Introduction

Interactive, touchscreen technology is a feature of many handheld electronic devices and is becoming widespread in commercial and promotional settings. Physicians are exposed to this technology in congresses through its use at exhibition booths. There is a growing trend to provide patient education interactively. There is, however, little if any use of interactive technology to deliver educational and scientific content in the poster sessions at scientific meetings.

A typical scientific poster contains lots of very small text to convey the key findings. However, a conventional printed poster offers limited opportunities to interact with data and concepts. To explore novel approaches to engage audiences, PAREXEL, in collaboration with authors of an international survey, has developed an interactive poster (Poster™).

Background

PAREXEL based the concept for the Poster™ on the principle that learning is not just transmitted, but achieved by continued engagement through interaction.

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) provides a framework on which to base an effective learning experience. It was developed in the USA in the 1970s, initially as a method to identify effective aspects of communication, but has subsequently gained popularity as a means of personal development.

NLP is based on the assumed connection between personal experience (neuro), language (linguistic) and patterns of behaviour (programmings (programmings). Its proponents consider that it has value for teaching and learning. Effective learning is promoted by an experience that affects each of the three NLP domains.

Individuals have different learning styles that have to be taken into account for successful learning. There are three main styles, PA REXEL developed an iPoster™ to give users an auditory, visual and kinaesthetic experience.

1. Auditory: learn by listening and speaking
2. Visual: learn by looking and watching

Patients have the capability to use all three styles to learn, but 10% of what they hear, 40% of what they see and 90% of what they see and do.

Combining the tenets of NLP and the appreciation of different learning styles, PAREXEL developed an iPoster™ to give users an auditory, visual and kinaesthetic experience.

The technological foundations of the iPoster™

The development of the iPoster™ was underpinned by educational technologies that are increasingly used in schools, such as interactive whiteboards. An interactive whiteboard is a large, touch-sensitive board which is connected to a computer and projector. It is reported to be popular with both teachers and pupils and increase participation in lessons from a whole class perspective.

Aspects of the poster content that enhance the iPoster™ include video interviews with lead authors or key contributors and recorded animations.

An iPoster™ example

The iPoster™ was shown at the 4th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Bipolar Disorders (ISBD), São Paulo, Brazil, 19 March 2010. A dedicated area in the congress hall was set aside for the Poster™ and physicians were directed in to the printed poster which was displayed in the Poster Hall.

The survey questions were broadly divided into the following topics:

– Accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment
– Patient’s access to information
– Patient’s access to medical support
– Quality of life
– Doctor-patient relationships
– Public attitudes toward bipolar disorder.

A collaborative approach between PA REXEL and A straZeneca in sound bytes.

The size and scale of the survey meant that it provided a rich source of information about the experiences of patients, carers and health care professionals.

The wealth of quantitative and qualitative data is presented in graphic form to convey the key findings.

The main driver behind the development of an iPoster™ is the content ‘interactivity’. The goal is to deliver an experience beyond that achieved by two-dimensional print.

The iPoster™

The iPoster™ is based on pre-existing technology, which allows it to be delivered to desktops and via the internet as well as shown at congresses.

Experience with the iPoster™

The iPoster™ was well received by the survey groups and the poster authors

Judging by feedback at the ISBD Congress 2010, the iPoster™ successfully engaged the audience and interactive elements. Comments included that ‘its format would be useful for more complex data dissemination, involving Kaiser-Meyer-Messmer scale and medication ‘footage’. One delegate said: ‘this is fabulous, it really brings the science to life.’

Dr Tiller, who presented the iPoster™ at the ISBD, said: ‘The interaction and engagement greatly enhanced the learning experience, with active engagement as doctors explored the elements of the poster. The whole experience was enhanced, as is a normal poster, by one of the authors being present to explain and discuss the poster in more depth.’

Example content from the iPoster™

Poster™ presentation is an alternative to the more conventional printed posters, with the potential for enhanced learning.

This technology may ultimately change the way in which poster sessions are conducted, and moderated.

Next phase is to validate the concept.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the ISBD poster authors for their commitment to the development of the poster and Poster™ and for their data.

We would also like to recognize the skills of PAREXEL Digital Department in constructing the Poster™.

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This technology in my opinion is a great advance, with the potential to add to the whole learning knowledge and skills base of doctors exploring the interactive poster. It also has the potential to assist ‘doctors’ surgeries as a valuable patient and carer educational aid

Conclusions

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