



CancerSiteFinder.com

Grant Number: N44-CN-05005

Abbreviated Abstract

The project is the result of an SBIR Phase II contract, #N44-CN-05005, from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The recipient organization was Clinical Tools, Inc., of Chapel Hill, NC, and the Primary Investigator was T. Bradley Tanner, MD. Mary P. Metcalf, PhD, was Co-Investigator.

This project developed, implemented, and evaluated CancerSite Finder.com, an interactive website designed to assist consumers with finding quality information on cancer on the Internet. CancerSiteFinder is available free of charge to the public at www.CancerSiteFinder.com. The final version of the site database searches over 6,400 web sites, of which roughly 2000 focus specifically on cancer. Cancer sites are grouped by 20 cancer types and indexed by 50+ attributes included quality indicators, features and content. Each day, CancerSiteFinder.com has over 100 visitors.

Primary Investigator

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Dr. Tanner is CEO and President of Clinical Tools, Inc. Dr. Tanner is a board-certified psychiatrist with experience in inpatient, outpatient and emergency health settings. He is a Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has written academic journal articles and presented on an array of subjects. His research focus is the development and evaluation of e-health solutions. Dr. Tanner has direct Clinical Tools, Inc. for the past 12 years, and been awarded 16 SBIR Phase I/II awards totaling over 10 million in funding from NIH, CDC and DOD.

Research Team & Affiliations

Clinical Tools, Inc.

Total Budget

\$749,000.00



Research Objectives

Aim 1: Create an Internet based, searchable database that serves as an information source for patients, consumers and health-care providers.

Aim 2: Allow the user to specify exactly what they are looking for and provide results tailored to their requests.

Aim 3: Conduct formative analysis to determine consumer needs and interests.

Aim 4: Conduct summative assessments of functionality and usability of the website/database.

Theory/Hypothesis

Internet cancer information seekers would utilize and benefit from a better tool to find quality online information.

Experimental Design

A series of iterative usability evaluations and usability tests were conducted during development of the website from 2002 through May 2004. Interviews and observations, heuristic review, formal usability and a controlled experiment with questionnaires were used. Preference and performance issues were assessed initially. Final tests focused on functionality, task completion and satisfaction.

Final Sample Size & Study Demographics

Subjects participated in usability evaluations in groups of 9, since this project would have required OMB clearance for larger sample sizes. A total of 52 consumers and health professionals participated in the evaluations. Study participants were evenly divided between male and female, and were primarily white (85%), which was representative of the demographic of Internet users during the project period.

Data Collection Methods

Survey, focus groups, interviews, iterative usability studies.

Outcome Measures

Evaluations included a survey based needs assessment, phone based semi-structured interviews with consumers, key informant interviews with health care professionals, and multiple usability tests. Three usability rounds evaluated the web site at the CTI lab, and 2 rounds at the NCI usability tests (conducted by Cari Wolfson and Jay Blenmenthal) . Summative evaluation involved two rounds of usability assessment for the product in Spring 2004.

Evaluation Methods

Qualitative methods focusing on usability testing



Research Results

All tasks were completed with ease and with minimal direction from staff. The participants were able to correctly identify the purpose of the site. However, the ownership of the site was not very clear and 78% of the participants incorrectly identified it.

Barriers & Solutions

This project spanned a time period of rapid evolution of the Internet and of search engine capability. The project needed to constantly change to accommodate changes in the marketplace, consumer expectations, and Internet technology during the development period. Ongoing usability testing and communication with the Institute were used to assure the project met the Institute's goals and remained commercially viable for the contractor.

Product(s) Developed from This Research

CancerSiteFinder.com