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INF3260/4260

Trafikanten

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Introduction

This project is done as an assignment for the course INF4260 – Human computer interaction at the department of Informatics, University of Oslo. We have chosen an assignment issued by Trafikanten. Trafikanten offers a service called "WAP Travel planner" where one can access travel planner service through WAP functionality on a mobile phone.

Our research questions take starting point at a previous project on Trafikanten, which took place in spring 2007 as part of the INF5261 course- Development of mobile information systems. The students in this project conducted a survey amongst users of www.trafikanten.no , fellow students and relatives. One of the concepts they have looked into was "Real time mobile information", where they tried to see whether users are aware that such systems are in place and if so, to what extend they use them. There results were based on 380 completed surveys.

What we find interesting to investigate further on is the result that 90% of the participating users were aware that Trafikanten offers real time information, but only few were using this WAP & SMS service. In their conclusion they suggest the following reasons for low usage:

- Awareness
- Complexity
- Cost

We choose to evaluate whether the low usage is due to complexity where we will focus on the "user friendliness" of this service.

To elaborate on this, the subject to be addressed by this project is analyzing Trafikanten WAP "Travel planner" with regard to usability.

Problem area

The group is interested in finding out:

- Analyzing the user:
  - Who are the users?
  - What are their needs?
  - What is their context of use?
  - Does the solution satisfy their needs?

- Evaluating the current solution using different evaluation techniques.
  - Usability testing
  - Heuristics evaluation

- Presenting proposals for improvements of the current solution (partly based on the evaluation).

Challenges

- It can be difficult to observe users using this service in its natural context without interviewing them.
- Since there are relative few who actually use “WAP Travel Planner” it could be difficult to have access to existing users and we may need to focus on potential users.

Method

- We will use literature from this course as well as other relevant literature, in hope to supplement our data findings.
- We will have to gain knowledge and understanding of the user .This will be partially based on previous research mentioned above, and partially by in-depth interviews we will conduct with 6-8 users.
- We will use qualitative methods where we focus on in depth interviews and usability testing during the data collection phase. We feel that by choosing this technique we can get rich data and an in depth view of how a user of Trafikanten’s travel planner via WAP experience the product’s interface. We plan to involve four evaluators, where each individual evaluator inspects the interface alone. In analyzing the data we plan to conduct a debriefing section, mainly by doing brainstorming and focus on discussions of possible redesigns to address the major usability problems found during the heuristic evaluation /data collection phase.
- To supplement our findings we will also use usability testing as a method, where we list several tasks/scenarios that the user should be able to accomplish with the system.
- We plan to perform this project as a case study[1] on Trafikanten. Case study has the strength of giving rich data, but at the same time we are aware of the limitations to generalisation of our findings. Therefore we choose triangulation (combining multiple methods) as a methodology to support our claims and to secure a high quality of our research.

[1] *Case studies* are in depth, descriptive examinations, usually of a small number of cases or examples. They provide an intensive, holistic description of a single phenomenon, investigated in situ.