WDP vs. Nielsen’s Heuristics: A Comparison

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Introduction

Most usability evaluation methods (UEM) based on heuristics (e.g., Nielsen’s heuristics) are tailored to usability professionals. These experts are rare and expensive. Therefore, we empirically evaluated whether the web usability inspection technique based on design perspectives (WDP) can achieve equally valuable results while being less dependent on expert knowledge. The results of the UX experts were compared to those of developers and students with low knowledge in the UX field.

Results & Discussion

Our experimental evaluation shows that the results of the developers using WDP were at least equal in all metrics to those of the usability experts using Nielsen’s heuristics.

We deduce that WDP applied by developers (and potentially also similar groups) can be a good alternative to heuristic evaluations performed by experts. This can be a major benefit from an economic point of view, as access to usability experts is usually more limited than access to developers.

Future Work

In contrast to the developers, students using the WDP method generally achieved worse results in terms of quantity than usability experts. Our relatively small sample size strongly weighted the negative deviation of one student. In our future work, we will repeat the experiment with a larger sample size in order to mitigate this threat.