USABILITY: ELECTION SURVEY WEBSITE

Brief

An organisation had been surveying Parties and Candidates for their views on a range of topics at every major election. I felt the way this was presented (on the web) was difficult and frustrating, and when I looked into the statistics, I could see a large number of people were not making it through to the answers we presented.

So I convinced the boss that I should make a one page overview for the election.

The survey layout before

Users are given an email with a link to this page:

Election Surveys - Commonwealth of Australia

Before each election ▓▓▓▓▓▓ ▓▓▓▓▓▓ sends candidates a questionnaire with ten statements on family-related issues. Candidates are invited to express their agreement or otherwise with each statement on the scale: Yes definitely, Probably, Unsure, Unlikely, Definitely not, or No comment.

▓▓▓▓▓ survey scoring rewards **openness** and **honesty**. Failure to acknowledge the survey scores zero. A response to the survey is scored separately for each question: full agreement (Yes Definitely) scores **10**, Probably = **7**, Unsure = **5**, Unlikely = **3**, total opposition (Definitely Not) = **2** and No Comment = **1**. The total score for all 10 questions thus ranges from 0 to 100.

Year	Survey	Results		
2016	Questionnaire	House of Representatives	Senate	Party Replies
2014	Questionnaire		WA Senate	Party Replies
2013	Questionnaire	House of Representatives	Senate	Party Replies
2010	Questionnaire	House of Representatives	Senate	Party Replies
2007	Questionnaire	House of Representatives	Senate	Party Replies
2004	Questionnaire	House of Representatives	Senate	Party Replies

Multiple frustrations are immediately apparent: which link do I click on? What is the House of Representatives? Scoring – of what? There is simply too much information.

On clicking 'Party Replies' the user gets the following page, which continues to 10 questions:

Election Survey - Commonwealth of Australia 2016

To view the party replies, please click on a question below.

Q1: Prayers in Parliament

Would you vote to support the continued opening of parliament with Christian prayers?

Q2: Marriage

Would you vote to retain the *Marriage Act 1961* definition of marriage as "the union of a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life"?

Q3: Safe Schools Coalition program

Would you support the cancellation of the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program, with funding used instead to support proven programs that address all forms of school bullying?

Q4: Illicit drugs

Would you support the replacement of the current focus of the National Drug Strategy on so-called "harm minimisation" with a new focus on achieving a drug free society?

Q5: Internet filtering

Would you support mandatory default filtering of the internet at ISP level to exclude all material currently refused classification in print, film or video media?

Q6: Gambling

Would you vote to require $1 maximum bets per spin and a $120 maximum hourly loss on poker machines?

Each question must be clicked to see the party responses, like this:

Election Survey - Commonwealth of Australia 2016 - Q4

Q4 - Illicit drugs

Harm minimisation has been one of the key principles of Australia's drug strategy since 1985. Harm minimisation measures include needle and syringe exchanges, injecting rooms, heroin prescription, methadone substitution, liberal cannabis laws and drug testing kits. This strategy has largely failed. By contrast, Sweden has shown that "drug free" policies can dramatically reduce the use of illicit drugs.

Would you support the replacement of the current focus of the National Drug Strategy on so-called "harm minimisation" with a new focus on achieving a drug free society?

Party Reply	Score
Family First ' Probably. Family First rejects harm minimisation because it gives up on discouraging illicit drug use, and instead focusses on encouraging 'healthy' ways of using illicit drugs. Methamphetamines or 'ice' are rampant in our community. 'Drug driving' levels in some places are higher than 'drink driving'! Family First supports state police initiatives to prosecute those who manufacture or grow illicit drugs, and very strong penalties imposed by the courts for destroying lives using illicit drugs. Hence we believe states – not the commonwealth – have the dominant role and spending obligation to address illicit drugs. The commonwealth's only role is to halt the importation of illicit drugs at our borders. '	7
Australian Labor Party ' Labor supports evidence-based, harm minimisation drug and alcohol strategies. The National Drug Strategy (2010-2015) provides the national framework for action to minimise the harms to individuals, families and communities from alcohol, tobacco and through supply, demand and harm reduction focused actions. It also recognises the importance of action at a national, state and local level to achieve change. '	2

No 'next' button is supplied, and the user has to press 'back' in their browser and then click once again to get the next question. For each click I found 10% of people gave up, so very few people saw the full answers.

The total number of steps needed to view just the party responses was 22.

The survey layout after

After re-jigging the website I found a one page layout where users could instantly see party responses (i.e. from 22 steps to 1 step!):

Users could click to see individual candidate responses at the bottom (House of Reps and Senate), so they were not confused by an initial table.

The whole page, including the table, was setup to be responsive to different screen sizes. So the number of questions shown reduces, but you can scroll through them. I achieved this and the automatic colouring of the numbers using jQuery.

With CSS I was able to switch the long name of the party with the abbreviation, and make the number of columns reduce as the screen width reduces – and the answers for each question remain together, and not on separate columns.