



D3.2

Usability Report

Document information

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Supplemental material is available online:

- 1: CLARIN old website usability testing report
- 2: CLARIN new website usability testing report
- 3: Virtual Language Observatory testing report
- 4: Federated Content Search usability testing report
- 5: CLARIN website's use cases report
- 6: Usability workshop summary
- 7: Questionnaire, Materials and Outline for Workshop Participants

1 Executive Summary

This report describes the work conducted and the results obtained in the context of Task 3.3.3: Usability Testing and Guided Tour - the usability testing of the central CLARIN website and the web-based services offered there. The purpose of this task was to assess the CLARIN website and key online services such as the Virtual Language Observatory, Federated Content Search and the Discovery Service from the user's perspective. The results have been used to inform the CLARIN Web Team on necessary or desirable improvements.

The work reported was mainly carried out by the seconded persons at the Center of Estonian Language Resources (CELR, a CLARIN partner) in close cooperation with CLARIN's Office.

This document contains an Introduction (Section 2) with a summary of the steps taken. Results (Section 3) summarizes the test results for the various aspects of the website that underwent testing, and the recommendations delivered. Some concluding remarks and an outlook into next stages of the work on usability are presented in Section 4.

All the testing materials are available via the supplemental material page of CLARIN-PLUS at: <https://www.clarin.eu/content/clarin-plus-supplemental-material>.

A thorough assessment was conducted for the usability of the version of the CLARIN website that was up and running at the start of the CLARIN-PLUS project, as well as the main services offered via the website. The aim of the assessment was to provide a basis for a redesign of the website, in accordance with the framework for usability described in deliverable [CLARINPLUS-D3.1] (Human Interface Guidelines), and with the goal to improve the ease of access for the various categories of users, to take away any technical obstacles and to ensure that all information is clearly presented and can easily be found by visitors. Many of the findings of the controlled testing have been confirmed during the workshop on usability held in Aix-en-Provence in October.

Also, pilot videos (screencasts) have been produced that explain the usage of the central elements of the CLARIN services. In addition some guidelines for how to make such screencasts for other components have been worked out.

In a nutshell: Although the overall usability of the website has been found to be adequate, many suggestions have been collected for the improvement of the usability of the CLARIN website, both overall and at more detailed levels.

2 Introduction

The CLARIN website functions as an information hub for both internal and external purposes, and an adequate redesign can be expected to reinforce the communicative function of the central CLARIN Office, the major goal of the work in WP3. Subtask 3.3.3, which is the background of the work presented here, contributes to this goal by providing a thorough assessment of the usability of the CLARIN website and central CLARIN services.

As a first step, a comprehensive analysis of the strong and weak points of usability of the existing CLARIN webpages and services was made. In addition, CLARIN-PLUS prepared for the creation of screencasts and guided tours that explain the usage of main features of CLARIN in order to support users in their interaction with the website.

A thorough assessment was undertaken in two stages:

- Assessment of the version of the website up and running at the beginning of CLARIN-PLUS, the basis of a complete redesign of the website.
- Assessment of the redesigned and re-implemented website that was launched in July 2016; the design of the new version is based on the outcome of the first stage and in accordance with the Human Interface Guidelines specified in deliverable [CLARINPLUS-D3.1].

Also two of the main CLARIN services, the Federated Content Search (FCS) and the Virtual Language Observatory (VLO), were tested for usability, use case presentations on the main CLARIN website were reviewed for their usability, and a list of good practices for use case representations was created (see Section 3.1). Scenarios for guided tours and/or screencasts were constructed (see Section 3.2).

At the CLARIN annual Conference 2016 (Aix-en-Provence) a workshop “Usability of CLARIN web services” was organised (see Section 3.3). At the same event, the main CLARIN services were tested, based on user screencasts (see Section 3.4).

The findings of Task 3.3.3 will continue to guide the CLARIN-PLUS activities related to the further monitoring and improvement of the usability of the website and services. In this report, the findings are not described in their entirety, but they are rather summarized, and the reader is referred to the original reports for the details.

All the testing materials and original reports are available here:

<https://www.clarin.eu/content/clarin-plus-supplemental-material>

They are divided to the following sections:

- 1: CLARIN old website usability testing report
- 2: CLARIN new website usability testing report
- 3: Virtual Language Observatory testing report
- 4: Federated Content Search usability testing report
- 5: CLARIN website’s use cases report
- 6: Usability workshop summary
- 7: Questionnaire, Materials and Outline for Workshop Participant

3 Results

3.1 Website Usability Testing

The CLARIN main website usability testing was done in two stage in order to assess the usability improvement between the old and the new main website versions.

The main testing team consisted of three workers of CELR with a background in digital humanities. All of the testers have a linguist education (M.A., Ph.D. in progress). All of them have used various web services in their research. All of them have also contributed to the web services development and usability improvement. One tester has worked on Estonian Wordnet development. The second tester has tested corpus managers and search engines made for the Estonian Spoken Language Corpus. The third tester has worked on the development of Emotional Speech Synthesis. Everybody in the testing team has been involved in user training (introducing Estonian linguistic web services to school students, university students, teachers, lecturers and researchers in digital humanitaria). Everybody involved in the testing task has worked independently but a common domain list and usability criteria (see below) were used along with the User Interface Guidelines produced under [[CLARINPLUS-D3.1](#)].

The CLARIN website had to be tested for the second time after the release of the new version in July 2016. The testing team involved a new member for the second testing round who would not be affected by the previous testing impressions. This new fourth tester is a digital archivist at the Estonian Literature Museum. She was given the same domain list and the same usability criteria as the main testing team.

The website testing was domain-based and covered the following domains:

1. Home Page
2. Creating a new Account
3. Using Search
4. Subscribing to Newsletter
5. CLARIN Portal
6. Consistency of pages (UI Guidelines)
7. Contact(s) Page
8. Structure of sub-menus, sub-headings
9. FAQ and Help
10. Other

The testing criteria that were qualitatively described were:

1. The easiness of finding the information that the user is looking for
2. Clarity of the information presentation
3. Sufficiency of help information and guidelines
4. Time for completing the user tasks
5. Comfort of work with the interface.

3.1.1 Previous website version testing

Three testers with a humanities and language technology background have separately tested the CLARIN website before its relaunch in summer 2016. The results and suggestions were structured by functionality and by test-persons, providing clear perspectives. Results of the testing have shown that there is a lot of very well structured information on CLARIN, e.g. on the advantages of CLARIN, its resources, services, usage instructions, and CLARIN's history. Testing showed also, however, that the information could be better interlinked and organized in a more novice-user oriented way.

Interlinking, highlighting and re-structuring the logics of the website according to the opinion of the testers mostly required rather mild changes, which already could significantly improve the usability. Creating the user account and subscribing to the newsletter needed some technical changes. Outdated links needed to be replaced. At the points where the contribution of users is crucial to CLARIN, more encouraging language urging the users to take action or to get more information was suggested by the testers. For the full report, see the CLARIN old website usability testing report.

3.1.2 New website version testing

Four testers (expanded testing team mentioned above) have separately tested CLARIN's new website after its relaunch in July 2016. All of them were provided with the general evaluation guidelines that were used while testing the previous website version as well. The new website was indeed found to be much more convenient and structured compared to the previous version; the majority of the necessary changes had been implemented; the short overview of CLARIN on the main page was found concise and useful, as well as the news section with alternating highlights that is nicely located and catchy. A problem for all testers was the colour of the links, which is difficult to separate from the text. In addition, some minor inconsistencies in presenting new links, logos, and images were marked by the testers as improvement points. See the CLARIN new website usability testing report for the full report.

3.1.3 VLO testing

The facet browser of the Virtual Language Observatory (VLO) was tested for usability. It was tested by three testers (the main testing team described above); strong and weak aspects were pointed out.

Testers approved the recently elaborated search features that are represented through intuitive and simple iconic visual clues. Among the points to be improved were certain search engine and metadata shortcomings, especially the unpredictable availability of metadata translations. Some features could be represented in a more user-friendly way, and users could benefit from a more detailed help text and a screencast guiding them through search examples involving a number of search possibilities. The VLO looked visually different from the CLARIN ERIC main page, and which is considered confusing for users and in conflict with the Human Interface Guidelines. The "Help" menu was found to be helpful as it introduces different possibilities for searching. A link to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on the CLARIN main webpage could be also on the "Help" page (and the FAQ needs to be expanded so as to also cover the new VLO version).

For the complete report, see the Virtual Language Observatory testing report.

3.1.4 FCS testing

The Federated Content Search (FCS) provides the opportunity to search multiple resources through a common aggregator. Three test persons from the main testing team have tested the aggregator's usability according to its appearance, functions and metadata. All test persons noted that the link to FCS should be more prominent. In the „About“ section there is a good overview of people involved in FCS, server log statistics and a list of software components, but a clear and concise user guide is lacking. Some search steps were not so intuitive and lacked information how the collection search works.

The full details are available in the Federated Content Search usability testing report.

3.2 Guided Tour and Use cases

The presentation of **Use cases** on the main CLARIN website (old version) was tested for usability and the use cases were assessed for their suitability as candidate for a guided tour/screencast. Each use case presentation, its accessibility and usability were tested

independently by two persons from the main testing team; strong and weaker points of the presentation and access to the use case tools and resources were pointed out in the testing report.

Clearly, the use cases form a great example set of multilingual and monolingual resources that represent good practices and innovation in both the language technology (LT) and the digital humanities (DH) area. They form a richly diverse set and represent useful metadata and contact details of the developers.

For improvement, more unification at the level of tags, keywords, metadata descriptions of the interlinked resources, and screenshots were found to be useful, as well as checking of the resource references (their consistency and relevance), and labelling the descriptions with a time tag. The visual presentation on the main use case page was recommended to be made more user-friendly and intuitive.

Several use case needed a revision of the introductory texts, especially on the main webpage, to clearly point out the uniqueness and significance of the resource.

A target-group-oriented approach could be beneficial for the use case representation (a hierarchical grouping or consistent tagging): division into DH (and more specific areas) and LT (and more specific areas). For a new user, a language index menu could also be helpful. The tag system could benefit from being united with other CLARIN subpages and resources described there.

In order to serve as a 'guided tour', first versions of **Screencasts** were made for the VLO, and for the Keeleveeb and WordTies use cases (again, these can be found [here](#)).

Different types of preliminary screencast were made, and scenarios and guidelines were produced for future screencasts. Camtasia, Panopto, iMovie and Windows Movie Maker were used, but other programs can be considered.

Some aspects to take into consideration when producing screencasts:

- where to start - CLARIN page or the resource individual page
- what activities to cover;
- where to be more (or less) specific, what is lacking and what abundant;
- is visual unification needed (CLARIN colours, unified captions, voice-sound, etc.)?
- a professional actor or really good speaker is needed for a video;
- it may be good to have the text of the screencast both in audio and in visual form;
- it may be best if final video screencasts are done professionally based on the scenarios made and comments of the developers;
- developers of the services need to be included in the work on screencasts.

3.3 Workshop

As planned in the DoW, a workshop on usability was organised with the aim to collect feedback on general and specific usability aspects of the CLARIN ERIC web pages and central services in order to improve them and to formalize usability evaluation procedures. The workshop was held on 26 October 2016, in conjunction with the CLARIN annual conference. Around 15 people from several CLARIN consortia participated.

For more details on the workshop, see the summary of the usability workshop.

The participants were provided with a questionnaire before the conference (see the Questionnaire, Materials and Outline for Workshop Participants), covering the following topics:

- Usability of CLARIN services
- Checklist for use case presenters
- Suggestions for how to make web service demos

- Best practices elsewhere to apply at the CLARIN ERIC website
- Usability of the CLARIN website

3.4 Usability testing with screencasts

During the CLARIN annual conference, screencasts of user behaviour were made. The test users (conference participants) were asked to test:

- the CLARIN ERIC website,
- the Virtual Language Observatory,
- the Federated Content Search,
- the Discovery Service (identifying your institution in the federated login),
- the Virtual Collection Registry

Altogether 18 people tested these 5 points.

The main recommendation for change pertains to the findability of the respective services through the main website, as the links to the various services via the “Services” page are not recognized in a straightforward way because they appear in the text as hyperlinks. It was suggested that the developers use the screencasts in order to watch the user behaviour in real time and use this for improving the website and/or web applications.

4 Conclusion

In sum, the work carried out in CLARIN-PLUS WP3/Subtask 3.3.3 has resulted in valuable insights on the usability of the central elements of the CLARIN website, and the central services and use cases presented there. It also brought concrete indications for how to improve their usability, while also showing that in general the CLARIN website, especially after its re-launch in July 2016, already has a good usability.

The results will be taken up by the CLARIN ERIC Office and the CLARIN Web Team, partly as part of the future activities in WP3 of CLARIN-PLUS. Feedback on the website from the various audience is also being collected via a web-form, which allows easier tracking of follow-up-actions needed and progress made. This procedure has proven efficient. Generally, the human interface guidelines (CLARIN-PLUS Deliverable 3.1) have proven to be useful, and they will be applied in further work on the web-presence of CLARIN, including work on the content of the national CLARIN webpages (CLARIN-PLUS Task 3.4). The screencasts on central CLARIN services will be finalized and made available, so that they improve the ease of access to the central CLARIN components and services presented there, and at the same time set examples of how to develop screencasts in a unified style for CLARIN.

All these activities performed within in and as follow-up to CLARIN-PLUS WP3 will contribute to the usability of the CLARIN web applications and CLARIN website.

References

[[CLARINPLUS-D3.1](#)] – CLARIN Human Interface Guidelines

All mentioned reports have been included as supplemental material, which can be found at: <https://www.clarin.eu/content/clarin-plus-supplemental-material>