Looking across the voter experience

how design, usability, and accessibility shape voters’ paths through elections

Dana Chisnell
Center for Civic Design
Presidential Commission on Election Administration
September 4, 2013
- Clear process
- Efficient, effective poll workers
- Usability and accessibility
■ Clear, verifiable results
■ A margin of victory that is larger than the number of residual votes
Carrying out voter intent.
Cast as intended
Cast as intended, counted as cast.
41 participants
geographically diverse
looked for answers on their county’s website
Most-asked questions
Most-asked questions

1. What’s on the ballot?
2. Can I vote absentee?
3. Can I vote early?
4. Where do I vote?
5. Who’s in office now?
6. Do I need ID?
7. What’s the deadline for registering?
8. How do I vote?
100+ hours in polling places
Preparing to vote
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparing to vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What's on the ballot?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can I vote absentee?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can I vote early?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where do I vote?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who's in office now?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do I need ID?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What's the deadline for registering?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do I vote?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot?
- Can I vote absentee?
- Can I vote early?
- Where do I vote?
- Who's in office now?
- Do I need ID?
- What's the deadline for registering?
- How do I vote?
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot? 72%
- Can I vote absentee? 60%
- Can I vote early? 60%
- Where do I vote? 65%
- Who's in office now? 35%
- Do I need ID? (not shown)
- What's the deadline for registering? (not shown)
- How do I vote? (not shown)
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot? 72%
- Can I vote absentee? 60%
- Can I vote early? 60%
- Where do I vote? 65%
- Who's in office now? 69%
- Do I need ID? 69%
- What's the deadline for registering? 35%
- How do I vote?
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot?: 72%
- Can I vote absentee?: 60%
- Can I vote early?: 60%
- Where do I vote?: 65%
- Who's in office now?: 69%
- Do I need ID?: 80%
- What's the deadline for registering?:
- How do I vote?: 35%
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot? 60%
- Can I vote absentee? 72%
- Can I vote early? 60%
- Where do I vote? 65%
- Who's in office now? 69%
- Do I need ID? 80%
- What's the deadline for registering? 80%
- How do I vote? 12.5%
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot? 60%
- Can I vote absentee? 72%
- Can I vote early? 60%
- Where do I vote? 65%
- Who's in office now? 69%
- Do I need ID? 59%
- What's the deadline for registering? 80%
- How do I vote? 12.5%
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot: 60%
- Can I vote absentee?: 72%
- Can I vote early?: 60%
- Where do I vote?: 65%
- Who's in office now?: 69%
- Do I need ID?: 59%
- What's the deadline for registering?: 80%
- How do I vote?: 12.5%
Preparing to vote

100%

What's on the ballot? 60%
Can I vote absentee? 72%
Can I vote early? 60%
Where do I vote? 65%
Who's in office now? 69%
Do I need ID? 80%
What's the deadline for registering? 80%
How do I vote? 12.5%
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot? 60%
- Can I vote absentee? 72%
- Can I vote early? 60%
- Where do I vote? 65%
- Who's in office now? 69%
- Do I need ID? 59%
- What's the deadline for registering? 80%
- How do I vote? 12.5%
Preparing to vote

- What's on the ballot?
- Can I vote absentee?
- Can I vote early?
- Where do I vote?
- Who's in office now?
- Do I need ID?
- What's the deadline for registering?
- How do I vote?

- 60%
- 72%
- 60%
- 65%
- 69%
- 65%
- 80%
- 12.5%
Voting at the polling place
## Voting at the polling place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get to the polling place</td>
<td>Get to the polling place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find polling within the building</td>
<td>Find polling within the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get in the queue</td>
<td>Get in the queue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure out where to go first</td>
<td>Figure out where to go first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check in</td>
<td>Check in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a ballot</td>
<td>Get a ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark the ballot</td>
<td>Mark the ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cast the ballot</td>
<td>Cast the ballot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get a sticker</td>
<td>Get a sticker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave</td>
<td>Leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voting at the polling place
Voting at the polling place

Get to the polling place
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Bad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get to the polling place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find polling within the building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get in the queue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voting at the polling place

Good

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first

Bad
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in

Good

Bad
Voting at the polling place

Get to the polling place
Find polling within the building
Get in the queue
Figure out where to go first
Check in
Get a ballot
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
Voting at the polling place

Mark the ballot
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?

Mark the ballot
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?
How do I mark my choices?

Mark the ballot
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?
How do I mark my choices?
Should I vote on everything?

Mark the ballot

Good

Bad
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?
How do I mark my choices?
Should I vote on everything?
What do I do if I don’t know anything about these judges?
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?
How do I mark my choices?
Should I vote on everything?
What do I do if I don’t know anything about these judges?
What if I get it wrong?
Voting at the polling place

Do I know about all this stuff?
How do I mark my choices?
Should I vote on everything?
What do I do if I don’t know anything about these judges?
What if I get it wrong?
What is this Vote for 3?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Mark the ballot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I know about all this stuff?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do I mark my choices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I vote on everything?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do I do if I don’t know anything about these judges?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What if I get it wrong?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this Vote for 3?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why didn’t they tell me there were more on the back?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
- Get a sticker
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
- Get a sticker
- Leave
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
- Get a sticker
- Leave
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Get a sticker
- Cast the ballot
- Leave
Voting at the polling place

Good

Get to the polling place
Find polling within the building
Get in the queue
Figure out where to go first
Check in
Get a ballot
Mark the ballot
Cast the ballot
Get a sticker
Leave

Bad
Voting at the polling place

- Get to the polling place
- Find polling within the building
- Get in the queue
- Figure out where to go first
- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
- Get a sticker
- Leave
Voting at the polling place

Get to the polling place
Find polling within the building
Get in the queue
Figure out where to go first
Check in
Get a ballot
Mark the ballot
Cast the ballot
Mark the ballot
Get a sticker
Leave
Voting at the polling place

Get to the polling place
Find polling within the building
Get in the queue
Figure out where to go first
Check in
Get a ballot
Mark the ballot
Cast the ballot
Get a sticker
Leave
Journey maps look at experience holistically
Benchmarking
Showing improvement over time
Voting at the polling place

Check in
Get a ballot
Mark the ballot
Cast the ballot
Get a sticker
Leave
Voting at the polling place

Checklist: test and measure

Can voters:
- find the information they need?
- find the correct place to sign in?
- read all signs easily?
- understand what is allowed in the polling place?
- read all of the information on the ballot easily?
- navigate the ballot to find all contests and ballot questions?
Voting at the polling place

- Check in
- Get a ballot
- Mark the ballot
- Cast the ballot
- Get a sticker
- Leave

Closing the gap

- Make signs easy to read
- Provide clear information about behavior in the polling place
- Use plain language
- Use icons to reinforce instructions
- Use mixed case
- Use big enough type
- Pick one sans serif font
- Use contrast and color to support meaning
- Show what’s most important
- Design matters throughout the experience.
■ Design matters throughout the experience.

■ Testing and measuring through usability checks can make it easy to make and see improvement over time.