Summary of e-tools seminar on dangerous substances

Bilbao, 26-27 September 2017
Purpose of the event

In relation to e-tools on dangerous substances:

- To share information on all aspects of OSH e-tool* development
- To stimulate thought and debate on the process
- To network – build the links to those with a common position or interest

*An electronic, interactive, tool that receives data and provides an output tailored for the end-user that focuses on health and safety issues
Why ... e-tools on dangerous substances?

- Simplify access to information and advice
- Support compliance with regulations
- Provide a recording system
- Provide single-point access to existing, but extensive information, e.g. datasheets
- Provide and share good practices – in general, substitution practice
- Provide a portable tool and information system (laptop, tablet, phone app)
Varying focus of tools presented

- Risk assessment process
- Safety data sheet and information management
- Good practices including substitution
- OSH legislation coverage only, or comprehensive approach including REACH and environmental legislation
- Interactive elements – fully/partially interactive
- Database shared by multiple users
Development approaches – will depend on circumstances

- SMEs look for ‘what are the regulations?’ ‘What do I have to do? – What good practice means I will comply?’
  - Scope what is available and what MSEs say they want to know – pilot study

- Complexity vs simplicity
  - Just OSH or covering REACH, environmental legislation?
  - Long and short versions?

- Different entry points for different levels of information

- Include detailed information in a searchable online reference feature
  - To help keep tool appearance simple

- Flexibility within development
  - Start with a core element and add modules/portals/features over time
  - Produce a variety of formats – online, tablet, phone app, others over time as technology advances
  - Avoid having to move platform/use new software

- Include user support features – FAQs, training, hotline, leaflet...

- Confidentiality of information – pros and cons
Development issues encountered

- Realistic timeframe + planning for ongoing work?
- Sufficient budget!
- Organised approach
  - Committees, stakeholder involvement, tester network, maintenance strategy
- Software and content complimentary
- Getting common understanding between IT and OSH dangerous substances experts
- No standard software format for safety data sheet exchange
  - Work with provider companies
- Challenge to get companies to share information (product data/practices)
  - Fear of revealing business secrets – need to convince sceptics
- Difficult to engage companies already using other systems
Development issues – strategic approaches taken

- **Expert/stakeholder committees**
  - Strategic committee
  - Operational committee

- **Sufficient time for testing – feedback process important**

- **Structured user testing**
  - Software and content
  - Tester network

- **Planned strategy for easy maintenance from the beginning**
  - Content update/regulatory changes and software

- **Feedback**
  - Use it!
  - Build in user feedback processes
  - Check comments on app stores

- **Further development – link up with other partners/campaigns**
Promotion approaches used

- Trade fairs, workshops, webinars, training
- Train key multipliers
- Target: experts, different users, ‘multipliers’, manufacturers/suppliers (not easy but usually who MSEs go to for information), trade associations, trade unions, software developers
- Link to a campaign
  - EU-OSHA campaign dangerous substances 2018-19!
- Get link to e-tool included on other websites
- Link into other products of your organisation
- Linkedin Showcase
- Associated products support publicity products:
  - Leaflet, starter kit, publicity material..
Conclusions Day 1

- Dangerous substances have been a topic for e-tools for a long time. There are a variety of approaches, focuses and platforms used – ranging from good practice stories to a sector specific focus
- There is considerable sensitivity over data (e.g. inventories of dangerous substances) which can act as a barrier to tool use
  - Requiring a download of a tool (e.g. so that private data is stored on a user computer) can additionally be a barrier to use
- There is a need for a collaborative approach to tool development including suppliers, manufacturers, users, legislators and workers
- There is a need to be engaging with the end user and closing the feedback loop. There is a need to be user-friendly with lots of help available – this can be e.g. FAQs or ‘starter packs’
- Training support – whether for the tool or the dangerous substances management approach – is vital
Conclusions Day 1 (continued)

- The safety data sheet (electronic) format is a challenge to coherent tool development
- The promotion of the tools is vital, using events, social media, and trade press
- It is not necessary to start from scratch with tool development – there is a community available to help. Existing tools may be transferable.
- To establish a tool as live, ongoing, maintained and updated can be challenging and expensive, especially to keep it free for the end user
- Data security (IT security) can be an issue and ensuring data protection is an ongoing issue
- Dangerous substances is a data heavy area, this may discourage the use of mobile devices. Mobile functionalty changes quicker than desktop. Two versions iOS and Android needed.
- The future is here – consider augmented reality in particular and virtual reality (for training)
- Tools have to balance the need for comprehensiveness while not overloading the end user with data. Data must be shareable by end users
Conclusions Day 2

- There is a mixed picture of tool needs and priorities regarding dangerous substances in Member States, but in general there is a need for high quality, simple tools on dangerous substances.
- Language is a challenge, not only national languages (more than one may be needed in a state) but delivering complex material in a lay person’s language.
- Do not underestimate the amount of support needed for technical and language adaptation. Often where there is the greatest need for a tool there may be the fewest resources.
- Labour Inspectorates may have a big role in the promotion, dissemination and use of the tool. In some states the role of the external prevention services is very important, as is the role of the social partners.
Conclusions Day 2 (continued)

- Maintenance requirements will depend on the anticipated life-span of the tool as well as any technical or legislative changes that occur during the tool’s lifespan.
- A topic for discussion is ‘integrability’ – the ability to include aspects of one tool into another.
- A tool may function as a prevention tool, but also as a vehicle for awareness raising, promotion and education. But a tool alone is not enough it has to be part of a package.
- The tool ideally should provide a win-win approach whereby not only is there better prevention but also life is made easier for the employer.