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The ELDA database - an information system for labelled household appliances in Europe

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Energy Efficient Equipment - OVERVIEW AND LABELLING

SESSION IV / Lecture 6

1. THE ELDA DATABASE: AN INTRODUCTION.

The Danish utilities' ELDA database has been utilized in Denmark since 1986.

ELDA is a unique tool that provides access to a database where it is possible to assemble all the domestic appliances available on the market.

The ELDA system allows a large amount of information to be recorded about each appliance. The database contains as many as 1,800 data sections divided into 25 different categories of appliances, which range from refrigerator to electric kettles.

ELDA contains all the data stored in the EU energy-labelling scheme.

The database automatically calculates the energy efficiency class and the estimated annual consumption based on current EU formulas and the relevant data entered. This allows selection of the most efficient appliance to meet the customer's needs.

The latest revision of ELDA has made it possible to incorporate other groups, such as lighting, as these become labelled.

2. WHY ELDA PROVES TO BE AN IMPORTANT TOOL.

In Denmark ELDA is continually updated on a national basis and the updates are forwarded to the users by e-mail once a week. The data is obtained from the manufacturers and is distributed via brochures, price lists and telephone contact to the various product managers.

Keying in data is quite simple; however, what really makes ELDA a reliable tool is that data validation and quality control take place at the same time. This enables the advisers to compare the different data sets on an equal level.

The ELDA database offers a complete market survey, which together with the many search and sorting functions secures an optimal level of service and advice to the customer.

Throughout the years a positive dialogue has been built up with the manufacturers, enabling ELDA to provide them with information. Moreover, many manufacturers contact ELDA when there has been a change in their range of products or in vital data (EU data).

3. ELDA - A TRANSFORMER?

Is it possible to influence the market towards a more energy-efficient awareness with an information system such as ELDA?

Of course it is!

ELDA is a unique tool that plays a very important role in any situation involving advice on, or information about, consumption or energy savings in the domestic area.

Advice

Since the 1950s, the Danish electric utilities have provided, an advice service free of charge, to their household customers. This advice can be given either by telephone or by a visit to the showrooms or utilities. The aim of this consultation is to help the customer in finding the most energy-efficient product to suit his needs.

In this connection, the database is a very efficient tool and has been so for the past 13 years. Through the search and sorting functions, one can compare data from many different appliances and quickly find the most energy-efficient and economical models.

Cheaper might be dearer - a low-cost appliance could have a higher running cost than a low-energy appliance, and thus its lifetime cost would be more.

ELDA can illustrate this through graphic outputs showing lifetime costs, which is a valuable feature. A printout of the information concerning the different models is given to the consumer, making it easy for him to make a rational choice.

Campaigns prior to 1999.

The utilities have promoted energy-efficient cold appliances through several campaigns since 1990. In the early nineties, a concept called 'energy arrows' was introduced as a graphic way of showing energy consumption. The fewer, the better!

The first national campaign was in 1994. The main objective of this campaign was to influence potential consumers in a positive way to purchase energy-efficient cold appliances when the need for new appliances arose.

In connection with this campaign, a registered name for very energy-efficient appliances was introduced. Energy-efficient freezers were registered as 'Sparefryser' and fridges and their combinations as 'Spareskab.' The aim was to make it easy for the consumer to identify the efficient models and, at the same time, to accelerate the introduction of these appliances.

The only thing the manufacturer had to do to get his appliances promoted was to provide documentation proving that the models could fulfil the requirements (1-4 energy arrows).

A 'Spareskabsliste' was prepared, including all the relevant appliances. In addition, total market surveys with a few relevant details (price, size, 'Spareskab' energy consumption and energy arrows) were compiled and made available to the consumer through the utilities or retailers.

These lists were generated by ELDA.

There was an effort to create publicity in order to encourage the purchase of 'Sparefryser' and 'Spareskab.' The customer received 200 DKR (27 ECU) in exchange for an old model on purchasing a 'Sparefryser' or a 'Spareskab.'

This resulted in the sale of 7,000 models during the campaign period. The old models were scrapped in an environmentally acceptable way.

Development: All cold appliances¹.

In recent years, the general market trend has been towards more energy-efficient appliances. In 1994, only 56% of all cold appliances sold were Energy Class A-C, whereas in 1997, 86% of all appliances were Energy Class A-C.

¹ Sales figures from Snehvilde/Køkkenland, covering 25% of the retail market in DK

There has not as such, however, been a significant change in sales of A appliances, except in the case of chest freezers, where every third that is sold today is in Energy class A.

Energy Class A: Campaign in 1999.

The Danish Electricity Saving Trust and the utilities therefore started a co-operative, nationwide campaign on the 20th of September. Their aim is to set the focus on all A appliances. The campaign runs until the 5th of December 1999.

During the period of the campaign, The Danish Electricity Saving Trust contributes 500 DKR (67 ECU) per A skab (all cold appliances with the exception of chest freezers) and 1000 DKR (135 ECU) per tumble drier in Energy class A.

The utilities' 'Spareskabsliste' has been revised:

- o The trademarks 'Sparefryser' and 'Spareskab' have been replaced by: 'Recommended by your utility' and washing machines, tumble driers and dishwashers are now included as well.
- o To qualify for inclusion on the list all appliances must be classified 'Energy Class A.'
Washing machines and dishwashers must also have a washing / cleaning performance class of A and a spin drying / drying performance class A - B.
- o The data on the list are now identical to the data listed in ELDA's market survey where the energy arrows have been replaced by the EU's energy-efficiency class (letter and graphic illustration).
- o The list can now be found on the web-site (www.spareskab.dk). The list contains 235 'Spare' appliances, of which 162 are cold appliances. In 1994 there were 33 appliances included.

The Danish Electricity Saving Trust has a similar web-site (www.hvidevarepriser.dk) with a market place where it is possible for dealers to key in the current market prices.

The customers can see:

- o What A products the market has to offer
- o Where they can be purchased
- o The cost-per-unit price (one can immediately determine where the best value is available)

At this point in time the campaign appears promising; in fact, one could already call it a gigantic success. Prior to the campaign, The Danish Electricity Saving Trust had estimated that during the campaign period sales would rise to approximately 2.500 appliances.

The estimate has now been altered to 25.000 appliances!

ELDA plays a very important role in the campaign in that both web-sites are based on data extracts from ELDA and are updated once a week through ELDA's updating function.

ELDA data in other connections:

- o The Danish Energy Agency and The Danish Institute for Informative Labelling use ELDA to check compliance with the energy-labelling scheme.
- o Green Peace utilizes ELDA's information when exploring the market for CFC-free cold appliances.
- o The largest chain store in Denmark (covering 35% of the retail market) make use of the ELDA's data in their own database which they have installed in 70 stores throughout Denmark.

We are convinced that ELDA has directly contributed during the years to transform the market in Denmark towards more energy and environmental friendly appliances - and will continue to do so in the future, when ELDA's data is accessible via the Internet and domestic appliance retailers.

4. ELDA and SAVE.

ELDA Ltd. is project coordinator for the SAVE II Program: 'Developing Appliance Information Systems for Europe.'

The aim is to help transform the market for energy-efficient household appliances by developing the basis of a European appliance information system, based on the functionality of the existing database, ELDA.

The project has six phases, and work has already started on all six.

Phase one, the development of the software package, is very close to an end.

The new system (ELDA 4.0) is based on the Microsoft Windows operating system and the Oracle database, and is now in the final stages of development and testing.

The last module remaining and now ready to be tested is that of data transfer by electronic interchange. This function will allow data to be imported directly from the manufacturers and has been the subject of initial discussions with Electrolux and Bosch Siemens.

In Denmark, more manufacturers have shown interest in delivering data by electronic interchange, and therefore we probably will invite a few to take part in the testing of this module. The number of partners has increased from 6 to 14 and the number of participating countries from 5 to 12 (including 3 from Central and Eastern Europe).

The number of working languages is being increased from 5 to 11 through translation of the fields, data descriptors and the user interface.

This task is now being completed for Swedish-, Portuguese- and German- language versions. The Danish and English versions already exist. With the addition of eight further partners in January 1999, work has started on the translation into the remaining major European languages, with the exception of Russian (French, Italian, Spanish, Romanian, Polish and Czech).

All of the partners must collect and assemble data regarding appliance groups that are or will be labelled. Data are currently available for the Danish and Scottish constituents, as they have been collecting data for some years.

For the time being it is not possible to update by means of electronic interchange, which is the reason why the updating sources will continue to be brochures, price lists and manufacturers' agents.

5. ELDA IN THE FUTURE.

A qualified guess on the basis of the SAVE projects:

- o ELDA will develop into a European database rather than remaining a set of national databases. This would facilitate entry of data into the database directly from manufacturers (or suppliers) across the entire European market. Data will still be checked for consistency and errors, of course, before being accepted into the database, and omissions will be discussed with the manufacturers.
- o ELDA's database, Oracle, will be linked to the internet. This would allow information to be stored at one or more servers and be accessed by a consumer or any registered user from anywhere in Europe. This system would therefore become the basis of a European information system.