



July 2010

TxDOT Website Analysis and Evaluation Project

Part 1: Stakeholder Interviews



Design For Use, LLC

David Richard, President drichard@designforuse.net

Nishant Jain, CEO njain@designforuse.net

www.designforuse.net 512.799.3605





Stakeholder Interviews

Overview and Protocol

Stakeholder interviews were scheduled and conducted at the Sherry Matthews and TxDOT offices in Austin, Texas on May 3 and 6, 2010. Throughout the week, representatives from TxDOT and Sherry Matthews were invited to sit down and share their goals, metrics for success and the perceived challenges they face.

Interviews followed the same general protocol for each session.

- Stakeholders met with Design For Use team members for approximately 60 minutes each to discuss the TxDOT website evaluation project.
- An introduction to the interview methodology and context was given to the stakeholders.
- Stakeholders were asked about the primary role in the organization and their role within TxDOT specifically.
- Interviews focused on goals, metrics, and challenges for the stakeholders. Additional stakeholder-specific questions and topics of discussion were part of the conversation.
- In this document, bracketed numbers indicate comments from a specific interview session.

Purpose

The purpose of these interviews was to gain further insight into the business requirements, internal processes, and expected success metrics for the stakeholders. The findings that are highlighted in this document will be used to validate the team's common goals and will also inform the subsequent design deliverables.



Qualitative Objectives

Organizational

- Identify what issues people have when coming to the site, what can be improved. [s2]
- The organization of the site needs improving because it is hard to find things when you need them. [s1]
- Find the best way to organize and structure the information on the site so users can find it quickly. [s2]
- Recognize whether there is some information on the site that is unnecessary. [s2]
- Too much of a reliance on micro-sites and third-party sites [s1, s2], which makes it hard to find information and navigate the site.

Branding

- Find out what the public thinks of TxDOT; what they like/dislike about the way the site is organized. [s1, s2]
- Can do a lot more communication with the webpage [s2]
- Use the website as a PR tool to improve the public perception of TxDOT. [s1]
- Need to distinguish between TxDOT, DPS, and DMV [s1], or gauge the degree to which those differences matter to the user. [s2]
- It would be good to take time to improve the website and shore up some public good will. [s1]

Website Tone, Descriptors

- All TxDOT related sites should have similar branding and visual design, making it clear that they are part of the oneDOT philosophy. [s2]
- The different layouts and URLs of the micro-sites do not make it obvious that they are related to TxDOT. [s1]
- Finding of previous focus group indicated that the website was “confusing,” and effort has been made to provide more clarity. [s2]
- Website should be: truthful, helpful, useful, clean and clear. [s1, s2]



Success Metrics (Quantitative)

Organizational

- At one point, TxDOT had 200,000 documents on its website, and that number has been reduced to 20,000. Reducing that number further would be ideal. [s2]
- Website content can be reduced by examining which pages get fewer than 50 hits a month and evaluating their need. [s2]
- Website content could be limited by putting a cap on the number of pages a certain division can have, for example 4 or 5 pages. [s1]
- Identify 5-6 main site issues to focus on for usability testing, and 6-7 tasks that users need to complete. [s2]

Experiential

- Considering that the most common task is downloading forms, this task should be given priority over other tasks in navigation. [s2]
- The task for renewing a drivers' license previously fell within the top 10 user needs, but now it is not even in the top 15. Considering this is a task for DPS, the traffic for drivers' license needs should decrease even further. [s2]
- Determine the issues people encounter when coming to the site, and gain different perspectives about what they can accomplish on the site. [s2]



Challenges / Risks

Organizational

- Not clear to what extent users need to know the difference between DPS, DMV, and TxDOT. Many users come to the TxDOT site to complete tasks relating to DPS and DMV, but it's easy to redirect them to the other sites. A goal for the usability testing is to determine how to highlight that a user is transferring between the sites, or whether any explanation is necessary at all. [s1, s2]
- There are a lot of local districts and divisions whose information becomes integrated into the TxDOT website, but there is little restriction or control over what is posted online. [s1]

Users

- User groups need to be more clearly defined. "The population of Texas" is not a specific enough demographic. [s1]
- Different generational demographic information should be collected; the way a 25-year-old uses the site is different than how a retiree interacts with TxDOT. [s2]

Technical

- The site would benefit from a CMS that manages the date that certain pages should be removed. [s2]
- Need to gauge the type of technology people would like to see on TxDOT; providing SMS, Text, or Twitter updates for road conditions and inclement weather. [s2]
- Due to the fact that many users are in rural areas and still rely on dial-up internet connections, the site cannot be too advanced technically or some users will not be able to access site (especially with the potential use of Flash). [s2]
- There is no clear indication of how many micro-sites link from the TxDOT site, and no system in place to count those micro-sites. Identifying the various project, safety campaign, and district sites is necessary to eventually incorporate their branding into one DOT. [s1]

Content

- Pages like Texas Expressway and safety micro-sites need to align with the look and feel of the larger TxDOT site. [s1, s2]
- Information that is no longer relevant should be archived and migrated off the site. There needs to be a system in place to make that possible. [s1, s2]



Users

- Although usability testing will be conducted in Austin, hopefully recruits will also come from more rural areas in Williamson County and around Austin. [s2]
- Due to inclement weather in the past few years (hurricanes and winter storms), users living in Austin who are from the gulf coast should be included in study, as well as users who travel in north Texas and are exposed to winter weather. [s2]
- Finding someone who doesn't use computers very often would be beneficial to see whether the website problems are a usability issue or a user problem. [s2]
- The focus of the study should be a balance of task-based scenarios and user-demographic scenarios. [s2]

Content

- Feedback is needed about the Road Conditions section of the website. Some districts are active about adding road information, but all districts must be engaged in the process. [s2]
- Considering information about roads is fragmented among regions (Transtar in Houston), there should be a system in place that streamlines this information. [s2]
- Website content from divisions is sometimes inaccurate; when web writers ask DDOs to revise the information on their pages, oftentimes no changes are made. [s2]
- Pushing information about drivers' license and auto registration to the TxDOT homepage redirects user traffic to the appropriate site (DPS or DMV) and serves the users' needs, regardless of whether they understand the difference between the agencies. [s2]



Reporting & Analysis

- The most commonly visited page is “404 Page Not Found,” indicating that there are many broken links within the site. Dead links should be removed to drive users to relevant and useful information. [s1]
- There are many “Object Moved” pages that rank in the top 15 most viewed pages and exit points. The cause of this issue needs to be reported. [s2]
- Although capturing information about users’ screen resolutions, operating systems, and browsers is possible, that data is currently not part of the reporting metrics. [s2]

Competition/Best Practices

- The local regions do a great job updating Facebook and Twitter pages, and the same information should be available on the TxDOT site. [s1]
- Colleges and universities are examples of organizations that have a lot of different programs and departments, but are able to organize information in a meaningful way. We could look at their organizational structure to learn more. [s2]
- Users are coming to TxDOT for specific information, like banking and investment sites, and the content should be divided and presented clearly. [s2]
- Ford.com, BMW, and Amazon are large organizations with many dealers and departments, but everything is organized in one website, and each page looks the same. TxDOT could accomplish the same thing with its departments. [s2]
- The clean, clear look of many financial websites, such as Bank of America and Chase, would be helpful in directing users to the information they need. [s1]
- Websites that provide an accurate search function are the most helpful, and TxDOT’s search function can be improved. [s1]