



Research blog – Eliciting user needs and experiences

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Information Society

CITIZEN MEDIA
social change



Introduction

Topic

- Can a research blog (together with video and photo applications) be used to elicit user needs and requirements

CITIZEN MEDIA

- Sharing and co-creating of user-generated content by non-professional users in A/V networked applications in the new media landscape

New media landscape

- Long tail: from consumers to producers (non-professional users)
- Social software (Facebook, Twitter...)
- Interactive technologies (AJAX, Flash...)
- Other media than text: video, audio, pictures

The new media landscape

A lot of interesting topics for research

But also more opportunities/tools for doing research

- Using existing, online application to gather user needs and experiences
- Rich media such as pictures and videos are very interesting

Research blog

- Blogger as central hub and for contributing text
- Picasa for pictures
- Youtube, Google Video for video
- Participants could see each others' contributions, but the blog remained private to the public to stimulate participants to contribute

Non-professional users

Non-users

Average users

- Do not use ICT on a regular basis
- Quite low computer skills

Instrumental users

- Higher ICT skills than average users
- Mainly use ICT for utility (e-government), for gathering information
- Good ICT access, higher education level

Entertainment users

- Relatively young
- Entertainment use (games...)
- Variation in income and education

Advanced users

2 pilot studies – Study 1

Research blog

■ Topic

- Eliciting user requirements for sharing and co-creation by non-professional users on A/V networked applications in the new media landscape

■ Participants

- 12 Entertainment users from the Pietel blog (<http://www.pietel.be>)
- 7 Average & instrumental users from Seniorennet community (<http://www.seniorennet.be>)

2 pilot studies – Study 1

Research blog

■ Procedure

- Introduction round to break the ice
- Ask for information regarding different themes:
 - Why do you post information online?
 - With whom do you share that information?
 - Why do you do this?
 - How (which applications for which use)?
- Spread these blog posts over time
 - Do not over burden the participants
 - Do not wait too long to avoid loss of interest
 - Study 1: wait and see what happens
 - 9 weeks
- Ask participants to use different kinds of information (text, video, pictures...)

2 pilot studies – Study 1

Diary (offline)

- 15 Other participants from the same communities
- Procedure
 - Ask participants to report the same questions every day during 1 week
 - Telephone interviews afterwards

2 pilot studies – Study 2

Research Blog

- **Topic**
 - Gather insight into quiz experiences of non-professional users
- **Participants**
 - 15 Average & instrumental users from Seniorennet community (<http://www.seniorennet.be>)
- **Same procedure as first study**

2 pilot studies – Study 2

Observation

▪ Topic

- Gather insight into quiz experiences of non-professional users

▪ Procedure

- Observe a quiz evening in a village in Belgium
- 34 teams of 4 people
- Saturday evening from 20 until midnight
- 4 researchers participated as one quiz team
- Take notes on paper (no recording allowed)

Results

10

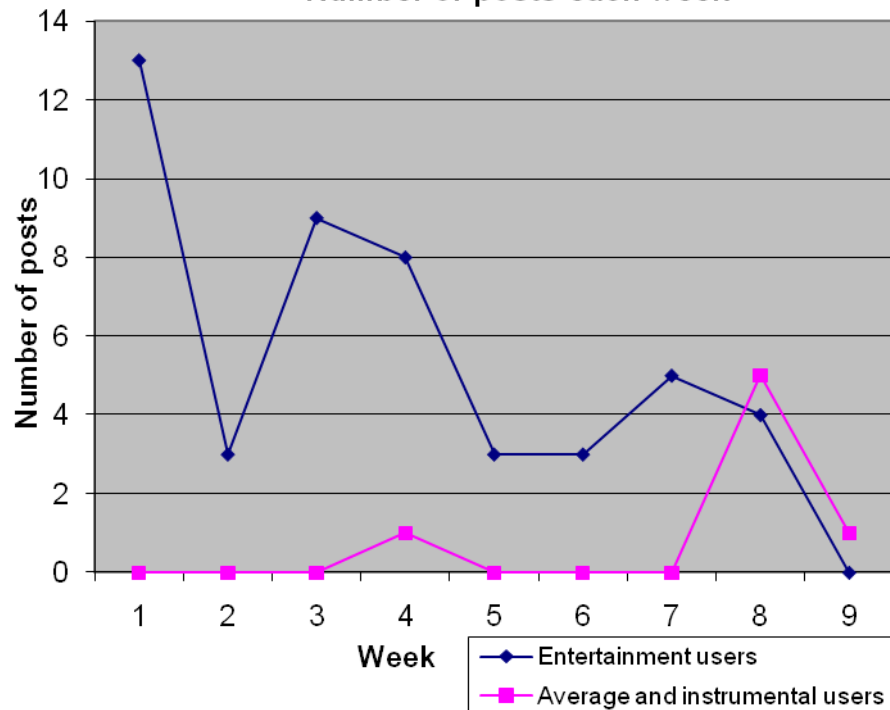
Social interaction

- Suggest that social interaction can generate more accurate results
 - Example: Flickr upload
- Difference between entertainment users, and average and instrumental users
- Time frame of 9 weeks – better: 3-4 weeks

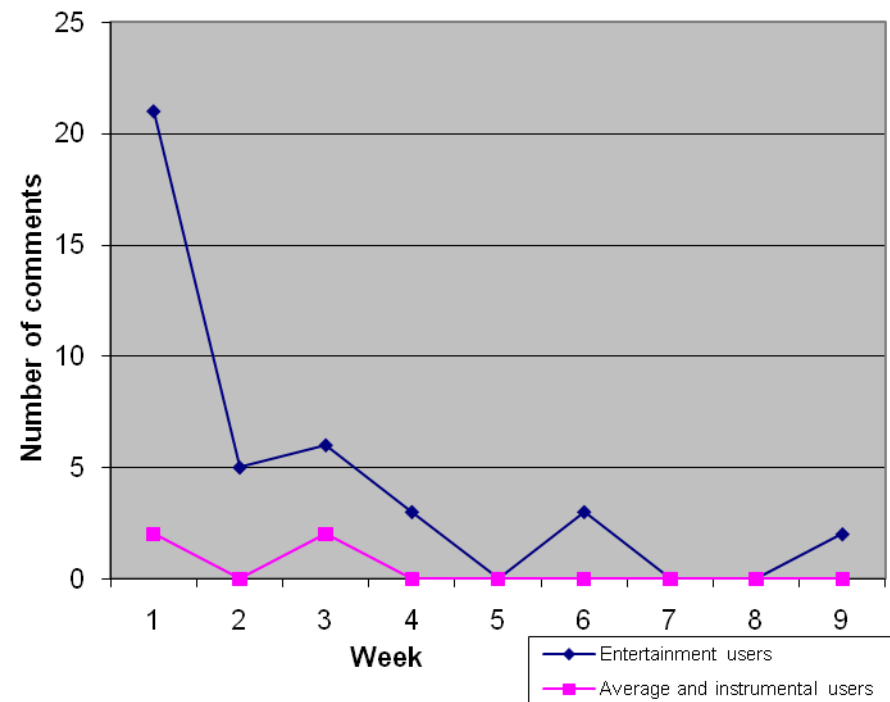
Results

Social interaction

Number of posts each week



Number of comments each week



Results

Contributed content: pictures, video, text

- Few pictures

- Entertainment user (2 pictures)
- Two average and instrumental users (2 “dummy pictures”)

- No video

- Text

- Main form of contribution
- From descriptive information to narratives (anecdotes)
- Narratives describe participants’ experiences very good

Results

Withdrawals

- 2 pilot studies
- Results not generalizable
 - Study 1 – research blog:
 - 8.3% drop out rate (entertainment users)
 - 42.9% drop out rate (average & instrumental users)
 - Study 1 – diary:
 - 0% drop out rate
 - Study 2 – research blog
 - 60% drop out rate
- Communicated reasons for quitting
 - Questions/assignments seemed too difficult
 - Prefer a list of questions instead of writing a report/anekdote (but emailed)

Conclusion & future work

Biggest problems in 2 pilot studies

- Little use of pictures, no use of video
- High rate of withdrawals
- Difference between entertainment users, and average and instrumental users

Solutions (?)

- Work with concrete assignments, but not too many
- Maximum duration: 3-4 weeks (maybe even shorter)