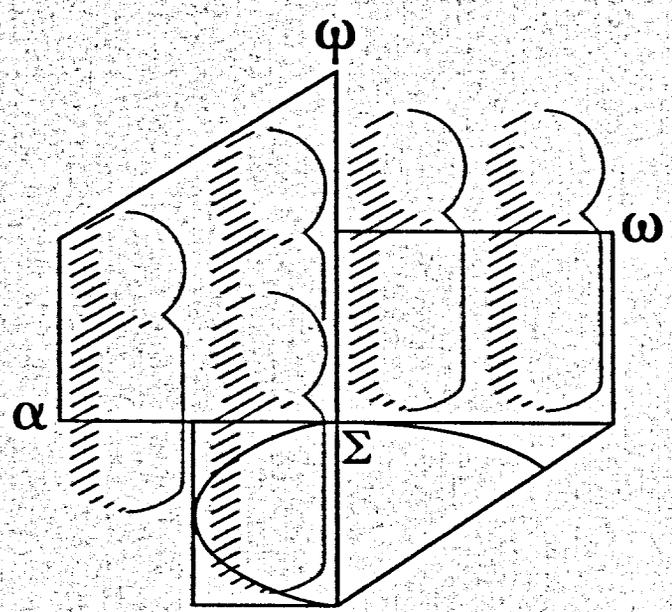
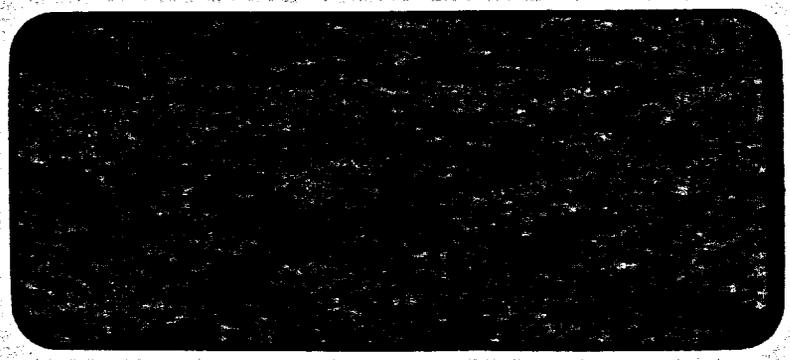


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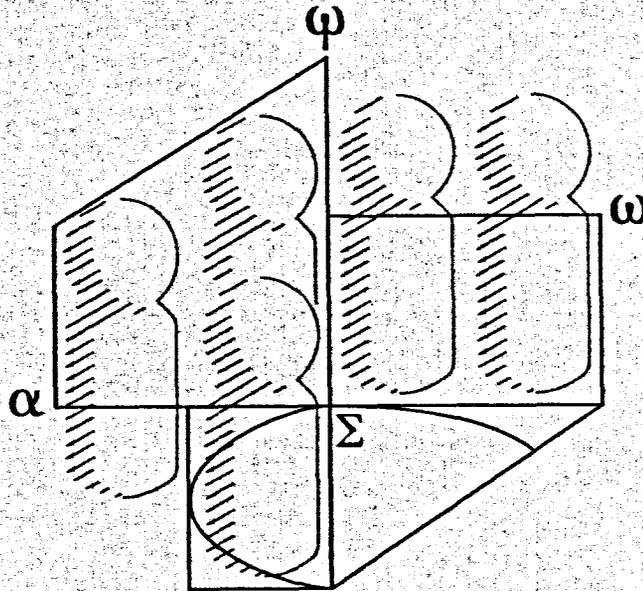


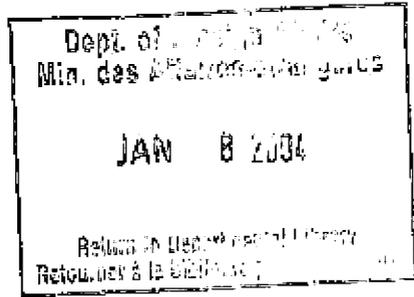
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QUALITATIVE TEST OF
INFOEXPORT WEBSITE
<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>





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INFOEXPORT WEBSITE**
<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>

Prepared for
*Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade (DFAIT)*

February, 2000

66018630

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
	A. FINDINGS	1
	1. <i>Background</i>	1
	2. <i>Overview of Reaction</i>	2
	B. PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS	5
2.	INTRODUCTION	7
	A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	7
	1. <i>Purpose of the Study</i>	7
	2. <i>Target Audience</i>	8
	B. METHODOLOGY	8
	1. <i>Qualitative Approach</i>	8
	2. <i>Number of Groups</i>	8
	3. <i>Participant Selection Criteria</i>	9
	4. <i>Participant Incentive</i>	9
	5. <i>Test Materials</i>	9
	6. <i>Focus Group Procedure</i>	10
	7. <i>Discussion Guide</i>	11
	8. <i>Moderating and Analysis</i>	12
	9. <i>About This Report</i>	12
3.	DETAILED FINDINGS	13
	3.1 INFORMATION NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS	14
	1. <i>Information Needs</i>	14
	2. <i>Information Sources</i>	15
	a) <i>General Sources</i>	15
	b) <i>Internet Sources</i>	15
	3. <i>Awareness of InfoExport and Trade Commissioners</i>	16
	4. <i>Perceptions of the Internet</i>	16
	3.2 INFOEXPORT: OVERALL REACTION	18
	1. <i>Perceived Purpose</i>	18
	2. <i>Perceived Browse-time</i>	19
	3. <i>Initial Reaction</i>	20
	4. <i>General Appeal</i>	21
	5. <i>Main Criticisms</i>	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(CONTINUED)

3.3	<i>INFOEXPORT: SPECIFIC COMPONENTS</i>	24
1.	<i>Content</i>	24
2.	<i>Visual Environment</i>	25
3.	<i>Entry Page</i>	26
4.	<i>Home Page</i>	26
	a) <i>Navigation Bar</i>	26
	b) <i>Flashing logos</i>	27
	c) <i>"Highlights" Banner</i>	27
	d) <i>Destination Headings</i>	27
	d.1) <i>How we can help</i>	28
	d.2) <i>Market reports and contacts in your sector</i>	29
	d.3) <i>e-Services of our offices abroad</i>	30
	d.4) <i>Other programs and services</i>	30
5.	<i>Architecture</i>	31
6.	<i>Guided Browsing Exercises</i>	31
3.4	<i>PARTICIPANT'S PARTING COMMENT</i>	33

APPENDICES:	1.	<i>DISCUSSION GUIDE (English and French)</i>
	2.	<i>QUESTIONNAIRE (English and French)</i>
	3.	<i>WEBSITE ENTRY PAGE</i>
	4.	<i>WEBSITE HOME PAGE (English and French)</i>

CHAPTER**1****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****A. FINDINGS****1. Background**

- This study, undertaken on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) was conducted to help evaluate the reaction of Canadian exporters to the InfoExport website which was designed to increase awareness of The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service and the assistance and support they provide to exporters.
- Accordingly, 2 focus groups (one anglophone, one francophone) were conducted at a cyber café in Montreal on February 2, 2000 with a total of 14 Canadian exporters.
 - Participants were all managers with various years experience in exporting within small to medium size companies drawn from the service and manufacturing sectors. All used the Internet in their work on a regular basis.
- Each 2-hour group had 3 main components – an introductory discussion, a 30-minute browsing segment including 15 minutes of free time and 15 minutes to search for 2 specific pieces of information, and a follow-up discussion. Clients were on-hand to observe and to provide assistance when necessary, and a technician was also available to provide technical support.
- Before browsing the InfoExport website, participants were queried about their information needs and sources, including the Internet. After browsing, they were probed for their reaction to the overall website, and to specific elements, such as content, visual presentation, the entry and home pages, architecture and the guided browse tasks.

2.**Overview of Reaction****a) In Brief**

- Initial reaction to the site was mixed, ranging from curiosity and interest to disappointment. Some of the exporters in this study felt the site was aimed at them, and others did not.
- However, all participants said they would bookmark InfoExport, and most indicated they would probably visit it again.
- Participants indicated that content was both the site's strength and its weakness.
- On the one hand, participants said the site contained a lot of good "basic" information, especially for new exporters or new markets.
- On the other, participants criticized the content because it was too general, often out of date, incomplete and hard to compare to other data.
- While participants said the site was well-organized, simple and easy to navigate, they did experience some difficulties using it.
- Most could not find the specific information they wanted, and didn't understand the main purpose of the site or how Trade Commissioners could help them.

b) Information Needs and Sources

- Throughout this study, anglophone and francophone exporters emphasized they needed specific, and not general, information. They needed information to help them decide where to export and to help them develop the project such as profiles of potential customers, partners and providers, and of competitors products and services, along with information related to banking, transportation, customs, tax laws, government grants, and equipment or resource availability.
- Participants used many information sources, including the Internet, which many found a frustrating experience. The Internet was seen to have 4 main weaknesses: the information found often lacked credibility; was incomplete, and too general. It also took too much time to find what you were looking for.

c) Perceived Site 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.
- 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.

d) Visual Environment

- The visual environment was generally seen to play a supportive role. Because participants didn't want fancy graphics, for the most part they appreciated the overall simple, clear and clean presentation.
- Many also appreciated the handshake image on the entry page and home page navigation bar, because it signified international trade and completed business deals.
- Participants in both groups criticized the following visual components:
 - ➔ the flashing elements on the site – from the flashing ads on many website pages to the flashing logos on the home page.
 - ➔ the 2-colour 2-size destination headings on the home page.

As well, some called the "Other programs and services" page somewhat "messy".

e) Entry Page

- The entry page generated favourable comments. Participants found it inviting and pleasant, and liked the hand-shake image which evoked an international climate and completed business deals.

f) Home Page

- While participants liked the general layout, plentiful white space and Trade Commissioner logo on the home page, many elements drew critical remarks – mainly for functional reasons.
- Participants indicated the 4 destination headings need to be reworked because the content, structure and visual presentation of the 4 destination headings was confusing, and did not effectively communicate the purpose of the site.
 - 1) No heading clearly indicated how visitors could benefit by contacting the Trade commissioners (i.e. how Trade Commissioners can help you find the information you need.)
 - 2) No heading clearly articulated how to use the website.
 - 3) Participants stated that market reports did not seem to go together with contacts – and wondered why these categories were grouped together.
 - 4) With 2 colours and type-sizes within the same heading, participants expected that clicking on words of different colours or sizes would link them with different destinations, which was not the case.
 - 5) Participants expressly wanted buttons to click on beside each heading.
 - 6) The headings were also visually unappealing for participants, who said they lacked symmetry and a justified margin, which made them difficult to read.
 - 7) Participants in both groups also said that the heading content was categorized and presented in a way that did not appear to be consistent with their interpretations and expectations.
 - ➔ The first heading – How we can help / Comment nous pouvons vous aider – was generally ignored because participants assumed it referred to site exploration, and not the practical help provided by Trade Commissioners
 - ➔ The second heading – Market reports and contacts in your sector / Études de marché et contacts dans votre secteur – included 2 categories which participants said did not go together. While participants were keenly interested in market reports, they said they often couldn't find one in their particular sector.
 - ➔ The third heading – e-Services of our offices abroad / Service-é de nos bureaux à l'étranger – did not make sense to francophones. They said "services-é" was a meaningless phrase. Many thought it was a typographical error.
 - ➔ The fourth heading – Other programs and services / Autres programmes et services – was generally overlooked by francophones, who did not explore it during their browse.

g) Searches and Sectors

- Participants in both groups expressed concern about the search engines, which did not allow structured search. In addition, some did not notice the search engine on the navigation bar.
- Participants in both groups also said that market sector categories overall seemed unfamiliar and incomplete.

h) Navigation Bar

- Participants indicated that the headings on the navigation bar were too small and unnoticeable. In addition, DFAIT in the first position on the bar led some off-site, without warning.

B. PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- All of the following suggestions for improvement were made by participants during the follow-up discussions:
 - 1) Explain the purpose of the site in clear and simple terms.
 - 2) Re-structure, re-label and graphically re-design the home page destination headings.
 - 3) Eliminate the "Highlights" banner on the home page.
 - 4) Consider eliminating the flashing of the logos featured on the home page, or creating a non-flashing way to present the information.
 - 5) Add a section for updated or new information on the site. This could include material about newly released reports from specific locations, or information about upcoming events, changes to the export laws, etc.
 - 6) Make the headings underneath the navigation bar more noticeable.
 - 7) Make the search engine more visible.
 - 8) As suggested by the anglophone group, create a more structured search engine, so visitors can search by country, by product, by sector and by contact.
 - 9) Make the "Tips for searching" phrase (underneath the search engines) more visible and clarify that visitors must click on it to access the tips.
 - 10) Use the phrase "in your sector" carefully, because some in this study had difficulty finding their particular sector.

- 11) Reduce the number and speed of flashing advertisements on website pages. Participants didn't mind the ads, just the flashing.
- 12) Improve the layout of the page linked to "Other programs and services" so that the information is presented in a more orderly and logical manner, instead of being grouped around a sphere.
- 13) On the first page linked to the "Contacts" heading, move the phrase "Click here for our Team and Address" higher up on the page, so that visitors can spot it without needing to scroll down the page.
- 14) Check the website for instances where the first information encountered after clicking leads visitors away from the InfoExport site. Consider warning visitors that if they click on DFAIT (or ExportSource on the first link to "How we can help"), they will move off the InfoExport site.
- 15) When conducting future site-testing research, to avoid wasting time, close all links to DFAIT and other sites, especially those still under construction, and shorten the registration procedure needed to access any data.

CHAPTER

2 INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

i. Purpose of the Study

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) developed a website – InfoExport – to assist Canadian exporters and to communicate the help and support available from the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.
- This qualitative study was undertaken to get first-hand feedback from some Canadian exporters about the InfoExport website -- in terms of its accessibility, ease of use, and relevance of content – to help improve and fine-tune it to the needs of potential users.
- It was hoped that by understanding how exporters perceived and used the Internet as an information tool, by determining their needs from a website aimed at exporters, and by discovering their awareness and perception of InfoExport and the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, the site's usefulness and relevance to the Canadian exporting community could be maximized.
- Participants were invited to evaluate the InfoExport site in terms of both content and presentation, including:
 - perceived strengths and weaknesses
 - comprehension, relevance and adequacy of content -- if it met their needs as exporters
 - visual environment, such as colours and images
 - various aspects of the architecture, including content presentation, the entry and home pages, the navigation bar, etc.
 - functionality and ease of use
 - ideas for improvement
 - intention to use the site.

2. Target Audience

- Participants in this study were all Canadian exporters with various years of experience in exporting.
- They were drawn from a diverse range of service and manufacturing sectors and used the Internet regularly in their work environment.

B. METHODOLOGY**1. Qualitative Approach**

- Given the nature of the research objectives, the conventional focus group was modified to allow for a website browsing session, along with general observation.
- Qualitative research works best when used as a learning tool to help understand the range and type of response the InfoExport website could generate from the target audience. Such an in-depth discussion of functionality, content and presentation is not possible with a quantitative survey.
- However, while the findings from this small-scale study do provide insights into the perceptions and attitudes associated with the InfoExport site, these are **not** quantifiable, and may or may not be representative of the target audience at large. It is left to the reader to judge and evaluate the hypotheses generated from such research.

2. Number of Groups

- A total of 2 focus groups were conducted at a cyber café in Montreal – one with francophone exporters and one with anglophone exporters.
- About 14 participants took part in the study – 7 in each group.
- Each session was about 2 hours long.

3. Participant Selection Criteria

- All participants were recruited by Createc, according to the following specifications:
 - All were managers in charge of foreign trade or exportation for small to medium service or manufacturing enterprises.
 - Service sector firms had anywhere from 2 to 50 employees.
 - Manufacturing sector companies had from 50 to 100 employees.
 - In each group, participants were drawn from a diverse range of businesses including sportswear, art, telecommunications, multimedia, computers, pool accessories, and transportation and underground infrastructure.
 - In each group, about half the participants were beginner exporters with less than 2 years experience, and about half were advanced, with more than 2 years.
 - All participants considered themselves regular Internet users, as part of their work.
 - English was the language used most often by anglophone participants, although it was not the birth language of all group members.
 - In both groups, 6 of the 7 participants were men.
 - No one had been involved in a focus group over the last 12 months, nor had any respondent ever participated in a group or interview on a related topic.

4. Participant Incentive

- All focus group respondents received an incentive payment of \$100 for their participation, at the end of the session.

5. Test Materials

- The subject of the study – the InfoExport website -- was located at:
<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca> and accessed via the Netscape browser.

6. Focus Group Procedure

- In this study, each session had 3 main components – an introductory discussion, a browsing segment, and a follow-up review of their experience of the website.
 - a) During the general introductory session, participants sat in a circle at one end of the room.
 - b) For the browsing segment, participants moved to a bank of computers set up nearby, and ready at a touch to access the entry page to the InfoExport site.
 - All participants had their own computer terminals.
 - In both groups, approximately 30 minutes was allotted for browsing purposes – including 15 minutes of free time and 15 minutes for a guided browse asking respondents to search for 2 specific pieces of information.
 - Both the anglophone and francophone groups were invited to make notes and write down their comments and questions as they explored the site.
 - They were also directed not to download and not to exit the site.
 - At the end of the browsing period, participants were asked to complete an individual questionnaire, which was used only as a way to capture their first impressions of the InfoExport website, before being influenced by the reaction of others. A sample questionnaire is attached (appendix 2).
 - c) After browsing, participants in both groups returned to the circle to continue the discussion and talk about their experiences with the website and its various elements.
 - During the follow-up sessions, a projector was used to display the website as a visual aid, for easy reference.
- During both groups, clients were at the back of the room at all times to observe, and were available to answer questions and provide assistance during the browsing segments.
- A technician was also on hand for both groups at all times, to provide technical assistance as and when required.

7. Discussion Guide

- Participants in both groups were queried along the lines of the attached discussion guide (appendix 1).
 - a) During the first segment, following some brief introductory comments by the moderator, participants were probed about their information needs as exporters, and their sources of information.
 - They were queried about their use of the Internet as a tool for exporters, including various governmental and non-governmental sites they used.
 - They were also asked what they knew about InfoExport, and The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.
 - b) Participants were then given about 30 minutes to browse the InfoExport website.
 - For the first 15 minutes, they were free to browse the site.
 - For the remaining 15, a guided browsing exercise asked respondents to search for 2 specific pieces of information – to locate the address of an embassy, and to access a market report in their sector.
 - At the end of the browsing session, all participants filled out an individual questionnaire, before returning to the circle for a debrief of their experience.
 - c) The follow-up discussions began with spontaneous comments and reactions to the InfoExport website overall. Throughout both follow-up sessions, respondents were encouraged to suggest ways to improve the site.
 - Participants were first asked about their likes and dislikes, and any problems they encountered while browsing.
 - They were then probed on the content of the website, including its perceived usefulness and relevance to them as exporters, its clarity, credibility, completeness and uniqueness.
 - Respondents were asked about the site's visual environment – including graphic design, colours, images, readability of text, and government identification.
 - Reaction to various elements of the entry and home pages was sought – including visuals, destination titles, and in the latter case, the navigation bar.
- Participants were also queried on the site's architecture and useability, and how easy it was to navigate.
- Discussion on the guided browse focused on the ease or difficulty, and success or failure in finding the 2 requested pieces of information.

- Respondents were asked about the site's perceived target audience, and effective ways of informing exporters of the site's existence.
- At the end of the follow-up discussions, participants were asked if they would bookmark the site, and visit it again.
- Most importantly, they were probed on any new awareness or understanding about Trade Commissioners and the services they offer.

8**Moderating and Analysis**

- Mr. Grégoire Gollin** acted as the project manager, responsible for the design of the work methodology, and supervision of the final report.
- Ms. Dany Jolicoeur** coordinated the project, moderated the francophone group and participated in the analysis and recommendations. **Natalie Gold** moderated the anglophone group, participated in the analysis and recommendations and wrote the final report. **Mr. Kyle Braid** functioned as a technical consultant.
- Each focus group session was recorded on audiotape and some verbatim comments are included in the text of the report, where appropriate.

9**About This Report**

- In this report, findings from the English and French participants are presented together.
- Any discernible differences are pointed out where relevant.
- The report begins with an executive summary, which outlines the major pertinent findings and presents some suggestions made by participants for improving the site.
- The report continues with the detailed findings, which first reviews participants' information needs and sources, along with their perceptions of the Internet and their awareness of the InfoExport site and the Trade Commissioner Service.
 - The report then looks at initial reaction to the website after the browsing experience – from its perceived purpose and the amount of browse-time, to its perceived strengths and weaknesses.
 - The report then presents a more detailed look at reaction to specific elements of the website, including the content, visual environment, the entry page, components on the home page, the site's architecture, and the guided browsing tasks.
 - The report ends with some concluding remarks by participants.

CHAPTER

3

DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 INFORMATION NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS

1. Information Needs

- In both groups, participants stated they always need information for 2 main reasons:
 - 1) their markets are in a constant state of flux, and
 - 2) they change markets with varying degrees of frequency.
- In both groups, participants emphasized throughout the discussions that they usually need "specific" information.
 - Francophones and anglophones both talked about information relating to future business: including profiles of potential customers, partners, and providers.
 - Both also wanted information about competitors and competitors' products or services -- to know who is doing what in their particular markets.
 - Other informational needs related to service and support for their exporting endeavors, included information about:
 - banking, transportation, customs, laws related to the tax system, grant information, and any constraints they might have to face, e.g. whether a certain type of equipment was available in a particular market or location.
- While exporters in this study said they need information at all stages of their export activities, the initial planning phases were the most important -- they needed information to help them decide where to export and to help them develop the project.
- Participants in both groups had difficulty identifying the most important information. When the question was asked, it generally drew blank stares. Most couldn't prioritize in this way.
 - However, some francophones mentioned the client's solvency would be essential.

2

Information Sources**a) General Sources**

- Participants said they consulted many information sources to find useful data relevant to their exporting business.
 - Anglophones mentioned WinExport, newspapers, other consultants, colleagues, and the Internet.
 - Francophones specified ACDI, the World Bank, competitors, and their partners in a foreign country.
 - Participants in both groups included Canadian Embassies along with Merx, although the information provided by the latter was not considered specific to exporters.
- However, despite the numerous sources, many in both groups expressed frustration about the general lack of information available on exporting.

b) Internet Sources

- In each group, all participants said they used the Internet at some point in their export activities, and most used it specifically to search for export information.
- However, their frustration about finding export information in general was experienced more strongly with regard to the Internet.
 - Most indicated they often did not find what they were looking for on the Internet.
- In general, fewer sites were identified in the anglophone group as information sources.
 - Anglophones said they used WinExport, Merx, and Canadian Embassies. Some also said they conducted general Internet searches by country.
 - Francophones mentioned: RAFI, Strategis, SEE, InfoExport, Merx, and CanadExport.

3. Awareness of InfoExport and Trade Commissioners

- In the pre-browse conversation, only a few respondents in each group knew about InfoExport. Their specific knowledge was not probed at this point, so as not to influence others in the group.
- Only some in both groups said they were aware of the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service.
 - ◊ Those who said they knew about Canadian Trade Commissioners appeared to have only a general awareness of the service, but no clear understanding of the available support. They could neither talk about nor describe the services provided.
 - Some who knew about the Trade Commissioner Service said they received a mailing from them on a regular basis.
 - A few anglophones thought it was a newsletter which was mailed to them about once a month, but they weren't certain.
 - One respondent in the anglophone group said he had used the Trade Commissioner Service some years ago before some apparent cutbacks were instituted. He felt the service had been excellent.

4. Perceptions of the Internet

- In both groups, due to time constraints, the perceived benefits and drawbacks of the Internet as an information source were probed only briefly.
- Participants agreed that compared to other information sources, the Internet was relatively quick, free and simple to use. For francophones, the Internet made it easier to establish contacts.
- On the other hand, participants expressed 4 main concerns about using the Internet as an information source:
 - 1) lack of credibility – participants had to check whatever information they found to ensure it was correct.
 - Anglophone respondents emphatically agreed there was a lot of “garbage” on the Internet.
 - 2) incompleteness – because sites were often “marketing-oriented,” they were not informative enough or technical enough to meet the needs of exporters in this study.

- 3) generality – while sites often provided interesting data, such as population estimates and other statistics, the information was not specific enough to be useful to many in this study.
 - > Francophone participants pointed out that they wanted specific information to support potential projects in the countries they selected as export destinations.
- 4) time-consuming -- participants in both groups agreed it often took a very long time to find what they were looking for.

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.

2. Perceived Browse-time

- There was a consensus in both groups that the 30 minutes allotted to explore the website was "not enough time."
- Participants in both groups spent more time on the market reports during their free browse. Most wanted more time to explore reports available in their specific sector.
 - This indicates that they found this type of information potentially interesting and useful, and that the content of market reports is very important.
 - As one anglophone woman, in the art business, stated "At first I thought there was nothing related to what I'm doing, but then I found a nice surprise – a market report related to my sector."
 - However, as a result, some either only quickly browsed or didn't get a chance to browse the "other programs and services" section (the last heading on the home page).
 - It isn't clear if this was a less interesting section, or if participants simply got caught up in the market reports and didn't have time to get to it.
- This lack-of-time perception by anglophones and francophones alike provides further evidence of 2 contradictory issues:
 - On the one hand, exporters were interested in the site and hoped to find specific information there. They felt more time might allow them to find it, even though this might not be the case. Participants could hunt for hours on the site without finding what they needed.
 - On the other hand, the site did not communicate that Trade Commissioners are available to help exporters get the specific information they want. Contacting the appropriate Trade Commissioner is, in itself, not a time-consuming task.

3. Initial Reaction

- In general, impressions about the InfoExport website were mixed, and ranged from curiosity and interest to disappointment.
- In the follow-up discussions in both groups, participants spontaneously mentioned what they disliked first.
- As indicated by the following quotes, francophones and anglophones identified the same weaknesses, although the francophone group was somewhat less critical.
 - *"The information didn't fit my need, but it's interesting."*
 - *"A lot of good ideas, but I don't trust the accuracy."*
 - *"Information 101." (Basic Information)*
 - *"Je me sens insatisfait parce que l'information est trop générale pour mes besoins." (I feel unsatisfied because the information is too general for my needs.)*
 - *"Ça s'adresse aux exportateurs qui débutent ou aux exportateurs qui entrent dans un nouveau marché puisque l'information est générale." (It's geared towards junior exporters or exporters getting started in a new market since the information is of a general nature.)*
- On a more positive note, participants in both groups generally considered the site a "good initiative," and felt hopeful they would find the specific sector-related information they were looking for.
- Most participants in both groups also said they intended to add it to their bookmarks.
 - *"It's a good effort, I will use it."*
 - *"Very interesting and very useful, a place that you can find a lot."*
 - *"Un bon outil général, un outil préliminaire soit de base." (A good overall tool, a basic tool to get preliminary information.)*
 - *"Un site convivial pour des informations générales." (A user-friendly site for general information.)*

- While the site had a lot of good general information, participants in both groups emphasized they wanted information on their specific product, market or sector.
 - Because many didn't find the specific information they were looking for, they felt disappointed or deceived.
 - While some found specific information, they also discovered an error or that the data was out-of-date.
 - For example, an anglophone participant recognized an incorrect phone number for a contact in an African market. This created doubts in his mind about the veracity of all the information on the site.

4. General Appeal

- Participants in both groups felt there was a lot of useful data on the InfoExport site, especially for new exporters or new markets.
- It was considered a "good starting point" because the site had a lot of basic information.
 - This was perceived as one of the website's main strengths.
 - Anglophone and francophone respondents spoke favourably about the market reports, contacts in other countries, and government programs linked on or to the site.
 - Market reports were considered to be the most useful information by both groups.
- The site was generally considered well-organized, simple, and easy to navigate.
- Not everyone discovered the search engine during their browse-time, but once they learned about it in the discussions, all appreciated that the site had its own.
- Some anglophones especially liked the visual image of the business card, in the "Contacts" section – and the contact information provided.
- One English respondent said he liked the inclusion of DFAIT in the navigation bar, because there was "a lot of incredible info in DFAIT." This individual spent a fair portion of his browsing time exploring DFAIT, before being requested to return to the InfoExport site. This has some potential ramifications regarding the placement of DFAIT on the navigation bar, which are discussed elsewhere in the report (see section 3.3 - 4.a.)

5. Main Criticisms

- The most common complaints in both groups focused on the content of the InfoExport website, which was seen as:
 - 1) "too general" and "not specific" enough. Because some participants in the anglophone group could not find specific "product" information (e.g. garments in New England), they wondered if this was indeed the purpose of the site.
 - 2) "incomplete" – especially regarding the "vague" list of industrial sectors. Participants in both groups had difficulty finding their particular sector.
 - 3) "out-dated" or "not current," and therefore perceived as useless – for example, a 1982 report on Mali. When probed, participants defined "current" as meaning that reports were no more than one year old.
 - 4) "incomparable" and therefore somewhat useless. In the francophone group, some participants thought that because market reports came from different sources, they were created differently, so the information could not be compared, and was therefore hard to use.
- Participants also had some criticisms about the useability of the InfoExport website.
 - 1) Many participants in both groups either didn't notice the search engine or thought it was "hard to find" because the titles on the navigation bar were "too small."
 - For some, the search engine didn't work with certain words or phrases relating to products or industrial sectors – for example, "computer consultants."
 - The DFAIT on the navigation bar was an issue in the anglophone group because it drew some participants away from the InfoExport site. One individual suggested that visitors receive a warning that clicking on this link would move them off-site.
 - 2) Another anglophone participant went to a connected site which was still under construction, and found this annoying. He suggested that for future site tests, any links under construction be closed.
 - 3) In the francophone group, one individual was not aware of any links to other sites, which suggests a possible layout flaw.
 - *"Ils ne donnent pas de liens avec d'autres sites. C'est pas nécessaire d'avoir tout sur un même site ... Je trouve que les sites sont prétentieux de ne pas faire de liens avec ce qui se fait ailleurs. Si on nous disait allez à telle place, ce serait important et satisfaisant."* (They don't provide links to other sites. It's not essential to have everything on the same site. I feel that sites are pretentious when they don't connect with what is done elsewhere. If they told us to go to a specific location, it would be important and satisfying.)

- 4) Someone in the francophone group wanted to contact someone directly through email, and was not aware this was possible, even after looking at the contact information. This suggests that clearer guidance is needed as to how to use the site.
- Other spontaneous criticisms related to the visual presentation of the InfoExport website.
- Most participants in both groups agreed that the flashing advertisements on many website pages were major distractions – too annoying and too commercial for a government website. Participants didn't mind the ads, just the flashing.
 - Many also disliked the flashing logos on the home page, and found them distracting and annoying. (This is discussed in more detail in section 3.3 - 4.b.)

3.3 INFOEXPORT: SPECIFIC COMPONENTS

1. Content

- All participants expressed a need for information, and saw content as the most important element of the InfoExport site.
- In both groups, content was identified as the site's principal strength and principal weakness.
- Participants felt the content had 4 main strengths:
 - 1) useful for new markets or new exporters
 - 2) clear, well-written, easy to read, and easy to understand
 - 3) credible
 - The name of DFAIT was generally thought to add credibility to the information on the site.
 - 4) not superfluous -- participants agreed there was no extraneous information on the site.
- On a less positive note, participants indicated the content had 4 main weaknesses:
 - 1) ineffective in communicating the purpose of the site, which virtually no exporter in this study seemed to understand.
 - 2) too general, non-specific and lacking detail.
 - Participants in both groups found a lot of general information and contacts on the site, but wanted more specific information.
 - For many, the site had an insufficient level of detail.
 - 3) inaccurate, for some, who found mistakes.
 - Participants generally assumed information provided on the website was correct. However, if they found an error their perceptions of the whole site shifted to a negative tone.

- 4) out-of-date
- There was a general and strong expectation in both groups that information on the Internet should be current (i.e. not more than one year old).
- While anglophone participants weren't sure if the information on the site was unique, some in the francophone group thought it was not, and that they could find similar information on the Strategis site.
- In both groups, participants had a difficult time comparing the InfoExport site with other sites aimed at exporters. Due to time constraints, this topic was not probed.

2. Visual Environment

- The anglophone and francophone exporters in this study were looking for content -- not for an outstanding visual presentation -- on the InfoExport site.
- Since relevant and useful content topped their "wish list," participants tended to see the visuals in a supportive role -- to explain and help them access the information on the site.
 - The visuals were therefore assessed according to their essential functional and informative purpose, rather than their aesthetic nature.
- Anglophone and francophone participants, therefore, tended to be somewhat uncritical of the overall visual presentation. It was considered fine, or "okay."
- Francophones called it "sobre" (clean), and felt it was appropriate for a government site aimed at exporters, without being too dry or dull.

"Moi j'ai aimé la présentation : c'est clair et net." (Personally, I liked the presentation : it's clear and clean.)
 - Anglophones found the text easy to read, the government identification clear, and the images and colours pleasant to look at.
- In both groups, certain pages drew criticism:
- Anglophones and francophones disliked a number of visual elements on the home page, mainly because they were distracting and confusing. (These are detailed in section (c) of this chapter).
 - Some anglophones found the Other Programs and Services page too dense and messy.

3. Entry Page

(The entry page is found in appendix 3.)

- The general reaction to the entry page was positive.
- In both groups there were no negative comments.
- Participants agreed the entry page was inviting and pleasant.
- Most liked the image of the hand-shake, because it
 - evoked an international climate, and international trade
 - suggested business deals, friendship and different countries.

4. Home Page

(English and French versions of the home page are found in appendix 4.)

- While the home page drew a fair amount of negative reaction in both groups, the anglophones were somewhat more critical.
- On the plus side, participants in both groups liked the "well-spaced" layout, which had enough white space so as not to look cluttered.
- Some also said they liked the Trade Commissioner logo (on the upper right corner of the screen.)
- However, most other elements on the page drew criticisms, including the navigation bar, the flashing logos, the "Highlights" banner, and the 4 destination titles.
 - a) **Navigation Bar**
 - Anglophone and francophone participants agreed that the navigation bar (across the upper left-hand side of the home page) fulfilled a classic function.
 - The visual image and colours, similar to that on the entry page, generally drew favourable or neutral reaction in both groups.
 - However, most felt the headings on the navigation bar were too small, especially those who did not notice the search engine or email connection. Some suggested that the search engine be moved to first position on the navigation bar to make it more noticeable.
 - The fact that DFAIT was the first link on the bar was misleading for some, because it led them off-site. Participants suggested that the DFAIT link be moved to the other end of the navigation bar.

b) Flashing logos

- Participants in both groups disliked the flashing logos shown underneath the "Highlights" banner for a number of reasons.
 - Because the flashing aspect resembled advertisements, participants tended to ignore the information.
 - The flashing was also considered extremely distracting.
 - In addition, the flashing happened too quickly, so participants did not have enough time to read the information.
 - Most did not realize the flashing logos were links to other information.
 - For those who did, there was not enough time between flashings to click on the logo which interested them.
- Participants strongly suggested that there be no flashing information on the site.
- Instead, they preferred the information to be stationary, and possibly on another page, with a clearly defined banner identifying "Upcoming Events" or whatever was intended.

c) "Highlights" Banner

- The "Highlights" banner was confusing in both groups because it looked like a button which would link participants to another page. Many tried to click on it, but could not.
- No one seemed to understand that the "Highlights" referred to the flashing logo information underneath the banner.

d) Destination Headings

- The 4 destination headings, considered extremely important by most participants, contributed to the general confusion about purpose of the site because of their content and visual presentation.
- The content of the headings seemed to contribute to the lack of awareness of the purpose of the website and to create confusion in 3 ways:
 - 1) No heading clearly indicated how visitors could benefit from contact with the Trade Commissioner Service – which should be the first button anyone is invited to push, and should be identified as such.
 - 2) No heading clearly articulated how to use the InfoExport website.

3) The grouping together of seemingly disparate elements (i.e. market reports and contacts, other programs and services) seemed odd to many participants, and added to their fuzzy perceptions about the site.

- According to participants, the destination headings or informational links on the home page needed to be restructured and re-categorized.
- Participants found 2 basic flaws in the way the headings were visually presented.

1) The headings were confusing because they lacked buttons, and because the words in different colours and sizes created uncertainty about where to click.

- Participants expected to be linked to different pages if they clicked on the first, last, or middle words.
- Participants also expressed a clear preference for buttons to click on.

2) The headings were considered visually unattractive.

- They lacked symmetry – the letters were in 2 sizes and 2 colours, and were unevenly indented on the page, not neatly lined up or justified along a left or right margin.
- Participants said they wanted headings that looked more conservative and easier to read.

d.1) How we can help / Comment nous pouvons vous aider

- The first heading “How we can help” seemed too obscure to many in this study. Participants could interpret this in 2 different ways:

- 1) how we can help you browse on the site, or
- 2) how we can help you with the Trade commissioner services.

- Because the former interpretation was generally used, participants did not tend to explore this link in much detail.

- Therefore they missed learning about the Trade Commissioner Service, and how Trade Commissioners could help them get the specific information they were looking for.

- Furthermore, if participants did click on this heading, the first paragraph on the connecting page directed them to Team Canada’s ExportSource search site, and away from InfoExport. To find out about Trade Commissioners, they had to scroll down the page.

d.2) **Market reports and contacts in your sector / Études de marché et contacts dans votre secteur**

- This second heading was generally confusing, because most participants said they did not associate reports and contact information.
 - This perceived "unusual" association suggested to participants that both categories had equal weight.
 - Participants who were usually looking for a market report, didn't understand why they would also need a contact at this point.
- Participants in both groups wanted the 2 categories separated.
- After clicking on this second heading, participants were linked to a page featuring a list of market sector categories.
 - To many anglophone and francophone participants, the list of categories was unfamiliar, unexpected and confusing.
 - Some in both groups couldn't find their particular market sector listed.
 - The 2 search engines available on the connecting page were equally confusing to many in this study, because one related to contacts and one related to market reports, but neither related to sector.
 - This made no sense to participants, who expected to be able to search by sector, since the heading on the home page had stated "in your sector."
 - In addition, the phrase "Tips for searching" appeared under both search engines, and went largely unnoticed by participants in this study.
 - When discussed during the groups, most participants didn't realize that they could click on this phrase to find search help.

d.3) e-Services of our offices abroad / Services-é de nos bureaux à l'étranger

- This third heading generated little comment from anglophones.
- However, francophones found the heading confusing and irritating, because it didn't make sense to them.
 - While "e-services" -- meaning electronic services -- was easily understandable to the anglophone group, the French translation -- "Services-é" meant nothing. Many francophones thought it was a typographical error.
- While most anglophones said they liked the map on the page linked to this heading, some francophones said they would prefer a more detailed version.

d.4) Other programs and services / Autres programmes et services

- The main problem with the fourth heading was that it tended to be overlooked by some francophones, because they needed to scroll down the home page to see it.
 - Most francophones did not explore this heading during their browse. It is not clear whether this was because the subject matter was less interesting, or because it was the last heading and they didn't get around to it. There was not enough time to pursue this issue adequately during the discussion.
- During the follow-up session, when the moderator clicked on the heading, many francophones were pleasantly surprised to see so many links on the connecting page. This reaction underscores how the heading needs to be clearer.
- The anglophone group, like their francophone counterparts, generally appreciated the content of the linked page, but some criticized the visual presentation.
 - The graphic image of a sphere surrounded by so many organizations and links was considered messy, disorganized and confusing. It was seen to lack the simplicity, directness and sophistication of other InfoExport pages.

5. Architecture

- When asked about the InfoExport website architecture, reaction was the same in both groups – positive.
 - Many participants said the site was generally easy to browse and user-friendly.
- When testing websites, it is not unusual to hear that a site is easy to use, while at the same time observing that participants have difficulty finding what they want. In fact, this is exactly what happened in this site test.
- In this study, some of the positive comments by participants need to be tempered somewhat because:
 - most did not understand the main purpose of the site, or how Trade Commissioners could help them
 - many were confused by the visual presentation of the headings on the home page
 - many felt the first two headings on the home page lacked clarity about the content of the linked pages
 - some felt frustrated that the search engines didn't allow searches by sector, especially when they expected to be able to do this
 - many found sector categories unfamiliar and incomplete, and were unable to find their particular market sector.

6. Guided Browsing Exercises

Task #1: find an embassy

- Participants in both groups generally thought finding an embassy was easy.
- Most in fact found the particular embassy they were interested in.
- Those unable to locate it did not spot the address link because it was at the bottom of the page, and because they did not scroll down to find it; it went unnoticed.

Task #2: access a market report in your sector

- In both groups, most participants found the market report they wanted.
- However, some said they found it in an unexpected location.
 - Participants were initially put off because they had difficulty finding their particular sector. For example, there was no sector called Telecommunications, so participants had to look in other sectors.
- To access a market report on the InfoExport website, participants were required to officially register with the site.
- Some in both groups complained that registration took too long a time, especially during the limited browsing period. They said they would have preferred to spend this time exploring other parts of the site.

3.4 PARTICIPANT'S PARTING COMMENT

- For most participants in both groups, the InfoExport website was essentially aimed at new exporters or exporters looking for new markets.
- While some in this study felt that the site was aimed at them, others did not.
 - Those who said the site was "not for me" did so because the information was too general and not up-to-date, and because they couldn't find their sector.
- Despite its perceived flaws, most participants in both groups said they would probably visit the site again, depending on their need for information. Anticipated frequency ranged from weekly to 5-6 times a year.
- Participants identified a number of effective ways to inform them about the website, including:
 - ads in newspapers and on the web, billboards on the road, the CMA (Canadian Manufacturers Association), and a web link to the word "export."

APPENDIX 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE (English and French)

DISCUSSION GUIDE

InfoExport Web Site

<p>CLIENT : Louis Marcotte Tel. : (613) 944-8995 MAECI</p>	<p>DATE, TIMES AND LOCATION :</p>
<p>PROJECT MANAGER :</p> <p>Dany Jolicoeur Tel.: (514) 844-1127</p>	<p>MONTREAL</p> <p>February 2, 2000</p>
<p>MODERATORS/ANALYSTS :</p> <p>A. Natalie Gold (<i>anglophone group</i>) Tel. : (416) 654-6453</p> <p>B. Dany Jolicoeur (<i>francophone group</i>) Tel.: (514) 844-1127</p>	<p>A. 6:00 pm : anglophones</p> <p>B. 8:00 pm : francophones</p> <p>Café Électronique</p> <p>1425, René-Lévesque Ouest Tel. : (514) 871-0307</p>
<p>NUMBERS OF GROUPS : N = 2</p>	

1. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

This initial stage of the discussion is to establish a level of confidence and a rapport between the moderator and the participants. The persons being interviewed are informed of the purpose of the discussion and what is expected of them.

GUIDELINES

- Word of welcome and introduction of moderator
- Objectives of the research : *"Obtain your opinions on the InfoExport Web site of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade" / Confidentiality : "All your answers will remain confidential. Your name will not be communicated to anyone and your opinions will be combined with those of other participants like yourself. The sole purpose is to improve the site in order for it to meet the needs of exporters".*
- Role of moderator / client observing discussion / recording
- Neutrality of moderator (*does not work for the government and is not an Internet or Web expert*).
- Role of participants
- Duration: 2 hours
- Give an idea on the sequence of events (*general discussion, free and guided browsing, discussion on the site*)
- Are there any questions?

GO-AROUND

- Given name
- Occupation
- Company description (*sector of activity, number of employees, etc.*)
- How long has your company handled exports? To where?
- To what extent are you familiar with the Internet and the Web? (*probe : to what ends do you use it? how many hours a week? etc.*)

2. INFORMATION NEEDS (10 minutes)

- Let's talk about your information needs as an exporter. Do you often need to look for information related to your export activities?*
- At what stages of your export activities do you require information? What type or category of information do you look for? What is the most important information, what do you need to know when exporting your products / services outside Canada?*
- Could you tell me how you get the information? What are your sources? How do you go about it? How are you organized to look for the information? To what extent are you satisfied with these information sources? Do you think that there are other information sources that are worth considering?*

3. EXPERIENCES WITH WEB SITES GEARED TOWARDS EXPORTERS (10 minutes)

- What do you think of the Internet as an information tool for an export business?*
 - What benefits and drawbacks do you see in using the Internet as an information tool for exporters?*
 - To your knowledge, what sites are geared towards exporters? What sites have you consulted? What do you think of these? What compliments and criticisms would you like to express? (probe : content / easiness to use) Among non-governmental sites, which ones are the most interesting? Among governmental sites, which ones are the most interesting?*
 - What do you think of the information geared towards exporters that we find on the Internet? (probe : useful? credible? up-to-date?) Have you ever not found information that you were looking for?*

→ *If no mention made :*

- Do you know InfoExport? Have you ever consulted this site? (*Do not record comments on the site until the browsing*)
- Have you ever heard of The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service? (*probe : what do they offer? Is it useful? etc.*)

4. FREE AND GUIDED BROWSING (40 minutes)

GUIDELINES ON BROWSING (5 minutes)

- *Remind them of the research's objective: "It's the Website we are testing, not you! "What are your impressions of the site?"*
- *Explain the process: 15 minutes of free browsing followed by 15 minutes of guided browsing (search for specific information), a questionnaire, then a group discussion on their opinions.*
- *Mention that they must not download or exit the site.*
- *Mention that they have ample time, that this free browsing period isn't a race against the clock: "go at your own pace".*

FREE BROWSING PERIOD (15 minutes)

- *Site's address : <http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/>*
- *Browser : Netscape*
- *Invite participants to concentrate on general aspects pertaining to form (presentation, organization, etc.) and content (type of information found).*
- *Encourage note-taking of comments (whether positive or negative), suggestions while browsing.*
- *Mention : "We are not only interested in your rational or logical reactions but also in the way you feel while browsing".*
- *Ask participants to keep comments to themselves for the time being in order not to influence each other.*
- *Specify duration: 15 minutes.*

GUIDED BROWSING : SEARCH FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION (15 minutes)

- *Invite participants to accomplish the following tasks :*
 - 1) *Find the address of an embassy that you are particularly interested in*
 - 2) *Access a Market Report in your industrial sector (Moderator: they will have to register to have access)*
- *Specify duration: 15 minutes.*

ADMINISTRATION OF INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE (5 minutes)

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION (40 minutes)

Moderator: Use projector when needed, to illustrate / facilitate the discussion

- General comments / spontaneous reactions

Probe :

- Did you have the time to adequately browse through the site? What did you particularly spend more time on? What did you quickly browse through? Are there parts of the site that you did not have the time to explore? Did you experience any problems / difficulties? Which ones? Were you able to overcome them?
- What do you feel after having browsed through the site?
- What pleased you? Displeased you? (*List on flip chart*) What terms would you use to describe the site?
- Would you add the site to your bookmarks?

Content

- What do you think of the **content**? How would you describe it? *

Probe in depth :

Usefulness / Relevance

- To what extent is the information found useful to you? Do you consider that the information provided on the InfoExport site is pertinent? Adapted to your needs? (*Probe*) Is it interesting from an operational standpoint? Does the site contain the information you need to know to export, such as the information you mentioned earlier in the meeting? What information?
- If you had to mention one type of particularly useful information, what would it be?
- Can this help you decide where to export your products / services? (*probe : contacts and services they can benefit from*) Do you consider yourself better equipped to probe and develop new markets with this information?
- What type of exporter would find this site most useful?

Clarity

- Is the information easy to understand? Clear? Well written?

Credibility

- Is the information credible? (*the sponsor's credibility?*)

Completeness

- Is the information sufficiently complete?
 - Is there important information missing? What other information would you like there to be present? If you had to point out only one type of pertinent information that is missing, what would it be?
 - Is there superfluous information? What?
- Is the level of detail sufficient or insufficient? *If insufficient* : can you give me examples?

Exclusivity

- In your opinion, does InfoExport offer information that one could easily find elsewhere or do you think it contains important information that one couldn't always easily find elsewhere?
- Is an opportunity of finding all this information on a single site a value-added feature?
- To what extent is InfoExport comparable to, or different from other sites aimed at exporters? (*Probe*)

Visual environment

- Overall, what do you think of the visual aspect? How would you describe it?

Probe:

- the colors
- the images
- the text's readability
- the government's identification / the site's name
- the graphical design

Entry and Home Page

- What do you think of the **Entry page**? (*Moderator* : it's the page where we see the handshake, English and French)

Probe :

→ Is it inviting? Visually appealing?

- What do you think of the **Home page**? (*Moderator* : it's the page where we see the 4 major destinations "How can we help you, etc.")

Probe :

→ Is it inviting?

→ Are the destination titles clear? What do you expect to happen when clicking on ...?
(*Moderator*: read each of the destinations)?

→ The navigation bar (*DFAIT - Site Map - Search - E-Mail - Register*)

The site's architecture / "usability"

- What do you think of the site's **general architecture**, its organization? How would you describe it?

Probe:

→ Is it easy to browse (*or can you get lost*)? Logical? Intuitive? User-friendly?
To which aspects does this apply? Does not apply?

Guided browsing

- For each of the **guided browses**, probe:
 - What did you feel after having accomplished this task?
 - Where did you first look? How did you go about it?
 - Was it easy or difficult to find the information? Quick or not?

- Did you find the information you expected to find?
- Did you find it where you expected?
- Did you encounter any problems? Which ones?
- Did you ask yourself any questions? Which ones?

6. OTHER (5 minutes)

- In your opinion, who is this site aimed at? At you? Why? Why not? How will beginner exporters react? Senior exporters?
- What will be the most effective way to be informed of the site's existence?

7. CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

- Overall, what is the most positive thing you would have to say about the site? And the most negative thing?
- Would you visit the site? Why? Why not? How often?
 - What are the reasons why an exporter would visit this site? Would bookmark it?
- After having explored the site, do you now know what Trade Commissioners are and what services they offer?
- In your opinion, what should be definitely altered, removed or added in order to improve the site?
- Do you have any other comments, suggestions or other things that you did not have a chance to mention before and that you would like to say now?

THANK AND CONCLUDE

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Projet : 576-009
Janvier 2000
Version 2

GUIDE DE DISCUSSION

Site Web InfoExport

CLIENT : Louis Marcotte Tél. : (613) 944-8995 MAECI	<u>DATES, HEURES ET LOCALISATION :</u>
RESPONSABLE DU PROJET : Dany Jolicoeur Tél. : (514) 844-1127	MONTRÉAL 2 février 2000
ANIMATEURS/ANALYSTES : A. Natalie Gold (<i>groupe anglophone</i>) Tél. : (416) 654-6453 B. Dany Jolicoeur (<i>groupe francophone</i>) Tél. : (514) 844-1127	A. 18h00 : anglophones . B. 20h00 : francophones Café Électronique 1425, René-Lévesque Ouest Tél. : (514) 871-0307
NOMBRE DE GROUPES : N = 2	

1. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Cette première partie de l'entretien consiste à créer un climat de confiance entre l'animateur et les participants. C'est à ce moment que l'animateur rassure les personnes interrogées sur ses intentions et précise ses attentes à leur égard.

CONSIGNES

- Bienvenue et introduction de l'animateur
- Objectifs de l'étude : *"Obtenir vos opinions sur le site InfoExport du Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international" / Confidentialité : "Toutes vos réponses demeurent confidentielles. Votre nom ne sera transmis à personne et vos opinions seront combinées avec celles des autres participants. Le seul but est de peaufiner le site afin qu'il réponde aux besoins des exportateurs".*
- Rôle animateur / observation par le client / enregistrement
- Neutralité de l'animateur (*ne travaille pas pour le gouvernement et n'est pas un expert de l'Internet ou du Web*).
- Rôle des participants
- Durée : 2h00
- Donner une idée de la séquence des événements (*discussion générale, navigation libre et guidée, discussion sur le site*)
- Des questions?

TOUR DE TABLE

- Prénom
- Occupation
- Description de leur entreprise (*secteur d'activités, nombre d'employés, etc.*)
- Depuis combien de temps votre entreprise exporte-t-elle? Où?
- À quel point êtes-vous familier avec l'Internet et le Web? (*sonder : à quelles fins l'utilisez-vous? combien d'heures par semaine? etc.*)

2. BESOINS D'INFORMATION (10 minutes)

- Parlons de vos besoins d'information en tant qu'exportateur. Avez-vous souvent besoin de chercher de l'information reliée à vos activités d'exportation?
- À quelles étapes de vos activités d'exportation avez-vous besoin d'information? Quel type ou catégorie d'information recherchez-vous? Quelles sont les informations les plus importantes, celles que vous avez besoin de connaître lorsque vous exportez vos produits / services à l'extérieur du Canada?
- Pourriez-vous me dire comment vous obtenez ces informations? À quelles sources vous référez-vous? Comment procédez-vous? Comment êtes-vous organisé pour rechercher ces informations? Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous satisfait de ces sources d'information? Croyez-vous qu'il existe d'autres sources d'information qui mériteraient d'être considérées?

3. EXPÉRIENCES DES SITES WEB DESTINÉS AUX EXPORTATEURS (10 minutes)

- Que pensez-vous de l'Internet comme outil d'information pour une entreprise qui exporte?
 - Quels sont les avantages et inconvénients liés à l'utilisation d'Internet comme outil d'information pour les exportateurs?
 - À votre connaissance, quels sites s'adressent aux exportateurs? Quels sites avez-vous consultés? Que pensez-vous de ces sites? Quels compliments et quelles critiques avez-vous à formuler? (*sonder : contenu / facilité d'utilisation*) Parmi les sites non-gouvernementaux, quels sont les plus intéressants? Parmi les sites gouvernementaux, quels sont les plus intéressants?
 - Que pensez-vous de l'information pour les exportateurs qu'on retrouve sur l'Internet? (*sonder : utilité? crédible? d'actualité?*) Vous arrive-t-il de chercher de l'information et que vous ne la trouviez pas?

→ Si non mentionné :

- Connaissez-vous InfoExport? L'avez-vous déjà consulté? *(ne pas recueillir les commentaires sur le site avant la navigation)*
- Connaissez-vous le service des Délégués Commerciaux du Canada? *(sonder: qu'offrent-ils? est-ce utile? etc.)*

4. NAVIGATION LIBRE ET GUIDÉE (40 minutes)

CONSIGNES RELATIVES À LA NAVIGATION (5 minutes)

- *Rappelez l'objectif de l'étude : "c'est le site Web que nous évaluons, pas vous!" "Quelles sont vos impressions à l'égard du site?"*
- *Expliquez le processus : une navigation libre de 15 minutes suivie d'une navigation guidée (recherche d'informations spécifiques) de 15 minutes, d'un questionnaire puis d'une discussion de groupe sur leurs opinions.*
- *Spécifiez qu'il ne faut pas télécharger et ne pas sortir du site.*
- *Spécifiez qu'ils ont amplement le temps, que cette visite libre n'est pas une course contre la montre : "Allez-y à votre rythme".*

NAVIGATION LIBRE (15 minutes)

- *Adresse du site : <http://www.infoexport.gc.ca/>*
- *Navigateur : Netscape*
- *Invitez les participants à s'affarder aux aspects généraux de la forme (présentation, organisation, etc.) et du contenu (type d'information qu'on y retrouve).*
- *Encouragez la prise de notes de commentaires (positifs ou négatifs), des suggestions lors de la navigation.*
- *Précisez : "Nous nous intéressons à vos réactions pas seulement au niveau rationnel ou logique, mais aussi au niveau de ce que vous ressentez en naviguant".*
- *Ne pas faire de commentaires à haute voix pour ne pas influencer les autres participants.*
- *Précisez la durée : 15 minutes.*

NAVIGATION GUIDÉE : RECHERCHE D'INFORMATIONS SPÉCIFIQUES (15 minutes)

- *Invitez les participants à réaliser les tâches suivantes:*
 - 1) *Trouver l'adresse d'une ambassade qui vous intéresse en particulier*
 - 2) *Accéder à une étude de marché dans votre secteur industriel (Animateur: ils devront s'inscrire pour y avoir accès)*
- *Précisez la durée : 15 minutes.*

ADMINISTRATION DU QUESTIONNAIRE INDIVIDUEL (5 minutes)

5. DISCUSSION GÉNÉRALE (40 minutes)

Animateur : Utiliser le projecteur au besoin, pour illustrer / faciliter la discussion.

- Commentaires généraux / réactions spontanées
Sonder :
 - > *Avez-vous eu le temps de faire le tour du site? Sur quoi vous êtes-vous particulièrement attardé? Sur quoi êtes-vous passé rapidement? Y a-t-il des parties du site que vous n'avez pas eu le temps de consulter? Avez-vous rencontré des problèmes / des difficultés? Lesquels? Avez-vous réussi à les contourner?*
 - > *Que ressentez-vous après avoir visité le site?*
 - > *Qu'est ce qui vous a plu? Déplu? (Lister sur flip chart) Quels qualificatifs utiliseriez-vous pour décrire ce site?*
 - > *Ajouteriez-vous ce site à vos signets?*

Contenu

- Que pensez-vous du **contenu**? Comment le qualifiez-vous?

Sonder en profondeur :

Utilité / Pertinence

- Jusqu'à quel point l'information qu'on y retrouve est utile pour vous? Considérez-vous que l'information que communique le site InfoExport est pertinente? Adaptée à vos besoins? (*Sonder*) Est-elle intéressante d'un point de vue opérationnel? Est-ce que le site contient les informations dont vous avez besoin de connaître pour exporter, soit celles que vous avez mentionnées au début de la séance? Lesquelles?
- Si vous aviez à désigner un seul type d'information particulièrement utile, quelle serait cette information?
- Est-ce que cela peut vous aider à décider où exporter vos produits / services? (*sonder: la notion de contacts et de services qu'ils peuvent obtenir*) Vous considérez-vous mieux équipé pour sonder et développer de nouveaux marchés avec cette information?
- À quel type d'exportateur ce site est le plus utile?

Clarté

- Est-ce que l'information est facile à comprendre? Claire? Bien écrite?

Crédibilité

- Est-ce que l'information est crédible? (*crédibilité du commanditaire?*)

Complet

- Est-ce que l'information est suffisamment complète?
 - Manque-t-il des informations importantes? Quelles autres informations aimeriez-vous y retrouver? Si vous aviez à désigner un seul type d'information pertinente mais manquante, quelle serait cette information?
 - Y a-t-il de l'information superflue? Laquelle?
- Le niveau de détail est-il suffisant ou insuffisant? *Si insuffisant* : pouvez-vous me donner des exemples?

Exclusivité

- À votre avis, est-ce que InfoExport présente de l'information que l'on peut retrouver facilement ailleurs ou bien pensez-vous qu'il contient des informations importantes que l'on ne retrouve pas toujours facilement ailleurs?
- Est-ce que la possibilité de retrouver toute cette information sur un même site constitue une valeur ajoutée?
- Dans quelle mesure, InfoExport est comparable ou différent à d'autres sites qui s'adressent aux exportateurs? (*Sonder*)

Environnement visuel

- Globalement, que pensez-vous de l'environnement visuel? De quelles façons le qualifiez-vous?

Sonder :

- les couleurs
- les images
- la lisibilité du texte
- l'identification du gouvernement / du nom du site
- le "design" graphique

Page d'entrée et d'accueil

- Que pensez-vous de la **page d'entrée**? (*Animateur* : c'est la page où l'on voit la poignée de mains, English et Français)

Sonder :

→ Est-elle invitante? Attrayante visuellement?

- Que pensez-vous de la **page d'accueil**? (*Animateur* : c'est la page où l'on voit les 4 grandes destinations "Comment nous pouvons vous aider, etc.")

Sonder :

→ Est-elle invitante?

→ Est-ce que les titres des destinations sont clairs? À quoi vous attendez-vous en cliquant sur ...? (*Animateur*: lire chacune des destinations)?

→ La barre de navigation (*MAECI - Carte - Recherche - Courriel - Inscription*)

Architecture du site / "utilisabilité"

- Qu'en est-il de l'**architecture générale** du site, son organisation? De quelles façons la qualifiez-vous?

Sonder :

→ Est-ce facile d'y naviguer? (*ou s'y perd-t-on?*) Logique? Intuitive? Conviviale? Sur quels aspects ce l'est? Ce ne l'est pas?

Navigation guidée

- Pour chacune des **navigations guidées**, sonder :

→ Qu'avez-vous ressenti après avoir effectué cette tâche?

→ Où avez-vous regardé en premier? Comment avez-vous procédé?

→ Est-ce que ça été facile ou difficile de trouver l'information? Rapide ou non?

- Avez-vous trouvé l'information que vous vous attendiez?
- Avez-vous trouvé l'information là où vous vous y attendiez?
- Avez-vous rencontré des problèmes? Lesquels?
- Vous êtes-vous posé des questions? Lesquelles?

6. AUTRES (5 minutes)

- À votre avis, à qui s'adresse ce site? S'adresse-t-il à vous? Pourquoi? Pourquoi pas? Comment vont réagir les exportateurs qui débutent? Les exportateurs expérimentés?
- Quelle serait la façon la plus efficace pour vous informer de l'existence de ce site?

7. CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

- Dans l'ensemble, quelle est la chose la plus positive que vous diriez à propos du site? La plus négative?
- Fréquenteriez-vous ce site? Pourquoi? Pourquoi pas? À quelle fréquence?
 - Quelles sont les raisons pour lesquelles un exportateur visiterait ce site? Le mettrait à ses signets?
- Après avoir visité ce site, savez-vous ce que sont les Délégués Commerciaux et quels services offrent-ils?
- Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui devrait absolument être modifié, éliminé ou ajouté afin d'améliorer ce site?
- Avez-vous d'autres commentaires, suggestions ou des choses que vous n'avez pas pu dire avant et dont vous aimeriez me faire part?

REMERCIER ET TERMINER

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE (English and French)

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

➤ *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the InfoExport site?*

	Agree				Disagree		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. I would definitely use what I found on this Web site	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
2. The site is worth remembering	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
3. Presents new information to me	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
4. Informative	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
5. An essential tool for exporters	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
6. The information seemed out-of-date	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
7. All the links were easy to understand	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
8. Easy to use	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
9. Confusing architecture	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
10. The words were easy to read	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
11. I had to use a lot of effort to understand how to browse	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
12. The overall organization / lay-out is excellent	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
13. Pleasant presentation	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
14. Imaginative	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
15. I've seen this kind of Web site too many times; it's the same old thing	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
16. The visual attractiveness is excellent	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
17. I felt satisfied as I ended my visit with this Web site	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
18. I want to visit the Web site again	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
19. I would register to have access to market studies	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
20. I would definitely bookmark this Web site on my browser	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
21. This Web site is superior to most sites geared towards exporters	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

➤ *To what extent does the site you tried require changes?*

A lot Somewhat A little Not at all

➤ *On a scale ranging from 1 to 10, where 1 means "not useful" and 10, "very useful", how would you rate the usefulness of the information presented by InfoExport?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

QUESTIONNAIRE INDIVIDUEL

➤ Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous en accord ou en désaccord avec les affirmations suivantes à propos du site InfoExport?

	En accord				En désaccord		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. J'utiliserai certainement ce que j'ai trouvé sur ce site Web	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
2. Vaut la peine qu'on se souvienne du site	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
3. Présente de nouvelles informations pour moi	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
4. Informatif	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
5. Un outil essentiel pour les exportateurs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
6. L'information fournie semblait dépassée	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
7. Tous les liens étaient faciles à comprendre	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
8. Facile à utiliser	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
9. Architecture confuse	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
10. Les mots étaient faciles à lire	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
11. J'ai fait beaucoup d'efforts pour comprendre comment naviguer	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
12. La disposition / organisation générale est excellente	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
13. Présentation agréable	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
14. Imaginatif	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
15. J'ai déjà vu ce genre de site Web trop souvent; c'est encore la même vieille affaire	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
16. L'attrait visuel est excellent	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
17. Je me considère satisfait après avoir complété ma visite de ce site Web	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
18. Je veux revenir visiter ce site Web	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
19. Je m'y inscrirais pour avoir accès aux études de marché	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
20. Je sauvegarderai certainement ce site Web dans les signets de mon navigateur	()	()	()	()	()	()	()
21. Ce site Web est supérieur à la plupart des sites destinés aux exportateurs	()	()	()	()	()	()	()

➤ Jusqu'à quel point le site que vous avez visité nécessite des modifications?

Beaucoup Assez Un peu Pas du tout

➤ Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 signifie "pas utile" et 10 "très utile", quelle est l'utilité de l'information que présente InfoExport?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

APPENDIX 3

WEBSITE ENTRY PAGE



Department of Foreign Affairs
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Canada

APPENDIX 4

WEBSITE HOME PAGE (English and French)

INFOEXPORT



**THE CANADIAN
TRADE COMMISSIONER
SERVICE** *Serving Canadian Business Abroad*

[DFAIT](#) [Site Map](#) [Search](#) [E-Mail](#) [Register](#)



How We Can Help

Market Reports
and **Contacts** in Your Sector

e-Services of our Offices Abroad

Other Programs & Services

Canada's
National **IWAY** Awards



Les Prix nationaux **IWAY**
du Canada



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Canada

INFOEXPORT



LE SERVICE DES
DÉLÉGUÉS COMMERCIAUX
DU CANADA

Au service des entreprises canadiennes à l'étranger

MARCI Carte du site Recherche Courriel Inscription

Comment nous pouvons vous aider

Études de marché
et contacts dans votre secteur

Services-é de nos bureaux à l'étranger

Autres programmes et services



Canada's
National IWAY Awards



Les Prix nationaux IWAY
du Canada



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Qualitative test of InfoExport
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<http://www.infoexport.gc.ca>
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