

HCI in Spain

J. Abascal¹ and J. Lorés²

¹Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea. Informatika Fakultatea.

Manuel Lardizabal 1, E-20018 Donostia. Spain

julio@si.ehu.es

²Escola Universitària Politècnica

Universitat de Lleida. Spain

jesus@eup.udl.es

Abstract: Human-Computer Interaction field in Spain has experienced a great expansion in the last few years, even if this happened with some delay in comparison with neighbour countries. This paper analyses the reasons for this situation. The efforts made by universities to include Human-Computer Interaction topics in Informatics curricula, and by industry to incorporate usability and human centred design in its strategies, are also discussed.

Keywords: Spanish activities in HCI

1 The university

Spanish Universities have faced a long process to renew university curricula. Informatics Engineering has also recently modernized its structures, but without including Human-Computer Interaction or Interface Design issues as compulsory topics. In the last decade, many Spanish universities have addressed this lack by proposing optional courses covering diverse aspects of this field. The result is a broad variety of proposals in the diverse universities ranging from one or two general courses in HCI (EHU [JA2]...) to a set of choices that completes something similar to a specialization (UCLM [JA3]). Nevertheless, some issues related to the interaction with the user are scattered in many pre-existing topics such as Computer Graphics, Artificial Intelligence, Voice and Image Processing, etc.

2 The industry

It can be said that Spanish software industry is more directed to the production of customer tailored applications than to the of-the-self market. This means that usability issues are not critical to acquire an advantageous position in the market. Nevertheless, the most dynamic industries have discovered the need for usability oriented design procedures in order to enhance user satisfaction and productivity. This is also true for many institutional applications used directly by citizens (to pay taxes, for instance): good usability features enhance acceptability by the user and provide economical benefits for the government. In this connection, CADIUS, a Spanish association of industries interested in Usability, can be mentioned. (<http://www.cadius.org>).

3 The AIPO association

AIPO stands for *Asociación de Interacción Persona-Computador*, that is, Association for Human Computer Interaction. Even if most of its members

¹ Julio Abascal is the Spanish representative on IFIP Technical Committee 13 "Human-Computer Interaction", since 1991.

² Jesús Lorés is the founder chairperson of the Association for Human-Computer Interaction AIPO. [JA1]

are Spanish, the association does not make any geographical prescription because AIPO aims to be open to people from Ibero-American countries (Spanish and Portuguese speaking people both in Europe and Latin America). This association was created in November 1999 and since then has attracted a large number of people, mostly from the University. Among its aims, the intention to establish a Spanish speaking HCI community and to provide academics and professionals with relevant materials for teaching, training and applying Human Computer Interaction design techniques, can be underlined. The AIPO's web portal (in Spanish) hosted by the University of Lleida, has received thousands of visits (<http://www.aipo.es>). One of the key services provided is material for teaching consisting of an e-book (Lorés, 2001), slides and videos.

Since 2000, AIPO ha annually organised a conference on HCI called INTERACCIÓN. The first conferences were hosted in Granada³ (2000), Salamanca⁴ (2001) and Madrid⁵ (2002). Subsequent conferences will be hosted in Vigo⁶ (2003) and Lleida⁷ (2004). Attendance has progressively increased and both the quality and the quantity of the presented papers are very much improved.

3.2 AIPO Challenges for the future

The most important challenges for AIPO are

- * To enhance communication and collaboration between Spanish HCI industry and academia.
- * To collaborate with other similar associations in the Mediterranean area and Latin America.
- * To promote HCI related studies in the Spanish University and to produce good materials for teaching, training and applying HCI.

References

- (Abascal et al., 2001) J. Abascal, I. Aedo, J.J. Cañas, M. Gea, J. Lorés, M. Ortega, P. Valero, M. Vélez: Un corpus docente virtual, común y ubicuo en I.P.O. Interacción 2001, Salamanca. En: Abascal J., García F.J. y Gil A. (Editores) "Interacción 2001. 2º Congreso de Interacción Persona Ordenador". Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2001. ISBN: 84-7800-874-8. Pp. 173-183
- (Lorés et al., 2000) J. Lorés (editor), J. Abascal, J. J. Cañas, I. Aedo, M. Gea, M. Ortega, L. A. Ureña, P. M. Valero, M. Vélez (contributors). Towards a common & free spanish curricula contents of HCI in Internet using cooperative design. NordiCHI Workshop on HCI Education. Stockholm, Sweden. October 2000.
- (Lorés et al., 2001) J. Lorés, J. Abascal, J. J. Cañas, I. Aedo, M. Gea, M. Ortega, L. A. Ureña, P. M. Valero, M. Vélez. HCI Curricula in Spain. SHE'2000. Puertollano (Spain), 1999. In M. Ortega & J. Bravo (Eds.) "Computers and Education. Towards an Interconnected Society". Kluwer Academic Publishers. 2001. ISBN: 0-7923-7188-7. Pp. 227-234.
- (Lorés, 2001) J. Lorés (ed.): Introducción a la Interacción Persona-Ordenador. AIPO. Lleida, 2001. ISBN84-607-2255-4.

³ <http://giig.ugr.es/interaccion2000/>

⁴ <http://www3.usal.es/interaccion2001/>

⁵ <http://www.dei.inf.uc3m.es/ipo2002>

⁶ <http://suido.lsi.uvigo.es/i2003/>

⁷ <http://griho.udl.es/Int2004>