



## Transforming the Commission's online communication

### Building a common task-based information architecture

This report describes the process and results of work carried out by the Digital Transformation team between September 2014 and February 2015 to build a common, sustainable and task-based information architecture for the European Commission's future web presence.

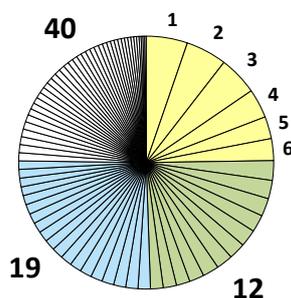
### Preparing the ground: identifying our audiences' needs

In May 2014, people visiting Commission websites were polled to establish the most important reasons why they interact with the organisation. The poll was based on a list of 77 Commission-wide user tasks distilled from an original list of 1700, and collectively agreed by all DGs. The poll results revealed the main audiences interacting with the European Commission online, and their 'top tasks'.

The poll was carried out in 24 languages and received 106,792 valid responses.<sup>1</sup>

#### Key findings

- There are 6 top tasks, with remarkable consistency across all audience profiles, interest areas, countries:



#### 6 Top Tasks

1. EU law, rules, treaties, judgments
2. Research and innovation
3. Funding, grants, subsidies
4. Education and training in EU
5. EU strategy, political priorities
6. Environmental protection

- People most often visit Commission websites for professional reasons
- Low level of satisfaction concerning search results and confusing menus and links (= information architecture)

<sup>1</sup> Factsheet on the 2014 top tasks poll: [http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/documents/digital\\_transformation/factsheet\\_digital\\_transformation\\_user\\_survey\\_final.pdf](http://www.cc.cec/home/europa-info/documents/digital_transformation/factsheet_digital_transformation_user_survey_final.pdf)

The solidity and consistency of the poll results provided a strong case to build a common information architecture for the European Commission.

## Information architecture – what is it?

Information architecture is the structure of the website. It connects people to the content they are looking for. It includes classification and hierarchy (the way information is grouped), labels and tagging (terminology, etc), navigation methods and search. Good information architecture helps people who create and maintain content do their jobs more easily, and links content to other content to make it more usable and easy to find.

## How we build an information architecture

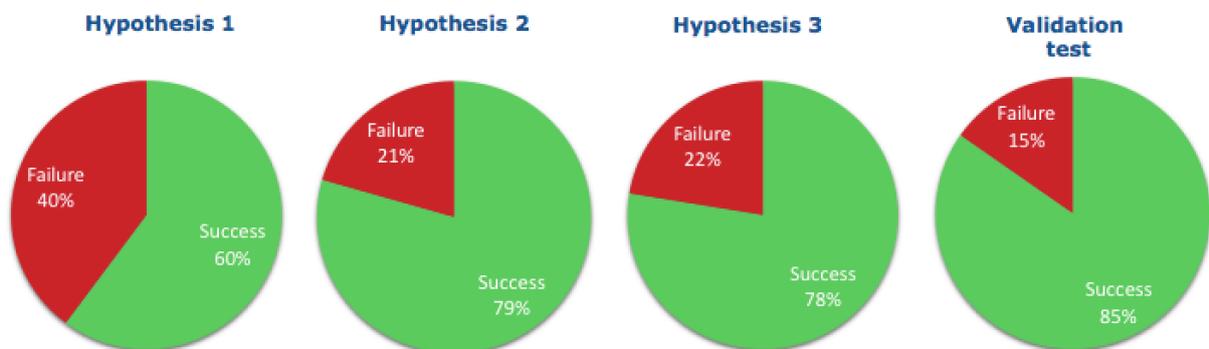
In line with our approach of following the evidence and involving our stakeholders (both the DGs and the people using our websites), we used the following process to create the top-level classification:

- develop a first hypothesis with classes covering all 77 of the tasks included in the original poll<sup>2</sup>
- test and refine the hypothesis until our testers achieve an 80-90% success rate.<sup>3</sup>

Between September 2014 and February 2015, we carried out 6 test iterations, with people representative of our typical audience profiles (as evidenced by the top-task poll). A total of over 6000 test volunteers were invited to take part.

Each test iteration was followed by a collective review meeting with colleagues from the DGs (a total of 5 plenary meetings) where we presented the results and our analysis and took decisions before proceeding.

## We achieved success after 4 iterations of testing



<sup>2</sup> See Annex page 7 on cardsorting

<sup>3</sup> See Annex page 13 on treejack testing

## Top-level classification

The top-level classification is the highest level of menu labels, giving access to all information provided by the European Commission.

### The 15 classes

The 15 classes in the top-level classification, accepted by DGs on 12 February 2015 were:

- Business, Economy
- Live, Work, Travel in EU
- Law
- About the EU
- Funding, Tenders
- News, Publications, Events
- Environment
- Research and Innovation
- Strategy
- Education
- Aid, Human Rights
- Jobs at the European Commission
- Statistics
- Food, Farming
- EU Regional and Urban Investment

A final validation test was done to confirm the last hypothesis. The test confirmed we achieved our goal with an overall success rate of the classification of 84%.

### Dynamics of the classification

Each of these classes gives access to a number of tasks. For example, the class "Business, Economy" will give access to tasks such as product safety, doing business in the EU, economic growth, financial stability, loans, access to finance, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Our test results also indicated that navigation by topic (topics-based entry points) would be needed at the appropriate level in the architecture.

The detailed dynamics of the classification are set out in the **Annex section III** p.59.

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<sup>4</sup> The precise descriptions and order in which these tasks will appear will be worked out in the second-level classification.