

Group C5

As we begin our work in pseudo-designing this interface, basing our work in both our perceived view of the usergroups we are designing for, as well as the actual experiences of the user groups, seems vital for success. Although it seems a recurring theme that designer groups tend to misrepresent the users when designing their systems, by basing their design on their own experiences, we hope to avoid that complication by conducting user studies. Not only would this be a good starting point, it is also vital that we keep this in mind while we work throughout the project (*Gulliksen & Göransson, 2010*).

Aside from providing useful insight in the minds of the users, user studies can also provide the designers with other crucial information regarding the environment the users work in, what kind of needs and aspects they believe to be important in regards to a new product in order to improve usability. In addition, user studies can tell us what kind of potential value the product can have for the user, all so that we can observe both social, physical and technological contexts when designing a system (*Preece, Sharp & Rogers 2002*).

Although we have faced some problems regarding logistics, we have carried our interviews as our chosen user study. These have taken place in a variety of different ways, all in accordance with the time allotted and availability of the users, which in our case is small-scale companies. At first, we seemed to have reached an impasse, as the nature of our target group meant that a company of notable size would often have very standardized answers to the questions we were asking.

Of course, the way to avoid this would be to attempt to immerse ourselves in the daily situations of the users to a higher degree (*Gulliksen & Göransson, 2010*). Most of the conflicts we found did not occur when interviewing users, but rather, when attempting to interview the designers and owners of existing systems. We made a conscious choice to perform interviews with both the owners and the users of existing systems, in order to maximise the information we could get from the start. Unfortunately, getting time with the companies to perform the studies has proven difficult within the given time period, therefore, some of our interviews have been carried out through email or over the phone. Given a situation where we could evaluate the users in their own natural environment, the information we could extract would exponentially grow by, for instance, interacting with the users or asking them to think aloud.

We used a semi-structured form of interviews, in order to loosely base the interviews on our questions when needed, but also let the users focus on the parts which they thought were important (*Preece, Sharp & Rogers 2006*). The questions themselves were chosen as a collaborative effort, largely in order for us to find answers to the questions that had arisen during our precurring discussions.

Alternative ways of conducting our user studies could have been handing out surveys to a number of companies of our choice, or conducting observations of their everyday working situation, and thus getting a feel of their business and their needs. The downside of observation however is that it is quite time-consuming and you may not always get those direct answers you're looking for, as you would in an interview. A survey on the other hand would give plenty of direct answers, although it offers very little information outside of the questions stated in the survey. Which isn't the case in a semi-open interview, where you can delve deeper into unpredicted areas of interest, as they spring out of the original set of interview-questions.