



Experience prototyping report

This section describes the experience prototyping sessions conducted last May 2016 in Bologna, Coimbra and Poznan and it reports about the obtained results, with the aim of identifying concrete hints for progressing in the definition and design of ILOCALAPP functionalities and services.

Definition

Experience Prototyping is a method that focuses on how a task or a situation is experienced with the main purpose of gaining understanding of users and their experiences in a real world context and to evaluate and communicate design ideas. The designers investigate users' needs as actors role-playing users in a real user environment. The aim is to find solutions for a new application, a new interface, a new device or a new service. This technique helps the designers to understand the users' point of view when designing future devices or applications.

The experience prototyping consists in a realistic simulation and it is considered one of the best ways for visualising human behaviour and for sharing even its least describable qualities with the specific recipients. The prototypes could be a physical model of a specific touchpoint, a sketch or a sign. It could also be a role-play, which focuses on the service's interactions. The prototype should focus on the service's most important or unusual touchpoints, according to the designers' needs.

In the context of the ILOCALAPP project, experience prototyping help better define and design the functionalities and the services our app will provide.

Preparation

In particular, the goals of our experience prototyping sessions were:

- understanding users and their experiences with the app prototype in a real world context,
- understanding users' needs and users' point of view in a real user environment

To reach these goals, we have identified 3 tasks the participants had to complete during the experience prototyping session. The tasks are the same ones for all the ILOCALAPP partners:

- Buy a bus ticket.
- Visit a monument/museum/library.
- Eat a typical food.

Starting from some "common" mockups, we have customized them with specific multimedia content (pictures and texts) for each partner, as prototypes models. Then, each partner has printed on paper the mockups and has managed to create a suitable model for the participants.

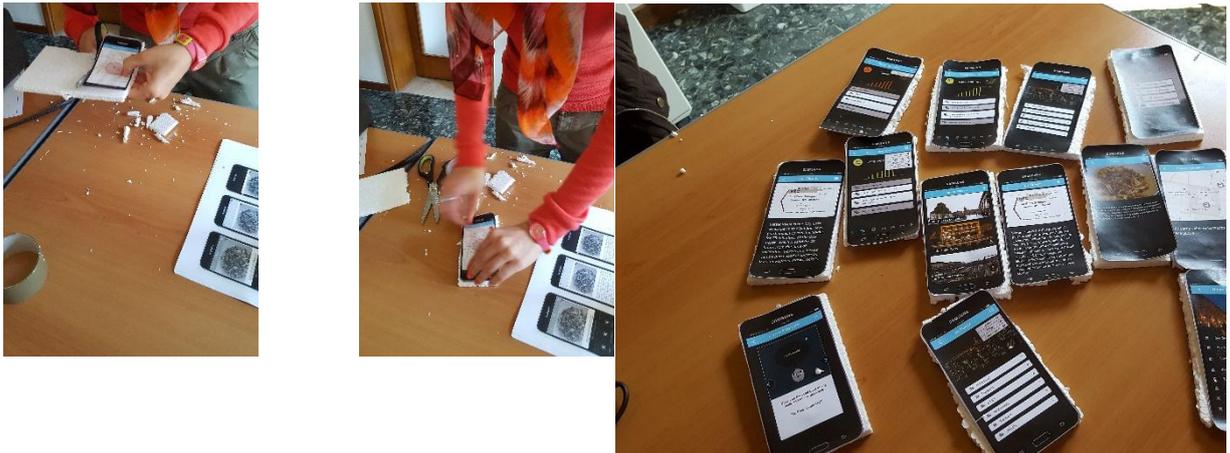


Figure 1 – Prototype Model preparation in Bologna

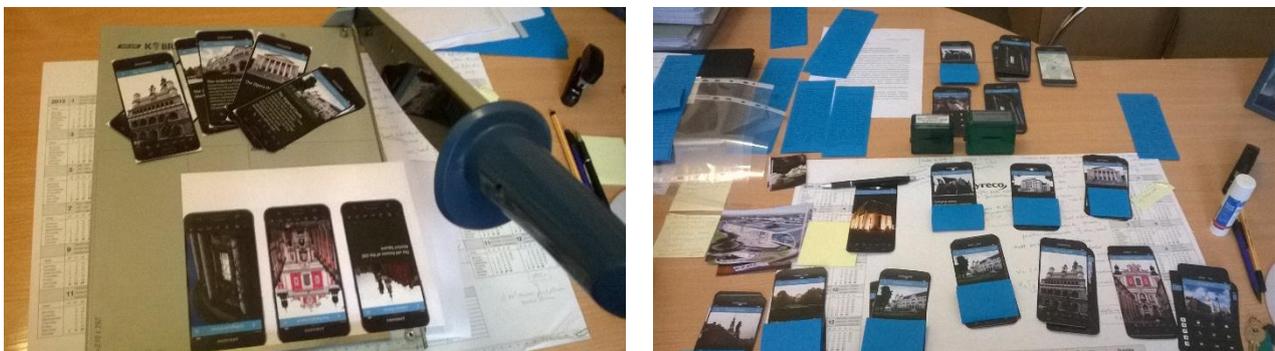


Figure 2 – Prototype Model preparation in Poznan

Sessions

In May 2016 experience prototyping sessions were held in Bologna, Coimbra and Poznan, with the aim of getting feedback and comments from participants on the functionalities, the interactions, and the flow of the application that we are developing, by means of a realistic simulation in a real world context.

Some data about the participants are available in the following table.

Institution	Date	Participants
Unibo	17 th and 24 th May 2016	3 (2 Italian Students, 1 from Bachelor degree in Foreign Languages, 1 from Master degree in Computer Science; 1 graduated), 1F +2M.
AMU	30 th and 31 st May 2016	5 (international students, students of mobility programmes), 2F + 3M
CES	May 2016	2 Erasmus/mobility students.

The sessions were conducted in an informal way, letting the participants feel comfortable and free to provide comments and suggestions. Pictures and Videos were taken, together with textual notes.



Figure 3 – Experience Prototyping session in Bologna

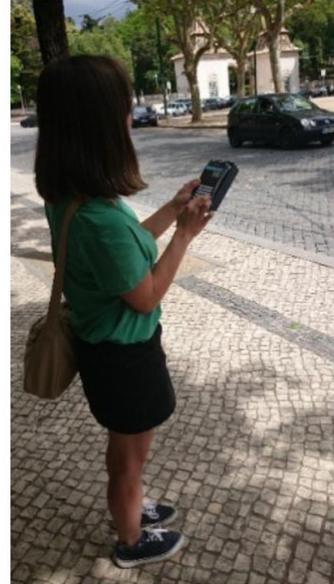


Figure 4 – Experience Prototyping Sessions in Coimbra

Results

We have analyzed the notes and the reports provided by all the partners involved in such an experience, and we have identified the main common remarks about the following items.

Navigation among the contents and the services

Navigation among the contents and the services plays a strategic role. Navigation tools should be adequately provided to come back to the previous content/menu/interface, to come back to the index page of the application, and to move across different services/content/functionalities related to the same content (i.e. language tips, tips to talk, cultural and historical information, practical information, games, external links, etc.).

Interface, layout and their configuration/personalization

The participants have shown opposite positions about background and foreground colors and about font size. This means that some sort of customizations are needed. The application should offer a set of configurations to let the user choose his/her preferred combination of typographical aspects. Moreover, the interface should let the user scroll long content and enlarge images. Finally, the interface should help the user in clearly identify the content typology: cultural information, language tips, exercises and games.

Vehicular language vs target language

This is a very complex issue, that should be further discuss before taking any decision.

According to users' preferences, the interface and the content should be provided in both languages. At least, the app should let the user choose which languages (or if using both of them). Icons and visual cues should be exploited as much as possible in the app interface.

External links and social network connections

External links and connections with social networks are considered very important by the most of the participants. In particular, they expressed interest in having:

- additional external/official information related to the topic;
- a way to share information/pictures/comments;
- a way to be connected with the other users;
- exploiting already existing functionalities and social networks.

Practical and cultural content

A good balance between historical/cultural content and practical information should be found. We have to pay attention in providing not only practical information or not only historical/cultural information. This would also help us in applying the incidental learning paradigm.

Audio Content

Audios are needed, in particular for the language tips, with the aim of effectively support users in their daily activities and in learning the language

Online vs Offline App

Most of the participants showed interests in having some contents available also offline. Obviously, not all the services can be available offline (i.e. notifications related to the user's position). But, at least, some sort of "static" content should be available also offline. An idea could be make available offline all the content that does not need any online functionalities or services (i.e. geo-localization).

Final Remarks

The experience prototyping has been useful and fruitful in all the three institutions. The discussion confirmed some issues already emerged during the focus groups and allowed us to better understand the direction of the final design of the app and to better identify the direction of the following steps. A further prototyping session is planned in Rovaniemi for September 2016 during which an improved mockup will be tested. In general, this method may be exploited also during future stages of development in order to gain further insights on the app.