



Canadian Heritage

Qualitative Research on the Accessibility of Cultural Information to Diverse Youth Audiences

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Prepared for: Canadian Heritage

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> Methodology

- D-Code was hired to undertake qualitative research on the accessibility of cultural information to diverse youth audiences
- Four focus groups were held on Tuesday March 23, 2004 at the Canada Quay offices, at Harbourfront, Toronto
- 32 newcomers to Canada, aged 16-24, were recruited to participate, of which 24 people actually participated
- All participants have resided in Canada for less than ten years – the most recent arrival only one month ago
- Findings from this research are to be used for directional purposes only, given the small sample size and the purely qualitative assessment undertaken, and the urban-centric geography of the participants
- The objective of the focus groups was to offer initial insights into cultural websites and the issue of 'Canadian culture' as it relates to this specific audience
- The focus groups were 90 minutes in length, beginning with introductions followed by a discussion on 'Canadian culture' and its meaning for this group
- The final part of the focus group was a real-time web audit looking at several specific Government of Canada 'cultural' websites



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> Summary of key insights

- For the participants in the focus groups, there were considerable potential barriers identified that may impede connections with 'Canadian culture.' These include:
 - Fuzziness surrounding the concept of 'Canadian culture' - Participants associated 'Canadian culture' more with, belonging, social norms, practices and national identity rather than the arts, heritage etc.
 - Resistance to any concept of a fixed notion of 'Canadian culture' – Newcomers seem to want to shape the culture and know that it is flexible
 - Desire to experience 'Canadian culture' first hand rather than learn about it
 - Newcomers often under various 'stresses' while settling in, therefore engaging with 'Canadian culture' is often a lower priority
 - Government is not seen as the obvious place to learn about 'Canadian culture'
- But there are opportunities too:
 - There is considerable appetite to learn about history and peoples of modern Canada – but participants don't necessarily know what to look for
 - The audited websites all had various appealing elements to participants. The challenge is to get users to the sites, and understand when and how to use them.



> About 'Canadian Culture'

'Canadian culture' is an amorphous concept



- Unprompted, nearly all of the groups equate 'Canadian culture' to 'Canadian identity' or characteristics of the people – NOT to arts, heritage and the like
- To some, 'Canadian culture' was perceived as white or caucasian
- For others it is a 'blend' – the culture *is* multicultural – contributing to the slippery nature of the concept
- Also mentioned were aboriginal history, slavery, the monarchy, English and French Canada, and bilingualism
- There was a sense that 'Canadian culture' differs in rural and urban areas, and that the sheer size of Canada means that culture varies by city
- On prompting, other more stereotypical aspects of 'Canadian culture' were identified, including hockey and beer, curling, Celine Dion and Shania Twain
- There was no concept of uniquely Canadian visual art, film or music – just Canadians who made these products, influenced by living in Canada, but also influenced in a great part by living next to the United States.

> About 'Canadian Culture'

- Lorena, 19, stated "Canada is too young to have it's own culture" – comparing Canada's newness in its current form compared to her Greek ancestry
- Neta, 23, from an Israeli background noted shifts in her feelings of being Canadian:
"When among Canadian-born people, I feel like an immigrant, but when I am with other immigrants I feel Canadian"
- Julian, 23, with German roots, made a similar point:
"In Canada I feel more German, in Germany I feel more Canadian"



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> Sources of information: Prior to coming to Canada

- Participants in general had only a vague sense of Canada prior to arrival
- Talking points included the weather: “My relatives think that we all live in igloos here” (Lorena, 19, Albanian/Greek background)
- Personal networks were the major source of pre-arrival information e.g. sponsors, family members etc.
- Some use of the web – including University sites and <http://www.cic.gc.ca/>



> Information on 'Canadian culture'

- One participant had sought information on the Canadian political system since arrival to understand how it differs from the US
- Others pick up information from the media
- Government Websites mentioned as sources of information include CIC and Canada.gc.ca
- Most seek to experience 'Canadian culture' rather than to learn about it
- There is an expressed appetite for more information on 'Canadian culture', for example "knowledge reduces racism and stereotypes" (Nickoy, 21, Jamaican roots)



> Government role in providing information

“Information is out there. It’s up to individuals to go out and get it”
(Ameena, 16, Pakistani background)



- The Government was not seen as an obvious institution from which to learn about ‘Canadian culture’
- Little mention of the web as a medium where the Government should place information
- Vehicles mentioned included television, e.g. CPAC, and radio
- Two participants had enjoyed ‘Heritage Moments’ television commercials
- Information that participants wanted to see provided by Government include:
 - Dress, food and music
 - Political system and the money system
 - Modern Canadian history
 - National anthem – “you never hear the national anthem”
- Also mentioned was a facilitating role – helping different newcomer communities to connect to each other
- Culturelink was a Government program mentioned as an active way for youth to concretise notions of ‘Canadian culture’ – though it was not widely known
- Another idea was an Aboriginal Education Day

> Barriers to connecting with 'Canadian culture'

- Defining culture: Difficulty identifying much unique about 'Canadian culture', for some in the groups it was equated to white culture – beer and hockey
- We are 'Canadian culture' – the groups felt that all Canadians contribute to the country's culture and therefore people should not have to bend too far to take on some common identity
- Connection to existing ethnic communities with similar cultural / geographical backgrounds meant that there was less need to connect with the wider "Canadian" culture
- Values of wider society was not necessarily the same as the newcomers, e.g. one participant mentioned tolerance of a range of sexual orientations
- Competing priorities: newcomers busy getting established this can make cultural exploration a luxury
- Geography: The size of the country means that culture varies from place to place, further muddying the concept of 'Canadian culture'



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> Web audit (<http://canada.gc.ca/acanada/acPubHome.jsp?lang=eng>)



> Web audit (<http://canada.gc.ca/acanada/acPubHome.jsp?lang=eng>)

DESIGN, NAVIGATION, INFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT



... the plus side

- Lots of information; Well organized
- Attractive; Good images
- Comfortable for first time user
- Many of the links seemed appealing and were clicked on by participants

... the down side

- Not different – “feels like a Government site”
- Overwhelming; too busy; can’t look through logically
- Text based and difficult for someone with limited English

Ideas for improvement

- Include sources of entertainment
- More focus on young people’s culture, e.g. music, video games, relationships, jobs
- Ways for new Canadians to connect with their own communities.

> National flag section

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/df1_e.cfm)



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the Canadian Heritage website. The address bar shows the URL: http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/df1_e.cfm. The page features the Canadian Heritage logo and navigation links for Français, Contact Us, Help, Search, and Canada Site. The main content area is titled "The National Flag of Canada" and lists several topics:

- [The National Flag of Canada](#)
- [Proportions and Description of the flag](#)
- [Birth of the Canadian flag](#)
- [The Making of the Canadian flag](#)
- [First "Canadian flags"](#)
- [Elements of the flag](#)
- [You were asking...](#)
- [Ceremonial Dress Flag](#)
- [Dipping the flag](#)
- [Colour specifications](#)
- [Pledge to the flag](#)
- [Half-masting of flags](#)
- [Commercial use](#)
- [Flag Etiquette in Canada](#)

At the bottom of the page, there is a large image of the Canadian flag. The website footer includes the Canadian Heritage logo and the text "Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien".

DFP

> National flag section

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/df1_e.cfm)

DESIGN:

- “Appeals to an older audience”
- Feels like a ‘library’ site; not interesting
- Text heavy
- “Looks like doing school work”
- Too simple
- Information looks interesting, lots of it, seems organized.



> National flag section

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/sc-cs/df1_e.cfm)

NAVIGATION, INFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT:

- People found interesting information and enjoyed the trivia
- New information was gleaned, including the reason for the maple leaf on the Canadian flag and the connection of the flag to the British and the French flags
- There was surprise that the current flag is less than 40 years old
- Participants expressed interest in revisiting the site themselves
- Yet it was unclear to some why they would go to some links over others e.g. 'Birth of the Canadian flag' v.s. 'The Making of the Canadian flag'
- Sometimes the information sought was not easily available, e.g. the meaning the colours of the flag
- Ideas for improvement focused on design features rather than content, e.g. video streaming and making the flag more interactive.



> Canadian symbols

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm)

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the website http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm. The page features the Canadian Heritage logo and navigation links for Français, Contact Us, Help, Search, and Canada Site. The main heading is "Ceremonial and Canadian Symbols Promotion". Below this, there are links to the Minister's page, Minister of State (Sport), and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women). The location is identified as Home - Ceremonial and Canadian Symbols, dated 2004/03/26. A sidebar on the left lists "Subjects" (A-Z Index, Arts and Culture, Citizenship and Identity, Diversity and Multiculturalism, International, Sport, Youth) and "The Department" (About us, What's new, Application Forms, Funding Programs, Legislation, Organizational View, Publications, Regional Offices). The main content area is titled "Ceremonial and Canadian Symbols Promotion" and contains a list of links: [Our mission](#), [The Symbols of Canada](#), [Public holidays and other important dates](#), [Across Canada](#) -- The office of Lieutenant Governor and provincial/territorial links., [A few suggestions about protocol for national ceremonies.](#), [The Canadian Monarchy](#) -- Royal Visits and guidance notes., [Resources](#) -- Lists of useful links and publications., [The Quiz!](#), and [Canadian Heritage Colouring Book](#).

3000

> Canadian symbols

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm)

DESIGN:

Comments were mostly negative

- Design not intuitive
- Very plain compared to home page
- 'Symbols' just leads to more links – surprise that there weren't actual symbols shown
- Not attractive – lacking images
- Nothing stands out – doesn't catch the eye
- "It looks like a Government website."



> Canadian symbols

(http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/index_e.cfm)

NAVIGATION, INFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT:

- Popular first links to click included 'The Quiz'; 'Public Holidays' and 'The Symbols of Canada'
- One person went to 'Our Mission' hoping to see where Canada sees itself in the next 10-15 years
- The language used is considered accessible – “no big words”
- People picked up new information, e.g. the naming of Canada
- Information was not necessarily intuitive, e.g. it was not clear why there was a 'music' area under 'The Symbols of Canada'.

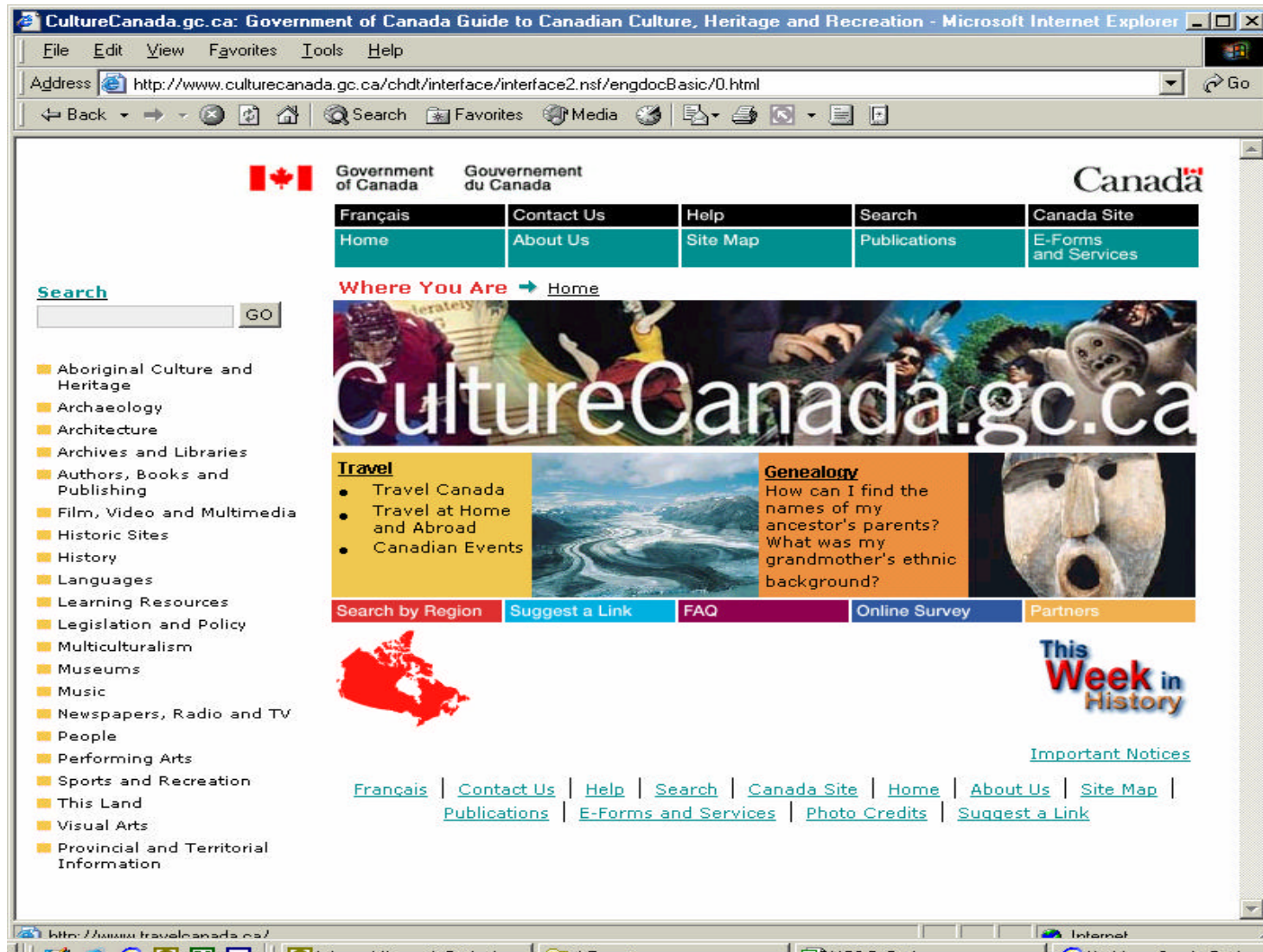
Improvements

- Include a section on famous Canadians, from Don Cherry to Jim Carrey
- Include information about coins
- Include more pictures, for example of actual Canadian symbols
- Add more colour.



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> Comparative web audit (<http://www.culturecanada.gc.ca>)



WSP

> Comparative web audit (Prototype)



> Comparing sites: Impressions of culturecanada.gc.ca

Impressions of culturecanada.gc.ca

- “Appealing – it reminds me of the Air Canada site”
- Colourful – appropriate given that Canadian culture is too
- Clean site – good spacing

But...

- Design lacking vitality
- Not clear about where to go first
- “Just a collection of links”
- Links “really boring”
- Genealogy takes people back to original country, not good for building ‘Canadian culture.’



> Comparing sites: Impressions of Prototype

- The blurb 'Your Window to Government Programs and Services on Culture, Heritage and Recreation,' helped some users to understand what the site is for – though most people did not notice it
- Signposting is key to ensure that users are on the site for the right reason, i.e. to learn about government programs and services rather than 'culture' more generally
- "Catches the eye" and "less of a Government feel"
- More "put together", e.g. nicely spaced
- Feels more "related to young people" than original version
- More interactive than the original, but less accessible for those less familiar with the web or this type of site
- News feel: reminded several people of a newspaper site, e.g. Toronto Star or National Post or like MSN or hotmail. The first site, by contrast, was more like an encyclopaedia. One person said that the encyclopaedia felt more appropriate for research
- Another said that the news style is no longer unique - a bit overdone.



> Prototype – where participants would click

“I didn’t know there was archaeology in Canada”

Iulia, 16, Romanian descent



Popular destinations on the prototype site included:

- ‘Architecture’ and ‘Archaeology’
- ‘Aboriginal culture’ (cool picture)
- ‘Factoid’ – to learn something interesting
- ‘Racism: stop it’ – one participant was glad that the problem was acknowledged and another was drawn to this because of the social action element
- ‘Calendar’ to find out more about what is going on
- ‘Sports and Recreation’ for listings
- ‘Multiculturalism’ to find out about the different cultures represented in Canada.

> Prototype versus original – preferences

- When asked to express a preference between the two sites, participants were evenly divided
- The newspaper style of the prototype was given mixed feedback
- The vivid colours of the original were a hit
- The original's simply laid out links also worked in its favour
- Yet there was a positive response on the content of the prototype – like anti-racism.



> Possible next steps for Canadian Heritage: Website development



- Support appropriate usage (right user, right place, right information) e.g. provide links between Government sites with 'cultural' content
- Develop filtration mechanism that supports distinct users, in particular those looking for:
 - up to date or new information on culture, e.g. directing people to current Census data
 - information for research purposes, e.g. school projects
 - Government services and funding
- The filtration should also help users to find particular topics of interest – media, multiculturalism, aboriginal issues etc.
- Prioritise content. For example, the focus groups were much more interested in the meaning of the colours of the Canadian flag than their specific pantone, and yet the former is harder to find.

> Possible next steps for Canadian Heritage: Insight development

- It is unknown to what extent the findings in this report on young diverse new Canadians are limited to those who currently live in Toronto
- It is recommended that young diverse new Canadians are engaged in other urban and secondary population centres across Canada in order to:
 - Deepen understanding of the unique barriers identified to broader engagement with 'Canadian culture', and of reactions to the various culture related websites,
 - Develop strategies to respond to the unique barriers identified, and to support awareness and appropriate usage of the websites.



> Appendix 1: Focus Group Participants

Canadian Heritage - Culture Access Focus Groups

22-24 years - 9am to 10:30 pm

Name	MF	Age	Origin	In Canada for...
Mike	M	24	Britain/Middle East	9 years
Aferdita	F	23	Albania	4 years
Julian	M	23	Germany	4.5 years
Baindu	F	24	Sierra Leone	1 month
Jaaffer	M	22	Jamaica	9 years
Neta	F	23	Israel	9 years

20-22 years - 11am to 12:30 pm

Name	MF	Age	Origin	In Canada for...
Morton	M	21	Antigua	15 months
Aamer	M	22	Pakistan	14 months
Michelle	F	21	Zimbabwe	3 years
Nickoy	F	21	Jamaica	4 years
Nirmal	M	20	Sri Lanka	6 years
Maqueita	F	22	Jamaica	3 years
Emil	M	20	Honduras	4 months

19-21 years - 2pm to 3:30 pm

Name	MF	Age	Origin	In Canada for...
Lorena	F	19	Albania/Greece	3 years
Tockhi	M	19	Afghanistan	9.5 years
Boris	M	19	Columbia	1 year
David	M	20	Columbia	4 months

16-18 years - 4pm to 5:30pm

Name	MF	Age	Origin	In Canada for...
Ameena	F	16	Pakistan	4 years
Petrit	M	16	Kosovo	5 years
Lei	F	17	China	3 years
Iulia	F	16	Romania	4 years
Rachel	F	18	Congo	5 years
Taly	F	16	Israel	9 years
Thuan	M	18	Vietnam	9 years

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> Appendix 2: Discussion Guide

Canadian Heritage – Focus Groups Facilitation Guide March 23, 2004



OVERVIEW

- The focus group is divided into the following five parts:
 - Meet, greet, refreshments and registration (Pre-session)
 - Introduction and participant go round (0-7 minutes)
 - Primer discussion (8-40 minutes)
 - Real time web assessment (41-84 minutes)
 - Final thoughts and wrap up (85-90 minutes)

1. MEET, GREET, REFRESHMENTS AND REGISTRATION

- Includes name tags (for facilitators too)

> Appendix 2: Discussion Guide



2. INTRODUCTION AND PARTICIPANT GO ROUND (7 minutes)

- People introduce themselves and put a sticky note on their country of origin on the map.
- The workshop is conducted on behalf of Heritage Canada – a federal government department that exists to work 'towards a more cohesive and creative Canada.' The session is run by D-Code – a company that conducts research on young adults in Canada, looking at their behaviour, thoughts and attitudes.
- The purpose of the focus group is to look at websites run by Canadian Heritage to help new Canadians to learn more about Canadian culture. We would like your views about whether the websites do a good job and how they can be improved. Your views will be used to improve the design and content of these websites.

3. PRIMER DISCUSSION (32 minutes)

We will first talk about some of the ideas behind the websites before going on to look at them.

- Before coming to Canada did you find out information about Canada?
- What does the term "Canadian culture" mean to you?
- What kind of information have you found out about Canadian culture?
- Where, if anywhere, do you get information about Canadian culture?
- What information would you like the government to provide on Canadian culture?
- Do you feel that you need more information about Canadian culture?

[TO LOOK OUT FOR AND PROBE – BARRIERS BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS AND CLOSER CONNECTION TO CANADIAN CULTURE]

> Appendix 2: Discussion Guide

4. REAL TIME WEB ASSESSMENT (43 minutes)

- Participants will be seated in front of a computer logged into the “About Canada” section of the Government of Canada website (<http://canada.gc.ca/acanada/acPubHome.jsp?lang=eng>)
- We have five minutes to ask them the following:
 - What words would you use to describe the character of the website?
 - The usefulness of the information. (Would you add or remove anything?)
 - The presentation of the information. (Is there any way to improve the presentation?)
- Click on **NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA**. Look around. We have 15 minutes
 - DESIGN: How appealing is the overall design?
 - ACCESSIBILITY / NAVIGATION: How easy is it to find information? Ideas for improvement
 - CONTENT: How in-depth is the material presented? Is the content easy to understand? What information did you not see here but would like to?
 - IMPACT: Did you learn anything new about Canadian culture? Would you ever come back to this website? Would you recommend this website to a friend?
- Repeat questions for **CANADIAN SYMBOLS** (13 minutes)



> Appendix 2: Discussion Guide

- Go to <http://www.culturecanada.gc.ca> - a site that covers government programs and services on culture, heritage and recreation.
 - Explore the website and click on a few links, then go back to the home page.
- Now go to <http://callbase.nortak.com/culture> (username: culturegrp, password: test-eng1) PROTOTYPE SITE. LINKS ARE DEAD. DO NOT CLICK.
- We have 10 minutes to ask them about:
 - The character of the prototype site compared to the original
 - The appeal of the prototype site overall design compared to the original
 - The suitability of the information on the prototype.
 - Suggestions for improvement on the prototype.



5. FINAL THOUGHTS AND WRAP UP (5 minutes)

- Any final thoughts and comments?
- Thank group and issue payments.

> Contact us:

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