Abstract: Human-Computer Interaction field in Spain has experienced a great expansion in the last few years, even if this happened with some delay in comparison with neighbour countries. This paper analyses the reasons for this situation. The efforts made by universities to include Human-Computer Interaction topics in Informatics curricula, and by industry to incorporate usability and human centred design in its strategies, are also discussed.

Keywords: Spanish activities in HCI

1 The university

Spanish Universities have faced a long process to renew university curricula. Informatics Engineering has also recently modernized its structures, but without including Human-Computer Interaction or Interface Design issues as compulsory topics. In the last decade, many Spanish universities have addressed this lack by proposing optional courses covering diverse aspects of this field. The result is a broad variety of proposals in the diverse universities ranging from one or two general courses in HCI (EHU [JA2]…) to a set of choices that completes something similar to a specialization (UCLM [JA3]). Nevertheless, some issues related to the interaction with the user are scattered in many pre-existing topics such as Computer Graphics, Artificial Intelligence, Voice and Image Processing, etc.

2 The industry

It can be said that Spanish software industry is more directed to the production of customer tailored applications than to the of-the-self market. This means that usability issues are not critical to acquire an advantageous position in the market. Nevertheless, the most dynamic industries have discovered the need for usability oriented design procedures in order to enhance user satisfaction and productivity. This is also true for many institutional applications used directly by citizens (to pay taxes, for instance): good usability features enhance acceptability by the user and provide economical benefits for the government. In this connection, CADIUS, a Spanish association of industries interested in Usability, can be mentioned. (http://www.cadius.org).

3 The AIPO association

AIPO stands for Asociación de Interacción Persona-Computador, that is, Association for Human Computer Interaction. Even if most of its members
are Spanish, the association does not make any geographical prescription because A IPO aims to be open to people from Ibero-American countries (Spanish and Portuguese speaking people both in Europe and Latin America). This association was created in November 1999 and since then has attracted a large number of people, mostly from the University. Among its aims, the intention to establish a Spanish speaking HCI community and to provide academics and professionals with relevant materials for teaching, training and applying Human Computer Interaction design techniques, can be underlined. The A IPO's web portal (in Spanish) hosted by the University of Lleida, has received thousands of visits (http://www.aipo.es). One of the key services provided is material for teaching consisting of an e-book (Lorés, 2001), slides and videos.

Since 2000, A IPO ha annually organised a conference on HCI called INTERACCIÓN. The first conferences were hosted in Granada3 (2000), Salamanca4 (2001) and Madrid5 (2002). Subsequent conferences will be hosted in Vigo6 (2003) and Lleida7 (2004). Attendance has progressively increased and both the quality and the quantity of the presented papers are very much improved.

3.2 A IPO Challenges for the future
The most important challenges for A IPO are
* To enhance communication and collaboration between Spanish HCI industry and academia.
* To collaborate with other similar associations in the Mediterranean area and Latin America.
* To promote HCI related studies in the Spanish University and to produce good materials for teaching, training and applying HCI.

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