

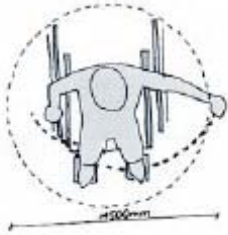
INFO KIOSKS

Purpose

Info kiosks are interactive computer terminals for retrieving information from databases or the Internet, located in public transport terminals or other public spaces. They can also provide information for tourists or on various events.

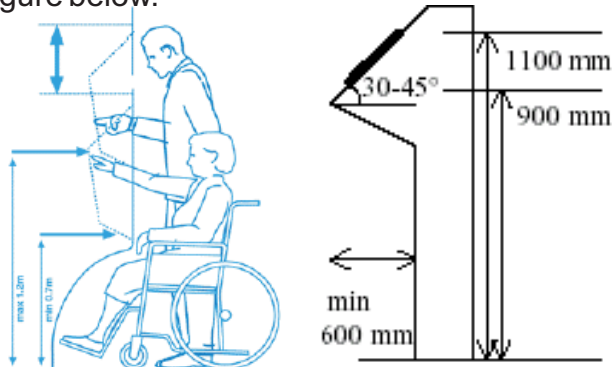
Location

Info kiosks should be located in quiet places that can be monitored. They must be accessible with a wheelchair.



There must be 1.4 to 1.5 m free space around the kiosk. If the space is well-lighted, the touch screen must be equipped with a visor. There must be space under the screen and a

small shelf for a wallet as well a hook for a bag or a walking stick. The right height for a screen to be used from a wheelchair can be seen in the figure below.



If possible, info kiosks should be so designed that they can be used both from a wheelchair and while standing. It is generally not recommendable to implement user-group-specific solutions.

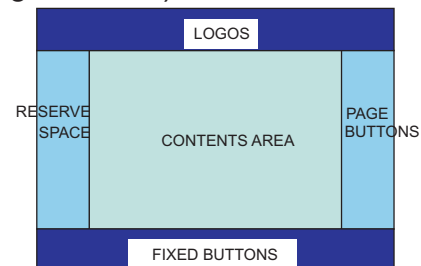
Interactive Use

Usability can be considerably improved by a simple navigation device (a ball mouse is ergonomically a very good solution), voice direction and a printer. A separate keyboard makes things easier for a user accustomed to using a keyboard and makes more versatile software feasible (more detailed queries, text input etc.). On the other hand, if the data structure is well designed, i.e. if clear and simple commands, symbols and drop-down menus are used, there is no need for text input and the use of the information kiosk will be easier for those not used to a keyboard (e.g. the elderly and children). The touch screen must be sensitive, a light push must be enough. The

user must receive a confirmation that the push has been registered and a search started, e.g. an hourglass or a progress bar. In order to eliminate erroneous functions, automatic repetition should be avoided (a long push etc.). It should always be possible to return to the beginning or the main page (a clear separate button).

Layout

The touch screen should measure at least 15.1 inches. The picture area (the touch buttons and the information itself) should not extend to the very edge of the screen in order to ensure that everything essential is visible. In an EU standard, the screen is divided into four parts (see figure below):



- the top area is for the logos of the public transport operators etc.; the date and time should be placed in top right corner
- the right margin is for the title buttons of the pages (for navigation within the site)
- the middle part is for the information contents
- the icon buttons like language selection, "Forward", "Back", "Home" etc. are at the bottom (these remain the same on all pages).

The standard recommends that the same dark colour, e.g. dark blue, be used at the top and bottom. The middle part should be light. Speech can be used both for input (voice recognition) and output. An info kiosk is a special application. There must be sufficient space around it for easy access, and the output information must be well-designed.

See also Visual Disabilities and Public Transport Information, Advance Information and Websites.

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Text and Graphics

The font size must be as large as feasible: 14 to 19 points -- even as large as 48pt (= 1cm). The titles and help features must be paid attention to. There may be titles missing when timetable pages on the Internet are opened from the kiosk. It is better to have too many titles and too much repetition than vice versa. The figure below presents a sample icon button.



The size of the icon button is 2cm x 2cm. The space between icons should be at least 20% of the icon size. The icon should change colour when pushed. The picture inside the icon measures about 1.6cm x 1.6cm. Virtual three-dimensionality improves discernability. Recommendations concerning different colours are indicated in the table below. It is good to have a clarifying text under the button (font Helvetica 18 to 24pt). The same applies to the contents: both graphics and text should be used to make the result is usable and illustrative. Icons should comply with European standards like ISO 7001.

Helvetica is the recommended font in the EU standard. It can be replaced by Geneva or Arial. Chicago, Courier or Gothic fonts should be avoided. Bold text can be used for highlighting if necessary. The font size should be adjustable.

Proposals for Contents

- journey planner (door to door)
- web-based public transport information
- maps should be simple and fast to download, e.g. a rough general map plus more detailed ones for smaller areas
- tourist attractions on a map; pushing a sight will provide further information and public transport services to it
- calendar of events.

If there is a direct access to normal websites from the kiosk, usability may be compromised: the text may be too small, buttons may be designed for mouse-clicking (and not for a touch screen), or text input from a keyboard may be required. A separate version, customised to be used with a touch screen, should be made for information kiosk use.

TIPS

- the main page is in the official language, other languages can be selected at the bottom of the screen by pushing a flag icon
- the user can cancel his/her choice at any point
- the user can push the "Help" button at any point
- The user can push the "Home"/"Restart" etc. button at any point
- a screen saver will attract users, the screen must not be blank
- the contact information of the responsible maintainer of the kiosks is found in the device (a sticker at the back etc.).

Guidelines and Standards

Draft standard "European Prestandard 450 ja 451, Draft V3.0 Public Access Terminals", made under CEN TC 278 WG3 and the related documents:

European Task Force INPUT and Infopolis 2, Design Guidelines for Information Kiosks in Travel Centres, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland, 2002

TELSKAN, Design Guidelines, Usable ATT systems for Elderly and Disabled Travellers, Commission of the European Communities

Colour	Purpose	Conspicuous-ness	Contrast good with	Do not use with	Location on screen
Red	Emergency, warning, alarm	High	White	Green	In the middle
Yellow	Preparedness, alarm	High	Black, dark blue (green)	White	
Green	Safe normal state	Low	White	Red	In the middle (as background)
Light blue	Instructions, neutral ("water")	Low	Black	Yellow	At sides (as background)
Dark blue	Instructions, neutral	Low	White		
Magenta	Alarm	High	White		In the middle, small area
White	Instructions	Low	All dark colours (+ red)	Light blue, yellow	
Black	"Official"	Low	White, light blue, yellow		