

Office Software Usability Study Amongst Office Workers

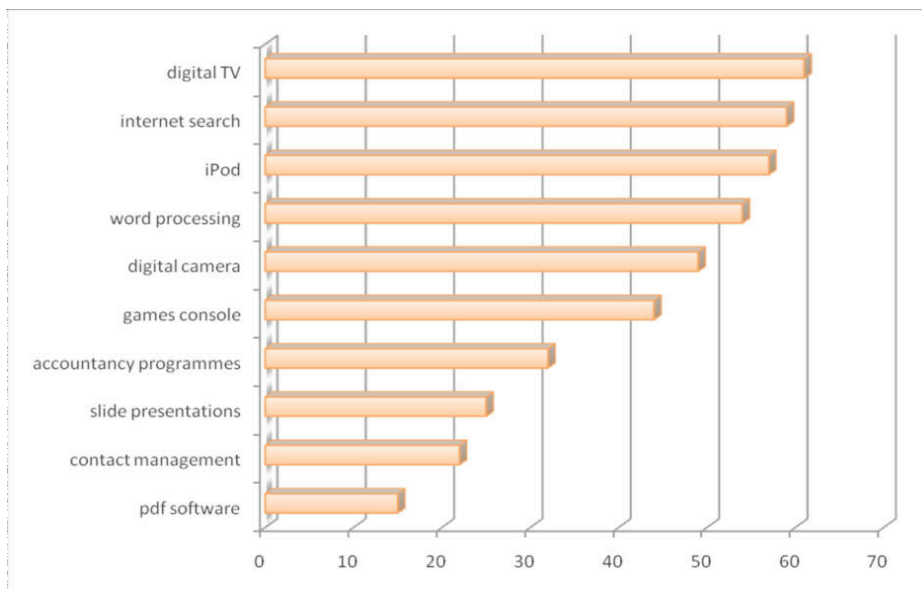
Introduction

A study was undertaken on behalf of Global Graphics by Opinion Matters/Tickbox.net in February 2009 into the usability of business software in the office. The research was conducted using a nationally representative sample of 1000 office workers in three countries: Australia, UK and USA.

Results

The majority (53%) of respondents said they found the business software difficult to use; from 53% in the USA to 77% in the UK. The two most common complaints are that software applications offer too much functionality, and a lack of training.

The research also shows that office workers are frustrated that software developers are not putting in enough effort to make sure their software is easy to use. In general, business-oriented software programs such as those used for .pdf creation, contact management, and accounting lagged severely behind the ease-of-use found in consumer applications such as Internet search, digital cameras, digital television programming (DVR), iPods and gaming consoles.



Which technologies do you find easiest to use?

Source: Global Graphics

A surprisingly high 68 percent of office workers estimate they lose up to an hour every working week as a result of business software being difficult to use, with a further 22 per cent saying they lose up to five hours every week.

The sheer number of different applications and the way different office applications work with each other is a prime reason for the losses. Office workers have to draw information from an ever-increasing range of sources, in a range of different and evolving formats. Yet 52 per cent of office workers say they would find it difficult to take pages of information from a variety of different file formats and combine them into a new document.

Conclusion

Organisations invest millions of dollars on training their employees how to use business software. Yet employees are fully capable of using Facebook, YouTube and a huge array of other online sites and tools, as well as downloading apps for their iPhones and digitizing their music – all without any training whatsoever. By making business software as easy to use as consumer technology, employees can be more efficient and less frustrated while companies benefit from lower training costs and higher productivity