Using a scenario-planning tool to support an engaging online user experience

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Overview

This presentation discusses:

- issues a government department has in serving its citizens
- a conceptual approach to a solution
- design & testing of the solution
- thoughts for the future
Background

Issues presented by “Centrelink”:

- make online contacts with Centrelink more engaging and convenient for customers
- encourage less-experienced online users to interact with Centrelink using self-service
- use the online environment to promote the benefits of workforce participation
- help customers take an active role in planning a pathway towards self-sufficiency.

Background

Focus:

- Increasing population of older customers returning to the workforce
- ‘Work First’ Accessing Assistance interview questionnaire

Research question:

- Can a Centrelink’s online experience be enhanced by developing a self-help tool which allows customers to explore various scenarios of actions and their outcomes?
Aims of the study

To develop an online tool that would be:

- highly engaging vs “form-filling”
- dynamic
- reflective.

Approach

Scenario planning

- beyond the ‘loans calculator’

Concept of ‘flow’

- goals, feedback, challenge vs skills
- control, autotelic
- control + engagement + enjoyment.
Developing a Prototype

Analysis of Centrelink interaction

Algorithm design

Screen design

Prototype Development

Centrelink branding – logo, images, tool links, main menu

Prototype 1

Page title

Instructions / Welcome text

Static parameters

Next page nav >>

Skip to Prototype 2
Summary & referrals

The colour to the left is an “average” of all your inputs. You might like to consider one or more of the following actions:

- Language skills course
  This 6 month course will help improve your reading and writing skills.

- Mobile phone purchase
  Buying a mobile phone will improve your contactability with potential employers.

Preparing to return to the workforce

This tool is designed to assist you preparing to return to work. It allows you to nominate your current situation and see the types of options Centrelink may offer you to assist you return to work.

It can also be used to plan for the future by allowing you to change various values and see the result of doing things such as getting you resume up-to-date.

Please note:
1. Options presented in this tool are indicative only and actual options recommended by Centrelink may differ depending on your situation.
2. Centrelink does not record or retain any information based on using this tool.

Gender?

- Female

How long since your last paid employment?

- More than 3 years
- 1 year
- Less than 1 month

Age?

- 40
- 45
- 50
- 55
- 60

How many address changes have you had in last 2 years?

- 5 or more
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 or none
Prototype 2

- Temporary work
- Education
- Work Hours
- Fitness
- Confidence
- Resume
- Up-to-date qualifications
- Number of Interviews
- Interview skills
- Interview notification

What hours are you prepared to work?
- Overtime
- Full time
- Part time
- Casual
- Weekends
- Nights

Resume

Fitness

Education

Literacy

Contact

Number of Interviews

Overtime

Full time

Part time

Casual

Weekends

Nights

Interview skills

Interview notification
Work Hours

Temporary work

Number of Interviews

Resume

Interview skills

Education

Literacy

Fitness

Confidence

Resume

What is your level of fitness?

Very low – no regular exercise

Reasonable – exercise twice per week

High – exercise almost every day

How confident are you of finding work in the next 3 months?

Very low confidence

Reasonably confident

Very high confidence

What is your age?

Up-to-date qualifications

Contact
Improving your résumé
Developing your interview skills
Suggestion about temporary work
Language skills courses
Building confidence
Improving contact
Improving job skills
Getting fit
Getting for that job
Improving your qualifications
Improving your education
Testing with Customers

Four groups of six participants tested at The University of Melbourne usability laboratory:

- Centrelink customers
- Age 50+
- Unemployed 2+ yrs

Data collection:

- Questionnaires
- Scenario tasks using the prototype
- Focus group.
The Prototype...
The Prototype…

The Prototype…
Task 2 (10 minutes):

Work through the program from the first screen, filling in the values for your actual circumstances. When you get to the final screen (“3. Options”), have a look through any options presented to you.

Note: if no options are presented to you, that means you are in a good condition to find work.

When you have finished, please wait until the facilitator asks you to continue to Task 3. In the meantime, you may explore and change settings in the model as you please.
Scenarios (revised version)

Task 2: Fast forward to the present day (10 minutes)

Back to the current day.

You have another interview with Centrelink (tomorrow!) and you remember the experience of using the computer program on the earlier occasion. Use it again to explore your current situation. Put in the real information that relates to you today and take note of the options it suggests for you.

Are they helpful – could they be improved? Again, explore and see if the program can help you reflect on what you might do to improve your chances of finding a job.

When you have finished, please wait for the facilitator to describe the next scenario to you.

Outcomes & discussion

User interaction

- user explored & answered various ‘what-if’ questions
- they were engaged
- but, had expectation of a ‘process’
- little evidence of flow (control + engagement + enjoyment)

Software evaluation

- usability details…
- mixed reaction to direct manipulation design
- need greater enticement to explore.
Findings *(do we need this?)*

Centrelink customers:
- explored the effect of their current and future actions in relation to workforce participation
- answered various ‘what-if’ questions.

The prototype supported:
- interactively describing a customer’s situation and envision other scenarios
- customers with minimal internet experience
- promoting benefits of workforce participation
- supporting customers taking an active role in planning a pathway towards self sufficiency.

Next steps…

Modifications to software…
Apply scenario-planning to other areas…
Generic concept – self-help through exploration:

- observe prioritised output
- adjust personal info
- reflect
Conclusion

We have identified:

- potential of ‘novel’ interaction style in e-government
- design requirements for further prototype
- areas of interest from within Centrelink for collaboration
- moving towards self-help through reflection.