

Social Inclusion Through Universal Design, in Concept and Practice

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Abstract

Universal Design is an approach to design that includes all abilities from the outset. Whether this approach can achieve social inclusion and equality is analysed in this research paper. An insight into disabilities is provided and delivers a fundamental understanding of how to cater for their needs. In the hope to create a meaningful discourse from this vast array of needs visual impairment is the subject under review in this paper.

The core ideas of Universal Design are examined in concept throughout this paper. Through studying principles such as Equitable Use and Flexibility in Use, it is found that designing in this manner ensures it is possible to achieve a totally inclusive environment. As with many conceptual ideas it is often difficult to achieve total compliance. It is widely acknowledged that development and design incurs necessary but unwanted tradeoffs. In practice certain guidelines must take precedence over others to produce a well rounded functioning end product.

To further verify this concept and taking an existing, current example, this research paper examines the Dublin Bus real-time passenger information service, to consider how Universal Design stands up in practice. The Dublin Bus real-time passenger information service is an attempt to improve the overall service by providing clear travelling information to those utilising it. It was found through the shortfalls in design of this service that additional channels of delivering information are required to achieve a service that is socially inclusive for all abilities. It was found that there is a possibility that visually impaired individuals may be ignored. However, through the suggested solutions that appear in this paper a more inclusive and attractive system can be achieved.