WISER: A framework for improving government forms

Form-a-Palooza | BETA

W	I	S	E	R
WHO	**INTRODUCTION**	**STRUCTURE**	**EXPRESSION**	**REPEAT**
Understand your clients and the process.	Focus on page 1. Offer clear instructions, highlight key info.	Structure the form simply and guide people through it.	Write for clients, not government. Use plain English.	Test and iterate.

STEPS

W	I	S	E	R
✓ Map the overall process: identify each step your clients need to undertake	✓ Write a title that makes sense to clients	✓ Order sections logically	✓ Write in plain English	✓ Implement the new form in a way that reduces friction
✓ Gather data on the form and clients: eg: completion rates, demographics	✓ Clarify eligibility and purpose	✓ Make it visually attractive	✓ Remove jargon and legal jargon	✓ Measure success of re-design
✓ Conduct focus groups and user testing	✓ Highlight why people should complete the form	✓ Use formatting cues to signal alternatives	✓ Keep sentences short	• Completion rates
✓ Complete a form audit from your client's perspective	✓ Tell them what they need on-hand to complete the form	✓ Group into common themes	✓ Keep tone direct, calm & understated	• Data quality
✓ Identify where, when and how clients receive and lodge the form	✓ Use boxes and bold sparingly to highlight key information	✓ Remove duplication	✓ Consider framing	• Policy outcomes
✓ Identify key friction points in the process and the form	✓ Remove technical information, or consider appendices	✓ Consider defaults	✓ Aim for year 7-8 reading level	• Focus groups and feedback
	✓ Put key information first	✓ Use navigation prompts	✓ Use active voice, not passive	
	✓ Advise how to submit	✓ Ask 'Is this necessary?'	✓ Use 'you' and 'we'	
	✓ Use checklists to signal actions	✓ Move legal notes to end	✓ Ask single-issue questions	
	✓ Personalise if possible	✓ Consider online best practice	✓ Make statistics tangible	
		• Prefilling	✓ Read it out loud to ensure it's clear	
		• Active choice		
		• Sequencing		
		• Mobile responsiveness		
		• Positive error messages		

BI CONCEPTS

W	I	S	E	R
Humans vs econs	*Cognitive overload*	*Choice architecture*	*Cognitive overload*	*Choice architecture*
Friction costs	*Salience*	*Salience*	*Friction costs*	*Friction costs*
	Friction costs	*Friction costs*		

Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government