Raising the Design Voice in Government: A Case Study

Government UX Summit // May 15, 2019
Hello!

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User Experience Specialist
GSA

Julia Bradshaw
User Experience Designer
Forum One
What we’ll cover

1. Background
2. Progress we’ve made
3. Struggles we’re facing
4. Case study: Per Diem Lookup
5. Mini case studies
6. Additional progress we need to make
7. How can you do this?
8. Q&A
About the UX effort

● Team members:
  ○ Program manager
  ○ Part-time consultants
    ■ Usability
    ■ Analytics
    ■ Project manager
● Time period: Sep 2016 to present
● Scope: GSA’s entire digital presence
● Objectives: Provide recommendations to improve based on analytics and usability
About GSA.gov

- **Purpose:**
  - Primary external-facing site

- **Complexity:**
  - 8 primary audiences
  - 11 primary audience goals
  - 7000 pages
  - Hands off to hundreds of other GSA websites

- **Content model:** Distributed authorship

- **UX maturity:** Early stages

- **Content organization:** mostly organization-based
Progress we’ve made

Count designs

- Sites tested: 8
- Sites implemented recommendations: 5

Count efforts that position us to be able to influence design

- Learning organizational challenges
- Developing strategic plays
- Increased organizational interest in analytics/usability
- Work closely with departments throughout the agency
- Increased self-sufficiency throughout the agency in analytics/usability
The struggles we’re facing

1. We lack authority
2. We lack implementation resources
3. Underlying business process is not human centered
What does it take to increase UX maturity?

- Shared vision
- Immersive exposure
- Continual learning

https://articles.uie.com/increasing-an-organizations-ux-design-maturity-our-not-so-secret-sauce/
# Mitigating the struggles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Struggle</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. We lack authority                          | ● Don’t test sites we can’t change.  
   ○ Get signed Letter of Intent from responsible party to implement agreed upon solutions  
   ○ Align with high visibility initiatives or other initiatives that:  
     ■ Are user-centered  
     ■ Have funded implementation  
     ■ Want our help |
| 2. We lack implementation resources           |                                                                                                                                              |
| 3. Underlying business process is not human centered | ● Align with projects that use an agile development process  
   ● Otherwise negotiate an embedded UX process |
Case Study:
Per Diem
Lookup
FY 2016 Per Diem Rates for District of Columbia / Maryland

(October 2015 - September 2016)

Cities not appearing below may be located within a county for which rates are listed. To determine what county a city is located in, visit the National Association of Counties (NACO) website (a non-federal website).

The following rates apply for District of Columbia / Maryland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Destination (1, 2)</th>
<th>Max Lodging by Month (excluding taxes)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>$222</td>
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</table>

Footnotes

1. Traveler reimbursement is based on the location of the work activities and not the accommodations, unless lodging is not available at the work activity, then the agency may authorize the rate where lodging is obtained.
2. Unless otherwise specified, the per diem locality is defined as "all locations within, or entirely surrounded by, the corporate limits of the key city, including independent entities located within those boundaries."
3. Per diem localities with county definitions shall include "all locations within, or entirely surrounded by, the corporate limits of the key city as well as the boundaries of the listed counties, including independent entities located within the boundaries of the key city and the listed counties (unless otherwise listed separately)."
4. When a military installation or Government-related facility (whether or not specifically named) is located partially within more than one city or county boundary, the applicable per diem rate for the entire installation or facility is the higher of the rates which apply to the cities and/or counties, even though part(s) of such activities may be located outside the defined per diem locality.
5. Meals and Incidental Expenses, see Breakdown of M&IE Expenses for important information on first and last days of travel.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Continental Breakfast/Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>IE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$51</td>
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<tr>
<td>$74</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table lists the amount federal employees receive for the first and last calendar day of travel. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>First &amp; Last Day of Travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$51</td>
<td>$38.25</td>
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<td>$51.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$55.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Per Diem?

59% of all GSA.gov pageviews are per diem related

- Top user task on GSA.gov
- Customer satisfaction score in FY16 Q1 & Q2 for per diem and travel was 83/100.
- Good relationship with product owner
Timeline

**February 2017**
- Start testing
- Ok, not great testing results; here are some improvements.

**May 2017**
- Oooof. Another team of dev coming in. Not receptive to input.

**June 2017**
- Short-term improvements
- Let’s keep iterating & testing

**Spring 2018**
- Conflict again!
- Put designs to the test

**July 2018**
- Medium-term improvements
- Let’s keep iterating & testing

**Present**
- But… waiting for resources to become available to make updates.
Tested actual users (determined by interviewing product owner and reviewing customer sat data)
Presented findings & had a collaborative workshop

Presented recommendations - conflict arose

Struggle #3 - Underlying business problem not human centered

Need to clarify roles and build embedded UX process where there had previously been none

**Technique:** Embed UX into process

**Tool:** RACI Matrix
June 2017

- Short-term improvements
- Let’s keep iterating & testing

- Short-term solution implemented
- Fixed M&IE page
- Still difficult 3-step journey, but the last page of journey is easier to understand
Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown

The separated amounts for breakfast, lunch and dinner listed in the chart are provided should you need to deduct any of these meals from your trip voucher. For example, if your trip includes meals that are already paid for by the government (such as through registration fees for a conference), you will need to deduct those meals from your voucher. Refer to Section 301-11.18 of the Federal Travel Regulation for specific guidance on deducting these amounts from your per diem reimbursement claims for meals furnished to you by the government. Other organizations may have different rules that apply for their employees; please check with your organization for more assistance.

The table lists the M&IE rates for personnel in the lower 48 continental United States (currently ranging from $7 to $14). If you need to deduct a meal amount, first determine the location where you will be working while on official travel. You can look up the location-specific information at www.gsa.gov/orme. The M&IE rate for your location will be one of the six rates listed on the table. Find the corresponding amount on the first line of the table (M&IE Total), and then look below for each specific meal deduction amount.

The table also lists the portion of the M&IE rate that is provided for incidental expenses (currently 15% for all rates).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Continental Breakfast/ Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>IE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$63</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$13</td>
<td>$3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$12</td>
<td>$13</td>
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<td>$99</td>
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<td>$84</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$17</td>
<td>$18</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table lists the amount federal employees receive for the first and last calendar day of travel. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>First &amp; Last Day of Travel</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$61</td>
<td>$18.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>$94</td>
<td>$48.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>$99</td>
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<td>$84</td>
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<tr>
<td>$99</td>
<td>$51.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$74</td>
<td>$55.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking for the foreign and outside the continental United States (OCONUS) breakdown chart? Visit FTR Appendix B. Notes: Appendix B breakdowns do not apply to any locations in the continental United States; use the table listed above.)

For all travel policy questions, email travelpolicy@gsa.gov.

PER DIEM RATES

Overview
FY 2018 Per Diem Highlights
Per Diem Mobile App
FAQ
Per Diem Contacts
M&IE Breakdown
Factors Influencing Lodging Rates
Per Diem Boundaries
Fire Safe Hotels
Per Diem Look-up
Per Diem Files (Archived)

Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown

Choose one of the headings below to get meals and incidental expense rates (M&IE) for federal travelers.

- Find total M&IE for travel in the continental U.S.
- Find M&IE breakdown by meal for travel in the continental U.S.

M&IE Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M&amp;IE Total</th>
<th>Continental Breakfast/ Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Incidental Expenses</th>
<th>First &amp; Last Day of Travel</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. This table lists the full daily amount federal employees receive for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel.
2. The separate amounts for breakfast, lunch and dinner listed in the chart are provided should you need to deduct any of those meals from your trip voucher. For example, if your trip includes meals that are already paid for by the government (such as through registration fees for a conference), you will need to deduct those meals from your voucher. Refer to Section 301-11.18 of the Federal Travel Regulation for specific guidance on deducting these amounts from your per diem reimbursement claims for meals furnished to you by the government. Other organizations may have different rules that apply for their employees; please check with your organization for more assistance.
3. This column lists the amount federal employees receive for the first and last calendar day of travel. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75 percent.
- Medium-term solution finally underway
- Reviewed findings & recommendation to combine Lodging and M&IE onto 1 page
- Dev team worked on a prototype and then presented to the UX team
- Decided to A/B Test

**Technique:** A/B Testing  
**Tool:** UserTesting.com; InVision
### Lodging by month (excluding taxes) | October 2018 - September 2019

Cities not appearing below may be located within a county for which rates are listed. To determine what county a city is located in, visit the [National Association of Counties (NACO) website](https://www.naco.org) (a non-federal website).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Destination</th>
<th>County</th>
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<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>$94</td>
<td>$94</td>
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<td>$94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Springs</td>
<td>Garland</td>
<td>$105</td>
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</table>

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

### Meals & Incidentals (M&E) Breakdown

Use this table to find the following information for federal employee travel:

- **M&E Total**: the full daily amount received for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel.
- **Breakfast, lunch, dinner, incidentals**: separate amounts for meals and incidentals. M&E Total = Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner + Incidentals. Sometimes meal amounts must be deducted from trip voucher. [See More Information](#)
- **First & Last day of travel**: amount received on the first and last day of travel and equals 75% of total M&E.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Destination</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>M&amp;E Total</th>
<th>Continental Breakfast/Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
<th>Incidental Expenses</th>
<th>First &amp; Last Day of Travel</th>
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</thead>
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Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard Rate</td>
<td>Applies for all locations without specified rates</td>
<td>$93</td>
<td>$93</td>
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2017 Oct
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2017 Oct

VS

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Applies for all locations without specified rates</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2017 Oct
• Medium-term solution implemented
• Completed round 4 usability testing
Task: Find Total M&IE
Completion Rate
Previous rounds: 50%, 62%  Now: 70%

Average time to complete task
Previous rounds: 2:02, 3:04  Now: 1:21

Task: Find Breakfast Allotment
Completion Rate
Previous rounds: 37%, 37%  Now: 100%

Average time to complete task
Previous rounds: 1:19, 1:07  Now: 0:15
- Development of long-term solution (one seamless automated tripfinder) on hold due to higher priority projects.
Timeline

February 2017
- Start testing
- Ok, not great testing results; here are some improvements.

May 2017
- Oooff. Another team of dev coming in. Not receptive to input.

June 2017
- Short-term improvements
- Let’s keep iterating & testing

Spring 2018
- Conflict again!
- Put designs to the test

July 2018
- Medium-term improvements
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Present
- But... waiting for resources to become available to make updates.
Lessons Learned

1. Establish a plan to collaborate on implementation from the start of the UX effort.
2. Present solution recommendations as timed phases.
3. Create a shared vision of ideal solution.
Bonus Mini Case Study!
IT Schedule
70
IT Schedule 70

We help you shorten procurement cycles, ensure compliance, and get the best value for over 7.5 million innovative IT products, services, and solutions from over 4,600 pre-vetted vendors.

**Buy From IT Schedule 70**

- Do market research in e-library
- How to Order
  - BuyFromGSA Advantage® - online shopping and ordering system
  - BuyFromSome - an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool

**What We Offer**

- Special Item Numbers (SINs) - cyber, cloud, health IT, e-commerce, desktop/laptop
- Solutions: Satellite Services and Telecommunications, Wireless, and Mobility
- Free Scope Compatibility Review

**Sell Through IT Schedule 70**

- Guide to Preparing an IT 570 Offer
- Startup Springboard - fewer than 2 years' professional/project experience? Use this!
- Fast Lane - shorter processing time
- Get the latest solicitation (FCS 08-099003)

**Training and Events**

IT Schedule 70 provides training sessions throughout the year on important topics and processes.

- See all customers and industry partners events
- Prep/Post Award Training
- Keeping your Contract Current
- Contract Modifications Training
- Doing Business with Schedule 70

The shortcut to this page is gsa.gov/schedule70
IT Schedule 70

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- How to Order
  - Buy from GSA Advantage® - online shopping and ordering system
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- Free Scope Compatibility Review

Sell Through IT Schedule 70

- Guide to Preparing an IT STR Offer
- Startup Springboard - fewer than 2 years’ professional/project experience? Use this!
- Fast Lane - shorter processing time
- Get the latest solicitation (FCS-JB-990000-4)

Training and Events

IT Schedule 70 provides training sessions throughout the year on important topics and processes.

- See all customers and industry partners events,
- Pre/Post Award Training
- Keeping your Contract Current
- Contract Modifications Training
- Doing Business with Schedule 70

The shortcut to this page is gsa.gov/schedule70

IT Customer Support

Chat Now!

Call: 800-455-7557
Hours for live chat and calls:
Sun 8 a.m. - Fri 8:30 p.m. CST
Email: ITSC@gsa.gov
Other ways to get support >>

PRESS RELEASE

Expanded Highly Adaptive Cybersecurity Services Now Available on GSA’s IT Schedule 70 (4/4/19)

GREAT GOVERNMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY BLOG

GSA Replaces Expiring FSS Wireless BWAs with New Enhanced Wireless SIN (2/2/19)
Expanding IT Schedule 70’s Cloud SIN to Make It Easier for Customers & Contractors (2/13/19)
Think IT Modernization? Think GSA (10/20/18)
Lessons Learned

1. Take the long-view; Break tasks into sub-tasks and phases
2. Build an implementation task into the project
Bonus Mini Case Study!
Service Blueprint
What we heard

“This is really helpful. Takes what I have [in my head] that’s abstract and makes it a more clear and definitive consideration of all these points.”

“This is .. helpful.. to align a multi-channel user journey .. in which [each] leg of that journey may be optimized to improve the stakeholder experience.”
Lesson Learned

1. Whenever possible align ourselves with people who are practicing human-centered design
What’s next...
The road ahead

- **Per diem**
  - Create shared vision of long-term solution
  - Modernize per diem API dataset
  - Continue to redesign mobile app
- **Partnership with high-level initiative**
  - beta.sam.gov modernization project
  - Federal Marketplace Strategy Digital Experience
  - US Web Design System v 2.0
  - 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act
- **Advocate for improved UX and design integration**
How can you do this?

- Include UX in your next digital design/redesign
  - Incorporate a usability review in the development cycle
  - Mega challenge: Add UX to digital contracts
- Meet whole team at beginning - talk through expectations, goals, how different teams will be woven into the process
- Use a letter of intent to get implementation commitment
- Get an executive champion
- Start working with more receptive teams
- Align with higher visibility initiatives
- Keep good records to support storytelling
Stay encouraged

● Put effort in proper perspective
  ○ Evaluate UX maturity of your organization
  ○ Define your own success accordingly
    ■ In low UX environment, everything counts as a win
● Stay connected with your peers in the UX COP
  ○ Training
  ○ Networking
  ○ Mentoring
● Volunteer for high visibility initiatives
  ■ Make your voice heard
  ■ Advocate for better UX process
Thank you!
Any questions?

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Extra Slides
Background

Narrative

- GSA.gov was formed by joining many disparate organization sites.
- The global navigation evolved to become topic-based, but the majority of content remains organization-centric.

Timeline

- 1994     CIO created GSA.gov
- 1995-1999 each organization developed content, - some on GSA.gov, some on own sites
- 1999     CIO/Public Affairs designated GSA.gov as agency portal
- 1999 - 2003 Major organizations moved some content to the portal
- 2003 - now GSA.gov evolved -- some topic-based content, mostly organization-based
Better UX design maturity makes an organization more competitive and more effective at delivering great products and services. While this is easy to say, we’ve seen this is not easy for key executives and stakeholders to understand. Without that understanding, organizations rarely improve.

Jared Spool

https://articles.uie.com/increasing-an-organizations-ux-design-maturity-our-not-so-secret-sauce/
Progress we’ve made

Quote from Jared Spool

The more the organization has a deep understanding of the challenges and struggles of its customers and users, the more the organization can work to eliminating those struggles and overcoming those challenges.

https://articles.uie.com/increasing-an-organizations-ux-design-maturity-our-not-so-secret-sauce/