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. Collaboration between users, designers and producers from the very beginning of the project until its completion, would be the success key. However, in the real world it isn't like this. Designers complain about the lack of tools and information necessary to deliver inclusive products and services for their clients. The producers point out constrictions of time and cost, besides the lack of appropriate information at enterprise management level for inclusive design. To work in Visual Communication one needs to have knowledge of different techniques and how to manipulate them. However, there is a gap in knowledge of Colour and Inclusive Design.

This paper presents a systematic approach to an overlap between Visual Communication Design, Printed Colour and Inclusivity, for older people, with the aim to develop a set of research-based ageing-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 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.

Keywords