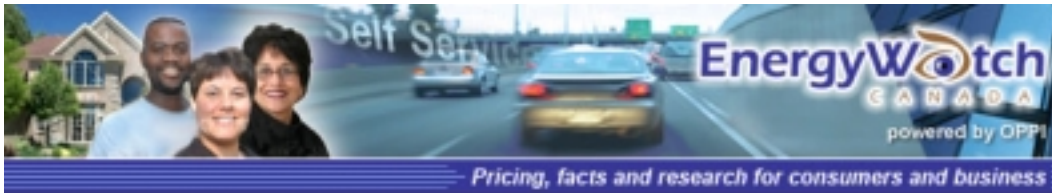

Final Report

A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS A NEW OPPI WEBSITE PROTOTYPE



*Prepared for
Natural Resources Canada*

Contract Number: #23533-060069/001/CY POR 463-06

May 29, 2006

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Background and Purpose

- The Office of Petroleum Price Information (OPPI) was created by the Government of Canada as the main source of contact for Canadian consumers and stakeholders seeking pricing information on petroleum products (e.g., gasoline, diesel, furnace oil).
- The OPPI exists primarily as a dedicated website (launched in October 2005) and allows for single-window access to consumer information and relevant government programs. The current OPPI website was qualitatively tested shortly after its launch, in November 2005.
- The main purpose of this study was to explore the ongoing needs and expectations of Canadians for petroleum price information, with regard to the OPPI website's redesign and revised content, as depicted in a new website prototype. More specifically, to determine:
 - 1) The overall reaction to the redesigned and revised content of the prototype site – positives, neutrals and negatives;
 - 2) The usefulness of the prototype site, i.e., its relevance;
 - 3) The usability of the prototype site – it's ease of use;
 - 4) The look and feel of the prototype site;
 - 5) Important expectation gaps;
 - 6) The concerns of potential users; and,
 - 7) What needs to be done to improve the prototype site.

Target Population

- The target population deemed most likely to use the site is the Canadian public. Specifically, this group includes people who (1) regularly drive a car, and/or use petroleum-based fuel to heat their home.

Methodology

- A total of 18 two-hour focus groups were conducted in nine locations across Canada from March 24-30, with 118 Canadian men and women aged 18 and over. Fourteen groups were conducted in English (Halifax, Moncton, Toronto, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Calgary and Vancouver), and four were in French (Montreal and Sherbrooke).
- Half the sessions were with "experienced" visitors, who had visited the revamped new OPPI prototype site before the group and completed four assigned tasks, and the other half were with "first-time" visitors, who were exposed to the prototype site for the first time during their session. All groups were comprised of a good mix of age, gender, educational and employment backgrounds. All had used the Internet at least one hour a day, and no one had participated in a focus group in the past year.
 - Each respondent received an incentive payment to thank them for their participation (\$75 for experienced visitors and \$50 for first-timers).
- Two client-approved discussion guides were developed for the experienced and first-time visitors to the site (appended to the report).
- All 18 sessions were held in fully-equipped focus group facilities, with a viewing room for observers, and audio-taping capacity.
 - In each facility, the moderator used one computer connected to the Internet (via high-speed), and a large screen projector to display the new OPPI prototype site so that participants (and observers) could see it.
- Note that focus groups, as with all other qualitative research, are best used as a learning tool to discover and understand the range of reactions to the site, and detect possible trends in attitudes. Findings are not quantifiable, and may or may not represent the target audience at large.

1.2 KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, most groups had a positive or neutral tone, but still provided critical feedback. The most positive reaction overall was in Saskatoon. In a similar fashion, the groups tending to have a more negative tone also provided positive feedback. Thus, despite any anti-government bias or negative feelings on the gas price issue, most participants were able to offer a balanced perspective.
 - In the Atlantic and Quebec locations, first-timers tended to be more negative than experienced participants, based more on a general cynicism towards the government than to the site itself.
- Apart from tone, findings were relatively consistent between experienced and first-time groups, and across locations and language. Therefore, results for all 18 groups have been combined, and differences pointed out when relevant.

1.2.1 SITE RELEVANCE: THE MAJOR CONCERN

- Participants in all groups indicated that the personal relevance and usefulness of the site was a major concern.
- This feedback ties into the perceived purpose of the site, and the perceived contradiction between the site's name, EnergyWatch¹, and the information currently provided and currently missing.
 - Is the site about petroleum products or the broader energy spectrum? Participants told us they were much more interested in the latter.
 - Is the site mainly going to provide understanding and information about petroleum product prices? If so, people told us (a) they would not need to refer to it more than once, unless their children were doing research projects, and (b) the name EnergyWatch was misleading and unsuitable.
 - Is the site mainly about tracking petroleum product prices, or other energy prices? If only the former, people said the site would only be useful if this information was updated regularly and often. Even then, many said they could follow gas price changes through other sources, mainly the media, and by keeping a watchful eye when driving around their location.

¹ *Since the focus group testing, OPPI has abandoned the name “energywatch” for its web site.*

1.2.2 PERCEIVED PURPOSE

- Most participants understood that the main purpose of the site was to "educate" or "provide information" to Canadians about energy.
- Most participants also understood that the government launched the site to provide information to concerned Canadians and answer questions about increasing fuel prices, especially for gasoline. Put in a positive way, participants thought that the government wanted to:
 - Dampen consumer uproar by giving consumers a place to get information on rising gas prices;
 - Heighten public awareness and change behaviours in energy consumption;
 - Educate the consumer;
 - Provide pricing facts and research for consumers and businesses;
 - Adopt a policy of openness; and,
 - Reduce the number of calls [and cost] to government call centres.
- However, the more skeptical in various groups and locations, said the government wanted to:
 - Justify their position on this issue;
 - Give the appearance of doing something; or,
 - Create an image of government concern, and that they are acting in a responsible way.

1.2.3 REACTION TO THE INITIATIVE

- Similar to findings in the previous qualitative testing of the current OPPI website, and despite concerns about relevance and usefulness, most participants approved of the initiative, including some who were skeptical and critical, mainly because they saw it as the government's responsibility to provide information to its citizens.
- However, in the four Quebec groups, most participants disapproved, mainly because of the perceived low usefulness of the site. The views of the naysayers in Quebec mirrored that of others in various groups and locations.

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- Many were somewhat confused about the site's purpose, who it is aimed at and why the GoC had created it. This lack of clarity was reflected in the contradictory name of the site, EnergyWatch, and the information currently available, which focused mainly on petroleum products, but also had some renewable/alternative energy information.
 - People in various locations felt the site was a bit of a smoke-screen, because both the government and consumers were powerless to effect meaningful change with regard to prices. A typical comment:
 - *There is really nothing the government can do about it.*
 - Francophones felt that if the site only gave information on petroleum product prices, it would not be useful to them, since they felt well-enough informed by the general media. Some people in various English groups and locations agreed.
 - However, most people thought that while the site provided interesting information, once they knew it, there would be little need to keep returning, or to bookmark it.
 - In addition, most indicated they would probably not recommend the OPPI site as is, but if they did, it would mainly be as a site that provides information to help understand rising fuel costs.

1.2.4 REACTION TO SITE CONTENT

- Overall, most participants initially reacted in a favourable way to the OPPI homepage, which looked to them like a typical GoC site.
- Despite the overall positive response, participants in various locations also thought the homepage was cluttered, with too much text in the middle, and not enough graphics or visual icons.
 - Participants generally applied this same critique to the whole OPPI prototype site, especially the second and third-level pages, which they explored by clicking on the left menu, the "more" in the paragraphs in the centre of the homepage, or the icons on the right-hand side.
- Thus, once participants began to use the site, and search for information, they encountered some difficulty, mainly related to the lack of certain content on the site and the way most information was presented.

1.2.5 USEFULNESS OF THE SITE

- Most participants indicated that the prototype site would be useful to them only if four main concerns regarding content coverage were addressed. The first three involve the inclusion or more thorough coverage of certain topics, while the fourth requires a less superficial and less biased type of analysis.
 - The heating fuel used in their area. For example, there was nothing on: electricity, natural gas, or even coal, used to heat homes respectively in Atlantic Canada, or Lethbridge.
 - Managing Your Energy Costs, a left-menu item, was a disappointing section for most participants, because they expected to be able to click on "at home," "at work," or "on the road," and could not. They wanted to see tips and ways to save money and/or energy for each of these locations in one spot, which was not the case.
 - Renewable Energy, or "alternative" energy, another left-menu item, also created considerable disappointment because it lacked so much detail and content. Participants wanted information about (a) vehicles that use alternative fuels, (b) how to find alternative energy sources, e.g., solar, including information on companies in their area that supply and install such alternatives, (c) detailed information on energy efficiency, related to home repairs or inspection, incentives and rebates, and auto or appliance purchase, (d) environmental issues and impacts related to energy sources, (e) global perspectives, i.e., how world events affect the supply of crude oil, and even (f) the numerous practical uses of petroleum products.
 - The real unbiased issues related to oil companies and what the GoC can do was missing from the OPPI site, according to participants in various groups and locations, especially Quebec. This notion was fuelled considerably by what these participants called the "urban legend" misinformation on weekend gas price increases (featured in the centre of the homepage), because it directly countered people's own personal experience.
- In addition, some participants pointed out that if you didn't own a car or a home, i.e., if you were an apartment renter, the site had no relevance for you. Unless you were a student, or were the parents of a student, who needed to do research.

1.2.6 THE NEED FOR QUICKER ACCESS

- Most participants felt that too much of the information on the prototype site was presented in a hard-to-read style and format. Once past the homepage, they found pages and paragraphs of densely packed text, and/or tables that were difficult to decipher at a glance. Most felt that the way the information was presented required concentration, effort, and more time and interest than they were willing to devote to the topic.

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- In this regard, participants wanted and hoped for four main changes to the prototype site:
 - 1) Information at-a-glance, a simple visual presentation, using colourful charts and graphs wherever possible. Certainly to replace pages of text, or complex tables.
 - 2) Information streamlined to make it personally relevant to the user. For example, have the homepage "automatically default to the user's location."
 - 3) Information accessible via an interactive format, so users could type in their personal information or requirements and find that particular information only. For example, provide a search box for the OPPI site featured prominently on the homepage.
 - 4) Information only one or two clicks away, instead of the numerous links most had to wade through to find information they were especially keen to have (i.e., on cost savings or energy efficient homes or cars).

1.3 IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Overall, participants felt the OPPI prototype site needed improvement in terms of organization, readability, and presentation of information, and, like the original version launched in the fall of 2005, it did not go far enough to be useful in a practical way to consumers.
- Suggested ways to improve the OPPI prototype were fairly consistent across all 18 groups, because participants wanted the site to be more useful and personally relevant to them.
- Overall, participants suggested over 60 improvements to the OPPI prototype website.

Make the site name and content consistent

- 1) If the site is to focus on fuel-related energy, then the name should reflect that, and all types of energy need to be included in similar depth and breadth. If the site is about prices, then include price information for all types of energy, including renewable energy.

Make the site much more interactive

- 2) Provide a search box for the site placed prominently on the homepage, so people can enter a specific word, topic or even a question.
- 3) Create an automatic default to the visitor's province, so that the homepage and all information subsequently relates to the visitor's province.

Provide quicker at-a-glance access to information

- 4) Convert text-heavy pages into bullet format, and include graphs, pictures, charts, or visuals whenever possible, preferably in an interactive format, to allow users to click on a particular section of the chart or graph, and get more detailed information.
- 5) Organize the content so it is more intuitive, and can be accessed quickly, without having to search through pages and links and layers.
- 6) Reduce the number of links required to access the pertinent information on the OPPI site, so that people are only 2 or 3 clicks away. If they want more detailed information, have a link for "More Details" or something similar.
- 7) Table headings, charts, graphs, etc., should always indicate the units of measure (e.g., \$ per litre, %, etc.)

Revamp the homepage

- 8) Simplify the homepage so it looks and feels much less text-heavy and "cluttered."
- 9) Feature more icons, graphs and charts, with any money-saving or energy-saving tips close to the top of the page.
- 10) Include a condensed version of "About Us," either in the centre or on the left menu.
- 11) Include a link to a site map.
- 12) Delete the "What you asked us" section, and integrate the questions with the FAQ or with the content of left menu items.
- 13) Change the French heading for News from "Les Nouvelles" to "Les Actualités."
- 14) Provide the meaning of all acronyms, similar to the way the Glossary works.
- 15) Delete the Fuel Price Calculator.
- 16) On the header, remove the phrase "powered by OPPI," and spell out the OPPI name in full.

Revamp the left menu

- 17) Rename some of the headings, to more accurately reflect the content, especially the first three, which include the word "energy."
- 18) Change the French heading for Understanding Energy Prices/Comprenez les prix de l'énergie. Quebec participants found the term "Comprenez" somewhat condescending.

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- 19) Reorganize some of the content under the various headings. For example, put all information related to prices or costs (e.g., taxes, fact sheets, reports and analysis) under Energy Prices.
 - 20) Find a way to let users know what the heading contains, without having to click or move off the page.
 - 21) Expand the content of two very important left menu sections:
 - Managing Your Energy Costs
 - Renewable Energy

Include additional information

- 22) Comparison of Canadian vs. international prices, i.e., to Europe and the USA.
- 23) Information related to energy efficiency, environmental concerns.
- 24) Different opinions and views from identified (named) third party industry experts, on various topics, included with relevant content, i.e., prices, renewable energy, etc.
- 25) Information on energy savings and efficiency related to renters.
- 26) Add a function so that users can print only the text, or a particular page from the map, what one participant referred to as “print-friendly pages.”

Understanding Energy Prices second page

- 27) Redesign the second page to include graphs and charts.
- 28) Use bite-size bits of information in bullet-format, so that it is easier to read at-a-glance.

Energy Prices second page

- 29) Redesign the second page to include interactive graphs and/or charts (pie-charts), which people can click on to get more detailed information about a particular locale and/or a particular petroleum product.
- 30) Make it interactive, with a window so visitors can type in their city and fuel of interest and be linked to the relevant charts and graphs.

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- 31) Include information about:
 - Taxes
 - Collusion between oil companies.
 - Fair competition and what the market will bear.
 - The role of the GoC, and why they don't intervene regarding price increases.
 - 32) Include the costs of other fuels, such as natural gas, electricity, coal and some of the alternative energies for cars and homes.
 - 33) Put the list of federal, provincial and other related links under one link (or icon) called Related Links, to make it available for those who are interested and out of the way for those who are not.

The Gas Price Table on Energy Prices third level page

- 34) Have the header of the table remain in place, so users can scroll down without having to remember column headings.
- 35) Use different colours or shading to differentiate the different rows and/or locales, and different columns.
- 36) Ensure that the units of measure are mentioned in each column heading.
- 37) Specify the tax amount, not the cost without taxes.
- 38) Make the table more interactive, so that if a location is clicked on, former prices can be seen.
- 39) For those who are interested, show how the average price is derived for each city, i.e., if it is based on the average for 75 stations. A few suggested mentioning the highs and lows, if the city was clicked on.

Managing Your Energy Costs second page

- 40) Make it possible to click on options such as “at home”, “at work”, and “on the road.”
- 41) Provide a comparative table, graph or chart on the cost of different heating sources presented in an easily accessible format.
- 42) Include provincial incentives and rebates.
- 43) Separate the cost-saving information for businesses and consumers so there are two distinct links to access each category. Otherwise, there's too much information to pore through.

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- 44) Make the One-Tonne Challenge site (or something related to Kyoto) a direct link from the OPPI homepage.

Renewable Energy second page

- 45) Make it possible to click on various options, or type them in.
- 46) Provide practical advice and sources of information (such as manufacturers of solar panels in their area, costs, savings realized, etc.)
- 47) Provide direct links to important cost-savings and alternative or renewable energy information, for example:
- Rebates and Incentives
 - Vehicles that use alternative fuels, or
 - Other information pertinent to the homeowner or car driver.
- 48) Include various topics, such as:
- Government plans regarding alternative energy
 - Information about Canada's usage
 - Research and scientific efforts
 - The history of the various alternative energies
 - The new fuel-efficient technologies.
- 49) Some in Quebec wanted the left menu to offer a scrolling sub-menu on the different renewable energies.
- 50) A few wanted the same "at home," "at work," and "on the road" headings as Managing Your Energy Costs.

FAQ second page

- 51) Use a question format for the FAQ, rather than statements or headings.
- 52) Some thought that the item "About this site" did not belong in a question and answer section.
- 53) Address the question, 'Why does the price of fuel fluctuate in harmony with all the others?'

Provincial Gas Prices

- 54) Enlarge the map so it is more noticeable.
- 55) Include an average price for the province and an option to view prices across the whole country.
- 56) Include a "zoom in" capacity so users could enlarge any particular area (like a Google map) to get more specific information.

Gasoline Price History

- 57) Enable the user to enter a specific time-frame, and/or dates, or to click on a specific year and be linked to specific information about that year, such as the cause of price fluctuations.
- 58) Include an option to click on an icon or part of the graph to get an explanation for peaks and troughs.

Calculate Your Commute

- 59) Provide a link to tips or hints for saving money, and/or fuel beside each specific calculation.

Fuel Consumption Calculator

- 60) Present the information in a simple, step-by-step bullet format.

Additional calculator ideas

- 61) Add a standard distance calculator, to calculate fuel consumption based on standard distances, say, between Lethbridge and Calgary, or Lethbridge and Winnipeg. By typing in the place of origin and destination (city/town names) and the price of gasoline, the calculator would compute the actual distance in kilometres by average fuel consumption and provide the cost of travel.
- 62) Add a calculator to compare different types of fuel (i.e., propane, hybrid, diesel, or high, low and medium grades of fuel), which would provide useful information when purchasing a car.
- 63) Add a trip-planning calculator, to allow someone to plan a trip, and have gas prices listed along the route.

1.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- The following five recurrent themes emerged from both the previous and current research on how to improve the OPPI web presence.
 - 1) Purpose and positioning
 - The general public needs the purpose of the site stated clearly. Lack of a clear and focused positioning was one of the main weaknesses of the prototype tested.
 - During site-building transition stages, it would be helpful to notify users that more information is planned for key topics of interest, such as ways to save money and energy.
 - 2) Reader-friendliness
 - The content is currently too text-heavy. Important information is hard to locate and to grasp at-a-glance.
 - If information can be presented in a visual way, then that should be the first option or first exposure, which users can then consider to access the information in greater detail.
 - 3) User-friendliness
 - The content on the site needs to be presented and organized in a more intuitive fashion, or be accessible in simple-to-use intuitive ways.
 - Information of a similar nature needs to be regrouped under a common overarching heading (ex. Energy prices, taxes, understanding price fluctuations etc.). Important information should not be buried in sub-level pages.
 - Information aimed at different audiences (ex. Consumers vs. businesses, home vs. cars) should not be mixed.
 - 4) Interactivity
 - Interactivity not only involves visitors more intently, and provides quicker access to more personally relevant information, it is also more fun. Participants described many different ways the site could be more interactive, including:
 - The ability to search the OPPI site for specific information
 - The automatic default to the user's province, or any province of the user's choice

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- Direct access to consumer-related programs from the OPPI homepage
 - The ability to click on elements of a table, pie chart or graph, to find more detailed or relevant information
 - A range of different calculators to help visitors plan, save money and/or energy, and make choices.

5) Informational balance

- Participants were generally pleased that information to help them understand the issues was available. But understanding is not enough to motivate a return to the site. That requires a better balance between general information and helpful information. Participants said they would be much more likely to return to the OPPI site if information to help them make informed choices became available, such as:
 - Alternative fuels for cars
 - Energy efficiency tips
 - Renewable energy for homes
 - Incentives and rebates from all levels of government, etc.

1. SYNTHÈSE DES RÉSULTATS

1.1 CONTEXTE, OBJECTIF ET MÉTHODOLOGIE

Contexte et objectif

- Le Bureau d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers (BIPPP) a été créé par le Gouvernement du Canada pour être le principal point d'accès des consommateurs canadiens et autres parties prenantes qui recherchent de l'information sur le prix des produits pétroliers (tels que, essence, diesel, mazout domestique).
- En octobre 2005, le BIPPP lançait un site Web, sorte de guichet unique dédié à l'information destinée aux consommateurs ainsi qu'à l'information sur des programmes gouvernementaux pertinents au domaine. Peu de temps après son lancement, en novembre 2005, le site Web du BIPPP avait fait l'objet d'un test qualitatif.
- L'objectif de cette étude était d'explorer les besoins et attentes des Canadiens en ce qui a trait à l'information sur les prix pétroliers, en relation avec des modifications apportées au contenu et à l'organisation du site actuel, et faisant l'objet d'un nouveau prototype de site. Plus spécifiquement, cette étude visait à déterminer:
 - 1) Les réactions générales au contenu révisé tel qu'illustré dans ce nouveau prototype de site : positives, neutres et négatives;
 - 2) L'utilité du prototype, c'est-à-dire sa pertinence;
 - 3) La facilité d'utilisation du prototype;
 - 4) L'aspect et la convivialité du prototype;
 - 5) Les écarts par rapport aux principales attentes;
 - 6) Les préoccupations des utilisateurs potentiels; et,
 - 7) Ce qui doit être fait pour améliorer le prototype de site.

Population ciblée

- Le groupe cible était les citoyens canadiens les plus susceptibles d'utiliser le site. Notamment, des gens qui (1) conduisent régulièrement une voiture, et/ou utilisent une source d'énergie à base de pétrole pour le chauffage de leur résidence.

Méthodologie

- Au total, 18 groupes de discussion d'une durée de deux heures chacun ont eu lieu dans neuf villes canadiennes, entre les 24 et 30 mars, avec 118 hommes et femmes âgés de 18 ans et plus. Quatorze groupes ont été réalisés en anglais (Halifax, Moncton, Toronto, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Calgary et Vancouver) et quatre en français (Montréal et Sherbrooke).
- La moitié des groupes ont été réalisés avec des « visiteurs expérimentés », qui avaient déjà visité le nouveau prototype du BIPPP avant la séance et devaient exécuter quatre tâches particulières. L'autre moitié des groupes ont été tenus avec des gens qui en étaient à leur toute « première visite », et qui étaient donc exposés au prototype de site pour la première fois lors de leur séance. Tous les groupes avaient une composition bien diversifiée selon l'âge, le sexe, le niveau de scolarité et le type d'emploi. Tous les participants utilisaient Internet au moins une heure par jour et aucun d'entre eux ne devait avoir participé à un groupe de discussion dans la dernière année.
 - Chaque répondant a reçu un montant incitatif en remerciement pour sa participation (75 \$ pour les visiteurs expérimentés et 50 \$ pour les premiers visiteurs).
- Deux guides de discussion ont été élaborés et approuvés par le client; l'un pour les visiteurs expérimentés et l'autre pour ceux qui en étaient à leur première visite du site (voir en annexe).
- Les 18 groupes de discussion ont été tenus dans des salles spécialement aménagées avec une salle pour les observateurs et la possibilité de faire un enregistrement audio.
 - Dans chacune des salles, l'animateur a utilisé un ordinateur branché à Internet haute vitesse et un projecteur permettant d'afficher sur un grand écran le prototype de site BIPPP aux participants et aux observateurs.
- Il est bon de rappeler que les groupes de discussion, comme toute autre technique de recherche qualitative, constituent une excellente méthode pour découvrir et comprendre un large éventail de réactions au site, et déceler des tendances dans les attitudes. Par contre, les résultats ne sont pas quantifiables et peuvent ou non être représentatifs de la population cible dans son ensemble.

1.2 PRINCIPAUX RÉSULTATS

- Dans l'ensemble, la majorité des groupes ont réagi de manière positive ou neutre, mais ont néanmoins formulé certaines critiques. Parmi toutes les villes, c'est à Saskatoon que les réactions ont été les plus positives. Par ailleurs, même les groupes qui ont eu tendance à être les plus négatifs ont également eu des réactions positives. Aussi, malgré un certain parti pris anti-gouvernement ou des sentiments négatifs au sujet du prix de l'essence, la plupart des participants ont eu des propos modérés.
 - Dans les villes du Québec et de la région Atlantique, les participants à leur première visite ont eu tendance à réagir plus négativement que les visiteurs expérimentés, et ce davantage à cause du cynisme assez répandu à l'égard du gouvernement que du site même.
- Mises à part certaines nuances, les résultats ont été relativement homogènes entre les groupes de visiteurs expérimentés et ceux qui en étaient à leur première visite, et ce dans toutes les villes, quelle que soit la communauté linguistique. Par conséquent, tous les résultats issus des 18 groupes de discussion ont été analysés ensemble dans ce rapport, bien qu'il soit fait mention de différences lorsque cela a été le cas.

1.2.1 PERTINENCE DU SITE : LA PRINCIPALE PREOCCUPATION

- Dans tous les groupes, les participants ont mentionné que la pertinence et l'utilité étaient leur principale préoccupation à propos du site.
- Cette préoccupation provient surtout de la dissonance perçue entre l'objectif perçu du site et son nom « Observatoire énergétique² », ainsi que de l'information actuellement fournie et celle qui manque :
 - S'agit-il d'un site sur les produits pétroliers ou plus largement sur l'énergie? Les participants nous ont dit être beaucoup plus intéressés par un site portant sur l'énergie en général.
 - Ce site a-t-il pour but premier de fournir des renseignements et de l'information pour mieux comprendre les prix des produits pétroliers? Si c'est le cas, les gens nous ont dit (a) qu'ils ne ressentiraient pas le besoin de le consulter plus d'une fois, à moins que les enfants aient des recherches à faire, et (b) le nom « Observatoire énergétique » portait à confusion et ne convenait pas à ce but.

² Depuis la tenue des groupes de discussion, le BIPPP a rejeté le nom « Observatoire énergétique », pour son site Web.

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- Ce site a-t-il pour but premier de suivre l'évolution des prix des produits pétroliers ou ceux d'autres types d'énergie? Si c'est seulement pour les produits pétroliers, les gens ont dit que le site serait utile à condition que l'information soit mise à jour régulièrement et souvent. Même dans ce cas, plusieurs ont affirmé qu'ils pouvaient déjà suivre les changements du prix de l'essence à l'aide d'autres sources, principalement les médias, ou en gardant l'œil ouvert lorsqu'ils circulaient dans leur localité.

1.2.2 OBJECTIF PERÇU

- Ce que la majorité des participants ont compris du but premier de ce site était qu'il vise à fournir de l'information ou à « éduquer » les Canadiens au sujet de l'énergie.
- La majorité des participants ont également présumé que le gouvernement a lancé ce site pour informer des Canadiens préoccupés et pour répondre aux questions sur les hausses des prix du carburant, particulièrement l'essence. Formulé de façon positive, les participants pensaient que le gouvernement voulait:
 - Apaiser la grogne des consommateurs en leur procurant un endroit où ils peuvent avoir de l'information sur la hausse des prix de l'essence;
 - Conscientiser davantage la population et modifier les comportements de consommation d'énergie;
 - Éduquer le consommateur;
 - Fournir aux consommateurs et aux entreprises des faits et des recherches sur les prix;
 - Faire preuve de transparence; et,
 - Réduire le nombre d'appels (et les coûts) aux centres d'appel du gouvernement.
- Toutefois, dans différents groupes et villes il y a eu des participants plus sceptiques qui pensaient que le gouvernement voulait :
 - Justifier sa position sur ce sujet;
 - Donner l'impression de faire quelque chose; ou,
 - Projeter l'image d'un gouvernement préoccupé, qui se conduit de manière responsable.

1.2.3 RÉACTION À L'INITIATIVE

- Tout comme cela avait été le cas lors du premier test qualitatif du site du BIPPP et malgré les préoccupations sur la pertinence et l'utilité, la plupart des participants ont approuvé l'initiative, même les plus sceptiques et négatifs, parce qu'ils considéraient que le gouvernement doit informer ses citoyens.
- Cependant, dans les quatre groupes du Québec, la majorité des participants ont désapprouvé cette initiative, surtout parce qu'ils percevaient que le site n'était pas assez utile. D'autres participants dans certains groupes et villes ont partagé ce point de vue.
 - Plusieurs étaient quelque peu confus quant au but du site, à qui il s'adresse et pourquoi le gouvernement l'a créé. Ce manque de clarté se reflétait dans le nom contradictoire du site, Observatoire énergétique, et dans l'information disponible, qui mettait principalement l'accent sur les produits pétroliers, mais un peu aussi sur les énergies renouvelables.
 - Des participants de différentes villes ont eu le sentiment que ce site était un peu de la poudre aux yeux, car tant le gouvernement que les consommateurs, tous deux sont impuissants à changer les prix, un tant soit peu. Un commentaire typique :
 - *Il n'y a strictement rien que le gouvernement puisse faire à ce sujet.*
 - Les francophones avaient le sentiment que ce site ne leur serait d'aucune utilité s'il offrait seulement des informations sur les prix des produits pétroliers, compte tenu qu'ils s'estimaient déjà assez bien informés par les grands médias. Dans divers groupes anglophones et villes, d'autres participants partageaient ce sentiment.
- Par ailleurs, la plupart des participants pensaient que même si le site fournissait de l'information intéressante, ils ne voyaient pas de raisons d'y retourner ou de l'inscrire dans leurs favoris après l'avoir consulté une fois.
- De plus, la majorité des participants ont fait part qu'ils ne recommanderaient probablement pas le site BIPPP tel qu'il est, mais s'ils le faisaient, ce serait surtout comme site dont le contenu aide à comprendre la hausse des prix du carburant.

1.2.4 RÉACTION AU CONTENU DU SITE

- Globalement, la majorité des participants ont d'abord réagi positivement à la page d'accueil du BIPPP, qui leur est apparue typique de celle d'un site du Gouvernement du Canada.
- Malgré ces réactions générales positives, les participants de différentes villes considéraient aussi que la page d'accueil était trop chargée, contenait beaucoup trop de texte au centre et pas suffisamment d'éléments visuels ou graphiques.

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- Les participants ont généralement eu la même critique à l'égard de l'ensemble du prototype du site BIPPP, particulièrement pour les pages de deuxième et troisième niveaux, qu'ils ont explorées en cliquant sur le menu de gauche, ou sur « pour plus d'information » dans les paragraphes au centre de la page d'accueil, ou encore sur les icônes du menu de droite.
 - Dès que les participants commençaient à explorer le site et à chercher de l'information, ils rencontraient des difficultés surtout à cause de l'absence sur le site de certains contenus et de la façon dont la plupart des informations étaient présentées.

1.2.5 UTILITÉ DU SITE

- Plusieurs participants ont souligné que le prototype de site pourrait leur être utile à condition que quatre aspects majeurs dans son contenu soient considérés. Les trois premiers ont trait à l'inclusion ou au traitement plus en profondeur de certains sujets, alors que le quatrième fait référence à une analyse moins superficielle et moins biaisée.
 - Le carburant pour le chauffage utilisé dans leur région. Par exemple, il n'y avait rien sur l'électricité, le gaz naturel ou même le charbon, utilisés pour chauffer les maisons en région Atlantique, ou à Lethbridge.
 - « Gérez vos coûts énergétiques ». Cette rubrique du menu de gauche a déçu la plupart des participants parce qu'ils pensaient pouvoir cliquer sur les mots « à la maison », « au travail » ou « sur la route » et ne le pouvaient pas. Ils auraient voulu avoir des trucs et des conseils réunis au même endroit afin d'économiser de l'argent et/ou de l'énergie pour chacune de ces situations, mais ce n'était pas le cas.
 - « Les énergies renouvelables », ou énergie « de remplacement ». Cette autre rubrique du menu de gauche a aussi généré une grande déception parce qu'elle contenait trop peu de renseignements. Les participants auraient voulu de l'information concernant (a) les véhicules qui utilisent des carburants de remplacement, (b) les énergies alternatives, par exemple le solaire, incluant l'information sur les fournisseurs et ceux qui assurent l'installation de ces solutions de remplacement dans leur région, (c) l'efficacité énergétique liée à l'inspection ou à la rénovation des maisons, aux mesures incitatives et rabais, à l'achat d'une voiture ou d'électroménagers, (d) les problèmes et impacts environnementaux reliés aux sources d'énergie, (e) les perspectives à l'échelle mondiale, c'est-à-dire comment les événements affectent l'offre de pétrole brut, et également (f) les nombreuses applications des produits pétroliers.
 - Les participants de divers groupes et villes, spécialement au Québec, ont déploré qu'il n'y avait rien d'objectif sur le site du BIPPP concernant les « vrais » enjeux liés aux pétrolières et le rôle du Gouvernement du Canada à cet égard. Ce point de vue a beaucoup été alimenté par ce que les participants appelaient la « légende urbaine » de désinformation sur la hausse des prix de l'essence durant les fins de semaine (information en plein centre de la page d'accueil), qui allait totalement à l'encontre de leur expérience personnelle.

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- Enfin, quelques participants ont fait remarqué que si vous ne possédiez pas une voiture ou une maison, c'est-à-dire si vous étiez seulement locataire d'un appartement, le site n'avait aucune pertinence pour vous. « À moins que vous soyez étudiant ou les parents d'un étudiant, qui a besoin de faire une recherche? », ont-ils dit.

1.2.6 BESOIN D'UN ACCÈS PLUS RAPIDE

- La majorité des participants considéraient que le site présentait beaucoup trop d'informations dans un style et un format difficiles à lire. Au-delà de la page d'accueil les répondants étaient confrontés à des pages et des paragraphes à haute densité de texte et/ou des tableaux difficiles à déchiffrer au premier coup d'œil. La plupart étaient d'avis que la façon dont l'information était présentée nécessitait concentration et effort, et finalement, plus de temps et d'intérêt que ce qu'ils étaient prêts à consacrer au sujet.
- À cet égard, les participants souhaitaient que quatre grands changements soient apportés au prototype de site :
 - 1) Rendre l'information plus accessible au premier coup d'œil, avec une présentation visuelle simple utilisant des tableaux et graphiques en couleurs partout où c'est possible. Bien sûr, remplacer les pages trop denses en texte ou les tableaux complexes.
 - 2) Personnaliser l'information afin de la rendre plus pertinente à l'utilisateur. Par exemple, avoir une page d'accueil personnalisée « par défaut » selon la ville de l'utilisateur.
 - 3) Rendre l'information accessible sous forme interactive de sorte que les utilisateurs puissent entrer leurs requêtes personnelles et ne recevoir que l'information spécifique à leur demande. Par exemple, mettre une fenêtre de recherche bien en évidence sur la page d'accueil du site du BIPPP.
 - 4) Rendre l'information pertinente accessible plus rapidement, à portée d'un ou deux « clics », au lieu des multiples chemins par lesquels la plupart des participants ont du passer pour trouver l'information qui les intéressait (c'est-à-dire celle sur les économies d'argent ou l'efficacité énergétique des maisons ou des voitures).

1.3 AMÉLIORATIONS SUGGÉRÉES PAR LES PARTICIPANTS

- Globalement, les participants étaient d'avis que le prototype de site du BIPPP avait besoin d'améliorations sur le plan de l'organisation, de la lisibilité et de la présentation de l'information et, tout comme ce fut le cas pour la première version lancée à l'automne 2005, que l'information sur le site n'était pas assez utile ou pratique pour les consommateurs car elle n'allait pas assez loin.

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- Les suggestions pour améliorer le prototype du site BIPPP ont été relativement homogènes à travers les 18 groupes, les participants désirant que le site soit plus utile et pertinent pour eux.
 - Dans l'ensemble, les participants ont suggéré plus de 60 améliorations à apporter au prototype de site Web du BIPPP.

Harmoniser le nom du site avec son contenu

- 1) Si le site met l'accent sur les carburants, alors son nom doit le refléter et tous les types de carburants doivent être couverts de manière égale. Si le site porte sur les prix, alors on doit retrouver l'information sur les prix pour toutes les sources d'énergie, incluant les énergies renouvelables.

Rendre le site beaucoup plus interactif

- 2) Offrir une fenêtre de recherche sur le site, bien en évidence sur la page d'accueil, de façon à ce qu'on puisse entrer un mot particulier, un sujet ou même une question.
- 3) Que la province du visiteur soit automatiquement l'option « par défaut » de sorte que la page d'accueil et toute information subséquente soient personnalisées à la province de l'utilisateur.

Fournir un accès plus rapide et « au premier coup d'œil » à l'information

- 4) Convertir les pages à haute densité de texte en un format par points importants et inclure à chaque fois que c'est possible des graphiques, images, tableaux ou tout élément visuel, tout en préférant la forme interactive de manière à ce que les utilisateurs puissent cliquer sur une section spécifique d'un tableau ou d'un graphique pour avoir plus de détails.
- 5) Organiser le contenu de façon plus intuitive pour qu'on y ait accès plus rapidement, sans avoir à fouiller au travers des pages, des liens et des niveaux.
- 6) Réduire le nombre de liens qui mènent à l'information pertinente sur le site du BIPPP, de sorte que les gens puissent toujours y accéder en deux ou trois « clics ». S'ils désirent en savoir davantage, fournir un lien « pour plus de détails ».
- 7) Les titres des tableaux, les figures, les graphiques, etc. devraient toujours préciser les unités de mesure (par exemple, \$ par litre, %, etc.).

Réorganiser la page d'accueil

- 8) Simplifier la page d'accueil pour qu'elle paraisse beaucoup moins dense en texte.
- 9) Inclure davantage d'icônes, de graphiques et de tableaux, avec des conseils ou trucs tout en haut de la page pour économiser de l'argent/de l'énergie.

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- 10) Présenter une version abrégée de « À propos du Bureau », soit au centre de la page, soit dans le menu de gauche.
 - 11) Intégrer un lien vers la carte du site.
 - 12) Supprimer la section « Les questions que vous nous avez posées » et les intégrer sous une rubrique « Questions fréquemment posées » ou encore au contenu des rubriques du menu de gauche.
 - 13) Modifier le titre français « Les nouvelles » pour « Les actualités ».
 - 14) Donner la signification de tous les acronymes dans un outil semblable au Glossaire.
 - 15) Supprimer le calculateur du prix du carburant.
 - 16) Dans l'en-tête, enlever la phrase « propulsé par le BIPPP » et inscrire le nom complet du BIPPP.

Réorganiser le menu de gauche

- 17) Renommer certaines rubriques de façon à refléter davantage leur contenu, particulièrement les trois premières qui comprennent toutes le mot « énergie ».
- 18) Changer le titre français de la rubrique « Comprenez les prix de l'énergie ». Les participants du Québec ont trouvé un peu condescendant le mot « Comprenez ».
- 19) Réorganiser une partie du contenu de certaines rubriques. Par exemple, regrouper toute l'information relative aux prix ou aux coûts (ex. taxes, fiches d'information, rapports et analyses) sous « Prix de l'énergie ».
- 20) Trouver une façon de donner aux utilisateurs un aperçu de ce que contient la rubrique sans qu'ils aient à cliquer ou à aller voir sur la page.
- 21) Développer le contenu de deux rubriques très importantes du menu de gauche :
 - Gérez vos coûts énergétiques
 - Les énergies renouvelables

Intégrer de l'information supplémentaire

- 22) Comparaison entre les prix canadiens et internationaux, c'est-à-dire européens et américains.
- 23) De l'information sur l'efficacité énergétique et les questions environnementales.

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- 24) Différents points de vue et opinions sur divers sujets, provenant de tierces parties bien identifiées comme des experts de l'industrie, avec des contenus pertinents tels les prix, les énergies renouvelables, etc.
 - 25) De l'information sur les économies d'énergie et l'efficacité énergétique pour les locataires d'appartement.
 - 26) Ajouter une nouvelle fonction pour que les utilisateurs puissent imprimer seulement le texte, ou la page particulière d'une carte, ce qu'un des participants mentionnait « imprimer cette page de façon conviviale ».

Seconde page de « Comprenez les prix de l'énergie »

- 27) Revoir la seconde page en incluant des tableaux et des graphiques.
- 28) Organiser l'information sous forme de courts paragraphes pour que ce soit plus facile à lire en un coup d'œil.

Seconde page de « Prix de l'énergie »

- 29) Revoir la seconde page en incluant des tableaux et/ou graphiques sur lesquels les gens peuvent cliquer et avoir plus d'information sur une région en particulier et/ou un produit pétrolier spécifique.
- 30) La rendre plus interactive avec une fenêtre dans laquelle les visiteurs peuvent entrer leur ville et le type de carburant qui les intéressent et être dirigés vers les graphiques et tableaux pertinents.
- 31) Ajouter de l'information sur :
 - Les taxes
 - La collusion entre les entreprises pétrolières.
 - Une saine concurrence et les rendements du marché.
 - Le rôle du Gouvernement du Canada et les raisons pourquoi il n'intervient pas dans la hausse des prix.
- 32) Inclure les coûts des autres carburants, tels le gaz naturel, l'électricité, le charbon et certaines énergies de remplacement pour les maisons et les voitures.
- 33) Rassembler la liste des liens fédéraux, provinciaux et autres liens connexes sous une même rubrique appelée « Autres liens » pour qu'ils soient accessibles à ceux qui sont intéressés sans nuire à ceux qui ne le sont pas.

« Prix de l'énergie » : Tableau sur les prix de l'essence à la troisième page

- 34) Rendre l'en-tête du tableau toujours visible pour que, lorsqu'il est déroulé, les utilisateurs n'aient pas à mémoriser le titre des colonnes.
- 35) Utiliser différentes couleurs ou ombres pour différencier les lignes et les colonnes selon les régions.
- 36) S'assurer que les unités de mesure apparaissent dans le titre de chaque colonne.
- 37) Préciser le montant des taxes et non le coût avec taxes.
- 38) Rendre le tableau plus interactif de sorte que si une ville a déjà été sélectionnée, les prix dans cette ville puissent encore être vus.
- 39) Pour ceux qui sont intéressés, démontrer le calcul du prix moyen dans chacune des villes, par exemple s'il est basé sur une moyenne des prix de 75 stations d'essence. Quelques participants ont suggéré de faire apparaître les prix les plus élevés et les plus bas lorsque l'on sélectionne une ville.

Seconde page de « Gérez vos coûts énergétiques »

- 40) Que les options « à la maison », « au travail » et « sur la route » soient cliquables.
- 41) Prévoir un tableau ou un graphique dans lequel on retrouve, sur une base comparative et dans un format facilement accessible, le prix des différentes sources de chauffage.
- 42) Inclure les mesures incitatives et les rabais par province.
- 43) Donner accès aux informations concernant les économies spécifiques aux entreprises et celles aux consommateurs via deux liens distincts. Autrement, le visiteur doit passer à travers beaucoup trop d'information non pertinente pour lui.
- 44) Créer un lien direct avec le site « Le défi d'une tonne » (ou un lien en rapport avec l'Accord de Kyoto) à partir de la page d'accueil du BIPPP.

Seconde page de « Les Énergies renouvelables »

- 45) Pouvoir cliquer sur les différentes options ou les entrer.
- 46) Donner des conseils pratiques et des sources d'information (par exemple, les manufacturiers de panneaux solaires dans une région, les coûts, les économies réalisées, etc.).

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- 47) Fournir un lien direct vers les économies monétaires importantes et à l'information sur les énergies renouvelables, par exemple :
- Les rabais et mesures incitatives
 - Les véhicules qui utilisent des carburants de remplacement, ou
 - Toute autre information pertinente pour les propriétaires de maison ou les conducteurs de voiture.
- 48) Inclure différents sujets tels :
- Intentions du gouvernement quant aux énergies renouvelables
 - Information sur les utilisations des énergies renouvelables au Canada
 - Travaux de recherche scientifique
 - Origine des diverses énergies renouvelables
 - Nouvelles technologies énergétiquement efficaces.
- 49) Quelques participants du Québec ont suggéré un sous-menu déroulant affichant les différentes énergies renouvelables sous cette rubrique du menu de gauche.
- 50) Quelques-uns ont suggéré la même chose pour « à la maison », « au travail » et « sur la route » sous la rubrique « Gérer vos coûts énergétiques ».

Seconde page de « Questions fréquemment posées »

- 51) Dans cette rubrique, formuler l'information par questions plutôt que par titres ou phrases.
- 52) Quelques participants ont considéré que la rubrique « À propos du Bureau » ne devait pas faire partie d'une section question et réponse.
- 53) Traiter d'une nouvelle question : « Pourquoi les prix du carburant fluctuent-ils dans le même sens que tous les autres? »

Prix de l'essence dans votre province

- 54) Agrandir la carte géographique pour qu'elle soit plus visible.
- 55) Inclure un prix moyen dans chaque province et une option permettant de voir les prix à travers tout le pays.
- 56) Inclure une fonction « agrandir » pour que les utilisateurs puissent agrandir une région particulière et avoir plus de détails (comme la carte Google).

Historique du prix de l'essence

- 57) Permettre à l'utilisateur d'entrer une période précise et/ou une date, ou de cliquer sur une année précise et obtenir directement l'information, par exemple les raisons d'une fluctuation des prix.
- 58) Introduire la possibilité de cliquer sur une icône ou une partie d'un graphique pour avoir l'explication sur des hausses ou des baisses de prix.

« *Calculez votre trajet* »

- 59) Fournir un lien vers des conseils et des trucs pour économiser de l'argent et/ou du carburant lors de chaque opération.

Calculateur de la consommation de carburant

- 60) Présenter l'information sous une forme simple, étape par étape.

Autres idées de calculateur

- 61) Ajouter un calculateur des distances-types pour calculer la consommation de carburant sur ces distances, par exemple, Lethbridge et Calgary, ou Lethbridge et Winnipeg. En entrant l'endroit d'origine et de destination (nom de la ville ou de la localité) et le prix de l'essence, le calculateur pourrait estimer le coût du parcours en fonction de la distance en kilomètres et de la consommation moyenne d'essence.
- 62) Ajouter un calculateur qui permet de comparer différents types de carburant (par exemple, propane, hybride, diesel ou différentes essences, super, intermédiaire, ordinaire), ce qui peut s'avérer utile comme information pour l'achat d'une voiture.
- 63) Ajouter un calculateur pour planifier des voyages, qui permet en fait de tracer son itinéraire et d'avoir les prix de l'essence tout au long du parcours.

1.4 EN CONCLUSION

- Tout comme lors du test antérieur de la première version du site, cinq thèmes sont de nouveau ressortis sur les façons d'améliorer la présence du BIPPP sur le Web :
- 1) But et positionnement
 - Le grand public a besoin que l'objectif du site soit clairement établi. L'absence d'un positionnement clair et précis est une des principales faiblesses du prototype testé.
 - Pendant les différentes étapes de construction du site, il pourrait être utile d'aviser les utilisateurs qu'il y aura plus d'information sur les sujets clés, tels les moyens pour économiser de l'argent et l'énergie.
 - 2) Lisibilité
 - Le contenu du site est actuellement trop dense en texte. L'information importante est difficile à repérer et à saisir du premier coup d'œil.
 - Une présentation visuelle de l'information devrait être préférée, à chaque fois que c'est possible; partant de là, les usagers pourront accéder à plus de détails, s'ils le désirent.
 - 3) Convivialité
 - Le contenu du site a besoin d'être repensé et réorganisé de manière plus intuitive pour être accessible et plus simple à utiliser.
 - L'information de même nature a besoin d'être regroupée sous une seule rubrique plus globale (par exemple, les prix de l'énergie, les taxes, comprendre les fluctuations de prix, etc.). L'information importante ne devrait pas être enfouie dans des pages de sous-niveaux.
 - L'information destinée à différents publics (par exemple, les consommateurs et les entreprises, les maisons et les voitures) ne devrait pas être mise ensemble.
 - 4) Interactivité
 - L'interactivité n'implique pas seulement de retenir les visiteurs et de leur permettre un accès plus rapide à l'information pertinente pour eux, mais c'est aussi de les divertir. Les participants ont décrit différentes façons de rendre ce site plus interactif :
 - La capacité de pouvoir chercher une information précise sur le site du BIPPP.

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- La province de l'utilisateur par défaut ou n'importe quelle province de son choix.
 - L'accès direct aux programmes qui s'adressent aux consommateurs à partir de la page d'accueil du BIPPP.
 - La capacité de cliquer sur les éléments d'un tableau ou d'un graphique et d'accéder à de l'information plus détaillée et pertinente.
 - Une variété de calculateurs pour aider les visiteurs à planifier, à économiser de l'argent et/ou de l'énergie, et à faire des choix.

5) Équilibre dans l'information

- En général, les participants ont apprécié que de l'information pour les aider à comprendre les enjeux soit disponible. Toutefois, le besoin de comprendre n'est pas une motivation suffisante pour les amener à retourner sur le site. Il faudrait un meilleur équilibre entre d'une part de l'information générale, et d'autre part, de l'information pratique et utilisable. Les participants ont affirmé qu'ils seraient plus enclins à retourner sur le site du BIPPP si de l'information pouvant les aider à prendre des décisions éclairées était disponible, telle que :
 - Les carburants de remplacement pour les voitures
 - Des conseils en efficacité énergétique
 - Les énergies renouvelables pour les maisons
 - Les mesures incitatives et rabais offerts par les différents paliers de gouvernement, etc.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

- Energy issues are top-of-mind in Canada for a variety of reasons, but in particular there has been growing public concern with respect to high gasoline and heating fuel prices. The Office of Petroleum Price Information (OPPI) was created by the Government of Canada as the main source of contact for Canadian consumers and stakeholders seeking pricing information on petroleum products (e.g., gasoline, diesel, furnace oil).
 - OPPI's primary mandate is to collect and disseminate pricing information on crude oil and other petroleum products such as gasoline and furnace oil.
 - The OPPI exists primarily as a dedicated website (launched in October 2005) and allows for single-window access to consumer information and relevant government programs with:
 - links to other relevant websites, including the Office of Energy Efficiency of NRCan, which provides energy conservation tips for consumers and,
 - timely information on crude oil and petroleum product prices.
- Findings from the previous qualitative testing of the OPPI website were fairly consistent: the site met with approval and elicited a positive response in terms of its relevance and ease of use.
 - Many people were favourably impressed with the breadth and depth of information the site provided.
 - The main findings indicated that the site needed improvement in terms of organization, readability, and presentation of information, and that it did not go far enough to be useful in a practical way to consumers.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- The main purpose of this study was to explore the ongoing needs and expectations of Canadians for petroleum price information, with regard to the OPPI website's redesign and revised content, as depicted in a new prototype website. More specifically, to determine:
 - 1) The overall reaction to the redesigned and revised content of the prototype site – positives, neutrals and negatives;
 - 2) The usefulness of the prototype site, i.e., its relevance;
 - 3) The usability of the prototype site – it's ease of use;
 - 4) The look and feel of the prototype site;
 - 5) Important expectation gaps;
 - 6) The concerns of potential users; and,
 - 7) What needed to be done to improve the site.

2.3 TARGET POPULATION

- The target population was the Canadian public most likely to use the site. Namely, people who:
 - Regularly drove a car, and/or
 - Used petroleum-based fuel to heat their home.

2.4 NUMBER AND TYPE OF SESSIONS

- A total of eighteen two-hour focus groups were conducted in nine locations across Canada from March 24 to March 30 2006, with 118 Canadian men and women aged 18 and over.
 - Fourteen groups were conducted in English (with 86 participants) in Halifax, Moncton, Toronto, Saskatoon, Lethbridge, Calgary and Vancouver,
 - Four groups were conducted in French (with 32 participants) in Montreal and Sherbrooke.

- In each location:
 - The first group was with "experienced" visitors, i.e., participants who had agreed to do "homework" and visit the prototype site before the group. The experienced participants were asked to complete four assigned tasks, determined by the client.
 - The second group was with "first-time" visitors, i.e., participants who were exposed to the prototype site for the first time during their session.
- Most sessions were conducted at fully-equipped focus group facilities, with a one-way mirror and viewing room for observers. The exception was Lethbridge, where the groups were held in an appropriate hotel conference room.
 - At each location, there was a computer connected to high-speed internet and to a large screen projector so that the moderator could show the OPPI prototype site to the group and to the observers.
 - Participants were thus able to explain their opinions and views, or any difficulties they encountered with the site.
 - All groups were audio-taped.
- The following table illustrates the number of experienced and first-time visitors who participated in the study per session and location:

Number of Participants by Session and Location

Location	Experienced	First-Timers	Total
Halifax	7	6	13
Moncton	6	6	12
Montreal*	8	8	16
Sherbrooke*	8	8	16
Toronto	7	8	15
Saskatoon	6	6	12
Lethbridge	6	6	12
Calgary	7	3	10
Vancouver	5	7	12
TOTAL	60	58	118

* *French-speaking participants.*

2.5 PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

- All groups were randomly recruited by Créatec according to the following criteria:
 - Half male, half female participants.
 - Range of income, educational and occupational backgrounds.
 - All participants spent at least one hour a week on the Internet at home or at work, not counting email and chatting.
 - All drove a car or other vehicle at least twice a week, or used heating oil to heat their homes.
 - Participants in half the focus groups were required to do some homework before attending the groups – to visit and spend time on the OPPI prototype website (for at least 15-30 minutes) and accomplish 4 basic tasks (as described in the discussion guide). All had an e-mail address and received instructions over the Internet. They were invited to bring notes to the group, if they wished.
 - In the last 2 years, no participants or their families worked for an ad agency, market research or PR firm, radio, TV or any print media, any government at the municipal, provincial or federal level, any political organization, an oil or heating oil company, or any company related to the Internet.
 - No one had participated in a focus group or interview in the past year, and no one had been involved in any research related to energy or to websites.

2.6 PARTICIPANT INCENTIVE

- Participants each received \$75 or \$50 to thank them for their participation (with the higher amount going to those in the experienced groups who did homework.)

2.7 DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Two client-approved discussion guides were developed, one each for the experienced and first-time visitors to the site.
- Participants in each group were queried along the lines of these guides, which are appended to the report (in English and French).

2.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- While public opinion surveys can tap the views of the Canadian public as a whole, qualitative research attempts to understand and explore individual beliefs, views and feelings by posing questions and listening, and having participants answer freely. The aim of this study was to discover the informational needs and expectations of Canadians regarding the revised OPPI site, and to understand the various viewpoints by listening to and observing participants.
- Focus groups provided the most appropriate context for participants to express their views with the flexibility, tone and direction they desired. In addition, the focus group methodology enabled an honest, open discussion and free exchange among participants and between participants and the moderator.
- We note here that the aim of the qualitative process is to explore awareness, perceptions and views. The moderator's role, in this case, was not to inform or suggest right or wrong answers, but to facilitate the discussion, to collect information and to observe, while encouraging participants to speak freely and honestly (which they did).
- As in all qualitative research, and in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standards of the Marketing Research Intelligence Association (MRIA), findings from this study may or may not be regarded as representative of the target populations at large. However, this research may be further pursued by other instruments (qualitative and/or quantitative) to contribute to our knowledge base.

2.9 RESEARCH TEAM

- **Mr. Grégoire Gollin** acted as the project manager. He was responsible for client relations, the design of the work methodology and supervision of the final report, as well as overall coordination and presentation of findings.
- **Ms. Natalie Gold** (based in Toronto) moderated and analyzed the English sessions in Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and Saskatoon, and prepared the final report incorporating findings from all 18 groups.
- **Ms. Louise Saint-Pierre** (based in Montreal) moderated and analyzed the French sessions in Montreal and in Sherbrooke.
- **Ms. Sharon Archibald** (based in Halifax) moderated and analyzed the English sessions in Halifax, Moncton and Lethbridge.

2.10 ABOUT THE REPORT

- This report presents the findings from all 18 focus groups together, incorporating views from both the experienced and first-time visitors to the redesigned OPPI prototype website.
- Views and findings were relatively consistent overall, but the report points out where relevant differences emerged, whether by location, language, or type of user.
- The report begins with an Executive Summary, which provides an overview of the key findings. It not only offers suggestions for improvement made by participants, but also provides some recommendations and implications for consideration.
 - This is followed by the Detailed Findings, and the Appendices, which contain the Discussion Guides.
- With regard to style:
 - This report is written using participants' own language, wherever possible, to let them speak in their own words.
 - For clarity and ease, the report is written in bullet format, and respondent verbatims appear in *italics* (usually without quotation marks, except when incorporated into the text).
 - Some verbatims have undergone slight editing to make people's comments understandable, but all have been used within their intended context.
 - Throughout the report:
 - For simplicity, the redesigned OPPI prototype website is referred to as the OPPI site, the prototype website or prototype site.
 - Participants who did homework on the prototype site are referred to as experienced visitors, the experienced group(s), or experienced participants.
 - Those who visited the OPPI site for the first time during their sessions are referred to as first-time visitors, first-timers or the first-time group(s).

3. DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 OVERVIEW

- Similar to the previous qualitative testing of the current OPPI site, most sessions tended to take on a positive or neutral tone, but still provided critical feedback with constructive suggestions. This occurred in:
 - Both sessions in Halifax, Toronto, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Saskatoon, and the Montreal experienced group.
 - The most positive reactions overall were in Saskatoon (in stark contrast to the previous qualitative testing, when the Saskatoon groups were the most negative).
 - Again, the existence of the OPPI website generally met with approval since it seemed to fill a need for participants to understand and deal with what was happening with fuel prices.
- The groups that tended to have a negative tone still provided some positive feedback, including:
 - Both sessions in Moncton, Sherbrooke and Vancouver, plus the Montreal first-timers.
- In the Atlantic and Quebec locations, first-timers tended to be more negative than experienced participants, based more on a general cynicism towards the government than to the prototype site itself.
- Apart from tone, findings were relatively consistent between experienced and first-time groups, and across locations and language.
 - Therefore, results for all 18 groups have been combined, and differences will be pointed out when relevant.
- Participants in all groups made consistent suggestions for improvement to the prototype site, mainly related to the site's usefulness and personal relevance.

3.2 ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

3.2.1 INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

Energy Pricing

- Overall, as was the case when the current OPPI website was tested (November 2005), most participants in all locations expressed a strong interest in gasoline prices. One consistent finding was that participants had questions about fuel prices, but few clear answers.
 - *The only thing I care about are the prices at the pump.*
 - *Pourquoi tous les jeudis, les prix de l'essence augmentent? (Why is there a rise in the pump price every Thursday?)*
- That, and the price of the different heating fuels used across the country comprised their main concerns.
- Besides gasoline, other energy products mentioned included:
 - Heating oil, natural gas, and propane
 - Alternative energy, e.g., solar, geothermal, wind
 - Electricity (in the Atlantic region and Lethbridge)
 - Diesel
 - Coal (mentioned in Lethbridge)
 - Nuclear energy (mentioned in Toronto)
- English-speaking participants generally wanted to know how much these products cost, when the price would increase, how the price was calculated and what caused such price volatility for gasoline, particularly just before long weekends. Some questions included:
 - *Why does it jump 8 cents overnight?*
 - *Why do prices increase before a long weekend?*
 - *Why do gas prices fluctuate from one place to another in the same province, or in the same city? What causes the difference in price?*
 - *Why are prices so high if Alberta is so oil rich?*
 - *What are gas prices made of?*

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- Most English-speaking participants experienced varying difficulty understanding the information currently available to consumers.
 - Most openly admitted that they were either misinformed or only partially informed and lacked a clear understanding of the market forces driving energy pricing.
 - *Knowing the reasons would make it easier to understand and make it less frustrating.*
 - In Lethbridge, for example, most had difficulty understanding energy pricing because of deregulation:
 - *When it comes to electricity pricing, do you sign a contract, or do you not sign a contract. The term flow through rate, which the government calls a regulated rate has caused a lot of confusion for consumers.*
 - *There is electricity and gas combined. You have this company saying they will give it to you for so much a gigajoule and this has caused a tremendous amount of confusion.*
 - However, certain individuals in various English-speaking groups across the country seemed to have a better grasp of the subject than others.
 - *The government has a series of booklets -- one on windows, furnaces. Saskatchewan used to have 85% energy efficiency. A lot of information came from SRC, the Saskatchewan Research Council.*
 - In contrast, most French-speaking participants felt already fairly well-informed by the media (Radio, TV, newspapers) on the price fluctuations of petroleum products.
 - *On en entend beaucoup parler dans l'actualité. (We hear a lot on the news.)*
 - *Je réagis quand les prix varient mais ce n'est pas un sujet qui me préoccupe quotidiennement. (I react when pump prices fluctuate but it isn't a subject that bothers me on a daily basis.)*
 - Skeptics, especially but not exclusively in Quebec, pointed out the consumer's lack of control and essential powerlessness over gasoline or heating oil prices.
 - *On n'a aucun pouvoir sur les prix. (We don't have any control over prices.)*
 - *It doesn't seem to make any difference whether I understand it or not, there is nothing I can do to change the prices.*
 - Some, mainly in Quebec, felt pricing was a conspiracy or game played by the large oil companies and the Stock Exchange.

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- *C'est de la spéculation, il y a du monde qui s'en met plein les poches... Si un site pouvait nous donner l'information réelle. (It is pure speculation. Someone is lining their pockets...I'd like to find the right information on a website.)*
 - *It seems like these oil companies have no regulation, they do whatever they want.*
 - Others in various locations saw their powerlessness derived more from world politics.
 - *There is so much withheld information, how much oil is in the sand, what is Saudi going to pump out, I don't expect to get that.*
 - *Difficult to find the truth about the spin.*
 - *Politics affect the price rise.*
 - *What is happening in the Middle East, it's all about oil, the supply of oil.*
 - *They blame it on anything that comes up in the world.*

Energy Efficiency

- Overall, participants generally expressed a strong interest in energy efficiency, and varying levels of understanding.
 - *Efficiency is an easier concept to grasp.*
 - *It's not in layman's terms.*
 - *It's not easy to understand and I haven't put any energy or time to try.*
- Energy efficiency was related to 4 main areas: (1) homes, (2) vehicles, (3) alternative energy sources, and (4) the environment.
 - 1) Homes
 - Energy efficient appliances, programmable thermostats, etc.
 - *Si j'achète un réfrigérateur maintenant, je fais plus attention qu'avant, on recherche l'étoile bleue [Energy Star]. (If I had to buy a refrigerator today, I would be more concerned about energy efficiency and I would look for the blue star label [Energy Star]).*
 - Home insulation
 - What kind of energy source to select for a new home, etc.

2) Vehicles

- Vehicles that use alternative fuels, e.g., biodiesel.
 - *Alternative fuels make a lot of sense.*
- Incentives for buying an electric car.

3) Alternative energy sources

- Solar and wind energies
 - What's happening with alternative power and what is happening in the world today with regard to prices.

4) The environment

- Environmental impact of different energy sources (Kyoto)
 - *J'ai été surpris de voir un site seulement sur les prix de l'essence, car il y a beaucoup d'autres préoccupations comme les impacts sur l'environnement, le rendement énergétique. (I was surprised to see a site only on oil product prices, because I am more concerned about environmental impact, and energy efficiency.)*
- Ozone, recycling, windmills, water conservation, etc.

What Participants Wanted to Know

- Participants in most groups had questions about petroleum product pricing and/or energy efficiency. Some of these are presented below.
 - *How does the end price get decided?*
 - *Who is causing the problem? Is it because of unrest in Iraq? Is more of a global perspective needed?*
 - *What alternative energy sources reduce global warming?*
 - *Price regulation, would it be in our best interest?*
 - *How can I save more money by using less fuel?*
 - *Why is the price of oil jumping up and down so often*
 - *Why can't it just be regulated and kept at a certain level?*

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- *Why does gasoline price fluctuate so much more than furnace oil?*
 - *Why does oil cost almost exactly the same all across the province, when we have to ship it elsewhere? [from the Atlantic region]*
 - *Why are prices so high if Alberta is so oil rich?*
 - *Are we using the oil efficiently?*
 - *Does a high peak time actually exist in electricity?*
 - *What is the connection between crude oil prices and gas prices at the pumps?*
 - *Why does gas cost more on the coast, when we ship our gas inland? [Atlantic region]*
 - *Why is oil and gas in Canada more expensive than in the US, given our supply?*
 - *Why does the price at the pumps go up a whole lot quicker than it goes down?*
 - *Why do prices increase before a long weekend?*
 - *Why do gas prices fluctuate from one place to another in the same province, what causes the difference in price?*
 - *What are gas prices made of?*
 - *What is the purpose of taxing gas, where is it [the money] going?*
 - *What percentage of provincial gasoline goes toward taxes?*
 - *Ce que je veux savoir c'est comment je peux sauver de l'argent et sauver la planète et aussi ce que peut faire le gouvernement en ce sens. (What I want to know is how to save money and save the planet, and also, what the GoC can do about this.)*
 - *Pourquoi tous les jeudis, les prix de l'essence augmentent? (Why is there a rise in the pump price every Thursday?)*

3.2.2 INTERNET EXPERIENCE

- Overall, most participants spent an average 30-minutes to 3 hours a day on the internet, for personal use (apart from email and chatting).
- They used the internet for a wide range of interests, including:
 - Research: on marketing and business; financial research, e.g., stock quotes, investment opportunities, learning about the currency market; medical research, or looking up medical information for people and animals; school research
 - Education: taking online courses, obtaining lecture notes
 - Maps, and finding addresses
 - Banking and paying bills
 - Entertainment news, e.g., sports, movies, music and video downloads, catching up on soap operas, comics, playing games online such as poker and chess
 - Shopping, e.g., price comparisons, purchasing various items or prices, ranging from clothing, household items, furniture; and visiting EBay
 - Downloading applications
 - Gas prices at home
 - News and current events, and specific items related to personal interests and work, e.g., journal articles relating to vet issues
 - Recipes
 - Travel deals and information
 - Learning different languages
 - Hobbies like plants.
- Most participants had visited at least one government website, whether it was at the federal or provincial level, for personal or business reasons.
- Specific sites mentioned included the following (stated as participants described them, in alphabetical order):
 - Business Development website
 - Canadian Forces
 - CCRA, Revenue Canada, Taxes: this was one of the most popular sites, mentioned by participants in most locations

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- Child custody laws
 - Earthquake information
 - EI, including for maternity leave
 - Environment Canada for weather, highway conditions, Weather Network
 - Family Justice sites
 - Go Canada 123
 - GoCanada.ca
 - Government grants for school, funding available for businesses
 - Healthcare
 - HRDC
 - Immigration and Citizenship, for passports
 - Job bank
 - Provincial governments, e.g., BC, Saskatchewan, Alberta, New Brunswick
 - Retirement information
 - Stats Canada
 - Tourism, BC Tourism
 - Wheelchair program
 - Worker's Compensation

3.3 THE PROTOTYPE OVERALL

3.3.1 THE PERCEIVED PURPOSE OF THE SITE

- Overall, most participants understood that the main purpose of the site was to "educate" or "provide information" to Canadians about energy, but there was a lot of confusion whether it was about fuel prices or all energy sources.
- Most participants also understood that the government launched the site to appease angry Canadians and answer questions about increasing fuel prices, especially for gasoline.
 - *People are wondering why the price is so high, so this is the response to the crazyness in the world.*
- Put in a positive way, the government wanted to:
 - Dampen consumer uproar by giving consumers a place to get information on rising gas prices.
 - *All the questions asked around our office everyday.*
 - Heighten public awareness and change behaviours in energy consumption.
 - Educate the consumer.
 - Provide pricing facts and research for consumers and businesses.
 - Adopt a policy of openness.
 - Reduce the number of calls (and cost) to government call centres.
- However, the more skeptical in various groups and locations, said the government wanted to:
 - Justify their position on this issue.
 - Give the appearance of doing something.
 - Create an image of government concern, and that they are acting in a responsible way.

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- In all groups, two main concerns emerged regarding the prototype site and its perceived purpose: namely, the usefulness of the site and its informational content.
 - These concerns generally stemmed from what seemed like a conflict between expectations based on the site's name and the information it actually provided. Participants wondered and weren't sure whether the site was:
 - Only about petroleum products or the broader energy spectrum.
 - Participants told us they were much more interested in the latter.
 - Mainly intended to educate and inform about petroleum product prices. If so, participants told us:
 - They would not need to refer to it more than once, unless their children were doing research projects.
 - The name "EnergyWatch" seemed therefore misleading and unsuitable.
 - Mainly about tracking petroleum product prices, or tracking other energy prices as well (including alternative fuels and energies). If only the former, people said:
 - It would only be useful if this information was updated regularly and often.
 - Even with frequent updates, many said they could follow gas price changes through other sources, mainly the media, and by keeping a watchful eye when driving around their location.
 - Overall, despite the above concerns, most participants approved of this GoC initiative, including some who were skeptical and critical.
 - *If information is not available people will get worked up about it. It is part of democracy to publish this type of information.*
 - *I approve but it can be way more useful and proactive.*
 - However, in the four Quebec groups, most participants disapproved, mainly because of the perceived low usefulness of the site. The views of the naysayers in Quebec mirrored that of some others in various groups and locations.
 - Confusion about the site's purpose, as mentioned above, and who it was specifically aimed at was reflected in the contradictory name of the site, EnergyWatch, and the informational content currently available.
 - This information appeared to focus mainly on petroleum products, yet there were menu items related to some renewable or alternative energy information, which participants indicated was sparse and unsatisfying.

- Francophones felt that if the site only gave information on petroleum product prices, it would not be useful to them, since they felt well-enough informed by the general media. Some people in various English groups and locations agreed.
- Some people in various locations felt the site was a bit of a smoke-screen, because both the government and consumers were powerless to effect meaningful change with regard to gas prices especially. A typical comment:
 - *There is really nothing the government can do about it.*
- In addition, most participants thought that while the site provided interesting information, once they knew it, there would be little need to keep returning, or to bookmark it.
 - *There is a lot of information on this site for just the facts. If it was more personal to me about how it affects my life or my peer groups it would be more interesting to learn about it that way.*
- Most would not recommend the site, but if they did, it would mainly be as a site that provides information to help understand rising fuel costs.

3.3.2 THE PERCEIVED USEFULNESS AND EASE OF USE

- At the end of each session, participants were asked to rate the site's usefulness and ease of use.
- Consistently, ease of use ratings tended to be higher than those for usefulness, in some instances to a striking degree.
- As shown in the table below, ease of use ratings were generally high in 14 groups, and no group gave consistently low ratings for ease of use. The lowest ratings came from the Sherbrooke first-timers.

PROTOTYPE SITE'S PERCEIVED EASE OF USE

Location	Experienced	First-Timers
• Halifax	High	High
• Moncton	High	High
• Montreal	Medium to high	N/a
• Sherbrooke	High	Low to medium
• Toronto	High	High
• Saskatoon	High	High
• Lethbridge	High	High
• Calgary	High	High
• Vancouver	High	Medium

- In contrast, the table below shows that usefulness ratings were high in less than half of the groups (7 out of 18), including both sessions in Halifax and Saskatoon, only the experienced groups in Sherbrooke and Calgary, and only the first-time group in Lethbridge.
 - Usefulness ratings were consistently low in 6 groups, including both sessions in Moncton and Vancouver, and the first-time groups in Montreal and Sherbrooke.

PROTOTYPE SITE'S PERCEIVED USEFULNESS

Location	Experienced	First Timers
• Halifax	High	High
• Moncton	Low	Low
• Montreal	Medium to high	Low
• Sherbrooke	High	Low
• Toronto	Medium	Medium to high
• Saskatoon	High	High
• Lethbridge	Low to medium to high	High
• Calgary	High	Medium
• Vancouver	Low	Low

- During the discussions, most participants indicated or stated directly that the EnergyWatch site would be useful only if several conditions were met, relating mainly to:
 - Content currently lacking, and
 - The need for quicker access to personally relevant information.

Content Currently Lacking

- Note that while moderators did keep pointing out that the site was still an unfinished prototype, participants still gave critical feedback.
- While the prototype site gave information on current gas prices, many people said this information was already available elsewhere.
- Most participants were also keenly interested in 4 main topics, currently not covered or not covered thoroughly enough on the prototype site:
 - The heating fuel used in their area. For example, there was nothing on:
 - Electricity, used to heat homes in Atlantic Canada
 - Natural gas, used to heat homes in Lethbridge, along with electricity, and coal.

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- How to manage energy costs
 - This was the menu item that most people were keenly interested in.
 - Most were disappointed and/or frustrated, because they wanted to be able to click on "at home, at work, on the road," and could not
 - The hope or expectation was to see all information on the home, for example, in one spot, which was not the case.
 - Information on renewable and alternative energy
 - This was another menu item that strongly interested participants.
 - Most were disappointed that it lacked so much detail and content.
 - *When I click on them I don't find what I want (Toronto, positive group)*
 - Information wanted included:
 - Vehicles that use alternative fuels, such as natural gas, or methane.
 - *You can now run your vehicle on natural gas and it's not on there.*
 - How to get access to alternative energy sources, e.g., solar, including information on companies that supply and install such alternatives in their area.
 - Information on energy efficiency
 - While some participants in various locations were pleased with the available information, others were disappointed not to find more detailed information on:
 - Home repairs, home inspection, incentives and rebates, auto purchase, appliance purchase, etc.
 - *I would like to see a quick link to new innovative household things that are more energy efficient.*
 - Some participants were also keen to know about:
 - Environmental issues and impacts, i.e., Kyoto (Quebec).
 - Global perspectives, i.e., world events affecting the supply of crude oil.
 - Practical uses of petroleum products.
 - *What is made from petroleum, and how they [Canada] are in the forefront of the world in using petroleum.*

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- In addition, participants in various groups and locations, especially Quebec, felt that the analysis currently on the site was:
 - Superficial, and did not present the real issues relating to petroleum companies and what the GoC can do.
 - Somewhat biased, since it was the government's viewpoint.
 - Wrong. In fact, the "urban legend" information on weekend gas price increases in the centre of the homepage was frequently cited as an example of misinformation, because it directly countered people's own personal experience. For some, this created skepticism about the site's credibility, and for others, it deepened and confirmed their worst suspicions. This one item did a lot of damage.
 - Some people pointed out that if you didn't own a car or a home, i.e., if you were an apartment renter, the site had no relevance for you. Unless you were a student, or were the parents of a student, who needed to do research.

The Need for Quicker Access

- Most participants felt that the information was too text-heavy and too often presented in a hard-to-read style and format.
- What they said they wanted and expected was information that was:
 - At-a-glance, mainly presented in a simple visual way, in colourful charts and graphs.
 - Streamlined so that it is personally relevant to them, presented in an inter-active format, so they could type in their personal information or requirements and find information only on that. For example have the homepage "automatically default to the user's location."
 - *If it was more interactive people would understand it more.*
 - Only one or two clicks away, instead of the numerous links they had to wade through to find, for example, information on energy efficient homes or cars.
- Instead, once past the homepage, they told us they found pages and paragraphs of densely packed text, and/or tables that were difficult to decipher at-a-glance. Most felt that the way the information was presented required concentration, effort, and more time and interest than they were willing to devote to the topic.
 - *It was like reading a text book, everything wasn't right there and it lacked clarity.*

3.3.3 MAIN POSITIVES

- Overall, participants identified 8 main positives about the prototype site: (1) lots of interesting information consolidated on one site, (2) looked and was easy to navigate, (3) easy to learn how to use, (4) a familiar and simple homepage layout, (5) the presence of the left menu, (6) content related to: Managing Your Energy Costs, Renewable Energy, Incentives and Rebates, plus items on the right side of the homepage, e.g., two of the calculators, provincial gas prices and price history, (7) the 1-800 number and (8) the glossary.
 - 1) Lots of interesting information, consolidated on one site.
 - *Very informative.*
 - *I learned some interesting stuff. Previously I wasn't interested in this type of information.*
 - *The fact that it exists. Someone has consolidated all of the information, so you don't have to go to a lot of site.*
 - *If you want to know anything it's there.*
 - *Needs work but it has a lot of valuable information.*
 - 2) The site not only looked simple and easy to navigate, it was. Participants said that even their "mom," parents, or people with minimal internet skills, could use it.
 - *Better, more user-friendly than other sites I've used.*
 - *I don't think anybody should have any problems navigating the website.*
 - *I do not foresee any difficulty using this website.*
 - 3) To most participants, the OPPI site was also easy to learn how to use, and took little time to learn.
 - *It's easy to follow and get around.*
 - *I don't use the internet tons, and I didn't have any problems finding my way around.*

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- 4) Most thought the homepage layout was simple, familiar, and similar to that of other GoC websites. Most participants tended to think the GoC connection made the information more trustworthy, but some indicated it made them more suspicious.
 - *Has the format of a typical government website, so you know that it is information that has been researched*
 - 5) Most participants valued the existence of the left menu.
 - *The fact that all of the options are on the side [the left menu] and stay with you throughout*
 - 6) Most participants placed a high value on some of the content, including:
 - The first two calculators, because they were fun and interactive
 - Provincial gas prices
 - Price History
 - In addition, some of the intended content generated considerable enthusiasm. While most felt disappointed with the sparse information on these topics currently on the site, most also expressed a strong interest in learning more about:
 - Managing your Energy Costs
 - Renewable Energy, and
 - Tips for reducing costs and saving money, such as the incentive and rebate information.
 - 7) Many said they appreciated the 1-800 number and invitation to submit an email.
 - *I like the fact there is the phone number on the site, it takes forever to find on a government site usually.*
 - 8) Most participants found the Glossary quite helpful, and appreciated that highlighted words linked them to the meaning of words they did not understand, or were uncertain about. Some participants in various groups had not explored this option, but when shown, thought it was a good idea.

3.3.4 MAIN NEGATIVES

- Overall, participants identified 10 main negatives about the site: (1) lack of clarity regarding the site's purpose and content, (2) an over-emphasis on gas and fuel prices, (3) the absence of a search box prominently displayed on the OPPI homepage, (4) a general lack of interactivity to involve people, (5) an over-reliance on text-heavy information and lack of visual at-a-glance access, (6) non-intuitive naming and content of some left menu links, (7) too many links before information was accessed on the OPPI site, (8) no direct links to relevant information, such as money saving tips, (9) no notification when links took them off-site, and (10) complicated tables on second and third-level pages, that were difficult or confusing to read.
 - 1) Most participants felt the purpose of the site wasn't clear, and the content did not reflect the name.
 - In Quebec, the name “Observatoire énergétique Canada” was not meaningful and contributed to confusion.
 - 2) Most agreed there was an over-emphasis on gasoline and fuel prices, which was not as relevant or meaningful as some of the other energy-related topics, related to saving money and alternative energy.
 - *Alternative solutions were missing from this website. It gave general information and stopped there. There were no links to learn more information on a particular subject.*
 - 3) Many said they wanted a search box displayed prominently on the OPPI homepage, so they could simply enter a term, phrase or question and be linked quickly to that information on the OPPI site.
 - *I am all about this little search box so I can just type in what I want to know instead of searching around.*
 - 4) Most indicated the OPPI site had too much static information, and a general lack of interactivity to draw participants in and get them involved.
 - 5) Most participants said that the content and pages relied too much on text-heavy information, and not enough on charts, graphs and simple visual ways to present information at-a-glance.
 - 6) Many indicated that the naming and content of some links on the left-hand menu were not intuitive or logical, and several overlapped (especially the first three).
 - *I found it frustrating because I don't have a lot of spare time.*

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- 7) In many cases, participants pointed out that there were too many links to wade through before getting to the pertinent sought-after information on the OPPI site itself. People wanted to be no more than 2 or 3 clicks away.
 - *You had to hop around too much go to too many links.*
 - *You shouldn't have to go to [so many] outside links, should all be on the website. All the relevant information should be there.*
 - 8) Many participants complained that there were no direct links to relevant information, such as money saving tips re fuels and energy efficiency.
 - 9) Some disliked not being notified that certain links would take them off-site, and preferred to have as much data as possible originate on the OPPI site.
 - *External links were annoying. I would have rather just have found the information on this specific site.*
 - 10) Many thought the tables on the second or third-level pages were complicated, difficult to read, and often lacked "units" (dollars, percentages, price per litre).

3.3.5 LOOK AND FEEL

- In general, participants were favourably impressed with the look and feel of the site.
- As mentioned earlier, most participants gave high ratings for ease of use, and felt that the prototype site not only looked easy to use, it was actually so. No instructions were needed to move around the site.
 - However, in most groups, some discussion focused on the frequent off-site links, especially to items on the left menu.
 - Opinion was generally split among participants as to whether a separate window should open whenever visitors clicked on a link that would take them off the OPPI site, or if a notification should appear whenever this was about to happen.
- As for the visual appeal, most comments were related to 3 main aspects: (1) the colour scheme, (2) the homepage header, and (3) the general layout of most pages on the site, including the homepage.
 - 1) Overall, there was a tendency to criticize the amount of blue in the colour scheme, since some participants in various locations linked energy to the colour green, than to blue.
 - *When I think of energy I think of green as a colour.*

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- 2) The homepage header (dealt with in more detail in section 4) was considered appropriate, and participants said it made the OPPI site look like a typical GoC website. For most, this appeared to be a positive aspect, creating trust and credibility, for the most part.
 - 3) Overall, the general layout was considered somewhat cluttered, from the homepage on, with too much text and not enough charts, graphs and visually presented information. In fact, the lack of visual stimuli was a common criticism of the site.
 - *I dislike the lack of graphic representations. I believe that most people need to have something that catches the eye to keep them interested.*

3.3.6 MAIN IMPROVEMENTS SUGGESTED BY PARTICIPANTS

- Overall, participants suggested 11 main improvements to the OPPI prototype website:
 - (1) consistency of name and content, (2) more interactivity, (3) convert text-heavy pages to bullet-format, with graphics, pictures and charts, (4) make the homepage less cluttered, with more graphics, a brief version of "About Us," and a site map, (5) change the left menu, including the first 3 headings, and reorganize some content to make it more intuitive, (6) expand the left menu sections, Managing Your Energy Costs and Renewable Energy, (7) provide direct links to important cost-savings and alternative energy information, (8) include all acronyms in the Glossary, (9) reduce the number of links to get to pertinent information on the OPPI site, (10) include a range of other information related to: international price comparisons, energy efficiency and the environmental impact of fuel use, alternative views from named third party experts, and information for renters, and (11) add the capacity to print text-only pages.
- 1) Consistency: make the name of the site and its actual content consistent.
 - If the site is to focus on fuel-related energy, then the name should reflect that, and all types of energy need to be included in the similar depth and breadth. For example:
 - Electricity, natural gas, coal
 - If the site is about prices, then include price information for all types of energy, including renewable energy.
- 2) Make the site much more interactive, including:
 - A search box for the site placed prominently on the homepage, so people could enter the specific topic (or question) they were interested in.

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- A place to enter your province, so that the homepage and all information subsequently defaults to your province.
 - *Add a heading, i.e., my province is Ontario, to edit it more effectively*
 - 3) Convert text-heavy pages into bullet format, and include graphs, pictures, charts, or visuals whenever possible, preferably in an interactive format.
 - *Type in whatever kind of fuel product and they give you today's price.*
 - 4) On the homepage:
 - Make the homepage less "cluttered" looking.
 - Use more icons, graphs and charts.
 - Include a condensed version of "About Us" in the centre of the homepage or on the left menu.
 - Include a site map.
 - Remove the Fuel Price Calculator.
 - 5) On the left menu:
 - Rename some of the headings, to more accurately reflect the content, especially the first three, which include the word "energy"
 - *Left hand column points of reference confusing; I'm not sure exactly what they are referring to.*
 - *Understanding Energy Prices and Energy Facts look like the same to me, which means I have to look through both.*
 - Reorganize some of the content under the various headings. For example:
 - Put all information related to prices or costs, including taxes, fact sheets and reports and analysis, under Energy Prices.
 - If possible, find a way to let people know the content under the heading, without having to click.

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- 6) Expand two very important left menu sections:
- Managing Your Energy Costs:
 - Make it possible to click on options such as “at home”. “at work”, and “on the road”.
 - Renewable Energy
 - Make it possible to click on various options, or type them in.
 - Provide practical advice and sources of information (such as manufacturers of solar panels in their area, costs, savings realized, etc.).
- 7) Provide direct links to important cost-savings and alternative or renewable energy information, such as Rebates and Incentives, or other information pertinent to the homeowner.
- *Managing your energy cost, I thought there would be a section on tips to reduce your spending, not necessarily that I want it but I expected it.*
 - *How much does it cost to have people come in and inspect your house?*
 - *Are there grants available to cover the cost?*
- 8) Provide the meaning of all acronyms with the cursor, similar to the way the Glossary works.
- 9) Reduce the number of links to get to the pertinent information on the OPPI site, so that people are only 2 or 3 clicks away. If they want more detailed information, have a link for "More Details" or something similar.
- *It's link hell.*
- 10) Additional Information to include:
- Compare international prices to Canadian prices: European and the USA.
 - Information related to energy efficiency, environmental concerns.
 - Different opinions and views from identified (named) third party industry experts, on various topics, included with relevant topics, i.e., prices, renewable energy, etc.

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- Information on energy savings and efficiency related to renters.
 - *More scenarios for renters, e.g., 5 loads of laundry vs. 20 loads, something for kids.*
 - *Nothing applied to the renter.*
- 11) Add a function so that users can print only the text, or a particular page from the map, what one participant referred to as “print-friendly pages.”
- *It would be good to have a printable version if we wanted to print something.*

3.4 CONTENT ELEMENTS

- When discussing their initial reaction to the OPPI site, the OPPI homepage was the main focus.
- Overall, the initial reaction of participants to the homepage (and site) tended to range from positive to neutral.
- However, concerns and criticisms, as discussed above, emerged about the homepage after using or exploring the site.
- This section focuses on participant experiences when using or exploring each main content element of the prototype homepage.

3.4.1 HEADER

- Overall, reaction to the homepage header ranged from neutral to positive. It was considered colourful and unobtrusive.
 - As mentioned earlier in the report, some in various locations disliked so much blue, mainly because they associated energy with the colour green.
- Most participants seemed pleased with the way the EnergyWatch name looked on the header. Only a few individuals indicated a dislike of the "eye" as part of the EnergyWatch graphic, but most either did not comment or gave approval.
- Many participants in various locations felt the image of people was a good choice because it indicated a consumer orientation as well as multicultural diversity. However, some in various locations wondered what they had to "smile" about.
 - *Without the people, who's going to do the savings?*
 - *Is it supposed to be saying something to us that we're supposed to be happy?*
- However, most criticisms about the header focused on 3 main aspects:
 - 1) The emphasis on gasoline and cars rather than on energy in general, which helped create confusion about the site's purpose.
 - 2) The image of the home, because it was much too upscale to be the home of an average Canadian. It was generally felt that people who lived in that type of home wouldn't need to save money.

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- *The cars, I don't mind, but not the multimillion dollar house.*
 - *People that live in that house probably aren't worried about the price of gas.*
- 3) The lack of image related to business, but business is mentioned underneath the header.
- In addition, some French-speaking participants pointed out there was no image of public transit.

3.4.2 CLICKING ON THE ENERGYWATCH NAME

- Most people were not impressed with this feature, where clicking on the EnergyWatch name moved the user to the About Us page.
- No one in the experienced groups had discovered this on their own, and most participants said they would not have moved their cursor over the word, because it was not an intuitive thing to do.
 - *I wouldn't have known to click on the title.*
- However, once exposed to the About Us information, participants generally considered it informative.
 - Some thought it should be on the left menu.
 - Some, more familiar with government websites, realized this information was on the top menu. But most had missed it.
- In French, "À propos du bureau" ("About the Bureau") was not meaningful, and was actually confusing. People wondered which Bureau. They had never heard of the Bureau.
- Participants in various locations, especially Quebec, wanted to understand the connection between EnergyWatch, OPPI, NRCan and the GoC. But there was only a very brief mention of this on the homepage.

3.4.3 "POWERED BY OPPI"

- Most people didn't see this phrase under the EnergyWatch name in the header. When pointed out, most didn't know who OPPI was.
 - *If I just went to that website I wouldn't know what OPPI was.*

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- Some thought OPPI was the company who designed the site, or associated it with OPEC. Thus the site seemed private, not public.
 - *Who is OPPI?*
 - *I thought it was OPP.*
 - *I prefer the government to be more impartial and now I'm suspicious that the government is linking with OPPI.*
 - A few individuals in various locations "got" the pun related to the word "powered" and the idea that energy was power, but most participants did not.
 - Suggestions generally involved removing the phrase. However, one improvement was to substitute the phrase "provided by" instead of "powered by."
 - *'Provided by' would make more sense.*

3.4.4 THE HOMEPAGE LEFT MENU

- Overall, most participants liked the concept of the left menu, and some of its items.
- However, most also thought that many of the headings were confusing, redundant, not intuitive, and did not clearly identify what they contained.
- Many in various locations felt that the first 3 headings (Understanding Energy Prices, Energy Prices and Energy Facts) needed re-labelling.
 - For example, most participants had no clear idea what to expect under Energy Facts.
- Some people thought the information under the various headings needed to be reorganized and regrouped. For example:
 - People in various locations thought that tax information made more sense if it was contained under Energy Prices, instead of as a separate item buried amidst Energy Facts.
- The following pages provide respondent reaction to each left menu heading, and the second and subsequent level pages under that heading.
 - Note that while most participants explored the second-level pages for all left menu items, not everyone spent time exploring all of the deeper levels. The report presents whatever findings emerged during the discussions.

Understanding Energy Prices/ Comprenez les prix de l'énergie

- Most participants thought this heading was clear, and accurately indicated the content under the link. However:
 - Some in various locations expressed disappointment because they expected the information to be presented in a more straightforward manner.
 - In Quebec, participants disliked the tab heading, and said the translation was poor, and the tone was condescending, especially for the term "comprenez".
- Most participants also felt that the second and subsequent level pages were much too text-heavy and time-consuming to read.
 - *Briefer would have been better.*
 - *I was hoping for the pie [chart] but I knew it wouldn't be there, the photo of flowers, I'd be off this site so fast.*
- On the second page, while some liked the supply and demand flower comparison, others found it simplistic and too superficial.
 - *It is informative, I can understand their comparison using flowers shops, made it easier to comprehend and understand, it was a good analogy.*
 - *To me it's kind of unexpected because if the price of roses is high, then chocolate is your alternative, but there is no alternate for gas if you drive.*
- In addition, some participants in various locations thought the issue was more complex, and there was more to understand than supply and demand. Some had anticipated a discussion about events that caused price increases.
 - *It should talk more about why it is going up instead of explaining supply and demand.*
 - *The first paragraph is erroneous and misleading. Prices are based more on what the market will bear vs. supply and demand. At the very least this argument should also be incorporated. Energy pricing is not based solely on supply and demand as it is presented here.*
 - *There is a clear issue with the perception of fair competition. Address it.*
 - *The second half of the first sentence beginning "A local perspective" is not to be believed for cities with a population of about 400,000 or less.*
 - *Le citoyen ordinaire qui tombe là dessus, il ne va pas faire le lien et il va aller ailleurs. (The average citizen who visits this page will not understand the link and will quit.)*

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- Improvements suggested by participants for the second-page included:
 - Redesign it to include graphs and charts.
 - *A comparison chart would be better.*
 - Use bite-size bits of information in bullet-format, so that it is easier to read at-a-glance.
 - Include information about:
 - Taxes
 - *Put taxes on the fuel page.*
 - Collusion between oil companies.
 - Fair competition and what the market will bear.
 - The role of the government and why they don't intervene regarding price increases.
 - *Le gouvernement essaie de nous faire avaler la pilule. Il est responsable à cause des taxes. (The GoC is trying to make us swallow a bitter pill. It is responsible for taxes).*

Energy Prices/ Prix de l'énergie

- Energy prices comprised the topic of greatest interest to most participants.
- Most felt they could generally predict the type of content under this heading.
- However, participants in most locations pointed out that the tab heading was quite similar to the previous one, and this caused some confusion.
- Some felt that while the information was interesting, there wasn't much anyone could do about energy prices.
 - *It was interesting to see what the other provinces paid, but unless I am going to move there it is not going to help me any.*
 - *C'est informatif, mais ça ne change rien à ta vie personnelle de savoir le prix de l'essence au nord de l'Ontario. (It is informative but knowing the gasoline price in the North of Ontario doesn't change anything in your life.)*

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- Overall, on the second page:
 - Most participants expected to find charts or graphs on the second page, or something more interactive.
 - *The heading is Energy Prices so you expect to see number figures . . . right away. If I have to click onto different links then I get frustrated.*
 - In addition, many also felt disappointed that the type of energy or fuel they used was not represented on the second page, such as electricity.
 - *On est dans un Observatoire énergétique et on ne nous parle que du prix de l'essence. (I don't understand why they only talk about gasoline prices on a web site called EnergyWatch.)*
 - While most understood they needed to click on one of the specific fuel types, some did not because it wasn't stated clearly.
 - In Quebec, many participants did not understand the term "mazout domestique" (furnace oil), and thought "huile à chauffage" was a better choice.
 - Most participants indicated they would not bother to look at crude oil prices, even though some understood the importance. Most of the participants who did view the crude oil table found it complex and the information displayed hard to understand, especially the unfamiliar terminology used.
 - *The crude oil price graphs are awkward and difficult for 'Joe Canadian' to understand without doing specific calculations.*
 - Participants in various locations said they felt somewhat overwhelmed and distracted by the list of federal, provincial and other related links on the second page, even though some found them quite "interesting."
 - *The links were a little bit confusing, I didn't know what most of them meant, I didn't know what was relevant to me.*
 - *The links are great for the keener wanting to spend quality time on this website.*

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- Improvements suggested by participants for the Energy Prices second page included:
 - 1) Make it interactive, with a window so visitors can type in their city and fuel of interest and be linked to the relevant charts and graphs.
 - 2) Alternatively, redesign the page to include interactive graphs and/or charts (pie-charts), which people can click on to get more detailed information about a particular locale and/or a particular petroleum product.
 - *Include bar graphs illustrating the amount of provincial and federal taxes during a monthly time frame.*
 - 3) Include the costs of other fuels, such as natural gas, electricity, coal and some of the alternative energies for cars and homes.
 - 4) Some in various locations suggested that the list of federal, provincial and other related links be relegated under one link (or icon) called Related Links, to make it available for those who are interested and out of the way for those who are not.
 - The table on the third level page under gas prices drew mixed reaction, and the same type of critical feedback as in the previous qualitative testing of the OPPI current site. Namely:
 - Most did not understand the order of the cities, and preferred alphabetical order. (Actually, most preferred something interactive, where they typed in the name of the location they were interested in)
 - Most found the table hard to read.
 - Some participants in most locations questioned the relevance and currency of the information in the table.
 - *What's it for? Prices change everyday, does this?*
 - Improvements suggested by participants for the gas price table on the third level page included:
 - Have the header of the table remain in place, so that people can scroll down without having to remember column headings.
 - Use different colours or shading to differentiate the different rows and/or locales, and different columns.
 - *When you put the cursor on a city it should be highlighted so you can follow the line across.*
 - *Need a coloured line to segregate regular and premium prices.*

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- Ensure that the units of measure are mentioned in each column heading.
 - *Should say the quantity, price per litre.*
 - *Maybe they should show what measurement it is in the price per barrel, litre, gallon.*
 - Specify the tax amount, not the cost without taxes.
 - *I'd like to know the actual tax. I want to know what I actually paid.*
 - Make the table more interactive, so that if a location is clicked on, former prices can be seen.
 - *I would like to see another box to check what the price was 2 weeks ago, be able to scroll over in a box.*
 - *Especially if you're planning for fuel cost forecasts, you could look back on it and more accurately predict for your budgeting.*
 - Some in Saskatoon wanted to know how the average price is derived for each city, i.e., if it is based on the average for 75 stations. A few suggested mentioning the highs and lows, if the city was clicked on.

Energy Facts / Faits concernant l'énergie

- Overall, the splitting of Energy Facts into Fact Sheets and Reports and Analysis on the second-level page was disappointing or annoying to many participants in various locations mainly because there seemed to be no logical or intuitive division.
- Most participants had expected content of a very different nature and were disappointed to discover what was actually there. In general, participants were hoping for information about the different energies and relevant comparisons between them, including: (1) their environmental impact, (3) ways to conserve, and (3) the rise in energy production and consumption over the years.
 - *I had a preconceived notion of all sorts of different energies. I was looking forward to seeing the different comparisons and alternative energy sources.*
- Overall, participants tended to find the depth of information overwhelming, and many said they were not really interested, unless the information was presented in an easier to understand way.
 - *I thought it was well-written but have pie charts within the links, like how world oil markets work. Show the different OPEC nations.*

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- *A lot of information, I found I was using the back button a lot.*
 - *It looks like a book.*
 - However, individuals in various locations appreciated the depth and detail of much in the Energy Facts section. One Saskatoon participant wrote on notes he handed in:
 - *The page "How World Oil Markets Work" is well-written. However it may be more attractive and easier to follow with some pie charts showing total world market contributors vs. OPEC members.*
 - *The page "Regional Variation in Gasoline Prices" is an adequate attempt to address this contentious issue. Need more of this effort.*
 - *The page "Regulating Petroleum" is a political football that is adequately addressed. In the second paragraph, second sentence, consider changing or removing the sentence 'Deregulation has increased the flow of investment in Canada's petroleum industry, facilitating its development.'*
 - *The Reports and Analysis page was not thoroughly reviewed, but I like what little I saw.*
 - Some participants in most locations suggested that the data in both sections included elsewhere, with the relevant topics.
 - *Ce n'est pas clair du tout. Ça devrait peut-être aller ailleurs comme information. (It is not clear at all. Maybe this information could be somewhere else.)*
 - For example:
 - Fact Sheets: Participants in various locations thought that information on Consumption Taxes could be with Energy Prices, as could Regional Variation in Gasoline Prices.
 - Reports and Analysis: Some thought the report on Understanding Gasoline Prices could be linked to the Energy Prices pages.

Managing Your Energy Costs / Gérez vos coûts énergétiques

- This was one of the topics that interested most participants in virtually all groups.
 - *En fait, on veut savoir comment faire les meilleurs choix. C'est ce qui touche les consommateurs de plus près et c'est ce sur quoi ils peuvent agir. (We want to know how to make the best choices. As consumers, it is the only area where we can do something.)*

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- However, most were quite disappointed with the scarcity of information on the second-level page.
 - *If there is an area to improve upon, this is the area!*
 - Participants in all groups had expected or hoped to find information or tips on how to save energy and/or save money, and to help them make better decisions when buying a car or other energy-using equipment at home.
 - *There should be things like how to run your freezer more efficiently, that was what I was expecting to find – practical tips.*
 - *The people who don't drive, they would be more likely to want to reduce fuel costs at home than on the road.*
 - Most participants wanted to be able to click on "at home," "at work" or "on the road" and find such tips, and were disappointed not to be able to do so.
 - *There are no tips.*
 - *Ça rejoint davantage ce à quoi je m'attendais, mais c'est décevant. On ne peut même pas cliquer sur 'à la maison.'* (This information is more like what I expected. I am disappointed because you can't click on 'at home.')
 - While some participants in all locations were pleased with the information they found on the OEE or One-Tonne Challenge sites, many in various groups and locations were surprised and frustrated that they had to dig offsite for the information which interested them the most.
 - *I went to the Alberta portion of Incentives and Rebates and I searched and it gave me a whole bunch of different links to look at.*
 - *When you go to the different websites you get kind of confused.*
 - Despite the problems with the second and subsequent level pages, many participants indicated they would return to the site to explore the Incentives and Rebates section more deeply.
 - Improvements suggested by participants for the second page included:
 - 1) Provide a comparative table, graph or chart on the cost of different heating sources presented in an easily accessible format.
 - 2) Include provincial incentives and rebates.
 - 3) Separate the cost-saving information for businesses and consumers so there are two distinct links to access each category. Otherwise, there's too much information to pore through.

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- 4) Make the One-Tonne Challenge site (or something related to Kyoto) a direct link from the OPPI homepage.

Renewable Energy / Les énergies renouvelables

- This was one of the topics that interested most participants in virtually all groups.
- However, most were disappointed with the scarcity of information on the second-level page.
 - *Some people don't even know what this stuff is, so it should give you the explanation.*
 - *C'est ça qui nous intéresse de voir toutes les sources d'énergie alternatives, d'en savoir davantage là-dessus. (What interests consumers is alternative energy sources, knowing more about that.)*
 - *When they listed energies I wanted them all to be linked.*
- Overall, participants in most locations wanted to know more about solar and wind power, with explanations about all of the alternative fuel sources and how to get access to such alternatives, including information on companies that supply and install such alternatives in their area.
 - *Where can you purchase solar panels for example?*
 - *Is solar energy practical for us? Can we do that? Can an average guy do it and how to go about it?*
 - *How much does solar power cost to run a home – how much energy?*
- Other interests included: geothermal energy, wave energy, and information related to cars, such as the difference between biodiesel and gasoline, and hybrid cars or those run on hydrogen or fuel cells.
 - *Alternative fuels -- solar, geothermal -- should all be links and then some information regarding alternative fuels for housing.*
 - *I want to know what alternative oils are, where they are coming from, where the trend is and where are we going and what we are learning from it.*
 - *Saw some things on Discovery Channel on wave energy.*
 - *Team up with other websites like the power cell cars that don't use gas.*

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- Participants suggested various improvements to the second-level page on Renewable Energy:
 - 1) Some in various locations expressed an interest in various topics to include in the Renewable Energy section, such as: (a) government plans regarding alternative energy, (b) information about Canada's usage, (c) research and scientific efforts, (d) the history of the various alternative energies, and (e) the new fuel efficient technologies.
 - *Government plans to use or encourage development of any of the alternative energy sources.*
 - *How much Canada uses the alternatives.*
 - *What percentage of Canadians and Canadian companies use alternative energy sources.*
 - *The efforts in research and science being made with Canadian funds surrounding renewable resources.*
 - *The history of different resources.*
 - *Name the other new technologies, besides hybrid vehicles, and show pictures. People love pictures.*
 - 2) Some Quebec participants wanted a scrolling sub-menu on the different renewable energies to be on the left menu.
 - 3) A few in Calgary wanted the same "at home," "at work," and "on the road" headings as in the previous menu item.
 - *It should give you specific facts on heating your house. For example, when you click on 'at home' it should have the different kind of fuel sources and tips for each.*

Frequently Asked Questions / Foire aux questions

- Overall reaction to the FAQ pages was mixed.
- While most recognized that the FAQ was a common feature on websites, some participants (both experienced and first-timers) said they usually didn't go there, or said they would only go there as a last resort, if they couldn't find information via a search engine.

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- Some participants said they found the information useful, and easy to understand, while others felt frustrated that they kept having to click on links before finding what they were looking for.
 - *There was a lot of information, could spend a lot of time on this website.*
 - *This is just terrible when you go from website to website and there is still not an answer*
 - Some participants, especially but not exclusively in Quebec, considered this tab redundant, because of the “What You Asked Us” section in the centre of the homepage or the different left menu items related to Energy Prices.
 - Participants suggested several ways to improve this section:
 - Some in various locations pointed out that the FAQ should be in question format, rather than statements or headings.
 - *Aren't they supposed to be in question form?*
 - Some thought that the item "About this site" did not belong in a question and answer section

3.4.5 THE HOMEPAGE CENTRE

- All three items in the centre of the homepage generated mixed reaction.

What You Asked Us / Les questions que vous nous avez posées

- Overall, participants expressed mixed reaction to this section.
- Many found it extremely useful, and exactly what they wanted to know.
 - *Loved it. There are all the questions I would ask. That is the first place I would go if I had a question.*
 - Some liked the option to “go deeper” by clicking on the "more" link.
- Others found this section somewhat irritating and redundant, since it duplicated the FAQ.
- Participants in various locations commented that although the information gave consumers an overall understanding, it lacked relevance.
 - *The only way to practically control costs is to manage your own consumption.*

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- *You cannot set the price or make the difference, so only consumption information is helpful.*
 - The answer to the second question in this section created quite a stir for some participants in most locations, and helped erode the site's credibility.
 - The information provided was that gas price increases before a long weekend was an "urban legend," which directly contradicted most people's experience at the gas pumps.
 - Improvements suggested by participants included:
 - Include a brief introduction like "About Us" on the homepage, featuring a short description of the site and its purpose.
 - One participant wrote in notes that he handed in:
 - *Consider addressing the question, 'Why does the price of fuel fluctuate in harmony with all the others?' This is debated and discussed more than any other regarding gasoline.*
 - Integrate the questions with the content of left menu items.

News / Nouvelles

- Overall, the News section evoked mixed reaction in most groups.
- Some found it interesting. One respondent wrote, in notes he handed in:
 - *I personally would like a few more links in the News section to various groups, including but not limited to CNN and the Canadian Taxpayers Association. Credibility will be enjoyed when more than one side of the story is told.*
- Others found the News section confusing, because they didn't understand that the information source was not the government.
- In addition, some participants in various locations felt that any important news regarding oil products would probably be available from their usual news sources (TV and newspapers), rendering this section either irrelevant or extraneous.
 - *Les gens n'iront pas sur ce site pour avoir des nouvelles. Ils vont chercher de l'information. (People will not go to the site for news. They will go there to search for information.)*

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- Many participants wondered how often it would be updated.
 - In Quebec, many said “Les Actualités” would be a better heading than “Les Nouvelles”.

Did you Know / Le saviez-vous?

- The Did You Know section evoked mixed reaction.
- While some found it interesting, most found it somewhat useless and irrelevant information.
- Many participants in all experienced groups said they didn't even notice this item at home because it required them to scroll down to the bottom of the page.

3.4.6 THE HOMEPAGE RIGHT ICONS

- Overall, in contrast to the three items in the centre of the homepage, participants were either positive or neutral about the items on the right-hand side of the page.

Check Provincial Gasoline Prices / Vérifiez les prix de l'essence dans votre province

- Overall, most participants liked the icon and the information contained in this section, because it was primarily visual, and easy to absorb at-a-glance.
- However, some found the information redundant because it was so similar to the information in the table under the Energy Prices heading in the left menu. While some preferred the table format, most participants across locations agreed that the map was easier to use.
 - *That is a lot more attractive than the table, getting hit with all those numbers.*
- However, some thought it still took too many clicks to find the province or city of interest.
- Some, mainly in the Atlantic region, preferred clicking on the map to using the drop-down menus at the bottom of each provincial map, but many didn't notice these menus.
- Some participants in Saskatchewan and Alberta were not pleased that so few locations were included for their province.
 - *Good technique but there doesn't seem to be a lot of value there if there are not more cities listed or data points (north, west and east).*

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- Participants suggested several improvements:
 - Enlarge the map so it is more noticeable.
 - Include an average price for the province and an option to view prices across the whole country.
 - *Select a province, you should be able to select all.*
 - Include a "zoom in" capacity so users could enlarge any particular area (like a Google map) to get more specific information.

Gasoline Price History / Historique du prix de l'essence

- Overall, the Gasoline Price History as presented created mixed reaction.
- Some participants valued the idea of a visual presentation.
 - *Looks neat to me. You don't see spikes and it's not the same every year.*
- Others weren't sure how useful historical information would be to them.
- In addition, many found the graph itself visually unattractive and static, preferring a more interactive model.
 - *I like the graph idea but I don't like this one.*
- Participants in various locations thought historical information could be interesting if two conditions were met: (1) if it contained more data, i.e., years (2) if it was more interactive.
- Thus, two major improvements were suggested by participants:
 - Enable the user to enter a specific time-frame, and/or dates, or to click on a specific year and be linked to specific information about that year, such as the cause of price fluctuations.
 - *I want to see it go back farther, i.e., to 1903.*
 - *I want to be able to manipulate the chart to make it more interactive so that I can put in whatever years I want, what was the price of gas the day I was born, for example.*
 - *Plug in a date as an information marker, i.e., the day you were married, favourite historical dates.*

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- Include an explanation for peaks and troughs.
 - Some wanted to be able to compare gas usage to previous years, to see how much is weather-related and how much is related to distribution problems etc.

Calculators / Calculateurs

- Overall, most participants across locations reacted in a positive way to the first two of the three calculators, which were valued mainly because they were interactive. However, no one saw any use for the Fuel Price Calculator.
- Because many participants in the experienced groups had not explored the calculators on their own, their first exposure was during the groups.
- Some thought the calculators would be more interesting if they provided tips to save money and/or energy.
 - *I think the main thing is providing the prices across Canada for traveling*

Calculate your Commute

- On the whole, most participants thought the Commute calculator would be a good tool for people who needed to budget.
- Some appreciated the conversion ability, litres to US gallons and imperial and metric measures.
 - *You can convert to US gallons, Useful if you drive in the States a lot.*
- Suggestions for improvement mainly involved additional tips or hints regarding saving money and/or fuel:
 - Provide a link to tips beside each specific calculation.
 - Include "helpful hints." For example, properly filled tires affect how much gasoline is used.

Fuel Consumption Calculator

- Some pointed out that the fuel consumption site was difficult to use.
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - *Bullet the information (directions) according to Step 1, Step 2, etc.*

Other suggested calculators:

- Participants suggested three additional calculators: (1) a standard distance calculator, (2) a fuel comparison calculator, and a trip-planning calculator.
 - 1) A standard distance calculator would calculate fuel consumption based on standard distances, say, between Lethbridge and Calgary, or Lethbridge and Winnipeg. By typing in the place of origin and destination (city/town names) and the price of gasoline, the calculator would compute the actual distance in kilometres, average fuel consumption and provide the cost of travel.
 - 2) A calculator to compare different types of fuel (i.e., propane, hybrid, diesel, or high, low and medium grades of fuel), would provide useful information when purchasing a car.
 - 3) A trip-planning calculator would allow someone to plan a trip, and have gas prices listed along the route.

3.5 TASK ASSIGNMENTS

- Note that:
 - The 9 experienced groups (one in each location) had done the assignments as homework before attending their sessions.
 - The 9 first-time groups did each of the tasks as a group, during their discussions.
- Any improvements suggested by participants regarding the various prototype pages they visited during the tasks, have been incorporated into the improvements section for those particular pages or content elements.
- Overall, participants in the experienced groups had varying difficulties completing several of the tasks. This was generally replicated in the first-timer sessions.
 - While some participants described most of the tasks as fairly straightforward and "easy," others admitted they had to work and spend time on one or more of them.
- Task #1, which involved finding the cost of heating oil, was probably the easiest for most participants.
- Task #2, which involved understanding recent gas price increases, generated the most dissatisfaction mainly because after finding various bits of information on the site, participants did not feel they understood clearly enough. Some kept searching.
- Task #3, which involved programs to save energy, required going offsite, and having to spend time searching through too many non-applicable programs.
- Task #4, which involved finding tax information, required many to do a lot of searching on the prototype site, because the location of tax information was not intuitive.
- Doing the various tasks highlighted 4 key areas for improvement:
 - 1) A site specific search engine, prominently displayed on the homepage.
 - 2) The content to be presented and organized in a more intuitive fashion. For example, most thought taxes should be included with or linked to Energy Prices.
 - 3) Direct access to consumer-related programs from the homepage.
 - 4) Table headings should indicate the units of measure (e.g., \$ per litre, %, etc.)

Task #1 – The cost of heating oil

- Most participants found the heating oil information related to their region (or to Thunder Bay, in areas where heating oil was not used).
- However, doing this task made some participants recognize the need for a site specific search engine, prominently displayed on the homepage.
- Some thought having a calculator function on the heating oil page would be helpful.
- Some in Quebec had difficulty with the term for heating oil (“mazout domestique”) because they were more familiar with the term “huile à chauffage”.

Task #2 - Understanding recent gasoline price increases

- Some participants in various locations had difficulty with this task, mainly because they were not satisfied with the explanations they received. More importantly, they did not feel as if they understood why prices increased.
 - *Nothing here makes me understand.*
- Some participants went to Understanding Energy Prices first. Others went to the FAQ. After that, some participants went to various other locations on the site.
- However, participants in various groups tried other avenues. For example:
 - *I went to Energy Facts and looked at both Fact Sheets and then started looking at regional prices.*
 - *I think I went through Reports and Analysis and then Understanding Gasoline Prices, and then I went to Retail Gasoline Prices.*
 - *I went to Gas Price History, it didn't really help.*
 - *I went to Energy Prices, Gasoline, and then the table. But it doesn't tell you why.*
- One participant discovered cost-saving information at the Ontario Ministry of Energy while exploring Task #3 (programs to save energy).
 - *It showed me how to reduce my bill which was not under Managing Energy Costs.*
- Doing this task in particular emphasized the concern about the way content was presented on the prototype site.

Task #3 – Existing programs available to help Canadians save energy

- Most participants found at least some information on what they considered to be a highly important and relevant topic, one which would keep them returning to the OPPI site.
- However, the information was offsite, "scattered" and required a lot of searching and digging.
 - *[There's a] wealth of information, but you need time to search for it or know what you are looking for.*
- Most participants began with the left menu item, Managing Your Energy Costs, and, as mentioned earlier in the report, were disappointed when they couldn't click on "at home," "at work" or "on the road".
- Some found existing programs, such as Incentives and Rebates, by clicking on the One-Tonne Challenge link.
 - Some said it was not easy to tell at-a-glance whether the different programs listed were related to cost savings, or energy savings, and where specifically they could get tips or helpful ways to save money and/or energy.
 - Some also criticized the lack of separation of programs related to the consumer and to businesses.
- Overall, different routes were followed to locate the information.
 - *I went to the NRCan website and then the Directory of Energy Efficiency, then I clicked on all provinces and clicked on search. Then there are ten pages of different areas that you can take a look at.*
 - *I went to questions commonly asked, or FAQ. And then I went to Saving Money on Fuel. Then I went to Related Links.*
 - *I went to Related Links, which led to the Ontario Ministry of Energy... had a lot more tips. This was what I expected to find under energy costs link.*
- Instead of having to spend so much time hunting, participants said they wanted direct access to consumer-related programs from the homepage.
 - *Out of all the questions, I had to do the most digging for this. I would want it to be just a one-click.*
 - *You have to go to so many places to get that information.*
 - *Links should be inserted into the homepage... or have some dollar signs.*

Task #4 – Amount of taxes per litre of gasoline

- Overall, some participants found this information with relative ease, while others did a lot of searching, sometimes with success and sometimes to no avail.
- Participants thought there were various ways to find this information, perhaps too many ways. It could be under: Understanding Energy Prices, Energy Prices, Energy Facts, or the FAQ. In fact, these are the main routes that participants took.
 - Many first went to Energy Prices, then Gasoline, then the table, which required some calculation.
 - *I went to gasoline and if it didn't work I went someplace else...an hour later I couldn't remember where it was again.*
 - Some went to the FAQ, then Taxes on Fuel.
 - Some went to Energy Facts, then Fact Sheets, which led to the Consumption Tax table. Participants said that the numbers and percentages should be in pie charts, to be more easily digestible.
 - A few referred to the top paragraph on the homepage, clicked on the "more" link, then on Taxes.
 - A few searched on the word tax.
- Many participants in Quebec and some from various other locations said they were not really motivated to find this information, which was already available at most gas stations in two different ways. First, they said there is a chart on each pump explaining the price components, and second, some pointed out that taxes are also detailed on the bill.
- Overall, most participants suggested that taxes should be included with or linked to Energy Prices.
- In addition, some wanted to know:
 - *What is the purpose of taxing gas, where is it [the money] going?*
 - *What percentage of provincial gasoline goes toward taxes?*

APPENDIX

DISCUSSION GUIDES

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Phase 2

- First Time Visitors –



<p>WEBSITE TESTING</p> <p>http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/ewc/index_e.htm</p>	<p>NUMBER OF GROUPS: N = 18 / 120 min.</p> <p>Group 1 – 5:30 pm – experienced visitors Group 2 – 7:30 pm – first time visitors</p>
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City	Time and Date		Location
Toronto, ON (Natalie Gold)	5:30 pm	Friday, March 24	Research House 1867 Yonge Street – 2 nd Floor Tel.: (416) 488-2328
	7:30 pm		
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	7:30 pm		
Halifax, NS (Sharon Archibald)	5:30 pm	Tuesday, March 28	Corporate Research 1 Maritime Place, Suite 700 Tel.: (902)493-3250
	7:30 pm		
Montreal, QC (Louise Saint-Pierre)	5:30 pm	Wednesday, March 29	Centre de Recherches Contemporaines 1250 Guy, Bureau 802 Tel.: (514) 932-7511
	7:30 pm		
Saskatoon, SK (Natalie Gold)	5:30 pm	Wednesday, March 29	Norsask Consumer 401- 220, 3 rd Avenue South Tel.: (306) 652-5160
	7:30 pm		
Moncton, NB (Sharon Archibald)	5:30 pm	Wednesday, March 29	Omnifacts Bristol Research 720 Main street, 3 rd Floor Tel.: (506) 855-5510
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	7:30 pm		

1. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- *Focus groups are used as a learning tool. The process is not to build consensus, but to explore the range of reactions.*
- *Findings may or may not represent the target population at large.*

This initial stage of the discussion is to establish a level of confidence and a rapport between the moderator and the participants. Participants are informed of the purpose of the discussion and what is expected of them.

Participants in this group were NOT invited to visit the site before attending their session.

GUIDELINES

- Word of welcome and introduction of moderator. CELL PHONES OFF
- Objectives of the research: “To gather your opinions, impressions, expectations and suggestions as a **potential user of the new website “EnergyWatch Canada” produced by the “Office of Petroleum Price Information”**”.
- *We are going to look at and discuss a **prototype** of the new EnergyWatch Canada website. I would like to have your honest feedback on what you like, dislike, etc. There are no right or wrong answers. All opinions are acceptable. All your answers will remain confidential. Your opinions will be combined with those of other participants to help improve this website. Any help you can give us is appreciated.*
- Role of moderator / observer behind one-way mirror / taping for research purposes only.
- Neutrality of moderator (*doesn't work for the government or any organization related to the topic being discussed, is definitely not an expert on the internet, intranet or information technology and is not here to judge anything or anyone but only to listen*).
- Role of participants
- Duration: 2 hours
- Are there any questions?

GO-AROUND

- Given name, brief description of current occupation
- Average # of hours/day on Internet – for work / personal use
- Apart from e-mail and chatting, what do you use the Internet for, at home?
- Which government websites have you visited, say, in the past year?

2. WARM-UP (5 minutes)

Before we take a look at the EnergyWatch Canada website (prototype), I would like to talk about information related to energy in general and to oil products in particular.

Moderator: *Do not display any page of the site (black screen).*

1. How interested are you in information about oil product **prices**?
 - What **kinds of information** about oil product prices are you most likely to look for?
2. What kinds of **oil products** are most relevant to you, personally?
3. What kinds of **other consumer information related to energy** are you most interested in?
4. How easy or difficult is it for you to understand consumer information related to:
 - Energy prices?
 - Energy efficiency?

3. THE ENERGYWATCH CANADA WEBSITE (1 hour and 10 minutes)

- **Explain procedure.** “We are now going to take a look at the EnergyWatch Canada website. This prototype is still under development and some links may not work, but are there to give you an idea of the new site's content.”

Moderator:

- Access http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/ewc/index_e.htm
- Display HOME PAGE

Moderator: *When the HOME PAGE is displayed, do not go further, but engage discussion.*

(Moderator: use the mouse / pointer when required.)

FIRST IMPRESSION / HOME PAGE (25 minutes)

1. Looking at the home page, what is your **first impression**?
 - Does it look familiar? Interesting?
 - What do you **like / dislike** about it?
 - On its own, what does it tell you about the site's **content**
2. Just by looking at this first page. . .
 - Do you **anticipate any difficulties** using this site?
 - Is there anything that seems **confusing**? What?
 - Who do you think this first page is **aimed** at? At you?
 - (If not) What would make it seem like it's aimed at you?

3. Without looking at the screen, what is the **main purpose** of this site?
4. Briefly **describe** how this page is **organized**.
5. What do you think / how do you feel about the various ways to **access the content**? (*Moderator: Do not click on each tab. For each tab, ask*)
 - What do you think of the **words, names**, labels, style of language used?
 - What do you **expect to find** behind this tab?
 - Understanding Energy Prices
 - Energy Prices
 - Energy Facts
 - Managing Your Energy Costs
 - Renewable Energy
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Check Provincial Gasoline Prices?
 - Gasoline Price History
 - Calculators?
 - What about the information in the centre of the page
 - What You Asked Us
 - News
 - Did you know?
6. Anything important **missing**? Anything **unnecessary** included?
7. On a scale of 1 to 10, (1 is extremely low, 10 extremely high)
 - How **useful** is the homepage?
 - What made you give this rating?
 - How **easy to use** is the homepage?
 - What made you give this rating?
8. How would you **improve** the homepage?

2nd LEVEL PAGES FROM LEFT MENU: EXPLORATORY (30 minutes – about 5 minutes each page)
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Moderator: *When clicking a related link that leads to an external website: observe participant's reaction, probe how people feel about it.*

Please, look at this briefly (**moderator:** *quickly browse through the page and sub-level pages to show its content*)

- Understanding Energy Prices
- Energy Prices
- Energy Facts
- Managing Your Energy Costs
- Renewable Energy
- Frequently Asked Questions

Moderator:

FOR EACH TAB / PAGE ask, when appropriate:

1. Is this what you **expected**?
 - Does it look **easy to use**?
 - Is this information of **interest** to you?
 - Is anything **missing**?
 - Is anything **unnecessary**?
2. How can this page be **improved**?

**2nd LEVEL PAGES FROM RIGHT MENU: EXPLORATORY
(10 minutes - in total)**

1. Please, look at this briefly and tell me what you think of it
 - **Check Provincial Gasoline Prices**
 - What do you think of the **presentation format** used?
 - How **easy** is it to use?
 - How interested are you in this information?
2. Please, look at this briefly and tell me what you think of it
 - **Calculators**
 - How **easy** is it to use?
 - What do you think of the **style of language** used?
 - How interested are you in this information?
 - What other kind of calculators would you like to find on this site?

NAME OF SITE (5 minutes)

1. What do you think of the name **EnergyWatch Canada**?
 - Is it a good choice?
 - What do you think of the expression 'fuelled by OPPI'?

Moderator: *click on the name on the visual banner – which switches to About Us'*

2. On the banner, when you click on the name, you go to this page '**About Us**'. Is it a **good choice** to link to this page?
 - What would you prefer: to be switched to 'About Us' or to the 'Home page'?

4. TASKS (30 minutes)

Moderator: Have participants (a different participant for each task) try to accomplish the following tasks and ask them to comment out loud while they are performing the tasks (2 minutes per task).

Ask: Please find...

1. THE COST OF HEATING OIL THAT YOU WOULD PAY IN THUNDER BAY.
2. INFORMATION TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND RECENT GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES.
3. EXISTING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO HELP CANADIANS SAVE ENERGY.
4. HOW MUCH YOU PAY IN TAXES PER LITRE OF GASOLINE.

OVERALL IMPRESSION AFTER COMPLETION OF THE TASKS (15 minutes)

1. Briefly describe the EnergyWatch Canada website.
 - What it is all about?
 - What can be found on the site?
2. Overall, what do you think/how do you feel about the site? (*List on flip chart or write down.*)
 - What did you **like the most**? Anything else?
 - What did you **dislike the most**? Anything else?
 - What did you **learn** as a result of looking at this site?
 - What was **unique or new** about this site?
 - Anything **confusing** about this site?
3. Overall, for a Government of Canada site dedicated to oil product prices, how well did it **meet your expectations**?
 - Were there any surprises? Any disappointments?
 - Any duplication with another site or sites that you have visited?
 - What would make it more appropriate to your own needs?
 - Did you trust the information contained on the site? How accurate did you think it was?
4. Why would you consult this site?
 - If you needed some information on oil product prices, would you **start with** this site? Why / why not?
5. Would you **bookmark** this site?
 - Recommend it to friends?
6. If you had to look for information you expected to find in this site, but could not find it, what would you do?
7. If you had to find this site but could not remember its name, what would you do? How would you try to find it?
 - What 3 keywords would you use with a search engine?

LOOK & FEEL (5 minutes)

8. Overall, how would you describe the look and feel of this site?
 - What did you think/feel about the colours? The visual?
 - Is it a good choice?
 - How **readable** was it?
 - How would you **improve** it?

5. END OF DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

OVERALL RATING

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, (*1 is low and 10 is high*), how would you rate this site on...?
 - Ease of use?
 - Usefulness?
2. **What made** the Government of Canada launch this website?
 - Do you approve of this initiative?
3. What **main improvement** would you make on this site?
4. Is there anything more you'd like to add to the discussion, parting comments? (Go round)

Thank you. Your participation was very much appreciated!

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Phase 2

- Experienced Visitors -



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- Role of moderator / observer behind one-way mirror / taping for research purposes only.
- Neutrality of moderator (*doesn't work for the government or any organization related to the topic being discussed, is definitely not an expert on the Internet, Intranet or information technology, and is not here to judge anything or anyone but only to listen*).
- Role of participants
- Duration: 2 hours
- Are there any questions?

GO-AROUND

- Given name, brief description of current occupation
- Average # of hours/day on Internet – for work / personal use
- Apart from e-mail and chatting, what do you use the Internet for, at home?
- Which government websites have you visited, say, in the past year?

2. WARM-UP (5 minutes)

Before we take a look at the EnergyWatch Canada website (prototype), I would like to talk about information related to energy in general and to oil products in particular.

Moderator: *Do not display any page of the site (black screen).*

1. How interested are you in information about oil product **prices**?
 - What **kinds of information** about oil product prices are you most likely to look for?
2. What kinds of **oil products** are most relevant to you, personally?
3. What kinds of **other consumer information related to energy** are you most interested in?
4. How easy or difficult is it for you to understand consumer information related to:
 - Energy prices?
 - Energy efficiency?

3. THE ENERGYWATCH CANADA WEBSITE (1 hour and 22 minutes)

1. Now, how would you **briefly describe** the EnergyWatch Canada website you tried recently? (5 minutes)
 - What it is all about?
 - What can be found on the site?
 - How **familiar with the Internet** do you need to be to use this site with ease?
 - How **useful** could this site be?
 - Who would probably find it useful?

- **Explain procedure.** “We are now going to take a look at the EnergyWatch Canada website. This prototype is still under development and some links may not work, but are there to give you an idea of the new site's content.”

Moderator:

- Access http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/ewc/index_e.htm
- Display HOME PAGE

Moderator: *When the HOME PAGE is displayed, do not go further and engage discussion.*

OVERALL IMPRESSION (10 minutes)

(Quick go-around without probing too much)

1. Overall, what do you think / how do you feel about the site?
2. What did you **like / dislike** about the **site**? (*flip chart*).
 - What did you **like the most? Dislike the most?**
 - What did you **learn** from using this site?
 - What did you read first?
3. Overall, for a site dedicated to oil product prices and other related consumer information, how well did this site **meet your expectations**?
 - Were there any **surprises**?
 - Any **disappointments**?
 - Any **duplication** with another site or sites that you have visited?
 - Anything **unique or new** about this site?
 - Anything **confusing** about this site?
 - Were any important elements **missing**? What?
 - Did you **trust** the information contained in the site?
4. Why would you **consult** this site?
 - If you needed some information on oil product prices, would you **start with** this site? Why / why not?

LOOK & FEEL (5 minutes)

5. Overall, **describe** the look and feel of the site.
 - What did you think / feel about the **colours**? The visual?
 - Is it a good choice?
 - How readable was it?
 - How would you improve it?

HOME PAGE (10 minutes)

6. **Likes and dislikes** about the **home page**
7. What do you think / how do you feel about the ways you can access the content? (*Moderator: Do not click on each tab*).
 - Understanding Energy Prices – *is it useful?*
 - Energy Prices – *is it useful?*
 - Energy Facts – *is it useful?*
 - Managing Your Energy Costs – *is it useful?*
 - Renewable Energy – *is it useful?*
 - Frequently Asked Questions – *is it useful?*
 - What You Asked Us – *is it useful?*
 - News – *is it useful?*
 - Did You Know? – *is it useful?*

- Check Provincial Gasoline Prices? – *is it useful?*
- Gasoline Price History – *is it useful?*
- Calculators – *is it useful?*

8. Anything important **missing**? Anything **unnecessary**?
9. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is extremely low, 10 is extremely high:
 - How **useful** is the homepage?
 - What made you give this rating?
 - How **easy to use** is the homepage?
 - What made you give this rating?
10. How would you **improve** the homepage?

NAVIGATION / EASE OF USE (5 minutes)

11. How would you **describe** the general way this site is **organised**? How does it work?
12. Overall, who had **difficulties** using the site or completing the tasks?
13. Overall, how much time and effort is needed to **learn how to use** this site?
 - Is it easy to learn or not?
 - If you were telling a friend about this site, would you say it is generally **easy to find** what you are looking for, or difficult?
14. Would you **change** the way this site is organised?

NOMENCLATURE (7 minutes)

15. Are there any words which are unfamiliar or a bit difficult to understand?
 - Overall, are the **terms** meaningful?
 - Which words would you change?
16. What do you think of the name **EnergyWatch Canada**?
 - Is it a good choice?
 - What do you think of the expression 'fuelled by OPPI'?

Moderator: *click on the name on the visual banner – which switches to About Us'*

17. On the banner, when you click on the name, you go to this page '**About Us**'. Is it a **good choice** to link to this page?
 - What would you prefer: to be switched to 'About Us' or to the 'Home page'?

2nd LEVEL PAGES: EXPLORATORY (40 minutes)

Moderator:

FOR EACH TAB / PAGE click the tab and sub-tabs and ask when appropriate (1-3 minutes per tab):

1. Is this what you expected?
2. How **easy** is it to use?
3. What do you think of the **style of language** used (presentation format for Check Provincial Gasoline Prices)?
4. How **interested** are you in this information?
5. Is anything **missing**?
6. Is anything **unnecessary**?

- Understanding Energy Prices
- Energy Prices
- Energy Facts
- Managing Your Energy Costs
- Renewable Energy
- Frequently Asked Questions
- What You Asked Us
- News
- Did You Know?
- Check Provincial Gasoline Prices?
- Calculators?
 - What kind of other calculators would you like to find on this site?

7. How can this page be improved?

Moderator: When clicking a related link that leads to an external website: observe participant's reaction and probe if participants noticed that the site was external and their feelings about it.

4. TASK SCENARIOS (20 minutes)

Now, we're going to talk about the 4 tasks you did at home -- what you did and what you found.

Moderator: Display the home page and engage discussion.

For each task, follow the search pattern of one participant (rotate participants between tasks), then ask others if what they did was the **same or different**, and where (at what step) they encountered difficulties, if any.

1. THE COST OF HEATING OIL THAT YOU WOULD PAY IN THUNDER BAY.
2. INFORMATION TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND RECENT GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES.
3. EXISTING PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP CANADIANS SAVE ENERGY.
4. HOW MUCH YOU PAY IN TAXES PER LITRE OF GASOLINE.

1. Were you able to do this task?
 - How **easy or difficult** was it?
 - How did you proceed?
 - What did you **find**?
 - Were you **pleased** with what you found?

- For Task 4: Before visiting the site, did you know what the oil price was made up of? What it included? Is this important information?
2. Did you look for **other information**, besides what was asked for on the tasks? What? Did you find it?
- If you had to look for information you expected to find on this site, but could not find it, what would you do?

5. END OF DISCUSSION (8 minutes)

OVERALL RATING

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, (1 is low and 10 is high) how would you **rate this site** on...?
 - Ease of use?
 - Usefulness?
2. Would you bookmark this site? Recommend it to friends?
3. If you had to find this site but could not remember its name, what would you do? How would you try to find it?
 - What are the 3 keywords you would use with a search engine?
4. What made the Government of Canada launch this website?
 - Do you **approve** of this initiative?
5. What **main improvement** would you make on this site?
6. Is there anything more you'd like to add to the discussion, parting comments? (Go round)

Thank you. Your participation was very much appreciated!

GUIDE DE DISCUSSION

Phase 2

- Première visite -



<p>TEST DU SITE WEB</p> <p>http://nrca.gc.ca/ewc/index_f.htm</p>	<p>NOMBRE DE GROUPES : N = 18 / 120 min.</p> <p>Groupe 1 – 17h30 : Visiteurs expérimentés Groupe 2 – 19h30 : Première visite</p>
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	19h30		
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1. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- *Les groupes de discussion sont utilisés comme outil exploratoire. Le but de la discussion n'est pas d'aboutir à un consensus, mais bien d'explorer la gamme des réactions.*
- *Les résultats peuvent être ou non représentatifs de la population ciblée dans son ensemble.*

Cette première partie de l'entretien consiste à détendre l'atmosphère et à créer un climat de confiance entre l'animatrice et les participants. Les participants sont informés de l'objectif de la discussion et ce que l'on attend d'eux.

Les participants de ce groupe n'étaient PAS invités à visiter le site avant d'assister à leur session.

CONSIGNES

- Bienvenue et introduction de l'animateur. **FERMEZ VOTRE TÉLÉPHONE CELLULAIRE**
- Objectifs de l'étude : « *Obtenir vos opinions, impressions, attentes et suggestions en tant qu'utilisateur potentiel du nouveau site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada**» réalisé par le « **Bureau d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers** ».* »
- *Nous allons regarder et discuter du prototype du nouveau site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada**». J'aimerais avoir votre opinion franche sur ce que vous aimez, n'aimez pas, etc. Il n'y a ni bonnes, ni mauvaises réponses. Toutes les opinions sont acceptables. Toutes vos réponses demeureront confidentielles. Vos points de vue seront combinés avec ceux des autres participants et vont contribuer à améliorer ce site. Toute aide que vous pouvez nous apporter est appréciée.*
- Rôle de l'animatrice / observateur en arrière du miroir sans tain / enregistrement seulement à des fins de recherche.
- Neutralité de l'animatrice (*ne travaille pas pour le gouvernement ou toute organisation reliée au sujet que nous allons discuter, n'est définitivement pas une experte de l'Internet, l'Intranet ou des technologies de l'information et n'est pas ici pour juger quoi ou qui que ce soit, mais pour écouter*).
- Rôle des participants
- Durée : 2 heures
- Des questions?

TOUR DE TABLE

- Prénom, brève description de l'occupation actuelle
- Moyenne d'heures/jour sur l'Internet – pour le travail/utilisation personnelle
- À part les courriels et le clavardage, dans quels buts utilisez-vous l'Internet à la maison?
- Quels sites gouvernementaux avez-vous visités, disons, au cours de la dernière année?

2. RÉCHAUFFEMENT (10 minutes)

Avant que nous jetions un coup d'œil au prototype du site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada** », j'aimerais que l'on discute de l'information reliée à l'énergie en général et des produits pétroliers en particulier.

Animatrice : Ne montrez aucune page du site (écran noir).

1. Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous intéressés par de l'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers?
 - Quels types d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers êtes-vous le plus susceptible de rechercher?
2. Quels produits pétroliers sont les plus pertinents pour vous, personnellement?
3. En tant que consommateur, quels autres types d'informations relatives à l'énergie vous intéressent le plus?
4. Dans quelle mesure est-ce facile ou difficile pour vous de comprendre l'information destinée aux consommateurs et reliée :
 - Aux prix de l'énergie?
 - À l'efficacité énergétique?

3. LE SITE WEB « Observatoire énergétique Canada » (1 heure et 10 minutes)

- Expliquez la procédure. « Nous allons maintenant jeter un coup d'œil sur le prototype du site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada** ». Notez que ce prototype est toujours en développement et que certains liens peuvent ne pas fonctionner mais ils sont là pour vous donner une idée de ce que serait le contenu. »

Animatrice :

- Accédez au http://rncan.gc.ca/ewc/index_f.htm
- Affichez la **PAGE D'ACCUEIL**

Animatrice : Lorsque la **PAGE D'ACCUEIL** est affichée, n'allez pas plus loin et engagez la discussion.

PREMIÈRE IMPRESSION / PAGE D'ACCUEIL (25 minutes)

1. Juste en regardant la page d'accueil, quelle est votre première impression?
 - Est-ce que ça semble familier? Intéressant?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous plaît / déplaît?
 - Qu'est-ce que cette page seule vous dit à propos du contenu du site?
2. Seulement en regardant cette première page...
 - Anticipez-vous des difficultés à utiliser ce site?
 - Y a-t-il quoi que ce soit qui semble confus? Quoi?
 - À qui pensez-vous que cette première page s'adresse?
 - S'adresse-t-elle à vous?
 - (Si ne s'adresse pas au participant) Qu'aimeriez-vous voir pour faire en sorte qu'elle semble s'adresser à vous?
3. Sans regarder l'écran, quel est à votre avis le principal objectif de ce site?
4. Pourriez-vous décrire brièvement comment cette page est organisée? (**Animatrice** : utilisez la souris / le pointeur lorsque nécessaire.)
5. Que pensez-vous / que ressentez-vous à propos des diverses façons d'accéder au contenu? (*Animatrice* : Ne cliquez pas sur chaque onglet) *Pour chaque onglet, demandez* :
 - Que pensez-vous des mots, des noms, des désignations, du style de langage utilisé?
 - Que vous attendez-vous de trouver derrière cet onglet?
 - Comprenez les prix de l'énergie
 - Prix de l'énergie
 - Faits concernant l'énergie
 - Gérer vos coûts énergétiques
 - Les énergies renouvelables
 - Foire aux questions
 - Vérifiez les prix de l'essence dans votre province
 - Historique du prix de l'essence
 - Calculateurs
 - Que pensez-vous de l'information située au centre de la page?
 - Les questions que vous nous avez posées?
 - Nouvelles
 - Le saviez-vous?
6. Y a-t-il quelque chose d'important qui manque?
 - Y a-t-il quelque chose d'inutile qui est inclus?

7. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 signifie extrêmement faible, 10 signifie extrêmement élevé, dans quelle mesure la page d'accueil est-elle utile?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous a amené à donner cette note?
8. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 signifie extrêmement faible, 10 signifie extrêmement élevé, dans quelle mesure la page d'accueil vous apparaît-elle facile à utiliser?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous a amené à donner cette note?
9. Comment amélioreriez-vous cette page d'accueil?

PAGES DE 2^{ème} NIVEAU DU MENU DE GAUCHE: EXPLORATOIRE (30 minutes – environ 5 minutes chaque page)

- **Regardez rapidement ce que cet onglet contient comme information (Animatrice : parcourez rapidement au travers de la page et des pages de sous-niveau pour montrer son contenu)**
 - Comprenez les prix de l'énergie
 - Prix de l'énergie
 - Faits concernant l'énergie
 - Gérer vos coûts énergétiques
 - Les énergies renouvelables
 - Foire aux questions

Animatrice :

POUR CHAQUE ONGLET / PAGE, demandez, lorsque approprié :

1. Est-ce ce à quoi vous vous attendiez?
 - facile à utiliser?
 - information qui vous intéresse?
 - quelque chose qui manque?
 - quelque chose d'inutile?
2. Comment cette page pourrait être améliorée?

Animatrice : *Si un clic mène vers un site Web extérieur, observez la réaction des répondants et sondez ce que les gens ressentent par rapport à cela.*

PAGES DE 2^{ème} NIVEAU DU MENU DE DROITE: EXPLORATOIRE (10 minutes – au total)

- Vérifiez les prix de l'essence dans votre province
 - **Regardez rapidement et dites-moi ce que vous en pensez**
 - Dans quelle mesure est-ce facile à utiliser?
 - Que pensez-vous du format, de la présentation?
 - Est-ce que cette information vous intéresse?

- Calculateurs
 - **Regardez rapidement et dites-moi ce que vous en pensez**
 - Dans quelle mesure est-ce facile à utiliser?
 - Que pensez-vous du style de langage utilisé?
 - Est-ce que cette information vous intéresse?
 - Quels autres types de calculatrice aimeriez-vous avoir sur ce site?

NOM DU SITE (5 minutes)

1. Que pensez-vous du nom pour ce site « Observatoire énergétique Canada »?
 - Est-ce un bon choix?
 - Que pensez-vous de « propulsé par le BIPPP »?
2. **Animatrice** : Cliquez sur le nom du site sur la bannière visuelle et vous êtes redirigée sur « À propos du Bureau ». Dites : lorsque vous cliquez sur le nom du site, on vous dirige automatiquement à la rubrique « À propos du Bureau ». Est-ce un bon lien à cette page?
 - Que préféreriez-vous : être redirigé à « À propos du Bureau » ou à la « Page d'accueil »

4. TÂCHES (30 minutes)

Animatrice : Faire en sorte que les participants (un participant différent pour chaque tâche) essaient d'accomplir les tâches suivantes et commentent à voix haute tout en effectuant les tâches (**2 minutes par tâche**).

Demander : Pourriez-vous trouver...

1. LE COÛT DE L'HUILE À CHAUFFAGE QUE VOUS PAYERIEZ À THUNDER BAY?
2. DE L'INFORMATION POUR COMPRENDRE LES AUGMENTATIONS RÉCENTES DU PRIX DE L'ESSENCE?
3. LES PROGRAMMES DISPONIBLES POUR AIDER LES CANADIENS À SAUVER DE L'ÉNERGIE?
4. QUEL MONTANT VOUS PAYEZ EN TAXES PAR LITRE D'ESSENCE?

IMPRESSION GÉNÉRALE APRÈS AVOIR EFFECTUÉ LES TÂCHES (15 minutes)

1. Maintenant, comment décririez-vous brièvement le site Web de « Observatoire énergétique Canada »?
 - De quoi s'agit-il?
 - Que peut-on trouver sur le site?

2. Dans l'ensemble, que pensez-vous / ressentez-vous par rapport au site? (*Listez sur flip chart ou inscrire.*)
- Qu'est-ce qui vous a **plu** le plus? Autre chose?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous a **déplu** le plus? Autre chose?
 - Qu'avez-vous **appris** en visualisant ce site?
 - Qu'est-ce qui est unique ou nouveau par rapport à ce site?
 - Quelque chose de confus à propos de ce site?
3. Dans l'ensemble, pour un site du gouvernement du Canada destiné aux prix des produits de l'huile, dans quelle mesure ce site a-t-il **répondu à vos attentes**?
- Avez-vous eu des surprises?
 - Des déceptions?
 - Des redondances / chevauchements avec d'autres sites que vous avez visités?
 - Qu'est-ce qui le rendrait plus approprié à vos propres besoins?
 - Faites-vous confiance à l'information contenue sur ce site? Dans quelle mesure l'information est-elle précise, selon vous?
4. Pourquoi consulteriez-vous ce site?
- Si vous aviez besoin d'information sur les prix des produits de l'huile, **commenceriez-vous d'abord par** ce site? Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas?
 - Mettriez-vous ce site dans vos signets / favoris? Le recommanderiez-vous à des amis?
 - Si vous aviez à rechercher de l'information que vous imaginez pouvoir trouver sur ce site mais qui n'y serait pas, que feriez-vous?
5. Si vous aviez à trouver ce site mais vous ne vous rappelez plus du nom, que feriez-vous? Comment tenteriez-vous de le trouver?
- Quels seraient les 3 mots clés que vous utiliseriez pour tenter de le trouver avec un moteur de recherche?

ASPECT ET CONVIVIALITÉ (5 minutes)

6. Dans l'ensemble, comment décririez-vous l'aspect et la convivialité de ce site?
- Que pensez-vous / ressentez-vous à propos des couleurs? Du visuel? Est-ce un bon choix?
 - Dans quelle mesure est-il lisible?
 - Comment l'amélioreriez-vous?

5. FIN DE LA DISCUSSION (5 minutes)

ÉVALUATION D'ENSEMBLE

1. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, comment évalueriez-vous ce site en termes... (1 étant une note faible et 10 élevée)
 - de facilité d'utilisation?
 - d'utilité?
2. À votre avis, qu'est-ce qui a amené le gouvernement du Canada à faire ce site Web?
 - Appuyez-vous cette initiative?
3. Quelle serait la **principale amélioration** que vous apporteriez à ce site?
4. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter à la discussion, derniers commentaires? (Faire un tour de table)

Merci. Votre participation a été très appréciée!

GUIDE DE DISCUSSION

Phase 2

- Visiteurs expérimentés -



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1. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- *Les groupes de discussion sont utilisés comme outil exploratoire. Le but de la discussion n'est pas d'aboutir à un consensus, mais bien d'explorer la gamme des réactions.*
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Cette première partie de l'entretien consiste à détendre l'atmosphère et à créer un climat de confiance entre l'animatrice et les participants. Les participants sont informés de l'objectif de la discussion et ce que l'on attend d'eux.

Les participants de ce groupe étaient invités à visiter le site et à exécuter certaines tâches de base avant d'assister à leur session.

CONSIGNES

- Bienvenue et introduction de l'animatrice. FERMEZ VOTRE TÉLÉPHONE CELLULAIRE
- Objectifs de l'étude : « *Recueillir vos opinions, impressions, attentes et suggestions en tant qu'utilisateur potentiel du nouveau site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada**» réalisé par le « **Bureau d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers** ».* »
- *Nous allons utiliser et discuter du prototype du nouveau site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada**» que vous avez utilisé récemment. J'aimerais avoir votre opinion franche sur ce que vous aimez, n'aimez pas, etc. Il n'y a ni bonnes, ni mauvaises réponses. Toutes les opinions sont acceptables. Toutes vos réponses demeureront confidentielles. Vos points de vue seront combinés avec ceux des autres participants et vont contribuer à améliorer ce site. Toute aide que vous pouvez nous apporter est appréciée.*
- Rôle de l'animatrice / observateur en arrière du miroir sans tain / enregistrement seulement à des fins de recherche.
- Neutralité de l'animatrice (*ne travaille pas pour le gouvernement ou toute organisation reliée au sujet que nous allons discuter, n'est définitivement pas une experte de l'Internet, l'Intranet ou des technologies de l'information et n'est pas ici pour juger quoi ou qui que ce soit, mais pour écouter*).
- Rôle des participants
- Durée : 2 heures
- Des questions?

TOUR DE TABLE

- Prénom, brève description de l'occupation actuelle
- Moyenne d'heures/jour sur l'Internet – pour le travail/utilisation personnelle
- À part les courriels et le clavardage, dans quels buts utilisez-vous l'Internet à la maison?
- Quels sites gouvernementaux avez-vous visités, disons, au cours de la dernière année?

2. RÉCHAUFFEMENT (10 minutes)

Avant que nous jetions un coup d'œil au prototype du site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada** », j'aimerais que nous discutons de l'information reliée à l'énergie en général et des produits pétroliers en particulier.

Animatrice : Ne montrez aucune page du site (écran noir).

1. Dans quelle mesure êtes-vous intéressé par de l'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers?
 - Quels types d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers êtes-vous le plus susceptible de rechercher?
2. Quels produits pétroliers sont les plus pertinents pour vous, personnellement?
3. En tant que consommateur, quels autres types d'informations relatives à l'énergie vous intéressent le plus?
4. Dans quelle mesure est-ce facile ou difficile pour vous de comprendre l'information destinée aux consommateurs et reliée :
 - Aux prix de l'énergie?
 - À l'efficacité énergétique?

3. LE SITE WEB DE « Observatoire énergétique Canada » (1 heure et 22 minutes)

1. Maintenant, comment décririez-vous brièvement le site Web de « **Observatoire énergétique Canada** » que vous avez essayé? (5 minutes)
 - De quoi s'agit-il?
 - Que peut-on trouver sur le site?
 - Dans quelle mesure faut-il être familier avec Internet pour utiliser ce site avec aisance?
 - Dans quelle mesure ce site pourrait vous être utile?
 - Qui pourrait trouver ce site utile?

- Expliquez la procédure. « Nous allons maintenant jeter un coup d'œil au site Web « **Observatoire énergétique Canada** ». Notez que ce prototype est toujours en développement et que certains liens peuvent ne pas fonctionner mais ils sont là pour vous donner une idée de ce que serait le contenu. »

Animatrice :

- Accédez au http://nrcan.gc.ca/ewc/index_f.htm
- Affichez la PAGE D'ACCUEIL

Animatrice : Lorsque la **PAGE D'ACCUEIL** est affichée, n'allez pas plus loin et engagez la discussion.

IMPRESSION D'ENSEMBLE (10 minutes)

(Tour de table rapide sans trop sonder)

1. Dans l'ensemble, que pensez-vous / ressentez-vous par rapport à ce site?
2. Qu'est-ce qui vous a **plu / déplu** à propos de ce site? (Listez sur flip chart ou inscrire.)
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous a plu le plus?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous a déplu le plus?
 - Qu'avez-vous **appris** en utilisant ce site?
 - Qu'avez-vous lu en premier?
3. Dans l'ensemble, pour un site destiné aux prix des produits pétroliers et à d'autres informations pour les consommateurs, dans quelle mesure ce site a-t-il **répondu à vos attentes**?
 - Avez-vous eu des surprises?
 - Des déceptions?
 - Des redondances / chevauchements avec d'autres sites que vous avez visités?
 - Quelque chose d'unique ou de nouveau à propos de ce site?
 - Quelque chose de confus à propos de ce site?
 - Y avait-il des éléments importants qui manquaient? Pourquoi?
 - Faites-vous confiance à l'information contenue sur ce site?
4. Pourquoi consulteriez-vous ce site?
 - Si vous aviez besoin d'information sur les prix des produits pétroliers, **commenceriez-vous d'abord par** ce site? Pourquoi/Pourquoi pas?

ASPECT ET CONVIVIALITÉ (5 minutes)

5. Dans l'ensemble, comment décririez-vous l'aspect et la convivialité de ce site?
 - Qu'avez-vous pensé / ressenti à propos des couleurs? Du visuel? Est-ce un bon choix?
 - Dans quelle mesure était-ce lisible?
 - Comment l'amélioreriez-vous?

PAGE D'ACCUEIL (10 minutes)

6. Ce qui plaît et déplaît
7. Que pensez-vous / ressentez-vous à propos des façons d'accéder au contenu? (**Animatrice : Ne cliquez pas sur chaque onglet**) Pour chaque onglet, demandez :
 - Comprenez les prix de l'énergie -- Est-ce utile?
 - Prix de l'énergie -- Est-ce utile?
 - Faits concernant l'énergie -- Est-ce utile?
 - Gérer vos coûts énergétiques -- Est-ce utile?

- Les énergies renouvelables -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Foire aux questions -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Les questions que vous nous avez posées-- *Est-ce utile?*
- Nouvelles -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Le saviez-vous? -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Vérifiez les prix de l'essence dans votre province? -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Historique du prix de l'essence -- *Est-ce utile?*
- Calculateurs -- *Est-ce utile?*

8. Y a-t-il quelque chose d'important qui manque?
- Y a-t-il quelque chose d'inutile?
9. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 signifie extrêmement faible, 10 signifie extrêmement élevé, dans quelle mesure la page d'accueil est-elle utile?
- Qu'est-ce qui vous a amené à donner cette note?
10. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, où 1 signifie extrêmement faible, 10 signifie extrêmement élevé, dans quelle mesure la page d'accueil est-elle facile à utiliser?
- Qu'est-ce qui vous a amené à donner cette note?
11. Comment amélioreriez-vous cette page d'accueil?

NAVIGATION / FACILITÉ D'UTILISATION (5 minutes)

12. Comment décririez-vous l'organisation générale de ce site? Comment ça fonctionne?
13. Dans l'ensemble, qui a eu des **difficultés** à utiliser le site ou à effectuer les tâches?
14. Dans l'ensemble, combien de temps et d'effort faut-il pour **apprendre comment utiliser** ce site?
- Est-ce facile à apprendre ou non?
 - Si vous parliez de ce site à un ami, lui diriez-vous qu'il est généralement **facile d'y trouver** ce que vous recherchez, ou difficile?
15. **Que changeriez**-vous à la façon dont ce site est organisé?

TERMINOLOGIE (7 minutes)

16. Y a-t-il des mots avec lesquels vous n'êtes pas familiers ou qui sont un peu difficiles à comprendre?
- Dans l'ensemble, est-ce que les **termes** utilisés sont évocateurs, parlent-ils d'eux-mêmes?
 - Quels mots changeriez-vous?

17. Que pensez-vous du nom Observatoire énergétique Canada? Est-ce un bon choix?

- **Animatrice** : Cliquez sur le nom du site sur la bannière visuelle et vous êtes redirigée vers « À propos de bureau ». Dites : Lorsque vous cliquez sur le nom du site, on vous dirige automatiquement à la rubrique « À propos de bureau ». Est-ce un bon lien à cette page?
 - Que préféreriez-vous : être redirigé à « À propos de bureau » ou à la « Page d'accueil »

PAGES DE 2^{ème} NIVEAU : EXPLORATOIRE (40 minutes)

- Comprenez les prix de l'énergie
- Prix de l'énergie
- Faits concernant l'énergie
- Gérer vos coûts énergétiques
- Les énergies renouvelables
- Foire aux questions
- Les questions que vous nous avez posées
- Nouvelles
- Le saviez-vous?
- Vérifiez les prix de l'essence dans votre province?
- Calculateurs
 - Quel autre genre de calculatrices aimeriez-vous retrouver sur ce site?

Animatrice :

POUR CHAQUE ONGLET / PAGE, cliquez sur l'onglet et les sous-onglets et demandez, lorsque approprié (1-3 minutes par onglet) :

1. Est-ce ce à quoi vous vous attendiez?

- Dans quelle mesure est-ce facile à utiliser?
- Que pensez-vous du style de langage utilisé?
- Êtes-vous intéressé par cette information?
- Quelque chose qui manque?
- Quelque chose d'inutile?

- *Pour l'onglet de la calculatrice, demandez : quels autres types de calculatrice aimeriez-vous avoir sur ce site?*

2. Comment peut-on améliorer cette page?

Animatrice : *Si un clic mène vers un site Web extérieur, observez la réaction des répondants. Si les participants remarquent que le site était à l'extérieur, sondez leurs sentiments par rapport à cela.*

4. SCÉNARIOS DE TÂCHE (20 minutes)

Maintenant, nous allons parler des tâches que vous avez effectuées à la maison, ce que vous avez fait et ce que vous avez trouvé.

Animatrice : Affichez la page d'accueil et engagez la discussion.

*Pour chaque tâche, suivez la façon dont s'y prend un participant pour faire sa recherche (alternez les participants d'une tâche à l'autre). Ensuite demandez aux autres si ce qu'ils ont fait était **semblable ou différent**, à quel endroit (à quelle étape) ont-ils rencontré des difficultés, s'ils en ont eues.*

1. LE COÛT DE L'HUILE À CHAUFFAGE QUE VOUS PAYERIEZ À THUNDER BAY.
2. DE L'INFORMATION POUR COMPRENDRE LES AUGMENTATIONS RÉCENTES DU PRIX DE L'ESSENCE.
3. LES PROGRAMMES DISPONIBLES POUR AIDER LES CANADIENS À SAUVER DE L'ÉNERGIE.
4. QUEL MONTANT VOUS PAYEZ EN TAXES PAR LITRE D'ESSENCE.

1. Avez-vous été capable d'accomplir cette tâche?
 - Dans quelle mesure cela a été facile ou difficile?
 - Comment avez-vous procédé?
 - Qu'avez-vous trouvé?
 - Avez-vous été satisfait de ce que vous avez trouvé?
 - Pour la tâche 4 : Avant d'avoir visité le site, saviez-vous de quoi était composé le prix du carburant? Qu'est-ce que ça incluait? Est-ce une information importante?
2. Avez-vous recherché de l'information autre que les tâches que vous étiez invité à accomplir? Qu'est-ce que vous avez recherché? L'avez-vous trouvé?
 - Si vous aviez à rechercher de l'information que vous imaginez pouvoir trouver sur ce site mais qui n'y serait pas, que feriez-vous?

5. FIN DE LA DISCUSSION (8 minutes)

ÉVALUATION D'ENSEMBLE

1. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10 (1 étant une note faible et 10 élevée), comment évalueriez-vous ce site en termes...
 - de facilité d'utilisation?
 - d'utilité?
2. Mettriez-vous ce site dans vos signets / favoris? Le recommanderiez-vous à des amis?
3. Si vous aviez à trouver ce site mais vous ne vous rappelez plus de son nom, que feriez-vous? Comment tenteriez-vous de le trouver?
 - Quels seraient les 3 mots clés que vous utiliseriez pour tenter de le trouver avec un moteur de recherche?
4. À votre avis, qu'est-ce qui a amené le gouvernement du Canada à faire ce site Web?
 - Appuyez-vous cette initiative?
5. Quelle serait la **principale amélioration** que vous apporteriez à ce site?
6. Y a-t-il autre chose que vous aimeriez ajouter à la discussion, derniers commentaires? (Faire un tour de table)

Merci. Votre participation a été très appréciée!