Colour and Inclusivity: a Visual Communication Design Project with Older People

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Abstract. In an ideal world, inclusive products and services would be the standard and not the exception. This paper presents a systematic approach to an overlap between Visual Communication Design, Printed Colour and Inclusive Design, for older people, with the aim to develop of a set of research-based ageing and ergonomics-centred communication design guidelines and recommendations for printed material (analogical displays). The approach included an initial extensive literature review in the area of colour, older people and ergonomics issues and vision common diseases, communication design. The second phase was the implementation of an experiment to measure the different colour experiences of the participants in two sample groups (one in UK and another one in Portugal), using printed material, to find out the colours one should use in analogical communication material, being aware of the colour contrast importance (foreground versus background) and the difficulties experienced by older people to read and understand lettering, signs. As main contribution of this research project, we developed a set of guidelines and recommendations based on the reviewed literature and the sample groups’ findings, trying to demonstrate the importance of these guidelines when conceiving a new communicational design project in a way this project will achieve vision comfort and understandability, especially for older people, in an inclusive design perspective.

Keywords: Inclusive Design, Colour, Older People, Ergonomics, Understandability