



COMPU MOOR SOLUTIONS PROJECT



SCHOOL OF INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT & SYSTEMS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Project Description & Organizational Analysis

Patrick Riley
InfoSys 208A
Professor Yale Braunstein
2.09.04



SCHOOL OF INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT & SYSTEMS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Project Description

In collaboration with a project for InfoSys 214 (Professor Nancy Van House's Usability Course), I will be observing the behavior of elderly individuals using computers, and producing an appropriate and valuable web resource to guide new users with the transition into the use of the computer and assist previous users with the most common troubleshooting inquiries based on my observations.

In order to adequately predict and diagnosis the common problems that elderly computer users run into, CompuMoor Solutions Project (CSP) will first spend a significant amount of time observing and interpreting the actions of the users at both public and private locations in the Rossmoor retirement community. The Rossmoor retirement community requires its residents to be 55 years and older, yet the average age of the community residents is about 72.8 years of age. The Rossmoor community provides a small, public computer lab, but there are also a number of residents who own computers in their respective homes. Therefore, both computer lab and individual household site visits will occur for this project. Ethnography and interview recall techniques will be performed exclusively in the Rossmoor retirement community, although the final project resource itself will be made available to the entire online community.

Elderly people are particularly vulnerable to computer problems and often feel alienated from the rest of the online community. Elderly people, especially those who have retired, do not have the same opportunities as others to learn about and adapt to the highly volatile computer technologies. Recognizing that some elderly people may struggle with satisfying their goals using the computer, this project will determine where frustrations come from and provide the elderly with a tool to solve them on their own. The final CSP product will be a free, user-friendly website that is designed for the elderly community's needs.



Project Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission:

At CompuMoor Solutions Project, we strive to provide user-friendly computer solutions to the common problems that occur for elderly computer users. The mission of the problem-solving website interface system for elderly people is to provide them with a tool that adjusts to their needs and provides them to tool so that they can solve their computer problems individually. With the arrival of the U.S. baby-boomers population and a high speed computer society, there is a lack of access to the information elderly people need to solve computer problems. There is also a sense of alienation in the elderly community, since many websites do not correctly design web pages to satisfy the needs of the senior citizen computer user. There is a dire need to create an elderly user-friendly assistant tool that will aid them in easily accessing troubleshooting and tutorial information resources. Through ethnography research, usability studies, and project planning, we strive to create a web tool that coordinates the users' needs of the elderly with the technology of today.

Goals:

The goals of the CompuMoor Solutions Project are to:

- Effectively research elderly users to see what their common problems are when using computers.
- Provide a rich resource that the elderly community can use despite their physical limitations and additional needs.
- Produce a web user interface that complements the desired properties of the elderly individuals.
- To teach elderly individuals how to self-manage their computer frustrations.

goals continued on page 2

- Give elderly a resource that provides lessons similar to what much of the current younger populations learn while at school or in the workplace.
- Reduce the feeling of alienation of the elderly from the rest of the computer community.
- Provide resources that both the beginner and the expert user find useful.
- Produce this assistant resource in a language that is understandable to the elderly community.
- Provide additional lessons on environmental issues, such as how to save paper during computer printing, ergonomic recommendations, such as how to position your monitor, keyboard and mouse, and when professional assistance may be required.

Objectives:

The objectives of CompuMoor Solutions Project are threefold. First, and most importantly, we must determine what the elderly community needs, where their frustrations are caused by current tutorials. We hope to spend at least 10 hours by the end of our observation and usability studies (February 25th) in both a public elderly computer lab, and in individual homes of elderly people, so that we can interpret what needs the community will have. We are expecting to have a majority of the resource content available and have performed additional usability testing on this prototype no later than March 12th. At the release of the final version, which we expect will be ready by early May 2004, we are hoping that elderly people are able to find the solutions to their problems in an average time of less than 2 minute, and learn a new computer skill or tip every month. It is also expected that after finding the solutions to their problems, elderly people will be able to solve their own problems with the clear and easy-to-use CompuMoor Solutions Project documentation individually in an average time of 3 minutes. It is our goal to provide an interface that at least 90% of all elderly people, both beginner and expert computer users, feel comfortable using. We also hope that the website will approach 500 unique users a month, and that the return rate to the website will be at least 70%.