



# AGID- Developing Training Modules for Staff On Ageing and Disability Issues

AGID – Newsletter N°3/2013

Dear readers,

Welcome to our third newsletter of the AGID project. This issue will focus on the content of the training portfolio and the achievements reached so far.

Please feel free to contact us if you wish to receive more information about the project.

For further information please visit the website [www.agid-project.eu](http://www.agid-project.eu).

We hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter!

## THE AGID PROJECT – short summary

The AGID project consists in developing an e-learning platform targeting frontline staff working with elderly and aging persons with Intellectual Disability.

Co-funded by the European Commission, the project has developed a training program in e-format (in English, French, German, Italian and Flemish language) on Aging and Disability issues with the primary aim to provide quality services to aging people with ID. The multinational consortium consisting of highly motivated partners, aims to provide services that will better meet the specific and evolving needs of this new emerging population- aging people with intellectual disabilities, through quality training of the staff and professionals working with the user.

## Evaluation of the online training platform

Once the online training platform has been developed and available, the closing step of the AGID project was to evaluate if the e-learning modules, as they are implemented in the online platform, are useful in helping front-line staff in improving their knowledge and competencies related to the work with aging people with ID.

To achieve this objective, the concept of usability<sup>1</sup> of an e-learning product has been considered. The analyses have been based on the SUMI and SUS method, two of the most used questionnaires in usability evaluation and research.

SUMI (Software Usability Measurement Inventory) is an instrument that evaluates the conditions of use from the user's point of view; taking into account: Efficiency (users assistance to help them in dealing with the assigned task); Affect (pleasantness – use of the product without any efforts); Helpfulness (utility – level of information of the product inside the product itself); Control (clearness as perceived by the final user); Learnability (ease of learning the use of the software by the final user).

---

<sup>1</sup> International Standards Organization (ISO) defines usability as: “The extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context” (ISO, 1998).



Even though they aren't specifically designed for eLearning usability evaluation, some studies (e.g. Argentero et al., 2009) showed that "SUS and SUMI questionnaires can be effectively employed to assess usability of an e-learning software system".

The questionnaire has been built with the aim to maximize the feedback from the users, providing both quantitative and qualitative data about user feedback, while remaining short and quick to administrate.

Along with the questionnaire items collecting user feedback on usability, some items were prepared to collect demographic and other relevant data. In addition to demographics, to be considered are years of work experience, educational level, general and specific computer experience and previous experience with this or similar products (Dumas and Reddish 1993). These socio-demographic variables collected among the sample group were deemed to be used to identify specific users profiles for which specific adjustments of the user interface might be necessary.

The questions included in the questionnaire were specifically selected in order to examine two topics in particular: the first deals with general aspects concerning the complexity and the usability of the graphic interface, while the second focuses on the user's ease of learning the usage of the e-learning software and on the degree of perceived pleasantness by using the system.

Moreover, in order to check for technological acceptance, which can be an important confounding factor, the following questions after the demographic items have been included: "are you familiar with the use of a personal computer?" "how often do you use a personal computer?", "do you use a personal computer mainly for work, free time or both?", and "did you already use an e-learning platform?".

### The user's sample of the AGID project

The usability questionnaire constructed using the method explained above was translated in English, Italian, German and French language and then forwarded to all the European partners of the Agid project: the instructions provided with the questionnaire stated that every single user should first complete the selected e-learning module individually, then fill in the questionnaire, paying special attention on the usability aspects of the platform, rather than on the content of the module.

The final sample consisted of 171 users, 72% of whom were females, from seven different European countries: among the users recruited for the usability evaluation, 52% were students, 26% front-line staff working with persons with ID and 9% of social care managers. Of the final sample, 48% already had worked with persons with ID.

More than half of the sample was recruited among the students, so more than half of the sample had an age comprised between 20 and 29 years. A large proportion of the final sample stated that never had the opportunity to work with persons with ID, while the rest of them had worked with persons with ID for a variable amount of time, ranging from more than 15 years (20 users) to less than one year (7 users), as can be seen from the graphic shown above.

### Results: overall score

The overall mean score for the entire sample analyzed, excluding item 16, resulted in 50,1, out of a possible maximum score of 72, consisting in a 69,58% of the maximum score.



In order to investigate the effect of different user characteristics on the perception of usability, we found interesting to compare the mean scores of the subgroup of social workers to the subgroup of non-social workers (comprised mainly of students): the social workers group (82 users) totaled a global score of 48,4 (67,22%), a slightly inferior score, compared to the entire sample, while non-social workers (89 users) achieved a mean score of 51,5 (71,53%), thus higher than the entire sample.

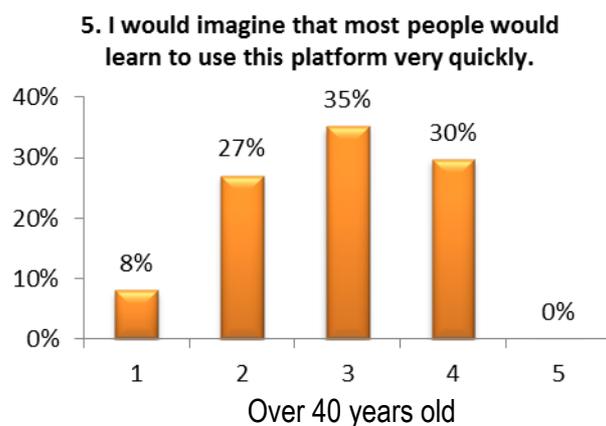
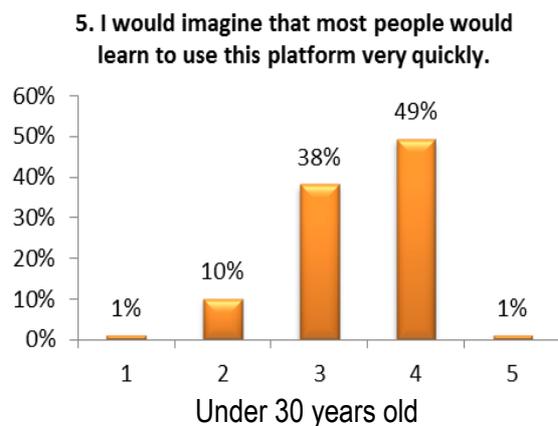
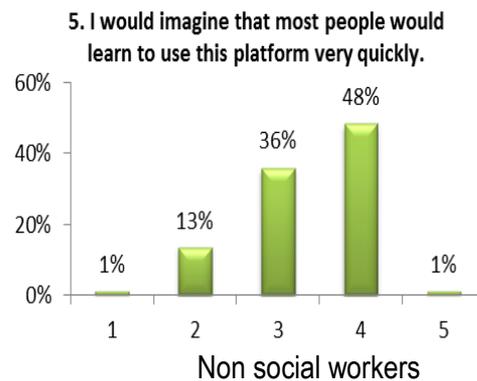
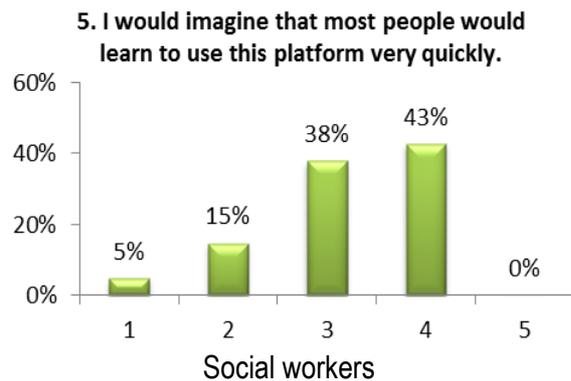
From this first set of comparison appears clear that a specific user profile, namely a user that is under 30 years old is still a student and already had an experience with e-learning platform appears to find the module platform more usable and easy, thus is probably slightly more advantaged in benefitting from the system. Conversely, users over 40 years old, working in the social field and that never used an e-learning platform appears to find the platform slightly less usable than the average of the entire sample.

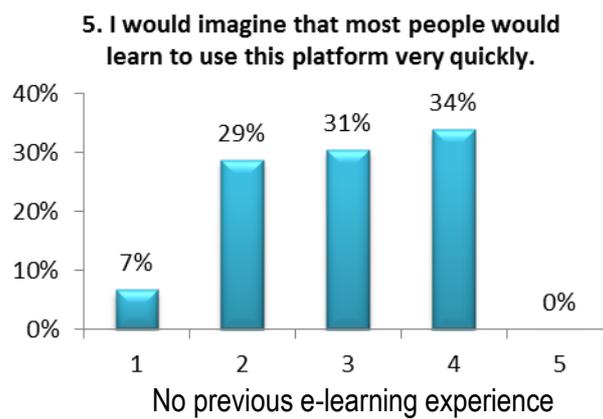
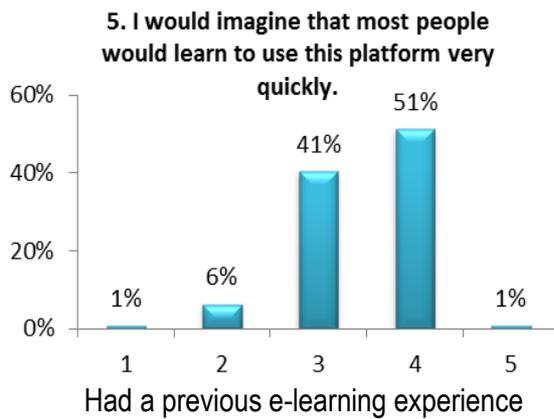
### Results: specific subscales

#### Ease and complexity of the system

Derived from items of the SUS subscale "Ease and complexity of the system". A comparison of the responses obtained in the two items can be seen below.

Item 5: I would imagine that most people would learn to use this platform quickly





The qualitative data analysis substantially confirms the findings of the questionnaire: a majority of the users stated that most people would learn to use this platform very quickly, thus they found the usage of the module easy enough to be learned by other people as well.

1. **Learnability** (“The platform presents itself in a very attractive way” ?”Have to look for assistance most times when I use this software”)

Among the relevant qualitative data collected, the user feeling of being able to easily learn the software utilization is represented by various comments on the attractiveness and the design of the platform: some users stated that the structure of the platform was clear and comprehensible and that it gave the possibility to follow each own rhythm, so it was easy to learn where and when they wanted; moreover, the platform is organized to be consulted in a personalized way, according to some users.

2. **Efficiency** (“The instructions and prompts are helpful “, “I sometimes don't know what to do next with this platform”).

Qualitative data analyzed confirm that a majority of the sample found the platform easy to use and full of relevant prompts. Many comments stated that the instructions provided in the platform are clear and comprehensible. In order to facilitate learning, many users appreciated that you could find a list of learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter, a recap of each chapter, and an easily accessible glossary.

3. **Helpfulness** (“I keep having to go back to look at the guides”. “I can understand and act on the information provided by this platform”. “There is too much to read before you can use the platform”)

The qualitative data analyzed seems to confirm the results obtained from the questionnaire: a majority users stated that the informations provided was clear and comprehensible. Among the critical issues, some users stated that the guide was too long to read.

4. **Affect** “The way that platform information is presented is clear and understandable” “Working with this platform is mentally stimulating”)



Majority of the users stated that the informations presented were clear and comprehensible. Some users cited a too technical language, especially in the introductory guides, as a critical issue.

5. **Control** (“The organization of the menus seems quite logical”, “There have been times in using this software when I have felt quite tense”).

Qualitative data collected relevant to this subscale substantially confirms that many users found the organization of the platform logical and coherent. Also, the easiness in navigating the menu was stressed as a positive point by many users.

### In a nutshell

The evaluation results of demonstrate that the overall usability score obtained is satisfactory and indicates that the platform is perceived as having a good usability by the tested sample.

Slight differences were found between the subgroups analyzed: as expected, students and persons aged less than 30 years old found the platform in the overall more usable. No differences were found between persons aged less than 30 years old and persons less than 40 years old.

A difference in the mean global usability score was found also between persons that already had an experience with e-learning platforms and persons who didn't, even though this difference is not as big as one might have expected: this finding may indicate that the platform revealed itself as usable and easy, independently of previous experience of the users.

Regarding the different subscales analyzed, it is clear from the results that, as stated before, younger users and users who had previous experience with an e-learning platform need less training and support in going through the modules. These findings may indicate the need of providing more assistance and support to social workers that have less experience with personal computers, when granting them access to the platform.

Moreover, the users with more than 40 years old, social workers, and with no previous experience with an e-learning platform found more difficult to comprehend the information presented, compared to the other subgroups, and they resulted more nervous and less confident in their ability to learn the usage of the platform. Nonetheless, the users older than 40 years old found the platform more mentally stimulating than the users aged less than 30 years old: this result indicates that they may exhibit more commitment to the e-learning platform, thus overcoming some of the difficulties found.

All the analyzed subgroups found the platform attractive, largely due to the multimediality of the modules (images, interactive exercises, videos). The attractiveness of the platform seems to be acknowledged by a large majority of the users, and this finding seems particularly important since is a relevant factor in the literature on usability.



## AGID Consortium



**La Fondation A.P.E.M.H.** (Association de Parents d'Enfants Mentalement Handicapés) is a national NGO working in Luxembourg for the support of people with intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities and dual diagnosis. The principal aim of the association is to improve the quality of life of their client groups and to ensure their social and vocational inclusion. A.P.E.M.H. has numerous services in various areas, such as residences, educational support structures to enable people to live in the community, sheltered workshops and a training centre -UFEP- for professionals in the field.

[www.apemh.lu](http://www.apemh.lu)



**University of Vienna** is the largest teaching and research institution in Austria. The project partner will be the department of clinical psychology, which has a special focus on research topics in the field of intellectual disability and ageing. The partner has a high competence in designing and offering training courses, in designing research and evaluation, and in dissemination activities (publications and conferences). The partner organisation has broad experience in jointly developing curricula and training modules especially in the context of EC funded projects.

[www.univie.ac.at](http://www.univie.ac.at)



**ARFIE**- Association de Recherche et de Formation sur l'Insertion en Europe brings together at European level various partners involved in the care and support of disabled people, associations of and for disabled people, training bodies, researchers and professionals all working in initial and continuing training; ARFIE is a member of the European Disability Forum and has been organizing training modules for professionals working with people with disabilities. It has also held conferences and issued reports on various important issues in the disability sector. The role of ARFIE will mostly focus on dissemination of the project outcomes through its European network (EDF and Inclusion Europe). ARFIE could also promote regional surveys and targeted studies through members not directly involved. ARFIE will play an active role during the project Final Conference through direct dissemination among its members.

[www.arfie.info](http://www.arfie.info)



**CADIAI** (Cooperativa Assistenza Domiciliare Infermi Anziani Infanzia) is a social cooperative and has been operating in the services to disabled people as a managing agency of services. It has also assisted many persons in the difficult transition to aging. CADIAI has created a work group called "Disabled become Old" composed of an expert in training process, a pedagogue and two researchers of the University of the Studies of Bologna. CADIAI operates since its foundation (1974) in the area of the services to the elderly, in domiciliary, semi residential and residential services.

[www.cadiai.it](http://www.cadiai.it)



**Association "Les Genêts d'Or"** was created to promote the establishment of structures to meet the needs of rural families in the department of Finistère (France). Its statutes define its purpose by the recognition, hospitality, support and integration of persons with disabilities and dependent people. It currently manages 24 properties, hosting over 1500 people and conducts studies on the ageing of the population. It also provides individual responses and / or group best suited to peculiar situations.

[www.lesgenetsdor.org](http://www.lesgenetsdor.org)



**ZONNELIED vzw** is a national NGO working in Belgium for the support of people with an intellectual disability, multiple disabilities and dual diagnosis. The principal aim of the association is to improve the quality of life of their client groups. They have numerous services in various areas, such as residences, day care center, supported employment. ZONNELIED vzw has been working for 30 years as a service provider (home, work, leisure, education, health, support ...) and has been faced with the growing challenge of aging of people with disabilities.

[www.zonneliedvzw.be](http://www.zonneliedvzw.be)



**De Montfort University** is based in Leicester, in the heart of England and consists of four Faculties - Health and Life Sciences, Business and Law, Technology and Art, Design and Humanities. The four faculties offer 400 diverse undergraduate and postgraduate subjects, with full-time, part-time and distance learning options offering much flexibility. The university's pioneering research is driven by over 1,000 research students and supported by 500 staff.

[www.dmu.ac.uk](http://www.dmu.ac.uk)



Gefördert aus den Mitteln des Fonds Gesundes Österreich

Gesundheit Österreich  
GmbH



Fonds Gesundes  
Österreich

Additionally the project has been co-financed in Austria by the "Fonds Gesundes Österreich".

[www.fgoe.org](http://www.fgoe.org)

