

# **Company Name Usability Report:**

## **First Round Prototype Testing**

Prepared by Clearleft Ltd on 16 January 2006



<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction and Goals .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Results .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix i: Pre Test Surveys .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendix ii: Post Test Surveys .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix iii: Test Data.....</b>	<b>26</b>

## Executive Summary

The first round of user testing provided a very useful insight into the content, structure and usability of the proposed XXX Extranet. The test participants found it easy to comment on consultations and confirm their attendance to upcoming meetings. Participants also found it easy to locate and read the XXX newsletters and find contact information for the committees. This tasks did highlight some minor usability issues, details and recommendations for which will appear later in this document.

However there were two tasks that caused significant problems for the participants. Firstly, none of the participants were able to locate a specified document, which was located in the “resources” section of the site. The name and contents of this section proved to be confusing and defied expectations. As such we recommend overhauling the content and structure of this section to make it more useful and relevant to XXX members, as well as being more usable.

Secondly, four of the five participants were unable to locate information on the XXX department as it was “hidden” in the news archive, rather than being in a more logical location such as the “About XXX” section. As such, we recommend restructuring or removing the “Departmental News Archives” and moving any relevant departmental information into the “About XXX” section.

On a more general level, it was felt that user actions such as submitting comments or confirming attendance to a meeting required more explicit feedback to ensure users understood that something had happened.

## Introduction and Goals

The purpose of this round of testing was to gather user feedback on the proposed XXX site structure and identify any serious problems before the design and production phase commences.

Specific questions that need to be answered:

- Does the navigational naming conventions make sense?
- Is the navigational structure clear and intuitive?
- Is contact information easy to find?
- Is the news section clear and easy to use?
- Are consultations easy to find and review?
- Is the committees' section clear and easy to understand?

## Methodology

6 participants were required for this round of usability testing, held at XXX offices in central London. Participants represented a typical cross section of XXX extranet users in terms of age, technical ability and knowledge of the organisation. Participants were asked to complete a pre-test survey, details of which can be found in appendix i.

Each participant was greeted by the test moderator and given a brief outline on the testing process. The participant was then set a series of tasks and each session was recorded on video for later analysis. Each session will last approximately 1 hour. Once the tasks were completed, the participant was debriefed and given the opportunity to ask any questions. Lastly, the participant was asked to fill in a short survey before they left. The results of these surveys can be found in appendix ii.

## Testing Outline

- Welcome and testing outline
- Begin task list
  - Read and comment on any consultations requiring your review
  - Confirm your attendance to the next XXX reporting meeting and print out an agenda
  - Read the latest XXX newsletter
  - Read news about the recent XXX Conference

- Download the recent XXX presentation from XXX
  - Find the email address of the chairman of the XXX Committee
  - Find out as much information as you can about the XXX Department
- Debrief participant
- Fill out post-test survey

## Results

### **Task 1: Read and comment on any consultations requiring your review**

Most of the participants found completing this task very straightforward. Participants found it easy to locate consultations requiring their review, and add comments. However there were three areas that caused some confusion and need reviewing.

At least two participants were unaware that clicking on the “add comments” link had taken them to the comments form on the same page, thinking instead that they had been taken to a separate page. This caused a certain amount of disorientation but was not a critical issue. However it did contribute to the second issue, which was more problematic.

Three of participants were unsure about the purpose of the “Add Comment” button. Participants #1 and #5 assumed that the act of filling in the form would automatically save their comments. Both participants thought that the “Add Comment” button was associated with sending an email notification. Participant #1 felt the naming was confusing, as they had already pressed a link with the same title. Participant #2 was also unsure of the buttons purpose, expecting to see a button called “Submit”.

At least three of the participants were unsure if the comment had been saved once the “Add Comment” button had been pressed. The participants didn’t notice the highlighted comment and were expecting more positive confirmation such as a feedback message. Participants #2 and #5 were confused that they were taken back to the comment box when the button had been pressed, feeling this was an indication that either the comment hadn’t been added, or they were expected to add another comment.

## **Task 2: Confirm your attendance to the next XXX reporting meeting and print out an agenda**

All but one of the participants was able to complete this task with relative ease. However participant #1 was confused by the confirmation process, thinking that they had to select their name from a list before selecting the "I Confirm my Attendance" button. The fact that names appeared in no logical order added to the participants confusion. With no means of selecting a name, the participant decided to email confirmation instead. One other participant also tried to select their name but quickly realised that the system knew who they were and they could just press the button.

Participant #5 understood that clicking on the "I Confirm my Attendance" button was supposed to confirm their attendance, but the lack of a positive feedback left them feeling unsure that the system had registered their confirmation.

All participants navigated back to the homepage to start this task. The majority of participants didn't notice the meeting in the list of their committees, heading straight for the list of "Meetings in the next 7 days" instead.

Apart from these minor issues, all but participant #1 were able to confirm their attendance with ease. However printing out an agenda caused a certain degree of confusion. Several of the participants did not realise that clicking on the "agenda" link had jumped them down the page, thinking instead that they had been taken to a separate agenda page. All participants expected the "Print agenda" link to either print to document or trigger a print dialogue box. None of the participants realised the link took them to a printer friendly page and the participants that through they were already on a separate page found this page particularly confusing.

### **Task 3: Read the latest XXX newsletter**

All participants were able to locate the XXX newsletter with the minimum of effort. After searching the homepage for a link everybody went immediately to the news page and spotted the newsletter link. However it seemed clear that none of the participants had heard of the newsletter so it's doubtful they would actually seek it out in this manner.

The newsletter page layout generally made sense to everybody, but none of the participants knew what the "XXX" and "Radio" links referred to. Three of the participants thought they went to external sites while participant #2 thought they were related to the previous "Diary Dates" heading. Most of the participants said that they would follow the link to see where it took them, but two participants said that if they didn't know what the links meant they would probably ignore them. When the links were clicked on, several of the participants were still unsure what the pages were about and at least one participant failed to realise that they were still within the XXX newsletter. The general consensus was that the terms "XXX" and "Radio" were too broad and essentially meaningless.

### **Task 4: Read news about the recent XXX Conference**

This task proved quite problematic. Only participant #3 found this task easy while participant #4 struggled through, participants #1 and #5 required help and participant #2 failed to complete the task.

After searching for the article on the news homepage, three participants immediately turned to the XXX newsletter as this seemed like the logical section for XXX related news. The other two participants didn't immediately know where to look and turned to the search mechanism. After some encouragement to continue using the UI, they too



headed for the XXX newsletter. All participants ignored the departmental archives and didn't notice or choose to use the main news archive.

### **Task 5: Download the recent XXX presentation XXX**

This task proved to be the most difficult, with no participants managing to find the required information. In general, the participants had no idea where this information would be kept. Some participants thought that it could be related to a specific committee, but not knowing which one, they didn't know where to start. Others searched the latest news stories for clues but didn't dig any deeper.

Participant #1 discounted the "resources" section as they felt it related to human resources. Participant #5 assumed that resources related to documents or resources available at the XXX head office. Participant #2 ignored the link despite hovering over it several times. Participant #3 immediately went to the resources link, but not seeing the presentation on the first page, gave up and used the search. Of the people who did eventually look at the resources page, none of them searched beyond the first page of results or considered looking in any of the departmental archive. The date based archive was considered useless as the participants had no idea when the presentation was given.

### **Task 6: Find the email address of the chairman of the XXX Committee**

This task proved to be one of the most straight forward, with everybody going straight to the committees section, finding the manufacturing committee and locating the appropriate email address.

However when three of the participants were asked what they understood by the terms "open" and "closed" committees they were not sure. Participant #2 thought that all committees on the page should be current committees and older committees

should appear in an archive. Participant #4 also didn't understand the need or value in displaying closed committees. Lastly, participant #5 thought that "open" and "closed" referred to access privileges rather than whether a committee was a current committee or an old committee.

### **Task 7: Find out as much information as you can about XXX Department**

The last task also proved extremely difficult with all but one of the participants failing to find the required information. Only participant #4 located more information about the specified department and this was because they remembered seeing the information on one of the previous tasks. The other four participants went immediately to the "About XXX" section expecting to find the information there. When they could not find the information, a few of them tried the "Staff Directory" link below the Wales contact details expecting this to take them to more information about the department.

## Recommendations

### Priority Recommendations

The wording of the “Add Comment” button proved confusing for a number of people. We suggest changing the wording on the button to something more active like “Submit”, “Submit Comment” or “Save Comment”. It may also be advisable to warn users that they have an unsaved comment if the comment form contains data that hasn’t been submitted.

It wasn’t clear to several of the participants if their comments had been added. We suggest providing more positive and explicit feedback. Some participants were also confused that they were taken back to the comment form. One suggestion would be to take people to a separate “Thank You” page once they comments have been submitted.

Feedback for confirming attendance needs to be improved, preferably with a positive text message confirming attendance.

In the meeting agenda section, the “Print Agenda” link should be changed to say “Print Friendly Version” to avoid confusion.

The news section proved confusing to a number of the participants. People assumed that all news relating to XXX would be in the XXX newsletter and discounted the departmental news. To avoid this, we recommend making more of a “feature” of the newsletters so they are visually distinct from the rest of the news page. These newsletters should contain text to explain what they are and who they are aimed at.

This Extranet is primarily aimed at external XXX members. However departmental news archives are only of value to XXX staff or members who have a good understanding of the department structure. These departmental archives added to the general complexity of the page and were largely ignored, even by the one XXX staff member.

As such, information only of interest to XXX staff should not appear on the Extranet and should instead be saved for an XXX Intranet. Instead we would recommend using another means of categorising news items based around the interest of your members rather than explicitly on your departmental structure. There could still be some correlation but you should use more readily recognisable categories such as English News, Welsh News, Events, Science and Technology, XXX in the News etc.

The resources section proved to be the source of a significant amount of confusion. Firstly, the term "Resources" meant different things to different people. Some people thought it referred to human resources, while others felt it meant links and publications. We recommend changing the name to something more descriptive.

Secondly, it wasn't clear what information was going to be in this section. All the users felt that this section was a "mishmash" of irrelevant information. Rather than becoming a document dumping ground, the content and purpose of this section needs to be re-evaluated. We recommend that this section should only contain information that is of broad interest to XXX members.

Participants felt that the date-based navigation was irrelevant, as they would not necessarily know when a resource was published or added to the site. As such we recommend significantly reducing its prominence, or removing this navigation method altogether. Navigating resources based on department may also prove problematic, as users will not necessarily understand the XXX department structure. Instead, resources should be categorised based on other factors such as their topic, area of interest or type of resource (presentation, publication etc).

Having departmental information in the departmental news archive was nonsensical and only one participant was able to find this information after considerable effort. All other participants went straight to the about us section so we recommend adding

departmental information here. Some participants also felt that the about us section could benefit from providing a better overview of the XXX including a committee structure overview and information on key positions.

## Secondary Recommendations

Internal “Jump Links” proved confusing for some users. We believe users will get used to these types of links over time. We also believe that the confusion will be diminished when there are more visual clues to say that users are still on the same page. However it will probably be worth testing this once the design is set and if they are still causing problems, remove them.

The meeting attendance list is currently in no discernable order. We recommend that the list be ordered alphabetically to allow for easier scanning of participants.

In the XXX Newsletter, most of the participants did not understand the meaning of the “XXX” and “Radio” links. These links require additional explanatory text. Being relegated to the side-bar, these links didn’t feel part of the newsletter. We recommend integrating these links more into the body of the newsletter.

The terms “open” and “closed” committees caused some confusion. It was felt that only current committees should be presented on the committees page and older committees should be relegated to a committees archive.

The participants liked the fact that department specific news stories contained prominent contact information. However one participant did comment that it would be better if there was just one generic contact address as otherwise they would not know who to contact. We recommend supplying a single point of contact for anybody interested in commenting on a particular news story.

## **Appendix i: Pre Test Surveys**

This appendix contains the answers to pre-test surveys of the participants to get an idea of demographics and test suitability.

## Participant 1

Name	XXX
Age	XXX
Sex	XXX
Job Title	Executive PA
Web Experience <i>1=novice, 5=expert</i>	1    2    3-4    5
Frequency Online <i>1=infrequent, 5=heavy user</i>	1    2    3    4    5
Computer/Platform	Windows 2000
Web Browser	Microsoft Internet Explorer Version 6
Experience of the XXX <i>1=limited, 5=extensive</i>	1    2    3    4    5
How long have you been involved with the XXX?	I have communicated with administrators in XXX throughout my career within the XXX industry on behalf of my boss. For the last year one of my team has been on secondment at the XXX and I have been a point of contact for some of the work he has been doing.
How many XXX committees do you belong to?	None – it is my boss who is involved
How many XXX consultations were you involved in last year?	N/A
Have you ever used the old XXX Extranet?	For downloading Commercial Committee Papers

## Participant 2

Name	XXX
Age	XXX
Sex	XXX
Job Title	Head of Education
Web Experience <i>1=novice, 5=expert</i>	1      2      3      4      5
Frequency Online <i>1=infrequent, 5=heavy user</i>	1      2      3      4      5
Computer/Platform	Compaq (at work)/Windows
Web Browser	Microsoft
Experience of the XXX <i>1=limited, 5=extensive</i>	1      2      3      4      5
How long have you been involved with the XXX?	5 years
How many XXX committees do you belong to?	2
How many XXX consultations were you involved in last year?	6
Have you ever used the old XXX Extranet?	Yes



## Participant 3

Name	XXX
Age	XXX
Sex	XXX
Job Title	Finance Manager, XXX
Web Experience <i>1=novice, 5=expert</i>	1      2      3      4      5
Frequency Online <i>1=infrequent, 5=heavy user</i>	1      2      3      4      5
Computer/Platform	Windows XP
Web Browser	Internet Explorer
Experience of the XXX <i>1=limited, 5=extensive</i>	1      2      3      4      5  <i>Before I got here in December! (NB – XXX is on secondment)</i>
How long have you been involved with the XXX?	About 3 years
How many XXX committees do you belong to?	None but involved via XXX Group
How many XXX consultations were you involved in last year?	One – XXX
Have you ever used the old XXX Extranet?	Yes

## Participant 4

Name	XXX
Age	XXX
Sex	XXX
Job Title	Regional Director XXX
Web Experience <i>1=novice, 5=expert</i>	1      2      3      4 X      5
Frequency Online <i>1=infrequent, 5=heavy user</i>	1      2      3      4      5X
Computer/Platform	HP and MAC
Web Browser	Microsoft Internet Explorer and Safari
Experience of the XXX <i>1=limited, 5=extensive</i>	1X      2      3      4      5
How long have you been involved with the XXX?	15 years
How many XXX committees do you belong to?	1 XXX
How many XXX consultations were you involved in last year?	Many through the XXX Group
Have you ever used the old XXX Extranet?	Very rarely

## Participant 5

Name	XXX
Age	XXX
Sex	XXX
Job Title	XXX Regulatory Manager
Web Experience <i>1=novice, 5=expert</i>	1    2 <u>3</u> 4    5
Frequency Online <i>1=infrequent, 5=heavy user</i>	1    2    3 <u>4</u> 5
Computer/Platform	IBM T40 laptop standard corporate build
Web Browser	Explorer
Experience of the XXX <i>1=limited, 5=extensive</i>	1 <u>2</u> 3    4    5
How long have you been involved with the XXX?	c.18 months
How many XXX committees do you belong to?	One
How many XXX consultations were you involved in last year?	Between 6-10 ish.
Have you ever used the old XXX Extranet?	No

## **Appendix ii: Post Test Surveys**

Each participant completed the following surveys directly after the user testing. These surveys provide a useful insight into each participants own personal feelings about the test and the site. However all this information is very subjective so any advice or suggestions need to viewed with care.

## Participant 1

Name: XXX

Date: 11/1/06

### 1. How did you find completing the tasks?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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### 2. How did you find navigating through the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
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### 3. Were the section names and link labels clear?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 4. Was information easy to find?

Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 5. Did you always know where you were in the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Always
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### 6. Was the site easy to learn?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 7. Would you find this site useful?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 8. Would you recommend this site to a colleague?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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Please list any additional comments about the site and your experience:

XXX

## Participant 2

Name: XXX

Date: 11/1/06

### 1. How did you find completing the tasks?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
-------------	---	---	---	---	---	------

### 2. How did you find navigating through the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 3. Were the section names and link labels clear?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 4. Was information easy to find?

Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 5. Did you always know where you were in the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Always
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### 6. Was the site easy to learn?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 7. Would you find this site useful?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 8. Would you recommend this site to a colleague?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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Please list any additional comments about the site and your experience:

XXX

## Participant 3

Name: XXX

Date: 11/1/06

### 1. How did you find completing the tasks?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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### 2. How did you find navigating through the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 3. Were the section names and link labels clear?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
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### 4. Was information easy to find?

Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
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### 5. Did you always know where you were in the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Always
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### 6. Was the site easy to learn?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
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### 7. Would you find this site useful?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 8. Would you recommend this site to a colleague?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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Please list any additional comments about the site and your experience:

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## Participant 4

Name: XXX

Date: 11/1/06

### 1. How did you find completing the tasks?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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### 2. How did you find navigating through the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 3. Were the section names and link labels clear?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 4. Was information easy to find?

Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 5. Did you always know where you were in the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Always
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### 6. Was the site easy to learn?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
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### 7. Would you find this site useful?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 8. Would you recommend this site to a colleague?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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Please list any additional comments about the site and your experience:

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## Participant 5

Name: XXX

Date: 11/1/06

### 1. How did you find completing the tasks?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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### 2. How did you find navigating through the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 3. Were the section names and link labels clear?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 4. Was information easy to find?

Difficult	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 5. Did you always know where you were in the site?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Always
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	--------

### 6. Was the site easy to learn?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Easy
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	-----------

### 7. Would you find this site useful?

Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Very Clear
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

### 8. Would you recommend this site to a colleague?

Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Easy
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Please list any additional comments about the site and your experience:

XXX

## Appendix iii: Test Data

For the full test date, see the document entitled **xxx**-usability-testing-data.xls

### Participant Details

Participant	Name	Date	Time
1	<b>xxx</b>	11/1/06	10:00
2	<b>xxx</b>	11/1/06	11:00
3	<b>xxx</b>	11/1/06	12:00
4	<b>xxx</b>	11/1/06	14:00
5	<b>xxx</b>	11/1/06	15:00

### Task List

Task	Description
1	Read and comment on any consultations requiring your review
2	Confirm your attendance to the <b>xxx</b> Group reporting meeting and print out an agenda
3	Read the latest <b>xxx</b> newsletter
4	Read news about the <b>xxx</b> Conference
5	Download the recent business dynamics presentation from <b>xxx</b>
6	Find the email address of the chairman of the <b>xxx</b> Committee
7	Find out as much information as you can about the <b>xxx</b> Department

## Task Difficulty (by number of Participants)

Task	Easy	Medium	Hard	Assist	Fail
1	4	1	0	0	0
2	4	0	0	0	1
3	5	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	1	2	1
5	0	0	0	0	5
6	5	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	1	0	4

