

Winner of the SIGCHI Finland thesis competition 2019

Receiver: Zhifa Chen, Aalto University, School of Arts, Design & Architecture
Collaborative and Industrial Design (CoID), Department of Design

Title: Co-designing a Chatbot for and with Refugees and Migrants

The thesis explores how can a co-design approach contribute to designing a chatbot supporting social integration within the context of refugees and migrants. The topic is current and important, and has a clear societal impact. Conversational user interfaces are increasingly becoming an important part of digital services and can be utilised in aiding in different kinds of situations. The thesis consists of theoretical, methodical and practical contributions. In addition, limitations, methodical validity and reliability of the study, as well as the practical challenges in the design and implementation work are presented clearly and analytically.

The thesis answers to the research problem with vast and carefully scoped background literature indicating an in-depth understanding of the research domain, as well as with thorough empirical study with over 70 participants. The strength of the study lies especially in the integrated plethora of methods and in the practical execution. The thesis also functions as an excellent example of carefully conducted co-design process of a current topic. The conversational user interface as a main contribution of the study is applicable also to other countries. Overall, the thesis is logical by its structure, the language and illustrations are motivational and pleasant. In summary, the thesis meets the criteria of an exceptionally meritorious thesis creating both scientific and practical knowledge.

The assessments of the submitted theses and the selection of the winners were done by a panel of experts, including both researchers and practitioners in the HCI field. The competition was organised by SIGCHI Finland, sponsored by Codemen and coordinated by Johanna Silvennoinen. The members of the panel were:

- Leena Arhippainen, University of Oulu
- Jussi Jokinen, Aalto University
- Satu Jumisko-Pyykkö, Vincit
- Johanna Kaipio, Aalto University
- Antti Pirhonen, University of Jyväskylä
- Päivi Majaranta, Tampere University
- Roope Raisamo, Tampere University
- Heli Väättäjä, Tampere University
- Annika Wolff, LUT University

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Honourable mention in the SIGCHI Finland thesis competition 2019

Receiver: Minja Axelsson, Aalto University, School of Science,
Degree Programme in Information Networks

Title: Designing an InMoov Robot to Teach Assistive Sign Language to Children with Autism

The thesis presents a framework for designing social robots and an InMoov Robot to teach assistive sign language to children with autism. The design framework is of great interest and can be possibly utilised in practice. Social robots in interaction design is a current topic, possessing various different application possibilities. This thesis contributes on several levels by providing knowledge of how to design for assistive sign language, explicating the possibilities of utilising social robots in teaching assistive sign language to children with autism, and with a theoretical design framework of the factors to be acknowledged in designing social robots.

The experimental design and the procedure of the experiment with autistic children, in collaboration with experts, is skilfully conducted and clearly explicated. The scientific content of the thesis is valid and the background literature addressed indicates an in-depth understanding of the research topic. The results are clearly communicated and are of importance in understanding the possibilities of utilising social robots in teaching assistive sign language to children. The structure of the thesis is logical and the scientific language utilised is competent. In summary, the thesis meets the criteria of an excellent thesis creating both scientific and practical knowledge.

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