AN EVALUATION OF THE ROBERT M. KERR

FOOD & AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

CENTER WEB SITE

By

LACIE AMANDA STOCKSTILL

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Thesis Approved:

_____Dwayne Cartmell_____
Thesis Adviser

_____Shelly Sitton_____

_____Cindy Blackwell_____

_____A. Gordon Emslie_____
Dean of the Graduate College

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Acknowledgements

Though I believe this section of a research-based document to be trite and too "fluffy" even for me, the fear of looking back when I'm old and gray and regretting not offering a few words of thanks to a few pertinent people has driven me to conform (I only hope that I'm not disappointed in myself for being such a conformist).

My parents have given me the opportunity to take on the world. Though I only chose Oklahoma for starters, they have offered love and support throughout my educational journey and will continue to do so as I begin my career. I'm the luckiest girl in the world (talk about trite, but if can't beat 'em…). My sister's not too bad either.

Kendra. Seriously? My dear, dear thesis-Siamese-twin. You're a 10, and, yes, I'm *almost* used to it. Box.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

The Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center (FAPC) is located on

the campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The 96,000 square-

foot facility employs 32 full-time faculty, professional staff, and technical staff who

"work to discover value-added products and processes to enhance the value of Oklahoma

agricultural commodities" (Oklahoma State University, 2004, p. 2). The mission of the

state-of-the-art facility is to "discover, develop, and deliver technical and business

information that will stimulate and support the growth of value-added food and

agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma" (Oklahoma State University, 2004,

p.3).

In 1996, the Oklahoma State Legislature established the FAPC Industry Advisory

Committee (IAC). The 16-member committee acts as an oversight and advisory council

for the FAPC (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007). Each member

appointed to the committee represents a sector of the food and agricultural industries in

Oklahoma. The governor, the speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives and the

president pro tempore of the Oklahoma Senate each appoint four members to the FAPC

IAC. The dean and director of Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural

Sciences and Natural Resources serves as a non-voting member and also appoints three members to the committee. The positions that are required by state statute include national food processors operating in Oklahoma, Oklahoma food processors, Made-In-Oklahoma representatives, economic development representatives and representatives from the food and agribusiness marketing and transportation sectors. Also included are a representative for the fiber and textile industry, representatives for the industrial and pharmaceutical sectors and representatives of production agriculture (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

The FAPC opened its door for business in 1997. Since then, the faculty and staff at the FAPC have assisted "more than 1,000 Oklahoma clients through 3,000 technical and business projects" (R. Holcomb, personal communication, July 16, 2007). In 2006, 343 business that had received FAPC assistance reported total sales of more than $1.9 billion; these companies provided about 8,700 full-time and about 325 part-time jobs for Oklahomans (R. Holcomb, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

Purpose and Functions of the FAPC

The FAPC is affiliated with Oklahoma State University's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. The FAPC's mission, to "discover, develop, and deliver technical and business information that will stimulate and support the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma" (Oklahoma State University, 2003, p. 3), is accomplished through the employment of 32 faculty, professional staff, and technical staff who "work to discover value-added products and processes to enhance the value of Oklahoma agricultural commodities" (Oklahoma State University, 2003, p. 2).

The faculty and staff of the FAPC act "to bridge the gap that sometimes exists between academics and the private sector by offering large and small businesses, producers, and entrepreneurs access to faculty and staff with expertise in business and technical disciplines" (FAPC Brochure, 2004). Through this mediation, the purpose of the FAPC is fulfilled. That purpose is to help keep products, employment, and revenue in Oklahoma by ensuring that Oklahoma value-added businesses become or remain successful (FAPC Web site, 2004).

In addition to pilot-processing facilities, educational workshops and research services, the FAPC offers its clients access to faculty and staff with expertise in agribusiness economics, analytical chemistry, business planning and marketing, cereal chemistry, food engineering, horticultural processing, food microbiology, muscle science, oil/oilseed chemistry, quality control and assurance, sensory evaluation, and wood products (Oklahoma State University, 2004).

Since the inception of the FAPC, faculty and staff have helped develop new made-in-Oklahoma products and subsequently have helped bring new jobs to Oklahoma's economy. FAPC "faculty and staff assist food industry and entrepreneurial clients identify, develop, and commercialize products, as well as help them train and educate their staff and develop business plans to expand their businesses" (Oklahoma State University, 2003, p.2).

FAPC Marketing and Communications

In an effort to disseminate effectively the information derived from research conducted at the FAPC, the faculty and staff produce publications, including brochures,

annual reports, fact sheets, newsletters, news releases, and research reports. In addition to these print publications, the FAPC communications specialist maintains a Web site that serves as an electronic source of information for stakeholders and clients (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

The communications team is responsible for reporting to clients, stakeholders, and the media the activities and projects of all faculty and staff members. Not only does the communications team want to promote activities and projects, but also team members want to increase the awareness of the function and purposes of the FAPC and provide clients and stakeholders with current information regarding new research findings and events taking place at the FAPC (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

The FAPC's current Web site was developed without an accurate assessment of what information clients and stakeholders desire to access from the site. The communications team has no knowledge of whether clients and stakeholders are aware of the Web site or whether they access it to obtain information (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007). An exploration of the phenomena related to uses and gratifications will explain why it is essential to provide clients and stakeholders with satisfying information so they will make use of this online resource (Stafford & Stafford, 2001). The communications specialist at the FAPC, Mandy Gross, has launched a revised communications campaign. The goal of this campaign is to unify all pieces of communication with a common design, including educational brochures, *fapc.biz* magazine, news releases, trade-show displays, educational videos and the Web site (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

Before investing time and money into the development and construction of an updated Web site, the FAPC administration, including Dr. J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC director; Jim Brooks, Erin Early, Andrea Graves and Chuck Willoughby, the FAPC business and marketing team; and Mandy Gross, FAPC communications specialist; want to know what information their clients and stakeholders desire to access via the FAPC Web site (M. H. Gross, personal communication, July 16, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

To achieve successful information dissemination, the communicator must know what information a target audience needs (Heckler & Childers, 1992). To improve electronic information dissemination to FAPC clients and stakeholders, the FAPC administration needs to know what information these stakeholders and clients desire to access via the FAPC Web site; therefore, the FAPC administration needs to survey its stakeholders and clients to determine what information to include on the FAPC Web site.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine whether FAPC clients and stakeholders use the FAPC Web site and what information they desire to access via the FAPC Web site.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were developed to accomplish the stated purpose:

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1. Determine whether FAPC stakeholders and clients are accessing the FAPC Web site;

2. Determine FAPC stakeholders' and clients' perceptions of the current site and how they think it can be improved;

3. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients seek in regard to FAPC educational and technical services and what sources they use for obtaining this information;

4. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients want to access from the FAPC Web site; and

5. Determine what information will make FAPC stakeholders and clients want to revisit the FAPC Web site.

Logical Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, the researcher accepted the following assumptions:

1. The responses made by the FAPC stakeholders and clients who responded to the survey instrument were honest expressions of their opinions.

2. The population has a vested interest in the FAPC.

3. The respondents know what would be beneficial information for them as business owners or stakeholders.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study included a census sample of FAPC stakeholders and clients. This population was obtained from the FAPC publications database that is

maintained by the FAPC communications specialist. The database was accessed in April 2007 from the communications specialists' office. The limitation is that the database is continually changing.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the research, the following terms were defined:

1. Evaluation: "the determination of the significance, worth, or condition of usually by careful appraisal and study" (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

2. Client: "a person who engages the professional advice or services of another" (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

3. Dissemination: "to disperse throughout" (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

4. Stakeholder: A contact of the FAPC with whom a relationship has been developed through FAPC workshop participation, affiliation with value-added processing and agriculture in Oklahoma, personal communication with FAPC administration or employment with the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

5. Web site: "a group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization" (Merriam Webster Online, n.d.).

Chapter Summary

Faculty and staff at the FAPC currently communicate with FAPC stakeholders and clients through print media and a Web site that the communications specialist

maintains. Whether these stakeholders and clients are currently accessing and benefiting from the Web site is not known.

To effectively communicate through online media, FAPC faculty and staff need to know whether their current communication efforts are valuable. The study was conducted to determine if the FAPC Web site is effective in its current state and what needs to be to done if improvements need to take place.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study. The study is an evaluation of the FAPC Web site. Faculty and staff at the FAPC are trying to improve electronic communication with stakeholders and clients. Before expending the time and resources required to launch a revised Web site, faculty and staff need to know if stakeholders and clients are aware of and using the Web site and what information they wish to obtain from the Web site.

Within this chapter is a review of literature to provide background information about the FAPC and to provide a theoretical framework for the study. The purpose and functions of the FAPC, the history of land-grant communications efforts, the emergence of Web-based communication, and the theory of uses and gratifications will be discussed within this chapter.

History of Land-Grant Communications Efforts

"Passage of the founding land-grant legislation–the Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862–was accomplished amid what is considered one of the darkest periods in our nation's history–the American Civil War" (Herren & Ewards, 2002, p.89). In 1857, Jonathan Baldwin Turner and Justin Smith Morrill developed the land-grant concept, authored a bill requesting federal funding to implement the concept, and introduced the

bill to the United States Congress. The bill called for "the establishment of colleges for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts" (Herren & Hillison, 1996, p. 28). The act was passed in 1862, and under the Morrill Act, Oklahoma was granted 30,000 acres of land designated for the establishment of a land-grant university (Morrill Land-Grant, 1862). The passage of the bill was the product of a five-year effort to bring about "the creation of a university in every state that would serve the needs of common people and teach the practical skills required by an increasingly industrialized economy, including that portion comprising the agricultural sector" (Herren & Edwards, 2002, p. 90). The university was also to be responsible for conducting research and disseminating research-based information to the people of the state (Morrill Land-Grant, 1862).

"The land-grant concept involved not only a movement for educational reform but also the desire of common people for social change" (Herren & Edwards, 2002, p. 90). Education for all was seen as a way to prevent the stratification of American society into levels, with the upper level being those only with a high socio-economic status. This is because before the institution of land-grant universities, commoners were not afforded the opportunity for education. The land-grand concept was one that would provide college education to those with lower socio-economic statuses (Herren & Edwards, 2002).

The land-grant approach to education did not comply with traditional methods. In the classical approach to education, "the aim of the curriculum was to expand and 'discipline the mind,' rather than to prepare one for a specific occupation with notable exceptions of lawyers and theologians" (Herren & Edwards, p. 91). Even the press of that time period disparaged the classic method of education. According to Herren &

Edwards (2002), Justin Morrill's concern for depleting natural resources in addition to his realization that young America could be left behind by more advanced nations prompted him to write that the solution to these problems was "more thorough and scientific knowledge of agriculture and a higher education of those who were devoted to its pursuit" (as cited in Parker, 1924, p. 262).

It took the persistent Justin Smith Morrill five years to get his bill passed. In 1862 when the bill finally passed, his strongest opposition, Southern lawmakers, was no longer in the United States Congress because they had seceded to become part of the Confederate States of America. Also, Abraham Lincoln was president at the time and a strong supporter of both agriculture and education, so he favored the bill (Herren & Edwards, 2002).

It was not until after the Civil War was over in 1865 that land-grant universities began being built. Soon after the establishment of land-grant universities across the nation, a substantial flaw in their educational plan became obvious. The educators had only a very limited knowledge about agriculture to share with the students. In an attempt to resolve this issue, the Hatch Act of 1887 was passed to establish "agricultural experiment stations that, with few exceptions, would become components of each state's land-grant university system" (Herren & Edwards, 2002, p. 94). The new information garnered from these research experiment stations would need to be disseminated, and there was no means of dissemination in place.

To meet the need for a means of information dissemination, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 was passed brining about "the Cooperative Extension Service as a means of disseminating newly acquired information, knowledge, and innovations to

agriculturalists, who then could put the new methods into practice" (Herren & Edwards, 2002). Today, funding from the passage of this legislation finances many of the projects undertaken at the FAPC (Oklahoma State University, 2004).

As a land-grant institution, Oklahoma State University has a three-part mission: "1) training tomorrow's agriculture leaders (teaching); 2) conducting the state's agriculture research (research); and 3) disseminating new findings to the people of Oklahoma (extension)" (Oklahoma State University Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Web site, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, in compliance with the Morrill Act of 1862 and the land-grant mission, the FAPC faculty and staff strive to develop research-based information and then disseminate that information to stakeholders and clients. The FAPC's mission to "discover, develop, and deliver technical and business information that will stimulate and support the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma" (Oklahoma State University, 2004, p.3) related very closely to the mission of Oklahoma State University. The FAPC communication specialist is responsible for assisting in disseminating information produced by research at the FAPC. One means of disseminating this information is through the FAPC Web site. As it is the newest medium with which information is disseminated, the theory of the diffusion of innovation is relavent.

Diffusion of Innovation

Rogers (2003) posited that diffusion of a technological innovation, like the Internet, is communicated via diffusion through social system channels. The structure of a social system determines how diffusion occurs through that social system. Though there

are many factors that can affect the rate of diffusion in a social system, the four primary contributors are as follows: innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system (Rogers, 2003).

Communication channels, such as the World Wide Web, play a vital role in the success of information dissemination. Mass media and interpersonal communication are the two primary channels of communication. Mass media, such as Web sites, are important in communication to large audiences. Interpersonal communication channels are sometimes more persuasive when trying to get people to accept a new idea. This is especially true when the channels are connecting similar individuals (Rogers, 2003).

When an individual learns of an innovation and begins to understand its purpose and function, awareness-knowledge has been achieved. The way that awareness-knowledge is most commonly initiated is by the mass media. If awareness knowledge is established, the need for the innovation may become apparent to the individual and the individual may be more likely to use it (Rogers, 2003).

The most newly developed communication channel through which the FAPC communications specialist attempts to disseminate information is the FAPC Web site. Thus, the diffusion of this innovation is essential if FAPC stakeholders and clients are expected to receive information through it. Since the FAPC Web site was evaluated in this study, understanding the emergence of web-based communication played an important role in the review of literature.

Emergence of Web-based Communication

"Information forms the underpinning of modern society" (Stafford & Stafford, 2001, p. 22). Media are required to disseminate this information to society members, and

the newest medium, the Internet, is one that is being considered the forefront of the information society (Stafford & Stafford, 1998). "An increasing number of businesses are choosing the Web as an alternative channel for developing a brand reputation, for transacting with and servicing customers and investors, or simply for public relations purposes" (as cited in Agarwal & Venkatesh, 2002, p. 168). The expectation that the Internet would be crucial for not only communication, but also for marketing has long been posited by researchers (Dreze & Zufryden, 1997).

In 2001, Nielsen reported more than 160 million people in the United States had Internet access. Of those 160 million, almost 100 million logged on weekly (Nielsen, 2001). "The Internet supports different forms of communication, from the most private exchanges to the most public pronouncements" (Webster & Lin, 2002, p. 8). To increase Internet presence, those who market their company or services via a Web site should strive to understand the dynamics of the Internet (Parker & Plank, 2000).

The information contained within a Web site is essential to its usability. "Content Management is a term that refers to the collection, management, and publishing of information online. The concept of content management comes into play when creating and maintaining a Web site" (Dahl, 2004, p. 24). The actual content and organization of a Web site trumps design in terms of importance. "Although people will notice the graphic design of your Web pages right away, the overall organization of the site will have the greatest impact on their experience" (Web Style Guide Web site, 2nd Edition, 2002, p. 1). "Audiences and users of new media are increasingly active – selective, self-directed, producers as well as receivers of texts" (Livingstone, 2004, p. 79).

In a recent study, Reim (2005) evaluated Web sites of each of the nine academic departments of Oklahoma State University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. These Web sites are meant to disseminate information about the department to all users. The information meant to be disseminated could be related to academics, such as college admissions, or to research (Reim, 2005).

The first objective of the study was "to conduct a review of literature for best practices of Web design" (Reim, 2005, p. 69). After conducting the review of literature, Reim (2005) developed a rubric "for evaluating Web sites based on a review of literature for practices in Web design for public universities" (Reim, 2005, p. 69). The rubric was validated by evaluating each departmental Web site (Reim, 2005).

Following the evaluation of Web sites, Reim (2005) made the following conclusion: "There is limited research on University Web site development. Most research and literature found was on E-commerce" (p. 72). Based on findings and conclusions of this study, Reim (2005) made the following recommendations: "When developers are in the process of developing a site, usability studies should be conducted to determine what features viewers have trouble navigating or other problems the site may have" and "The CASNR Web sites should be tested by users to identify how user-friendly they appear" (p. 73).

Based on these recommendations, the faculty and staff of the FAPC should indeed be concerned about how clients and stakeholders perceive the FAPC Web site and how user-friendly they think it is. The FAPC Web site was developed before the current director and communications specialist was in place, and it was developed with an evaluation study or usability study. To try to improve the Web site, current faculty and

staff are interested in surveying FAPC stakeholders and clients to determine their perceptions of the Web site.

<center>Theoretical Framework</center>

Theory of Uses and Gratification

"The emergence of the Internet in recent years has coincided with a renewed interest in 'uses and gratifications' theory" (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p. 304). This theory posits all audiences search for and find a medium that will satisfy their specific needs (Johnson & Kaye, 2003). Media is required for information dissemination through any type of communication other than interpersonal (Stafford & Stafford, 1998). Individuals have self-defined interests and goals to satisfy with media, and these factors influence media choices (Lin, 1977). The uses and gratifications model illustrates the processes by which media consumers discerningly obtain information that will meet their needs or desires (Blumler & Katz, 1974). After seeking out suitable media, consumers utilize the media content to fulfill their needs and interests (Lowery & DeFluer, 1983).

Mukherji et al. (1998) distinguished differences between two varying approaches to the uses and gratifications paradigm. The discrepancy between what the consumers seek and what they actually obtain determines media frequency, dependency and length of media use. Thus, this is termed the discrepancy approach (Palmgreen and Rayburn, 1979). The transactional approach, which forgoes the use of the difference between what is sought and what is obtained and relies on the symbiosis of gratifications sought and obtained, can help to explain variance in Internet usage (Mukherji, et al., 1998).

Motivation for Internet Usage

Stafford and Stafford (1996) found motivations for media use are divided between process gratifications and content gratifications. Process gratification is enjoying the actual use of the medium, such as browsing the Web (Hoffman & Novack, 1996). In contrast, content gratification is satiation from the information obtained (Stafford & Stafford, 1996).

In 2001, Stafford and Stafford recognized the existence of an Internet-specific gratification—socialization. The Internet can simultaneously offer the user commercial and noncommercial opportunities as well as interpersonal and mass communication media thus providing socialization. There may exist a synergy between content and process gratification for motivation to use online media (Stafford & Stafford, 2001).

Uses and Gratifications, a theoretical model of communication, is applicable to online media (Morris & Ogan, 1996). With the growing popularity of the World Wide Web, consumers are beginning to seek out companies and products of interest versus waiting for traditional mass marketing strategies to target and influence them (Sheth, 1992).

The theory of uses and gratifications can aid in the understanding of consumer motivations for implementing the Internet (Newhagen & Rafeli, 1996; Rafeli, 1988). Parker and Plank (2000) found online sources of information ranked just behind radio. The researchers posited the reliance on Internet-based information sources will only rise as computer prices continue to decrease. Personal involvement and continuing relationships can be motivations for Web site viewing (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

During the early study of uses and gratifications, McGuire (1974) found it is less important to discover how a user came to the medium than it is to know how to keep the user dependent on the medium or to develop "holding power." Content gratification seems to be the most likely reason for dependency on Internet media and repeat visits (Stafford & Stafford, 1998).

Audience Type and Uses and Gratification

The active audience is a basic principle in the theory of uses and gratifications (Blumler & Katz, 1974), and these active audiences are discerning and making choices (Levy & Windahl, 1984). Audience-specific uses and gratification apply to all media types (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

The role of an active audience is vital when investigating uses and gratifications in regard to the Internet, for the flow of communication is reversed (ie., the user controls the process by initiating access). The involvement of an active audience is assumed in Internet media because Web sites are designed for active use (Stafford & Stafford, 1998).

Effect of Web Design

An efficient Web site design is important for attracting repeat viewers (Eighmey & McCord, 1998). Web site designers should consider increasing a site's interactive capabilities to motivate users to actively use the site and mark it for return visits. Managers of organizational Web sites should understand the clients' comfort level with computers and technology as well as their personal and social Web usage (Stafford & Stafford, 2001).

Parker and Plank (2000) explored gratification associated with Internet usage in a general way and suggested future researchers analyze gratifications obtained for specific Web site visits. Because survey research is an effective method in uses and gratifications research (Rubin, 1981), the researcher will administer a survey instrument to determine the needs of the FAPC client and stakeholders to determine whether the FAPC Web site is gratifying.

Summary

The passing of the Morrill Act in 1862 established land-grant universities to provide those in lower-socioeconomic categories with educations to specifically prepare them for a career (Herren & Edwards, 2002). However, there was a flaw in the educational plan. The amount of knowledge educators had was very limited, so the Hatch Act of 1887 was passed to develop agricultural experiment stations as sources to generate new knowledge. Following the Hatch Act was the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which established the Cooperative Extension service as a means of disseminating research-based information produced by the agricultural experiment stations to the public (Herren & Edwards, 2002).

The mission of the FAPC fits closely with that of land-grant universities (Oklahoma State University Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Web site, 2006), and the FAPC Web site is the newest communication channel that is being used to disseminate information. Communication channels, like the Internet, play a vital role in information dissemination, and mass media is one of the two primary channels of communication (Rogers, 2003).

The World Wide Web is the most modern communication medium and is considered the forefront of the information society (Stafford & Stafford, 1998). Nielsen reported that in 2001, more than 160 million people in the United States had Internet access. In a recent study regarding Oklahoma State University's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources departmental Web pages, Reim (2005) concluded that limited research is available regarding University Web site development and recommended a usability study should be performed when developing a Web site.

The theory of uses and gratifications posits all audiences will search for and find a medium that will satisfy their specific needs (Johnson & Kaye, 2003, p. 304). After finding suitable media, consumers will use media content to fulfill their needs and interests (Lowery & DeFluer, 1983). Content gratification is the most likely reason for dependency on Web-based media and for repeat visits to a particular site (Stafford & Stafford, 1998). If the FAPC Web site is evaluated and data is collected regarding the users needs, dependency of the site is likely to increase in addition to repeat visits increasing.

CHAPTER III

Methodolgy

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study. The study is an evaluation of the

Food and Agricultural Products Center Web site. Faculty and staff at the FAPC are trying

to improve electronic communication with stakeholders and clients. Before expending the

time and resources required to launch a revised Web site, faculty and staff need to know

if stakeholders and clients are aware of and using the Web site and what information they

wish to obtain from the Web site.

Within Chapter II is a review of literature to provide background information

about the FAPC and to provide a theoretical framework for the study. For successful

information dissemination, the communicator must know what information a target

audience needs (Heckler & Childers, 1992). To provide this information is a mission of

land grant universities: "1) training tomorrow's agriculture leaders (teaching); 2)

conducting the state's agriculture research (research); 3) and disseminating new findings

to the people of Oklahoma (extension)" (Oklahoma State University Division of

Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Web site, 2006). A survey-based evaluation

is an effective way to determine clients' educational needs and preferences

(Malmsheimer & Germain, 2002). Gratifying these needs is a way to ensure the audience

will use a medium frequently and to develop dependency on it (Mukherji et al., 1998). An

efficient Web site design is important for attracting repeat viewers and ensuring that this

particular medium is an effective communication tool (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

This chapter will outline the methods and procedures used to collect data for this

study. Within this chapter are descriptions of population, instrumentation, validity and

reliability testing, data gathering, and data analysis.

Institutional Review Board

According to federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy, all

research studies involving human subjects must be approved before research can

commence. The review process is conducted by the Oklahoma State University Office of

University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect the

rights of human subjects who are involved in either biomedical or behavioral research. To

comply with these policies, the researcher submitted this study for review and was

granted approval to proceed. AG0717 was the IRB number assigned to the stakeholder-

based needs assessment study for developing a basis for an informative Web site (See

Appendix A).

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine whether FAPC clients and

stakeholders use the FAPC Web site and what information they desire to access via the

FAPC Web site.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Determine whether FAPC stakeholders and clients are accessing the FAPC
    Web site;

2. Determine FAPC stakeholders' and clients' perceptions of the current site and
    how they think it can be improved;

3. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients seek in regard to
    FAPC educational and technical services and what sources they use for
    obtaining this information;

4. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients want to access
    from the FAPC Web site; and

5. Determine what information will make FAPC stakeholders and clients want
    to revisit the FAPC Web site.

Research Design

The research design used in the study was descriptive. Descriptive statistics are a series of methods and concepts used to organize, summarize, tabulate, describe, and depict sets of data (Shavelson, 1996). Results of research are reported in tabular, graphical, or numerical form (Shavelson, 1996). The researcher began by gathering quantitative data though a mailed instrument to a population of FAPC clients and stakeholders. The researcher then used this data to develop conclusions.

Population

The FAPC publications database, which is maintained by the FAPC communications specialist, served as the population source (N=521). This database included the following individuals: basic-training workshop participants; producers of Made in Oklahoma products; members of the FAPC Industry Advisory Council; parties who have expressed interest in being on the mailing list; and a list compiled by J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC director, of state legislators and industry professionals who have a vested interest in food and agricultural products in the state of Oklahoma. Data was collected from the entire population, making this a census.

Instrumentation

The researcher designed and developed an instrument (see Appendix B) after interviewing the FAPC communications specialist to determine what areas of the FAPC Web site should be evaluated. The instrument was then mailed to participants. The questionnaire was developed specifically by the researcher to study the population to determine the questions raised by the objectives. Perception was addressed using summated-rating questions, and demographic information was collected. Five open-ended questions were asked with the intention that answers would be categorized and subsequently coded by the researcher. The instrument was presented to a panel of experts, and the recommended changes to the instrument were made.

Validity

To ensure both face and content validity, a panel of experts, consisting of an

Oklahoma State University Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and

Leadership faculty member and four FAPC faculty and staff (see Appendix C), reviewed

the instrument. The members of the panel are experts regarding instrument design and the

FAPC, so face and content validity were assured via their approval of the instrument.

Reliability

To ensure the collection of data was reliable, the researcher determined reliability

by visually comparing the similarities of the data collected from the first 10 respondents.

Data was reviewed for consistency, but no scaled reliability measures were calculated

because all three scaled questions were optional. If the participant had not visited the

Web site, the three scaled questions could not be answered.

Non-response error

Responses received after the cut-off date of June 5, 2007, were considered

nonrespondents. These 22 nonrespondents were compared to respondents, and no

significant differences were found. Therefore, the researcher will generalize the results of

this study to the rest of the population under investigation.

Data Gathering

The study collected data by means of mail survey instrument, following an

abbreviated version of the Dillman (2000) *Tailored Design Method*. Rather than sending

25

letters, the researcher sent postcards, and the total number of mailings was four rather than Dillman's recommended five. Dillman (2000) suggests a pre-survey letter that is followed in a few days by an instrument accompanied by a cover letter. A letter of appreciation, sent about three to seven days after the instrument to thank respondents and serve as a reminder to nonrespondents, and a final mailing, containing another instrument and cover letter recommending the participant complete the survey instrument, are also recommended by Dillman (2000). Finally, Dillman (2000) suggests a fifth contact by Federal Express or telephone.

To reduce cost, the researcher implemented postcards (see Appendix D) for the first and third mailing, as they were less expensive to print and mail. The researcher also allowed more time between mailings, so returned mail from the U.S. Postal Service could be readdressed and resent. The researcher collected data from April 19, 2007, through June 5, 2007, which was one month past May 5, 2007, the date by which the initial instrument packet asked that responses be postmarked. Instrument packets received after that point were considered nonrespondents.

The researcher sent the first postcard (see Appendix D) announcing the forthcoming survey instrument. One week after the first postcard was sent, the researcher sent the survey questionnaire (see Appendix E), which was accompanied by personalized cover letter (see Appendix F) individually signed by the researcher. A business-reply envelope was sent with the instrument. A reminder post card (see Appendix D) was sent two weeks after the survey instrument. Two weeks following the reminder postcard, a second survey instrument with a new cover letter (see Appendix G) was sent.

Data Analysis

The researcher entered the collected data into a Microsoft Excel™ spreadsheet. The data was then analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 11 Mac® OS X, a descriptive statistics software program. Basic descriptive statistics were used on scaled items. Open ended questions quantified by categorization. Inferential statistics were used to interpret data. Frequencies, percentages and means were reported.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study. The study is an evaluation of the Food and Agricultural Products Center Web site. Faculty and staff at the FAPC are trying to improve electronic communication with stakeholders and clients. Before expending the time and resources required to launch a revised Web site, faculty and staff need to know if stakeholders and clients are aware of and using the Web site and what information they wish to obtain from the Web site.

Chapter II provides a review of literature to provide background information about the FAPC and the theoretical framework for the study. For successful information dissemination, the communicator must know what information a target audience needs (Heckler & Childers, 1992). To provide this information is a mission of land grand universities: "1) training tomorrow's agriculture leaders (teaching); 2) conducting the state's agriculture research (research); and 3) disseminating new findings to the people of Oklahoma (extension)" (Oklahoma State University Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Web site, 2006). A survey-based evaluation is an effective way to determine clients' educational needs and preferences (Malmsheimer & Germain, 2002). Gratifying these needs is a way to ensure the audience will use a medium frequently and develop dependency on it (Mukherji et al., 1998). An efficient Web site design is

important for attracting repeat viewers and ensuring that this particular medium is an effective communication tool (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

Chapter III outlined the methods and procedures used to collect data for this study. After developing a mail instrument with the assistance of a panel of experts, the researcher sent the instrument to a population derived from the FAPC publication database. Following an adaptation of Dillman's (2000) *Tailored Design Method*, data was collected and then analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine whether FAPC clients and stakeholders use the FAPC Web site and what information they desire to access via the FAPC Web site.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were developed to accomplish the stated purpose:

1. Determine whether FAPC stakeholders and clients are accessing the FAPC Web site;

2. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients seek in regard to FAPC educational and technical services and what sources they use for obtaining this information;

3. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients want to access from the FAPC Web site;

4. Determine what information will make FAPC stakeholders and clients want to revisit the FAPC Web site; and

5. Determine FAPC stakeholders' and clients' perceptions of the current site and how they think it can be improved.

Population

The FAPC publications database, which is maintained by the FAPC communications specialist, served as the population source. This database included the following individuals: basic-training workshop participants; producers of Made in Oklahoma products; members of the FAPC Industry Advisory Council; parties who have expressed interest in being on the mailing list; and a list compiled by J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC director, of state legislators and industry professionals who have a vested interest in food and agricultural products in the state of Oklahoma.

Respondents

The initial population of 521 was reduced to a useable population of 483 (n=483) after undeliverable addresses were removed from the list. Of the 483 instruments sent, 100 responses were received, yielding a response rate of 20.70%. Given the low response rate, nonresponse error was taken into consideration.

Personal and Professional Characteristics

The participants were asked for demographic information in the following

categories: gender, education level, annual income, age, residence type, access to a home,

Internet connection, frequency of Internet usage, and communication preference.

Gender

Of the respondents, 58 (58.0%) were male, and 36 (36.0%) were female (see

Table 1).

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Male	58	58.0
Female	36	36.0
No response	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Education Level

All 95 respondents had earned at least a high school diploma or GED; no

respondents reported having no high school diploma. Four individuals (4.0%) responded

they had achieved a high school diploma or GED. Eighteen respondents (18.0%) reported

having some college but no degree, while 42 individuals (42.0%) answered they had

earned an associate's or bachelor's degree. Master's, professional or doctoral degree

holders represented 31.0% (31) of the respondents (see Table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Education Level

Degree	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Associate or bachelor's degree	42	42.0
Master's, professional or doctoral degree	31	31.0
Some college, no degree	18	18.0
High school diploma or GED	4	4.0
No high school diploma	0	0.0
No response	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Annual Income

Respondents could choose one of six categories when reporting annual income.

The smallest percentage of the respondents, 3.0% (3), reported less than $15,000 in

annual income (see Table 3). Seven individuals (7.0%) were categorized as earning

between $15,001 and $30,000. The $30,001 to $45,000 category held 9.0% (9) of the

respondents. Sixteen respondents (16.0%) answered earning between $45,001 and

$60,000, while 12.0% of the respondents (12) earned from $60,001 to $75,000. The

largest percentage of the population, 36.0% (36), earn more than $75,000 each year.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents by Annual Income

Income	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
More than $75,000	36	36.0
$45,001 to $60,000	16	16.0
$60,001 to $75,000	12	12.0
$30,001 to $45,000	9	9.0
$15,001 to $30,000	7	7.0
Less than $15,000	3	3.0
No response	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0

Age

Participants were provided with seven age categories from which to choose. No respondents (0%) answered to being in the 18- to 25-year-old range (see Table 4). Eight individuals (8.0%) responded they were in the 26- to 35-year-old range, and 36- to 45-year-olds represented 11.0% (11) of the population. Thirty-three respondents (33.0%) were between 46 and 55 years old, while 27 (27.0%) answered being 56 to 65 years old. Fourteen respondents (14.0%) ranged from 66 to 75, and only one respondent (1.0%) answered being older than 76 years.

Type of Residence

To the question of "Where do you live?" respondents were given the following

Table 4

Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
46-55	33	33.0
56-65	27	27.0
66-75	14	14.0
36-45	11	11.0
26-35	8	8.0
76 or older	1	1.0
18-25	0	0.0
No response	6	6.0
Total	100	99.9

choices: farm/ranch, rural resident (minimal acreage), town (less than 10,000 population), city (10,001 to 50,000 residents) or large city (50,001 or more residents). Nineteen respondents (19.0%) indicated they live on a farm or ranch, while 22 (22.0%) answered they live as a rural resident on minimal acreage (see Table 5). The smallest percentage of respondents, 8.0% (8), answered as living in a town of less than 10,000 people. The last two categories were city and large city, and responses were 18.0% (18) and 28.0% (28), respectively.

Access to a Home Internet Connection

Participants were asked if they had Internet access and, if so, what kind of connection they had. Ten respondents (10.0%) answered they did not have access to the

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents by Type of Residence

Residence Type	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Large city – 50,001 or more residents	28	28.0
Rural resident – minimal acreage	22	22.0
Farm/ranch	19	19.0
City – 10,001 to 50,000 residents	18	18.0
Town – less than 10,000 population	8	8.0
No response	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Internet (see Table 6). Twelve individuals (12.0%) responded they have access to the Internet and their connection is a dial-up connection. The majority of respondents, 74 (74.0%), indicated they have a high-speed Internet connection, including cable, broadband or digital subscriber line. One respondent (1.0%) answered to not having a home Internet connection but using the service provided by the local library.

Frequency of Internet Usage

The questionnaire asked participants how often they accessed their Internet connection. From the five choices that were provided, the majority of respondents, 63.0% (63), answered they access their Internet connection more than once per day (see Table 7). Eleven individuals (11.0%) responded they access their connection once per day, while seven (7.0%) access their connection three to four times each week. Three

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents by Internet Access

Type of Internet Access	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
High speed (digital subscriber line, cable, broadband, etc.)	74	74.0
Dial up	12	12.0
I don't have Internet access.	10	10.0
Other	1	1.0
No response	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Internet Usage

Access Frequency	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
More than once per day	63	63.0
Once per day	11	11.0
3-4 times per week	7	7.0
Once per week	3	3.0
Less frequently	6	6.0
No response	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

respondents (3.0%) only access their connection once per week, and the remaining 6.0%

(6) access their connection less often.

Communication Preference

The researcher posed the following question: "Do you prefer electronic newsletters and updates to be printed ones you receive through the U.S. Postal Service?" The respondents could select from two answers. Fifty individuals (50.0%) indicated they prefer electronic communication, while the remaining 45 (45.0%) answered they preferred to get information through the mail (see Table 8).

Table 8

Distribution of Respondents by Communication Preference

Demographic	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
I prefer electronic communication.	50	50.0
I prefer to get things through the mail.	45	45.0
No response	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Findings

Findings Related to Objective 1

The first objective of the study was to determine whether FAPC stakeholders and clients are accessing the FAPC Web site. None of the respondents (0.0%) reported visiting the FAPC Web site on a daily basis, and only 2.0% (2) visited the site two to three times per week (see Table 9). Three individuals (3.0%) visited the Web site weekly, while six (6.0%) reported going to the site two to three times per month. The second largest percentage, 23.0% (23), visited the FAPC Web site on a monthly basis and the largest percentage, 53.0% (53), reported never having been to the FAPC Web site. Eight

Table 9

The Distribution of Respondents by FAPC Web Site Visit Frequency

Visit Frequency	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Never	53	53.0
Monthly	23	23.0
Other	8	8.0
2-3 times per month	6	6.0
Weekly	3	3.0
2-3 times per week	2	2.0
Daily	0	0.0
No response	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

people (8.0%) indicated other, stating they had visited the Web site but do so less than monthly.

To determine the reason for visiting or not visiting the Web site, the researcher included the following question in the instrument: "Why do you visit the FAPC Web site? If you have never visited the FAPC Web site, why have you not?" Of the respondents who had visited the site, 22 out of 46 said they did so to obtain general information, and 19 out of 46 respondents indicated they visited the site to check for calendar and general updates (see Table 10). Five individuals out of 46 reported visiting the FAPC Web site to access staff contact information.

Table 10

Distribution of Respondents by Reasons for Visiting the FAPC Web Site

Reason	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
To obtain general information.	22	47.8
To obtain calendar and general updates.	19	41.3
To obtain staff contact information.	5	10.9
Total	46	100.0

Of the respondents who had never visited the FAPC Web site, 12 out of 49 reported it was because they either did not know about the Web site or had not thought of it (see Table 11). Six out of 49 indicated they had not visited the site because the printed information they receive in the mail is sufficient, while 16 out of 49 indicated they simply had no need. Ten of 49 respondents reported not liking to use a computer or the Internet, and five of 49 preferred direct contact with the staff rather than online communication.

Table 11

Distribution of Respondents by Reasons for Not Visiting the FAPC Web Site

Reason	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Do not have a need.	16	32.7
Did not know about it or did not think of it.	12	24.5
Do not like computers and/or the Internet.	10	20.4
Mailed information is sufficient.	6	12.2
Prefer direct contact with the staff.	5	10.2
Total	49	100.0

To determine which pages of the FAPC Web site clients and stakeholders visit, an instrument question was included that asked participants the following: "What pages of the FAPC Web site have you visited?" The page that had been visited the most was "Home," with 31 respondents indicating they had visited the home page (see Table 12). Nineteen individuals said they had visited "About Us," and 27 indicated having viewed "Calendar." Ten respondents said they had visited "Contact Us," 24 said they had visited "Publications," three said they had visited "Career Opportunities," 16 said they had visited "Staff," and 10 said they had visited "Other Links."

Table 12

Distribution of Respondents by FAPC Web Pages Visited

Web Page	Frequency
Home	31
Calendar	27
Publications	24
About Us	19
Staff	16
Contact Us	10
Other Links	10
Career Opportunities	3

The researcher also asked participants which page of the FAPC Web site they visit most often, with a rank of "1" being the page they visit most often and a rank of "8" being the page that they visit least often. Nineteen respondents ranked "Home" as 1, five

ranked "Home" as 2, three ranked "Home" as 3, three ranked "Home" as 4, one ranked

"Home" as 5, and one ranked "Home" as 6. These results gave "Home" a mean rank of

1.91 (see Table 13).

Table 13

Distribution of Respondents by Web Page Rank

Web Page	Mean	Rank
Home	1.91	1
Calendar	2.10	2
Publications	2.59	3
Staff	2.69	4
About Us	3.92	5
Contact Us	4.20	6
Career Opportunities	4.57	7
Other Links	4.73	8

The "About Us" page received a rank of 1 from one respondent. Two respondents

ranked "About Us" as 2, two ranked it as 3, three ranked it as 4, three ranked it as 5, one

ranked it as 6, and 1 ranked it as 7, giving "About Us" an average rank of 3.92.

Eleven individuals ranked "Calendar" as 1, while 12 respondents ranked

"Calendar" as 2. The remaining respondents ranked "Calendar" as follows: two as 3,

three as 4, and two as 5. These results gave "Calendar" a mean rank of 2.10.

"Contact Us" received a rank of 1 from one individual. Three respondents ranked

"Contact Us" as 2, two respondents ranked "Contact Us" as 3, three respondents ranked

"Contact Us" as 4, two respondents ranked "Contact Us" as 5, one respondent ranked "Contact Us" as 6, two respondents ranked "Contact Us" as 7, and one ranked "Contact Us" as 8, giving this page a mean rank of 4.20.

Seven individuals ranked the "Publications" page as 1, while eight ranked it as 2 and seven ranked it as 3. No respondents ranked "Publications" as 4. Four individuals ranked it 5, and one respondent gave "Publications" the rank of 6. These results gave "Publications" a mean rank of 2.59.

The "Career Opportunities" page was ranked 1 by two individuals. One respondent ranked "Career Opportunities" as 4, one respondent ranked it as 5, one respondent ranked it as 6, one respondent ranked it as 7, and one respondent ranked it as 8. Tallying these results gave "Career Opportunities" a mean rank of 4.57.

Four respondents ranked "Staff" as 1, three ranked "Staff" as 2, five ranked "Staff" as 3, and three ranked "Staff" as 4. One respondent ranked "Staff" as 6, giving the "Staff" Web page a mean rank of 2.69.

The "Other Links" page did not receive a 1 or 2 ranking. Five individuals ranked "Other Links" as 3, one ranked it as 4, one ranked it as 5, one ranked it as 6, two ranked it as 7, and one ranked it as 8. These rankings gave the "Other Links" page a mean rank of 4.73.

In addition to the main pages of the FAPC Web site, which have been discussed in the previous paragraphs, informative subpages provide information on the FAPC's various service areas. The instrument contained a question asking participants which of these areas description pages they had visited.

Fourteen individuals reported having visited the "Agribusiness Economics" page (see Table 14).

Table 14

Distribution of Respondents by Area Descriptions Visited

Area Description	Frequency	Rank
Food Engineering	28	1
Business Planning/Marketing	23	2
Agribusiness Economics	14	3
Pilot Plant	14	3
Microbiology	12	5
Quality Control and Assurance	12	5
Oil/Oilseed Chemistry	11	7
Horticultural Processing	10	8
Cereal Chemistry	8	9
Value-Added Wood Products	8	9
Analytical Chemistry	6	11
Muscle Science	5	12
Sensory Evaluation	5	12

Six respondents said they had visited the "Analytical Chemistry" page, while 23 said they had visited the "Business Planning/Marketing" area description. Eight respondents reported having visited the "Cereal Chemistry" area description, 28 reported having visited "Food Engineering," 10 reported having visited "Horticultural

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Processing," 12 reported having visited "Microbiology," five reported having visited

"Muscle Science," 11 reported having visited "Oil/Oilseed Chemistry," 14 reported

having visited "Pilot Plant," 12 reported having visited "Quality Control and Assurance,"

five reported having visited "Sensory Evaluation," and eight reported having visited

"Value-Added Wood Products."

Findings Related to Objective 2

To determine the FAPC clients' and stakeholders' perceptions of the Web site's

area description pages, the respondents were asked to rank the pages. A summated rating

scale was used to evaluate the responses. "Very informative and easy to understand" was

assigned 4, "some information, but not enough to fully understand services" was assigned

3, "enough information, not easy to understand" was assigned 2, and "not enough

information and hard to understand" was assigned 1. When the responses were calculated

(n=38), the mean (M) equaled 3.51.

When asked how the area description could be improved, five respondents out of

38 answered that including more current and up-to-date information on the pages would

improve them (see Table 15). Four out of 38 individuals reported a list of companies that

had been assisted in the various areas and examples of good and bad past projects and

products would be helpful, while nine respondents out of 38 liked the area description

pages the way they are. Four out of 38 answered that more specific, detailed information

would improve the pages, and two out of 38 suggested including client testimonials. One

individual out of 38 recommended adding video content to the pages, while another one

suggested including industry information from surrounding states. Two out of the 38

Table 15

Distribution of Respondents by How to Improve Area Description Pages

Improvement Suggestion	Frequency	Rank
Never use pages/no opinion.	10	1
Like the pages the way they are.	9	2
Add more current, up-to-date information.	5	3
Give examples.	4	4
More detailed, specific information.	4	4
Include a calendar with dates.	2	6
Include client testimonials.	2	6
Add video content to the pages.	1	8
Include industry information from surrounding states	1	8

respondents answered having a calendar with dates on the pages would improve them, but 10 out of 38 reported they either never used the pages or had no opinion as how to improve them.

Participants were given three choices when asked about the current design of the Web site. The responses were rated using a summated ranking scale. "Modern and not in need of any revision" was given 3, "slightly dated and in need of revision" was given 2, and "Dated and in need of full revision" was given 1. The calculated mean (*M*) of the responses (*n*=39) was 2.62.

To determine the participants' perceptions of the ease of navigability of the site, the researcher provided three choices that were rated using a summated ranking scale.

"The Web site is easily navigable, and I can easily find what I need," was given the rank of 3, "The Web site is moderately navigable. I can find what I need, but it takes some time," Was given 2, and "The Web site was not navigable. I am not able to find the information for which I am looking," was given 1. The calculated mean (M) of the responses (n=40) was 2.78.

When asked how often they thought the FAPC Web site should be updated, five individuals (5.0%) reported daily updates would be appropriate (see Table 16).

Table 16

Distribution of Respondents by How Often They Want the Web Site Updated

Update Frequency	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
Weekly	25	25.0
Monthly	18	18.0
2 times per month	10	10.0
2-3 times per week	8	8.0
Daily	5	5.0
Other (as necessary)	2	2.0
No response	32	32.0
Total	68	100.0

Eight respondents (8.0%) reported the site should be updated two to three times per week, while 25 (25.0%) answered the site should be updated weekly. Ten individuals (10.0%) answered the Web site should be updated two times per month, and 18 (18.0%) reported

they thought the site should be updated monthly. Two respondents (2.0%) answered

other, noting the site should be updated as necessary.

The researcher also included a question on the instrument to determine whether

FAPC stakeholders and clients preferred to be notified via e-mail when the Web site is

updated. Thirty-six respondents (36.0%) indicated they would like to be notified when

the Web site is updated (See Table 17). The remaining 37.0% (37) reported they would

not like to be notified.

Table 17

Distribution of Respondents by Update Notification Preference

Preference	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
No, I would not like to be notified.	37	37.0
Yes, I would like to be notified.	36	36.0
No response	27	27.0
Total	73	100.0

Findings Related to Objective 3

Questions were asked to determine what information FAPC clients and

stakeholders want regarding educational and technical services the FAPC provides and

what sources they prefer when searching for information. The researcher also collected

data to find out what information about the FAPC was important for clients and

stakeholders to receive. The question "What information about the FAPC is most

important for you to receive?" was open-ended. The researcher categorized the responses.

Forty-eight participants indicated information regarding upcoming events including

workshops, classes, training seminars and conferences, was important for them to receive (see Table 18).

Table 18

Distribution of Respondents by What Information is Important for Them

Information Type	Frequency	Rank
Upcoming events	48	1
Specific Service Area/Services	27	2
Quality Assurance/Food Safety/Labeling	12	3
General/Overview	6	4
Not Applicable/None	6	4
Research	6	4
Publications	5	7
Oklahoma Companies/Products	4	8
Staff/Contact	4	8

Issues regarding quality assurance, food safety, and labeling were reported as being important by 12 individuals. Six respondents answered information regarding research was important for them to receive. Information on specific service areas and services was deemed important to receive by 27 respondents. Six individuals answered that general or overview information was important for them. Four respondents reported information about companies in Oklahoma and Made in Oklahoma products was important for them, and five reported that information regarding publications was important. Four answered information regarding FAPC staff members and their contact

information was important for them to receive, and six respondents reported the question

was not applicable or no information about the FAPC was important for them to receive.

Participants were given four categories from which to choose. Eight respondents

(8.0%) indicated they rely on the organization's Web site for what events are upcoming

and to get news/announcements regarding the organization (see Table 19).

Table 19

Distribution of Respondents by Methods of Obtaining Organizations' Information

Method	Frequency	Valid Percent (%)
I use both printed communications and the Web site to stay informed, but I rely mostly on the printed communication I receive in the mail.	46	46.0
I rely on printed communication I receive in the mail to stay informed.	22	22.0
I use both printed communications and the Web site to stay informed, but I rely mostly on the organization's Web site to stay informed.	17	17.0
I rely on the organization's Web site to see What events are coming up and to get news/ announcements regarding the organization.	8	8.0
Other	3	3.0
No response	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Forty-six respondents (46.0%) answered they use both print communications and

the Web site to stay informed, but they rely mostly on print communication they receive

in the mail. Seventeen respondents (17.0%) indicated that they use both print

communications and the Web site to stay informed, but they rely mostly on the

organization's Web site to stay informed. Twenty-two respondents (22.0%) answered

they rely on print communication they receive in the mail to stay informed. Three

individuals (3.0%) indicated another means of communication, answering they expect an

e-mail as a means of getting information.

Findings Related to Objective 4

To determine what type of information FAPC stakeholders and clients wish to be

able to obtain from the FAPC Web site, the researcher asked that question on the

instrument and then categorized the responses. Twelve individuals answered they would

like to be able to access more specific information about their areas of interest (see Table

20). The specific areas of interest ranged from beer processing to honey bees, but the

common request was for more detailed information about respondents' respective fields.

Two respondents suggested they wished to be able access client success stories and

testimonials on the site, while 11 answered current information and updates on all aspects

of the FAPC were what they want to access via the Web site. Six respondents reported

they are able to access all desired information on the Web site, while one respondent

reported having no interest in the information on the site. Two suggested more links be

included on the site, whether they are to daily market updates or FAPC client companies.

Two respondents suggested they wish to access online classes, while one said he wanted

the site to be more searchable. Finally, two respondents reported wanting to be able to

access a list of contact information for all FAPC clients, so peers working on similar

projects would be accessible.

Table 20

Distribution of Respondents by Type of Information They Want the Web Site to Provide

Information Type	Frequency	Rank
More Specific Area/Discipline	12	1
Updates and More Current Information	11	2
Current Information Sufficient	6	3
Client Success Stories/Testimonials	2	4
Contact Information for Other Clients	2	4
More Links to Other Sites	2	4
Online Classes	2	4
More Searchable	1	8
Does Not Desire Any Information	1	8

Findings Related to Objective 5

To determine this objective, the researcher included the following open-ended question on the instrument: "What would make you want to visit the FAPC Web site more often?" After categorizing the responses, the researcher found five individuals reported an e-mail notification of Web site updates would make them want to visit the FAPC Web site more often (see Table 21). Ten respondents answered a more current calendar and more frequent updates would make them want to visit, while 16 reported

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Table 21

Distribution of Respondents by Reasons to Visit the FAPC Web Site More Often

Reason	Frequency	Rank
Nothing/Not Sure	16	1
Current Calendar/More Frequent Updates	10	2
More Specific Discipline Information	9	3
Email Notification of Updates	5	4
Having a Need to Visit the Site	3	5
Having Internet Access at Home	3	5
Customer Success Stories/Testimonials	2	7
More Links to Outside Sites	2	7
Ceasing Print Communication	1	9

they were not sure what would make them want to visit more often or that nothing would make them want to visit more often. Two participants responded the inclusion of example success stories or client testimonials would make them want to visit more often, and three reported having Internet access at their homes would make them want to visit more often. Including more links to outside research sites and companies that produce Made in Oklahoma products is what two respondents reported would make them want to visit the FAPC Web site more often, and nine answered that being able to access more detailed, specific information about their respective areas or disciplines would make them want to visit more. Three suggested having a need to access the site would make them want to

visit more, while one individual reported ceasing print communication would force online

information access and make that person want to visit the Web site more often.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study. The study was an evaluation of the Food and Agricultural Products Center Web site. Faculty and staff at the FAPC are trying to improve electronic communication with stakeholders and clients. Before expending the time and resources required to launch a revised Web site, faculty and staff need to know if stakeholders and clients are aware of and using the Web site and what information they wish to obtain from the Web site.

Within Chapter II was a review of literature to provide background information about the FAPC and to provide a theoretical framework for the study. For successful information dissemination, the communicator must know what information a target audience needs (Heckler & Childers, 1992). To provide this information is a mission of land grand universities: "1) training tomorrow's agriculture leaders (teaching); 2) conducting the state's agriculture research (research); and 3) disseminating new findings to the people of Oklahoma (extension)" (Oklahoma State University Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Web site, 2006). A survey-based evaluation is an effective way to determine clients' educational needs and preferences (Malmsheimer & Germain, 2002). Gratifying these needs is a way to ensure the audience will use a medium frequently and develop dependency on it (Mukherji et al., 1998). An

efficient Web site design is important for attracting repeat viewers and ensuring this particular medium is an effective communication tool (Eighmey & McCord, 1998).

Chapter III outlined the methods and procedures used to collect data for this study. After developing a mail survey instrument with the assistance of a panel of experts, the researcher sent the instrument to a population derived from the FAPC publication database. Following an adaptation of Dillman's (2000) *Tailored Design Method*, data was collected and then analyzed using descriptive statistics.

A detailed report of all data collected was found in Chapter IV. The results of each question from the survey instrument were reported according to the object with which it related.

In this chapter, the researchers reviews and summarizes the findings of the study and includes conclusions, implications and recommendations per the collected data.

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine whether FAPC clients and stakeholders use the FAPC Web site and what information they desire to access via the FAPC Web site.

Objectives

The following objectives were developed to accomplish the stated purpose:

1. Determine whether FAPC stakeholders and clients are accessing the FAPC Web site.

2. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients seek in regard to FAPC educational and technical services and what sources they use for obtaining this.

3. Determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients want to access from the FAPC Web site.

4. Determine what information will make FAPC stakeholders and clients want to revisit the FAPC Web site.

5. Determine FAPC stakeholders' and clients' perceptions of the current site and how they think it can be improved.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included a census sample of FAPC stakeholders and clients. This population was obtained from the FAPC publications database maintained by the FAPC communications specialist. The database was accessed in April 2007.

Methods and Procedures

The researcher collected descriptive statistics through a mail survey instrument, which was sent to a census sample of FAPC stakeholders and clients. Summated rating questions were used to collect quantitative data regarding respondents' perceptions of the current Web site's area description pages, ease of navigability and design. The researcher calculated responses and reported the means. Situational questions collected data regarding respondents' visits to the site and needs for information. Results from these questions were reported using frequencies and percentages. Demographic information

was also collected and reported. Some open-ended questions were included. The

researcher quantified the data for these questions by categorizing it.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Findings Related to Objective 1

The first objective was to determine if FAPC stakeholders and clients were using

the FAPC Web site. A majority of respondents had never visited the FAPC Web site. The

most common reason for not ever having visited the site was that they did not have a

need. Other reasons included not knowing about the site or simply not thinking about it,

dislike for the Internet and computers, receipt of enough mailed information to meet

needs and preference for direct contact with staff. Those who visit the FAPC Web site do

so mainly to obtain general information about the FAPC or to check the calendar for

updates and upcoming events. No respondents visited the FAPC Web site on a daily

basis, and a very small percentage visited two to three times per week. The majority of

visitors go to the Web site monthly.

Respondents who visited the FAPC Web site check the "Home" page most

frequently. The Home page was followed closely by the "Calendar" and "Publications"

pages. The "Career Opportunities" page was the one frequented the least. The

respondents' perceptions of the importance of pages matched the actual frequencies, as

they ranked the "Home," "Calendar" and "Publications" pages as the ones they visit the

most.

Of the area description pages, "Food Engineering" and "Business

Planning/Marketing" were the two most frequented, while "Muscle Science" and

"Sensory Evaluation" were the least.

Conclusions Related to Objective 1

Most FAPC stakeholders and clients in the publications database do not utilize the

FAPC Web site. Either other forms of communication, whether it be printed or direct

communication with faculty and staff, satisfy their need for FAPC information, or they

have no need for information regarding the FAPC. In agreement with what Stafford and

Stafford (2001) found, individuals sought out a medium that gratified their needs, and for

most FAPC stakeholders, it was not the FAPC Web site. The information the FAPC Web

site provides does not facilitate frequent visits to the site, as most visitors only visit it on a

monthly basis.

To reach the most stakeholders and clients, information should be put on the

"Home" page because this is one most frequented and the one perceived by respondents

to be the one they visit most.

The FAPC Web site is most used to view the calendar and to access publications.

The two discipline areas that most interest FAPC stakeholders and clients who

access the Web site are food engineering and business planning and marketing.

Findings Related to Objective 2

The second objective was to determine FAPC stakeholders' and clients'

perceptions of the current site and how they think the site could be improved.

Respondents indicated they perceived the current design of Web site to be modern and not in need of any revision (M=2.62 when "modern and not in need of any revision"=3 and "slightly dated and in need of minor revision"=2). They also reported the site to be easily navigable with things they needed being easy to find (M=2.78). Respondents found the area description pages to be slightly less than informative and easy to understand (M=3.51), but the majority offered no suggestion as to how to improve them, stating they never use the pages or have no opinion. The second highest percentage indicated they like the pages the way they are. Suggestions to improve included giving examples of past clients' success and/or failures, adding more current and up-to-date information, adding more detailed information, including client testimonials and video.

The majority of respondents indicated they would prefer the Web site to be updated weekly. The second highest percentage recommended monthly updates. Finally, a slight majority (50.7%, n=73) reported they would not like to be notified via email when the Web site is updated. The remaining respondents indicated they would like email notification.

Conclusions Related to Objective 2

The respondents who had visited the FAPC Web site deemed it acceptable as is; however, more than half of respondents had never visited the Web site. Including more information and updating more frequently would satisfy the needs of the majority of those who made suggestions. According to Stafford and Stafford (1998), supplying this information on the Web site would satisfy the needs of these stakeholders and clients; thus, they would depend on the Web site more and access it more frequently. Offering

email notification to those who wish to receive it could spur more frequent visits to the

FAPC Web site.

Findings Related to Objective 3

The third objective was to determine what information FAPC stakeholders and

clients want to know regarding FAPC educational and technical services and to determine

what sources they use to get this information. The largest percentage of respondents

indicated information about upcoming classes, training seminars and conferences is the

most important information for them to receive about the FAPC. The next most common

request was for more specific information detailing exactly what services are available

and better explanations of the various service areas/disciplines. The majority of

respondents obtain the information they need from both print communication sources and

Web site, but they reported they rely mainly on print communication they receive in the

mail. The smallest percentage of respondents relies solely on the organization's Web site

to get the information they need.

Conclusions Related to Objective 3

At this point, it is not feasible to expect to rely solely on the Web site to

communicate with a majority of stakeholders and clients because their needs are being

gratified by other forms of Media (Stafford & Stafford, 1998). It is feasible, however, to

direct them to the Web site for additional or supplemental information or by emails

announcing updates, but initial contact about a topic or event may have to be made via

mail. FAPC stakeholders and clients want to be able to access more detailed,

understandable descriptions of specific FAPC service areas and the services each provides. Information on upcoming events, including workshops and classes are the information most sought after by respondents.

Findings Related to Objective 4

The fourth objective was to determine what information FAPC stakeholders and clients want to be able to access on the Web site. The respondents want the Web site to provide the same information they want all other FAPC media to provide. The majority requested more specific information be included about each service area/discipline and the exact services provided by each be detailed in a manner they can understand. The second most common request was more updated, more current information be provided on the site. A listing of all clients for peer-networking purposes and customer success stories/testimonial were also recommended. Increased searchability and the possibility of online classes were also among the suggestions.

Conclusions Related to Objective 4

The Web site should provide more information and more features, including more informative area description pages with specific lists and descriptions of the services the FAPC faculty and staff can provide and a search feature. More updates and more current information would increase visit frequency among respondents because it would gratify their need for this information, leaving them satisfied with the FAPC Web site as an informative medium (Stafford & Stafford, 2001).

Finding Related to Objective 5

The fifth and final objective was to determine what would make FAPC stakeholders and clients want to revisit the Web site. The majority of respondents reporting that nothing would make them want to visit the site more often or they were not sure what would make them want to revisit. The largest percentage of respondents who gave a suggestion recommended the calendar be more current and updates take place more frequently. A slightly lesser percentage suggested more specific information on each, while others proposed e-mail notification of updates and being able to access customer success stories would cause revisits. One respondent said ceasing print communication would force that individual to utilize online communication and would therefore increase repeat visits to the site.

Conclusions Related to Objective 5

More frequent updates coupled with more detailed information on each page could prompt revisits. Ceasing print communication could force some to turn to the Web site for information but not likely the majority. If print media was ceased and no longer gratified their need for information, FAPC stakeholders and clients would seek out another medium from which to obtain information (Stafford & Stafford, 1998).

Recommendations for Practice

The FAPC stakeholders and clients continually should be informed about the Web site and encouraged to use it. Current publications, such as the monthly *fapc.biz*

magazine, should be used to direct stakeholders and clients to the Web site. Information should be available via the Web site that is not available elsewhere, so stakeholders and clients will be persuaded to use the Web site. For example, this could be more detailed information about an article in the magazine that was edited out due to space constraints.

For the Web site to be a viable, reliable source of information for stakeholders and clients, the FAPC Web site should be better marketed. An e-newsletter could be implemented to introduce FAPC stakeholders and clients to electronic communication and to encourage them to use the Web site.

The publications database should be reevaluated due to the number of respondents who had not visited the Web site because they were not interested in the FAPC or had no need for the information it would provide. If faculty and staff at the FAPC wish to keep all current contacts in the database, they should be divided into those who have a vested interest in the FAPC and those who FAPC faculty and staff wish to influence or educate about the FAPC.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Research</div>

A similar study could be performed after the publications database is reevaluated and a more appropriate population can be determined. Another option would be to conduct a study investigating the varying needs of those who have a vested interest in the FAPC as compared to those who FAPC faculty and staff are trying to educate.

Continuing research should be performed to monitor the impact of the FAPC Web site. A similar study could be repeated in the future to determine if stakeholders' and clients' needs have changed.

After improvements are made to the site, a follow-up study should be done to measure the impact of the improvements on stakeholders' and clients' needs. Also, a study specifically investigating the usability of the FAPC Web site could be performed.

The respondents could be divided up into groups, such as basic training workshop participants, the director's list, Made in Oklahoma producers, and the Industry Advisory Committee. Determining how each group evaluated the Web site and then comparing those evaluations across the population could some insight into the varying needs of each group.

Furthermore, a similar study could be performed using the media as the population to determine if the FAPC meets their needs.

Implications and Discussion

The use of mailing addresses from a publications database to collect information regarding a Web site could have had an effect on the results. For example, people who dislike mail may not fill out a questionnaire they have to return via mail. If this was the case, the results could have been slightly skewed in that only people who are proponents of mail responded. However, the FAPC had no record of e-mail addresses of stakeholders and clients, so the only way to contact them was through mail.

If faculty and staff at the FAPC wish to make the Web site a primary form of communication, practices must be changed. Currently, the reliance on print communication is effective. However, if transitioning to electronic communication is planned, a campaign should be launched to market the Web site. More than half of respondents had never visited the Web site, but almost three-fourths of respondents have

a high-speed Internet connection in their homes. It is reasonable to say this three-fourths do indeed visit other Web sites. Therefore, only one-quarter of those who are capable of accessing the Internet are actually visiting the FAPC Web site. Some type of incentive should be considered to encourage the use of the Web site.

The publications database contains contact information for individuals who are not interested in the FAPC and have no desire for information about it. This is acceptable if it is the administration's aim is to educate these people. If not, the mailings to them are simply wasted money that could be put somewhere else in the budget. If the transition to electronic communication is made, at least the number of recipients does not increase cost.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, April 03, 2007

IRB Application No   AG0717

Proposal Title: Developing a Basis for an Informative Web Site: A Stakeholder-Based Needs Assessment Study for the FAPC

Reviewed and   Exempt
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 4/2/2008

Principal
Investigator(s

Lacie Stockstill   Dwayne Cartmell
1200 N. Perkins Rd. J1   448 Ag Hall
Stillwater, OK 74075   Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☑ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

MAIL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Developing a Basis for an Informative Web Site: A Stakeholder-based Needs Assessment Study for the FAPC

Adding Value to Oklahoma

Food & Agricultural Products Center
Oklahoma State University
144 FAPC
Stillwater, OK 74078
405-744-3217
E-mail: lacie.stockstill@okstate.edu

Thank you for your time!
Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed pre-paid envelope.

If you would like your email address added to our database, please provide it below.
(Remember, all of your survey information is strictly confidential.)

Email: _____

If a question was not posed about a topic on which you wish to express your opinion or if you have additional comments about a topic, please make them in the space provided below.

Food & Agricultural Products Center
Oklahoma State University
144 FAPC
Stillwater, OK 74075
405-744-3217 • FAX 405-744-6313
www.fapc.biz

What information about the FAPC is most important for you to receive?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How often do you visit the FAPC Web site?

- Daily
- 2-3 times per month
- 2-3 times per week
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Never

Why do you visit the FAPC Web site? If you have never visited the FAPC Web site, why have you not?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What pages of the FAPC Web site have you visited?
(You may mark more than one.)

- Home
- Publications
- About Us
- Career Opportunities
- Calendar
- Staff
- Contact Us
- Other Links
- I haven't visited any of the pages.

Do you have Internet access? If yes, what type of connection do you have?

- I don't have Internet access.
- Dial up
- High Speed (DSL, Cable, Broadband, etc.)

How often do you access your Internet connection?

- More than once per day
- Once per day
- 3-4 times per week
- Once per week
- Less frequently

Do you prefer electronic newsletters and updates to printed ones you receive through the US Postal Service?

- Yes, I prefer electronic communication.
- No, I prefer to get things through the mail.

How do you get information regarding organizations of which you are a part?

- I rely on the organization's Web site to see what events are coming up and to get news/announcements regarding the organization.
- I use both printed communications and the Web site to stay informed, but I rely mostly on the printed communication I receive in the mail.
- I use both printed communications and the Web site to stay informed, but I rely mostly on the organization's Web site to stay informed.
- I rely on printed communication I receive in the mail to stay informed.

Rank the following pages with 1 being the page you visit the most. If you do not visit a page, do not include it in your ranked list, simply leave it blank.

_____ Home
_____ About Us
_____ Calendar
_____ Contact Us
_____ Publications
_____ Career Opportunities
_____ Staff
_____ Other Links

What area description pages have you visited? (You may mark more than one.)

- Agribusiness Economics
- Analytical Chemistry
- Business Planning/Marketing
- Cereal Chemistry
- Food Engineering
- Horticultural Processing
- Microbiology
- Muscle Science
- Oil/Oilseed Chemistry
- Pilot Plant
- Quality Control and Assurance
- Sensory Evaluation
- Value-Added Wood Products

If you have visited any of the description pages listed above, did you find them to be informative and understandable?

- Very informative and easy to understand
- Some information, but not enough to fully understand services.
- Enough information, but not easy to understand.
- Not enough information and hard to understand.

What could be done to improve the pages describing the different areas of the FAPC?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would make you want to visit the FAPC Web site more often?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What do you think about the current design of the Web site?

- Modern and not in need of any revision
- Slightly dated and in need of minor revision
- Dated and in need of full revision

What do you think about ease of navigability of the FAPC Web site?

- The Web site is easily navigable, and I can easily find what I need.
- The Web site is moderately navigable. I can find what I need, but it takes some time.
- The Web site is not navigable. I am not able to find the information for which I am looking.

➤ What is your educational level?

- ❑ No high school diploma
- ❑ High School Diploma or GED
- ❑ Some college, no degree
- ❑ Associate or Bachelor's degree
- ❑ Master's, Professional or Doctoral degree

➤ What is your annual income?

- ❑ Under $15,000
- ❑ $15,001 to $30,000
- ❑ $30,001 to $45,000
- ❑ $45,001 to $60,000
- ❑ $60,001 to $75,000
- ❑ More than $75,000

➤ Please indicate your age.

- ❑ 18-25
- ❑ 26-35
- ❑ 36-45
- ❑ 46-55
- ❑ 56-65
- ❑ 66-75
- ❑ 76 or older

➤ Where do you live?

- ❑ Farm/Ranch
- ❑ Rural Resident – minimal acreage
- ❑ Town – under 10,000 population
- ❑ City – 10,001 to 50,000 residents
- ❑ Large City – 50,001 or more residents

➤ What type of information do you want the FAPC Web site to provide?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

➤ How often do you think the FAPC Web site should be updated?

- ❑ Daily
- ❑ 2-3 times per week
- ❑ Weekly
- ❑ 2 times per month
- ❑ Monthly

➤ Would you like to receive email notification when the Web site is updated?

- ❑ Yes, I would like to be notified.
- ❑ No, I would not like to be notified.

➤ Please specify your gender.

- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

APPENDIX C

PANEL OF EXPERTS

Panel of Experts

Dr. Dwayne Cartmell
436 Ag Hall
Oklahoma State University

Mandy Gross
144 FAPC
Oklahoma State University

Dr. J. Roy Escoubas
148 FAPC
Oklahoma State University

Chuck Willoughby
141 FAPC
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Stanley Gilliland
111 FAPC
Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX D

POSTCARDS

First Postcard

The **Food & Agricultural Products Center** needs your help!

Improving the FAPC Web site for your benefit

In a few days, you will receive a packet from the Food & Agricultural Products Center. You are among a very small group of FAPC stakeholders selected to participate in a survey to determine how to improve the FAPC Web site.

Because this group is so small, we ask your consideration in taking a few minutes to fill out the survey and return it in the postage-paid envelope. Your survey information will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your time!

Lacie Stockstill
Communications Graduate Assistant
lacie.stockstill@okstate.edu
405-744-3217

Adding Value to Oklahoma

Second Postcard

Just a reminder:

The **Food & Agricultural Products Center** needs your help!

Improving the FAPC Web site for your benefit

A few days ago, you should have received a packet from the Food & Agricultural Products Center requesting your consideration in completing a simple survey. If you have not taken time to complete the survey, we ask that you take a few minutes to fill it out then return it in the postage-paid envelope.

Your response is very important because only a small number of FAPC stakeholders have been selected to help us. Please be assured that your survey information will be kept strictly confidential. We ask that the survey be postmarked no later than May 5, 2007.

Thank you for your assistance!

Lacie Stockstill
Communications Graduate Assistant
lacie.stockstill@okstate.edu
405-744-3217

Adding Value to Oklahoma

APPENDIX E

FIRST COVER LETTER

Director
J. Roy Escoubas
Oklahoma State University

INDUSTRY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Chair
Mr. John Bailey
The Schwan Food Co.

Vice Chair
Mr. Bill Wiley
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Services, L.L.C.

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Griffin Food Co.

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Mr. Gary Conkling
Producers Co-op Oil Mill

Mr. Bob Collins
Cooperative Ginners
Association of Oklahoma

Mr. Gary Crane
Ralph's Packing Co.

Mr. Danny Dupree
Bar-S Food Co.

Mr. David Howard
Unitherm Food Systems, Inc.

Mr. David McLaughlin
Advance Food Co.

Dr. Charles Nichols
Davison & Sons Cattle Co.

Mr. Tommy Kramer
Durant Industrial Authority

Ms. Jill Stichler
Redland Juice Co.

Mr. John Williams
Chef's Requested Foods

Ex-Officio
OSU DASNR V.P. & Dean
Dr. Robert Whitson

April 12, 2007

Dear <FAPC stakeholder's name>:

I need your help! As an FAPC stakeholder, your opinion regarding matters here at the FAPC is very important to us. We are striving to better serve you through the information provided on our Web site. You are one of a very limited number of FAPC stakeholders selected to participate in this research study titled "Developing a basis for an informative Web site: A stakeholder-based needs assessment study for the FAPC."

The primary purpose of this study is to determine what information you desire to access through our Web site. The results of this study will be valuable in assessing the usefulness of our Web site and will help us in restructuring it to better suit your needs.

This survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete. Please respond to the questions in terms of **your** views. Be assured that your responses will be treated confidentially. Only the FAPC communications specialist and I will have access to the data, and it will be kept on a password-protected computer here at the FAPC for two years. There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. Participation is voluntary and may be can be discontinued at any time.

Please answer each question thoroughly and then place the completed questionnaire in the business reply envelope. We ask that all surveys be postmarked by May 5, 2007.
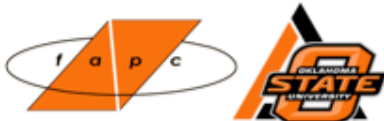
Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this questionnaire. Without your assistance it would be impossible to acquire this much-needed information. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call or email me at (405) 744-3217 or lacie.stockstill@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Sue C. Jacobs, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676, or irb@okstate.edu.

Sincerely,

Lacie Stockstill
Graduate Communications Assistant

APPENDIX F

SECOND COVER LETTER

Director
J. Roy Escoubas
Oklahoma State University

INDUSTRY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Chair
Mr. John Bailey
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Services, L.L.C.

Secretary
Mr. John Griffin
Griffin Food Co.

Past Chair
Mr. Rodger Kerr
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Mr. Virgil Jurgensmeyer
J-M Farms

Mr. Gary Conkling
Producers Co-op Oil Mill

Mr. Bob Collins
Cooperative Ginners
Association of Oklahoma

Mr. Gary Crane
Ralph's Packing Co.

Mr. Danny Dupree
Bar-S Food Co.

Mr. David Howard
Unitherm Food Systems, Inc.

Mr. David McLaughlin
Advance Food Co.

Dr. Charles Nichols
Davison & Sons Cattle Co.

Mr. Tommy Kramer
Durant Industrial Authority

Ms. Jill Stichler
Redland Juice Co.

Mr. John Williams
Chef's Requested Foods

Ex-Officio
OSU DASNR V.P. & Dean
Dr. Robert Whitson

May 12, 2007

Dear <FAPC Stakeholder's name:

Approximately two weeks ago, I mailed you a questionnaire concerning your views and opinions regarding the FAPC Web site. As of this date, I have not received your completed questionnaire. If you have recently completed the questionnaire, thank you.

I am writing you again because responses from all FAPC stakeholders are significant to the usefulness of this study. The questionnaire for this study was sent to a small number of FAPC stakeholders, so it is extremely important that your views be included in my efforts.

In addition to another copy of the questionnaire, I am providing a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Completing the questionnaire will take less than 10 minutes.

Please submit the completed questionnaire as soon as possible. Thanks for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this questionnaire. Should you have questions, please contact me at 405-744-3217 or lacie.stockstill@okstate.edu or my adviser at (405) 744-0461 or dwayne.cartmell@okstate.edu or call.

Sincerely,

Lacie Stockstill
Graduate Communications Assistant

VITA

Lacie Amanda Stockstill

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: DEVELOPING A BASIS FOR AN INFORMATIVE WEB SITE: A STAKEHOLDER-BASED NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR THE FOOD & AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS CENTER

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Flowood, Mississippi, February 11, 1983, the daughter of David and Dee Stockstill

Education: Graduated from Simpson Country Academy, Mendenhall, Mississippi, May 2001; received a bachelor of science degree in animal science from Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi, May 2005; completed the requirements for the master of science degree in agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University in July, 2007.

Professional Experience: Associate Producer, Oklahoma Horizon TV, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 2006-2007; Graduate Assistant, Food & Agricultural Products Center, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 2006-2007.

Professional Organizations: Agricultural Education Graduate Student Association, Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Delta.

Name: Lacie Amanda Stockstill   Date of Degree: July, 2007

INSTITUTION: Oklahoma State University   LOCATION: Stillwater, OK

Title of Study: AN EVALUATION OF THE ROBERT M. KERR FOOD &
                       AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS CENTER WEB SITE

Pages in study: 86   Candidate for the degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Agricultural Communications

Scope and Method of Study: The scope of this study included a census of FAPC
        stakeholders and clients obtained from the FAPC publications database. Data was
        collected with a mailed survey instrument. The purpose of this study was to
        determine whether FAPC clients and stakeholders use the FAPC Web site and
        what information they desire to access via the FAPC Web site.

Finding and Conclusions: More than half of the respondents had never visited the FAPC
        Web site, but those who had deemed it acceptable. The most common frequency
        of visit was monthly. The calendar of events and the publications archive are the
        two most visited pages, more frequent updates and more detailed information on
        area description pages could prompt more revisits. Currently, the Web site is not
        effective as a sole source of communication to stakeholders and clients.

Adviser's approval: Dwayne Cartmell