Eye Tracking Moodle: How to improve its usability and what do students really see?

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Project Report

The presentation at MoodleMoot UK 2011 is about two eye tracking case studies, which I have conducted to investigate students' viewing behaviour within Moodle.

The most recent test was about to deduce usability issues aiming to optimize Moodle's user interface. By eye tracking not only students' navigation paths and visual preferences can be recorded, but also redundant as well as inefficient areas can be detected. Within this investigation 87 usability issues could be revealed. These findings were used by the Moodle development team of Vienna University of Technology (Teaching Support Center) to elaborate 6 major usability improvements addressing navigation, overview, accessibility as well as aesthetic enhancements of TUWEL, our Moodle installation.

The second part of my presentation outlines results of another eye tracking case study that has been conducted to investigate students' visual scanning during the learning process itself. The study addressed objectives to find components that highly affect exploration and learning within Moodle's pages.

I intend to present strategies as well as 'tips&tricks' that help teachers producing educational material that is eye-catching and facilitates student's learning process within Moodle. Furthermore useful recommendations will be given to Moodle service providers and developers how to implement and optimize their Moodle platforms or extensions from visual point of view.

The basic question that I try to answer is: *How do students actually 'see' and work with Moodle?*

My session is organised in practical point of view as giving answers to the following questions:

- ✓ How do users navigate within Moodle?
- ✓ Where do they start their searching processes during certain tasks?
- ✓ How do learners behave immediately after accessing single pages of the learning environment?
- ✓ Which type of elements do they fixate first?
- ✓ What components are among the highest fixated?
- ✓ What elements are ignored?
- ✓ Which usability issues could be found by eye tracking?
- ✓ How can I create eye-catching teaching material?
- ✓ Where can be blocks and features optimally positioned?

etc.

Which sector is the presentation about? FE, HE, schools, commercial

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