

Date of Approval: 07/23/2024
Questionnaire Number: 1449

Basic Information/Executive Summary

What is the name of your project (system, database, pilot, product, survey, social media site, etc.)?

Chatbot personality unmoderated ut 2024

Business Unit

Office of Online Services

Preparer

For Official Use Only

Subject Matter Expert

For Official Use Only

Program Manager

For Official Use Only

Designated Executive Representative

For Official Use Only

Executive Sponsor

For Official Use Only

Executive Summary: Provide a clear and concise description of your project and how it will allow the IRS to achieve its mission.

In line with the Inflation Reduction Act's (IRA) initiative 1.4 regarding self-service options, this study will help determine the appropriate personality for the IRS chatbot, which will facilitate increased taxpayer use of the chatbot and improve taxpayer satisfaction. IRS will conduct unmoderated usability testing of possible IRS chatbot personalities to get feedback from participants with different attitudes, aptitudes, and abilities to iteratively design and improve the IRS chatbot experience. Improved IRS chatbots will enable taxpayers to get information through self-service channels, which will save time and money and free up live assistants to address complicated issues more efficiently. An improved online chat ecosystem will empower users to resolve issues via their preferred communication channel, which will increase user satisfaction and trust in IRS and improve the taxpayer experience.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Will this project use, collect, receive, display, store, maintain, or disseminate any type of Sensitive but Unclassified (SBU), Personally Identifiable Information (PII), or Federal Tax Information (FTI)?

Yes

Please explain in detail how this project uses sensitive data from inception to destruction (data lifecycle).

Data will first be collected through a web-based screener managed by a third-party recruitment vendor (Prodege). During participant screening, the third-party recruitment vendor will collect data such as: geographic location, gender, age, race/ethnicity, income, and tax filing history. Access to this data will be limited to select members of the third-party vendor's project team. Participant first names and email addresses will be shared securely with IRS-cleared BLN24/Fors Marsh staff directly working on the project, so that they can email the usability testing link to participants. No PII is shared with IRS at any time. Although PII remains in the vendor's secure database until participants ask to be removed, no screener data of participants who chose not to participate in the study will be retained. Results of the usability testing sessions won't include any PII and will only be viewed by IRS-internal researchers with a need to know. There will be no transfer of raw data between IRS and BLN24/Fors Marsh; the only information that will be shared across teams is aggregated data about participant demographics (e.g. the number of study participants in each age bracket, location, etc.). This aggregated data will be communicated via secure email. Within the IRS team, all data transfer will be via secure OneDrive. All data collected from the participant screener and usability testing will be destroyed in accordance with IRS destruction guides and no later than 1 year after study completion.

Please select all types of Sensitive but Unclassified data (SBU)/Personally Identifiable Information (PII)/Federal Tax Information (FTI) that this project uses.

Address
Education Information
Email Address
Federal Tax Information (FTI)
Language
Name
Personal Characteristics

Cite the authority for collecting SBU/PII/FTI (including SSN if relevant).

PII for federal tax administration - generally IRC Sections 6001 6011 or 6012

Product Information (Questions)

1.1 Is this survey a result of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)?

Yes

1.12 What is the IRA Initiative Number?

1.4

1.13 What is your research method(s) used (i.e., survey, telephone interview, focus group, etc.)?

Unmoderated virtual usability testing. Eligible, interested participants will receive a unique link to complete an unmoderated 15-minute online survey. This survey will ask about participants' communication preferences and elicit targeted feedback on prototype chatbot conversations.

1.14 Is this a new survey, telephone interview, focus group, or usability testing?
Throughout the rest of this questionnaire, we will use the term "survey" to include all of these.

Yes

1.19 Which Business Unit (BU) is requesting this survey?

Office of Online Services

1.21 Who will the survey be administered to?

Taxpayers

1.22 Will this survey be administered for one year with multiple events (1-year expiration)?

Yes

1.22 What is the start date?

8/12/2024

1.22 Is this a reoccurring survey?

No

1.23 What is the end date?

10/4/2024

2.11 Will the survey capture any type of PII or is PII (names, addresses, email addresses, etc.) used to select participants?

Yes

2.12 If any PII data is collected, disclosed, or studied on individuals who choose not to participate, please describe the data.

Not applicable. Any screener data of participants who chose not to participate won't be retained.

2.13 List any linkable data that the survey uses, collects, receives, displays, stores, maintains, or disseminates (gender, ethnicity, parts of address, tax filing information, etc.) or uses to select participants?

Age; gender; US state/territory of residence; race/ethnicity; use of accessibility tools; income; basic tax information (e.g. filing status, filing history); technological experience; education

2.14 Explain how the participants are selected. Include a detailed description. Please provide your research plan as supporting documentation.

As part of the BLN24/Fors Marsh contract, they will contact a third-party recruitment vendor (Prodege) who will lead recruitment. The third-party vendor will recruit participants for this study using their internal database of volunteer participants. They will send an email to potential participants asking them to take an online screener to determine their eligibility. Selection for this study is based on certain criteria, determined by the participants' responses to the screener survey and their availability to participate in the research study. If eligible, participants will be sent a unique link to participate in the study and will receive virtual compensation for their participation. To ensure sufficient data to draw meaningful conclusions, we will conduct unmoderated usability testing with 100 participants. These participants will constitute a demographically diverse group (e.g. across US locations, genders, age groups, racial/ethnic backgrounds, income brackets, and filing statuses). The third-party recruitment vendor will compare the participant pool against recent census data to ensure a representative sample of the taxpayer population. A fast-track PRA application under OMB control number 1545-2256 has been submitted on 7/2/2024.

2.15 How are the participants notified (letter, postcard, email, etc.) of the survey, and if the survey is voluntary/optional, how is notice given? If it is not voluntary, please explain why it is mandatory.

Participants are notified by email using the template provided in the attachments. Participation is voluntary. Notice is given over email informing participants of the voluntary research opportunity: "Providing feedback is voluntary and confidential. Any responses you provide are completely voluntary". Within the study, participants are also informed that their participation is voluntary: "Your participation is voluntary".

3.11 What tool(s) is/are used to conduct the survey? Please indicate if the anonymous feature has been set for the survey, if applicable.

Gitlab Community Edition IRS Labs will host unmoderated usability testing sessions. The anonymous feature has been set; research participants won't be linked to their study responses in any way. The third-party recruitment vendor will use a web-based screener to collect screener data and determine eligibility.

3.12 Will the survey be audio-recorded or video-recorded?

No

4.11 Does this survey retrieve information by any personal identifier for an individual who is a U.S. citizen, or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence? If the answer is Yes, you must have at least one SORN name and number selected in the SORNs section.

Yes

4.12 The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC § 552a(e)(3)) requires each agency that maintains a system of records to inform each individual requested to supply information about themselves. Do survey participants provide information about themselves?

Yes

4.13 Please provide the Privacy Act Statement.

Privacy Act Statement: The authority requesting this information is 5 USC 301. The primary purpose of asking for the information is to determine steps the IRS can take to improve our services to you. The information may be disclosed as authorized by the routine uses published in the following Privacy Act System of Records: (1) IRS 00.001 Correspondence Files and Correspondence Control Files and (2) IRS 10.004 Stakeholder Relationship Management and Subject Files. Providing the information is voluntary. Not answering some or all the questions will not affect you.

4.14 Does the IRS administer (conduct) the survey?

No

4.15 Provide the name of the IRS office administering the survey.

Office of Online Services and vendor BLN24/Fors Marsh will jointly administer the survey.

4.18 Does the IRS perform analysis of the survey results?

Yes

4.19 Provide the name of the IRS office performing the analysis of the survey.

Office of Online Services

4.21 If a contractor administers (conducts) and analyzes the survey, is all work performed and contained in the United States?

Yes

4.22 How does the administrator of the survey protect employees' or taxpayers' SBU/PII from compromise, loss, theft, or disclosure?

The third-party recruitment vendor will keep screening data in a secure database stored in an encrypted format on their private server. Contracted vendor BLN24/Fors Marsh will only have access to participant first names and email addresses from the third-party recruitment vendor. This information will be accessible only to BLN24/Fors Marsh staff who are directly working on the project and will be stored on a secure OneDrive on the BLN24/Fors Marsh server. All data shared by BLN24/Fors Marsh with the IRS research team will be aggregated and communicated via secure email. Study results will only be accessible to IRS-internal researchers and won't contain any sensitive data. Within the IRS research team, collected data will be stored in encrypted files on IRS OneDrive and will be viewed only by IRS researchers with a need to know. All IRS-internal data transfer will be via secure OneDrive.

4.23 Where and how is the PII stored and protected?

No PII will be transmitted to IRS. The third-party recruitment vendor stores PII on secure servers with access provided only to select members of the vendor staff working on the project. IRS-cleared BLN24/Fors Marsh staff working on the project have access to participant first names and email addresses, which is stored on their secure server with access provided only to select members of the BLN24/Fors Marsh team.

4.24 Provide the Cyber Security approved security and encryption used when data is transferred electronically from the IRS to contractors and back to the IRS.

There will be no transfer of raw data between IRS and BLN24/Fors Marsh; all information shared across teams will be aggregated and communicated via secure email.

4.25 How is the survey PII protected and stored when it is housed at a contractor site on contractor computers? Provide a detailed explanation of the physical and electronic security and protection of the data before, during and after the survey.

No PII will be transmitted to IRS. The third-party recruitment vendor will store PII in a secure database in an encrypted format on their private server. Access to this data will be limited to select members of the third-party vendor's project team. Participant first names and email addresses will be securely shared with IRS-cleared BLN24/Fors Marsh staff directly working on the project, so that they can send study links to participants. All information transmitted to BLN24/Fors Marsh will be stored on their secure server with access provided only to select members of the BLN24/Fors Marsh team. Within one year of study completion, all participant information will be destroyed.

4.26 Has a Contracting Officer or Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) verified the contract included privacy and security clauses for data protection and that all contractors have signed non-disclosure agreements which are on file with the COR?

Yes

4.27 Identify the roles and their access level to the PII data.

Project-affiliated contractor system admin (third-party recruitment vendor) -

Read-only access to PII

Project-affiliated contractor users (BLN24/Fors Marsh) - Read-only access to PII

Project-affiliated contractor managers (BLN24/Fors Marsh) - No access to PII

Project-affiliated IRS users - No access to PII

Project-affiliated IRS managers - No access to PII

4.275 Identify the roles and their access level to the PII data and indicate whether their background investigation is complete or not.

Project-affiliated contractor system admin (third-party recruitment vendor) - Read-only access to PII - Background investigation complete

Project-affiliated contractor users (BLN24/Fors Marsh) - Read-only access to PII - Background investigation complete

4.28 Explain the precautions taken to ensure the survey results will not be used for any other purpose not listed in the Detailed Business Purpose and Need section and to ensure that employees or taxpayers who participate in the survey cannot be identified or re-identified under any circumstances and no adverse actions taken.

No PII will be transmitted to the IRS. During recruitment, the third-party recruitment vendor will maintain participant privacy by keeping data in a secure database in an encrypted format on their private server. BLN24/Fors Marsh will review the de-identified screening data collected by the third-party recruitment vendor to ensure an appropriate mix of participants. Once participants are identified, the third-party recruitment vendor will share only participant first names and email addresses with BLN24/Fors Marsh in a password-protected document accessible only to IRS-cleared BLN24/Fors Marsh staff directly working on the project. This information will be stored in a secure OneDrive on the BLN24/Fors Marsh server. Study data will contain no PII or other sensitive information to ensure that participants can't be identified under any circumstances. All study data will be aggregated with no names attached to any feedback in final reports. Upon study completion, any recruitment data will be destroyed within one year.

4.29 Does the administrator of the survey have access to information identifying participants?

Yes

5.11 For employee or taxpayer satisfaction surveys explain how you have ensured that no "raw" or unaggregated employee or taxpayer data will be provided to any IRS office.

In reporting to IRS offices, researchers won't connect information collected with taxpayer email addresses. Final reports will contain only aggregated feedback and will contain no emails.

5.12 If the survey maintains records describing how an individual exercises their rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, explain the First Amendment information being collected and how it is used.

No

5.13 Does the individual about whom the information was collected or maintained expressly authorize its collection/maintenance?

No

5.14 If the First Amendment information will be used as the basis to make any adverse determination about an individual's rights, benefits, and/or privileges, explain the determination process. Consult with IRS General Legal Services to complete this section.

No

Systems of Records Notices (SORNs)

SORN Number & Name

IRS 10.004 - Stakeholder Relationship Management and Subject Files

Describe the IRS use and relevance of this SORN.

The IRS will use the collected information to improve digital services for taxpayers.

SORN Number & Name

IRS 00.001 - Correspondence Files and Correspondence Control Files

Describe the IRS use and relevance of this SORN.

The IRS will use the collected information to improve digital services for taxpayers.

Records Retention

What is the Record Schedule System?

General Record Schedule (GRS)

What is the retention series title?

6.5 - Public Customer Service Records

What is the GRS/RCS Item Number?

10

What type of Records is this for?

Electronic

Please provide a brief description of the chosen GRS or RCS item.

Public Service Operations Records, temporary

What is the disposition schedule?

Destroy 1 year after resolved or when no longer needed for business use, whichever is appropriate

Data Locations

What type of site is this?

OneDrive

What is the name of the OneDrive?

Secure BLN24/Fors Marsh OneDrive

What is the sensitivity of the OneDrive?

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) including Linkable Data

Please provide a brief description of the OneDrive.

Contracted vendor BLN24/Fors Marsh will store participant first names and email addresses on their secure OneDrive to facilitate study distribution and participant payment. This secure OneDrive will be on the BLN24/Fors Marsh server. Only IRS-cleared BLN24/Fors Marsh staff directly working on the project will have access to the OneDrive.

What are the incoming connections to this OneDrive?

BLN24/Fors Marsh will receive participant first names and email addresses from the third-party recruitment vendor via secure email. This information will then be stored on the secure BLN24/Fors Marsh OneDrive.

What are the outgoing connections from this OneDrive?

No information will be transferred out of the OneDrive. No PII or linkable data will be shared by BLN24/Fors Marsh.