Інформаційні та комунікаційні технології в Internet та World Wide Web

Colour as a tool of leading users to particular actions on websites

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Abstract – The issue of leading users to making partucular actions by pressing specified buttons on websites is discussed. On the base of visual flow theory and researching of two types of online services in english, german, polish and russian languages the optimal parameters of action buttons were defined.

Key words – website, online shops, classifieds services, human-computer interface, visual flow, focus point, action button, leading of users, usability, colour.

Tools of interaction with users in web. Main task of most websites is not just to share some information or offer services, but to lead a user to make a define action or a decision. In terms of user interface it usually means to press a particular button. Since the button should attract attention among other webpage elements and don't be frightening.

Users' eyes always move by some way on the webpage, that is called visual flow. For websites with european languages that way always directs from top and left to bottom and right. Such situation can be broken by focus points – places that tie users' looks besides their wish. Creation of a focus point is possible by making outstanding background colour, size, shapes or leaving more free space around element. It's not worth to experiment with shape and size of a button, because users want to press it only when it looks like a physical button. So using a link instead of a button is a bad idea.

Fig.1 Putting an action button according and against visual flow

On the right example (fig. 1) a button brokes visual flow by its placement and bright colour, on the left users are invited to read the text above the button first.

The issue is which colour works well? Is button's colour depands on website topic? Is there a link between website language, that as known has a great influence on mentality, and button's colour?

The research of the most popular websites in two fields and in four languages was made to work on the issues. The first field is online-shops of electonics and home appliances. For such services is very important to lead users to pressing a 'BUY' button. The second field

is a classifieds service. For such type of service is necessary to have plenty of content, therefor their task is to lead users to press 'POST AD' button.

'BUY' and 'POST AD' buttons' colours on the example of successful web interfaces. Generally the theory of visual flow and focus points is well applied on online shops and very pure on classifieds services. The worse situation in on german and polish classifieds, where often it takes a time to find out how to post something. Supposably, the source of such situation is lacking in money. In avarage selling business uses more agressive colour politics compare to advertising. Red, orange, blue, green, yellow are the most frequently used colours for action buttons (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Statistics in persentage of using background colours on online shops (S) and classified services (C) with different languages

Colour	English		German		Polish		Russian	
	S	C	S	C	S	C	S	C
orange	50	40	-	-	20	15	20	25
yellow	8	20	20	40	7	15	-	-
blue	7	10	20	30	30	15	10	30
green	25	10	-	15	8	15	10	25
black	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-
grey	-	-	-	15	-	15	-	5
pink	-	-	-	-	5	10	10	-
red	20	20	40	-	25	15	50	10

Red colour is applyed for 'BUY' buttons in 50% cases on russian language websites and in 40% on german language ones. Polish language shops prefer blue (40%), but there are still many red buttons (30%). And finally, some about 60% of English language "BUY" buttons are orange. Possibly it is due to amazon.com. It is interesting, that for german version of there website Amazon have used yellow colour. However, yellow is more popular in German advertising (50%). Russian advertising is also more calm and prefer mainly blue or green and orange. It was impossible to make any conclusions about polish classifieds services buttons, because there are in equal proportions all possible colours. In english advertising as in selling a preferable colour is orange (40%).

Conclusions. However orange is not so popular on other language websites as on english ones, it is also frequently used (30% of all websites). Since, an orange action button is a universal tool. However on german services orange is used only by foreign companies, local ones prefer red or yellow. It is possible to apply more aggressive colours on german and russian online shops, like red or even black, but they should be avoided in english versions. Blue colour is the one, which used in both fields with all languages and its average share is 20%.

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