

Airport wayfinding and interactive map design

S. LEE. **Airport wayfinding and interactive map design for the elderly.** *Gerontechnology* 2014; 13(2):238; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.304.00 **Purpose** Wayfinding can be challenging in complex environments such as airports and hospitals. The elderly may experience even more difficulties due to impaired cognitive and physical abilities¹. Currently the websites of many airports have web-based wayfinding systems, such as maps, to assist travellers in planning their routes and in obtaining help to find their destinations. Some airports have added interactive features to maps, which can function as a powerful wayfinding aid. However, airport map interfaces are not supportive of elderly users, because they fail to address elderly users' needs. This study aims to evaluate airport website interfaces and airport map designs in order to understand the current status and problems with gerontechnological issues. Ultimately, the results of this study will help elderly people travel more independently. **Method** This study evaluated web-based wayfinding systems for 29 international airports in the USA, 12 large and 17 small to medium hub airports. The evaluation criteria are based on National Institute on Aging² guidelines for website design for the elderly. The evaluation criteria included two sections: website interface evaluation (10 possible points) and airport map interfaces (18 possible points). Cross tabulations and correlations were conducted to study the relationships between airport size and evaluation results. Qualitative analysis of the usability testing was conducted as well. **Results & Discussion** Results showed that usability of both website interfaces and airport map interfaces was not correlated with the size of the airports (*Figure 1*). Qualitative analysis revealed that no airport included the information that specifically addresses the needs of elderly travellers. However, every airport included information for persons with disabilities. Most airports offered airport maps. Small texts and symbols made it difficult for elderly users to read and understand the information. The interactive features of airport maps certainly made them more usable, but they were too complicated for elderly users to comfortably utilize.

References

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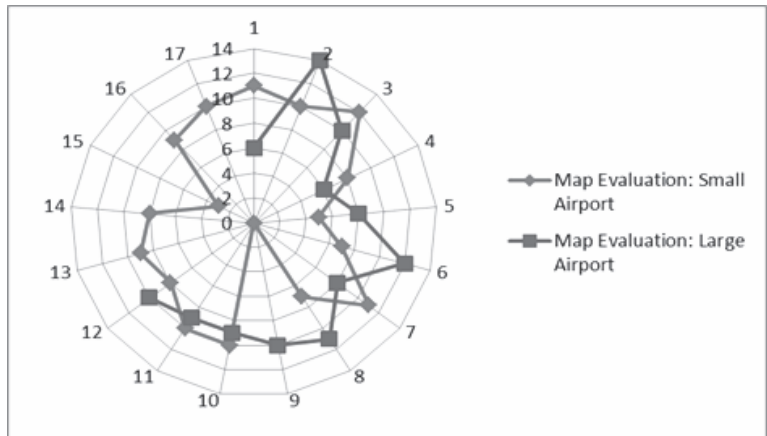


Figure 1. Map evaluation scores: bigger numbers indicate higher evaluation result