

Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 0651-0080)

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Focus Group Feedback in Support of U.S. Patent and Trademark Office’s (USPTO) Next Generation Initiatives.

PURPOSE:

To obtain feedback on customer preferences for various USPTO web-based sites and applications using focus groups. Feedback will be used to inform the design and functionality of the USPTO’s outward facing Next Generation programs.

The information gathered will aid the USPTO’s efforts in modernizing access to patent and trademark related information, as well as increasing the efficiency of the patent and trademark filing processes.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Any stakeholder who has an interest in the patent/trademark process and/or the filing of patent/trademark applications (e.g., patent attorneys, paralegals, and individual inventors)

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input type="checkbox"/> 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: Scott Merker

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

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No

3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? Yes No

Dissemination Events and Registrations (71 Fed. Reg. 77739)

PII will include contact information (such as name and addresses) in order to correspond with volunteers.

Information gathered during the discussions will not be linked to the respondents in any way. PII will be maintained in a separate electronic file from the quantitative and qualitative data collected during discussions. At the end of the data collection, two sets of files will be maintained.

One file will contain respondent information from the background information form and will be maintained to ensure customers are not recruited a second time (unless they indicate they would like to participate in future feedback sessions).

The second set of files will contain information generated from the focus groups.

Once the two files are created, respondent information will not be realigned with the data collected.

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
Individuals or Households	50	2 hrs.	100 hrs.
Private Sector	200	2 hrs.	400 hrs.
Totals	250		500 hrs.

The burden hours estimate is based on an average of 5 volunteers per focus group with 10 focus groups for Individuals or Households and 40 focus groups for the Private Sector.

FEDERAL COST: The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$7,500 based on 50 focus groups at a 2X government employee facilitator rate for 100 hours. (GS14-step 1, est. at approx. \$75/hr for a fully loaded rate) Each focus groups involves two government employees.

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? 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?

The USPTO will be requesting volunteers for feedback from several sources, including but not limited to: trade shows, conferences, and e-mail lists from associations with interest in patent and trademark issues (e.g., Rocky Mountain Inventors Association). The USPTO plans to minimize repeat requests for volunteers from the same source.

When a round of focus group sessions is planned, a cross-sampling of the volunteers who have responded will be selected so as to most closely represent all stakeholders relevant to the program being discussed. The main target groups for the sessions are patent attorneys, paralegals, and individual inventors who typically attend the shows and conferences and belong to the associations from which the USPTO will be requesting volunteers.

Administration of the Instrument

2. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)

- Web-based or other forms of Social Media
- Telephone
- In-person
- Mail
- Other, Explain

The focus groups may take place *in person* on government property or remotely *in person* at the volunteers' workplace. In addition, the focus groups may be conducted virtually using *web-based* screen sharing (e.g. WebEx) or, as an option, volunteers may attend the focus group using *telephone* based group conferencing.

Audio and video recording will be used during the discussions to aid in the capture of user preferences. Video will not intentionally be taken of the participants themselves; the intent is to capture information on a computer screen or information presented/arranged on a tabletop. These recordings will not be associated with PII data. Volunteers will have the option of declining audio and/or video recording in which case this data will not be captured.

3. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No

Each participant will fill out either printed or online versions of:

- *Form - Background Information*
- *Form – Audio and Video Recording Consent Form* (will not be included if the session will not be recorded)

The facilitator will use the following guide for assistance in preparing for the discussion:

- *Facilitator Guide – Focus Group*