

SUMMARY

IS4ALL (Information Society for All) is a EC-funded Thematic Network (Working Group) aiming to advance the principles and practice of Universal Access in Information Society Technologies, by establishing a wide, interdisciplinary and closely collaborating network of experts to provide the European IT&T industry in general, and Health Telematics in particular, with a comprehensive code of practice on how to appropriate the benefits of universal design. The IS4ALL Working Group is co-ordinated by ICS-FORTH (GR), and the members are: MS-HUGe (B), EHTEL (B), CNR-IROE (I), GMD (D), INRIA (F) and FhG-IAO (D).

BACKGROUND

IS4ALL roots back to the activities of the International Scientific Forum "Towards an Information Society for All" (ISF – IS4ALL). This forum was launched in 1997, as an international ad hoc group of experts sharing common vision and objectives, namely the advancement of the principles of Universal Access in the emerging Information Society. The Forum held three workshops to establish interdisciplinary discussion, exchange of knowledge, dissemination, and international co-operation. The 1st workshop took place in San Francisco, USA, August 29, 1997, and was sponsored by IBM. The 2nd took place in Crete, Greece, June 15-16, 1998. The 3rd workshop took place in Munich, Germany, August 22-23, 1999. The latter two events were partially funded by the European Commission. The Forum has produced two White Papers (<http://is4all.ics.forth.gr/html/documents.html>), which report on an evolving international R&D agenda focusing on the development of an Information Society acceptable to all citizens, based on the principles of Universal Design. The proposed agenda addresses technological and user-oriented issues, application domains, and support measures. The Forum has also elaborated on the proposed agenda by identifying challenges in the field of human-computer interaction, and clusters of concrete recommendations for international collaborative R&D activities. Moreover, the Forum has addressed the concept of accessibility beyond the traditional fields of inquiry (e.g., assistive technologies, architecture), in the context of selected mainstream Information Society Technologies, and important application domains with significant impact on society as a whole (e.g., Healthcare).

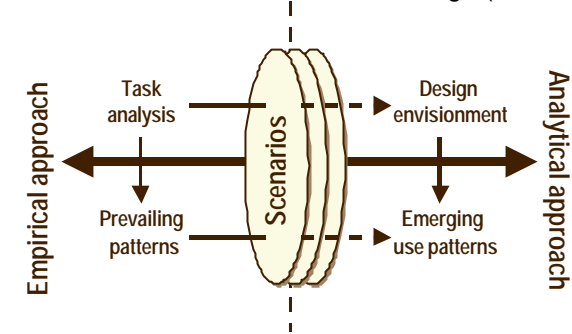
OBJECTIVES

At present, existing guidelines on Universal Access are of a high level of abstraction. This renders them impractical or even unsuitable to be used by industry designers without major efforts. Neither the resources (regarding the number of personnel, the amount of time and money involved) nor the expertise needed to apply these high level guidelines to the needs of individual sectors are available within companies. As a result, despite the fact that the basic wisdom about Universal Design in many cases may exist, the available guidelines remain unused. This gap has been identified as one of the main drawbacks that prevent European industries from applying the principles of Universal Access. IS4ALL aims to fill this gap by:

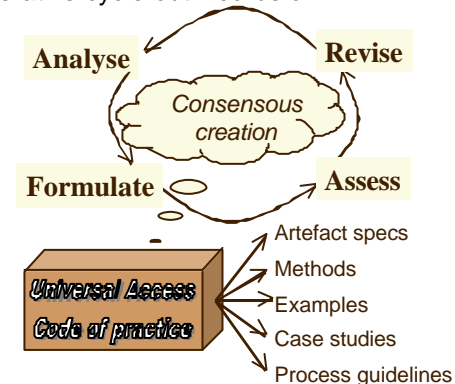
- ?? Consolidating existing knowledge on Universal Access in the context of Information Society Technologies, which is currently dispersed across different international sites and actors, into a comprehensive code of design practice.
- ?? Translating the consolidated wisdom to concrete recommendations for emerging technologies (e.g., emerging desktop and mobile platforms) in a critical application domain, which is Healthcare Telematics.
- ?? Demonstrating the validity and applicability of the recommendations in the context of concrete scenarios drawn from an experimental regional Healthcare Telematics network.
- ?? Promoting the Universal Access principles and practice in Healthcare Telematics through a mix of outreach activities, which include seminars and participation in major international conferences, concertation meetings, and project clustering events.

APPROACH

The approach of IS4ALL builds on scenario-based design (see diagram below).



To achieve the intended objectives IS4ALL proceeds in three phases, namely scenario analysis, consolidation and outreach. Schematically, the consolidation phase will follow the iterative cycle outlined below.



PARTNERS



Institute of Computer Science
Foundation for Research and
Technology – Hellas (ICS-FORTH)



Microsoft Healthcare Users Group
Europe (MS-HUGe)



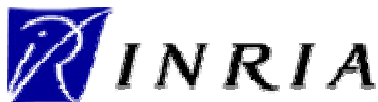
European Health Telematics Association
(EHTEL)



Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche –
Istituto di Ricerca sulle Onde
Elettromagnetiche (CNR-IROE)



GMD - Forschungszentrum
Informationstechnik GmbH (GMD)



Institut National de Recherche en
Informatique et Automatique –
Laboratoire lorrain de recherche en
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Thematic Network (Working Group)

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Information Society for All

IS4ALL

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