

Designing Alphanumeric Input for iTV in a Search Context

AIM OF THE STUDY

One of the prime implications of networking and socializing an interactive TV system is the growing need for an efficient user input interface. We aimed to use specifically relevant in-house academic and industrial research experience to elicit market insights on an alphanumeric input method we designed for a digital television service offered by a cable provider in Quebec, Canada. After substantial research and design, our remote-controlled search interface was implemented and is currently being used by real users.

The aim of this study was to revisit and improve conclusions drawn from our initial research with real users of a real product. The final paper/presentation demonstrates the initial design challenges, traces the project stages, outlines the basic usability principles which emerged, and presents how those principles evolved after retrospective user research.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative User Research: recording users' performance and efficiency while engaging in controlled interaction with the interfaces (success rates, user paths, questionnaires, etc.).

Qualitative User Research: interviews and focus-group studies of real service users. Data on subjective user experience, intentions, motivations, attitudes and expectations is collected.

RESULTS

Initial research provided specific criteria and guidelines concerning the cognitive load of screen/remote interactions, the number of actions necessary to enter one character, the meaning behind symbols used, interface adaptations depending on the input end-goals, interactive ambiguities to be avoided and the application of design standards to the unique usage context of iTV. Retrospective user research is ongoing and a final compilation of data is expected to have significant effects on the initial research conclusions.



YU CENTRIK is a highly-specialized Canadian interface usability firm. Since its founding in 2003, the organization has grown to serve a wide array of large businesses through the analysis, design, and testing of interactive products.

AUTHORS

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