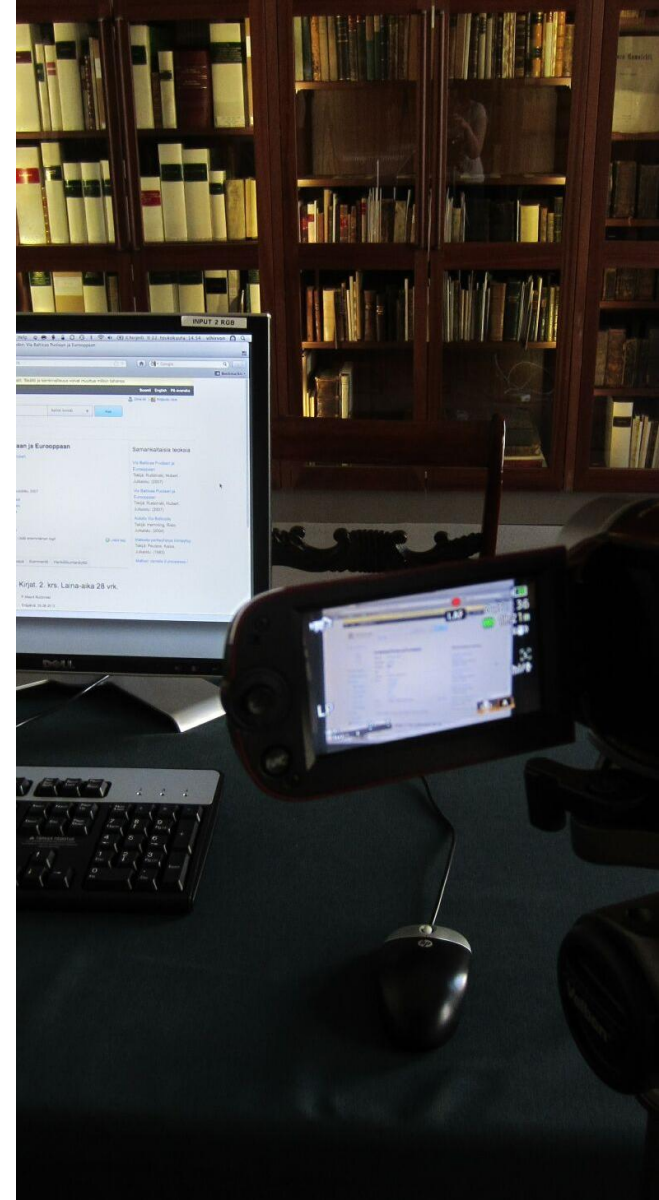
Finna's usability activities 3/3

- New viewpoints
  - Status: Discussion about discovery tools followed
  - Option: Users involved in evaluation tasks
  - Option: The Impact-ED framework considered for Finna's impact evaluation

Discussion

FINNA

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