



U.S. General Services Administration

# Raising the Design Voice in Government: A Case Study

Government UX Summit // May 15, 2019

# Hello!



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GSA



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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



By Sfivat - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2434953>

# Mitigating the struggles

Struggle	Mitigation
1. We lack authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't test sites we can't change.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Get signed Letter of Intent from responsible party to implement agreed upon solutions</li><li>◦ Align with high visibility initiatives or other initiatives that:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Are user-centered</li><li>■ Have funded implementation</li><li>■ Want our help</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
2. We lack implementation resources	
3. Underlying business process is not human centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align with projects that use an agile development process</li><li>• Otherwise negotiate an embedded UX process</li></ul>

# Case Study: Per Diem Lookup

1.

## Per Diem Rates

Search by City, State or ZIP

For Fiscal Year: 2019 (Current Year) ▾

Select a State

City (optional)

OR

ZIP

**Find Rates**

Search by State

For Fiscal Year: 2019 (Current Year) ▾

The Department of Defense sets rates for Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories, and Possessions (OCONUS rates).  
[Visit DoD site >](#)

The State Department sets Foreign Rates.  
[Visit the State Dept Site >](#)

2.

# 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**

Primary Destination (1, 2)	County (3, 4)	Max lodging by Month (excluding taxes)												M&IE (5)	
		2015			2016										
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep		
District of Columbia	Washington DC (also the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax, and the counties of Arlington and Fairfax, in Virginia; and the counties of Montgomery and Prince George's in Maryland)	\$222	\$179	\$179	\$179	\$179	\$226	\$226	\$226	\$226	\$174	\$174	\$222	\$69	

[Print Results](#) [New Search](#)

## 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.

**3.**

Total	Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	IE
\$51	\$11	\$12	\$23	\$5
\$54	\$12	\$13	\$24	\$5
\$59	\$13	\$15	\$26	\$5
\$64	\$15	\$16	\$28	\$5
\$69	\$16	\$17	\$31	\$5
\$74	\$17	\$18	\$34	\$5

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.

Total	First & Last Day of Travel
\$51	\$38.25
\$54	\$40.50
\$59	\$44.25
\$64	\$48.00
\$69	\$51.75
\$74	\$55.50

# 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



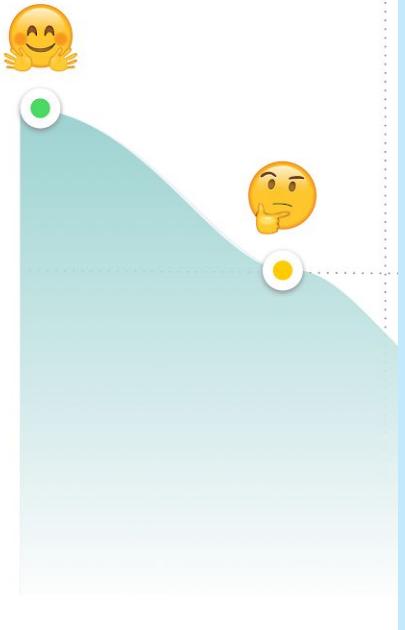
Present

But.... waiting for resources to become available to make updates.



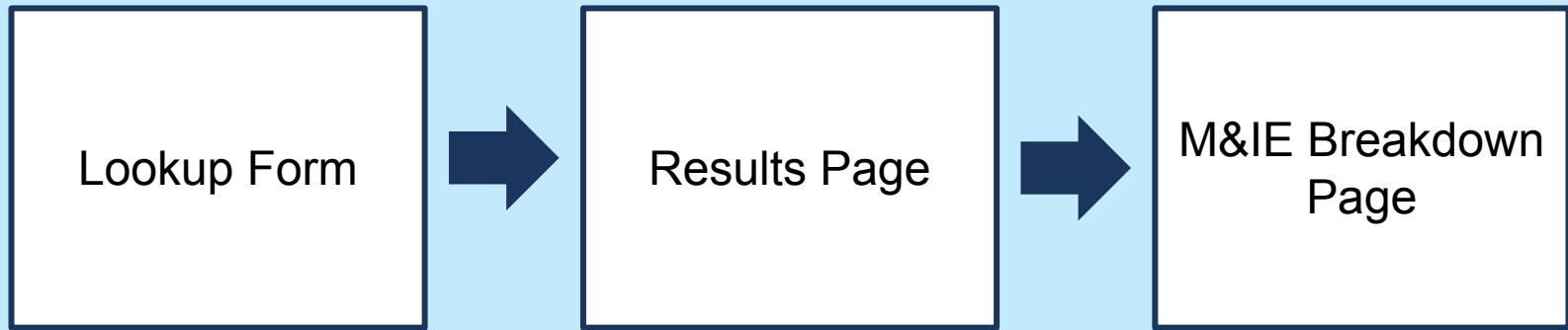
February 2017

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



Tested actual users (determined by interviewing product owner and reviewing customer sat data)

**Technique:** Usability Testing  
**Tool:** UserTesting.com



May 2017

Oooof. Another team of dev coming in. Not receptive to input.



- 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



PER DIEM RATES
<a href="#">Overview</a>
<a href="#">FY 2017 Per Diem Highlights</a>
<a href="#">Per Diem Mobile App</a>
<a href="#">FAQ</a>
<a href="#">Per Diem Contacts</a>
> <a href="#">M&amp;IE; Breakdown</a>
<a href="#">Factors Influencing Lodging Rates</a>
<a href="#">Per Diem Boundaries</a>
<a href="#">Fire Safe Hotels</a>
<a href="#">Per Diem Look-up</a>
<a href="#">Per Diem Files (Archived)</a>

## Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE;) Breakdown

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 a registration fee 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 six M&IE tiers in the lower 48 continental United States (currently ranging from \$51 to \$74). 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/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). The M&IE rate for your location will be one of the six tiers listed on this 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 \$5 for all tiers).

Total	Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	IE
\$51	\$11	\$12	\$23	\$5
\$54	\$12	\$13	\$24	\$5
\$59	\$13	\$15	\$26	\$5
\$64	\$15	\$16	\$28	\$5
\$69	\$16	\$17	\$31	\$5
\$74	\$17	\$18	\$34	\$5

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.

Total	First & Last Day of Travel
\$51	\$38.25
\$54	\$40.50
\$59	\$44.25
\$64	\$48.00
\$69	\$51.75
\$74	\$55.50

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

The shortcut to this page is [www.gsa.gov/mie](http://www.gsa.gov/mie).

QUESTIONS:  
For all travel policy  
questions, email  
[travelpolicy@gsa.gov](mailto:travelpolicy@gsa.gov).



- RELATED GSA TOPICS
- [FedRooms®](#)
  - [Travel E-mail Notification](#)
  - [POV Mileage Reimbursement Rates](#)

- GOVERNMENT LINKS
- [Fire Safety Information](#)



PER DIEM RATES

<a href="#">Overview</a>
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## 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

M&IE Total (1)	Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast (2)	Lunch (2)	Dinner (2)	Incidental Expenses	First & Last Day of Travel (3)
\$51	\$11	\$12	\$23	\$5	\$38.25
\$54	\$12	\$13	\$24	\$5	\$40.50
\$59	\$13	\$15	\$26	\$5	\$44.25
\$64	\$15	\$16	\$28	\$5	\$48.00
\$69	\$16	\$17	\$31	\$5	\$51.75
\$74	\$17	\$18	\$34	\$5	\$55.50

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 a registration fee 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.

- ▶ [Find M&IE breakdown by meal for foreign and outside the continental U.S. \(OCONUS\) travel](#)

The shortcut to this page is [www.gsa.gov/mie](http://www.gsa.gov/mie).

For all travel policy  
questions, email  
[travelpolicy@gsa.gov](mailto:travelpolicy@gsa.gov).



## Spring 2018

- Conflict again!
- Put designs to the test



- 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 (a non-federal website).



[Filter Results...](#)

Primary Destination	County	2018		2019									
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94	\$94
Hot Springs	Garland	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105	\$105

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

2018	Nov	Dec
<b>Oct</b>		
<b>\$94</b>	<b>\$94</b>	<b>\$94</b>
<b>\$105</b>	<b>\$105</b>	<b>\$105</b>



## Meals & Incidentals (M&IE) Breakdown



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

**M&IE 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&IE 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&IE.

[Filter Results...](#)

Primary Destination	County	M&IE Total	Continental Breakfast/Breakfast		Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses	First & Last Day of Travel
			Breakfast	Breakfast				
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$55	\$13	\$13	\$14	\$23	\$5	\$41.25
Hot Springs	Garland	\$61	\$14	\$14	\$16	\$26	\$5	\$45.75

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

Show 10 Destinations

Search

County or City

Primary Destination	County	2017 Oct	Nov	Dec	2018 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93	\$93
Antioch / Brentwood / Concord	Contra Costa	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154	\$154
Bakersfield / Ridgecrest	Kern	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100
Barstow / Ontario / Victorville	San Bernardino	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95	\$95
Death Valley	Inyo	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112	\$112
Eureka / Arcata / McKinleyville	Humboldt	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$101	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$101
Fresno	Fresno	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103	\$103
Los Angeles	Los Angeles / Orange / Ventura / Edwards AFB less the city of Santa Monica	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$173
Mammoth Lakes	Mono	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131
Mill Valley / San Rafael / Novato	Marin	\$184	\$151	\$151	\$151	\$151	\$151	\$151	\$151	\$184	\$184	\$184	\$184

Showing 1 to 10 of 33 rows

Previous

1

2

3

4

Next

Show 10 Destinations

Primary Destination <span>?</span>	County <span>?</span>	2017 Oct
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$93

VS

Show Less  Show More

Primary Destination <span>?</span>	County <span>?</span>	2017 Oct
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$93

Show 10 Destinations

Primary Destination <span>?</span>	County <span>?</span>	2017 Oct
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$93

VS

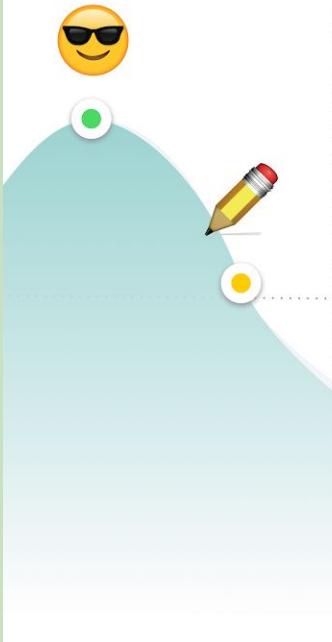
Show Less  Show More

Primary Destination <span>?</span>	County <span>?</span>	2017 Oct
Standard Rate	Applies for all locations without specified rates	\$93

*July 2018*

- Medium-term improvements
- Let's keep iterating & testing

- 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

## *Present*

But.... waiting for resources to become available to make updates.

- 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.



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Oooof. Another team of dev coming in. Not receptive to input.

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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

Search GSA.gov Per Diem Lookup

GSA BUYING & SELLING REAL ESTATE POLICY & REGULATIONS SMALL BUSINESS SHARED SERVICES TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY ABOUT US

Home > Technology > Technology Purchasing Programs > IT Schedule 70

**IT SCHEDULE 70**

> Overview  
SINS and Solutions We Offer  
Buy from IT Schedule 70  
Sell through IT Schedule 70  
Training and Events

## IT Schedule 70

**Chat Now!**

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 on eLibrary
- How to Order
  - Buy from GSA Advantage!® - online shopping and ordering system
  - Buy from eBuy - an online Request for Quotation (RFQ) tool

**What We Offer**



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

**Sell Through IT Schedule 70**



- Guide to Preparing an IT 70 Offer
- Startup Springboard - fewer than 2 years' professional/project experience? Use this!
- Fast Lane - shorter processing time
- Get the latest solicitation (FCIS-JB-980001-B)

**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](http://gsa.gov/schedule70)

Last Reviewed 2018-12-18

**Chat Now!**

Call us at **855-ITaid4U (482-4348)**  
Sun 8:00 p.m. - Fri

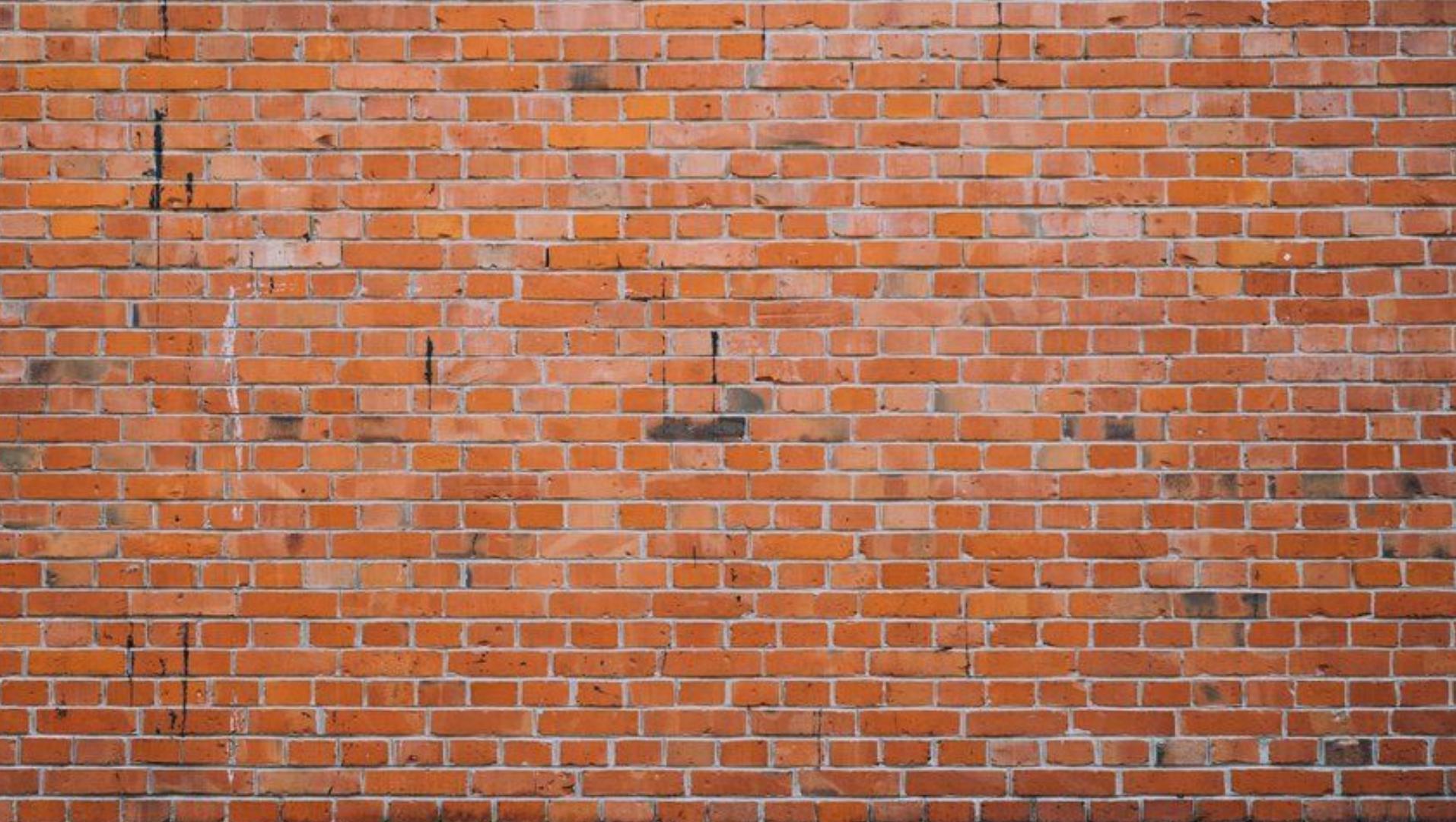
8:30 p.m.  
[ITCSC@gsa.gov](mailto:ITCSC@gsa.gov)

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**Chat Now!**

Call us at [855-ITaid4U](tel:855-ITaid4U)  
[\(482-4348\)](tel:482-4348)

Sun 8:00 p.m. - Fri  
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Hours for live chat and calls:  
Sun 8 p.m. - Fri 8:30 p.m. CST

Email: [ITCSC@gsa.gov](mailto:ITCSC@gsa.gov)

[Other ways to get support >>](#)

**2018**

**January 2019**

**TECHNOLOGY PURCHASING PROGRAMS**

- [Overview](#)
- [Cloud Acquisition Vehicles](#)
- [Dashboards and Prices Paid Tools](#)
- [Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts](#)

> [IT Schedule 70](#)

- [SINS and Solutions We Offer](#)
- [Buy from IT Schedule 70](#)
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- [Training and Events](#)
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### Sell Through IT Schedule 70



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**IT Customer Support**[Chat Now!](#)Call: [855-482-4348](tel:855-482-4348)Hours for live chat and calls:  
Sun 8 p.m. - Fri 8:30 p.m. CSTEmail: [ITCSC@gsa.gov](mailto:ITCSC@gsa.gov)[Other ways to get support >>](#)**PRESS RELEASE**

Expanded Highly Adaptive Cybersecurity Services Now Available on GSA's IT Schedule 70 (4/2/19)

**GREAT GOVERNMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY BLOG**

[GSA Replaces Expiring FSSI Wireless BPAs with Newly Enhanced Wireless SIN](#)  
(2/25/19)

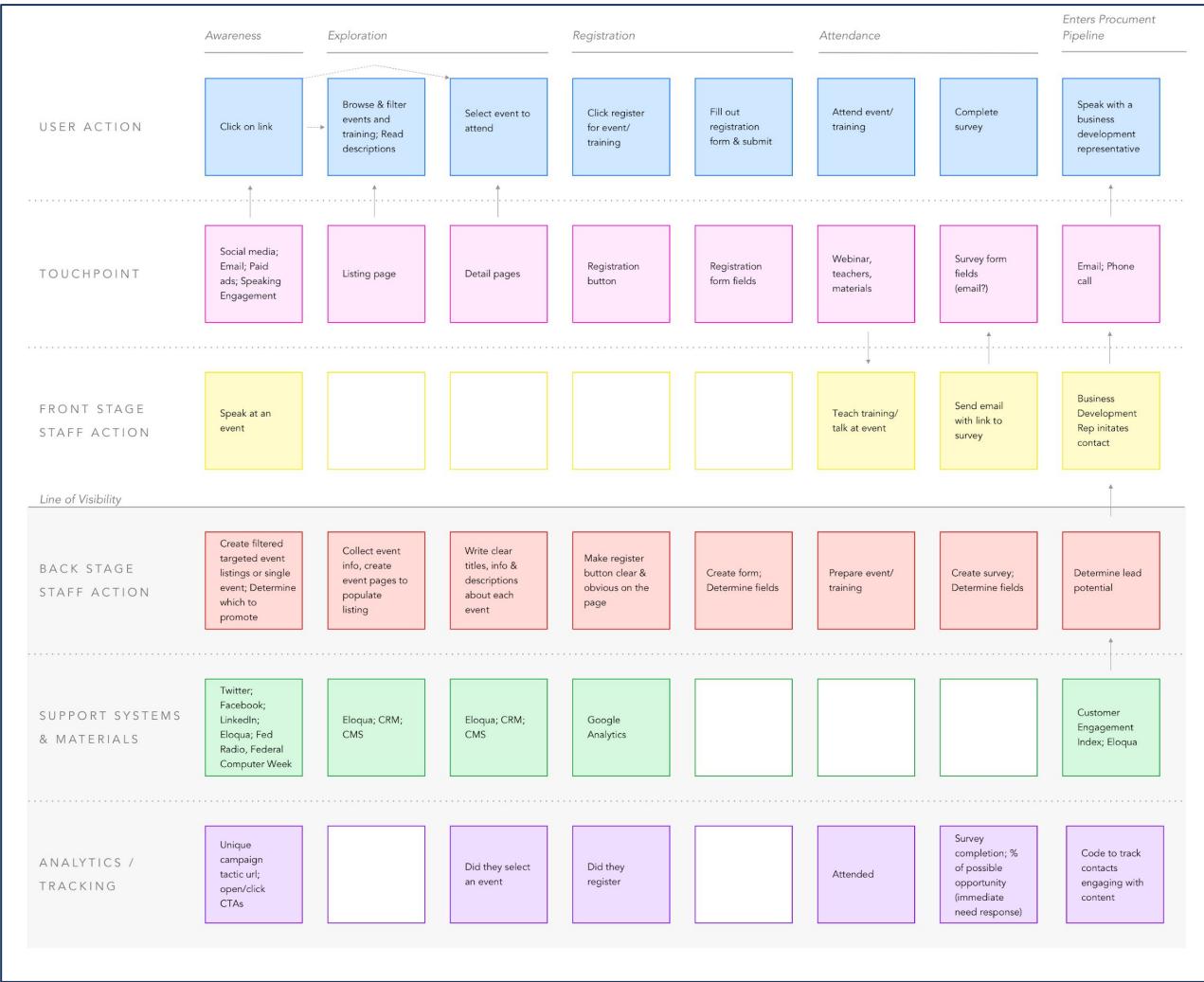
[Expanding IT Schedule 70's Cloud SIN to Make it Easier for Customers & Contractors](#)  
(2/19/19)

[Think IT Modernization? Think GSA](#) (10/29/18)

# 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



U.S. General Services Administration

# Thank you!

## Any questions?

**Kristal Byrd**  
User Experience Specialist, GSA  
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**Julia Bradshaw**  
User Experience Designer, Forum One  
[jbradshaw@forumone.com](mailto:jbradshaw@forumone.com)



# **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/>