

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 1545-2256)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Component Library Usability Study

PURPOSE:

MITRE’s IRS Component Library research aims to trial large scale, quantitative usability testing to improve key design components of IRS.gov. The research team will pilot a small-scale, moderated usability test of two different components to reveal qualitative insights and ensure the questions and tasks are understood by participants. On the completion of the pilot study, MITRE will work with IRS Online Services to review the findings and design two large scale, unmoderated studies to capture a statistically significant sample of quantitative data (e.g. task times) related to two user interface components.

The initial pilot study will test the protocol and produce an initial data set for analysis. The test protocol will be rehearsed to ensure it is easily understood by a general audience and to identify any potential issues. Up to thirty MITRE employees will be recruited to participate in a study that tests users ability to find specific information using two different components and formats:

Flat User Interface (UI) and Clickability Signifiers of Buttons on IRS.gov: The current trend in user interface design incorporates a flat style, in which clickable elements (i.e., buttons, links) on a webpage lack realism and three-dimensional visual effects. When used incorrectly, flat UI leads to increased uncertainty of whether an element is clickable, and thereby decreases user task completion efficiency. This study aims to test two versions of a UI, containing either flat button signifiers or semi-flat button signifiers, to understand potential effects on user satisfaction and usability.

Accordions vs. Formatted, Scannable Text: Accordions as a UI element can help to shorten pages with long content and allow users to find what they are looking for more efficiently than scanning a long page. However, properly formatted text (e.g., using bulleted lists, properly named headers) can be a better solution, depending on the type of content displayed (Loranger, 2014). As IRS.gov has content varying in type and length, an exploration of accordion use compared to formatted, scannable text warrants examination in order to support enhanced taxpayer interaction. The main goal of this study is to determine efficiency and user preferences of accordions vs formatted, scannable text for webpages with long content. This study intends to compare two UI layout formats to inform design decisions; this study will not be used to assess users’ individual capabilities.

Data collected will be identified only by a participant ID code which will never be linked with the participants identities. The de-identified data will include basic demographics (age, gender, technology proficiency), time on task, task success and satisfaction with components presented during the test.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Participants will be recruited within MITRE using a “Call for Participants” email and flyer, distributed to various internal listservs and on the company intranet. Participants must be MITRE employees and U.S. citizens.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form
- Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software)
- Focus Group
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Small Discussion Group
- Other: _

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Alcora Walden

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If Yes, will any information that is collected be included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
3. If Yes, has an up-to-date System of Records Notice (SORN) been published? Yes No

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? Yes No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
MITRE employee pilot participants (web-based usability test wording and timing will be tested with volunteer participants from the MITRE Corporation using a facilitator)	30	25 minutes	13
Web-based, unmoderated usability study - Potential Individual Participants (estimated time of those who view call for participants, review study description, but choose not to participate)	800	5 minutes	67
Web-based, unmoderated usability study - Individual Participants	400	17 minutes	113
Totals (hours)			193

FEDERAL COST: N/A

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
[x] Yes [] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

Sampling is discussed in the "Description" section above.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
[x] Web-based or other forms of Social Media
[] Telephone
[x] In-person
[] Mail
[] Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? [x] Yes [] No

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Instructions for completing Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback”

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Provide the name of the collection that is the subject of the request. (e.g. Comment card for soliciting feedback on xxxx)

PURPOSE: Provide a brief description of the purpose of this collection and how it will be used. If this is part of a larger study or effort, please include this in your explanation.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Provide a brief description of the targeted group or groups for this collection of information. These groups must have experience with the program.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: Check one box. If you are requesting approval of other instruments under the generic, you must complete a form for each instrument.

CERTIFICATION: Please read the certification carefully. If you incorrectly certify, the collection will be returned as improperly submitted or it will be disapproved.

Personally Identifiable Information: Provide answers to the questions. Note: Agencies should only collect PII to the extent necessary, and they should only retain PII for the period of time that is necessary to achieve a specific objective.

Gifts or Payments: If you answer yes to the question, please describe the incentive and provide a justification for the amount.

BURDEN HOURS:

Category of Respondents: Identify who you expect the respondents to be in terms of the following categories: (1) Individuals or Households; (2) Private Sector; (3) State, local, or tribal governments; or (4) Federal Government. Only one type of respondent can be selected per row.

No. of Respondents: Provide an estimate of the Number of Respondents.

Participation Time: Provide an estimate of the amount of time (in minutes) required for a respondent to participate (e.g. fill out a survey or participate in a focus group)

Burden: Provide the Annual burden hours: Multiply the Number of Respondents and the Participation Time then divide by 60.

FEDERAL COST: Provide an estimate of the annual cost to the Federal government.

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

The selection of your targeted respondents. Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them. If the answer is yes, to the first question, you may provide the sampling plan in an attachment.

Administration of the Instrument: Identify how the information will be collected. More than one box may be checked. Indicate whether there will be interviewers (e.g. for surveys) or facilitators (e.g., for focus groups) used.

Submit all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.