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Speaker Qualifications

Prof. Dr Thomas Porathe is a researcher and an assistant professor in information design with more than fifty international conference papers during the last ten years.

Conspicuity Index: A Method of Measuring the Visibility of Traffic Signs

A fundamental problem in design of traffic information signs is to make the signs visible. A sign need to be visible enough to be seen, but not so conspicuous that it takes all attention from neighbouring information. One part of the problem is that the visibility does not only depend on properties of the sign itself, the context must also be taken into account. To be able to do such assessments a measurement method is needed. Traditionally, search time has been used, but this is a cumbersome method. In this presentation a new method – a *conspicuity index* – will be introduced. This is a quantitative method that is easy to conduct and that provides a numeric index, which makes it possible to compare the visibility of different designs, both when it comes to detection and to identification of the sign. The method has been introduced by professor Alexander Wertheim at the University of Utrecht and involves an angle measurement of the eye gazing at the target and then diverting with the gaze until the target can no longer be seen in the parafoveal vision. The method is easy to conduct in everyday settings and therefore interesting as a practical tool for the information design community.

In this presentation a validation study conducted at Maelardalen University in Sweden on traffic signs for the European research project SAFEWAY2SCHOOL will be presented as well as practical advice on how to conduct this kind of measurements in a lab milieu using photographs.