

## Interview on the effect of distributed figures in a manual

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Rapport no. 675

Interview on the effect of distributed  
figures in a manual  
(DC680/DC684 car radio)

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### Introduction

On behalf of ICE&IS, CE Service made two types of manual for the DC680/DC684 car radio cassette combinations.

Type A had, in addition to the 'survey of controls-figure' on the inside of the cover, a number of figures within the text illustrating, for instance, the operation of presets, or fast winding forwards. Type B had no such additional figures.

Two enquiries were held, one among 50 users of the DC684 who had both the A- and the B-manual, and one among 20 users of the DC684 who had only the A-manual, and 20 others who had only the B-manual. The results of these enquiries were reported in 'Gebruiksaanwijzingonderzoek DC680/684' (AR 390 A7-DC680-061) by J. Damoiseaux, and in 'Autoradiogebruiksaanwijzing en bedieningsenquêtes (IPO Rapport no. 645) by F.L. van Nes and I.L. McClelland.

It turned out that the 50 users who had both manuals at their disposal overwhelmingly preferred the new, A-manual, whereas the enquiries from the 20 users who had either the A- or the B-manual contained no clues on, for instance, the appreciation of additional illustrations within the text. Therefore, it was decided to hold a small scale-interview with 5 users of the A- and 5 users of the B-manual; this report describes the results of those interviews.

## Method

Of course such a small interview cannot yield statistically reliable results, only indications. It would have been best to have at least an equal number of men and women, and a variety of age groups among the people interviewed; but this was impossible due to the small number of participants in the test itself. Availability for the interview became the prime selection criterion. Thus, the following age and gender distribution resulted:

- Manual A: five males, aged 29, 45, 48, 49 and 50 years.
- Manual B: one female of 26 and four males of 37, 43, 53 and 55 years.

The users were interviewed about their behaviour as to building the radio into the car and operating it, with an accent on their utilization of the manual for these aims. Finally, they were shown the other manual, i.e. the one they had not used operationally, and asked for their opinion on the presence or absence of the extra illustrations and, in conclusion, which manual type they preferred.

The interviews were held in the room of the author at IPO. A DC680 car radio was present to illustrate specific points that were made, if required.

## Results

Table 1 contains the results of the interviews as to preference. An underscored A means a well-argued preference for manual A for more than one reason. So: from the five users of manual B three preferred manual A in this way, whereas one user simply expressed a preference without argumentation, and one user had no preference. Note that of the five users of the (new) manual A, one showed a clear-cut preference for the (old) manual B.

Table 1: Number of users who preferred manual A or B.

Old, B manual users	New, A manual users
<u>A</u> : 3	<u>A</u> : 2
A : 1	A : 2
- : 1	<u>B</u> : 1

One user of the A-manual felt that an important advantage of figures within the text is that 'one's concentration is not interrupted by having to search in the large figure'. One user of the B-manual said he had not read it because he was discouraged by all that continuous text, and this would not have occurred with the extra figures that 'provoke your curiosity and therefore make you read the text concerned'.

Other points of interest from the interview were:

- 9 of the 10 people interviewed used a 'carriage' (slede) to be able to take the radio out of their car when they left it unattended; 8 actually did take the radio out then (the 10th one gave up using this carriage because he did not manage to mount it in his car).  
Nevertheless, 3 of these 8 used the security code, so every time they put the radio back in their car they also re-entered the code.
- Autostore: 3 users did not know or understand this function (after six months of using the radio); a 4th one had only a vague idea about its use. A 5th user knew and used autostore from the beginning, but discovered (from the manual) only after one month of use that, so to speak in addition, it was possible to program and operate preset keys for tuning. Actually, he had mistaken the autostore function for the preset function.
- Autoreverse: 2 users did not know this term, although they did use, and appreciate, the corresponding function.
- LCD-remarks from individual users: 'when you try to read the word STEREO on the display, you are bound to get an accident: a LED or lamp should be used instead'.  
'I still don't know (after half a year of use) whether side 1 or 2 of the cassettape is being played: I want to look that up one day'.
- Loudspeaker connections: after almost half a year, one user was informed by his garage that he had misconnected his loudspeakers. And indeed, he had noticed that the balance and fader controls had no effect - but he had not known what 'fader' meant anyway.
- Volume control: 'this is the only really important control: it should be better within reach', one user said.

## Conclusions

1. The interview yields a clear indication that the extra illustrations in the A-manual are beneficial.
2. Complex functions that users are not familiar with, such as autostore, easily remain unknown and/or misunderstood.
3. Users are willing to voice their opinions and experiences quite frankly, once they are prompted.