Abstract

Although usability has earned a lot of attention during the last decade, the focus has mainly been on usability as a part of the system development process. When the product is delivered end-user training has become essential for the usefulness of software to companies. More than often some kind of instruction is required in order for a user to be able to use a software tool. This situation gives reason to investigate whether usability is influenced by training.

The users’ perception of control of the piece of software is positively correlated with training, as is the users’ perception of affect. Although, it can not be shown that subjectively perceived usability is positively correlated to training.

However, the results show that usability is influenced by training in precisely those aspects that is easily linked to contemporary ideas within the field of instructional design. Affect and control can be linked to the transfer of training and to self-efficiacy respectively. There can be found no explanation from the formal evaluations. In combination with interviews it is concluded that usability is positively correlated to training.

These contradictive conclusions gives reason to doubt the evaluative instrument, or the theory on which that instrument and recent definitions of usability build.

The study undertaken consists of ten users evaluating a word processor with the Software Usability Measurement Inventory, SUMI. Evaluations were made before, after and two weeks after the training period. As control group the standardisation database for SUMI were used.
The effect of end-user instruction on usability