

SIGN SYSTEMS FOR TOURISTIC INFORMATION: DESIGN AND METHOD

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The highest affluence of people to certain places such as airports, commercial areas, events, public services, tourism installations, etc., led to the need to guide these persons in unknown places and to communicate basic messages with a language understandable by everyone. That movement has developed the need to learn new rules, which ones will be formalized through signs that make the access or the circulation to certain places easier.

The need for universal communication, regardless of language, is preserved as a fundamental principle of the Manila Declaration on World Tourism. The use of symbols to represent tourist attractions is a decisive step in that direction.

The proliferation of information signs in Portugal is very clear and illustrated by the use of 293 symbols for tourist information applied to signal tourism resources ^[1] and 112 symbols used on indicating signs applied to road signs (traffic) ^[2], making a total of 405 information symbols, lacking of course this area of standardization and normalization.

For the present research project a concrete problem was identified: the sign systems for tourism information in Portugal, Europe and in the entire world, are totally different from one another, having no graphic relationship, being incoherent from the graphic point of view: there isn't a normalized system ^[3].

Strategically, there is a concrete answer in the communication design, to obtain research methodologies applied to the conception of symbols for tourism information.

Even the Portuguese Tourism Institute recognizes the need for critical reflection coming from the various areas of knowledge and also the role of design (or research design) as a key factor in identifying solutions for tourist signs.

The current research aims to develop the contribution to knowledge in the area of design, specifically in signalectics (as a discipline of communication design), trying to be a valuable tool for designing specific sign systems for information. This project addresses Touristic Information and aims to give a contribution to a more legible, understandable, inclusive and ergonomic approach in the research area, through the validation of the existing signage, mainly at Iberian Peninsula level, the design of new methodologies applied to the conception of symbols and to conceive a valuable tool for the conception of specific sign systems for tourism information.

References

- [1] Direcção Geral do Turismo – Simbologia turística: Manual de identidade. Lisboa: DGT - Divisão de Recursos Turísticos, 1999. ISBN 972-8103-26-3
- [2] Símbolos constantes no Quadro XXI anexo ao Decreto Regulamentar n.º 22-A/98 de 1 de Outubro que aprova o Regulamento de Sinalização do Trânsito.
- [3] Sistema de signos desenvolvido pelo AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) para o Department of Transportation dos Estados Unidos.