Demonstration: *Otago InForm* – Online Evaluation Request System

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation questionnaires can be an invaluable resource for teachers, allowing them to gauge student understanding of a course or the effectiveness of a particular approach to teaching. Questionnaire feedback can be used for a wide range of purposes – including departmental reviews, staff confirmation and promotion processes, and performance appraisal – and as such, staff members must be able to tailor questionnaires to satisfy their specific requirements. Until recently, the process for ordering a student evaluation form at the University of Otago has been almost exclusively paper-based, requiring staff to fill in request forms by hand and reference various supplementary documents to indicate their preferred set of evaluation questions. Despite the fact that it has become well-established over the past ten years, such a system is unnecessarily complex for academic staff and difficult to administer. Following the recommendations of a review panel, evaluation administration staff decided that the implementation of an online request system would result in easier and more accurate ordering of student evaluations. Aiming for widespread adoption of the new system, a user-centred design approach was used to translate the existing process into the digital realm, simplifying tasks where possible while maintaining staff expectations of how the system should work.

Categories and Subject Descriptors  
H.5.2 [User Interfaces]: Interaction styles, user-centered design

General Terms  
Design, Human Factors.

Keywords  
Student evaluation, user-centred design, complexity, paper-based, online, compatibility

THE DEMONSTRATION

We are demonstrating the process undertaken by staff to order an evaluation online. After logging in with a valid University username and password, staff members are able to create a request for a student evaluation questionnaire. The user selects the type of evaluation they would like to order from a dropdown list, and chooses from the available templates. These decisions determine which question catalogue the user can draw from, and may also result in compulsory questions being added to the form. The user can open the question catalogue by clicking the corresponding link in the control panel; it will appear as an overlay on the right-hand side of the screen. Questions are then added or removed to the request form by accessing a menu of options.

The ‘virtual paper’ in the centre of the screen displays the questions that have been added, as well as providing feedback to the user on their progress. A red message will alert the user to any problems with their request (such as an incorrect number of questions), and a green message will appear when the request is ready for submission.

Once a request is able to be submitted, the user is taken to a ‘checkout page’ where they confirm their personal details and provide other administration details such as course code, number of participants, and desired distribution method. Once all required information has been supplied, the user confirms that all request details are correct and submits their order. The request is emailed to the evaluation administration team and copied to the staff member.

This ordering system represents one step in reconceptualising the wider evaluation administration process, and there are further efficiencies to be gained from future development. Specifically, we aim to automate the generation of formatted questionnaires and streamline the scanning of completed questionnaires. Eventually, we also aim to incorporate evaluation results into the system for easier access by staff.