

Attachment 1:
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Screener Guide

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling on behalf of Macro International, a research and consulting firm in the Washington DC area. We are working with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to obtain feedback about the some pages of its website (IRS.gov). We are seeking participants for a focus group we are holding in [insert city].

IF ASKED: (EACH INTERVIEWER WILL HAVE THIS INFORMATION).

If respondents ask how their name was obtained, tell them their phone number was randomly selected from a list of individuals in the local calling area. If respondents are concerned about participating, tell them that our contract with the IRS specifically prohibits me from revealing their name or any information about them to the IRS or anyone else, whether or not they participate in the focus group. Participation in this focus group will not affect your taxes or filing status.

This project has been approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB Clearance Number is 1545-1349. If you like, I can give you a name and address where you can send comments and questions or suggestions for making this process simpler.

Internal Revenue Service
Tax Products Coordinating Committee
1111 Constitution Ave, NW IR-6526
SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP
Washington, DC 20024

Your answers to these questions will be held completely Private by Macro, meaning we will not provide your name or any identifying information to the IRS.

1. Would you consider yourself to be fluent in English?
() Yes..... Continue
() No..... Terminate

2. In the past 12 months, have you accessed www.irs.gov to locate information about tax forms, instructions, or publications?
() Yes..... Continue
() No..... Terminate

3. Are you a tax professional? (Individual who prepares 25 or more Federal tax returns each year)
() Yes Continue to Q5

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() No.....Continue

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4. Are you a small business owner? **[Note to recruiter: if someone asks what a small business is, say it is a business with assets of less than \$10 million.]**
- Yes**[recruit 3 small business owners]**.....Continue
- No Continue

For questions 5-8, recruit a mix of individuals

5. Into which of the following categories does your age fall?
- less than 18.....
..... Terminate
- 18 to 33
- 34-44
- 45 to 65
- 66 and older
6. Please identify your highest completed level of education. *[May opt-out if they wish to.]*
- Some High School
- High School Diploma/GED
- Some College or Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate or Professional Degree (M.D., J.D.)
- Opted out
7. So that we can be sure that all backgrounds are represented in our project, could you please tell me the race or ethnic origin you identify with *[1 or more responses OK; may opt-out if they wish to]*.
- Hispanic or Latino/a
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Opted out
8. *Record Gender—DO NOT ASK UNLESS UNABLE TO DETERMINE; may opt-out if they wish to.*
- Female
- Male
- opted out

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INVITATION

Thank you for answering our questions. Based on your responses, we would like to invite you to participate in a focus group which will be held in [insert city] [insert date] at [insert time]. The total time will be no more than 2 hours. We will provide everything that you need to participate in the focus group. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Are you willing to participate?

() Yes.....
.....Continue

() No.....
.....Terminate

I'm glad that you will be able to join us! We will provide you with a \$XXX stipend for participating as well as a light meal and refreshments.

At this point I need to collect some contact information from you. Then we will send you a confirmation letter and directions to the facility via e-mail.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone # (Day): _____ (Evening) _____
E-mail Address: _____

We are only inviting a few people, so it is very important that you notify us as soon as possible if for some reason you are unable to participate. Please call *[insert recruiter contact and phone]* if this should happen. We look forward to having you participate on [insert day] at *[insert time]*.

Do you have any questions?

Great! Thank you for your time and we will be in touch again the day of the focus group. Please remember to bring reading glasses if you use them.

TERMINATE TEXT

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Thank you very much for your time, and thank you for answering our questions. Unfortunately, based on the focus group requirements, we cannot extend you an invitation. Perhaps at a later time we can include you in a future focus group. Have a good [*day/evening*].

Confirmation Letter

Confirmation Letter for In-Person Focus Groups

<Insert date>

Dear <insert name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group discussion on <insert date> at <insert time> at <insert facility name>. Please arrive 15 minutes before the start of the focus group so that you can complete some paperwork and have something to eat. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. As a thank you for participating in the focus group, you will be given \$XX at the end of the discussion.

The directions to the facility are attached. We are accessible by public transportation [insert bus number/subway station as appropriate]. If you would like to drive, parking is available [insert information about parking and any costs].

If you have any questions, please call <insert facility manager's name> at <facility phone number>.

Thank you for your time and participation.

[Insert facility manager's name]
[Insert name of facility] on behalf of Macro International Inc.

Confirmation E-mail

Confirmation e-mail for Online Focus Group Participants

Dear <insert name>,

On behalf of the NACTP and IRS, thank you for agreeing to participate in an online focus group to share your opinions about specific web pages on IRS.gov.

The focus group will take place online and by phone on <insert date> at <insert time> ET.

Please log in 15 minutes early (insert time) to establish your connection, allow time for any assistance you may need, and to review information about the focus group session.

In order to participate, you'll need to be on the phone and computer at the same time.

Please join us online at:

<https://www1.gotomeeting.com/join/<insert number>>

When prompted, the Meeting ID is <insert number> and the Meeting Password is <insert number>. (Should you have difficulty using the link above, you can open a web browser and go to joinGoToMeeting.com and enter the meeting ID and Password when requested.)

The conference line number for this focus group is <insert toll-free 800 number>. Use passcode <insert passcode> when prompted. The conference line will be open beginning at <insert time> ET.

The GoToMeeting site will ask to download a small plug-in to enable you to view the session. Please allow this installation and follow the instructions provided to complete the setup.

When actually connecting to the session, you will be prompted to supply your name and email address. Please provide **only your first name** in the Name field, and do not enter anything in the E-mail Address field.

If you experience and difficulty joining the online session or the call, please contact me, <insert name> at <insert phone number> for technical support.

As a thank you for participating in the focus group, we will mail you a check in the amount of \$150 after our discussion. Please note that we must receive your W-9 before a check can be sent to you.

I look forward to your participation.

Reminder Phone Script

Reminder Phone Script for In-Person Focus Groups

To be used no more than 24 hours prior to the scheduled focus group. If participant is not available, leave voice mail message and try back later.

Hello, may I speak to <insert name>? Hi, my name is <insert recruiter's name> and I work for Macro International. I'm calling to remind you about the focus group you agreed to participate in tomorrow at <insert time> at <insert location>. Are you still able to participate? Great! I <mailed/e-mailed> you directions to our facility. Did you receive the directions? **[If no, read directions and follow with an e-mail.] [If yes]** Do you have any questions about how to get to the facility?

Please remember to bring reading glasses if you use them. If you need to cancel for any reason, I would appreciate if you would call me at]][insert phone number].

We look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Reminder E-mail for Online Group

Reminder E-mail Script for Online Focus Group

To be sent 24 hours prior to the scheduled online focus group.

Dear <insert name>,

This is a reminder that our online focus group will take place tomorrow at <insert time.> join us online at: <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/join/<insert number>>. When prompted, the Meeting ID is <insert number> and the Meeting Password is <insert number>.

The conference line number for this focus group is <insert toll-free 800 number>. Use passcode <insert passcode> when prompted. The conference line will be open beginning at <insert time> ET.

The GoToMeeting site will ask to download a small plug-in to enable you to view the session. Please allow this installation and follow the instructions provided to complete the setup.

When actually connecting to the session, you will be prompted to supply your name and email address. Please provide **only your first name** in the Name field, and do not enter anything in the E-mail Address field.

If you experience and difficulty joining the online session or the call, please contact me, <insert name> at <insert phone number> for technical support.

If for any reason you are not able to participate, please e-mail me at <insert e-mail address> or call me at <insert phone number> as soon as possible.

I look forward to speaking with you tomorrow during our online session.

<insert moderator's name>

Attachment 2: Moderator's Guide

[Note: Information in regular type is meant to be said by the moderator. Instructions for the moderator are included in italics].

I. Welcome and Introductions

A. Introduction of the moderator.

Good morning/afternoon. My name is <insert first name> and I will be your moderator for this session. I am employed by Macro International, a management consulting firm located just outside of Washington, DC. Today I will be asking for your input about some of the web pages on IRS.gov. The Tax Forms and Publications Division is responsible for the web pages we will be discussing and would like your feedback on the content and format of the pages. I want to let you know that I will not be asking you any questions about IRS forms, instructions, or publications –only about the layout, content, and organization of specific web pages.

The IRS will take into consideration comments from this focus group and others that we are conducting around the country (Calverton, MD; Philadelphia, PA; Kansas City, MO; Phoenix, AZ; and Portland, OR).

B. What is a moderator?

Before we begin, I want to let you know that I'm not an expert on the form we will be discussing or any other IRS tax forms. My job as a moderator is to:

- Help guide the flow of conversation
- Make sure everyone's comments are heard
- Ensure that questions about various aspects of the topic are covered

You will see me referring to this outline during our session. The outline includes all issues I need to raise with the group, and helps me keep the discussion on track. It is important that we cover all the issues. Therefore, I may have to break off the conversation in order to move on to another area in the guide.

C. Informed Consent

Moderator: All participants will have reviewed and signed the informed consent for their participation in the focus group prior to coming into the focus group room. This will be handled by a designated staff at the focus group facility and confirmed by a staff of Macro International.

Before coming into the room, you were asked to review and sign an informed consent form for your participation in the discussion. I just want to go over some of the key points on the consent form to make sure we are in agreement. *Review consent form, emphasizing audio-taping, observers, privacy, and use of first names only.*

Before we begin, I'd like to go over some basic ground rules for our discussion tonight.

D. Ground Rules

Before we begin, I'd like to review some ground rules for today's discussion.

- For the IRS to speak with the public, we are required to have approval from the Office of Management and Budget. Their approval number for this project is 1545-1349. Also, if you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions on making this process simpler, please write to the: IRS Tax Products Coordinating Committee, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, IR-6526, Washington, DC 20224.
- We are audio-taping the meeting for use in preparing a report about findings. Because we are taping this meeting, I ask that you speak loudly and clearly. If I think you are speaking too softly to be heard on the tape, I will ask you to speak up.
- Please speak just one at a time so everyone has a chance to participate.
- Don't engage in side conversations-- we need for everyone to hear what the others are saying and for everything that's said to be heard easily on the tape.
- Sometimes I'll go around the table and ask everyone for their input. At other times, I will just throw a topic open for general discussion.
- Participation -- we would like to hear from everyone in the group, but you don't have to answer every question.
- No evaluation -- there are no right and wrong answers. We expect differences in how people see things, and we need to know about these differences.
- Feel free to disagree or question each other. The purpose of a group session is for us to learn things in group interchanges that we don't get out of one-on-one discussions. If someone says something you disagree with, please let us know.
- Some observers are present behind the mirror. They want to hear what you have to say about the web pages we'll discuss, but we don't want you to feel constrained by their presence.
- If anyone needs to use the restroom, they are located (specify). There is no need to stop the discussion.
- Your participation is voluntary.
- If you have a cell phone, please turn it off or set to vibrate.

- The session will last about two hours.
- We do have a technical support person available if anyone has any problems with their computer that I can't solve.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

E. Introduction of Participants

First, I'd like each of you to introduce yourself to the group (first name only). Please tell us approximately how many times in the past 12 months you have gone to www.irs.gov to find a tax form or publication, or other information.

Moderator: Thank participants after the introductions. Remind participants that your job is to ask questions and, if needed, to ask them to clarify their responses.

I'm not sure if any of you have participated in a focus group before. This focus group may be a little different than those you went to or what you've heard about focus groups. The first thing you notice is that each of you has a computer in front of you. You should each be looking at the homepage for the IRS. Does everyone see what we are looking at on their screen? [*Moderator-you should have www.irs.gov projected on the screen for all to see.*]

II. General Questions about IRS.gov and IRS.gov/formspubs/index.html

Tonight we are going to be looking a specific part of the IRS' website -- the Forms and Publications web page. Look on the left side of your screen and you'll see "More Forms and Publications." (It's the last link in the "Most Requested Forms and Publications" section.) *Moderator: click on the link on your computer so everyone can see the page they should be on.* Go ahead and click on that link.

Take a minute and look at this page. **Please don't click on anything just yet.**

1. Please give me your initial reactions to this page.
 - o Probe:
 - What did you first notice?
 - What do you like or dislike?
 - Is anything confusing?
2. Who do you think this webpage is for?

- o Probe: taxpayers (individual and/or business), tax preparers, people who work for the IRS, others?
- 3. Without clicking on anything yet, if you were looking for a tax product (a form or publication), what would you click on first? Why?

I'd like you to take about 5 minutes and explore the forms and publications portion of this page. That would be everyplace that is in the "white" section. Feel free to click on any of the links in this area. Since we won't be talking about any of the tabs across the top – "Individual," "Businesses," "Charities & Non-Profits" ... please don't click on them. Also, don't click on any of the IRS Resources other than the "Forms and Publications" – which brings you back to this page.

There is a pad of paper and pencil next to you. Feel free to jot down anything you found useful or something you wanted more information about. Did anything confuse you?

Okay – let's talk a few minutes this page (www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html)

1. Now that you've had the opportunity to explore the Forms and Publications page, what link did you click on first?
 - o Probe: Why, please explain
2. Tell me what did you liked or disliked?
 - o Probe: Why, please explain
3. What if anything did you find confusing?
 - o Probe:
 - What about the blue hyperlinks – is the link text self-explanatory?
 - If you clicked on a link – did it the subpage contain the information you expected?
4. Are there any (other) changes you would make to the Forms and Publications home page? If so what are they?
5. If you heard that there was a tax change that might impact you/your clients, how would you find information about that change?

[Moderator: See if participants say they would click on see "Highlights of Recent Tax Changes" or "What's hot in forms and publications." Note: Also not all changes are tax law. Changes can also be due to rulings, procedures, etc.]

Now we're going to locate some specific tax products. I'd like you to locate Publication 17, Your Federal Taxes. (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p17.pdf>) Please choose one of

the links in the **Download forms and publications by:** section to start. *Wait approximately 90 seconds.*

6. Did you find the publication? What steps did you take?
7. If you didn't find the publication, where did you stop? Was there something that confused you?

Let's return to the Forms and Publications main page. Use your back button and go back to the Forms and Pubs page (or click on Forms and Publications on the left menu). *Ask if everyone is on the same page.* Now let's find a different product. Please locate a tax product that contains information about environmental taxes. Just like before, please choose one of the links in the **Download forms and publications by:** section.

8. What products did you find? How did you find them? *(if they searched, ask for specifics; did they use the "Find" box? If so, what key word did they insert?).*
9. Is this the information you expected to find?
10. Was it easy to find the information?

Use your back button and go back to the Forms and Pubs page (or click on Forms and Publications on the left menu). Next we are going to look at the "**Forms and Instructions number page**".

11. Did you notice that on the Forms and Publications page the link to this page is called "Form and instruction number?" When you click on it, the page says "Forms and Instructions." Did that cause any confusion for you? Which to you prefer?
12. What do you think about the layout? –Probe for their thoughts on the list of files – how they are organized, how they would find the form or instruction they wanted?
13. Please read the instructions. Are the instructions clear?
14. Is there anything you would delete (information not needed) or anything that is missing?
15. Did you notice the "Find" feature? Do you think this find is different from the search at the top of the page? How do you think it is different?
16. Did you notice the triangles next to the column labels at the top of the list? What do you think they are for? Did you click on them?

The next section of the Forms and Publications homepage that we are going to look at is "**Important Changes.**" We're going to look at the two pages under this area.

17. Before you click on “What’s Hot in forms and publications,” tell me what you think you’ll see.

(Go ahead and click on the link and take a minute or two to explore the page. [<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,id=97397,00.html>] Be sure to click on the “check here” and changes to tax forms, publications, and other tax products links.

18. On the forms and pubs homepage the link to this page is called “What’s Hot in forms and publications” and this page is labeled “What’s Hot in Forms, Publications, and Other Tax Products.” Which label do you prefer? Should the titles (or labels) be the same on both pages?

19. When you clicked on “check here” for highlights of recent tax changes, did you find the type of information you expected?

o Probe:

- Did you like how the tax changes are organized by all taxpayers, businesses, estates and trusts, and so forth?
- Is the text below the abstract helpful? Did you even notice it? What would be helpful?
- Was it easy to find the information you were looking for?
- Is there anything you would delete or anything that you would add that’s missing, such as mileage rates?

20. When you clicked on “Changes to Our Current Tax Products” did you find the type of information you expected?

o Probe:

- What do you think about the about the way the information is organized?
- How could this page be improved?
- Is there anything you would delete or anything that you would add that’s missing?

For software developers only: (Q 21- Q26)

I have two more pages that I’d like us to look at. You **cannot** access these pages from the Forms and Publications homepage.

21. How would you go about finding information about IRS’ estimated schedule for when they will post tax forms, publications, and instructions?

<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/article/0,,id=103641,00.html>

o Probe:

- How did you find it?

- Should there be a link to this page on the forms and publications homepage?
- Would it be helpful to have a link to this page on the tax forms and publications home page?

22. As we know, new tax laws often require that the IRS modify existing tax forms. Let's pretend it's December 2008 and you want to find out if any of the tax forms you need for Tax Year 2008 are being revised. How would you go about finding out this information?

Ask participants to go to: <http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/lists/0..id=97782.00.html> Take a minute to look at this page.

23. Did you know that draft tax forms are available to review?

24. Is this information useful?

25. What do you think about the about the way the information is organized?

26. Would it be helpful to have a link to this page on the tax forms and publications home page?

IV. False close

Explain that participants can discuss among themselves the answers while you check in with the observers to see if they have any addition questions they would like you to ask.

V. Closing

27. Thinking about our discussion tonight, is there anything else you would like to share regarding the tax forms and publications web pages?

Thank you very much for coming this evening, and for sharing your ideas with us—we really appreciate your time.

Thank You/Wrap Up

Direct participants to area outside of the room to pick up their incentive.

**Attachment 3:
Informed Consent**

INFORMED CONSENT

Macro International Inc. (Macro) is conducting focus groups on behalf of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), to gather reactions and opinions about some web pages on IRS.gov.

You have been invited to participate in a discussion that will last no more than 2 hours with a representative of Macro. A report of the results from all of the discussions will be prepared by Macro for IRS.

Before you agree to join in this discussion, please review and consider the conditions listed below:

- Participation in this discussion is completely voluntary.
- Any questions you have about this study will be answered before the discussion begins.
- The discussion will be audio taped.
- The information you give will be private and your name will not be associated with your answers.
- Your name will not be used in any reports about this group and no quotes will be attributed to you.
- You may choose not to answer questions that you do not want to answer.
- You may choose to leave the discussion at any time for any reason.
- Although we believe that participation in this focus group poses little or no risk to you, some people may feel a little anxious about the discussion. You can choose not to answer any questions you do not want to answer.
- You will receive a monetary stipend to compensate you for your time.
- **Contact information:** If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this focus group or have any questions about the study, please contact the project manager, Arlen Rosenthal at 301.572.0222. If you think participation in this research has caused you any harm, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Macro International Inc. at 301-572-0340 and ask to speak to Ms. Rená Agee, the IRB secretary.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the conditions stated above and agree to participate in this focus group.

Print your name: _____ Date _____

Signature _____