

Usability analyses of of iPad Electronic Picturebook

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The 3C products such as iPad, tablet PC, smart phone and e-book reader are unknowing invade our daily life. For the new-generation of children, the time and opportunities for reading paper books hence become less and less while the time spending on 3C products are more and more. Therefore, the contents provided by those tools become a focus point of concern. The new reading equipments not necessarily enable the children to love learning and reading, but undeniably, equipped by e-book reader and combined with multimedia elements, the reading contents have provided a different reading experience. iPad, combined touch screen and multimedia, provide an experience of more intuitive operation than web pages and CD versions. The main purpose of the research is to understand the current situation of design and development of iPad electronic picturebooks and analyze their usability. The researcher used the ranking lists search and browsing in Apple Store for browsing various electronic picturebooks in great number. In the final stage, we screened out six different models to be used in iPad electronic picturebooks and conducted the analyses of usability. We selected by purposive sampling 12 adults (including six teachers and six mothers) and four six-year-old children (2 boys and 2 girls) who had experiences of using iPad. The subjects at first browsed six electronic picturebooks. Then 12 adults filled out the questionnaires, four children were interviewed and their operations were observed to understand their preferences and the uses of the products. The research of research found that the commonalities of the design of iPad electronic picturebooks a) dominated by page style; b) focused on linear development; c) most of interactive designs of story contents are clicking the objects on the screen; d) provided different languages and audio versions; e) most of them adopted the design of limited animation in which they used zoom-in and zoom-out and diversion techniques to show animations. Besides, both the adult and child subjects suggested: a) iPad electronic picturebooks are more lively and interesting than the printing picturebooks; b) the readers could involve the decisions of font sizes and placement; and c) the story contents could have more dynamic effects and designs of interactive games. The recommendations for future publishers and designers were: a) take advantage of elements of interactive design in multimedia; b) increase the interaction of the story; c) strengthen the control power of users; d) create all-new e-picture books.

Keyword: e-PictureBook, e-Storybook, e-Book, iPad Picturebook, Interface, Usability