

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES NIH - TASK ORDER

RFTOP# 158

TITLE: Usability Study of NIH Health Information Page

PART I – REQUEST FOR TASK ORDER PROPOSALS

A. POINT OF CONTACT NAME: Anthony Revenis

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Proposal Address:

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Rockville, MD 20892-7663

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Bethesda, MD 20892-2045

B. PROPOSED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: To be completed 60 days from date of award.

C. PRICING METHOD: Firm Fixed Price – Firm should provide a single price.

Currently available funding is limited to \$25,000. If, in the opinion of your firm, this is not a sufficient amount to conduct a thorough evaluation of fundamental aspects of the NIH Health Information Page, please specify how to best spend available funds, which tasks will remain undone, and the additional amounts necessary to complete the evaluation. If available funds are more than necessary, a lower proposed price will be reflected in the evaluation scores.

D. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS: Proposals should be submitted by e-mail.

Please enter in the subject line the following text, "RFTOP#158 – Proposal from {insert your firm's name}." A signed task order form may be submitted electronically or will later be requested from the successful bidder.

E. RESPONSE DUE DATE: Proposals are due Monday, September 22, 2003 at 10:00 AM local NIH time.

F. TASK DESCRIPTION:

The NIH Health Information Page (<http://health.nih.gov>) is one of the NIH's most important mechanisms for fulfilling its congressional mandate to disseminate information about its research activities to the public. It provides access to Institute and Center resources

for an audience that includes health consumers, health professionals, business owners, policy-makers, and the media.

The original Health Information Page was launched in 1997 when the OD Online Information Branch (OLIB) converted the existing NIH Information Index into HTML. A pilot usability study was conducted in FY2000 to evaluate the Health Information Page as part of an overall evaluation of the NIH Web site. Nearly every participant who tried to retrieve health information from the Health Information Page experienced significant usability problems.

In answer to these problems, OLIB created a dynamic, database-driven Health Information Page to make resources from the Institutes and Centers more easily accessible. OLIB now wishes to conduct a usability study of the new page to determine if, and to what extent, the content and navigation meet the needs of its primary and secondary stakeholder groups.

1.0 Program Goals

The Goals of the NIH Health Information Page are:

1. To inform NIH audiences about the vital connection between the NIH's research mission and human health;
2. To provide NIH audiences with a single point-of-entry to the online health resources of the Institutes and Centers;
3. To provide these health information seekers with multiple means of displaying and navigating the resources stored in the system;
4. To ensure that NIH's health information seekers can navigate the system and find relevant information in an amount of time they find acceptable; and
5. To continuously obtain knowledge about the health information needs of NIH's audiences in order to improve the content and functionality of the system.

2.0 Key Questions

The Key Questions to be addressed by this usability study are:

1. What do NIH audiences expect from the Health Information Page?
2. Does the Health Information Page help to convey an awareness of NIH's research mission?
3. What level of satisfaction do NIH audiences have with the Health Information Page?
4. Does the current system resolve the navigational problems reported in the pilot usability study?
5. Are there any navigational "hang-ups" in the processes that must be performed using the new page? In what specific ways does the interface design aid or hamper task flow?
6. How satisfied are NIH's target audiences with the content? What are their needs and specific suggestions for improvement?
7. Which browsers/platform are the target audiences using to view the Health Information Page?
8. Which Web sites do NIH audiences frequent? Which features do they favor? Are any of these features applicable to the Health Information Page?

3.0 Study Design

An experienced usability firm shall be contracted to conduct a **heuristic evaluation** of the Health Information page followed by a series of **usability task scenarios**.

3.1 Heuristic Evaluation

The contractor shall perform a high-level evaluation of the Health Information Page, noting obvious usability problems and successes based on their usability experience and emerging Web standards. The contractor shall then meet with OLIB and discuss how the Health Information Page performs, and compare and contrast it with leading Health Web sites (e.g., discoveryhealth.com, mayoclinic.com, WebMD.com, and Intellihealth.com). This discussion will be the basis for developing the usability task scenarios for the study.

3.2 Usability Task Scenarios

The contractor shall work closely with OLIB to develop task scenarios that will

- a) test users' ability to navigate the Health Information Page;
- b) ascertain users' expectations with regard to the content; and
- c) help gauge user preference for existing and desired features.

3.2.1 Recruitment

The contractor shall be responsible for recruiting and scheduling participants for the tests. The contractor shall have an existing recruitment database from which to select participants. A total of 16 participants will be recruited for the study; 8 from each of 2 target audiences: health consumers and health professionals.

The contractor shall recruit participants who have a serious interest in a particular health condition. OLIB hypothesizes that health consumers who personally experience a health condition will have a more vested interest in the outcome of their task scenarios, and will offer more valuable feedback about how they think the page performs as well as their perception of the quality of information they obtain. Likewise, health professionals who specialize in a particular condition will be more likely to provide targeted feedback on how well the Health Information Page helps them serve their patients, and what ways it could be improved to meet their needs.

OLIB will assist the contractor in determining which health conditions to recruit for.

3.2.2 Facilities and Equipment

The usability tests will be conducted at a usability lab where OLIB staff can watch the proceedings from behind a two-way mirror. The lab shall accommodate persons with disabilities. Sessions shall be videotaped with permission of the participant, and copies of the tapes supplied to OLIB at the conclusion of the study.

3.2.3 Moderator's Guide

The contractor shall work closely with OLIB to prepare task scenarios and a moderator's guide that can be tailored *in situ* to the health conditions associate with the recruited participants. The contractor shall administer all tests, assuring each participant that confidentiality will be maintained. OLIB staff may choose to observe some or all of the sessions, and as a result, may make slight changes to the moderator's guide between sessions.

3.2.4 Remuneration

All participants will be remunerated for their time, at a rate determined by the contractor in accordance with industry standards.

3.3 Analysis

The contractor shall summarize the data, analyze it to determine the most pressing usability problems, and make recommendations for resolving those problems. The contractor shall also make recommendations for desirable new features based on usability data.

3.4 Report and Deliverables

The contractor shall deliver two version of the final report. The first, a Microsoft Word narrative, shall describe the results in detail. The second, a Microsoft PowerPoint executive summary, shall present the most salient points and high-level analysis. Both shall be e-mailed to OLIB in anticipation of an informal, wrap-up meeting about the Health Information Page. The contractor shall deliver copies of all videotapes to OLIB.

4.0 Pricing

Firm rates and an hourly ceiling for each labor classification for usability testing. Pricing for the development of task scenarios should be based on labor hours subject to the overall ceiling for the task order. The total amount for participant remuneration must be included as part of the total cost. Facilities costs for the usability lab must be included as part of the total cost.

5.0 Clearances

All studies will be conducted in accordance with OMB regulations. No clearances are required.

G. EVALUATION FACTORS

The contractor shall have demonstrated experience in the following:

- Performing heuristic evaluations
- Recruiting subjects from target populations
- Developing moderators' guides
- Preparing and conducting task analysis sessions
- Administering usability tests in a usability lab setting
- Recording and analyzing response data
- Preparing clear and concise reports and presentations from the response data

Task Order # NICS-158

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PART II - CONTRACTOR'S REPLY: CONTRACT #263-01-D-0 _____

Contractor:

Points of Contact:

Phone-

Fax-

Address:

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:

Pricing Method: FFP

TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOURS:

PROPOSED COMPLETION DATE:

FOR THE

CONTRACTOR: _____
Signature Date

SOURCE SELECTION:

WE HAVE REVIEWED ALL SUBMITTED PROPOSALS HAVE DETERMINED THIS FIRM SUBMITTED THE BEST OVERALL PROPOSAL AND THE PRICE/COST IS REASONABLE.

Billing Reference # _____

Appropriations Data: _____

RECOMMENDED:

FAX # Signature - Project Officer Date

APPROVED: _____

FAX # Signature - Contracting Officer Date

NIH APPROVAL -

CONTRACTOR SHALL NOT EXCEED THE ESTIMATED LABOR HOURS OR ESTIMATED TASK ORDER AMOUNT WITHOUT THE WRITTEN APPROVAL OF THE CONTRACTING OFFICER & ICS COORDINATOR

APPROVED: _____

FAX 301-435-6101 Signature -Anthony M. Revenis, J.D., NIH-ICS Coordinator
Date