THE VOICE GARDEN

BACKGROUND

Community garden (allotment garden) are very popular trend found in urban areas and today some 26,000 allotment are in Sweden [1]. Our intention is to explore the roles that urban gardening play in community development and how technology can contribute in building community and bridging the local communication gap between gardeners.
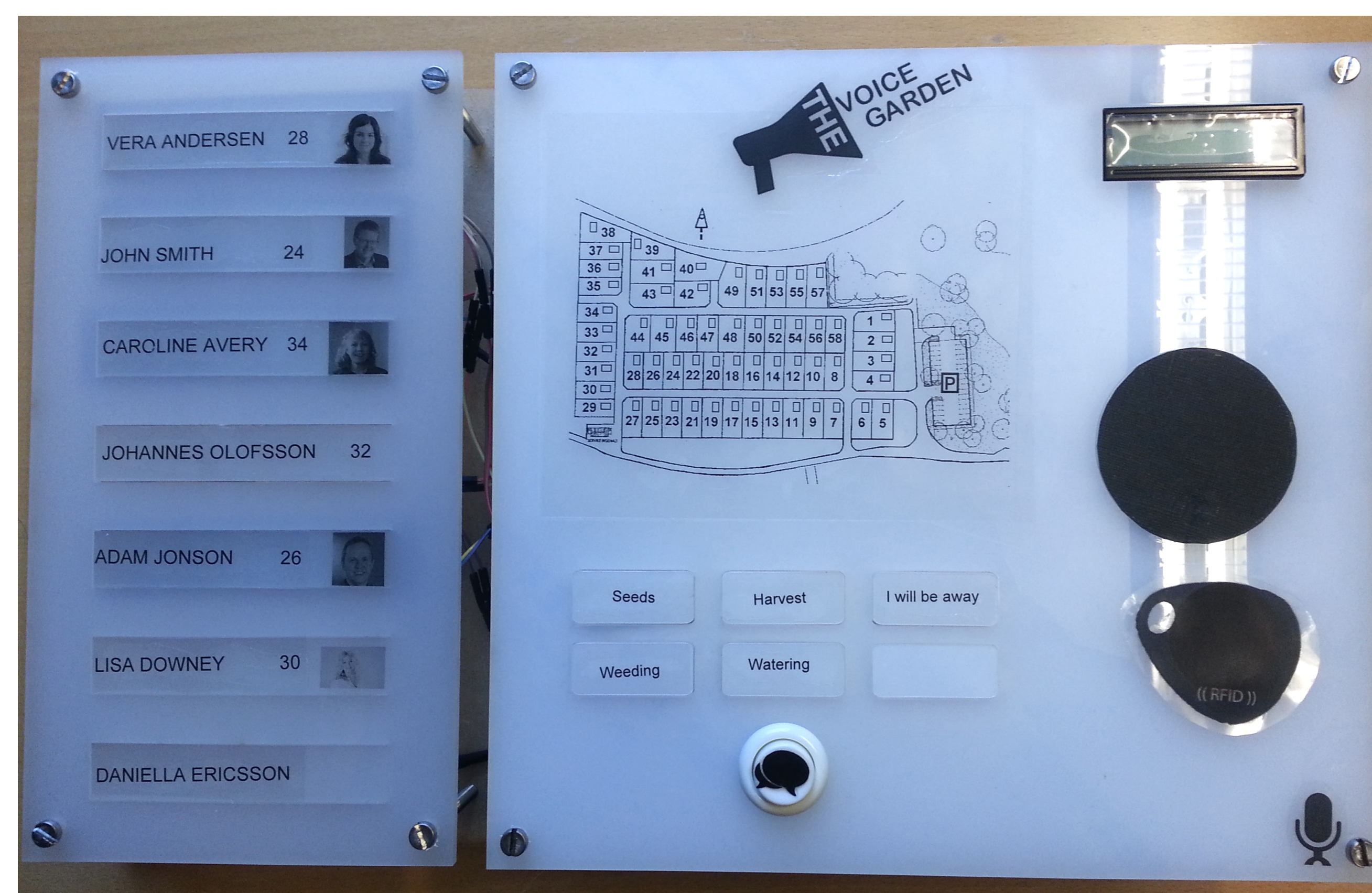
MOTIVATION

Urban gardening communities involve people with different backgrounds, lifestyles and belonging to different age groups. Leveraging the potential of community collaboration and utilizing shared or shareable resources and human capital can only happen through effective communication. For supporting this, they need adequate tools which are built around their gardening activities. At present, despite their geographical co-location, the lack of such tools is hindering collaboration opportunities within communities of urban gardeners.

GOAL

We intended to bridge the communication gap between traditional Internet and smartphone users on one side, and non-smartphone users on the other side (who will be exclusively using the billboard as a physical interface). We would like to create a platform that helps strengthen community building amongst the gardeners by having them share products, services and expertise. We would like for the app and billboard to be useful tools that fit into the gardening routines of the gardeners.
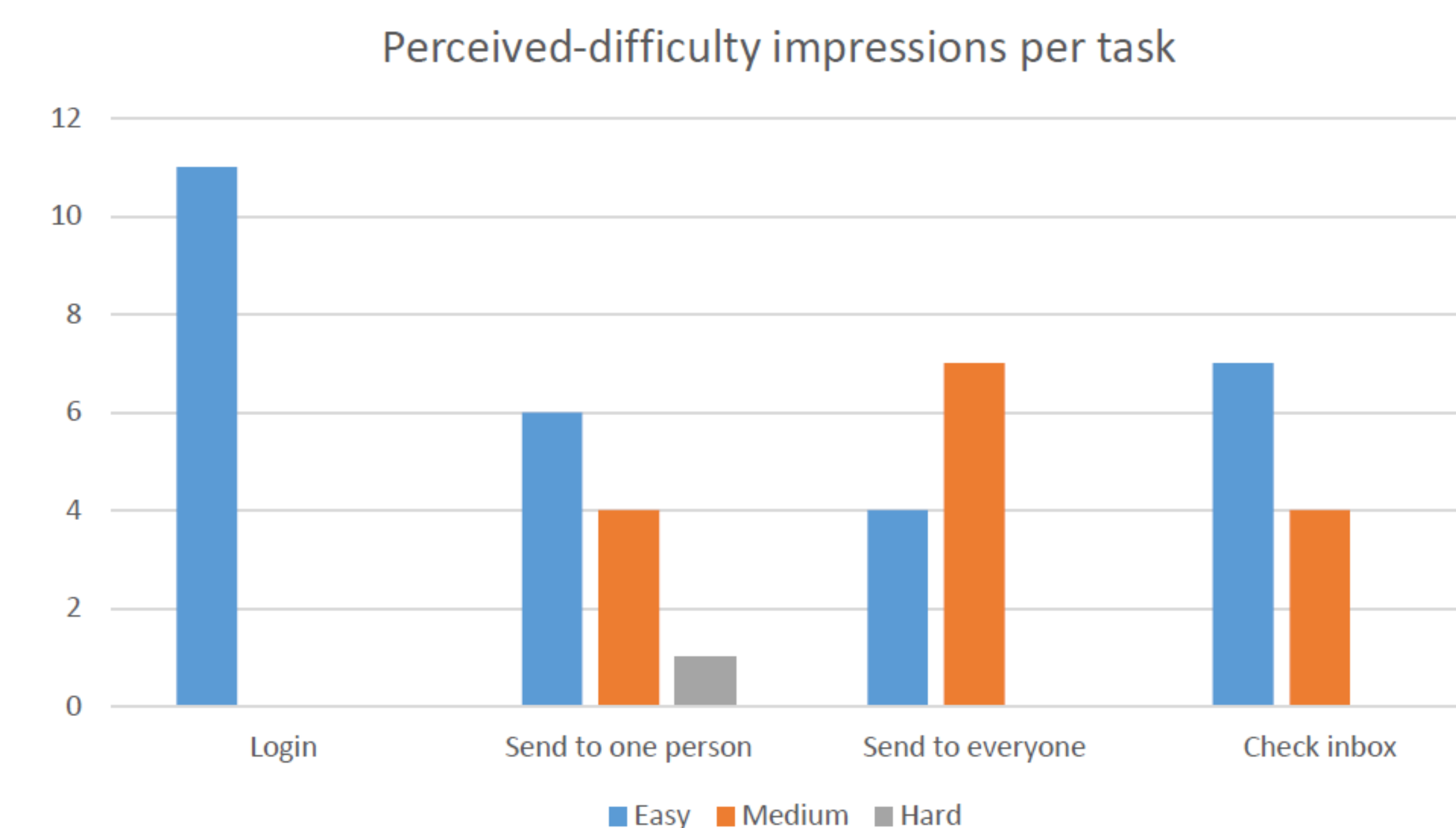
OUTCOME

In the scope of this project we collaboratively designed wireframes of the mobile application, and were successful in bulding and evaluating a working prototype of the physical billboard.

OUR PROCESS

WORKSHOP N. 1 — The first workshop involved learning about the users' gardening practices, then identifying their challenges and potentials. We then synthesized the identified challenges and came up with a community-building concept.

WORKSHOP N. 2 — During the second workshop, we introduced a billboard and mobile app concept and carried out some rapid prototyping of the concepts with the stakeholders. This resulted into a billboard, mobile app and home device.

WORKSHOP N. 3 — We introduced the cardboard and interactive mockup prototypes of the billboard and mobile app. We then discussed the features, structure, functionalities and layout of the billboard and mobile app. The results formed the basis of the working prototype

EVALUATION WORKSHOPS — For the final workshop, we prioritized evaluating the physical prototype of the billboard. We carried out some task-based usability tests. This was followed by some semi-structured interviews, and then quantitative output of the results.

EVALUATION

User testing results show that most of our eleven participants find it relatively easy to use the main features of the billboard.

Perceived-difficulty impressions per task

FUTURE WORK

For future work, and based on feedback from the evaluation sessions we intend to simplify the interaction model, by using one tag per user and implementing audible feedback for the message recording feature. In addition, developing a working prototype of the mobile application will be necessary for carrying out further research, in the aim of investigating how using this platform will influence communication patterns inside a local urban gardening community.

Reference:
[1] Gindl, T. (2015). Sweden - Office International. [Online] Jardins-familiaux.org. Available at: http://www.jardins-familiaux.org/nations/se/eng/se_e_start.html [Accessed 18 Jan. 2015].

Bibi Asma, Emma Mainza Chilufya, Jennifer Meurling, Skander Hamada

MALMÖ HÖGSKOLA