

Voter Guide Usability Sessions Script

This is a summary version of the researchers' script for usability testing of a prototype voter guide with voters and non-voters as part of a project on how voters get information for the Future of California Elections.

More information about this project: civicdesign.org/how-voters-get-information

Introduction

Good to meet you! Thanks for helping us out. We're doing a study to learn about how people use information about voting and elections. A group called Future of California Elections and the James Irvine Foundation fund the study.

We're going to show you a new guide for voters and ask you some questions about it.

We're going to use what we find out here to give election officials guidance about the best ways to write and present information for voters.

We'll take about 45 minutes. You don't have to participate, though, and you don't have to answer all of our questions. You can stop at any time.

By the way, we won't use your name in any of the reporting. Is it OK if we record this for our notes. *[Get OK for streaming, if it's running.]*

Any questions so far? If this is OK, could you sign here.

Warm up interview

Have you ever received anything in the mail about elections that looked official?

___ No ___ Yes *[If **yes:**]* What made it official looking?

___ *no color*

___ *flags or other logos or insignia*

___ *cheap (newsprint) paper*

___ *looked like a tax form*

___ *seal*

___ *other:* _____

What's that thing you got in the mail *called*?

Have you ever voted in an election? ___ No ___ Yes

*[If **has not voted:**]* Can you tell me about why you haven't voted?

*[If **has voted:**]* When? What was that experience like? _____ year

Their questions

[If **has voted**:] Do you remember what questions you had about the election and voting? Tell me about some of your questions.

[If **has NOT voted**:] Let's say an election is coming up. What questions do you have about voting and elections?

[Number in the box for the order in which the participant mentions a question.]

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> What's on the ballot? (What would I be voting for?) | <input type="checkbox"/> What's the deadline to vote by mail? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How do I actually vote? (How do I mark the ballot? What's the voting system like?) | <input type="checkbox"/> What do I have to do to vote by mail? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What happens when I get to the polling place? (What's the process like?) | <input type="checkbox"/> When is my vote-by-mail ballot due? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What are my options for getting to vote? Do I have to vote at the polls on Election Day? | <input type="checkbox"/> Where do I go to vote? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> When is the next election? | <input type="checkbox"/> Am I eligible to vote? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can I vote before Election Day? | <input type="checkbox"/> How do I register to vote? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How do I vote if I can't vote on Election Day? | <input type="checkbox"/> What's the deadline for registering to vote? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Am I registered to vote right now? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Can I register on Election Day? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Do I need to show ID to vote? |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Who is in office right now? |

What was the most **important** question? The one you most urgently want answered?

[Circle it above]

What makes that the most urgent question for you? [What might make the difference in whether they vote.]

First look at the guide

Hand the participant the voter guide.

This arrived in your mailbox today. What do you do with it?

immediately recycle it

flip through and then recycle it

try to figure out what it's for

make a mental note about an election coming up

other: _____

Why?

Ok. Let's start by giving you some time to look at it.

We are focusing on a few pages today, because we want to make sure that they are written in a way you understand. They are marked with a post-it note.

I'll give you some time to look through it in your own way, and then we'll talk about it together.

What is your first impression? Any overview?

Page reviews

Let's look back through this, page by page. As we go through, show me anything that you thought was confusing or that you didn't understand.

Forced choice (5 min)

In a couple of situations, we actually showed the same information in two ways. We'd like to go back to those now. I'll show you both versions, and I want you to compare the pages and comment on them. For each, ask: If you had to choose just one of these pages for a voter guide, which one would you choose? Why?

Candidate Information		
___ A (table)	___ easy to read ___ easy to understand	
___ B (long form)	___ paraphrased OK? ___ prefer?	
Measure Information		
___ Measure E (all of it)	___ easy to read ___ easy to understand ___ paraphrased OK ___ prefer?	___ Summary ___ Yes/No ___ Pro/Con ___ Arguments/Rebuttals ___ Impartial Analysis ___ Full Text
___ Measure F (summary)		

Just a couple more questions

On pages 12-15, we showed this [flip back to the facsimile ballot]. How important is it that the example is exactly like what you will vote on?

[If Spanish or Chinese, and no comment before this:] How was the translation?

Demographic form

Before we finish, I just want to make sure that we've got all the details about you correct...

[ask or confirm questions on demographic form]

Wrap-up

Great! Thanks! This was very helpful. Anything else you'd like to add?