

Buttons

on forms and surveys

a look at some research

Caroline Jarrett

Buttons matter to users

The image displays two overlapping web browser windows from Microsoft Internet Explorer. The background window, titled 'Home - Phaser 8500DN - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by evesham.com', shows the product page for the 'Phaser 8500DN' printer. It includes a 'Features' section with a list of capabilities, an 'Optional Features' section, and a 'Printer Drivers' section with a link to 'Install Printer Drivers'. A 'Refresh Status' button is visible at the bottom left. The foreground window, titled 'http://www.tekcolor.com - Drivers - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by ev...', shows the 'Drivers' page for the 'Phaser 8500/85' series. It has sections for 'Windows Users' and 'Macintosh Users'. A modal dialog box with a blue header and the word 'XEROX' in red is open over the 'Windows Users' section. The dialog box contains two input fields. The footer of the background window reads 'COPYRIGHT © 2005 XEROX CORPORATION. All Rights Reserved.' and the XEROX logo is centered at the bottom.

Home - Phaser 8500DN - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by evesham.com

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://192.168.1.16/>

ControlWare Internet Services
Phaser 8500



Ink Low

Name: Phaser 8500DN
DNS:
IP: 192.168.1.16
Contact:
Location:
Status: [warning](#)

 Refresh Status

Features

- ✓ Premium color printing
- ✓ Fast printing up to 24 ppm and unrivalled seconds to first page
- ✓ Outstanding performance with 800 MHz processor
- ✓ Easy to load solid ink consumables
- ✓ True Adobe PostScript 3
- ✓ Easy installation and use with Phaser Software

Optional Features
(✓ = installed on this printer)

- ✓ Automatic two-sided printing
- ✓ 525-Sheet feeder
- ✓ Advanced Features
- ✓ Network Interface

Printer Drivers
[Install Printer Drivers](#)

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XEROX.

http://www.tekcolor.com - Drivers - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by ev...

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Address <http://www.tekcolor.com>

ControlWare Internet Services
Phaser® 8500/85

Drivers

Windows Users

Click the link below to begin the

- [Windows Driver Instal](#)

Macintosh Users

Click the link below to download

- [Macintosh Driver Inst](#)

XEROX

Internet

The basic eye movement on forms: look for a box, turn left to read the label

The diagram illustrates a form with various input fields and labels. Red arrows indicate the sequence of eye movements, starting from the top right and moving left to read labels, then down to the next field. The form includes:

- Town/City* (Text input: LEIGHTON BUZZARD)
- County (Text input: Beds)
- Postcode (Text input: [blurred])
- Title* (Dropdown menu: (Choose) ▼)
- Other title (Text input: [blurred])
- First name* (Text input: [blurred])
- Last name* (Text input: [blurred])
- Gender* (Dropdown menu: (Choose) ▼)
- OU Personal Identifier (if known) (Text input: [blurred])
- Date of Birth (DD-MM-YYYY) (Text input: [blurred] - [blurred] - [blurred])

A

B

C

D

E

Where to put the button?

Best place for a button: aligned with left-hand end of text boxes

Town/City* LEIGHTON BUZZARD

County Beds

Postcode

Title* (Choose) ▾

Other title

First Name*

Last Name*

Gender* (Choose) ▾

OU Personal Identifier (if known)

Date of Birth (DD-MM-YYYY) - -

3 Looks here
last

1
Looks here
first for button

2 Then looks here

Study #1: Luke Wroblewski and Etre (2007)

TYPICAL WEB FORM

Personal Information

First Name

Last Name

Contact Information

Address

City

County

Post Code

Country

| [Cancel](#)

PRIMARY ACTION

SECONDARY ACTION

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

E

Post Code

Country

F

Post Code

Country

“Only Option E performed poorly during our testing”

Luke W's examples considered again

A

Post Code: Country:

1

Submit Cancel

B

Post Code: Country:

1

Submit Cancel

C

Post Code: Country:

1

Submit Cancel

D

Post Code: Country:

1

2

Submit Cancel

E

Post Code: Country:

1

Cancel Submit

Fail

F

Post Code: Country:

1

2

Submit Cancel

“Only Option E performed poorly during our testing”

Study #2: Couper et al, 2011.

Couper, M. P., Baker, R. & Mechling, J. (2011).

Placement and design of navigation buttons in Web surveys.

<http://surveypractice.wordpress.com/2011/02/14/navigation-buttons/>

“...we recommend that survey designers consider the use of a hyperlink for the *Previous* or *Back* function, or place the *Previous* button below the *Next* button, either centered (if the questions are centered on the page or the majority are presented horizontally) or on the left (if most of the questions are presented vertically and left-justified)”.

Does 'Next' go on the left or right of 'Previous'?

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Surprise!

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next

Previous

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

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- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next

Previous

What about for these two?

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

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- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

[link here](#)

Probably a lot less of a surprise

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

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- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next

Previous

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

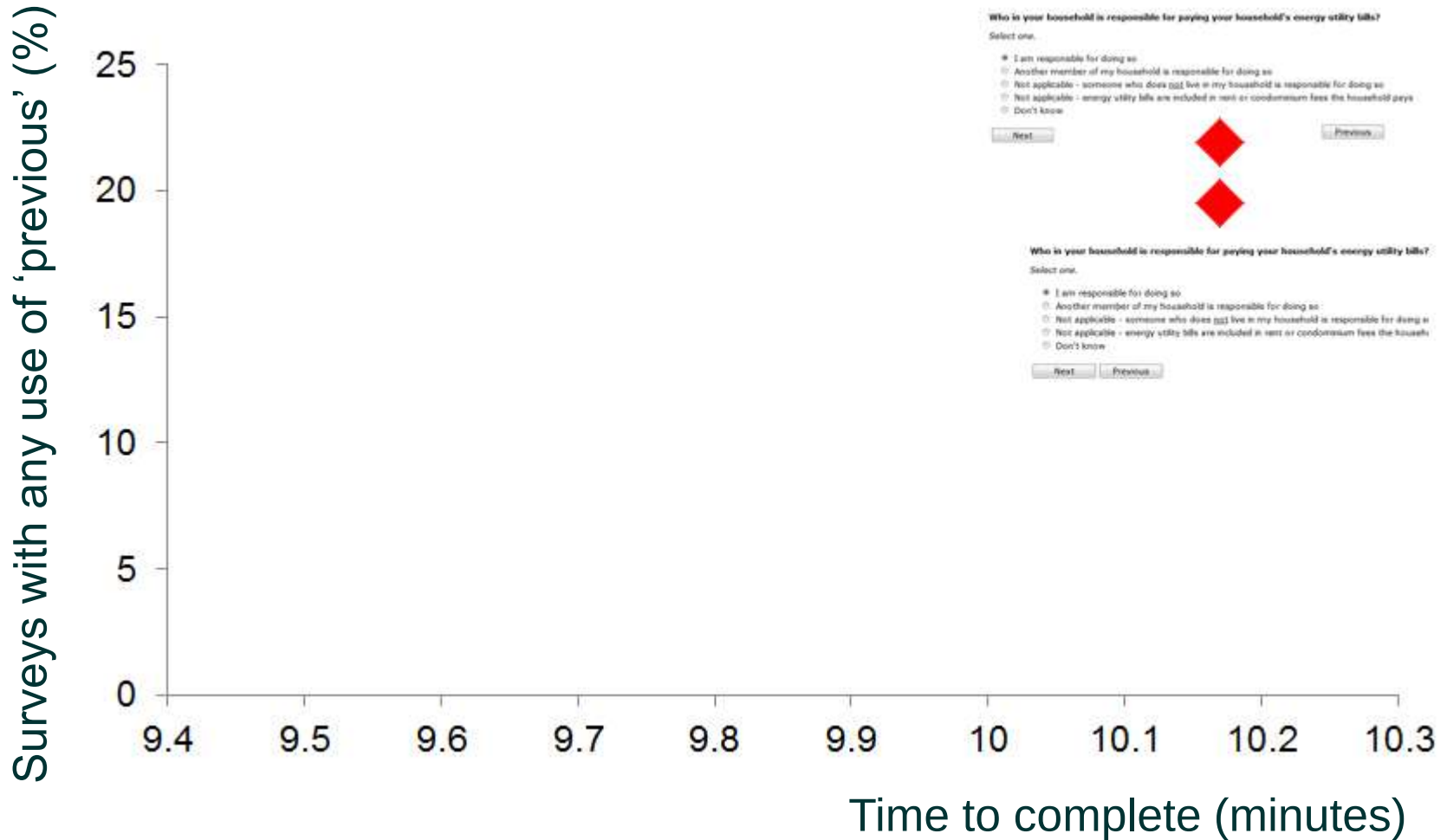
Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next

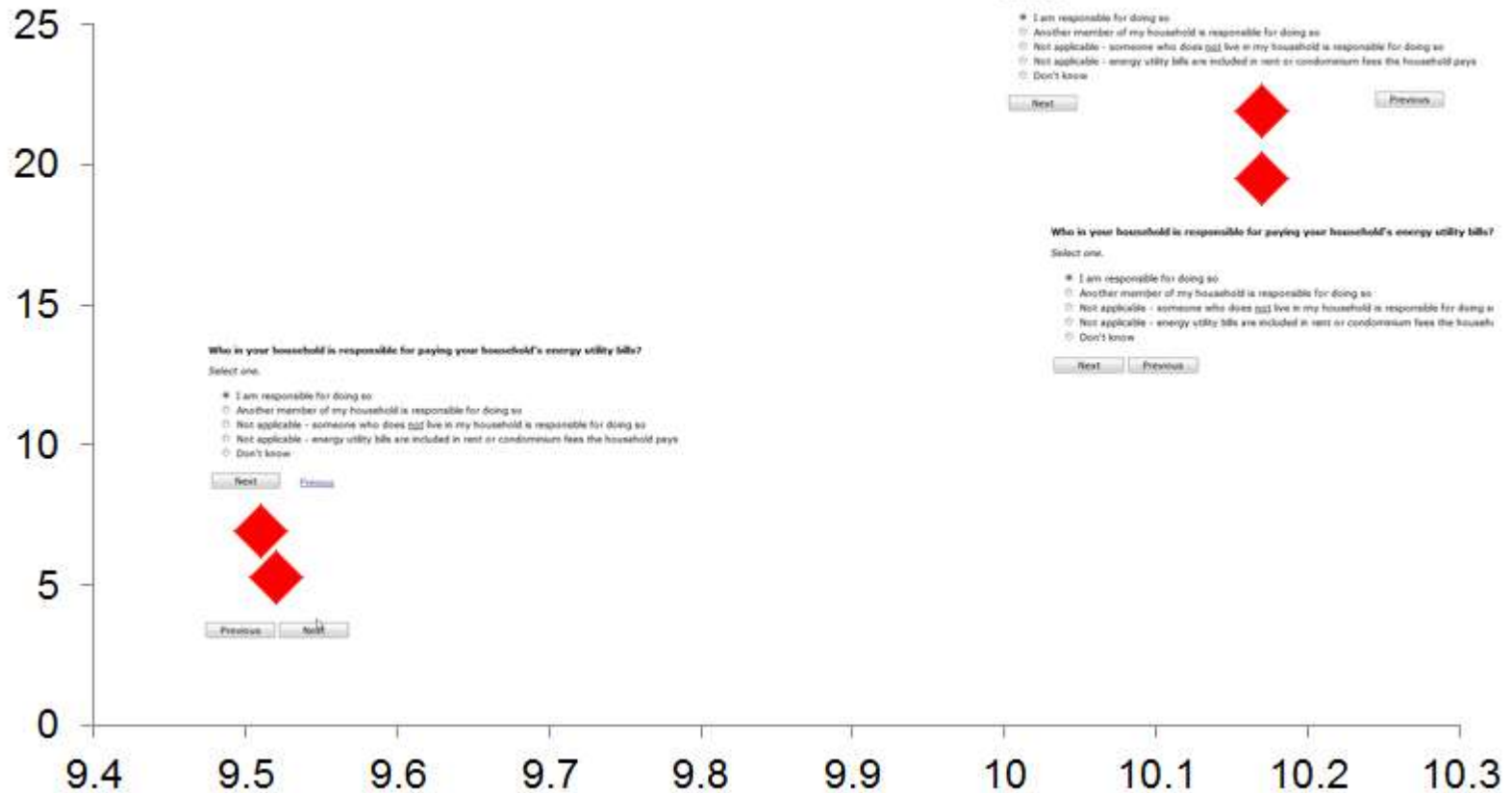
[Previous](#)

The survey with the surprising layout ~ 10 mins



With an expected layout - quicker

Surveys with any use of 'previous' (%)



Who is your household responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next Previous

Who is your household responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

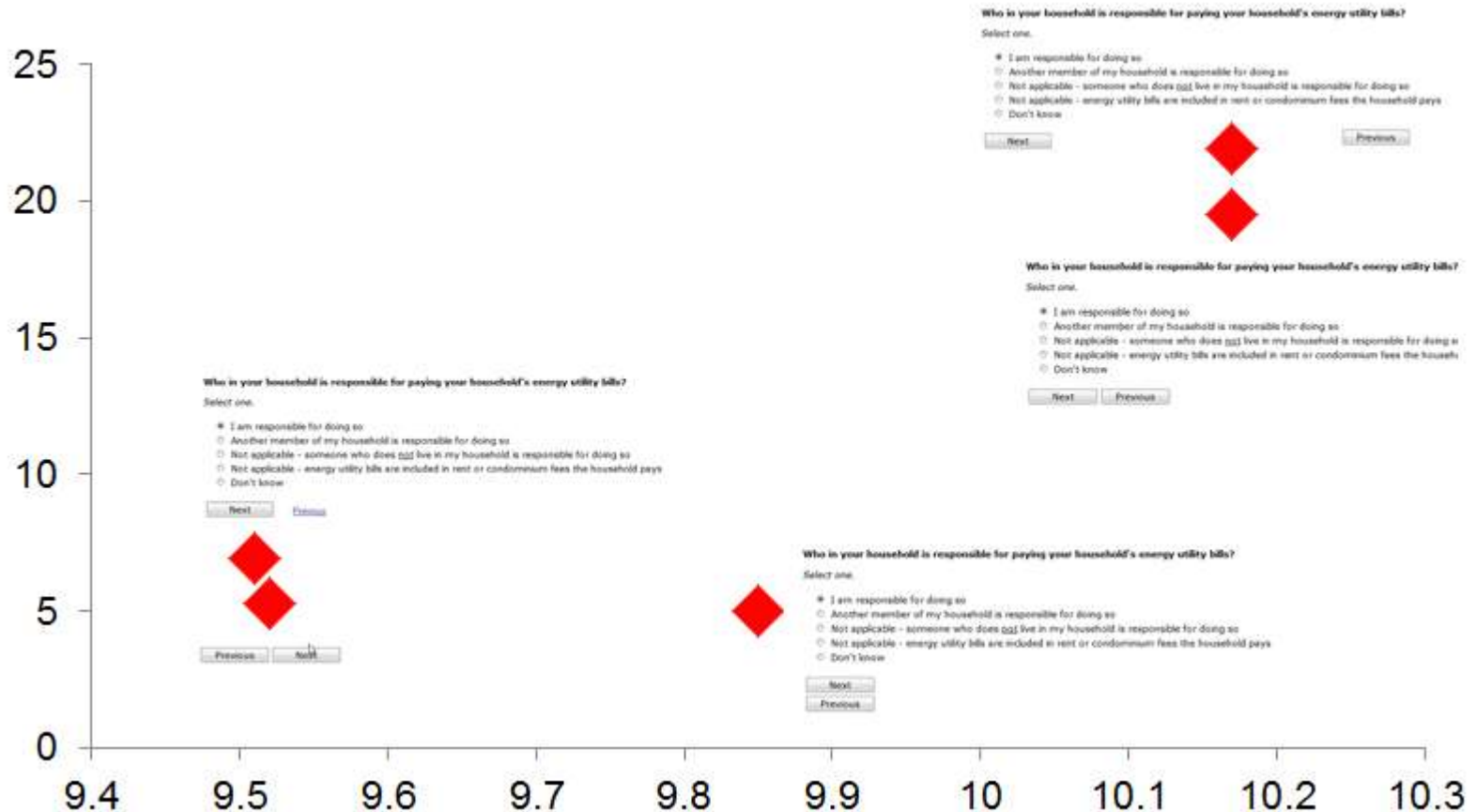
- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

Next Previous

Time to complete (minutes)

Unusual but not barmy layout: in between

Surveys with any use of 'previous' (%)



Time to complete (minutes)

Graph inspired by <http://blog.vovici.com/blog/bid/54343/The-Usability-of-Web-Surveys>

Does that blow away my theory?

The surprise layouts should be fine

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

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- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are paid for by condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

1

Next

Previous

Theory
fail?

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

- ☒ I am responsible for doing so
- ☐ Another member of my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in the household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are paid for by condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

1

Next

Previous

Theory
fail?

Or does it?

Are forms the same as surveys?

Form study #1

- Single screen
- 'Submit' and 'Cancel'
- Time: not given,
but probably ~ 1 minute
- General public

Survey study #2

- Survey
- 'Next' and 'Previous'
- Time:
~ 9 to ~ 10 minutes
- Survey panel members
 - Used to long surveys
 - Used to adapting to different formats for surveys

Study #3: Jennifer Romano Bergstrom (2011)

<http://www.romanocog.com/blog-NextandPrevious.html>

Also reports findings from two U.S. Census Bureau studies

- Romano, J. C. & Chen, J. M. (2011). **A usability and eye-tracking evaluation of four versions of the online National Survey for College Graduates (NSCG): Iteration 2** (Statistical Research Division Study Series SSM2011-01). U.S. Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/ssm2011-01.pdf>

- Romano, J. C. & Chen, J. M. (2010). **A usability evaluation of the online National Survey for College Graduates (NSCG)**(Statistical Research Division Study Series SSM2010-05). U.S. Census Bureau.

<http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/ssm2010-05.pdf>

A survey study with some characteristics of a form study?

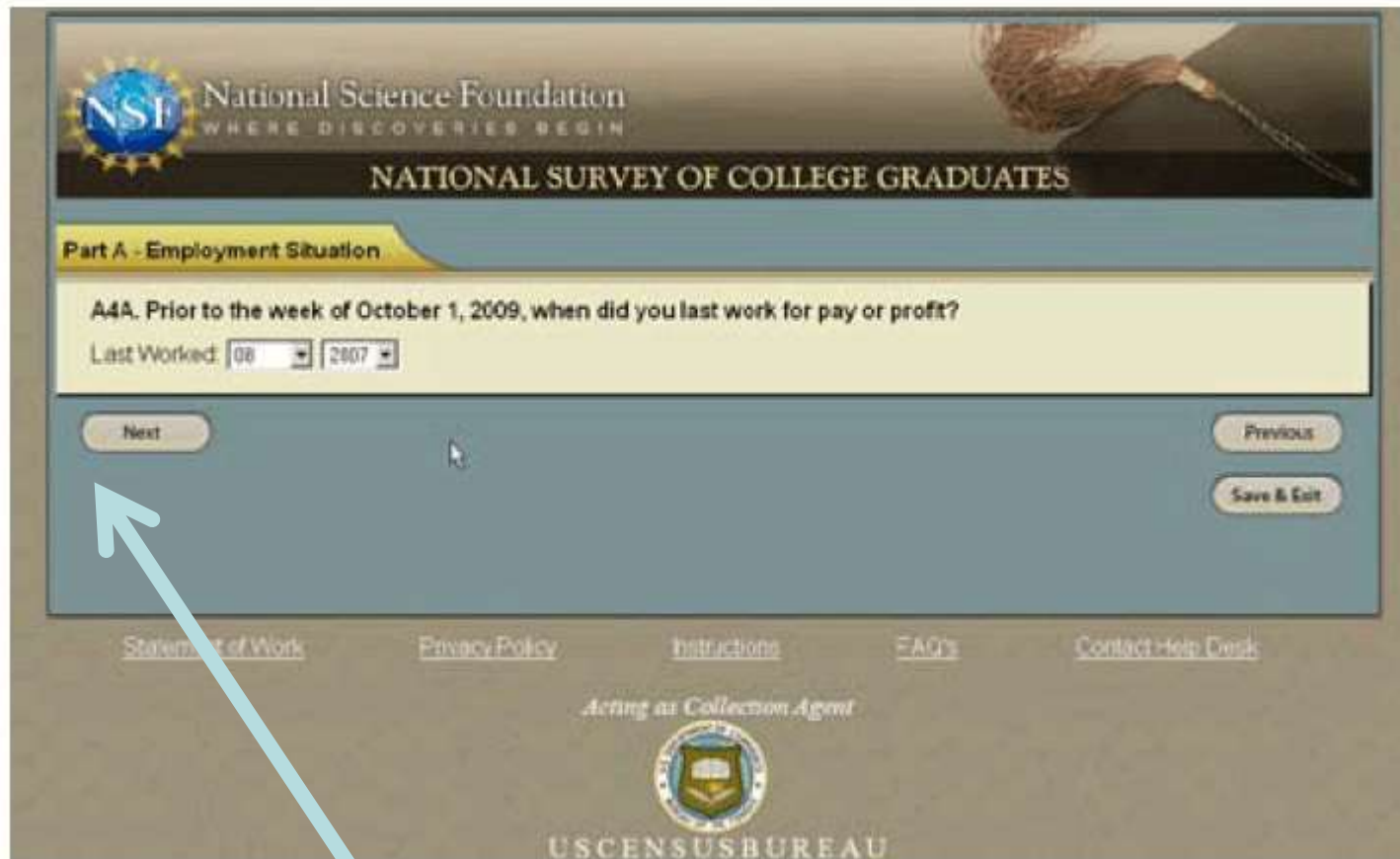
Form study #1

- Single screen
- 'Submit' and 'Cancel'
- Time: not given, but probably ~ 1 minute
- General public

Survey study #3

- Government survey (more important)
- 'Next' and 'Previous'
- Time: ~ 9 to ~ 10 minutes
- General public

Example screenshot - first part of study #3



NSF National Science Foundation
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

NATIONAL SURVEY OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

Part A - Employment Situation

A4A. Prior to the week of October 1, 2009, when did you last work for pay or profit?

Last Worked: 08 2007

Next Previous Save & Exit

[Statement of Work](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Instructions](#) [FAQ's](#) [Contact Help Desk](#)

Acting as Collection Agent

USCENSUS BUREAU

Second part of study #3 moved
Previous / Save and Exit block to left of Next

My theory claims that users can **use** this layout
– and they could use it

Who in your household is responsible for paying your household's energy utility bills?

Select one.

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- ☐ Not applicable - someone who does not live in my household is responsible for doing so
- ☐ Not applicable - energy utility bills are included in rent or condominium fees the household pays
- ☐ Don't know

1

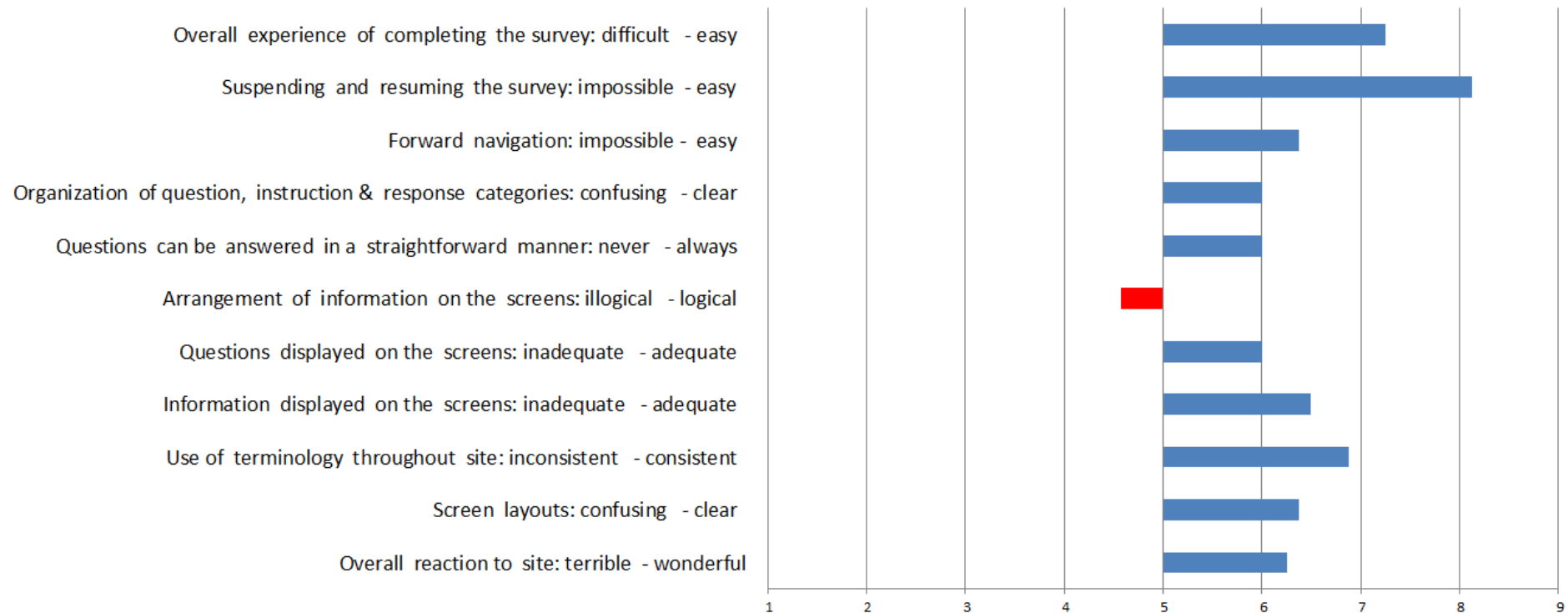
Next

Previous

“All participants were able to successfully complete the NSCG Web-based survey”. (both conditions – study #3)

Participants didn't like the surprise layout

Mean across all participants (n=8)



Mean rating against scale 1 to 9

1 = bad, 9 = good

First part of study #3

Participants see the buttons, left or right,
but they don't like the surprise layout

Surprise layout (previous on right)



“really irritated”
“opposite of what most people
would design”

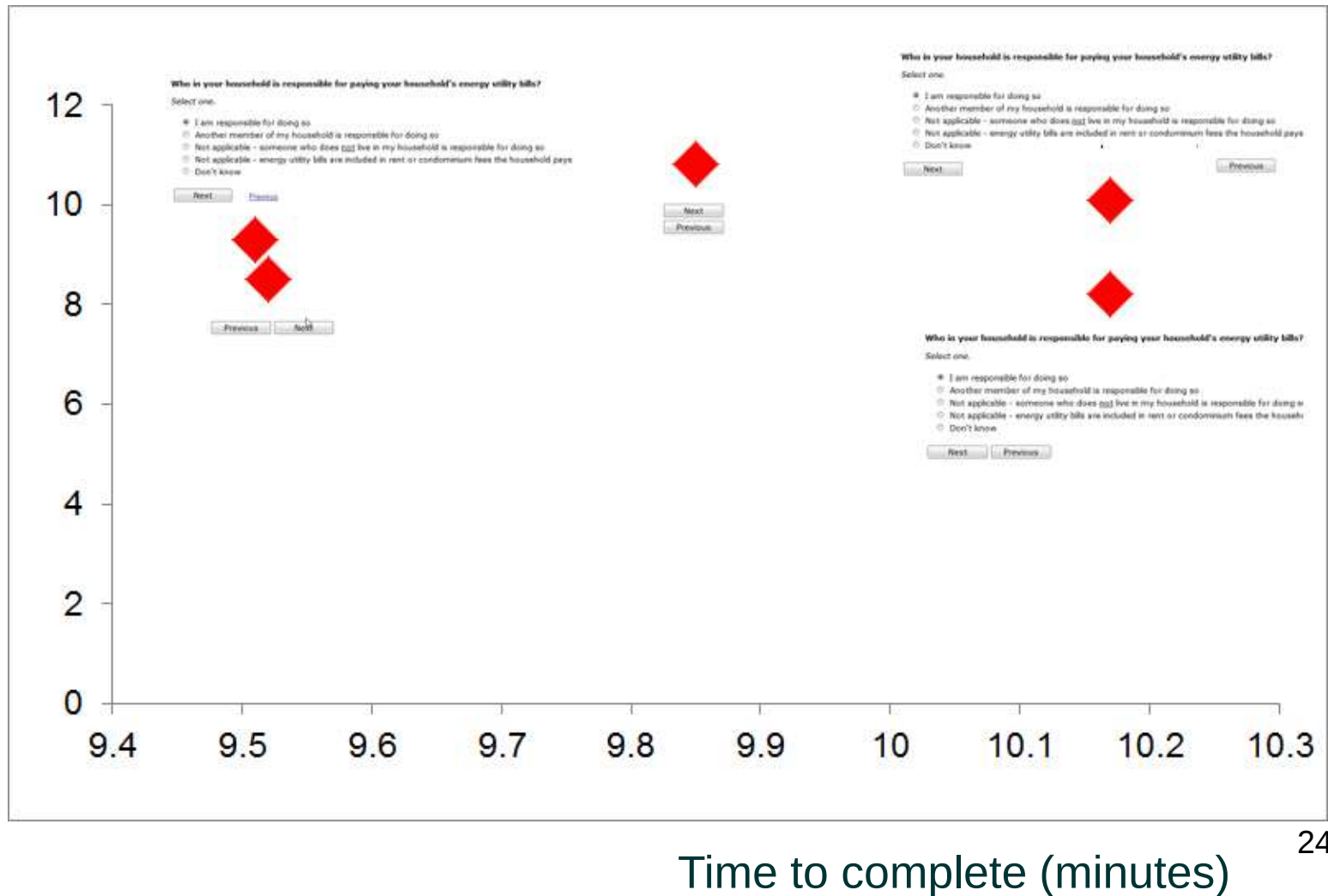
Stacked layout (previous on left)



“logical”
“pretty standard, like what you would
typically see on Web sites.”

The surprise layout takes longer, but doesn't make much difference to break-off

Break-off
(%)



Conclusion: best place for a primary button is aligned with left-hand end of text boxes

Town/City* LEIGHTON BUZZARD

County Beds

Postcode

Title* (Choose) ▼

Other title

First name*

Last name*

Gender* (Choose) ▼

OU Personal Identifier (or known)

Date of Birth (DD-MM-YYYY) - -

3 Looks here last

1
Looks here first for button

2 Then looks here

(but avoid doing silly things with any secondary buttons)

More resources on <http://www.slideshare.net/cjforms>

Design tips for complex forms Malta 2012

Caroline Jarrett



Design tips for complex forms 2011

Caroline Jarrett
J.Boye Conference Denmark



Design tips for complex forms

Caroline Jarrett
Clarity 2010 Lisbon

Design tips for surveys 2012

Caroline Jarrett
User Interface Engineering / Rosenfeld Media Seminar



Surveys in practice and theory 2011

Caroline Jarrett
J.Boye Conference Denmark



Labels and buttons on forms and other time-consuming forms controversies

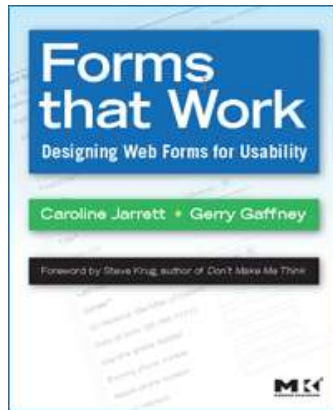
Caroline Jarrett

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CJ01 2012, May 7-12, 2011, Vancouver, BC, Canada
SCN 11-01

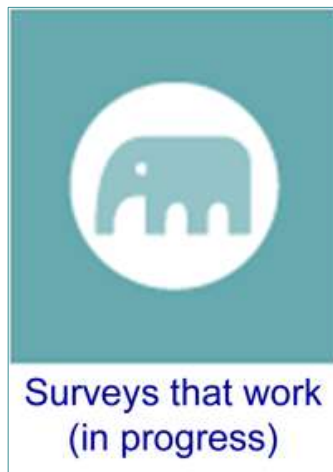
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<http://www.formsthatwork.com>



<http://www.rosenfeldmedia.com/books/survey-design/>