

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation

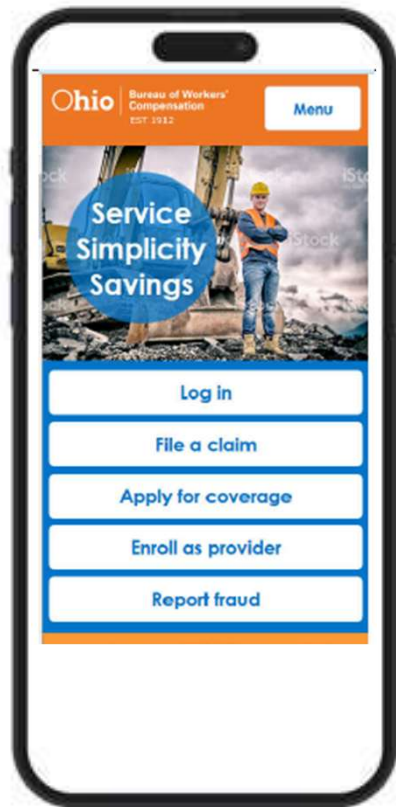
Case Study

Presented by Theresa Wilkinson



Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation

Case Study



Agenda

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The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) initiated a large-scale redesign of its public website to improve navigation, usability, accessibility, and content comprehension for workers and employers. The existing website contained more than **1,000 pages** organized across a complex navigation structure, making it difficult for users to locate information and complete common tasks.

As the **UX Research and Design Lead**, I designed the proposed **information architecture** and conducted a **mixed-methods research** program to evaluate and validate the redesign. Research activities included stakeholder interviews, customer service representative interviews, tree testing, moderated usability testing, focus groups, surveys, readability analysis, and customer feedback analysis.

The research identified significant **navigation, comprehension, and accessibility barriers** and provided **evidence-based recommendations** that informed the redesigned website. Findings helped improve findability, content organization, accessibility, and user understanding across key worker and employer workflows.

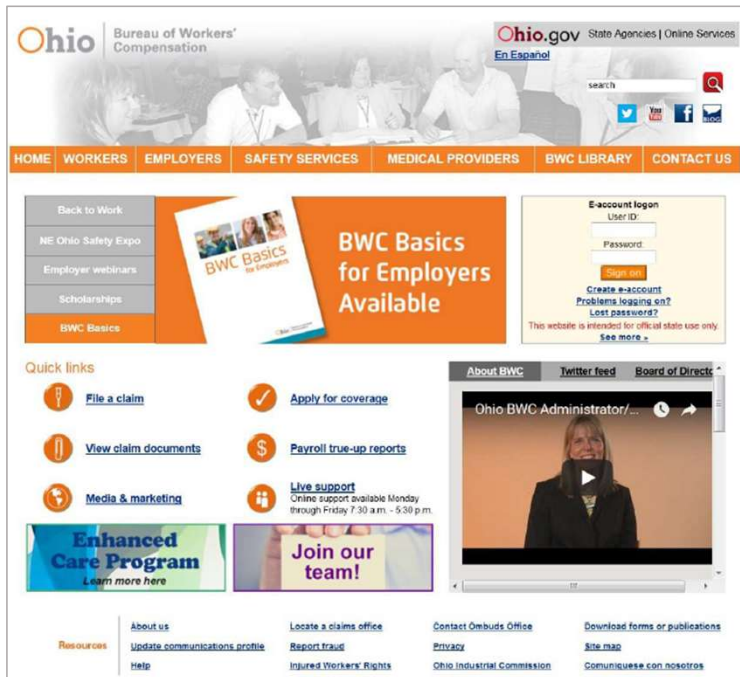


Study Goals

- Evaluate whether workers and employers could successfully locate information using the proposed **information architecture**.
- Identify **navigation, content organization, and labeling issues** that created findability barriers.
- Assess the **usability and accessibility** of key worker and employer workflows.
- Understand how **readability, terminology, and content complexity** affected user comprehension.
- Identify opportunities to improve **navigation, content, accessibility, and overall user experience**.
- Provide **evidence-based recommendations** to support the website redesign.

The Challenge

The Challenge



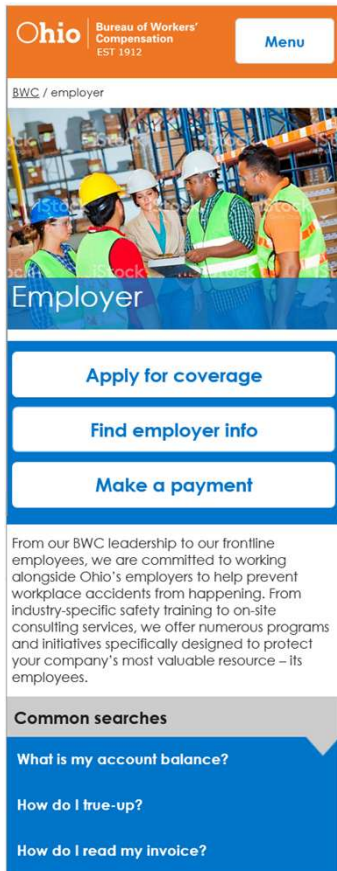
The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation website contained **more than 1,000 pages** organized across a complex navigation structure. Workers and employers frequently struggled to locate information, understand **workers' compensation terminology**, and complete common tasks.

Customer service representatives reported that users regularly contacted them for assistance finding information, understanding forms, and navigating workers' compensation processes. Existing content contained **legal, medical, and industry-specific terminology** that many users found difficult to understand.

Stakeholders needed **research-based evidence** to identify **navigation, usability, accessibility, and comprehension issues** and to guide improvements for the website redesign.

Research Objectives

Research Objectives



- Evaluate whether workers and employers could successfully locate information using the proposed **information architecture**.
- Identify **navigation, labeling, and content organization issues** that created findability barriers.
- Assess the **usability and accessibility** of key worker and employer workflows.
- Understand how **terminology, content complexity, and process requirements** affected user comprehension.
- Identify opportunities to improve **navigation, content, accessibility, and overall user experience**.
- Provide **evidence-based recommendations** to support the BWC website redesign.



- Can workers and employers successfully locate information using the proposed **navigation structure**?
- Which navigation **labels, categories, or content groupings** create confusion?
- Are users able to complete **common worker and employer tasks** without assistance?
- How easy or difficult is it for users to find **forms, claims information, coverage information, and other high-priority content**?
- Do users understand the **terminology** used throughout the website?
- What **accessibility, readability, and usability issues** affect task completion and comprehension?
- Which **navigation, content, and design improvements** would make information easier to find and understand?
- Does the redesigned experience improve **findability, usability, and user satisfaction** compared to the existing website?

Generative Research

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Customer Service Representative Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Comment Analysis

Evaluative Research

- Tree Testing
- Moderated Usability Testing
- Accessibility Evaluation
- Readability Analysis

- To evaluate **navigation, usability, accessibility, and content comprehension**, I conducted a **mixed-methods research** program using qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Research activities included stakeholder interviews, customer service representative interviews, tree testing, moderated usability testing, focus groups, surveys, readability analysis, and customer feedback analysis.
- Research was conducted with workers and employers to understand their unique needs, behaviors, and challenges.
- Data from multiple research methods were analyzed to identify navigation issues, **findability barriers, accessibility concerns, comprehension challenges, and opportunities for improvement.**
- Findings were used to guide **information architecture, content, accessibility, and usability recommendations** for the BWC website redesign.

Participants: 3,140 (3,042 readability study + 88 tree test + 10 usability test)

Number of Studies: 3

Tasks Evaluated: 24 (18 tree test + 6 usability)

Success Rates: 0%–100%

Time on Task: 41 sec – 5 min 14 sec

Other Key Numbers: 100% CSAT, 100% Ease of Use, 100% Task Completion



Survey Highlights

- **3,042 survey responses**
- **59% of injured workers** reported needing help reading information and completing forms
- **67% of injured workers** reported difficulty understanding forms
- **49% of employers** reported needing help reading information and completing forms
- **71% of employers** reported difficulty understanding forms
- Survey findings identified significant **readability and comprehension barriers**

1. Navigation and Findability Were Major Barriers Before the Redesign

Tree testing revealed significant information architecture and navigation challenges for both workers and employers. **Workers failed 50% of tasks** and **employers failed 70% of tasks**, with several **critical tasks achieving success rates below 30%**. Users frequently selected incorrect navigation paths, struggled to locate important information, or abandoned tasks entirely.

Research findings demonstrated that the existing navigation structure did not align with user expectations and created barriers to finding common workers' compensation information. These findings provided quantitative evidence supporting information architecture and navigation improvements as part of the website redesign.

2. Workers and Employers Struggled with Terminology, Forms, and Process Comprehension

Research identified significant comprehension barriers affecting both workers and employers. Survey responses, focus groups, customer feedback, and CSR interviews revealed that **many users struggled to understand workers' compensation terminology, forms, instructions, and required processes.**

Participants reported difficulty understanding what information was required, what steps to complete, and how to navigate the workers' compensation process. Complex legal, medical, and industry-specific terminology further increased confusion and reduced user confidence. Many participants requested simpler language, clearer instructions, examples, definitions, and step-by-step guidance.

3. Users Often Relied on Others for Help

Many workers and employers relied on customer service representatives, attorneys, accountants, third-party administrators, or other individuals to help them understand terminology, forms, letters, and required processes. Research indicated that this reliance often stemmed from confusion and comprehension challenges rather than task complexity.

Customer service representatives reported that injured workers frequently called seeking assistance understanding correspondence and completing required forms. Participants expressed a desire for clearer guidance, examples, definitions, and process information that would allow them to complete tasks independently and with greater confidence.

4. Accessibility and Readability Issues Made Information Harder to Understand

Accessibility and readability issues compounded existing navigation and comprehension challenges. **Users reported difficulty reading content, locating information, understanding terminology, and completing tasks. Small fonts, low-contrast text, confusing interface elements, and screen reader compatibility** concerns created additional barriers for some users.

Readability analysis found that many commonly used workers' compensation terms exceeded recommended reading levels, while survey responses and participant feedback highlighted the need for plain language, clearer explanations, and more accessible content. Findings demonstrated that accessibility, usability, and readability should be addressed together to improve overall user understanding and success.

5. The Redesigned Prototype Improved Task Completion and User Satisfaction

Usability testing demonstrated substantial improvements in findability, task completion, and overall user experience. **All participants successfully completed the test tasks, resulting in 100% task completion, 100% ease of use, and 100% customer satisfaction.**

Participants consistently praised the redesigned navigation, large buttons, and process guidance provided throughout the experience. Features such as the Next Steps pages helped users understand what actions were required and what would happen next. Remaining recommendations focused primarily on increasing font size and improving color contrast to further enhance accessibility and readability.

Usability Testing Results

- **10 participants** (5 workers, 5 employers)
- **100% task completion**
- **100% ease of use**
- **100% customer satisfaction (CSAT)**

Readability Study Results

- **3,042 survey responses**
- **59% of injured workers** reported needing help reading information and completing forms
- **67% of injured workers** reported difficulty understanding what to write in forms
- **49% of employers** reported needing help reading information and completing forms
- **71% of employers** reported difficulty understanding what to write in forms
- Readability analysis identified terminology with reading levels as high as grade 26.5

Navigation & Information Architecture

- Reorganize content to better align with how workers and employers look for information.
- Use **clear, user-centered navigation labels and terminology**.
- Improve **content grouping and categorization** to reduce navigation errors.
- Prioritize **high-frequency tasks and information** within the navigation structure.

Content & Comprehension

- Use **plain language** in website content, forms, letters, and communications.
- Reduce **jargon, acronyms, and specialized workers' compensation terminology**.
- Provide **definitions, examples, and supplemental guidance** for complex concepts.
- Create **worker and employer checklists** to support common tasks and processes.

Accessibility & Usability

- Ensure website content and functionality meet **WCAG and Section 508 accessibility standards**.
- Improve **font size, color contrast, and readability** across the website.
- Conduct **ongoing usability testing** to identify and address accessibility and comprehension barriers.

Research & Continuous Improvement

- Continue gathering feedback from **workers, employers, and customer service representatives**.
- Use **survey, focus group, and comment analysis findings** to prioritize content and process improvements.
- Validate **navigation, content, and design changes** through ongoing user research and usability testing.



- **Navigation, readability, accessibility, and usability issues** are often closely connected and should be evaluated together.
- **Tree testing** can provide powerful **quantitative evidence** to support information architecture decisions.
- **Customer service representatives** can provide valuable insight into recurring user pain points and support needs.
- **Complex terminology** can create barriers for users regardless of education level.
- Combining **qualitative and quantitative research methods** provides a more complete understanding of user challenges.
- **Research recommendations may be implemented incrementally**, making ongoing testing and validation essential.

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