Supporting e-Service Clients with Personalized Narratives

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Introduction

In order to simplify the complexity of organizing domiciliary care, a website was to be designed that included a personalized application procedure and administrative function. By first eliciting and engineering requirements and second, testing a paper prototype, we wanted to design an e-Service that is as user-friendly as possible. Personalized narratives turned out to be one of the means to achieve this.

Requirements engineering

We interviewed six domiciliary care clients and six employees of domiciliary care suppliers. Based on these interviews we formulated, among others, the following requirements:

- Applicants must be able to translate information concerning regulations to their own situation.
- The application for domiciliary care must be heavily guided by the system.
- Applicants may not be questioned about matters, not crucial for the application for, or management of, care.
- Applicants must have an estimation of the amount of care they will receive as soon as possible.
- Calculations in forms must already be filled in when possible.
- Language used in the system must be geared upon the preparatory vocational education level.

Paper prototype design

A paper prototype* which covered the total application and management of domiciliary care was designed. Personalized narratives were included to satisfy the requirements listed above. They should provide the client with an indication of whether s/he is eligible for domiciliary care and how much financial aid s/he will receive. The narratives are presented to the client at the start of the application procedure.

1. Can I get help?

The client chooses a story that resembles his/her own.

2. Personalizing the story

The client is shown the story of Remco. S/he can alter it to fit his/her own situation by adjusting the underlined parameters (e.g., age, residence, income).

3. Automatic adjustment linked parameters

When a client adjusts a parameter, the linked parameters automatically change as well (e.g., income & financial aid). Data from a personalized narrative is incorporated in the digital application form.

Paper prototype evaluation

We conducted a cognitive walkthrough with 15 potential users of the website. Ages ranged from 29 to 81 years. Part of this session was focused on the experience of the personalized narratives. The main results are:

- Five participants indicated that they liked the option to adjust a story to their personal situation.
- Six participants liked the personal approach of the narratives.
- Three participants preferred general information.
- Seven participants had difficulty understanding the goal and mechanism of page 2 and 3.
- Five participants had difficulty understanding the used terminology .

We conclude that personalized narratives can be very useful for a large group of users, but general information needs to be available too. The mechanism and goal of the narratives need to be introduced thoroughly, since users are unfamiliar with them. Finally, the used terminology needs to be explained beforehand or their meaning should be easily accessible.

* The paper prototype is developed in cooperation with the Telematica Instituut, Enschede, the Netherlands (www.telin.nl) as part of the B-dossier project.

Telematica Instituut