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USER FEEDBACK ON SYMPA COLLECTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EU-PROJECT *PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES ON E-LEARNING (PARCEL)* IN 2007

The tool was tested by male staff responsible for computing and data management or staff being not absolute beginners in it. Different features were tried out by different people. Hence the feedbacks are not fully comparable. Some people had expertise and experience with similar computer software. Nevertheless the feedbacks contradict each other in several points. This is a sign that many features depend on individual user demands. For this reason it might be advisable to create more features that can be individualised by the respective user:

The spontaneous feedbacks vary: “simple handling, comfortable and good overview”, says one user, “optically unacceptable” says another one, and it is a painstaking task to compile lists, subscription and administration are confusing. Another first impression says “user-friendly to deal with, some features are unusual”.

One of the users with strong computing skills expected more options for the creation, subscription, and administration of mailing lists, and is not quite satisfied with the graphical user interface, which does not allow for quickly creating lists, and he considers it inferior to Mailman in these respects, and also for the subscription of lists he thinks that there are not enough options that can be individualized.

Another one believes that list descriptions for “lists” and “member subscribing” are very detailed - maybe too detailed and too complicated.

The simple mailing system is easy to use, at least with the instructions of a technician, says a less experienced computer savvy users.

There are some innovative options. One user missed or did not find the option how to insert graphical elements and to send smallest compressed pictures.

There is absolute inconsistency concerning the user-friendliness of the tool, sometimes even the same users seem indecisive in this point, and say one time that there is good information quick access to the lists, easy subscription and sending of messages, but at the same time they think that the tool is there is bad overview and it is time consuming. One user considers the installation (perl lcnab) of Sympa as too time-consuming, suggests to improve the manual and the FAQ, and misses additional information in user fora and a porting for Windows.

There the same inconsistency of feedbacks on graphics, design, fonts we get from other tools too: evidently this is mostly a matter of taste. Because there is some unfavourable feedback, too (an eye-catcher says one, disagreeable, not pleasing says another), it might be best to offer the user different individual options to create their own optical design.

Concerning the menu the feedbacks say it 73gn. Td [(c)10.6134(a)1.1.4422(i)5(r)-4.55617()-11.3345(o)0 fe.l

the opportunity to select from a choice of tools offered by KALEIDOSCOPE and PROLEARN like software, hardware, course material and anything else useful for technology-enhanced learning and test these tools. Within feedback rounds and roundtables they report back their experience working with the tools.

PARCEL reached out to groups which, although being quite broad, might be different from the traditional groups of technology enhanced learning, institutions in higher education, larger companies, governmental departments or other organisations with sufficient financial resources and staff familiar with ICT: Elderly people, people with learning disabilities and children, handicapped people, and social groups lacking resources.

PARCEL's communication activities were conceived as pilot activities and offered good practice for participatory communication activities of similar Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence.

PARCEL was a Specific Support Action under the Horizontal Action *Promoting the „embedding“ of science and society issues across the Framework Programme* of the Science and Society Workprogramme under the Sixth EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

Further information on the project is available at <http://parcel.uni-sofia.bg>.