

Professional manuals for interactive play devices

Public summary

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Introduction

Yalp Lappset B.V. (Yalp) has been designing and selling interactive play devices for 17 years. Now that the interactive play devices are sold all over the world, a lack of documentation on their installation process arises. This lack causes: the Yalp installation team to fly all over the world, wrongly installed products, and an overload of frequently asked questions by international clients.

The research question is stated as follows: *How can the manuals of Yalp's six interactives be upgraded systematically to improve the service provided to the customers before, during, and after the buying process?*

There are two design-inputs: First, a literature research clarifies the international regulations and will offer scientific guidelines for the visualization of information. Second, an information landscape will be created to define the (potential) function of the manuals within Yalp's sales process. These inputs will be used to create the design. At the end of the research the design and the process will be assessed.

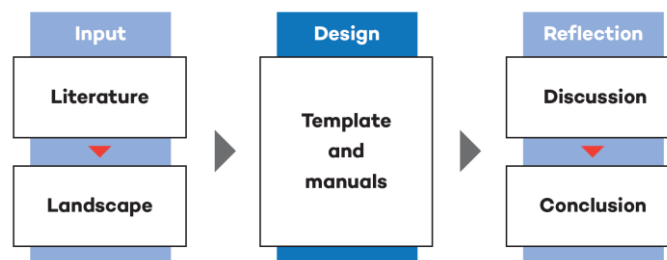


Figure 1 - Graphic representation of the structure of the report.

Input

Literature research

The literature research exists of three parts. The first part shows that the IEC standard is the most recent standard that prescribes international *theoretical* guidelines for creating an installation manual. It covers rules for: preparations, authors, contents, and warnings. The second part gives guidelines towards *practically* designing a manual. It explains four design principles: scale, visual hierarchy, balance, and contrast. Which all help making a clear distinction between different elements in a visual. The third part is about user perception. This part gives guidelines for the correct design of manuals, based on the idea that humans are “machines” that follow certain “rules”. It discusses: The Gestalt Principles, the aim and use of manuals, storytelling, and visual structuring. The literature research gives guidelines that do always work in design but also shows that designers may deviate based on context, aim, or audience.

Information landscape

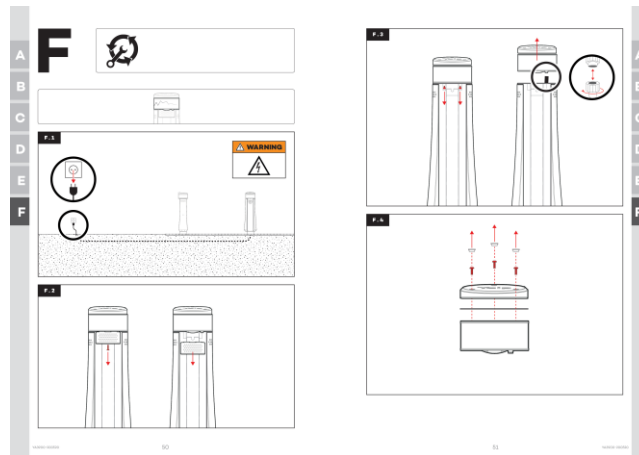


Figure 3 - All elements are based on object styles.

Creating the content of the manuals is done by combining different types of input: on-site installations, already existing installation documentation, visits to Yalp, and meetings with designers of the interactives.

Reflection

The end of the research discusses the implementation of literature in practice. All design principles were of a certain use for the design of the manuals, however not all could be taken into account *always*. A survey has been conducted, it shows the relevance and pitfalls of certain Gestalt principles and is used as a guideline for the design of complex and ambiguous installation steps.

The biggest challenge in this process has been to merge all the inputs into relevant and correct manuals. This directly implies the scientific relevance of this research: the connection between theory and practice; the wide variety of examples and the practical reflection on literature makes the literature more understandable and useful for future research and designs.

Concludingly, the final design does update the current manuals in a systematic way. Even though the design is never fully done, the overall outcome is beneficial to Yalp's service towards clients in the sales process.