

**Supporting Statement**  
**Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research**  
**(OMB # 1545-1432)**  
**Usability Testing of Prototypes of Redesigned IRS.gov and Online Account**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary**

As outlined in the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Strategic Plan, the agency is working towards delivering high quality service to reduce taxpayer burden and encourage voluntary compliance. Consequently, the IRS seeks to develop a Future State of IRS service delivery that provides the most convenient and efficient service to taxpayers utilizing technologies, optimizing service channels, and partnering with third parties to assist taxpayers based on their need and preferences.

Online Services (OLS) and Wage & Investment Strategies & Solutions (WISS) hosted activities at the 2016 Tax Forums to provide information and conducted research. Activities included a Future State seminar, IRS.gov research, product demonstrations, and Future State focus groups. OLS used the research results in redesigning the tax professional landing page and designing tax professional digital services.

At this year's Tax Forums, WISS has partnered with OLS to collect information from tax professionals about the irs.gov redesign and a prototype of an online account for tax professionals. WISS will conduct usability tests with individual tax professionals at each Tax Forum to collect feedback and identify potential problem areas.

**2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection**

From an operational value perspective, the purpose of this study is to collect information directly from tax professionals in order to assess usability of the redesigned irs.gov and Online Account prototype. From a taxpayer value perspective, the purpose of this study is to ensure that irs.gov and Online Account are designed to best meet the needs of tax professionals and the taxpayers they serve. OLS will use the data from this study to make changes to irs.gov and Online Account. This is a new request.

**3. Consideration Given to Information Technology**

IRS will use computers with Online Account and irs.gov prototypes downloaded onto them for participants to use during the individual sessions. Computers will only allow participants to access the prototypes needed for the individual sessions.

**4. Duplication of Information**

This is the only usability testing the IRS will conduct with tax professionals with the irs.gov and Online Account prototype to determine usability, identify potential problem areas, and provide feedback for design changes.

**5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities**

No Small Entities are involved in this Research.

**6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection**

Without conducting this research, OLS will not have in-depth information from tax professionals about their experience with, opinions of, and comments about the prototypes before development of Online Account and the irs.gov redesign are complete. The information collected is needed to determine any

improvements that may be beneficial to the design of Online Account for tax professionals or the irs.gov redesign.

**7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances.

**8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency**

There are no known consultations with persons outside of the Agency.

**9. Payment or Gift**

There will be no payment provided for participation.

**10. Confidentiality**

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this study and WISS will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately. The security of the data used in this project and the privacy to the extent allowed by law of the taxpayers will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded.

Also, the individual session data will have no identifying information relating specific records to individual taxpayers. Nonetheless, the IRS will ensure that privacy is maintained to the extent allowed by the law and security of the aggregated results will receive the utmost attention. Public and official access to the information will be tightly controlled. The computer files containing this tabulated information will remain password protected at all times. Data security approaching level C-2 will be accomplished using the Windows 7 operating system. WISS will apply fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all participants. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code, provides for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

**11. Sensitive Nature**

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

**12. Burden of Information Collection**

The estimated time for each usability session is 50 minutes. The IRS will conduct 150 sessions with tax professionals. Based on an estimated response rate of 50%, the IRS will attempt to recruit approximately 300 tax professionals. The burden hours for soliciting participation is 25 hours (300 potential participants x 5 min / 60 min) and the burden hours for completing the usability sessions is 125 hours (150 participants x 50 min / 60 min). The total number of burden hours requested is 150 hours.

<b>Collection Activity</b>	<b>Minutes Per Person</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
Soliciting participants	5 minutes	300	25
Usability session completion	50 minutes	150	125
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>			<b>150 hours</b>

### **13. Costs to Respondents**

There is no cost to respondents resulting from the collection of information.

### **14. Costs to Federal Government**

The estimated cost to the federal government is \$19,000.

### **15. Reason for Change**

This is not a request for a change.

### **16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans**

IRS will conduct behavioral data analysis using the quantitative data about whether participants could complete tasks using the prototype. This will include tallying how many participants could complete the task and ranking the tasks based on that data.

WISS will analyze qualitative data from the usability sessions using a constant compare analysis. The initial step is to group data into smaller units and identify each with a unique descriptor or code. Next, the researcher places these codes into broader categories with the final goal of uncovering overall themes. Although WISS does not publish its findings, information will be shared (when appropriate) with other organizations within the IRS, and will include specific discussion of the limitation of the data as discussed above.

### **17. Display of OMB Approval Date**

IRS is seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval, as this is a one-time, limited-duration collection.

### **18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

### **19. Dates collection will begin and end**

IRS will collect data at each of the 2017 Tax Forums. The Tax Forum dates are:

- Orlando, FL. July 11-13, 2017
- Dallas, TX. July 25-27, 2017
- National Harbor, MD. August 22-24, 2017
- Las Vegas, NV. August 29-31, 2017
- San Diego, CA. September 12-14, 2017

## **B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

The primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

### **1. Universe and Respondent Selection**

Testing session participants will be solicited in-person from individuals attending the IRS Nationwide Tax Forums.

## **2. Procedures for Collecting Information**

WISS will conduct usability sessions at the 2017 Tax Forums. During each session, a WISS researcher will ask participants questions while he/she accesses a computer with a prototype of either irs.gov or Online Account. Depending on which prototype the participant will access during the testing session, WISS will use one of the two attached moderator's guides for the session. Half of the usability testing sessions will focus on irs.gov and the other half will focus on Online Account. An additional WISS or other IRS employee will serve as a note taker/scribe for the sessions.

## **3. Methods to Maximize Response**

The focus group sessions will be limited to 50 minutes in length, and the session topic will be clearly communicated to potential participants in order to maximize participation. Participants will be assured anonymity of their responses, thus being free to express their thoughts and opinions.

## **4. Testing of Procedures**

Pretesting will not be conducted.

## **5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection**

For questions regarding the study or the research and statistical methodology, contact:

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