COMPUTER-SUPPORTED CO-OPERATIVE WORKING
Group Project (sem. 2)
On-line conversations about dyslexia

This document describes the group project to be completed by the students who are taking the module on CSCW in the academic year 2014-2015.

Mark component: Group work = 100%[1]

Students willing to take part to the course-work are strongly encouraged to attend classes. People who could not attend can take an oral examination.

Learning outcomes: the project is designed to give students first-hand experience of the design and evaluation of on-line community, following the principles of usability and sociability. The students will learn how to foster a community, how to understand user behaviour analyzing on-line sources, and interpreting the data within the theoretical frameworks introduced in the course, and how to write a project report. The project will include both individual and group activities. Students will be exposed to typical group work dynamics, and will learn how to share information and co-ordinate activities.

Objectives
The assignment consists of the evaluation of existing resources and the conceptual design of an on-line platform for fostering a healthy community around the theme of dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning disability manifested by significant difficulties with reading fluently and with accurate text comprehension despite normal or above-average intelligence. It is estimated to affect around 10% of the EU population. Dyslexia cannot be cured; in fact it is a lifelong condition. With appropriate support and intervention, however, people with dyslexia can succeed in school and have a rewarding life. Dyslexia can be strongly supported by ICT technology (text to speech, spelling and grammar, speech processing tools).

The Internet includes several on-line resources about dyslexia, some institutional examples are
http://headstrongnation.org/

http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/

http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/

http://www.american-dyslexia-association.com/

http://eida.org/

http://www.aiditalia.org/ (In Italian)

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[1] Students may be requested to hand-in evidence of all their individual work which will be marked for completeness and accuracy in case of group conflicts. Students will also be invited to evaluate each group member contribution, including their own. Evidence of exceptional performance or sub-average contribution will be taken into consideration in the final mark.

Similarly, many people have started personal blogs to share personal experiences (https://www.facebook.com/thethinkingtree?fref=nf). Yet, especially, in Italy people still struggle to find information and could benefit of an on-line community where to share information, obtain practical advices and psychological support. The objective of this course-work is to design such a community, starting from the critical analysis of existing resources, and proposing new strategies for effective communication.

Netnography & usability and accessibility analysis: requirements elicitation. The students will evaluate critically existing resources about dyslexia with a focus on sociability and usability. At this stage the user requirements will be defined based on the analysis of on-line conversations and digital traces.

Design of social network. In this phase the students will write a plan for the creation and consolidation of the social network. The community could be designed inside existing platforms or as a standalone tool.

Report writing. The group will prepare a 20 pages (max) report of the evaluation. Report writing is both an individual and a group activity. All members are expected to contribute to it and the report will be marked as a group deliverable not as a collection of chapters authored by different people. The report will be composed of:

- Executive summary (1 page summarising the main findings and recommendation from your study)

- Objectives (stating and justifying the objectives of the study)

- Benchmarking (describes current status of social networks addressing dyslexia, focus on usability and sociability)

- User requirements (extracted from netnography on existing resources)

- Design proposal (detailed report on mobile community proposals, taking into account issues of usability and sociability)

- Evaluation (against existing resources)

- Conclusion (recommendations, suggestion for further research)

Deadline:
April 27 group presentation (30 minutes)
June 5 final deliverable e-mailed to menendez@disi.unitn.it

Final exam: June 12, June 20, September 10