

English The Saint James Way. Pilot Tests Report. November 2011 ENDURANCE

REPORT ON THE PILOT TESTS CARRIED OUT BY ENDURANCE FOR THE LEONARDO DA VINCI ENGLISH THE SAINT JAMES WAY PROJECT IN AMERSFOORT, IN OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2011.

Version 1.0

Pilot tests description

In order to begin the pilot tests, Endurance contacted some organisations, smaller hotels / pensions, individual persons and groups who are active with activities around the Saint James Way. This wasn't very easy! There were many questions and a lot of resistance on our activities to improve the quality of the English language on people who are involved within the context of the route.

We also contacted the persons at the moment time of the year: at the beginning of the summer season. So many of them were very busy or were planning their own holidays. And one other problem is that the level of English in the Netherlands, and especially in the sector of hospitality and tourism, is at a reasonable level. At least a level on which possible students would say: I don't need an extra training.

Saying all this, we changed our plans as the role for Endurance is not only to increase the level of the sector on his part, but also testing the e-learning system we want to use for this new target group. Our former experiences were not to positive on this part: many people who start with this digital way of education stopped after a few check-ins as they didn't have the self-discipline to make time for their education. The age of the target group in earlier projects was most of all the cause of tis problems. Elderly people don't have the feeling to work on their own and have to little affinity with computers.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, we selected a group that was more in scope of our organisation: trainers and other relations. We asked them to test the system by using one of the possible items: I-Phone, Blackberry, PC (stand alone or laptop) or I-Pad.

We worked with 13 students:

1. Linda Stitselaar
2. Augusta van Eerten
3. Gretha de Vries
4. Loes Geurds
5. Rob Versteeg
6. Andrea van den Brink
7. Romeo Oehlers
8. Jan Willem Schoenmakers
9. John van den Enden
10. Wessel Versteeg
11. Pieter van Breugel
12. Katja de Jong
13. Lotte Stienstra

Getting started

Endurance started with a personal contact with all students. We explained the principles of the project and way we wanted to test our new developed system of e-learning. After the commitment of each individual we send the e-link to the programme and also send the translated version of the students manual (see the annex). After this the 'testing students'

were able to start with their work.

The role of the tutor was filled in by Rob Versteeg, involved in the project and responsible for the translation of all texts from English to NL. Because of the hectic times in these months and the short period for testing, we thought this would be the easiest and safest way to organise this important role. You never know what and how many problems will come during a test like this.

The Service and Tutorial Sessions

One week after the sending around of the e-links, the tutor telephoned each of the participating students to find out if they had been able to start the course successfully, and to encourage those who had not started to do so.

One week later, we held the first tutorial sessions, again by telephone. The tutor spoke again to each student and asked about several aspects within this testing. Questions spoken over were:

- Did you start? If not, what is the reason?
- Did you have problems with starting up the programme?
- On what system are you working?
- What is your first reaction on doing this course?
- Do you expect problems in your testing work?
- Can the tutor be of any help?
- What do you think of the manual? Is this of any help?
- Do you expect to go through the whole programme?
- Do you have any questions you want to ask?

Most of the students made their first login at the moment of this second contact, but did not really start with the programme. Problems with time because of their workload and (in two cases) not using the manual were reason for this poor result. 6 of the students told the tutor also that the level of the training was too low for them: their English was better than the level they needed for the programme. The tutor discussed with them about this subject and convinced all of them to go on with the testing of the e-course but with the goal to give their opinion about the system and the way it worked and not on the content itself. Only mistakes in the translations should be mentioned.

After this second contact with the tutor, next contacts were more individually organised: students with questions got in contact with the tutor by e-mail or by phone and asked their questions or mentioned their problems.

Most problems were caused by the lack of time of students in combination with the level of the programme. It takes a lot of time to go through the different chapters of the programme without learning something new. While saying this we don't mean that the content of the programme is not suitable for the target group. It's only the level that caused this lack of interest.

While testing we didn't receive any complaints about the procedure to login. On every instrument, on every location and moment: we didn't receive any complaints about problems in this. Referring to our own e-learning programme we are looking to differences

in this login procedure as in our own programmes one of the most important reasons to drop out are caused by the complaints of students around the process of logging in.

We took a period of three weeks in October for testing the programme. At the moment of writing this evaluation report we must note that none of our students have completely finished the e-course. They all went through one or more chapters and send us their feedback. 6 students in the group are still motivated to go through the whole programme in order to receive the final certificate. We gave them time until the end of this year to do so. We will keep on following them!

We don't see a problem in the way students worked themselves through parts of the programme. They all had ideas about and experiences in the way the systems works and made us part of their experiences.

At the end of the testing period (first week of November) Endurance presented all of the students a digital questionnaire to give their opinion. For the results see one of the next pages.

Results of the Pilot Tests

Of the 13 students who participated in the programme, at the moment of writing this document:

- None of the students full filled the programme completely;
- All of them spend more than three hours in the programme;
- All of the students were positive about the procedure to login;
- All of the instruments (I-Phone, Blackberry, tablets, PC/Laptop) were used;
- All of the students used the Dutch version of the manual;
- All the students were positive about the e-learning system as a way for learning on any time ad (almost) any place they want;
- All students would recommend the programme to people working in the sector and thinking about improving their level of English.

Weren't there any complaints or tips to improve the programme? Yes of course there were!

In the next part of this report we will give the feedback we received from the students on the content.

Technical Considerations

Differences between the I-Phone/ Blackberry and the PC / Laptop:

On the plus side, the I-Phone and Blackberry offer the user a much greater mobility, but the much smaller screen makes it difficult and tiresome to follow the e-course. Two of the students who started with this way of training, stopped after some time as they were very negative about the possibilities to read and make the assignments.

We also received from one student the remark that doing the programme on the laptop (wireless) was not convenient as well. It was much too slow. After logging in on the PC this problem was solved. It could be the wireless system in this (private) house.

Working with the course on a tablet

Using the I-Pad (version 1) gave two complaints: there was no possibility to repeat the English spoken text in the system. After this we found out that the manual mentioned that an I-Pad 2 was needed.

Technical Improvements:

After doing the pilot tests, we detected the following areas for improvement:

- making a mistake while logging in (wrong username i.e.) and nothing happened. It should be better to give the remarks 'wrong username and or password';
- working on different locations with the programme gives other problems (explorer 9,



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versus 8.9) in the spoken text;

- the sound level in some exercises must be improved.

Some of our students also suggested using earphones to help them to hear the listening exercises better and to concentrate better.

A few remarks have been made on some words that are not being heard (like cloth dryers). The word is not being mentioned and clicking on the score button gives a result of 0%! After this tem the student cannot continue to the next page as the 'V' doesn't get dark grey.

Another technical improvement mentioned by several students is the way the student has to combine spoken words with the photos. They all found out the way this works (by dragging the icon to the right photo), but it took them all some time. Also forgetting on photo could perhaps be made more visible in order to find the mistake on a more easy way.

Similar remarks we received on the chapters where English characters should complete the text. The student das to find out that only one character at a time should be put in the open space. After on exercise this is clear but it takes some time to find out how it works.

On one part a writing mistake is left in the text: 'fkisdramkautomaat' should be changed into 'frisdrankautomaat'.

Language Learning Considerations:

The level of the course was too low for our students; their level of English is better than the course suggests. Although every student gave positive feedback about the applicability of the content in the sector where it is supposed to be used: smaller hotels and pensions on the route to Santiago the Compostella (the Saint James Way).

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Pilot tests satisfaction surveys

Once the students finished the pilot tests, they were asked to answer a brief satisfaction survey, and here are the results:

Satisfaction

5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = just OK, 2 = not very good, 1 = very poor

The system is effective	
The system is suitable for my needs	
It is easy to use	
It is flexible	
It is convenient to do the course with a Smart phone	
It is convenient to do the course with a Tablet.	
It is convenient to do the course with a PC	
The amount of time I was given to complete the course.	
The tutorials	
The course was individualized.	
The course will help improve the service I give.	
Indicate how satisfied you are globally with the service	
Overall satisfaction	

Do you feel that you learned?	
Would you like to continue with this training?	

Comments

Do you feel that you have learned?
Difficult via I-Phone, screen is too small (2x). Training should be shorter. I learned new words, although my English is good!
Good training, especially for the target group.
New words for me, nice to be part of this programme.

Would you like to continue with this training?
My English is sufficient (4x).
Like to see a next version! (2x)

Positive comments
Flexible: my own time and own place (if there is a PC) 5 x
Easy to work in and with.
Can do it in my own speed.
Can start every moment at the chapter I stopped last time.
Chapters exactly the right length.

Improvements suggested
Not suitable for I-Phone.
Sometimes I made a mistake or forgot something and didn't know where this mistake was made.
Texts should be more loud (or my ears are not good anymore).
Some mistakes in words (in Dutch).
Manual could be better worked out on some parts and therefore be more suitable.
Some words were not spoken in the chapter, so I couldn't go on with the next part.

Other comments

Nice and good idea!
Not for I-Phone as screen is too small. But if you would find I way to make the programme more suitable for the small screen I would be very happy!
Photo's are very small for I-Phone.
In this evaluation you should add no opinion at question 5 and 6 if you don't use a smartphone or tablet.
Make a follow up version for the programme.
Don't use it for the Camino! It should stay as primitive as it is!!
Go on like this!
You have to develop this kind of programme also for other sectors.