EDEN

Dealing with Digital Communication

Project acronym: EDEN
Project full title: **E**mbracing **DE**me**N**tia

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A growing number of web users around the world are living with dementia. People living with dementia and their relatives have various levels of digital literacy. They may be experiencing difficulties sequencing and processing information, reduced problem-solving abilities and thinking speed, judgment, vision and perception or problems with language and words.

A lot of information about dementia and, for example, local social or support initiatives are to be found on the internet. By creating websites that are more accessible to this growing group of users, designers can support PwD to help them and their relatives stay active and participating in the community as long as possible by following specific digital design guidelines.

The EDEN project also presents a digital platform for learning and teaching materials headed towards PwD, relatives, CSOs and HSCPs developed after the guidelines listed below: Learning and teaching platform

1.1   Dementia digital design guidelines

- **Include people living by dementia**

This will help to understand, validate and meet real needs. It will also help improve empathy for whom you are designing. So make sure to:

- Include PwD and their relatives in all stages of design. Conduct primary research with them.
- Get feedback from PwD. Test, validate and iterate designs with representative users.
- Promote that your website is dementia-friendly and help reducing stigma.

- **Writing, words and terms**

People living with dementia may struggle with language, like remembering a word or terminology. Therefore:
- Use simple, clear and precise headings and labels.
- Avoid generic calls to action or complex wordplay and use unambiguous headings.
- Use explicit content. Make the purpose clear and content interesting.
- Use dementia positive language, 'living with', rather than 'suffering from', dementia. Be respectful.
- Avoiding using abbreviations and acronyms.

- **Layout, navigation and interface design**

People can struggle to remember things and become disorientated. Try to make navigation explicit and signpost a route back to the homepage, or the start. Therefore:

- Provide a clear link to 'Home', or the start.
- Use clear section breaks to make splits and stages obvious.
- Make hyperlink styles clear.
- Avoid splitting tasks across multiple screens and hiding navigation off-screen.

- **Colours and contrast**

Each type of dementia can damage the visual system in a number of different ways. Perceptual problems that cause misinterpretation can also occur. And as people get older, normal vision will change simply due to ageing. This can mean that age-related visual decline may affect both the person with dementia as well as their relatives. So:

- Use high contrast colour schemes to improve readability.
- Use plain backgrounds for textual content, rather than patterns or images.
- Avoid the use of blue, especially for important interface elements.

- **Text and fonts**

Make letter shapes and words simple and easy to perceive. This improves readability and comprehension for all people on all computer devices. Tips to make words more readable include:

- Using an open source sans-serif typeface. The simplicity of these letter shapes is more readable.
- Using a larger text size (and higher contrast) to provide more information to the eye.
- Using bold text alongside clear, short statements. This is useful to highlight important information.
- Avoiding unnecessary multiple fonts. This may make the interface and content confusing.

- **Images and multimedia**

Videos and images can be misinterpret for real situations and people. Keep images and multimedia therefore simple, relevant and closely related to the content.

- Images should be engaging and meaningful.
- Provide subtitles or transcripts for video and audio content.
- Use simple and familiar playback controls.
- Pictograms and icons can aid recognition and function of user interface control.