Instructional Product Development

Formative Evaluation Plan

Erin Cunia
IDE 716
Jerry Klein, Professor
April 12, 2005

Erin Cunia.info Project Eval Plan	**Project Name:** TRAC QuickStart Guide	**Project Manager/Team:** Erin Cunia

Table of Contents

Introduction

This is the plan for evaluation of the training provided for the TRAC help section(s).

The entire process (ADDIE) has been a challenge to carry out in this project. It has certainly been an iterative process involving much trail and error in the design and development of the *new* help section(s) for the TRAC website.

I plan on using Kirkpatrick's four-level approach to training evaluation (Nickols, 2002). I will use several methods to obtain information on reactions, learning, behavior, and results. The methods to be used for evaluation will be a short user surveys, interviews, staff reports, observations, and usage log analysis.

Background

The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) was founded in 1989. It is an independent research group associated with Syracuse University's School of Management and the School of Public Communications. Its founders, Susan Long and David Burnham, have pioneered data research of the federal government using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to obtain statistical information from the various government agencies. They have provided this data through their website, http://trac.syr.edu.

Through the years the website has evolved into 2 areas, a public access area and a subscription area. The public access site is pretty easy to follow providing several topical *layers* in which the user can access reports and graphs illustrating the data. The subscription area is somewhat more complicated for the user. TRAC had several *help* sections, a *Quickstart Guide*, and a *Guided Tour* available for user training. They would also provide individualized training to the subscription users on a case-by-case basis.

I was hired in the fall of 2004 to develop a more comprehensive program that would instruct the user on the use of the public and subscription sites. The staff of TRAC are not satisfied with the existing help sections. The help sections are outdated and under-used.

Purposes

There are two primary purposes for the evaluation of the *new* help section for the TRAC public and subscription website. First, the new help section will be evaluated by the staff of TRAC for design and content. Second, the help section will be evaluated by existing and new users of the site.

Training Objectives	Program Components	Target	Context of Training Delivery
New/existing/potential users need to know *what* information is available.	New Search feature – description and how to use; explanations of the data available	New, existing, and potential users.	Online text descriptions and instructional *movies*
New/potential users need to get started using the public and subscription sites.	New Quickstart Guide	New and potential users.	Online text descriptions and instructional *movies*
Existing users need to know how to use all the tools to obtain information using the public and subscription sites.	Tutorials on tool use	Existing users	Online text descriptions and instructional *movies*

Limitations

Currently the limitations consist mostly of time. This project started in August of 2004. The first *draft* of the TRAC Help section went into production in February.

It has also been a challenge to get input from the staff of TRAC. Other non-related projects have consumed much of the stake-holders time. Recently I have been able to get much needed feedback on the content that went into production in February and on content currently in development.

Questions and Methods

This section describes the evaluation design and procedures. Once the help section is fully developed and in production, I would like to conduct a survey and interview of users to determine how effective the new help section is. At this time, only feedback from the Staff of TRAC has been obtained throughout the design and development phase.

		Type of Data Collection				
Key Evaluation Question(s)	**Type of Management Information and Evaluation Measure(s)**	**Survey/Scale**	**Structured Interview**	**Self Report/Log**	**Direct Observation**	**Archival Records**
A. Planning and Implementation Issues	A. Descriptive and Process Measures					
1. Who uses (will use) the TRAC site and help sections?	1. Basic demographic info	X	X			
2. What are they interested in?	2. Information on users (industry types) and the information relevant to them	X	X			
3. Do they use the help section?	3. Accessability	X	X	X	X	X
B. Assessing Attainment of Objectives	B. Outcome Measures					
1. How many people use the help?	1. Number of people accessing the help pages.	X	X	X	X	X
2. Are users able to get started?	2. Number of new users accessing	X	X	X	X	X
3. Can users use the tools?	3. What tools are being used and user perceptions.	X	X	X	X	X
C. Impact on Users						
1. Are users satisfied with the help section?		X	X			
2. Can users self-direct their data searches?		X	X			
D. Impact on TRAC						
1. Has the need for individualized training decreased?		X	X	X	X	
2. Are users needs being met by the help section?		X	X	X	X	

Conclusion

This project has been a *real* learning experience. The IDD&E program teaches the models of instructional design, building on the basic ADDIE model. In the real world, the ADDIE model works in principle but it is not necessarily a *clean* process. There can be much *jumping* around the different parts of the model in an attempt to please the client. It can be difficult to do much analysis or evaluation, as all the client really wants is the product. The real challenge is convincing the client that they need the *whole* process.

References

Nickols, Fred. (2000, Last updated September 12, 2004). *Evaluating Training: There is no "cookbook" approach*. Retrieved April 11, 2005 from http://home.att.net/~nickols/evaluate.htm.

Rossett, Allison. (1987). *Training Needs Assessment.* New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications.

University of Kansas. (2003) *Developing an Evaluation Plan*. Retrieved April 11, 2005 from http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/sub_section_tools_1352.htm.