



FORMS



<https://www.typeform.com/>

# *Label placement in forms*

*and other time-consuming forms controversies*

Caroline Jarrett

STC Summit Dallas 2010

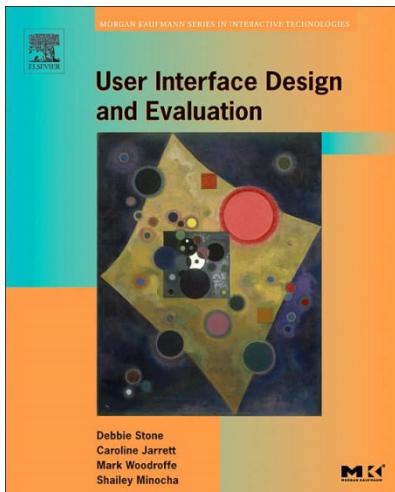
# A bit about me: Caroline Jarrett

Consultancy: [www.effortmark.co.uk](http://www.effortmark.co.uk)

Training: [www.usabilitythatworks.com](http://www.usabilitythatworks.com)

Forms advice: [www.formsthatwork.com](http://www.formsthatwork.com)

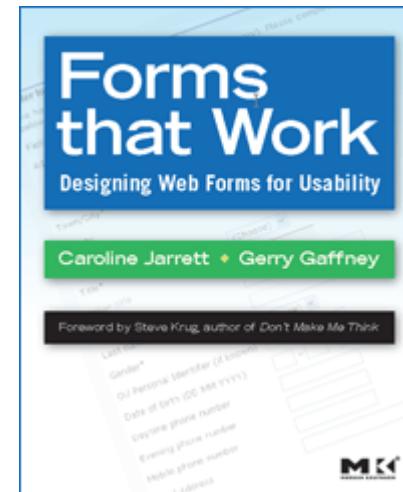
Editing tips: [www.editingthatworks.com](http://www.editingthatworks.com)



Stone, Jarrett, Woodroffe  
and Minocha (2005)

User interface  
design and  
evaluation

Morgan Kaufmann



Jarrett and Gaffney (2008)

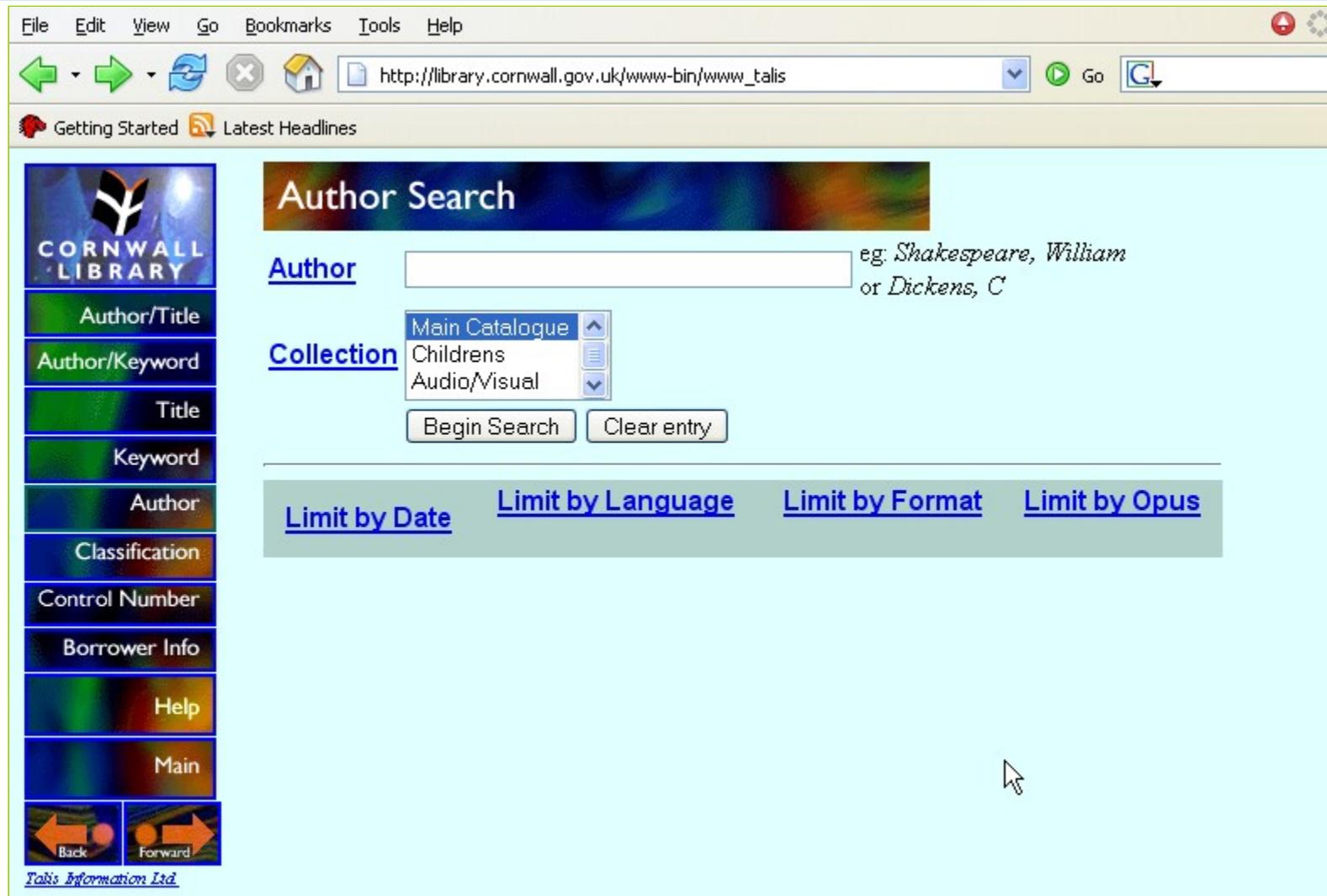
Forms that work:  
Designing web forms  
for usability

Morgan Kaufmann

# Agenda

Where people look on forms  
What that implies for placing labels  
Let's stress about unimportant details  
Two details that do affect users  
Final reminder: it's what you ask and  
why that really matters

# Reading forms is different from using them

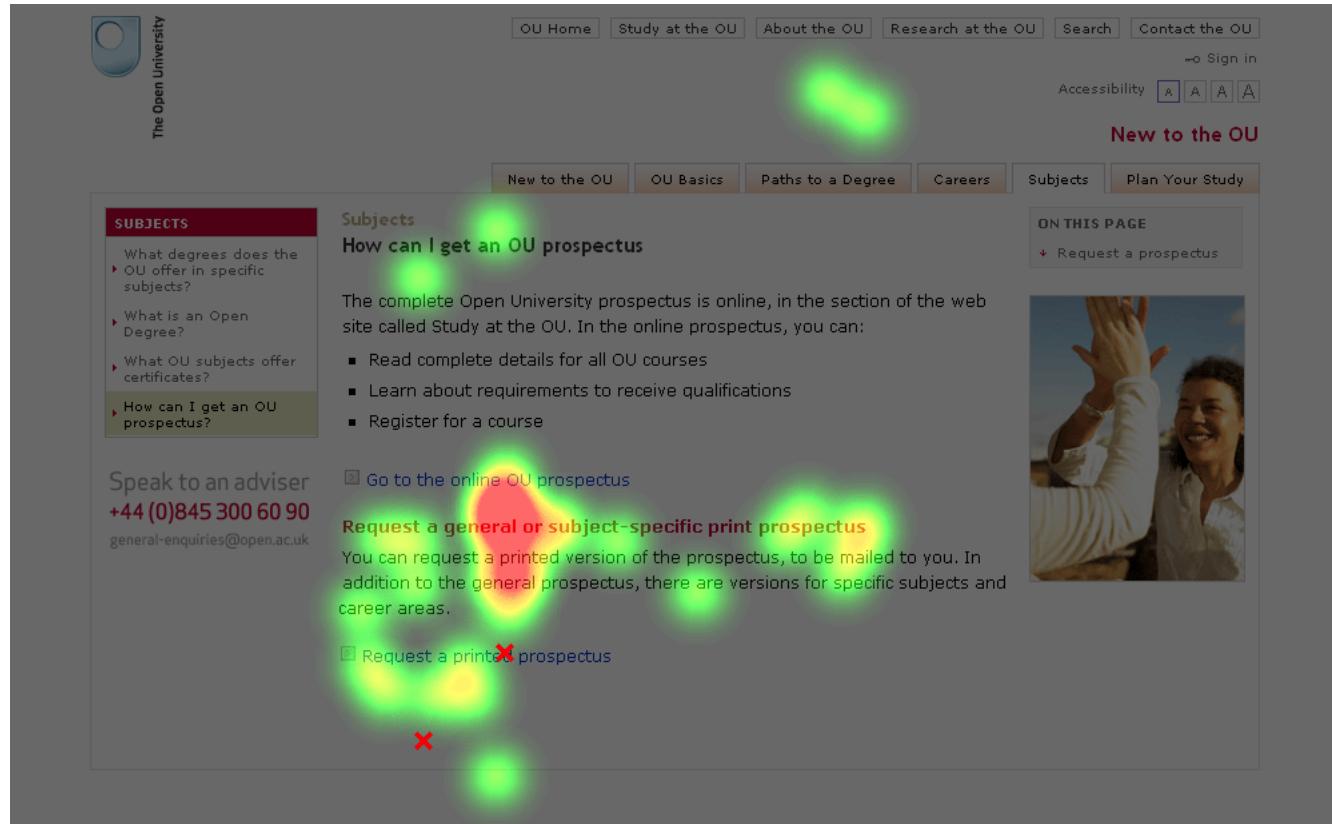


The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following details:

- Header:** File, Edit, View, Go, Bookmarks, Tools, Help.
- Address Bar:** http://library.cornwall.gov.uk/www-bin/www\_talis
- Toolbar:** Back, Forward, Stop, Home, Refresh, Go button, and a search icon.
- Page Content:**
  - Cornwall Library Logo:** A stylized 'Y' logo with the text "CORNWALL LIBRARY" below it.
  - Section:** Author Search.
  - Form Fields:**
    - Author:** Text input field with placeholder text: "eg: Shakespeare, William or Dickens, C".
    - Collection:** A dropdown menu set to "Main Catalogue" with options: Main Catalogue (selected), Childrens, and Audio/Visual.
    - Buttons:** "Begin Search" and "Clear entry".
  - Limitation Options:** [Limit by Date](#), [Limit by Language](#), [Limit by Format](#), [Limit by Opus](#).
  - Navigation:** A vertical sidebar on the left with buttons: Author/TITLE, Author/Keyword, Title, Keyword, Author, Classification, Control Number, Borrower Info, Help, Main, Back, Forward.
  - Page Footer:** Talis Information Ltd.

# Are my observations confirmed by eye-tracking? A look at some heat maps

Examples thanks to permission from  
Ian Roddis, Head of Online Services, The Open University



# Ordering a prospectus

- User has chosen a prospectus
- Postcode lookup for the address

## Prospectus Request

If you need HELP  
please email [General-  
Enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk)  
or call us on  
+44 (0)845 300 6090

### Order for myself

We have filled in your address (amend where necessary). Please complete the details below

Fields marked \* must be filled in

Address\*

Town/City\*

County

Postcode

Title\*

Other title

First name\*

Last name\*

Gender\*

OU Personal Identifier (if known)

Date of birth (DD MM YYYY)

 -  - 

Daytime phone number

Evening phone number

Mobile phone number

Email Address

Which of these subject areas are you most interested in studying with the Open University?

Which of these best describes your reason for enquiring about study with the Open University?

When would you like to start studying with the Open University?

How did you find out about us?

Please tell us how you found out about our website

If the promotion you saw has a response code please enter it here (e.g. UGCXYZ)...

If you do not have the response code in which publication/website did you see our promotion?

**proceed**

# One person's heat map

- Small green dots show narrow focus on labels and left end of fields
- Red crosses show clicks

The Open University

## Prospectus Request

### Order for myself

We have filled in your address (amend where necessary). Please complete the details below

Fields marked \* must be filled in

If you need HELP please email [General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk) or call us on +44 (0)845 300 6090

Address\*

Town/City\*

County

Postcode

Title\*

Other title

First name\*

Last name\*

Gender\*

OU Personal Identifier (if known)

Date of birth (DD MM YYYY)

Daytime phone number

Evening phone number

Mobile phone number

Email Address

Which of these subject areas are you most interested in studying with the Open University?

Which of these best describes your reason for enquiring about study with the Open University?

When would you like to start studying with the Open University?

How did you find out about us? Please tell us how you found out about our website

If the promotion you saw has a response code please enter it here (e.g. UGCKYZ)

If you do not have the response code in which publication/website did you see our promotion?

# An aggregate

- Narrow focus on the easy questions at the top
- Gets messy further down: harder questions, more answers to consider

The Open University

Prospectus Request

If you need HELP please email [General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk) or call us on +44 (0)845 300 6090

**Order for myself**

We have filled in your address (amend where necessary). Please complete the details below

Fields marked \* must be filled in

Address\*

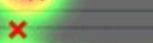
Town/City\*

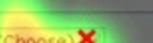
County

Postcode

Title\*  (Choose)  

Other title   

First name\*   

Last name\*   

Gender\*  (Choose)  

OU Personal Identifier (if known)   

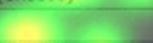
Date of birth (DD MM YYYY)     

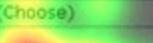
Daytime phone number

Evening phone number   

Mobile phone number

Email Address   

Which of these subject areas are you most interested in studying with the Open University?  (Choose)  

Which of these best describes your reason for enquiring about study with the Open University?  (Choose)  

When would you like to start studying with the Open University?  (Choose)  

How did you find out about us? Please tell us how you found out about our website

If the promotion you saw has a response code please enter it here (e.g. USCKYZ2)...   

If you do not have the response code in which publication/website did you see our promotion?  (Choose)



The ‘narrow focus’ means big jumps for the users’ eyes.

A heatmap visualization of a user registration form, likely from a眼动追踪 (Eye tracking) study. The form is on the left, and the heatmap grid is on the right. The heatmap uses a color gradient from green (low focus) to red (high focus). Red 'X' marks indicate specific points of interest or errors. The heatmap shows that users tend to focus on the first few fields (Title, First name, Last name) and then jump to the Date of birth and mobile phone number fields, indicating a 'narrow focus' pattern.

Form Field	Heatmap Column	Heatmap Row	Notes
Postcode	1	1	
Title*	1	2	High focus (red)
Other title	1	3	
First name*	1	4	High focus (red)
Last name*	1	5	High focus (red)
Gender*	1	6	High focus (red)
OU Personal Identifier (if known)	1	7	
Date of birth (DD MM YYYY)	2	1	High focus (red)
Daytime phone number	2	2	
Evening phone number	2	3	
Mobile phone number	2	4	

# Agenda

Where people look on forms  
What that implies for placing labels  
Let's stress about unimportant details  
Three details that do affect users  
If it looks good, it's easy to use  
Final reminder: it's what you ask and  
why that really matters

# Mario Penzo's recommendation: “Place labels above or right-align them”

Form illustrating poor label placement:

- Labels are placed to the left of the input fields, often overlapping them.
- Labels include: "Your address", "Your city", "Company you work for", and "Number of colleagues".
- Input fields are represented by green rectangles.
- Numbers 1 through 32 are scattered around the form, likely representing user input or validation errors.

Form illustrating better label placement:

- Labels are placed to the right of the input fields, avoiding overlap.
- Labels include: "Your address", "Your city", "Company you work for", "n° of colleagues", and "Submit".
- Input fields are represented by green rectangles.
- Numbers 1 through 32 are scattered around the form, likely representing user input or validation errors.

Form illustrating best label placement:

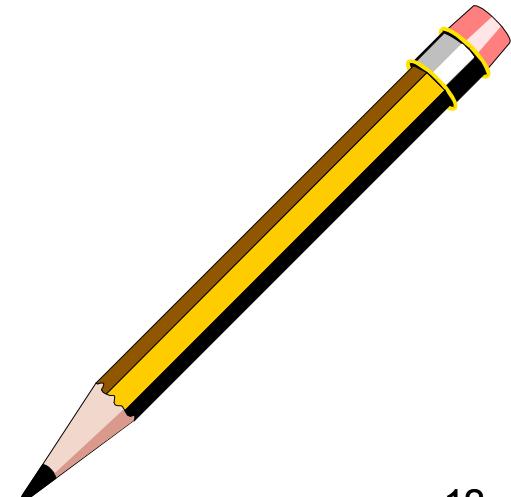
- Labels are placed above the input fields, avoiding overlap.
- Labels include: "Name", "Surname", "Age", "City", and "Submit".
- Input fields are represented by green rectangles.
- Numbers 1 through 32 are scattered around the form, likely representing user input or validation errors.

# Are all these questions equivalent? Where do the answers come from?

- Your address
- Your city
- Company you work for
- Number of colleagues

- Your address
- Your city
- Company you work for
- n<sup>o</sup> of colleagues

- Name
- Surname
- Age
- City



# Easy questions and hard questions prompt different patterns of reading

- Users glance at populated answers
- Users look mostly at the left end of the answer space for easy questions
- Users read complex instructions quite carefully...
- ... provided they are on the way to their goal

The image shows a heatmap of a 'Prospectus Request' form from The Open University. The heatmap uses color intensity to represent where users have looked, with darker shades indicating higher engagement. The form includes fields for address, town/city, county, postcode, title, other title, first name, last name, gender, OU personal identifier, date of birth, daytime and evening phone numbers, mobile phone number, email address, and two dropdowns for subject interest and reason for enquiring. A 'proceed' button is at the bottom. Red 'X' marks are placed on the right side of the form, likely indicating validation errors.

If you need HELP please email [General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk](mailto:General-Enquiries@open.ac.uk) or call us on +44 (0)845 300 6090

**Order for myself**

We have filled in your address (amend where necessary). Please complete below

Fields marked \* must be filled in

Address\*

Town/City\*

County

Postcode

Title\* (Choose) X

Other title

First name\* X

Last name\* X

Gender\* (Choose) X

OU Personal Identifier (if known)

Date of birth (DD MM YYYY) X - X - X

Daytime phone number

Evening phone number X

Mobile phone number

Email Address X

Which of these subject areas are you most interested in studying with the Open University? (Choose)

Which of these best describes your reason for enquiring about study with the Open University? (Choose)

When would you like to start studying with the Open University? (Choose) X X

How did you find out about us? Please tell us how you found out about our website

If the promotion you saw has a response code please enter it here (e.g. UGCKYZ)... X

If you do not have the response code in which publication/website did you see our promotion? (Choose)

**proceed**

## Update:

Labels above the fields may be no faster than right aligned labels

- Das, McEwan and Douglas investigated label placement
- Chose a simple form with simple questions
- Found no difference between labels above the fields and right-aligned labels

Das, McEwan and Douglas (2008)

*Using eye-tracking to evaluate label alignment in online forms,*

NordiCHI '08: Proceedings of the 5th Nordic conference on Human-computer interaction: building bridges

# A section of a form where I think left-aligned labels really are necessary

Did you receive any <b>interest</b> etc, for example, from UK* banks, UK building societies, UK unit trusts? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>
Did you receive any <b>dividends</b> , for example, UK companies, authorised unit trusts, open-ended investment companies, foreign companies (up to £300)? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>
Did you receive any <b>UK pensions, annuities or state benefits</b> , for example, state pension, occupational pension, retirement annuity, incapacity benefit? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
Did you receive any <b>other UK income</b> , for example, Employment lump sums, Share schemes, Life insurance gains, Any other income? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
Have you made any <b>income tax losses</b> in the year* 2007-08? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="No"/>
Are you liable to <b>pension savings tax charges</b> or have you* received payments from overseas pension schemes? <a href="#">?</a>	<input type="button" value="No"/>

# Users can survive a lot

## Checkout

### Step 1: Billing and Shipping Address

Step 1 2 3 4

\*Indicates a required field

If you are a new customer complete this form.

#### Billing Address

Title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, etc.)

\* First Name

\* Last Name

Company

\* Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

\* City/Town

\* Postal Code

 United Kingdom 

\*Country

\* Daytime Phone Number

\* E-mail Address (must be accurate for us to send your order confirmation)

#### Shipping Options

- Ship entire order to my billing address
- Ship entire order to ONE address (other than my billing address)
- Ship items in this order to MORE THAN ONE address

#### Catalogue Code

If you have a printed catalogue, please enter the catalogue code from the blue box on the back of the catalogue (See below).

CATALOG CODE

CUSTOMER CODE

WEB COUPON CODE

Catalogue Code

#### Coupon Code

If you have a printed coupon to apply to your order, enter the code here:

Coupon Code

Continue **16**

# Update: Roland Feichtinger finds that labels below the boxes may work better in Austria

## Einzugsermächtigung



Kundennummer										Frau	Herr	Firma	andere:	Titel			Firmenbuchnr.												
Name/Firmenname/Anschrift																													
Kontoinhaber (Name/Firmenname)																													
Kontonummer					BLZ					Name der Bank																			
E-Mail-Adresse (optional)															<input type="checkbox"/> Ich bin widerruflich damit einverstanden, zu Werbezwecken per E-Mail, Post oder per Telefon kontaktiert zu werden.														

Hiermit ermächtige(n) ich/wir Konica Minolta Business Solutions Austria GmbH widerruflich, die von mir/uns zu entrichtenden Zahlungen bei Fälligkeit zu Lasten meines/unseres Kontos einzuziehen. Damit ist auch meine/unserre kontoführende Bank ermächtigt, die Lastschriften einzulösen, wobei für diese keine Verpflichtung zur Einlösung besteht, insbesondere dann nicht, wenn mein/unser Konto die erforderliche Deckung nicht aufweist. Ich/Wir habe(n) das Recht, innerhalb von 42 Kalendertagen ab Abbuchungstag ohne Angabe von Gründen die Rückbuchung bei meiner/unserer Bank zu veranlassen.

Datum \_\_\_\_\_ Unterschrift/firmenmäßige Zeichnung des Kontoinhabers \_\_\_\_\_

**Bitte senden Sie diese Ermächtigung an Konica Minolta Business Solutions Austria GmbH, Amalienstr. 59-61, 1130 Wien, z.H.: Buchhaltung**

Konica Minolta Business Solutions Austria GmbH, Amalienstraße 59-61, 1130 Wien, Tel: +43 (0)1 87882, Fax-DW: 112, Homepage: [www.konicaminolta.at](http://www.konicaminolta.at)  
Sitz: Wien, Gerichtsstand: Handelsgesetz Wien • Bankverbindung: Bank Austria Creditanstalt AG, Kto.-Nr.: 245 109 272/00, BLZ 12000 • FB-Nr.: FN 197364t • DVR-Nr.: 0556459, UID-Nr.: ATU49754500, ARA-Lizenz-Nr.: 1302

# Method 1 (more effort, and may not work): Decide where to put your labels according to your users, their goals, and the questions

Your users and  
their goals ....

Willing to reveal the  
answers; filling in  
the form helps them  
to achieve a goal

Unwilling to reveal  
answers or reluctant  
to fill in the form

Your questions ...    Put the labels ...

Simple, only a few of  
them

Simple but lots of  
them

Complex

Simple or complex

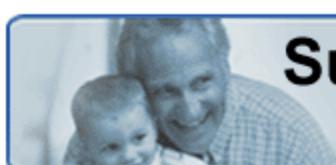
Above

Right-justified

Left-justified

Left-justified

(you'll need more  
explanation)



# Submit a Complaint

**AARP Elder Watch**

A Program with the Colorado Attorney General and the AARP Foundation

 **Home**

Do you have a fraud or financial exploitation concern?  
 Complete this complaint form or call us Monday - Friday 9am to 4 pm  
 Toll Free in Colorado: **1-800-222-4444**  
 Denver Metro: **303-222-4444**

If using this form, please note that labels in **bold with an asterisk (\*)** are required

## Your Information

**\* First Name:**

**\* Last Name:**

Phone Number:  (nnn-nnn-nnnn)

Email:

Would you like to receive a status update?

Yes  No

**\* Relationship to Victim:**

**\* Type of Complaint:**

**\* Estimated Amount of Financial Loss:**  (to the nearest \$)

**\* Are you the Contact?**  Yes  No

Will you share your fraud experience with the public in order to help others?  Yes  No

How did you hear about us?

## Contact Information

**\* First Name:**

**\* Last Name:**

**\* Phone Number:**  (nnn-nnn-nnnn)

Email:

## Method 2 (easier, and guaranteed success): Choose anything harmonious then test and test

- Any reasonably harmonious arrangement of labels and boxes is likely to be OK
- The only guaranteed way of achieving a good form is:
  - Test YOUR form with YOUR users
  - Make changes based on what you find
  - Test again with (different) users
  - Make more changes
  - Repeat until the form works



# Sign up

A variety of plans to fit everyone's needs. You can upgrade, downgrade, or cancel any time.  
**All pay accounts include a 30-day Free Trial.**

## — Create your administrator account —

This is the master log-in for your account. All fields are required. Once your account is set up you can add accounts for other people as well. Each person will have their own username and password.

First name Last name Email Username What you'll use to log in (or [use OpenID](#)).Password Password again 

Confirm your password by entering it again.

Company/Group 

Examples: Apple, UCLA, Red Cross

Time zone  (GMT-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada) 

### Which web browsers work with Basecamp?

Any of the following web browsers work with Basecamp: **IE 7 (PC)**, **Firefox 2 or later (Mac, PC, or Linux)**, **Safari 2 or later (Mac)**.

### Can I upgrade, downgrade, or cancel later?

Absolutely. Basecamp is a month-to-month service so you can upgrade, downgrade, or cancel at any time.

### Which forms of payment do you accept?

We accept Visa, Mastercard, and American Express. We do not accept POs, checks, or invoices to be paid at a later date. We do email a "PAID" invoice each time you are billed.



# Screenshot best available

## You're just 60 seconds away from your new Basecamp account.

Already use a 37signals product? Then [sign in](#) with your 37signals ID to save time.

### 1 Create your Basecamp account

First name

Last name

Email

Company

(Or non-profit, organization, group, school, etc.)

Time zone

### — Now choose a username & password —

Username

This is what you'll use to sign in. (or use [OpenID](#))

Password

6 characters or longer with at least one number is safest.

Enter your password again for verification

### 2 Create your Basecamp site address

Every Basecamp site has its own web address. For example, if you want your Basecamp site to be at <http://acme.basecamphq.com> you'd enter acme in the field below. **Letters & numbers only.**

http://  .basecamphq.com

Thanks for choosing Basecamp!



You're in good company when you use 37signals products.

### Over 3,000,000 users

Thousands sign up every week

### Secure and reliable

Your data is backed up daily

### Great customer service

Fast, accurate, and friendly help

# Agenda

Where people look on forms  
What that implies for placing labels  
Let's stress about unimportant details  
Two details that do affect users  
Final reminder: it's what you ask and  
why that really matters

Let's stress  
about  
unimportant  
details

Colons at the end of labels?  
Sentence or title case?  
Required field indicator?

# Colons at the ends of labels are a matter of considerable debate

Where am I? telegraph.co.uk > My Telegraph > Register

**Telegraph.co.uk**

Telegraph Blogs my.Telegraph.co.uk in association with CISCO. SEARCH

Join the debate. Join My Telegraph

Please complete all fields

Screen name (only alphanumeric characters)

This is the name that will be displayed against all comments and posts that you make on the site.

First name

Last name

welcome to the human network.

Already a member?

What is my.Telegraph

Join the debate with the Telegraph

- Read blogs from other Telegraph users
- Write your own blog
- Share your opinions with the rest of the Telegraph community
- Save all your comments in one place

Joining is free and takes only a few moments.

First name

Last name

The New York Times

ON THE WEB

Already a Member? [Log In](#)

**Registering for NYTimes.com is free and easy!**

Registration provides free and instant access to breaking news, reviews, online classifieds and more on NYTimes.com.

[Why Register?](#) | [What is TimesSelect?](#) | [Privacy Concerns](#) | [Cookies Information](#) | [FAQ's](#)

**Create an Account (Required)**

Choose a Member ID:

Choose a Password:  (Five character minimum)

Re-enter your Password:

Secret Question:  — Select One —

Secret Answer:

E-Mail Address:  [Why do we need this?](#)

NYTimes.com will only use this address with your permission.

Remember my Member ID and password on this computer.

**Choose a Member ID:**

**Choose a Password:**

**Re-enter your Password:**

Pick one style. Stick with it. It's not worth arguing about.

<http://www.usabilitynews.com/news/article3200.asp> and  
<http://www.usabilitynews.com/news/article3112.asp>

# Sentence or title case?

## Sentence case wins. (But only just).

- This is sentence case
- This is Title Case
- This Is Capitalisation Of Each Initial Letter
- ISO-9241 part 17 says
  - "Initial upper-case (capital) letter for field labels: To facilitate readability, the text field labels begin with an upper-case letter. The rest of the label should contain lower case (small) letters except for cases where the label is a logo, an acronym or language convention that requires each word in the label to begin with a capital letter."
- Sentence case is slightly more legible due to familiarity
- It's not worth changing a big suite of forms to fix this

# Required field indicator?

There's a theme developing here ....

- Miriam Frost Jungwirth:
  - “I was once charged with testing that.  
Seriously. \$10,000 of manhours testing asterisk placement.  
  
There was no difference in user performance. At all.“
- I’m a little more interested in this discussion:
  - Indicators placed to the right of the field are likely to be invisible
  - Put the text describing the indicator at the **top** of the **fields**  
(that is, not at the end of the form and not in the instructions)
  - Use the same indicator in both places (text and next to required field)
  - Use the alt-text ‘required’ (not ‘asterisk’)
  - Always indicate required; don’t switch to indicating optional
  - If you feel the urge to indicate optional, use the full word ‘optional’
  - Do not use colour on its own as an indicator

# An example of required field indicators using colour alone

**WIN A VIP  
HOLLYWOOD BOWL  
EXPERIENCE!**

**15 GRAND PRIZES**

**WIN A PAIR OF TICKETS  
TO ONE OF THE  
FOLLOWING SHOWS**

- THE DECEMBERISTS (JULY 7)
- CAFÉ TACUBA (JULY 15)
- COOL BRITANNIA! WITH  
JAMIE CULLUM (JULY 21)

**PLUS A BRISTOL FARMS  
PICNIC BASKET VOUCHER**





Required fields are marked in pink.

First Name:

Last Name:

E-Mail:  Confirm Email:

Address Line 1:

Country:  Zip or Postal Code:

USA

Gender (m/f):  Birthday:

Male or Female  Month  Day  Year

Cell phone number:  What kind of cell phone do you have?



# An example of required field indicators at the wrong end of the field

 **Department of**  
**MDOT Transportation**

 Michigan.gov  
An Official State of Michigan Web Site

Michigan.gov Home | MDOT Home | Site Map | Contact MDOT | FAQ | State Web Sites

Search

**doing business**

- > Forms
- > **Contractor Services**
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- Prequalification
- Bid Letting
- Payments & Awards

> Vendor/Consultant Services

> Local Agency Program

> Passenger Transportation

**roads & travel**

**rail & public transit**

**bridges, borders & ferries**

**news & information**

**projects & programs**

[Printer Friendly](#) [Text Version](#) [Email Page](#) [A-](#) [A+](#) [Text Size](#)

## Order a Construction Prequalification Packet

To request a prequalification packet via email, fill in this form and click the Submit button below. **\* REQUIRED INFORMATION**

Name:  \*

Email:  \*

Company:  \*

Address:  \*

Address 2:

City:  \*

State:  ZIP  \*

\* Required

**Departments/Agencies**

**Online Services**

**Surveys**

**RSS Feeds**

Related Content

- How to Become Construction Prequalified
- MDOT Prequalified Contractor Directories

# Which is the most important problem

- Examine the Michigan Department of Transport form
- Find as many usability problems as you can
- Decide which ONE problem is the most important



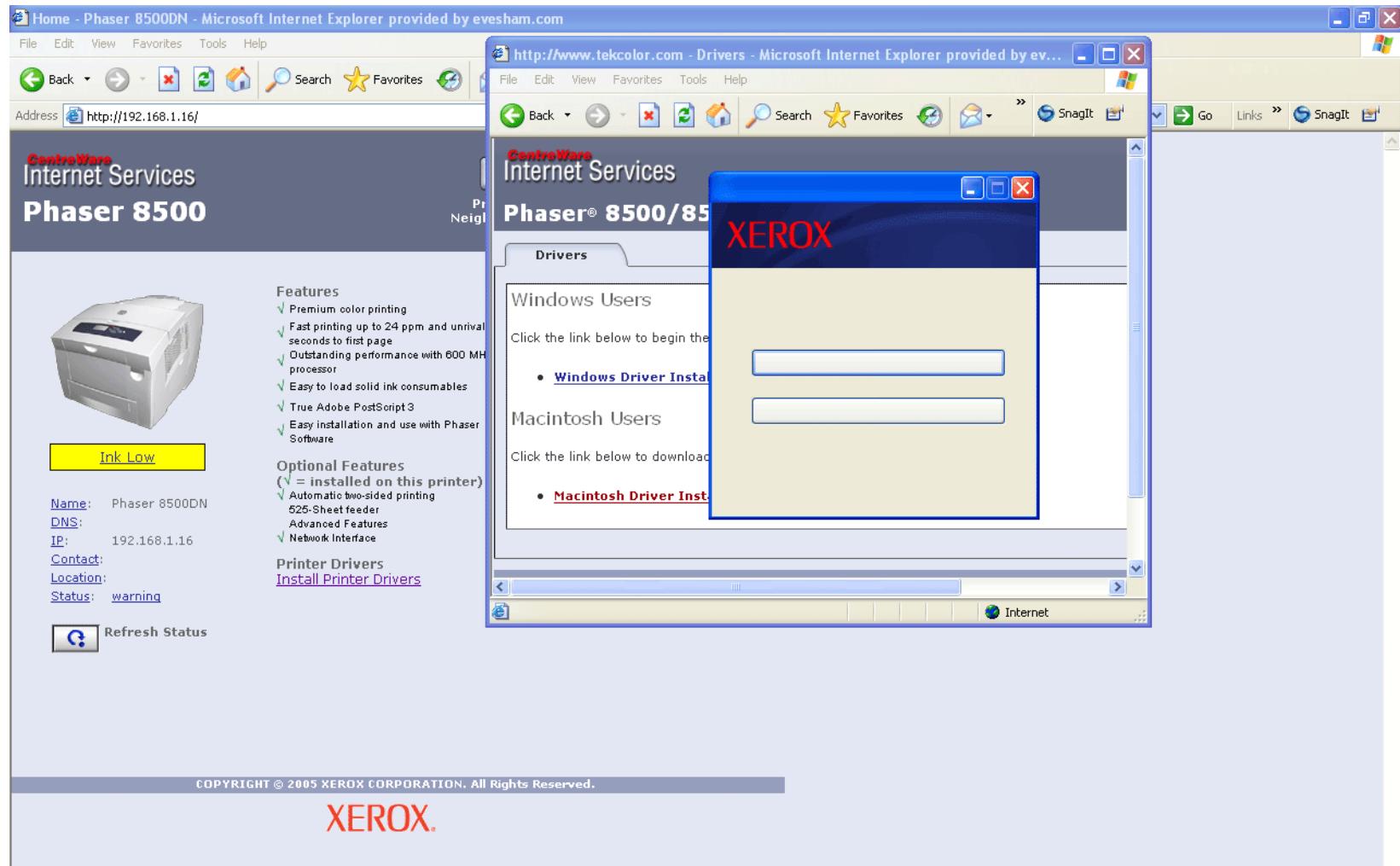
# Agenda

Where people look on forms  
What that implies for placing labels  
Let's stress about unimportant details  
**Two details that do affect users**  
**Final reminder: it's what you ask and why that really matters**

## Two details that do affect users

1. It's not OK and I don't want to Cancel
2. Shorter preambles

# Buttons really do matter to users.



1. Label the button with what it does.
2. If the user doesn't want to do it, don't have a button for it.

- “OK” works – if it makes sense to say “OK” at that point
- “Reset” probably doesn’t work
  - Reset Button: INPUT TYPE=RESET

An INPUT element with 'TYPE=RESET' represents an input option, typically a button, that instructs the user agent to reset the form's fields to their initial states. The VALUE attribute, if present, indicates a label for the input (button).

When you are finished, you may submit this request: <input type=submit><br>

You may clear the form and start over at any time: <input type=reset>

When you are finished, you may submit this request:

You may clear the form and start over at any time:

# LukeW writes about buttons

## TYPICAL WEB FORM

**Personal Information**

First Name

Last Name

**Contact Information**

Address

City

County

-- Select County --

Post Code

Country

United Kingdom

**Submit** | [Cancel](#)

**PRIMARY ACTION**

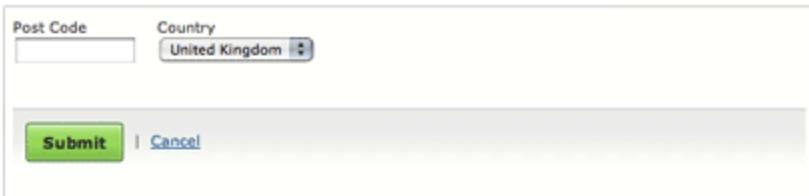
**SECONDARY ACTION**

# LukeW and Etre tested a selection of different button placements and styles

A

Post Code  Country

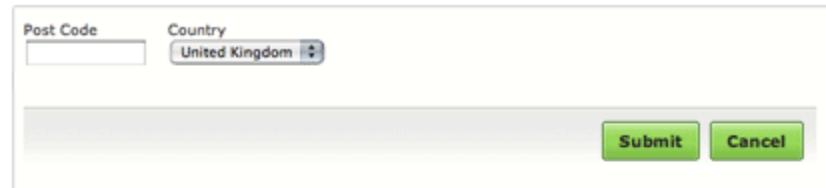
| [Cancel](#)



D

Post Code  Country

[Submit](#) [Cancel](#)



B

Post Code  Country



E

Post Code  Country



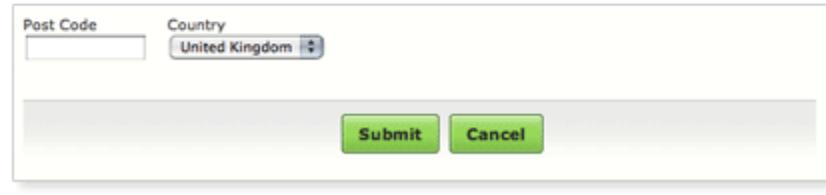
C

Post Code  Country



F

Post Code  Country



# Which one do you prefer? Why? Is there a better option?

A

Post Code  Country

D

Post Code  Country

B

Post Code  Country

E

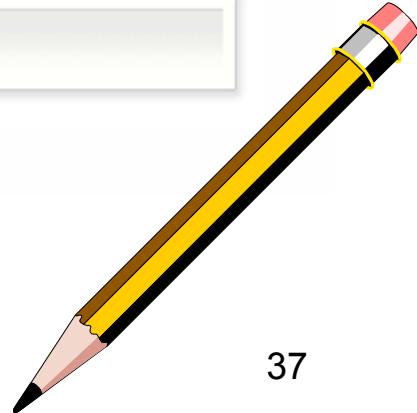
Post Code  Country

C

Post Code  Country

F

Post Code  Country



# Which one do you prefer? Why? Is there a better option?

A

Post Code  Country

| [Cancel](#)

B

Post Code  Country

C

Post Code  Country

D

Post Code  Country

[Submit](#) [Cancel](#)

E

Post Code  Country

F

Post Code  Country

[Submit](#) [Cancel](#)

“Only Option E performed  
poorly during our testing”

# A new selection of options: get rid of E, add another one?

**A**

Post Code  Country

**D**

Post Code  Country

**B**

Post Code  Country

**F**

Post Code  Country

**C**

Post Code  Country

**G**

Post Code  Country

[Throw away my work.](#)

# Method 1: (harder, and not guaranteed)

## Work out the patterns your users expect

- Read the appropriate style guide(s) and think about them
- Find out what other form(s) your users are using
  - In the same operating system
  - In the same media (web, application, mobile etc)
  - As part of similar tasks
- Work out an appropriate compromise
- A good standard approach
  - Put the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the fields, preferably aligned with the left-hand edge of the last field
  - Make sure that the SUBMIT button cannot be confused with destructive buttons
- For all approaches: Label each button with what it does

# Method 2 (easier, and guaranteed success): Choose anything sensible then test and test

- Any sensible arrangement of buttons will probably be OK
- Label each button with what it does
- The only guaranteed way of achieving a good form is:
  - Test YOUR form with YOUR users
  - Make changes based on what you find
  - Test again with (different) users
  - Make more changes
  - Repeat until the form works

## Two details that do affect users

1. It's not OK and I don't want to Cancel
2. Shorter preambles

Request a Personalized Rate Quote

Tired of calling a list of mortgage providers only to be asked the same questions over and over again? Let our lenders and brokers come to you! By providing the following information, one or more companies in your area will provide a "personalized quote" on your borrowing request. Most will respond in less than 24 hours. Please complete this form as thoroughly as possible.

We respect your privacy. This is a confidential request and your personal information will only be sent to lenders and brokers in your area who are customers of CompareInterestRates.com. For more information, see our [privacy statement](#).

Property State

Purpose of loan

Preferred mortgage product

(If you want quotes on multiple products please indicate additional products in the comment field below)

Approximate loan amount you wish to borrow \$

(please use whole numbers without any commas, decimals or dollar signs)

Purchase price of home or approximate value for a refinance \$

(please use whole numbers without any commas, decimals or dollar signs)

If purchasing a new home you have identified, when is the closing date?

Contact Information:

First Name

Last Name

Home Phone #  -  -

Business Phone #  -  -

Email Address

Please rate your credit

Are you willing to document your income throughout the loan process?

Have you ever had a bankruptcy?

Additional information, comments, and questions.

Do you wish to also receive quotes on home owner's insurance?

Do you wish to subscribe to our Daily Mortgage Rate Update email?

Please press submit button only once. Multiple submissions may transmit your request to more lenders than you requested.

# A/B testing

Request a Personalized Rate Quote



This mortgage rate quote form will take approximately 30 seconds to complete. Here's how our service works:

- Complete our short form
- We will search hundreds of mortgage lenders and thousands of loan programs in our database
- You will then receive quotes from up to 4 competitive lenders in your state
- You choose the mortgage lender with the best rate and loan terms and save money

Property State

Purpose of loan

Preferred mortgage product

(If you want quotes on multiple products please indicate additional products in the comment field below)

Approximate loan amount you wish to borrow \$

(please use whole numbers without any commas, decimals or dollar signs)

Purchase price of home or approximate value for a refinance \$

(please use whole numbers without any commas, decimals or dollar signs)

If purchasing a new home you have identified, when is the closing date?

Contact Information:

First Name

Last Name

Home Phone #  -  -

Business Phone #  -  -

Email Address

Please rate your credit

Will you document your income?  Yes  No

Have you ever had a bankruptcy?

Additional information, comments, and questions.

Please press submit button only once. Multiple submissions may transmit your request to more lenders than you requested.

In our 2004 study, we found that only a better preamble made any real difference

- We tested a wide selection of visual variants of a form
- Variants improved conversion rates
- The only variation that achieved statistical significance was the improved preamble:
  - Shorter
  - Clearer
  - Better layout



# Sign up

A variety of plans to fit everyone's needs. You can upgrade, downgrade, or cancel any time.  
**All pay accounts include a 30-day Free Trial.**

## — Create your administrator account —

This is the master log-in for your account. All fields are required. Once your account is set up you can add accounts for other people as well. Each person will have their own username and password.

First name

Last name

Email

Username

What you'll use to log in (or [use OpenID](#)).

Password

Password again

Confirm your password by entering it again.

Company/Group

Examples: Apple, UCLA, Red Cross

Time zone

(GMT-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

### Which web browsers work with Basecamp?

Any of the following web browsers work with Basecamp: **IE 7 (PC)**, **Firefox 2 or later (Mac, PC, or Linux)**, **Safari 2 or later (Mac)**.

### Can I upgrade, downgrade, or cancel later?

Absolutely. Basecamp is a month-to-month service so you can upgrade, downgrade, or cancel at any time.

### Which forms of payment do you accept?

We accept Visa, Mastercard, and American Express. We do not accept POs, checks, or invoices to be paid at a later date. We do email a "PAID" invoice each time you are billed.



66 words

## You're just 60 seconds away from your new Basecamp account.

Already use a 37signals product? Then [sign in](#) with your 37signals ID to save time.

### 1 Create your Basecamp account

First name

Last name

Email

Company

(Or non-profit, organization, group, school, etc.)

Time zone

### — Now choose a username & password —

Username

This is what you'll use to sign in. (or use [OpenID](#))

Password

6 characters or longer with at least one number is safest.

Enter your password again for verification

### 2 Create your Basecamp site address

Every Basecamp site has its own web address. For example, if you want your Basecamp site to be at <http://acme.basecamphq.com> you'd enter acme in the field below. **Letters & numbers only.**

http://  .basecamphq.com

Thanks for choosing Basecamp!



You're in good company when you use 37signals products.

**Over 3,000,000 users**

Thousands sign up every week

**Secure and reliable**

Your data is backed up daily

**Great customer service**

Fast, accurate, and friendly help

28 words

# Jason Fried talks about the new signup form.

- *“The previous form … was dated and too long… we wanted the redesigned form to be markedly shorter than the one it was replacing”.*
- *“We spent a lot of time on the language, graphical elements in the sidebar, and overall information flow throughout the process”.*

# Agenda

Where people look on forms  
What that implies for placing labels  
Let's stress about unimportant details  
Two details that do affect users  
**Final reminder: it's what you ask and why that really matters**

# It's what you ask and why that really matters

- Users rarely abandon forms because of:
  - Label placement
  - Use of colons
  - Required field indicators
  - Sentence or title case
- Users often abandon forms or lie on them because of:
  - Questions that they don't understand
  - Questions that they have no answer for
  - Intrusive questions that are inappropriate to the task
  - Validations that refuse their preferred or correct answer

# Question time

Caroline Jarrett  
[carolinej@effortmark.co.uk](mailto:carolinej@effortmark.co.uk)  
+44 1525 370379

I'm a consultant, hire me:

Consultancy: [www.effortmark.co.uk](http://www.effortmark.co.uk)

Training: [www.usabilitythatworks.com](http://www.usabilitythatworks.com)

Free stuff:

Forms advice: [www.formsthatwork.com](http://www.formsthatwork.com)

Editing: [www.editingthatworks.com](http://www.editingthatworks.com)

Columns: [www.usabilitynews.com](http://www.usabilitynews.com)

“Caroline’s Corner”

[www.uxmatters.com](http://www.uxmatters.com)

“Good Questions”