Secrets of User Compliance

“Why don’t they listen to us?”
Agenda

- Introduction
- Four influencers on compliance
- What doesn’t work
- What *might* work
- Conclusion and discussion

Please hold your questions until the end. This is a recorded session.
Intro: What is user compliance…

…and why does it matter?
The Venzuelan Rabbit Plan

President Nicolás Maduro: give baby rabbits to 15 communities to breed for meat.

The follow-up revealed: “People had put little bows on their rabbits and were keeping them as pets. A lot of people gave names to the rabbits.”

Freddy Bernal (Minister of Urban Agriculture) admitted that there was a “cultural problem”
What is compliance?

How much will the users read?

How closely will they follow the directions?
Why does this matter?

- **Risk for the user:**
  - potentially dangerous product
  - high-risk processes

- **Risk for the company:**
  - increased internal costs (tech support, etc.)
  - loss of prestige through perceived product failure

- **Your challenge:**
  - meet regulatory requirements…
  - …but balancing it with usability

- **Poor compliance is common…**
What we say to dogs

Okay, Ginger! I've had it!
You stay out of the garbage!
Understand, Ginger? Stay out of the garbage, or else!

What they hear

blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah blah blah blah
blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah blah blah blah...
What we Say to cats...

Well, Fluffy, you've clawed the furniture for the last time! I'll not tolerate that behavior any longer...

What they hear
Four Compliance Influencers

Here we go…
1: Age

- Age and gender are the basis of all demographics!
- Age:
  - significant differences in reading patterns
  - older (65+) read more, click less
  - read and process more
  - miss more visual cues (below-the-fold content)
- “But what about *gender*?”
2: Education

- Linked to ease of reading:
  - FOG, SMOG, ARI, Flesch-Kincaid, etc.
  - “first-time comprehension”

- Ability to logically extrapolate.

- Ability to error-correct based on context.
3: Culture

- Culture is:
  - a mix customs, beliefs, and societal expectations
  - a mix that shapes our world view
- Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions:
  - PDI (Power Distance Index)
  - IDV (Individualism vs. Collectivism)
- How comfortable are they about asking questions?
- …about complaining?
- …about relying on their own logic?
4: Industry

- Different industries have different cultures:
  - insurance vs. gaming
  - medical vs. consumer

- Users in heavily-regulated industries are:
  - more likely to be trained in *processes*
  - understand the need for regulations
  - are used to following rules

- Start-ups and entrepreneurs:
  - strong skeptics
  - always looking for options

- Repetitive work:
  - rely on habits
  - ignore instructions
What Doesn’t Work
1: Telling people to read the docs.

- “Read this document carefully before performing this or any other maintenance procedure.”
- Um, no.
2: Overusing hazards.

- Too many hazards on a page reduces the visual impact.
- Users start to ignore them.
3: Yelling.

- ALL CAPS REDUCES READABILITY!!
  - we rely on the variety of ascending, descending, and neutral characters
  - “same-shape” typos (for example, test instead of test), doubles the error rate*

- Most important: Users skip blocks of text that are hard to read.

*Kevin Larson, Advanced Reading Technology, Microsoft Corp., July 2004
4: Unnecessary lines and boxes.

- “It’s important, so I’ll put it in a box!”
- Users don’t read content in boxes.
  - “…they didn’t read the stuff in the box. Apparently, people have a resistance to that.” (John Byrne)
  - users are conditioned subconsciously by UI
5: Expecting blind obedience.

- Users may not follow instructions that appear counter-intuitive.

- However, over-explaining also hurts:
  - Don’t include something just because the SME thinks it is “interesting”.
  - “Experience shows that the more words you put on that dialog box, the fewer people will actually read it.” (Joel Spolsky)
What *Might* Work
1. Write for the low end.

- Choose ease and simplicity rather than sophistication.

- Remember:
  - no one wants to read your docs, so…
  - remove the barrier of complexity!
  - high-literacy readers won’t notice, because…
  - …people read books, but they **use** documentation
2. Consider culture and industry.

- For content targeted for one region, learn national “personality”.
- For one industry, consider:
  - level of regulation
  - amount of training
3. Layer info.

- Progressive reveal:
  - just what is needed
  - allow user to control

- This allows you to provide the reasons for the instructions.

- Supports needs of mixed users.
1. Wash the right hind leg with sudsing agent. Rinse thoroughly.

2. Allow the leg to dry. If no blowers are available, wait at least 15 minutes. More...
   To test, press a dry facial tissue on the leg. If it blots any moisture, towel-dry the leg or allow it to air-dry for another 10 minutes.

3. Massage a small amount (about 1 tsp) of Bag Balm to the pastern (from fetlock to hoof). Wipe off excess with a clean soft cloth.

4. Place the sensor on the right hind leg below the fetlock with the blue arrow facing up.
4. Test

- The best way to verify compliance is through usability testing.
- But keep in mind:
  - follow same rules for product UX testing
  - tests deliver false positives
- Modify based on results.
Summary

- We have little control over user compliance.
- Understanding the influencers helps us estimate risk.
- Avoid the “solutions” that don’t work.
- Try some of the tricks that may work.
- Questions?
Discussion

A butter approach to TC...

We want your feedback! Smartphone or tablet at http://ux01.honestly.de or scan the QR code.

Leah Guren
Cow TC
technical communication training & consulting
tel: (+972) 54-485-3473
e-mail: leah@cowtc.com
website: www.cowtc.com