A Corporate Style Guide that Includes Domain Knowledge

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Abstract

Different professions adopt their own language such that the semantics involves elements very specific to their domain. System developers approaching users in a new domain often experience initial difficulties when trying to understand what takes place at work. Since most software developers also lack knowledge of human-computer interaction (HCI), we have been investigating means of transferring domain and HCI knowledge to developers in a convenient form. A domain specific style guide could be a worthy framework for the development of a high-level structure of interface elements and guidelines, including domain knowledge. Such a style guide is therefore suggested as a practical form for packaging domain and HCI knowledge for non-specialists in these areas. Anticipated benefits are enhanced application quality, usability, efficiency and acceptance while the communication between software developers and intended users improves. The speed of application development could also increase.

This paper summarises a case in which a medical style guide was developed, and describes in more detail the work procedure utilised in the development of a corporate style guide for the tax-handling domain. Finally, suggestions on style guide development conditions are presented based on experiences from the establishment of the style guide in an organisation.