



Summary of e-tools workshop

Bilbao, 21-22 September 2016



Purpose and format of the e-tools workshop

Purpose:

- 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

Format:

- Expert presentations followed by workshops using an existing publication as a basis for the theoretical development of a tool

An OSH e-tool is an electronic, interactive tool that receives data and provides an output tailored for the end-user that focuses on health and safety issues

Why OSH e-tools?

- “To keep with the times”
 - As part of a “natural” / technological evolution:
 - from local PC without / with limited internet connection
 - to PC / Mobile / Tablet (Web) fully connected;
 - Fast increase over the years of the percentage of the population using Mobile / Tablets / PCs connected to internet.
- To “close the gap between complex/abstract regulation and practice”
- Because associated with “innovation”, “new”, ... (more attractive)
- Because associated with words like: “simple”, “practical”, “facilitate”, “easy”, “engaging”
- Because of their pedagogic dimension:
 - to show how (e.g. of carrying out a risk assessment, of measuring noise);
 - to guide,
 - to inform,
 - to help fill the gaps of OSH knowledge.

Why e-tools?

- To empower end-users to properly manage OSH in general or one specific risk in a more autonomous way
("external help (OSH experts / consultant) can be expensive and not sustainable")
- To reach specific target audiences, particularly:
 - Young people (because very fond of these kind of tools)
 - Micro and Small companies (because of their big number)
- To "engage" end-users in a different way ("interactive", "help to identify / understand the problems but also provides solutions")
- To be part of a bigger programme (along with training, counselling, information services / instruments)
- To maximise the use of existing information / databases (in this sense can be a very powerful way to put existing information at the disposal of end-users)

Stages in the development of an e-tool

- **Conception / development**
 - Needs analysis
 - Technical development
 - Content development

- **Implementation – Dissemination / promotion**
 - Launch
 - Promotion

- **Sustainability**
 - Support
 - Upgrades

The workshop discussed the life-cycle of an e-tool following this broad framework

The following slides highlight issues raised during the presentations and discussions

Conception / development 1

- Market research is essential, in particular:
 - Does this type of e-tool already exist? If so,
 - What is the user interface?
 - What is the technology base?
 - What is the content source?
 - For whom is the tool intended?

- Can we build on the existing tools or do we need to develop them from scratch?
 - Can a tool be translated?
 - Can a tool be adapted to a different target audience or use?
 - E.g. taking a tool designed for environmental protection and adapting it to worker protection

Conception / development 2

- **Essential to “scope the market”:**
 - Do such e-tools already exist?
 - What do they look like?
 - Can we build on the existing tools (just translate, introduce small changes) or do we need to develop them from scratch?
- **Is it really an e-tool that is really needed?**
- **What is also needed as part of the package?**
 - Awareness campaign?
 - Labour inspection intervention?
 - Economic incentives?

- **Clearly define the aim of the e-tool**
- **Identify the added value of the e-tool**
- **Recognise the barriers, limitations, and obstacles to the tool development and use**

**New technologies are not a panacea:
e-tools alone will not fix an existing problem**

Conception / development 3 – Business Plan 1

- **To produce a (“good”) business plan, the following should be addressed:**
 - Who is the target audience?
 - Legal duty holders?
 - Micro-enterprises?
 - OSH professionals?
 - Young workers?

- **What are the specific objectives for the tool?**
 - To raise awareness of a specific problem?
 - To provide information to support decision-making by the end-user?
 - To provide a means of compliance with a legal obligation?

Conception / development 4 – Business Plan 2

- **Who is going to:**
 - Provide and validate the OSH content?
 - Do the technical (software) development?
 - Carry out the dissemination and marketing?
 - Provide technical support?
 - Carry out an evaluation?
- **How user input / feedback will be ensured and monitored?**
 - To ensure the e-tool has reached its target audience
 - To ensure the e-tool works and is being used in practices
- **In case of outsourcing the technical development, the issue is:**
 - Who sets the priorities and budget?
 - How can control be kept over the priorities and the budget?

Conception / development 5 – Business Plan 3

- **Within the Business plan, it should be clear if the tool a stand-alone product or part of a larger package**

- **Potential elements of a package containing e-tools include:**
 - Training for end-users
 - Workshops and information sessions
 - Supported by trusted intermediaries (e.g. chambers of commerce, Unions)
 - Help-desk (phone/e-mail)
 - Coaching visits
 - Information campaign
 - Inspection initiatives
 - Economic incentives

Conception / development 6 – Evaluation of the technical development

- **What kind of e-tool(s) are we going to develop?**
 - A native application? (works on a phone and does not need internet)
 - A web application? (requires internet but can also be tailored for mobile devices)
 - A hybrid application?
- **What is the e-tools policy of your organisation?**
 - Now may be a good time to develop such a policy!

All applications have their benefits and disadvantages, so depending on the resources, the needs, the organisation's e-tools policy a decision will have to be taken.

Conception / development 7

■ Data protection

- The protection of end users privacy has to be taken very seriously.
- Data protection issues (what information is stored, how it is used) have to be considered from the beginning of the project.
- Data protection issues (or simply the need to overcome the reluctance from end-users to use the tools) may determine:
 - the access to the tool: is it open or there is a need to open an account?
 - the statistics that will be developed (very important to monitor the use / success of the tools)

- **The perception of confidentiality is important. Users who believe that a tool is collecting and sharing data (e.g. to the labour inspectorate) will not use it – even if it is not.**

Conception / development 8 – Multilingualism

In Member States with different official languages e-tools are normally developed in a way that multilingualism is supported, but this is not general practice

- **When thinking about the development of a tool the multilingual dimension needs to be addressed:**
 - For usability reasons (possibility of reaching a bigger number of end users)
 - To facilitate sharing (for supporting its adaption in other member states / languages)

1. Promotion strategy

For an e-tool to be successful (reach its target audience) it is not enough to be good, it must be actively promoted.

When developing a promotion strategy the following dimensions will need to be taken into account:

- **The objectives**
- **The messages**
- **The target audience**
- **The resources / Budget**
- **Partners / intermediaries / networks to be involved**
- **Communication channels & products**

2. Communication channels & Products

- **Promotion is easier when the e-tool is part of an information package**
- **Promotion routes can include:**
 - Web promotion (Institution home page or paid advertising)
 - Apple / Google Play / Windows stores
 - Through intermediaries: Insurance companies, regional reps, self-employed associations
 - Printed material (e.g. brochures)
 - Articles in magazines and newsletters
 - Banners and posters
 - Health and safety training sessions
 - Promotion at events
 - E.g. trade fairs
 - Advertising campaigns on mass-media (e.g. TV)
 - Target-specific advertising (e.g. sector-specific media)

3. Communication channels & Products

- **Uptake of a tool can depend on the credibility of the tool provider and promoter**
 - Tool provided or backed by the labour inspectorate may be more credible than one developed commercially
- **Institutional promotion channels can be very effective in raising awareness and promoting use**
 - Social security offices
 - National institute website
 - Labour inspection branding
- **Supporting a community around the tool can prolong the continued use of a tool**
 - Allow users to provide feedback
 - Respond to comments and criticism
- **Provide appropriate support**
- **Use social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, ...)**

Sustainability – Support and upgrades

- **Development and support for an e-tool is a long-term investment**
 - Sustainability and life-span of tool should be discussed and budgeted from the outset in the business plan
- **Hosting and maintenance**
 - Hosting in-house or outsourced?
- **Need to regularly upgrade the technical structure (operating systems)**
 - Costs that need to be taken into account
- **Monitoring and evaluation is vital**
 - Is the target audience being reached?
 - Is the e-tool being downloaded AND used
 - Is the e-tool being used on an ongoing basis?
- **Statistics are a vital monitoring tool**
 - There may be a conflict over data security