**User research: blog notifications**

**May-June 2024**

## Context

Research Assets: <https://blog-nrrd.doi.gov/>

### Background & Scope

The primary objective of the study is to understand how current blog readers prefer to receive notification of new posts (our question from the define phase). This is a discovery phase in which we are defining the best solution regarding blog notifications.

This study is initiated by messages from two users who suggested different methods of receiving new blog post notifications.

User research has never been done on the ODDD blog, therefore we have a secondary objective for this research project: understand the overall usability of the site and determine if there are any other problems or questions regarding the blog that we need to solve.

### Goals

This study is intended to answer the question of how users prefer to receive alerts, with the secondary goal of learning blog user expectations in general.

* How do our blog users prefer to get alerted about new posts from other blogs they read?
* What do those alerts look like? What are user expectations around various types of blog post alerts?
* Are there any features users expect that our blog lacks?

### Method and Desired Participants

Over the course of 1-2 weeks, we aim to interview 8 users in 15-20 minute sessions via Microsoft teams. Due to the nature of our blog, we expect our participants to be individuals working in civic tech.

User Types: Known blog readers

Recruitment Strategy

We will recruit known blog readers by reviewing previous emails and linkedin messages that our team members have received after we post a blog. We will only look for readers we have had recent correspondence (we’ll initially aim for readers we’ve heard from in the past 12 months, if needed we can expand to 18 months)

### Actions taken for inclusivity

* Research team watched a video on Trauma-Informed UXR for the bias-reduction activity
* Worked with Sid and the DOI ERG to try and recruit a screen reader user

## Interview Guide (approx. 20 min)

### Intro

[Introduce yourself and your role on the team if this is someone you haven’t worked with before]

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this research study. I will be conducting the interview, and my teammates in this call will be listening in to take notes and observe. They may have follow-up questions for you as we move through the interview.

Our goal today is to learn how you prefer to get notified of blog post alerts, and any features you think might improve our blog site.

Don’t hesitate to tell me if something doesn’t make sense or you don’t like something about the site. We appreciate your honest feedback. The more honest you are with us, the more your feedback help us improve our designs.

**[DROP LINK INTO CHAT:** [**https://github.com/DOI-ONRR/nrrd/wiki/User-research-agreement**](https://github.com/DOI-ONRR/nrrd/wiki/User-research-agreement) **]**

Prior to today, we sent you links to the User Research Process and User Research Agreement. Were you able to review that information? I’ve dropped the link to the research agreement in the chat if you need it.

**[If they have not reviewed the agreement yet – ask if they want a few minutes to do so]**

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you agree to participate in today’s interview?

### Blog Questions

Let’s start by having you share your screen and open the blog homepage. I’m putting that link in the chat to make it easy

**[DROP LINK INTO CHAT:** [**https://blog-nrrd.doi.gov/**](https://blog-nrrd.doi.gov/) **]**

* To start with, can you tell me a little bit about your role at your agency?
* How did you learn about our blog?
  + Do you recall which listserv/website/announcement that was?
* Do you regularly read any other work-related blogs or something similar? What are those?
  + - How do you learn about new posts on those blogs?
* Do you have a preferred method for learning about new blog posts or articles from any blog?
  + - Are there any notification methods you don’t like?
* Would you sign up for an email list specifically for new blog notifications?
  + - If so, what features would you want that to have? (easy to unsubscribe, notification management options, etc.)
      * Would you sign up for an email notification if it did not have those features?
    - What do you expect the email list sign-up function to look like?
      * Where do you expect it to be on the blog site?
* Do you use RSS feeds?
  + - If so, what do you expect the subscription option to look like?
* We know that you have read some of our blog posts in the past – do you recall what some of those posts were? Feel free to browse the blog now if that will help.
* Are there any features or functions that would make our blog easier to use?
  + - If they have any – ask them to elaborate/show you where that would be on the site or how it would look.
* Do you have any other feedback about our blog that you would like to share?

### Close

That’s it for talking about the blog – I have a few closing questions before we end our session.

* The information you gave us today will be deidentified and used to develop recommendations for improving the website. Your answers will be made available to other members of the ODDD team. Are you okay with this?
* Are you interested in participating in future studies?
* Is there anyone else you recommend we speak with for this or future user studies?

**[SPACE FOR NOTETAKERS TO ASK QUESTIONS]**

Thank you for your time. Your insights are really important for helping us improve our blog platform.

If there is additional information that comes to mind that you think might be helpful, please feel free to reach out to our team via email – I'll drop our team email into the chat, or you can contact the address that sent you the scheduling emails for this session