

3.2 INFOEXPORT: OVERALL REACTION

1. Perceived Purpose

- To most participants in this study, the perceived purpose of the InfoExport site was to provide new exporters or exporters looking for new markets with some general information, including some market reports and contacts.
- However, because participants did not correctly understand the main purpose of the site, they were unable to maximize its use, and see its full potential as an information tool. This inability to convey how the site can be used is one of its main weaknesses.
- Participants expected the InfoExport site to provide specific information, which they did not find.
 - Participants did not understand that the site existed primarily to present the services of the Trade Commissioners and give exporters access to some general information, including publicly available market reports.
 - Participants also did not understand that Trade commissioners were available to help them get the specific information they sought.
 - After browsing, participants generally remained as uninformed about the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service as they had been before browsing the InfoExport website.
 - None of the exporters in this study seemed to realize that as site visitors, all they had to do to get more specific information was to contact the appropriate Trade Commissioner. Not knowing this, participants tried to access the information themselves and were disappointed when they didn't find it.
 - As one francophone participant explained:

"On ne trouve pas l'information qu'on recherche et ils ne nous disent pas où la trouver. C'est sûr qu'ils ne peuvent pas tout avoir sur leur site mais au moins, ils pourraient nous dire où on peut aller chercher l'information." (We don't find the information we want and they don't tell us where to find it. It's normal, they can't have everything on their site but at least tell us where to go to find the information.)
- In sum, while the site succeeds in conveying the impression that it contains useful export information, it does not succeed in explaining the purpose and helpful function of the Trade Commissioners, or encourage exporters to make contact with the Commissioners.