Usability for Memory Institutions: Experience of CALIMERA project

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Institute of LIS
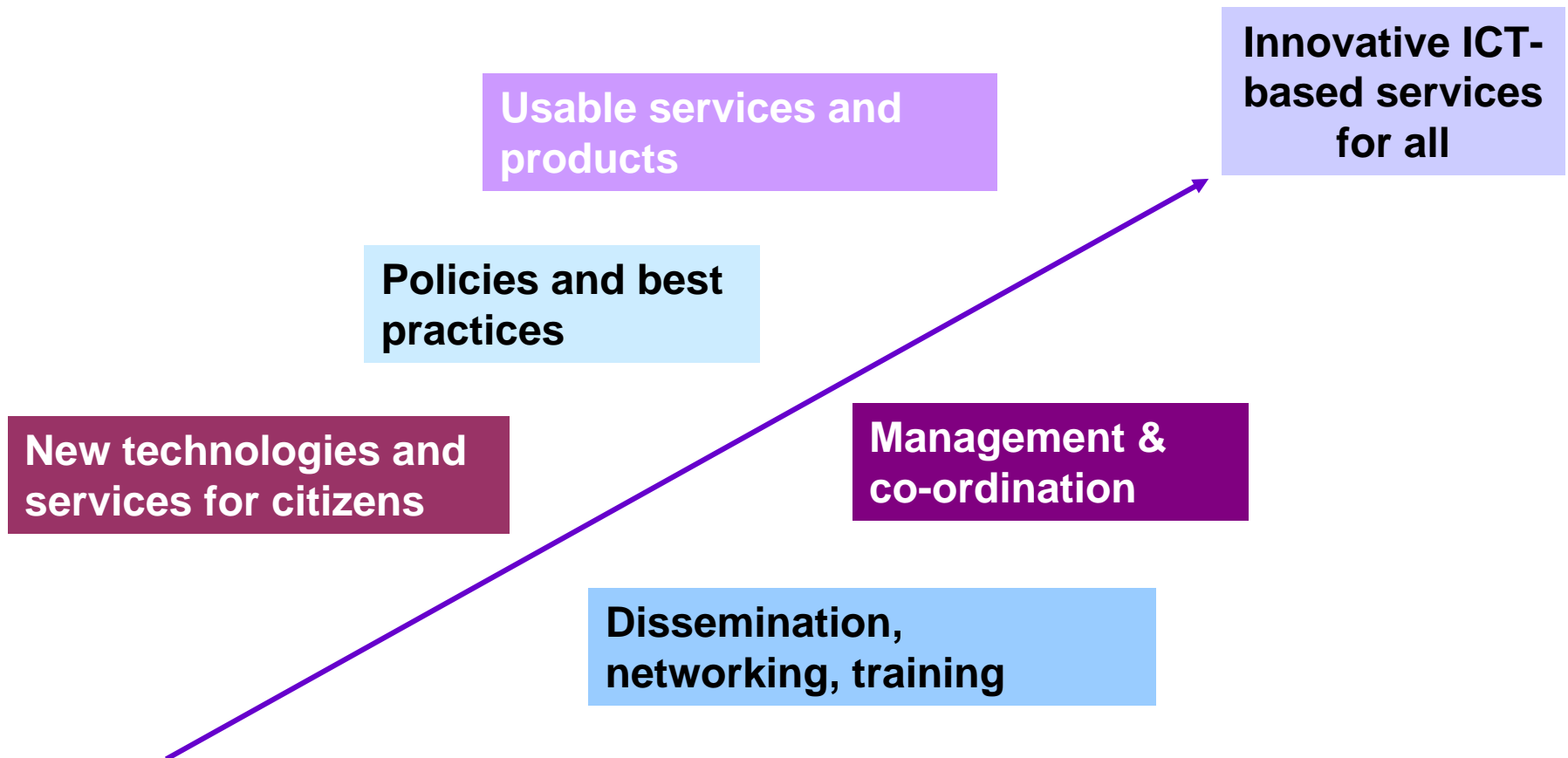**Faculty of Communication**
Vilnius University

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Scope of the presentation

- Usability in the context of cultural heritage-related activities
- Memory institutions: libraries, archives, museums
- Contents:
  – Brief introduction into CALIMERA project
  – The concept of usability
  – Usability and ISO standards
  – Usability framework for memory institutions
  – Important usability areas for memory institutions

CALIMERA: an introduction

CALIMERA – Cultural Applications: Local Institutions Mediating Electronic Resource Access; http://www.calimera.org

Usable services and products

Innovative ICT-based services for all

Policies and best practices

New technologies and services for citizens

Management & co-ordination

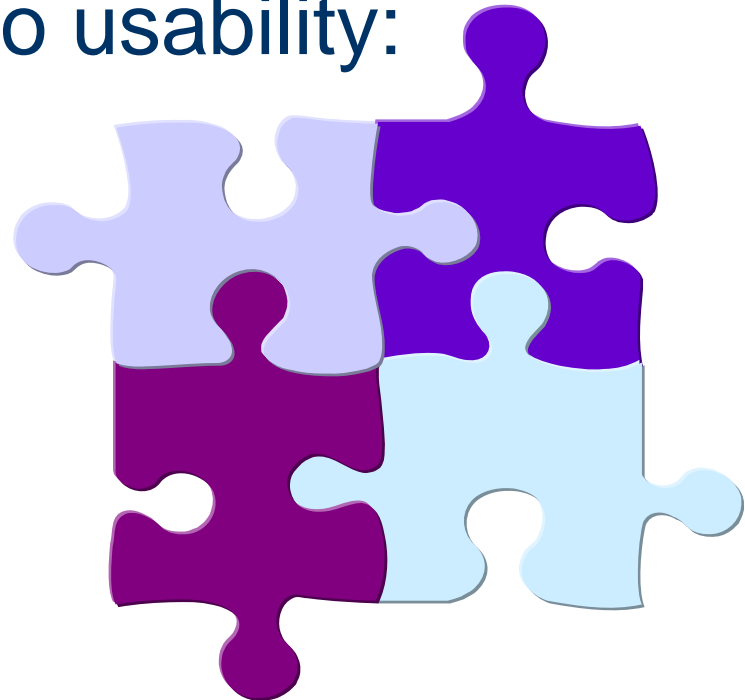**Dissemination, networking, training**

WP3: The end-user experience: a usable community memory

- Report *Usability of ICT-based systems*: *state-of-the-art review*
- Expert usability workshop (Vilnius)
- Series of usability evaluation forums:
  - User testing in Hungary
  - User testing in Greece
  - Accessibility testing in Portugal
- Expected results: Usability guidelines for the local memory institutions

Defining usability

- Usability in the context of HCI
- Usability notions: ease of use, ease of learning, user friendliness
- Systemic approach to usability:
  - J. Nielsen
  - B. Shackel
- Other view:
  - Universal usability
  B. Shneiderman

Usability standards and the context of local memory institutions

- Process-oriented approach: ISO 9241-11 (1998) etc.
- Product-oriented approach: ISO 9126 (1–4 parts, 2001 – 2004)
- Needs of the local memory institutions (Usability Forum, Hungary):
  - Usability guidance & consultancy
  - Usability education & information dissemination
  - Greater co-operation between archives, libraries and museums

Usability approach for memory institutions

- Generic usability model for memory institutions: what is the starting point?
- Phenomenon of "memory institutions":
  - What is it?
  - What is common?
  - What is different?
- Memory institutions – social mission

Important usability areas for memory institutions

- Age-specific issues
- Cross-cultural usability
- Human abilities
- Socio-technological usability constraints
- Horizontal issue: usability of WWW services

Conclusions

- Usability-related information overload: standards and recommendations often are not usable themselves

- Common usability framework for memory institutions – further research is needed:
  - Perspectives & limitations
  - Areas for exchange of experience

- A usability "cookbook" – priorities and criteria

- Raising awareness in memory institutions

Thank you for attention
Questions?

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