Redesigning the Wayfinding System in the PATH

Amy Chong & Stephanie Chow Supervised by Professor Greg A. Jamieson

The PATH
- A network of underground walkways that span across the core of downtown Toronto
- Original signage strategy proposed was not implemented to its full capacity because of financial limitations
- Extensive expansions will be made to accommodate the projected increase in pedestrian demands

The City of Toronto is looking for a new wayfinding system for the PATH

Problem with the Current Design
- The current system is ineffective in helping users navigate through the PATH
- Five major problems were revealed through testing
  1. Missing and inconsistent information
  2. Poor placement and orientation
  3. Users are unaware of PATH features
  4. No connection between underground and street level
  5. Does not identify accessible routes

Usability Testing & Results
- Performed a heuristic evaluation on alternative designs
- Preliminary concept testing was performed to verify user understanding
- Usability testing through video simulation and think-aloud protocol
  - All participants reached the final destination
  - No wrong turns or need for backtracking
  - All participants located themselves on street level successfully

Guidelines for Placement
- **Alignment Principle:** aligned maps are easier to use than those misaligned
- **Forward-Up Equivalence:** direction in front of you is up on the vertical map
- **Place signs:**
  - In sight of previous one
  - In high traffic areas, decision points, and transitional areas
  - So they are detectable from all directions
  - Where the cost of making a wrong choice is high

References

Proposed Wayfinding System
- **PATH logo** distinguishes wayfinding system
- **Arrows** provide egocentric direction
- **Accessibility Information** identifies the accessible routes
- **Street intersections** street level reference while travelling underground
- **Route Information** states the buildings that the user is travelling through

Future Work
- **Wall Map**
  - Update wall map so it is reflective of true state (non-rectilinear routes)
  - Include all accessible routes and entrance/exit points
  - Include architectural features
- **PATH Promotions**
  - Provide pamphlets of PATH system at attractions and entrances points
  - Strengthen cardinal direction relationship with colours (NESW=blue, yellow, red, orange)