Supporting Statement A
"USPTO Websites Customer Satisfaction Surveys"
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Office of the Chief Information Officer
OMB Control No. 0651-New

Justification

1.) Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is requesting to obtain a generic clearance to conduct customer satisfaction surveys on its websites. The contractor, ForeSee, is using a derivative of the ACSI methodology called Customer Experience Analytics or CXA [see supplementary documents The ForeSee CXA Methodology: White Paper]. This collection will allow for continued use of a data-driven and a statistically valid approach to understanding customer satisfaction with Agency websites. The objective is to help the USPTO become more citizen-centric and achieve higher levels of public trust and confidence.

The primary law that supports these efforts is the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, 31 U.S.C. 1116, which has as one of its purposes "improve Federal programs effectiveness and public accountability by promoting a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction." Such an initiative is also widely supported by longstanding administrative policy, as expressed in Executive Orders and Laws, described below.

Official policy on customer service standards is contained in Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards, which establishes that Federal Government agencies should survey customers to determine their level of satisfaction with existing services, measure customer service satisfaction results against service standards, benchmark customer service performance against the best in business, provide customers with choices in both the sources of service and the means of delivery, make complaint systems easily accessible, and provide means to address customer complaints. Agencies are to utilize information about their customer satisfaction results in judging the performance of agency management and in making resource allocations.

On April 27, 2011, an Executive Order was published (E.O. 13571, Streamlining Customer Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service). This E.O. requires each agency to develop a customer service plan in consultation with OMB that addresses how each agency will provide services in a manner that streamlines service delivery and improves the experience of its customers. The E.O. requires the establishment of mechanisms to solicit customer feedback on Government services and using feedback regularly to make improvements. Furthermore, the E.O. requires improving the customer experience by adopting proven customer service best practices across service channels (including websites) as well as identifying ways to use innovative technologies to accomplish customer service activities, thereby lowering costs, decreasing service delivery times and improving the customer experience (as can be accomplished through agency websites).

The USPTO will use the ForeSee CXA surveys in order to collaborate effectively with the public and meet Administration mandates. These surveys will assist the Agency in its efforts to be open and collaborative, as it solicits input and feedback on its websites.

The advantage of ForeSee CXA surveys lies in their statistical significance with minimum cost and burden on the public. Collecting, analyzing, and acting upon customer satisfaction data are vital to the Agency's ability to provide the public with useful and effective websites.

2.) Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

This generic clearance will enhance the ability of the USPTO to:

- Better identify who is visiting its websites.
- Determine what drives visitor satisfaction.
- Understand the relationship between visitors' satisfaction with their experience and future behaviors.
- Prioritize resource allocation based on their ability to drive return on investment.
- Measure customer satisfaction of visitors continuously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Benchmark performance against public and private sector websites with a similar mission.
- Identify areas for improvement.
- Quantify the impact of improving visitor satisfaction on future behaviors.
- Drill down to evaluate satisfaction of different user groups and various sections of its websites.

The website customer satisfaction measures or surveys are based on the ForeSee CXA methodology. ForeSee, Inc. uses a unique website customer satisfaction measurement survey and model that determines both the impact of drivers on satisfaction and also the outcome of satisfaction on trust and confidence in the government. This survey and related analysis and reporting enables the Agency to obtain insights that help make valuable resource allocation decisions based on customer feedback. ForeSee utilizes a derivative of the proprietary methodology behind the ACSI econometric model to link the drivers and consequences of satisfaction. An important advantage, in contrast to methods that rely solely on survey questions, is that it produces results with statistical stability and low chance variation. This helps ensure uniform and consistent results that allow cross-agency comparisons and benchmarking.

The benefits to the USPTO in using the ForeSee CXA Methodology for customer satisfaction measures are:

- Reliance on uniform and scientifically established measures of E-Government customer satisfaction.
- Confidence in having accurate and researched indexes of customer satisfaction.
- Information on how to improve website satisfaction.
- Impartiality and objectivity in website satisfaction.
- High quality of data.
- Ability to measure customer satisfaction continuously.

A brief survey made up of a combination of standard and/or custom questions is triggered randomly for the smallest possible percentage of site visitors needed to achieve statistically valid information. The survey gathers information from visitors about their overall satisfaction with the Agency's sites, satisfaction with specific site elements, and their likelihood to return to, recommend, or transact with Agency sites in the future. All reporting and data storage are done through secure servers that reside at the ForeSee site so that USPTO site performance is not affected. In addition, aggregate data on website satisfaction is maintained and available for comparative purposes.

The surveys may present questions in a variety of formats, such as numeric sales, multiple choice, or comment boxes. The content of each question covers a range of user experience, such as general satisfaction, ease of use, look and feel, future behavior, and other similar topics.

The USPTO will use the survey results for internal purposes only; the results will neither be published nor used to measure outcomes of Agency programs. The surveys will likewise be used only to assess customer service of Agency websites.

3.) Consideration Given to Information Technology

The ForeSee CXA methodology is an online survey tool that is fully automated for data collection and reporting. Most other tools available to agencies measure activities such as numbers of page views, amount of time per visit to a website, percentage of website reliability, etc., but do not capture data on customer satisfaction. Moreover, most other customer satisfaction survey tools are not able to capture data on the customer experience both randomly and after the customer has visited sufficient web pages to render a reasonable evaluation of their experience. Data is collected with state-of-the art technology and requires only an average of 8 minutes of the participant's time.

4.) Duplication of Information

Respondents for the website survey are selected at random and, typically, only after the website visitor has had a unique experience with the Agency's website. Individual respondents will not be selected to complete more than one random survey.

5.) Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

The collection of information will have no significant impact on small businesses or other small entities. If asked to participate in a survey, a small business could opt out very easily without penalty or pressure.

6.) Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Without the utilization of ForeSee surveys, USPTO websites are at risk because:

- They might focus on the wrong measure of success – how well the websites serve the Agency's needs instead of citizens' needs.
- They will fail to be truly citizen-centric or provide the best possible service and information to citizens as required by Executive Branch policy and directives.
- Citizens will benchmark Agency website performance against the "best in business" and will not return to or recommend government websites that do not meet their expectations.
- They will not see productivity gains, necessary improvements and sufficient returns on their information technology budgets.
- Potential savings of doing government business via websites will not be realized, thus missing an important opportunity to reduce costs.
- Citizen satisfaction will decline which will lead to an overall reduction in citizen trust and confidence in government.

7.) Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

8.) Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

This survey employs a methodology that was previously reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (1090-0008). It does not require respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, and does not include a pledge of confidentiality.

In accordance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d), a notice was published in the *Federal Register* on July 5, 2018 (Fed. Reg. 83, 31378). No public comments were received.

9.) Payment or Gift

No payments or gifts will be made to respondents.

10.) Confidentiality

Individuals and organizations given the opportunity to take a survey will be assured of the anonymity of their replies under 5 U.S.C. 552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130. Survey respondents will be advised on the survey form or in a privacy statement that participation is voluntary.

No personally identifiable information is collected. No system of records is created.

11.) Sensitive Nature

This website survey will not ask questions or collect data of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. However, on occasion, some respondents may consider some of the standard demographic questions as sensitive in nature (e.g., questions that request the respondent's age, gender, education, or household income). Demographic questions are useful in segmenting the responses of different user groups or visitor profiles and are helpful in evaluating the results; therefore, respondents will be encouraged to answer these questions but assured that their participation is completely voluntary.

12.) Burden of Information Collected

IC Number	Information Collection Item	Estimated time for response (minutes) (a)	Estimated Annual Responses (b)	Estimated annual burden hours (a) x (b) = (c)	Rate (S/hr) (d)	Total Cost ($) (c) x (d) = (e)
1		8	100,000	13,333.33	$203.71	$2,716,133.33
Total (Three –Year Period)		**- - -**	**100,000 (300,00)**	**13,333.33 (40,000)**	**- - -**	**$2,716,133.33 (8,148,400.00)**

13.) Costs to Respondents

There are no anticipated non-hourly respondent costs associated with this collection.

14.) Costs to Federal Government

The total annual estimated cost to the government resulting from the collection of information is estimated to be $92,433.49, which is the total of 5,000 hours of GS-13, step 1 labor (shown in the table below), and roughly $15,000 for ForeSee to analyze the responses.

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1		1	100,000	1,666.67	$46.46	$77,433.49
Total (Three –Year Period)		**- - -**	**100,000 (300,00)**	**1,666.67 (5,000)**	**- - -**	**$77,433.49 ($232,300.47)**

15.) Reasons for Change

As this is a new collection there are no changes from previous renewals.

16.) Tabulation of Results, Schedule, and Analysis Plans

The USPTO has access to its scores and detailed statistical and analytical data through an on-line reporting portal maintained by ForeSee. The Agency will also receive monthly on-line reports.

17.) Display of OMB Expiration Date

To potentially increase the response rate by reducing the amount of introductory information, the USPTO requests that it not be required to state the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection in these survey instruments.

18.) Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exception to the certification statement is being requested.