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# Usability testing and the factors influencing a person's choice of petition websites, and Russian petition culture for Petitions24 Oy

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## Usability testing and the factors influencing a person's choice of petition websites, and Russian petition culture for Petitions24 Oy

Rashidi Kabir  
Degree Programme in BIT  
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This bachelor thesis comprises three tasks that were defined during the meeting with the client. The client company Petitions24 Oy is located in the city of Oulu, Finland and was established in 2014. The company's main activity is focused on developing and maintaining online petition websites. The primary task of the thesis project was to identify usability issues on the client's petition website by utilizing applicable usability test methods to enhance website's usability. In addition, the client desired to know what factors influence a person's website choice. Based on this data, the client potentially wanted to improve visibility and/or user experience of the website. Lastly, since the client owns a Russian version of the petition website, the client requested that the author gather information about Russian petition culture and its current state. The task was assigned due to lack of availability of such information in English and Finnish languages.

The theoretical section of the thesis report briefly covers petitions and the petition process, which is the process that the petition takes from the moment a person submits a petition to a government official to the point it reaches the parliament of the country for discussions about the petition. The role petitions play for society as a democratic instrument is also discussed. The theoretical part also covers usability and the purpose and benefits of usability testing for companies. The usability test methods that were utilized during the thesis project consisted of heuristics evaluation and a thinking aloud test was also introduced.

The empirical part includes the results of heuristics evaluation testing of the client's website and thinking aloud testing of the client's website along with two international online petition websites. Based on usability tests, the results included suggestions and comments that were given by the participants of thinking aloud test. The list of recommendations was formulated for the client, concerning the usability issues on the client's website and their possible solutions. Moreover, factors that potentially may influence a person's website choice and information about Russian petition culture and its current state were presented in separate chapters to the client.

Keywords: usability test, heuristics evaluation, thinking aloud, petition, Russian

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## 1 Introduction

In this chapter the objectives of the thesis will be presented as well as the scope and limitations of the thesis. The client's company and field of activity of the company will be introduced. Moreover, information about petition processes and associated with petition countries laws will be presented in separate chapter as well as, definition and the objective of petitions. The purpose of the thesis is to provide information to the client about creation and signing petition processes of the online petition websites by utilizing usability tests, in order to enhance the usability of the client's website. But as well, finding the key factors that affect person to choose one petition website above another. And lastly provide information about Russia's petition culture and current state.

The thesis comprises of three tasks that were defined during the meeting with the client. The primary task is to design and conduct the usability tests of several online petition websites including client's regarding creation and signing processes. In order to identify usability issues on the client's petition website and to enhance its usability. Usability test is commonly applied as a tool to a website in order to determine, what usability issues the website has from users' point of view. Then the results of the usability tests are analysed and based on the usability tests results an appropriate solution must be found, that can potentially solve or improve the issue/issues. Solution which, as an outcome can make the usability of the website better for the users of the website.

The second task is focused on identifying the key factors that may influence person to choose one petition website above another. Client desired to know what factors influence person website choice, based on that data client potentially wanted to increase visibility and/or improve user experience of the website. Lastly, since the client owns a Russian version of the petition website, the client requested that the author gather information about Russian petition culture and its current state including petition websites that are the most visited among Russian speaking users. The task was assigned due to lack of availability of such information in English and Finnish languages.

Different data sources will be utilized in the thesis depending on the tasks. Primary data sources with relation to the usability testing and finding key factors will be collected from the books, eBooks from the Laurea UAS library, Laurea Finna and Lib Guides. But, as well data collection methods such as questionnaires, observation and interviews will be utilized as a part of the usability testing. Additionally, secondary data sources will be used to collect data from articles and open and publicly available statistical data and more regarding all the tasks.

## 1.1 Background information

According to Yritystele, the client company Petitions24 Oy was established in December, 2014 in the city of Oulu, Finland. The company's main activity is focused on developing online petition websites and maintaining online petition websites that are already developed by the company and available for the users online. The company Petitions24 Oy maintains number of petition websites under different domain names, the company owns one of the most popular online petition websites in Finland that is placed under 'adressit.com' domain name. Additionally, the company possesses an international version of the petition website that, can be found by the domain name of 'petitions24.com' and Russian version of the website can be found by visiting the web address 'www.petitions247.com'. It must be noted that websites were developed and put in use in different years for instance, 'adressit.com' have petitions on the website that were created in 2006, long before company Petitions24 it-self was established. The same can be mentioned about the 'petitions24.com' and 'petitions247.com' websites that presumably were developed in 2010 and in 2011 respectively.

## 1.2 Objective

The objectives of the thesis are to understand the usability and usability test subjects, as well as conduct usability testing on number of online petition websites including client's petition website by using appropriate usability test methods. To distinguish factors that affect person choice regarding petition websites. The research questions can be defined/expressed as follows:

What is usability's definition?

What is usability test's definition and purpose?

What appropriate usability test methods are going to be utilized in this specific case?

What usability issues were found with relation to client's tested petition websites?

What are potential solutions to identified usability issues on client's websites?

What are the key factors that influence person's choice regarding petition websites?

What is Russian petition culture and its current state?

What petition websites are most popular among Russian users?

## 1.3 Scope and limitations

The thesis will introduce the petition, usability and usability test subjects and provides information on related process. The other part of the thesis will cover the steps that will be taken in order to design and conduct the usability testing of the online petition websites. Also, data will be collected about key factors that affect the person to choose one petition website over another. And information about petition culture and its current state of Russia will be provided to the client in a concise and understandable manner.

However, it is also important to mention that the thesis will have number of limitations such as: budget, time and distance communication with the client. The aspect of budget is important one and since the budget is limited and it will certainly influence on usability test methods choice. The timeframe that was defined with the client is another factor that must be taken into account. And finally, since client and company are located in the city of Oulu, Finland, communication will be limited to email and usage of application for video conferencing/calls.

## 2 What is petition

According to online encyclopaedia, petition is a request to do something, most commonly addressed to a government official or public entity. In the colloquial sense, a petition is a document addressed to some official and signed by numerous individuals (Petition 2017).

While online petition also known as internet petition or e-petition described as a form of petition which is signed online, usually through a form on a website. Visitors to the online petition sign the petition by adding their details such as name and email address. Typically, after there are enough signatories, the resulting letter may be delivered to the subject of the petition, usually via e-mail (Online petition 2018). One of the most popular online petition website 'GoPetition.com' have described petition as a request to change something, most commonly made to a government official or public entity. Commonly today, a petition is a document addressed to some official and signed by numerous of individuals. Traditionally this was done by using a paper petition form, which was signed by a group of people to indicate their support of the attached petition letter (Online Petitions Explained 2018).

Petitions and online petitions in particular are becoming more popular due to wide usage and availability of internet. According to Statista, at least five percent of established internet users (internet users who have been online for five or more years) in the United Kingdom (UK) in 2015 have replied that they do sign online petitions on weekly basis, among other activities they do on internet such as paying bills online, watching videos and using social networking sites (Weekly online activities 2015). This information supports the statement of well-known online petition website that indicates that online petitions are increasingly becoming the most effective way to organise large groups of people in support of a common cause. And that online petition can circle the globe very quickly and generate millions of signatures of support almost overnight (Online Petitions Explained 2018)

The online petitions role becomes noticeable especially in recent times. A good example of which can be a petition that was made on the government related website 'kansalaisaloite.fi' with relation to unemployed citizens that, become known in Finland as an 'activation model law' (Racine 2017). The law was introduced by the government of Finland and was in action from the beginning of 2018, but have raised questions from citizens and political parties that,

have organized an online petition with intention 'activation model law' to be revised/reviewed by the parliament again. The petition itself and the number of people that have signed online petition, made the news in Finland and have raised debates among major political parties of Finland.

As a result, Finland's largest labour organisation Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) have organized demonstration in the Senate Square, Helsinki (Unions plan 2018). Additionally, the SAK have organised the strike of drivers of public transportation in Finland for couple of days. According to YLE, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, has estimated that this strike has led to losses of up to 120 million euros while, SAK estimated the damages in around 18 million euros (EK: Lakon kustannukset 2018). An online petition can be seen as, an additional tool that can be beneficial for people to have control or influence over the government and make sure that people's opinion about any issues that will collect certain number of signatures will be heard by the government officials. But as well, petitions could be used as a method that can help to promote awareness about certain issues to general public as was in the case of 'activation model law'.

## 2.1 Petition process

Petition process is another aspect that that need to be covered in order to understand how petitions actually work. Petition process can have different steps depending on country, municipality, to what department or government official petition is addressed. However, a good example of the petition process from the moment petition has been submitted by the petitioner, till the moment it gets replied by the government officials is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below this paragraph. In this example the petition process with relation to environmental issues that, takes place in Canada is addressed to 'Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Canada' is demonstrated. Noteworthy to mention that according to petition law of Canada in case of the environmental initiatives, petitioners are not obliged to gather any minimum number of signatures to petition to be accepted by the government.



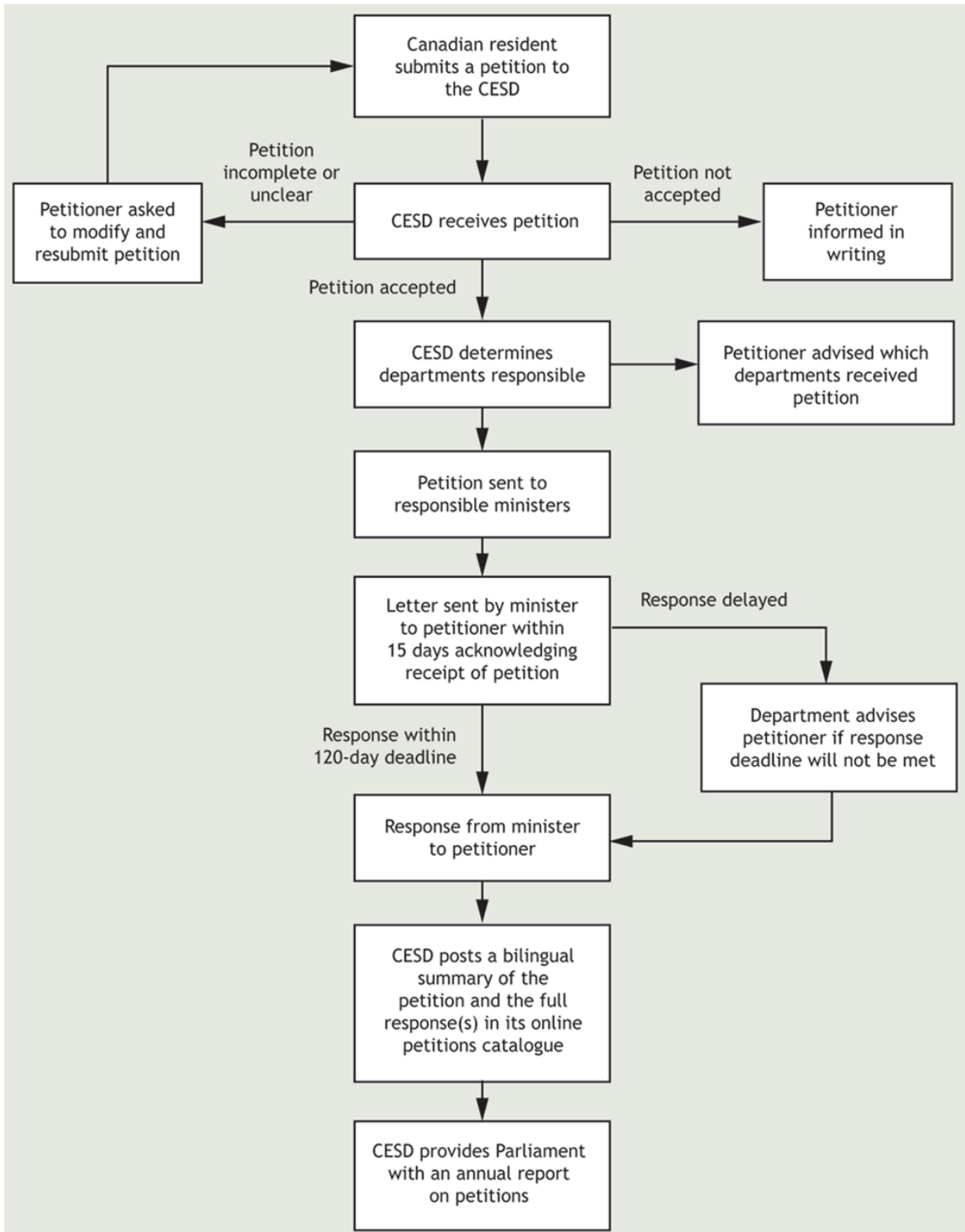


Figure 1: The environmental petitions process in Canada (Getting Answers—A Guide 2018).

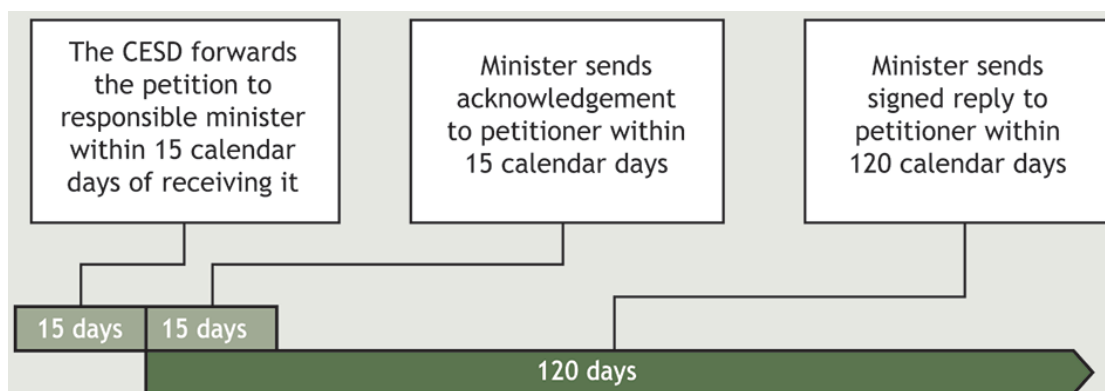


Figure 2: The timelines involved in the environmental petitions process of Canada (Getting Answers—A Guide 2018).

There are resemblances in countries such as: Canada, The United States, Finland, United Kingdom, Australia in terms of what are the basic requirements that must be met by the petitioner in order to petition to be accepted. For instance, the signatures that the petitioner must collect before the petition can be accepted; however, they do differ on how many signatures must be collected. For example, in the U.S. the petitioner has to collect one hundred thousand signatures in space of thirty days but, before that one hundred fifty signatures should be collected in a month, to be able to publish your petition to make it visible to the rest of the internet users (Terms of Participation 2013).

In Finland the Citizens' Initiative law states that the petitioner must collect a minimum of fifty thousand signatures verified by the Population Register Centre of Finnish voting age citizens in space of six months. The signatures are verified by the Population Register Centre by comparing the data of the Population Information System with the presented signatures. Also, it is noteworthy to mention, in case of self-management systems such as: 'addressit.com' and 'change.org' the systems can be subjected to certification by the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority (Ficora). While, in all cases the collected signatures must comply with the requirements of the Personal Data Act (Finnish citizens' initiative 2018). Whereas, in the U.K. depending on to whom the petition is addressed, either ten thousand or one hundred thousand signatures must be collected by the petitioner (How petitions work 2018). And in Australia a single signature would be enough to collect (House of Representatives Petitions 2018).

Another likeness is how petitions must be expressed/formulated in terms of the language style. First of all, a petition must be presented in a clear and concise manner and follow requirements defined by the country's petition law, otherwise the petition will be sent back to the petitioner for further adjustments and corrections. Another aspect is that a petition will not be accepted or even published if it contains an advert, spam, or promotes a specific product or service. Moreover, a petition will not be accepted in case, if it is offensive or extreme in its

views. That includes petitions that attack, criticize or negatively focus on an individual or a group of people because of characteristics such as their age, disability, ethnic origin, gender identity, medical condition, nationality, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation (Standards for petitions 2018).

One more similarity in the petition process step that is notable, on how long the petitions are being reviewed by the government officials. For instance, in Canada the petition on environmental issues can take up to four months to be reviewed, in the U.S it is around sixty days, but the time of the review potentially can increase in certain circumstances. While, in the U.K. no specific timeframe is set but, when the petition reaches one hundred thousand signatures it almost certainly will be debated in the Parliament of United Kingdom.

After browsing through number of government or related to government petition websites of the countries such as: The United States, United Kingdom, Finland and Australia. It can be concluded that the schema/process petition takes place is relatively similar in those countries but, also it is evident that each country has its own set of standards/requirements that petitioner must follow in order to petition to be accepted and proceed forward.

### 3 What is usability

Since, usability is going to play a central part of the thesis, it is essential to introduce the subject to a reader/client. In this chapter usability will be introduced as well as why usability is important. Usability is part of the broader term “user experience” (UX) and refers to the ease of access and/or use of a product or website (What is Usability? 2018). Relatively often user experience(UX) term is mistaken or confused with usability term however, it is not quite correct since usability is just a part of the user experience. User experience combines several elements such as: accessibility, desirability, credibility and more, that is perfectly illustrated in the Figure 3 (Usability: A part of the User Experience 2018).



Figure 3: User Experience Honeycomb (Morville 2004)

Usability definition could be slightly different depending on authors or organisations who are regarded as experts in the field. But, it can be summarised that most of the approaches to usability are focused on how the user interacts with the product/website and are looking at how much work and satisfaction or/and frustration the user experiences while using the product or website (Usability: A part of the User Experience 2018). Several of the definitions of usability will be presented below in order to have a broader view on the topic.

### 3.1 Jacob Nielsen

According to Wikipedia, Jacob Nielsen was born on October 5<sup>th</sup> of year 1957 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Nielsen holds a Ph.D. in human-computer interaction from the Technical University of Denmark in Copenhagen. Jacob Nielsen is co-founder and principal of Nielsen Norman Group and one of the most popular and well-known experts in usability (Jakob Nielsen 2018).

In his book *Usability Engineering* (1994a), Jacob Nielsen states that usability has multiple components that are traditionally associated with these five usability attributes:

1. **Learnability:** The system should be easy to learn so that the user can rapidly start getting some work done with the system.
2. **Efficiency:** The system should be efficient to use, so that once the user has learned the system, a high level of productivity is possible.

3. Memorability: The system should be easy to remember, so that the casual user is able to return to the system after some period of not having used it, without having to learn everything all over again.
4. Errors: The system should have a low error rate, so that users make few errors during the use of the system, and so that if they do make errors, they can easily recover from them. Further, catastrophic errors must not occur.
5. Satisfaction: The system should be pleasant to use, so that users are subjectively satisfied when using it; they like it.

### 3.2 Steven Heim

The definition of usability term by Steven Heim has similarities with Jacob Nielsen's own definition of usability. In Heim's view usability consist of four attributes: simplicity, memorability, predictability and visibility. According to Heim's book 'The Resonant Interface HCI Foundations for Interaction Design' these attributes are defined as follows:

1. Simplicity - If things are simple, they will be easy to understand and, therefore, easy to learn and remember.
2. Memorability - Interfaces that have high memorability will be easier to learn and use
3. Predictability - Predictability involves a person's expectations and his ability to determine the results of his actions ahead of time.
4. Visibility - The principle of visibility involves making the user aware of the system's components and processes, including all possible functionality and feedback from user actions.

### 3.3 ISO 9241-11

ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 161 national standards bodies. Since 1946, the time when an organization was established, ISO have published an over 22209 International Standards and related documents covering almost all aspects of technology and manufacturing (About ISO 2018).

ISO 9241-11 defines usability as:

"The extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context of use" (UsabilityNet 2018).

Effectiveness represents accuracy and completeness when users achieve a specified goal. Efficiency is resource cost in relation to the accuracy and completeness. Satisfaction is the comfort and acceptability of use (Web usability 2018).

It is noteworthy to mention that the new version of ISO 9241-11 has been published in 2018. However, the accesses to the new version of ISO 9241-11 is restricted by organization that, only allows individuals that are willing to pay more than one hundred euro to have possibility to read/access it (ISO 9241-11 2018).

### 3.4 Wikipedia

According to Wikipedia web usability's main goals are presentation of information and choices in a clear and concise way, a lack of ambiguity and the placement of important items in appropriate areas. Another elements of web usability that are highlighted, availability of the content on various devices and browsers and accessibility of website for individuals with physical or mental condition that limits movements, senses, or activities (Web usability 2018).

### 3.5 Why usability is important

The website usability is mainly important because, of the customers/visitors who visits websites to fulfil their needs by finding necessary information, buying products or services etc., as quickly, easier and reliably as possible. By increasing the confidence in a website and being a trustworthy and efficient website, the visitors/customers will become more loyal to the website(company). That in return will reflect on the sales of services or products in case of e-commerce websites, or in more frequent visits in case of informative websites. This is especially significant nowadays since, the website of the company becomes as the main contact point by which visitors of the website will create an impression about that company (Witten 2018). A good quote with relation to usability importance is given by Jacob Nielsen:

“On the Web, usability is a necessary condition for survival. If a website is difficult to use, people leave. If the homepage fails to clearly state what a company offers and what users can do on the site, people leave. If users get lost on a website, they leave. If a website's information is hard to read or doesn't answer users' key questions, they leave.” (Nielsen 2012b)

Another aspect of usability that company can benefit from by utilising usability elements as an outcome is savings of a company's budget. But, more importantly a company will get a website from the time it will be available to public with less usability issues such as: frequently occurring errors, the time spent on the website to fulfil the task and more. By preventing this type of issues to occur, there are evident consequential benefits as functional

as well as financial that the company will receive. These benefits specifically can be associated to companies that are utilising usability through website development process.

#### 4 Usability testing theoretical part

According to Steven Heim the usability test is a structured process used to explore the interaction between an objective participant and a proposed design. Heim also indicates that usability tests have common attributes such as: the goal is to improve a product, participants are real users, the participants do real tasks, participants are formally observed, the data are analysed, and recommendations for improvement are made (Heim 2008, 6-7).

Advantages of usability test can include: the issues and potential problems are highlighted before the product is launched, increases the likelihood of usage and repeat usage of the product, the usability test may minimise the risk of the product failing, and users are better able to reach their goals, which results in the business meeting its targets (Experience UX 2018). Disadvantages according to (Heim 2008, 12) in the other hand can comprise of: artificial context - the usability testing is not hundred percent representative of the real-life scenario. Not definitive of product acceptance - testing does not guarantee that the product actually works. Skewed sample of users - it is difficult to identify the actual target persons of the product and finally usability tests are not always efficient (EasyQA 2018).

Two usability testing methods were selected to help to identify usability issues of client's website considering financial and time constraints that are exists. The heuristics evaluation and thinking aloud tests are selected as the most suitable in this particular case and will be utilized. Both usability tests methods are going to be introduced in the next two sub chapters.

##### 4.1 Heuristics evaluation

Heuristics evaluation is a usability inspection technique where one or a number of usability experts evaluate the user interface of a product for example a website against a set of heuristic principles. A heuristics evaluation can be seen as a quick and lower-cost way to measure and improve your product's usability issues (Muniz 2016).

Jakob Nielsen's heuristics are one of the most-used usability heuristics for user interface design. Nielsen developed the heuristics based on work together with Rolf Molich in 1990 while, the final set of heuristics were published in Nielsen's book Usability Engineering in 1994 (Heuristic evaluation 2018). The ten heuristics can be also found on the Nielsen Norman Group official website are as follows (Nielsen 2005):

1. Visibility of system status. The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.
2. Match between system and the real world: The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms. Follow real-world conventions, making information appear in a natural and logical order.
3. User control and freedom: Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit" to leave the unwanted state without having to go through an extended dialogue. Support undo and redo.
4. Consistency and standards: Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.
5. Error prevention: Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place. Either eliminate error-prone conditions or check for them and present users with a confirmation option before they commit to the action.
6. Recognition rather than recall: Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another. Instructions for use of the system should be visible or easily retrievable whenever appropriate.
7. Flexibility and efficiency of use: Accelerators – unseen by the novice user – may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced users. Allow users to tailor frequent actions.
8. Aesthetic and minimalist design: Dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed. Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.
9. Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover from errors: Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.
10. Help and documentation: Even though it is better if the system can be used without documentation, it may be necessary to provide help and documentation. Any such



information should be easy to search, focused on the user's task, list concrete steps to be carried out, and not be too large.

The advantages of heuristics evaluation include providing relatively inexpensive and quick feedback to designers. Also, assigning the correct heuristic can help suggest the best corrective measures to designers and lastly it can be used together with other usability testing methodologies. One of the heuristics evaluation disadvantages is that it requires knowledge and experience (trained usability expert) to apply the heuristics effectively. As well, multiple experts should be used and to aggregate their results. And finally, the evaluation may identify more minor issues and fewer major issues (Heuristic Evaluations and Expert Reviews 2018).

According Nielsen's (Severity Ratings 2018), severity ratings can be used to allocate the most resources to fix the most serious problems and can also provide a rough estimate of the need for additional usability efforts. Depending on severity ratings with relation to usability problems that the product (website) might have, it can be decided to publish/release the product in case the issues are more of a cosmetic nature. While, if the issues are indicated to be more serious by severity ratings, to postpone the publishing/releasing the product.

The severity of a usability problem is a combination of three factors:

1. The frequency with which the problem occurs: Is it common or rare?
2. The impact of the problem if it occurs: Will it be easy or difficult for the users to overcome?
3. The persistence of the problem: Is it a one-time problem that users can overcome once they know about it or will users repeatedly be bothered by the problem?

The following 0 to 4 single rating scale might be used to rate the severity of usability problems (Usability Engineering 1994b):

- 0 = I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all
- 1 = Cosmetic problem only: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on project
- 2 = Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority
- 3 = Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority
- 4 = Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

#### 4.2 Think aloud test

The think-aloud method was introduced in the usability field by Clayton Lewis while he was at IBM and is explained in 'Task-Centred User Interface Design: A Practical Introduction' by C. Lewis and J. Rieman. The method itself was developed based on the techniques of protocol analysis by Anders Ericsson and Herbert A. Simon (Think aloud protocol 2017).

Think aloud testing is a direct observation method of user that involves asking users to think out loud as they are performing a task. During such testing, users of a website or product are encouraged to think aloud when using individual features. These mostly unconscious expressions are registered and evaluated. This method is especially helpful for determining users' expectations and identifying what aspects of a system are confusing (Thinking Aloud Test 2018). Nielsen insists that think aloud testing can be used at any stage in the development lifecycle of product or website, from early paper prototypes to fully implemented, running systems, without employing any special equipment (Nielsen 2012).

Before conducting a thinking aloud test it is important to make sure that all the necessary equipment such as voice recorder, computer on which the test will be conducted are functioning properly to avoid any equipment failure during the testing. Moreover, all the necessary materials (pen, pencil, notebook) and documentation have to be prepared and checked. Additionally, scenarios and questions must be clear to participants of the usability test, while the consents of the participants should be signed before conducting the usability testing (Running a Usability Test 2018).

While conducting the test it is important to treat participants with respect and make them feel comfortable. But, also to be patient during testing sessions with the participants since they allocated their time and making an effort to help you find usability issues. Participants should be informed that they are helping us testing the product(website) and that participants are not tested during the test. It is vital to remain neutral during the usability test and not lead the participants or help them at first request. Take good notes the better the notes are that are taken during the session, the easier the analysis will be (Running a Usability Test 2018).

According to Nielsen think-aloud benefits includes being: cheap - no special equipment is needed. Robust - even from a poorly run study it still possible get reasonably good findings. Flexible - the method can be used at any stage in the development lifecycle, from early paper prototypes to fully implemented, running systems. Convincing - the most hard-boiled developers, arrogant designers, and tight-fisted executives usually soften up when they get direct exposure to how customers think about their work. Easy to learn - you don't need any extras to run a basic thinking aloud test (Nielsen 2012a).

Although, the downsides of the method are such as unnatural situation - most people don't sit and talk to themselves. This makes it hard for test participants to keep up the required monologue. Filtered statements (vs. brain dump) - users are supposed to say things as soon as they come to mind rather than reflect on their experience and provide an edited commentary after the fact. Biasing user behaviour - prompts and clarifying questions are usually necessary,

but from an untrained facilitator, such interruptions can very easily change user behaviour. No panacea - thinking aloud test method serves many purposes, but not all purposes (Nielsen 2012).

## 5 Usability testing implementation part

In this chapter both heuristics evaluation and thinking aloud usability testing methods will be implemented. Heuristics evaluation will be focused on clients' online petition websites in particular Finnish, English and Russian versions, with relation to signing and creation of petition processes. Heuristics evaluation will be utilized to identify potential issues that clients' websites might have, and that possibly could be overlooked by the participants of thinking aloud test. Thinking aloud test will be focused on clients' and two international online petition websites signing and creation of petition processes in order to identify any potential issues of the clients' website from users' point of view.

### 5.1 Heuristics evaluation test

Heuristics evaluation identified number of issues that were found on three versions Finnish, English and Russian of the clients' website that were tested. Jacob Nielsen's ten heuristics principles and usability problems severity rating scale were used to identify and rank websites issues. Heuristic evaluation was completed by the author of the thesis, even though an author is not trained usability expert. The website's evaluation testing included: creating and signing up petitions, testing website's forms fields on existing issues, testing error messages, assessing colour palette, identifying functional and cosmetic issues all while keeping in mind heuristics principles and severity rating scale. Mozilla Firefox desktop version browser was used for testing purposes and the testing was done by 10.08.2018.

Homepage:

No.	Problem	Severity
1	Facebook's questioner form or/and sponsored message that appears on the left side of home page, is shifting down along with content of the homepage, when cursor hovers over menu bar's dropdown menu or the search items.	1
2	'Follow us on Facebook' on the bottom of the homepage, lacks any visible link to a company's Facebook page while using Mozilla Firefox desktop browser.	2
3	Two menu bar's items are highlighted. If user will visit 'Contact Us' page and will press on 'Browse petitions' or 'Search' both menu bar's items will be highlighted.	2
4	Difficult or unable to select other language versions of the website from the website.	3

Create a petition page:

No.	Problem	Severity
1	All fields, except 'email' field on the creation petition page lack proper validation.	3
2	Error messages do appear in different languages. For example, on Finnish and Russian versions of the website error messages do appear in English.	2
3	Error messages on a website do appear in a text box with bright red(pink) background colour while, the text of the error messages is red.	2
4	'Your email address is your username' on Russian version of the website is written apparently in Ukrainian but, not Russian.	1
5	'Please fill out this field', notices are not attached to the fields that they indicate about.	1

Manage petitions (the page after petition has been created):

No.	Problem	Severity
1	In announcement section, share and send message on Facebook buttons are not working.	2
2	In Russian version of website, after pressing manage petitions, appears number of options such as edit, delete and more. But option 'Pause petition' is written as an 'Edit petition' instead of pause petition.	1
3	'Our last message to this address bounced' error message is not clear.	1
4	Contact author of the petition form has no appropriate validation.	2

## Signing petition page:

No.	Problem	Severity
1	First name, last name and city fields do lack validation. Space symbol in each field can be used instead of actual name and the city.	3
2	If petitioner did not set to have an email as required when petition is created, user still can click on to have 'Keep me update on the petition' while, not entering an email and leaving blank field.	2
3	On Russian version of website, there is a missing option to sign up petitions using Facebook.	2

No issues that can be ranked as fourth and catastrophic were found during the heuristic evaluation. However, all language versions of the website had issues with validation. Even though the websites have a basic validation for the fields that required to be filled by either petitioner or the user of the website it was insufficient. For example, during the test it was possible to create a petition that had single space symbol instead of the name of the petition. Moreover, in the textbox where petitioner must enter the text of the petition, and which must have at least 50 characters, was tricked by pressing the enter button multiple times. The outcome was nameless petition without any text describing petition. Additionally, password field did accepted space symbols as a password, however that lead to an issue because log in form dose not accept password made entirely from space symbols.

Similar issues with the validation was found during the testing of client's websites signing petition process. As a substitute to a first name, family name and city, the space symbols were submitted and were accepted by the form. This issue in theory can make the petition untrustworthy. But more important the lack of proper validation can lead to potential security issues of the website such as being hacked. That in turn can result an unauthorized access to personal information of the users by cybercriminal and undermine confidence in a website.

Another issue that was found and can be significant was difficulty or inability to choose other languages of the website without being an advanced user. The only way apparently to find other language versions of the website was hidden in the translate petition option, the option that designed for advanced users. And lastly error messages on a website do appear in a text box with bright red(pink) background colour while, the text of the error messages are red. This can potentially produce difficulties especially to users with colour blindness. Visual examples of the all identified issues can be found on the appendix section of the thesis (Appendix 1: Visual examples).

## 5.2 Think aloud testing

Thinking aloud test was conducted while keeping in mind the suggestions of the client, to test along the client's websites, two international petition websites 'avaaz.org' and 'change.org'. The client selected those online petition websites to compare client's website with the most popular websites in its category in terms of functionality and usability. 'Avaaz.org' currently has around 50 million members around the world which makes it one of the most well-known online petition websites in the world. Whereas 'change.org' is apparently one of the most popular online petition websites with around 250 million people taking action using the website. The client insisted to strictly focus on creation and signing up petition processes on these websites.

Thinking aloud test was conducted while adhere to the rules and recommendations that are typically set for this type of usability testing method. Three participants of different age groups and IT skills were volunteered to participate in the usability testing of the websites. Participants were selected randomly from the known people of the author and who live in the Helsinki city area to avoid long distance journeys for participants. Also, one of participants was selected for being native in Russian language. Since, it was agreed with the client that one of the participants would test petition websites that are aimed for users that native on language different from English and Finnish in this case Russian was chosen as such language.

The thinking aloud tests were conducted in a period of 17.09-22.09.2018. The testing was conducted on two different computers using Windows 10 operating system, but the same software was used in both cases. For recording purpose, participants voice and activities on the screen CamStudio free software was utilised and as a default browser Mozilla Firefox desktop browser was used. Before the beginning of the testing participants had signed participants consent form, an example of which can be found on Appendix 3: participants consent form. Participants were from different age groups, gender and had different computer skills. More detailed background information can be found on Appendix 4: Background information questionnaire form.

- Participant 1: male, 31-40 age group, very good computer skills.
- Participant 2: female, 51-60 age group, moderate computer skills.
- Participant 3: female, 41-50 age group, good computer skills.

Part of results of thinking aloud test are presented in form of info table, which shows how participants of the tests manage with the tasks. The data is divided into three tables with relation to corresponding tested website or websites. The tasks such as tasks 6 which is states: to repeat the tasks until none of three website options left untested, this task is omitted from

the last table since it is the last tested website in the order. The task 1.1 assigned only to participant 2 whose task was to test Russian version of the websites. The task 2.2 which requests participants of the test to explain briefly, what advanced options on creation of the petition page on client's websites(adressit.com/petitions24.com/petitios247.com) means.

The table show success rate of the participants with tasks on corresponding websites. Also, the table demonstrates how much time each participant spends on particular website to complete the tasks. It must be mentioned that, participant 2 asked for two breaks that each took place after testing the first and second website's usability respectively. Moreover, a minor an internet connection issue has occurred when participant 3 was completing her final tasks which was fixed in short period of time and did not affect the results. The list of tasks can be found on Appendix 2: Thinking aloud test's list of tasks.

Name	Task1	Task1.1	Task2	Task3	Task4	Task5	Task6	Total	Time(min)
Participant1	100%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	9
Participant2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	16
Participant3	100%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	8

Table 1: change.org website testing results

Name	Test1	Test2	Test2.2	Test3	Test4	Test5	Test6	Total	Time(min)
Participant1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	9
Participant2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	14
Participant3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	9

Table 2: adressit.com, petitions24.com, petitios247.com websites testing results

Name	Task1	Task1.1	Task2	Task3	Task4	Task5	Total	Time(min)
Participant1	100%	N/A	100%	100%	50%	100%	90%	8
Participant2	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	83%	12
Participant3	100%	N/A	100%	100%	50%	100%	90%	9

Table 3: avaaz.org website testing results

The data from the table show that participants did well by completing most of the tasks on the websites, the only exception was task 4 of 'avaaz.org' usability test. The task 4 requires participants to log out from the account after petition has been created and go to the homepage of the website. But the issue was identified that 'avaaz.org' website did not have a clear homepage button, also a logo of the website which often used as link to homepage did not lead to the homepage of the website. The more experienced participants in terms of computer skills did manage to go to the homepage of the website by editing the link of the website in the browser search bar. While the participant 2 did asked for help that, was provided in order to continue further testing of the website. The time that participant 1 and 3 did spend on the websites to complete the tasks on average took nine minutes. The time the participant 2 spend on the websites were slightly higher on average compare to other two participants, but it must be considered that participant 2 had an additional task, to change the language of the website. Besides, participant 2 is less experienced in terms of computer skills than the other two participants. It must be mentioned that few participants had an impression that 'avaaz.org' was the quickest among petition websites for creating and signup up a petition. However, according to the testing results the time participants did spend to complete similar tasks on all tested websites were quite even.

### 5.2.1 Participants impressions of the websites

Participants impressions about the websites were collected during thinking aloud test and post-test questionnaire. Participants impressions were summarized and were collected into three sections, each to corresponding website.

Participants impression of change.org:

- Clear indication of website's purpose and what it is dedicated to. The homepage of the website looks bright.
- Noticeable buttons such as 'start a petition' on the website that caught an attention and well described titles of the fields in the process of creation a petition.



- The process of creating petition seems intuitive to petitioners.

Participants impression of petitions24.com/petitions247.com/adressit.com:

- The name indicates website's purpose. The site is clear and intuitive with menu bar on the top.
- The filtering (year, most recent, last signed) of the list of petitions was noteworthy to the participants.
- The creation of the petition page was clear, however advanced options were a little bit confusing to one participant.
- When participants received an error message, they were able to understand them and swiftly fix the issues.

Participants impression of avaaz.org:

- Participants have an impression about the website that it is interactive. Participants are keen on live statics of the avaaz.org members and a map that shows website members location.
- The participants did appreciate the colour pallet of the website and the language selector that immediately visible to a visitor of a website. Start a petition buttons with bright colour are easy to notice.
- Simpler creation of petition form comparing to other two websites according to one participant.
- Lack of visible list of petitions.

### 5.2.2 Participants suggestions

Suggestions are based on participant comments during the usability test and on answers of the post usability testing questionnaire. The list of participants suggestions that potentially may improve usability of the client's website as follows:

1. To add language selector on the client's website that appear as necessity by majority of the usability test participants.
2. To add brighter colours to the buttons on the client's website. For example, 'start the petition' link on the home page of the website can be more visible, if it would be in a form of a button that have a bright colour.

3. To add an indicator on how many signatures are left or needed to reach the goal of the petition. In the same way, that can be found on two other tested international petition websites.
4. Additional information about the fields on the creation of the petition page would be helpful.
5. The top menu bar could be more visible.

### 5.3 Summary of the usability testing and recommendations

Recommendations are based on outcome of the two usability testing methods heuristics evaluation and thinking aloud testing of the three language versions of client's websites and two international petition websites. The usability testing helped to identify usability issues of the client's websites that consist of few major issues and number of cosmetic and secondary issues. Moreover, usability test participants suggestions on how to improve the client's website were also taken into account. The given recommendations may potentially improve the usability of the client's website if applied correctly. It should be mentioned that overall the client's websites performed well and allowed to complete the main tasks of the online petition website without facing any catastrophic issues.

One of the major issues of the client's website is lack of proper validation of the fields on creation of the petition page form and signing up petition fields. This issue can make the website vulnerable to unauthorized access to website's users' data. The trim or/and prepared statement functions if applied to the fields(values) of the forms with corresponding parameters could be used as one of the measures to make the website more secure. Nevertheless, developer of the website must pay attention to this issue and further study other suitable solutions.

Another major issue of the client's website is lack of language selector. Which is especially evident by comparing client's petition website to other tested international online petition websites. Moreover, users or visitors of the website will need to study advanced options on the creation of the petition page to get an information that the website is available on several other languages. There could be number of ways this issue can be solved, for example by adding on the top right corner of the website a language selector. Selected language will lead user of the website to corresponding version of website of a chosen language.

One of the cosmetic issues on the website is related to the colour palette of the website. Error messages on a website do appear in a text box with bright red(pink) background colour

while, the text of the error messages is red. The better option would be a more contrasting colours, for example the text of the message could black which, especially would be helpful to users of the website with the eye sight problems. As well, 'start the petition' link on the home page of the website is not sufficiently visible. Again, in contrast to other tested online petition websites that have bright 'start the petition' buttons on the homepage. It is recommended to follow suite and make the start the petition link as form of a button with a bright colour.

Another cosmetic issue can be found, on the creation of the petition page of the client's website where, each field do have description of what that filed is intended for. However, the other two international websites that were tested along with client's website do have more in-depth explanation of the fields that petitioner required to fill. Moreover, they do have examples on how they can be filled, that participants of the usability test appreciated. It is recommended to add more description to each field to make it clearer to the users, what and how each filed can be filled.

The last recommendation is based on thinking aloud test participant's comments. Participant did mention that there is no indicator of petitions signature goal or how many signatures are left to reach the goal, that can be found on other two tested petition websites. It is recommended to make petitions more informative by adding an indicator of how many signatures were signed of the total intended number of signatures.

## 6 The key factors that affect person choice, regarding petition website

The chapter will briefly cover the topic of key factors that affect person's choice regarding petition websites but, also might be applied to other websites in that matter. While considering that the more in-depth review of the topic will be inexpedient because it will require additional time which is limited in this case. This information could potentially be used by the client to have an idea what factors may potentially influence person's website choice and based on this data adjust certain elements of the website to enhance its usability.

The common factors that can affect person's choice regarding the website are derives from user interface area. Which person encounters at first interaction with the website. The factors such as: the first impression of the website appearance, credibility and accessibility of the website, quality of the content, simplicity and more are factors that do affect person's choice of the website. For instance, the first impression of the website includes utilization of the screen size, eye catching images or title on the home page, background colour and brightness of webpages. Credibility of the website reflects in, number of the awards won by the website, identification of the owner and designers of the website and website visits counter.

Accessibility comprises of practices that aiming to improve the access to websites for persons with disabilities. Which includes to provide synchronized alternatives for multimedia (captions, audio descriptions), allow users to avoid content that could cause seizures due to photosensitivity and make all functionality operable via a keyboard interface and more. The slow loading speed of website's pages could turn off the person from using the website the source of the issues could be poor coding, unoptimized images. There are also technical aspects of the website such as the server of the web hosting service where the website's files are essentially stored in and which, reflects on the loading speed of the website's pages (Zhang 1999).

However, it is not the only factors that do affect person's websites choice but, there are also person's behavioural patterns that affects which website a person selects based on his/her biases. Aurora Harley (2016) explains in her article that how people choose between different options with the aid of prospect theory and loss aversion. The prospect theory was proposed by psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky in 1979. Prospect theory explains the biases that people use when they make such decisions like: certainty, isolation effect and loss aversion.

**Certainty:** people tend to overweight options that are certain and are risk averse for gains. This bias may also explain why people often remain loyal to a specific product, service or website.

**Isolation effect:** the isolation effect refers to people's tendency to disregard any elements that are common to both options, in an effort to simplify and focus on what differs, but it can also lead to inconsistent choices depending on how alternatives are presented. The Isolation effect can be used by website's owner advantage by designing the website so that customers pay attention to what owner/developer want them to see and remember. The shapes can be used to stand out from the rest of the homepage to draw attention to certain elements. Choose a colour that contrasts strongly with the rest of the site for call-to-action for example create a petition button. Wide range of words, tenses, and expressions could be used to make sure important information catches the visitor's attention (Murad 2018).

**Loss aversion:** most people will behave so that they minimize losses, because losses appear larger than gains, even though the probability of those losses is small. This idea reflects the loss aversion, that losses generally have a much larger psychological impact than gains of the same size. The brain regions that process value and reward may be silenced more when we evaluate a potential loss than they are activated when we assess a similar-sized gain (Schit-tenhelm 2016).

For instance, after petition has been created the petitioner can be offered to purchase a promotion for the petition. The offer that will have a time frame would indicate that petition with promotion have a higher success rate of reaching petition signature goal. The time frame would create the feeling of urgency, since the offer would be available only limited amount of time for example for twelve or twenty-four hours (Loss Aversion Design Pattern 2018).

Overall there are many factors that can affect person's website choice such as the design of the website, behavioural factors, social and cultural aspects, bandwagon effect and more. The factors that were mentioned in the chapter can be take in to account during the development process of the website or after the website's development process is complete. However, applying those changes when the website is in development process is easier and economical. The developer of the website can make the website more appealing for visitors while keeping in mind potential website's visitors' behavioural patterns.

## 7 Russia's petition culture and its current state

The chapter will briefly cover the Russian petition culture and its current state. It will cover some of the historically important events that have direct relation to the history of the petitions in Russia. Moreover, the most used online petition websites are going to be listed in the chapter. As well, the chapter will cover the current state of the petition in Russia, and the role petitions currently play for society in Russia. This task was assigned in order to gather information for the client about Russian petition state, due to lack of availability of such information on English and Finnish languages.

Petitions or initiatives have a long history in Russia that started at around mid-15th century, at that time the Russia was called Grand Principality of Moscow. An individual or collective written petition were called "chelobitnaya" that is literally means "beat the brow" and were remained in that form in Russia until the third quarter of the 18th century. The petitioners, who brought petitions in the name of the tsar, had to stand at the Red Porch of the Faceted Chamber. Petitions were collected by dyaks(clerks) of Boyar Duma (Челобитная 2016).

One of the notable historical events that is linked to petitions in Russian empire occurred on January 9, 1905 in St. Petersburg, also known as "Bloody Sunday". The St. Petersburg workers that marched to the Winter Palace and led by Father Georgy Gapon were aiming to give Tsar Nikolai II of Russia a collective petition about working needs. The petition included several political demands, the main of which was the convocation of the national representation in the form of the Constituent Assembly. The demonstrators desire to break though the cordons of solders that were positioned next to Winter Palace and number of other relevant locations, caused the dispersal of the march during which firearms were used against unarmed workers.

The dispersal of the march, which caused the death of several hundred people, led to an explosion of indignation in Russian society and triggered the beginning of the First Russian Revolution in 1905 (Кровавое воскресенье 2018).

The current state of the petitions in Russia is different compared to for example Soviet Union, where there were many restrictions and obstacles. The government recognised the role of the online petitions by developing state owned online petition website “Russian Public Initiative” ‘www.roi.ru’. Only those petitions that were created on the “Russian Public Initiative” have actual legal value. The signing method on the website is no different from other platforms, except each signature has a legal value. Because, in order to sign or create a petition, a person required to register first on the website “State Services”, ‘www.gosuslugi.ru’ with a bank account or an identity card/passport. For the authorities to respond to the petition, the petition needs to collect the following number of signatures: at the federal level - at least one hundred thousand, at the regional level, if over two million people live in the area - one hundred thousand, for the rest - five percent of the population, at the municipal level - five percent from all residents of the municipality. However, the registration process on the “Russian Public Initiative” website is time consuming, but as well there is no convenient access through social networks. At the moment on the website that became active on 4 of March 2013, were posted 2430 active petitions. Overall 13839 petitions were created on the website of these, 32 have been considered by the authorities and only 17 have received positive decisions (Chukhno 2017).

According to Esquire and number of other sources including the director of the Eastern-Europe’s and Central-Asia’s online petition website ‘change.org’, the website ‘change.org’ is the most popular online petition website in Russia with around fifteen million users. The main petition topics that collect large number of signatures on the website are health, animal rights, human rights and petitions of people with disabilities. According to ‘change.org’ own study, 71% of their users have a higher education with men and women equally presented on the website. Most of the user from Moscow, St. Petersburg and other major cities and have different political views and religions. A prime example of the petition on Russian version of the ‘change.org’ website is the petition against shooting stray animals before the football World Cup 2018 in Russia. The author of the petition succeeded in attracting actors, actresses, singers and other people to her petition via social networks. As a result, the petition has collected more than 1.8 million signatures (Kuresha 2018).

According to Dmitriyeva (2018) an author of the petition, it is possible that petition itself failed to meet the main aim. But she indicates that she met with Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, Vitaly Mutko, and with representatives of Russia’s Ministry of Sport to discuss the

topic which by itself was quite difficult to accomplish. Moreover, federal government assured, to issuing instructions for Russia's regional governments and adopting a resolution on building animal shelters in the FIFA World Cup 2018 host cities.

Other popular online petition platforms in Russia along with 'change.org' and 'roi.ru' are 'avaaz.org', 'onlinepetition.ru' and 'ag.mos.ru' an app for Moscow region only (Orlova 2015). The search results of google.ru show above listed online petition websites along the client's petition website 'petitions247.com' on the first page of the search results, when a person enters 'online petitions' using Russian language. It might be concluded that online petitions play relative role in Russian society and at least ten percent of the Russian population are using online petition websites. Moreover, Russian government does pay attention to the petitions that collect large number of signatures especially if they were picked by the mass media, even though petitions created on websites like 'change.org' do not have legal value by the country's laws.

## 8 Conclusion

In final chapter of the thesis, that was completed for Petitions24 Oy and where conclusion of the whole thesis work will be briefly summarized. Additionally, number of subjects that were learned during the process of completing the thesis by the author are going to be listed below.

Even though the time frame that was agreed on with client on thesis completion was not met. The thesis questions that were defined in objectives section of the thesis were all answered by this thesis work. The questions including what usability's definition, usability's test definition and purpose and what usability test methods appropriate for this type of projects. The usability test methods that were selected while keeping in mind time and budget limitations in this case were heuristics evaluation and thinking aloud test.

One of the main questions of the thesis were what usability issues were found on client's website and what are their potential solution? The usability testing helped to identify number of usability issues on the client's Russian, English and Finnish language versions of the website. And based on usability test's findings composed of heuristics evaluation results and suggestions and comments that were given by the participants of thinking aloud test. The list of recommendations was formed for the client to have an idea of the usability issues on websites and their possible solutions.

The usability issues including the lack of proper validation on client's website form fields that can be potentially solved by utilizing trim or/and prepared statement functions. By applying functions to the fields(values) of the forms on the website, might be used as one of the

measures to make the website more secure. Another identified usability issue was the lack of language selector that can be solved in number of ways for example by adding on the top right corner of the website a language selector. Selected language will lead user of the website to corresponding language version of website.

The client's website however, performed well along with other international petitions websites that were tested. And allowed participants of the thinking aloud test to complete set of tasks without any appalling issues. But it does not mean that the client's website usability cannot be improved. Thus, it is advised to browse through the table of issues in heuristics evaluation test chapter of the thesis that includes number of cosmetic and minor issues that were left out of recommendations due to low severity ranking.

Another question of the thesis was, what factors influence person's choice regarding petition websites. The factors that potentially can influence person's choice were identified and presented in sixth chapter of the thesis. The factors include user experience of the website for example: credibility, accessibility, quality of the content, simplicity and more. But as well behavioural patterns such as: certainty, isolation effect and loss aversion may also potentially influence person's choice.

And lastly, the thesis question about Russian petition culture and its current state. The 'che-lobitnaya' which dates to around 16<sup>th</sup> century was a form of petition or initiative that was addressed to tsar. Today online petition websites are used by around ten percent of Russian population. The website 'change.org' that has 15 million users in Russia is apparently the most used online petition website in the country. However, petitions created on websites similar to change.org does not have legal value by the country's laws. Nevertheless, petitions that collect large number of signatures are still considered by the government officials despite being created on online petition websites like 'avaaz.org' or 'change.org'.

I also would like mention number of topics that I was not much aware about, before I started the thesis project but become more familiar with during and by the end thesis process. Although, I was aware of petition concept in some way, but I definitely have learned more about the process that petitions take from the moment a person submits a petition to government official till it reaches the parliament of the country for discussions about the petition. And the role petitions play for society as a democratic instrument that can make people opinion heard by the government officials in any country about any topics that are important to people, due to online petition websites.

Moreover, I have familiarized with the usability concept and how it reflects on website's overall user experience. Selecting the most appropriate usability test methods for given tasks



was a good learning process, as well as designing and conducting usability testing of the websites utilising heuristics evaluation and thinking aloud test. I have become more aware of behavioural patterns and how they can potentially influence a person and his or her website selection process. But as well, how developer of the website can make the website more appealing for visitors while keeping in mind potential website's visitors' behavioural patterns. While studying and gathering information about Russian petition state, culture and most used online petition websites in Russia was informative.

Finally, I would like to add that usability tests were managed to identify number of usability issues on the Petitions24 Oy's websites that potentially can be solved with the help of list of recommendations to further improve user experience of the website. I would advise developer of the website to browse through the table of issues in chapter 5.1. And the outcome of heuristics evaluation test, that includes number of minor and cosmetic issues that were left out of recommendations list due to low severity ranking. These usability tests findings can be used as source for further examination on presence of potential usability issues on the Petitions24 Oy's websites.

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## Appendix 1: Visual examples of the issues on client's websites

### Home page:

#### Problem 1



#### Problem 2

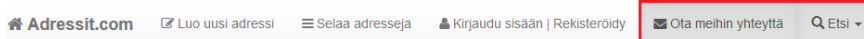
##### Adressit.com

Tarjoamme ilmaisen sivutilan nettiaadresseille. Käyttäjemme luomiin adresseihin viitataan päivittäin tiedotusvälineissä, joten nettiaadressi on tehokas väline, kun haluat saada asiallesi suuren yleisön ja päättäjien huomion.

- [Luo uusi addressi](#)
- [Kuinka kirjoittaa addressi?](#)
- [Kuinka mainostaa addressia?](#)
- [Voiko adresseilla vaikuttaa?](#)
- [Addressi vai kansalaisaloite?](#)
- [Yksityisyyskäytännöt](#)



#### Problem 3



#### Problem 4

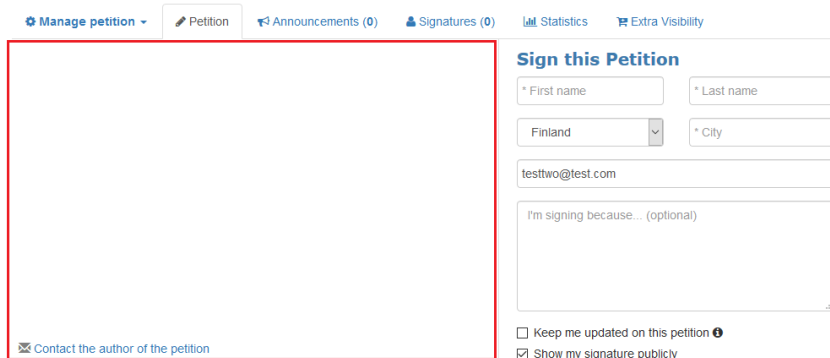
##### Lisäasetukset

Voit muokata allekirjoittajille esitettäviä kysymyksiä, vaihtaa allekirjoituslomakkeen kielen ja valita adressin URL-osoitteen.

- Näkyvyys:  Julkinen  Yksityinen
- URL:  [Muokkaa]
- Kieli: Englanti [Muokkaa]

### Create a petition page:

#### Problem 1



## Problem 2

**Error while trying to create a petition!**

- petition\_author\_password: You already have a user account on our website. Unfortunately this password does not match with your existing user account.
- Adressin sisältö: Adressin tekstin pituus pitää olla vähintään 50 kirjainta. Kerro tarkemmin aiheesta, jotta nekin joille asia ei ole ennestään tuttu, ymmärtäisivät mistä tässä on kyse.
- Petition address: <https://www.adressit.com/test>. Tämä on jo käytössä. Kokeile jotain muuta.

## Problem 3


**Error while trying to create a petition!**

- petition\_author\_password: You already have a user account on our website. Unfortunately this password does not match with your existing user account.
- Adressin sisältö: Adressin tekstin pituus pitää olla vähintään 50 kirjainta. Kerro tarkemmin aiheesta, jotta nekin joille asia ei ole ennestään tuttu, ymmärtäisivät mistä tässä on kyse.
- Petition address: <https://www.adressit.com/test>. Tämä on jo käytössä. Kokeile jotain muuta.

## Problem 4

## Allekirjoita tämä adressi

 Our last message to this address bounced.

## Problem 5

Adressit.com [Luo uusi adressi](#) [Selaa adresseja](#) [Kirjautu sisään](#) | [Rekisteröidy](#)

Please fill out this field.

Adressin sisältö

Pyydät ihmisiä olemaan samaa mieltä tämän tekstin kanssa ja allekirjoittamaan sen. Ilmaisehan näkökantasi selkeästi (mitä vastaan / minkä puolesta olet, mitä tulisi tehdä ja miksi).

## Manage petitions (the page after petition has been created):

## Problem 1

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Send a message on Facebook](#)

[Send an email](#)

[Tweet to your followers](#)

[Promote your petition](#)

## Problem 2

Управление петицией | Петиция | Сообщения (0) | Подписи (0) | Статистика | Дополнительная видимость

- Входящие (0)
- Редактировать
- Перевести эту петицию на другие языки
- Опубликовать сообщение
- Распечатать подписи
- Перенести
- Неподтвержденные подписи
- Редактировать петицию**
- Удалить

Советы

- Добавьте в свою петицию видео или фотографию.
- Проверьте орфографию, грамматику и пунктуацию.
- Попросите кого-то вычитать ваш текст.

### Problem 3

#### Allekirjoita tämä addressi

test

test

test

Suomi

testone@test.com

Our last message to this address bounced.

### Problem 4

Ваше имя  
as

Адрес электронной почты  
dasdaad@asdada.com

Телефонный номер  
asas

Subject (in English)  
asas

The message (in English)  
as

Название петиции  
as

URL петиции  
as

4 + 2 =  
6

### Signing petition page:


#### Problem 1

#	Name	City	Date
121		Riga	Dec 15, 2013
122		Dolní Třebonín	Jan 18, 2014
123		+	Aug 10, 2018

« 1 2 3 11 12 13 »

## Problem 2

### Sign this Petition


 Login with Facebook

OR


test test

Finland test

Email address (optional)

Keep me updated on this petition 


Show my signature publicly

I'm not a robot  reCAPTCHA  
Privacy - Terms

Sign

I accept the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

## Problem 3

 [Дополнительная видимость](#)

**Подписать петицию**

\* Имя

## Appendix 2: Thinking aloud test's list of tasks

### Thinking aloud test's tasks

All options are intended to be tested however, from option two participant of the test should select one which is uses desired language. It is also recommended to participant of the test to select options in natural order from one to three.

#### Task 1

To search from Google home page for options presented below as follows:

Option 1: [change.org](http://change.org)

Option 2: [adressit.com](http://adressit.com) (Finnish), [petitions24.com](http://petitions24.com) (English), [petitions247.com](http://petitions247.com) (Russian)

Option 3: [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org)

After opening the website of one of the options' participant should proceed to the next task.

#### Task 1.1

The task made for testing Russian language versions of the petition websites and designed only to participant who is fluent in Russian. The task is to change the language of the website to the participant's desired language in this case is Russian, if such an option is available on the website.

#### Task 2

To create a petition using unspecified(false) user name and an email address on preferred or unspecified topic, in order to test petition website's functionalities.

#### Task 2.1

The task is intended only to the 'Option 2' websites. The task is to explain the meaning of the advanced options on creation of petition page of the 'Option 2' websites.

#### Task 3

The task is to log out from the account and go back to home page.

#### Task 4

Browse through the available petitions on the website. Then select only one petition that participant prefers and open it.

#### Task 5

Sign up the opened petition in preferred method, if multiple sign up methods options are available.

#### Task 6

Go over and repeat the tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 with petition websites that were left untested. For example, after testing option one website, participant can select one of the 'Option 2' websites and start the testing by going through the tasks again until no options left untested.

### Appendix 3: Participan consent form

#### Participant consent form

Please read and sign this form.

This is a study about usability issues and user experience of petition websites. Intended for people who are going to use petition websites to create and sign up petitions. Our goal is to make the client's web site intuitive and user friendly. Your participation will help us to achieve this goal. You will be asked to perform tasks such as creation and signing up petitions on a website using computer. A facilitator will sit near you and help you if you are stuck or have questions. We will also conduct an interview with you regarding the tasks you performed when the testing will be completed.

Participation in this usability study is voluntary. All information will remain strictly confidential. The descriptions and findings may be used to help improve the Petitions24 Oy 's petition websites. However, at no occasion will your name or any other identification be used, moreover all information and recording is for research(study) purposes only. You can withdraw your consent to the testing and stop participation at any time.

I have read and understood the information on this form and had all of my questions answered

\_\_\_\_\_

Subject's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Thank you!

We appreciate your participation.

Appendix 4: Background information questionnaire form

**Participant 1**

1. What is your age? a) Under 20, b) 20-30, **c) 31-40**, d) 41-50, e) 51-60, f) Over 60
2. What is your gender? a) Female, **b) Male**
3. Do you use computer on daily basis? **a) Yes**, b) No
4. How many hours per day do you spend using computer? a) Less than 1h, b) 1-2h, c) 3-4h, d) 5-6h, **e) More than 6h**
5. Do you use the internet on daily basis? **a) Yes**, b) No
6. How many hours per day do you spend browsing internet? a) Less than 1h, b) 1-2h, c) 3-4h, d) 5-6h, **e) more than 6h**
7. Are you familiar with petition concept? **a) Yes**, b) No
8. Have you ever used online petition websites before? a) Yes, **b) No**
9. If 'Yes' how often (number of times) do you use online petition websites per month? a) 1-5t, b) 6-10t, c) 11-15t, d) 16-20t, e) more than 20t

**Participant 2**

1. What is your age? a) Under 20, b) 20-30, c) 31-40, d) 41-50, **e) 51-60**, f) Over 60
2. What is your gender? **a) Female**, b) Male
3. Do you use computer on daily basis? a) Yes, **b) No**
4. How many hours per day do you spend using computer? **a) Less than 1h**, b) 1-2h, c) 3-4h, d) 5-6h, e) more than 6h
5. Do you use the internet on daily basis? **a) Yes**, b) No
6. How many hours per day do you spend browsing internet? a) Less than 1h, b) 1-2h, **c) 3-4h**, d) 5-6h, e) more than 6h
7. Are you familiar with petition concept? **a) Yes**, b) No
8. Have you ever used online petition websites before? a) Yes, **b) No**
9. If 'Yes' how often (number of times) do you use online petition websites per month? a) 1-5t, b) 6-10t, c) 11-15t, d) 16-20t, e) more than 20t

**Participant 3**

1. What is your age? a) Under 20, b) 20-30, c) 31-40, **d) 41-50**, e) 51-60, f) Over 60
2. What is your gender? **a) Female**, b) Male
3. Do you use computer on daily basis? **a) Yes**, b) No
4. How many hours per day do you spend using computer? a) Less than 1h, b) 1-2h, c) 3-4h, **d) 5-6h**, e) more than 6h
5. Do you use the internet on daily basis? **a) Yes**, b) No
6. How many hours per day do you spend browsing internet? a) Less than 1h, b) 1-2h, c) 3-4h, **d) 5-6h**, e) more than 6h



7. Are you familiar with petition concept? a) Yes, **b) No**
8. Have you ever used online petition websites before? a) Yes, **b) No**
9. If 'Yes' how often (number of times) do you use online petition websites per month? a)1-5t, b)6-10t, c)11-15t, d)16-20t, e) more than 20t

## Appendix 5: Post thinking aloud test interviews

### Participant 1

1. What do you think about the websites (overall) simplicity, usability? Did everything work as you expected? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: Overall it was easy to work on the websites, but the last option(avaaz.org) was the easiest. Creation (registration) and signing up the petition were simple on avaaz.org.

2. How easy was it for you to complete the tasks? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: The tasks were easy to do on all websites.

3. Was it easy to understand the language that was used on the websites? What do you think about 'Option 2'?

Answer: 'Change the world' slogan on change.org was vague.

Option 2 was an easiest compare to other options in terms of language used on the website. However, a bigger 'create a petition' button on the home page would be better.

4. Was there any feature/option on the websites that you did not particularly understand how it works?

Answer: Option 3(avaaz.org) could not go to home page after logging out and list of petitions on the site was missing.

Pettitions24.com lacked changing languages feature on the website, and menu bar was not so noticeable as well.

5. Do you think the website, 'Option 2' needs any improvement or any additional features? If yes, what would you suggest? What do you think about 'Option 2' lack of language selector?

Answer: Petitions24.com need to solve the issue with languages selection on the website.

6. If you would recommend one of the websites to your friend, which one would mention and why?

Answer: Change.org website will be recommended by me, since you can clearer understand what it is about.

### Participant 2

1. What do you think about the websites (overall) simplicity, usability? Did everything work as you expected? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: Change.org was my favourite compare to others because it was detailed, and I could understand it better.

2. How easy was it for you to complete the tasks? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: Tasks were explained well, but because I do not use computer often on daily basis. And because it was my first-time using petition website it was not easy to complete the tasks.

3. Was it easy to understand the language that was used on the websites? What do you think about 'Option 2'?

Answer: Because all of the tested websites had a Russian version of the website the language was not an issue.

4. Was there any feature/option on the websites that you did not particularly understand how it works?

Answer: I did not manage to go to home page of [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org), other than that I do not remember any other problem.

5. Do you think the website, 'Option 2' needs any improvement or any additional features? If yes, what would you suggest? What do you think about 'Option 2' lack of language selector?

Answer: I do not know what can be improved on the [petition247.com](http://petition247.com). As for the lack of language selector you might use translator.

6. If you would recommend one of the websites to your friend, which one would mention and why?

Answer: Even though process of creating the petition was longer on [Change.org](http://Change.org) I would still recommend it. Every step was explained well and in details that would be especially good for users who use petition website for the first time.

### **Participant 3**

1. What do you think about the websites (overall) simplicity, usability? Did everything work as you expected? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: Simplicity: [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org), [adressit.com](http://adressit.com), [change.org](http://change.org), Usability: [adressit.com](http://adressit.com), [change.org](http://change.org), [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org). On [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) after creating the petition was made an issue appeared when I wanted to go to main page. But [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) petition creating process was clean and fast.

2. How easy was it for you to complete the tasks? Which option of three did you preferred the most and why?

Answer: It was easy because, the tasks were clear. Both [adressit.com](http://adressit.com) and [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) were both quite easy to use.

3. Was it easy to understand the language that was used on the websites? What do you think about 'Option 2'?

Answer: Personally, I understood all three website options.

4. Was there any feature/option on the websites that you did not particularly understand how it works?

Answer: The issue with the [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) was obvious because it stuck, even though I was able to complete the task. (Participant refers to the task three)

5. Do you think the website, 'Option 2' needs any improvement or any additional features? If yes, what would you suggest? What do you think about 'Option 2' lack of language selector?

Answer: 'Option 2' ([adressit.com](http://adressit.com)) did not have feature to choose other languages. It could be a big issue on an international level.

6. If you would recommend one of the websites to your friend, which one would mention and why?

Answer: Despite the issue I would recommend [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org), because the website was interactive(live).