

A Usability Study of Mobile Text Based Social Applications: Towards a Reliable Strategy for Design Evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The authors present a usability study where three of the most popular mobile Social Applications (mobile Facebook, mobile Twitter, and mobile Windows Live) were analyzed. The evaluation focused on four text-based tasks: Text-lines visualized at one time (Number of Turns), contacts visualization, conversation tracing, and text entry. The evaluation was performed using an adapted version of the System Usability Scale (SUS), which was answered by ninety participants (each mobile Social Application was analyzed by thirty participants). The authors firmly believe that the results of the study could lead to create a reliable strategy for design evaluation which could be structured into a set of heuristics.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Nowadays the *Instituto Tecnológico de Aguascalientes* is part of the *Sistema Nacional de Educación Superior Tecnológica* (SNEST) which coordinates over 261 Institutes of Technology throughout the country (Mexico). This national network provides support to almost 500,000 students, both undergraduates and postgraduates.

The *Instituto Tecnológico de Aguascalientes* will hold its 45th anniversary in September in 2012; this institute has its educative process certified by ISO 9001: 2008 and all their programs accredited and recognized by Secretariat of Public Education (SEP, Mexico) as a good quality Institute in the country.

This Institute is also certified by the Gender Equity Model (GEM: 2003) and runs a business incubator model recently authorized by the secretariat of economy in Mexico. The *Instituto Tecnológico de Aguascalientes* offer the following degrees: Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, ICT Engineering, Bachelor in Informatics, Electronic Engineering, Management Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Bachelor in Business Administration, and this year release the Materials Engineering program. Additionally offer the online degrees on Engineering in Computational Systems. A PhD on Engineering programs was released this year as well, this program is currently in evaluation by *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología* (CONACYT) to be incorporated into the *Programa Nacional de Posgrados de Calidad* (PNPC) which belong the most prestigious graduate programs in Mexico. There are above of 4,400 students currently registered in the different degrees offered.

Meanwhile, the *Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes* was created at 1973, having their origins at the *Instituto Autónomo de Ciencias y Tecnología de Aguascalientes* established on 1867 in the Aguascalientes City.

In 1968 it began offering two degrees, Public Accountant and Business Administration. Currently it offers many programs, including middle and high school education, 40 undergraduate careers, two post-basic, eleven specialties, seven master's and two PhD programs.

The *Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes* is distinguished from other institutions for its departmental structure, separate from traditional systems but according to the needs of our time. Thus, education is taught through academic centers, allowing you to organize the sciences related to different groups of professors who teach interchangeably in different courses and careers.

As a decentralized institution of the state with legal personality to acquire and administer property, it aims to impart the secondary and higher education in the state, to perform scientific and humanistic research, and extend the benefits of culture to the various sectors of the population.

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