



WP4 - D4.2 Report of evaluation

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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Rationale

The general idea was to evaluate the beta version of the MyLK Dashboard with real users outside the partnership in order to:

- a. confirm the MyLK approach to recording and presenting online learning reflected on the MyLK Dashboard;
- b. verify whether the dashboard functionalities are useful for the aforementioned purpose and usable as a service.

Testing procedure

Target group

The MyLK platform was designed and developed as a tool for the automatic tracking of (digital) learning of the individual learners in variety of contexts: formal, non-formal, or informal. In order to maximise the results of the testing from the initial broad target group **students, employees and unemployed** users were defined for the testing. As MyLK tracks and records online activities taken up by the user, facilitates recognition of skills and suggests further learning resources depending on declared level, it could provide meaningful support to the groups described in learning path(s) and skills acquired to the employers and other audiences.

It was defined that 15 test users is the minimum number that could provide meaningful data for the further analysis. Each partner was responsible for selecting the adequate number of test users.

Testing session set up

The recommended structure for the testing per session was defined as:

- 1 test user
- 1 researcher - “supervisor” - asking questions and assisting with the tasks
- 1 researcher observing the test users behavior and taking notes.

The test user receives a task to perform within the MyLK Dashboard. The tasks are the same for all the users. Estimated time for the session is 90 minutes. The test user needs to have a computer with installed latest version of the Chrome browser. The supervisor needs to install the MyLK plugin before the testing session is launched for the testing doesn't cover the plugin evaluation. The supervisor follows the testing scenario (Appendix 1) and the accompanying researcher fills it in.

Workflow

The testing procedure consists of the following steps:

1. Introduction from the supervisor to the test user: explanation about MyLK Dashboard and the idea of the project, introduction to the aims of the testing and explanation of the testing procedure.
2. MyLK webpage. The supervisor asks the tester to access the webpage and finds out what he/she has understood from the MyLK idea of the dashboard.

3. Ongoing observation of a testing user during which a group of testers is given the opportunity to test the MyLK dashboard under supervision, assisted by another person observing the behaviour and comments. Notes from the observation are taken according to the observation grid as a guiding document for the supervisor and assistant.
4. Post-test questionnaire. During these tasks, testers undertake a semi-directed interview in a face-to-face format. The purpose of this interview is to learn about their overall impression of the MyLK dashboard

Types of tasks

The testing procedure does not differentiate testing tasks on the type of the user. Representatives of all the three target groups are asked to perform the same actions. However, the context of each target group, the perspective, the experience and actual needs are different, thus their feedback and behaviour in the MyLK dashboard could result in the crucial findings on the usability of the service. All these 3 groups were mirrored in MyLK dashboard. Users testing the tool can declare their actual situation / status in the user profile. Such declaration does not affect MyLK dashboard functionality.

At first the test user is asked to perform the tasks without any support. If it is not possible additional clues are given by the supervisor. The extent of hints is evaluated by the assistant researcher.

Tasks for the test users:

1. Create an account (Registration)
2. Fill in your profile
3. Link skills to the occupation (in the profile)
4. Activate/de-activate the MyLK plugin
5. Observe the DLR's tracking
6. Manage your DLRs (add skills, delete, comments, etc.)
7. Request for DLR suggestions (for skills associated or not with professions)
8. Create DLRs collection
9. Allow sharing of DLR collections
10. Get in touch with other users who have shared their collections
11. Complete your CVs
12. Share your CVs with third parties

Findings and recommendations

The testing was performed by 19 test users from France, The Netherlands and Poland. The testing sessions were organised between 6.7 - 27.07.2018.

Users profile

- 58% are employed
- 37% are students
- 5% represents employers

The service proved useful for all three groups of users. However if it is to be targeted towards students it will require certain amendments in vocabulary used as well as more explanations towards special features, such as ESCO or EQF.

Industry

A variety of industries were represented and various types of professions on different levels. Generally professional background is not relevant to the general opinion about usability of the service.

Age

The users represented various age groups.

- 37% 18-24
- 26% 25-34
- 16% 45-54
- 16% 35-44
- 5% 55-64

Education

- 33% high school graduates, currently studying
- 24% hold bachelor degree
- 19% hold doctoral degree

Languages

For all of the users English is their second language. 15% declare basic level, 38% intermediate and 46% fluent level. As such the service that is currently available in English is accessible for them. Language problems were not reported as a problem however certain parts of the service require further improvements of the texts.

Use of Internet

100% of the test users uses Internet every day. So MyLK Dashboard will not affect their daily routine or provide extra online work - it can be run parallelly to their online activities.

Learning Online

Only 11% of the test users declared not to be learning online so the vast majority of 89% of the users claims to be actually learning online.

Services

The test users enumerated various services or sources of information:

- University's or company's Learning Management Systems
- Social media professional groups and topic-related discussion boards
- Video tutorials
- Professional portals, blogs and users' groups
- Popular search engines eg. Google Scholar
- Wikipedia
- Video services, such as YouTube
- Professional data basis
- Online courses available worldwide (eg. Udemy)

1. The idea of the MyLK Dashboard

The question was intended to assess whether the main MyLK site is accessible, usable and informative for three groups of users. Also it was important to learn if the MyLK idea is communicated clearly. The test users were asked to analyse the main website (dashboard landing site) and explain freely what they think the service offers for them.

The test users understood the idea of the Dashboard as a service that **“supports learning”** and allows for **“sharing experience”** (54%) as well as **“tracking online activities”** (26%) They noticed MyLK as a tool for facilitating social learning for a **“group work”** (38%) and **“sharing resources”** (46%). They also commented that MyLK is for **“supporting decision making”**, and **“create learning path”**. They also mentioned **“cv building”** and **“online portfolio”** features.

As for the audience, the test users said it is **“for everybody”**, **“for young people”** and **“for students and employees”**. However two comments noticed the discrepancy between the image of the young pupil on a main site and the actual targeting of the service (adult learners).

Recommendation

- The message evoked is clear and consistent with the intention of the MyLK authors. The design of the main website lets the users easily gain insight into MyLK rationale. Perhaps changing the image to the adult learner would make the message more coherent.

2. Creation of the account

The majority of the test users (72%) created their account without any support. 95% marked it as “easy”. 74% clicked “Get started” at first to complete the activity. There were only two questions and they concerned the password requirement.

Recommendation

- Provide clue for the password requirements.

3. Filling in the profile

Only 26% of the test users completed the task without any support however 84% marked it as easy in the end of the task. 74% clicked “fill in the profile” at first while the rest of the test users clicked “pop-up” and “current occupation”. Many comments and questions appeared after the task.

Recommendations

- As assistance was needed for the majority of test users it is necessary to improve this feature so that it is easier for the users from the beginning. However it is easy to learn so only minor improvements are necessary.
- It is difficult to fill in the profile with occupations for the students so an alternative possibility should be also made to help define subject areas and professional/ educational/ study domains.
- The users should be able to fill in the profile any time.
- A clear “saving” option should be made available as the users fear of losing the data. The current “+” was reported as misleading.
- The pre-defined list of occupations might be difficult to use for positions that are broadly defined (eg. IT specialist). Also the list was reported as long and difficult to handle. Even for intermediate English speakers the list of professions in English (ESCO database) proved difficult in some cases, which can be especially the case for the students and non-native English speakers, as the translation or local names for the occupations may vary. Perhaps a possibility to type in user’s option is advisable.
- Setting up exact daily dates was reported as difficult, especially for the users with long/ not recent history of employment or education so optional date set up would be useful.
- “Non work interests” requires changing to correspond with “Interests” in the later part of the service.

4. Estimate the level of skills in the profile

For both >>Finding the option<< and >>the estimation<< 79% clicked respectively at “the name of the occupation” and “I want to enhance this skill”. 21% clicked on various other options. This task was done without any support by 68% and for 11% it was impossible to do without supervisor’s help. For 37% the task was perceived as “hard”. Users did a lot of random clicking to find out what was possible on the site.

Recommendations

- This was one of the first tasks related to the idea of MyLK's service - estimation of skills so it is important to make sure it is self-explaining to the users that will work without any assistance.
- EQF and ESCO seem not to be a commonly known systems, so it requires further explanation if MyLK is to connect to that concept. It is especially hard for the students.
- Academic caps as a symbol for skills estimation may be misleading for those not possessing academic degree. Their gray colour suggest inactivity and it was not obvious for the users that they are clickable. Also there were doubts what the caps actually assess (current or wanted level). So the concept of the cap needs to be upgraded, perhaps with the clues or changing colours so that the users receive adequate support.

5. Activation and de-activation of the MyLK plugin

The plugin was tested on Mac OS and Windows Chrome browsers. There was only one remark about the system which didn't concur with other Mac OS users so it is not possible conclude that it is system-dependent error.

42% clicked the MyLK logo, 32% of the users clicked >>switched on/off<< and 21% >>Get plugin<< at first while performing this task. Only 26% did the task without any support while 16% were not able to do it without support. In some tests the plugin activation required re-starting the browser.

37% found the colours not intuitive enough. 58% perceived this task as hard.

Recommendations

- The users' first clicks were divided into 3 groups so it is clear that the activation of the plugin is not obvious to them. Restarting the browser and using a new tab could make it additionally difficult. Some people reported that they are not used to the plugins despite everyday use of the Internet so for sure extra instruction about the plugin installation and configuration would be beneficial.
- The colours and design of the plugin on the browser's bar (gray and colour after activation) require adaptation as the logo is not well visible for some users. The plugin is important for it needs to be activated during learning session.

6. Observation of the Digital Learning Resources' tracking

Only 16% of the test users did this task without any support although 74% found this task easy.

Recommendations

- Explanation about the time required for the DLR to be tracked, information about the duration of the DLRs storage and access to the delete function are essential for the users to receive before getting into DLRs tracking. The procedure was regarded as "easy" after the task but surely extra support is required eg. in a form of hints.

- The tracking was reported to work unreliably eg. there were delays with tracking and resources needed to be added manually. Manual handling was perceived as easy.
- The pop-up is visible for too short a time, and cannot be read, so information about the successful tracking and adding to the user's wall needs to be visible for a longer period of time, perhaps to be closed by the users.

7. Managing DLRs (add skills, delete, comments, etc.)

50% of the test users clicked >>setting icon<< at first. The rest of the users tried out different options (eg. comments, delete, learning outcomes). 74% of the test users did the task with the support of the supervisor. However 89% test user found this activity easy after the task and some features were natural to them (eg. comments)

Recommendations

- As many questions about delete, saving and search for DLRs emerged during testing it is important to provide the users with extra information about the idea of managing the DLRs as for some it was unclear what is possible.
- The relationship between the skills suggestions and the DLRs is not clear and as an important feature requires further explanation to the users .
- Clear saving option is necessary so that the users are sure that their DLRs are preserved.
- Stars were well-received as a assessment tool.

8. Making request for DLR suggestions (for skills associated or not with professions)

42% of the test users clicked on the learning suggestion button while 37% title of the occupation at first to complete the task. 11% clicked skill linked and another 11% selected various other options. 79% needed some support to complete the task however also 79% regarded this task as easy.

Recommendations

- Users found occupations difficult to handle in contrast with the skills, especially students
- Learning suggestions generated enthusiasm but were also difficult to understand. It is important to clarify what kind of suggestions and for what kind of items (occupations or skills) are provided by MyLK.

9. Collecting DLR

11% clicked on >>my profile<< and 47% >>hamburger menu<< however 42% clicked on various options (my collections, learning suggestions, add button, all DLRs). 58% did this task with a support from a supervisor. However 74% assessed this task as easy. 82% stated that collecting is a very useful functionality.

Recommendations

- High percentage of random clicks can suggest that collecting DLR is not intuitive enough.

- EQF is not a familiar concept for everybody, even for those with academic background. Assessing DLRs against EQF requires significant knowledge that is surely beyond an average user.
- There were doubts about the subject of the assessment with academic caps eg. actual level of skills or wanted level of skills. It is important to clarify that issue as it confuses the users but it is also important for MyLK rationale.
- Users were also confused but positively surprised by drag-and-drop of the resources. As it is the first time it appears in the system the users were very enthusiastic. Perhaps it is possible also to introduce this functionality into other parts of the service.
- It is important to work out the names of the functionalities so that they are coherent with the content (eg. linked statements, link occupation)

10. Sharing of DLR collections

56% clicked on the sharing icon at first to complete the task while 33% clicked on the title of the collection. 71% did this task without any support and 86% found this task easy.

Recommendations

- It is important to provide information about the sharing rules - is it private or public, how it can be restricted or expanded, is it automatic etc. as the users want to have a control over their collections.
- Save and delete needs to be revised as they are often confused

11. Getting in touch with other users

Although 50% clicked on the hamburger menu to complete the task the other clicks varied significantly (share, user's wall, collections, letter icon). Only 8% of the users didn't need any support and 31% required significant support to complete the task. For 56% the task was however easy in the end.

Recommendations

- Social networking is an important feature for most services nowadays so it is important that this functionality is provided for MyLK users to a high standard
- It needs to be communicated clearly if the users were connected
- There was a lot of confusion about the visibility of others' collection on the users' wall so it is important to work out the clear way to display shared and added collections
- Other channels of communications for the users, such as chat rooms and messages could be useful if the site is to focus on collaboration as well

12. Completion of the CV

61% clicked on my profile while 17% selected an arrow and hamburger menu in search for a CV. 92% did this task without any support and 83% assessed this functionality as easy.

Recommendations

- Europass connection is important however the users seem not to be familiar with this format
- Import option requires further explanation

- Again assessment with EQF standard may be difficult for the average user. None of the test users assess the qualifications with EQF for the testing purposes.
- There were also questions about data security as uploading a CV involves sharing of personal data, so some GDPR disclaimer is important to implement for the whole service

13. Share CV

69% clicked on share cv to complete this task. 92% of the users were able to do it without any support. 88% found this task easy.

Recommendations

- Similarly to other social networking functions the users were interested in learning more about sharing options (to whom? how to notify? what the recipient can see?) so it is crucial to implement more detailed support for that functionality

General recommendations and closing remarks

The test users completed also a post-test satisfaction questionnaire. The service was generally perceived as useful and interesting for the test users of various backgrounds. In general 67% of the test users were interested in using MyLK. 65% of the respondents were positive that MyLK could help to showcase skills and experiences achieved in the informal or/and non-formal setting. 89% understood MyLK usefulness for following and managing informal and non-formal learning resources. 61% understood MyLK usefulness and interest in providing advice about changing or finding a new job. 28% were not sure about the good visibility to recruiters in my job search while 39% were rather positive about that feature. As such the service is regarded more to support personal learning than professional life towards job recruitment.

72% thought it was rather easy to MyLK dashboard (interface, navigation, ergonomics, user help) but 41% were not sure how to use the MyLK Dashboard and only 37% were rather sure how to use it. 50% thought it was complicated to manage learning resources with the MyLK Dashboard and only 33% thought it was rather easy. 83% thought that more time is needed to understand the use and particularly its interface functions. That is consistent with the the overall impression that the beta version of the service requires more development towards user experience and online support for the users (eg. elaborated tutorials, hints, text-overs etc.)

82% were sure that the MyLK Dashboard can offer additional functions to suit the user's needs, so the service is perceived as an added value to the existing portals.