

Executive Summary

This report outlines the findings from a pilot usability study of the UW Timesheet. The test was performed on November 14, 2006 in the Laboratory for Usability Testing and Evaluation (LUTE) with the purpose of collecting data about the usability of the approver view of the application.

Features Tested and Audience

More specifically, our test focused on evaluating the usability of these features:

- Viewlet Can users successfully watch and operate the tutorial controls?
- Approver View Can users intuitively perform critical tasks?
- Help Is help available for users if needed?

Our usability test focused on approvers in departments that may choose to use the UW Timesheet in the future. Based on our audience screening requirements, participants must:

- Have a UW NetID and an email address with a @u.washington.edu suffix
- Have experience logging into applications requiring a UWNetID and password
- Currently be responsible for approving at least 2-3 timesheets (either paper or electronic)
- Not have attended a demonstration of the UW Timesheet

Positive Findings

Our pilot study of the UW Timesheet did not reveal any severe issues that could corrupt data or prevent task completion. Both participants were able to complete most critical tasks after watching the approver Viewlet even though all of the tasks were not covered in the tutorial.

Areas of Improvement

Viewlet. Currently, the Viewlet does not fit on a standard screen size, which hides information being presented to the user and also inhibits access to the animation controls.

Keyword scanning. Users had trouble scanning for keywords, such as “Print List” and “Return to List”, even though these links were placed near the top of the screen.

Link naming. Users expected different link names for links such as “Return to List” and “Print List,” which made it difficult for them to find initially and remember later on.

Help. There is no help link for approvers while working in the timesheet review screen.

Recommendations

- Recreate the Viewlet with screenshots sized to fit within a web browser displayed at 1024x768.
- Consider adding icons placed next to keywords to help pre-attentive scanning.
- Consider holding focus groups to discover intuitive and conventional link names.
- Add a help link to the approver view of an employee’s timesheet.