

As part of the user-centred design approach for development of legislation.gov.uk, a usability agency was commissioned to research the behaviours, goals and tasks of current users of the OPSI and Statute Law Database websites. The results of the research, surveys and interviews have been distilled into a set of fictional personas to help shape the design of our services. The following are extracts from the persona profiles produced.

## Introducing your personas



### PRIMARY PERSONA

**Mark Green:** Environmental Enforcement Officer, Birmingham City Council

Regular user, more so of OPSI. Needs to quote legislation. Uses a handful of Acts regularly. No access to subscription services. Web savvy.

*"I need to quote legislation as part of my job and so it is essential that the legislation I access is up-to-date"*



**Jane Booker:** Law Librarian

Regular user, more so of SLD. Likely to use all the features SLD site offers. Expert web researcher and confident researcher of legal documents. Time pressured to respond to queries. Uses subscription services and other sources.

*"I need to respond the solicitors' requests for information in a timely manner and it is absolutely essential that what I provide is up to date"*



**Heather Cole:** Member of public seeking to defend her rights.

First time user, does want to view legislation, but needs support and advice too. Needs to understand what she is seeing. Web savvy.

*"I want to prove to my local council that they are not providing the services they are obligated to provide"*



**Brian Hedges:** Frustrated by his neighbour's fence. **an anti-persona?**

First time user. A beginner when it comes to using the internet. Vague search terms. Needs signposting.

*"It seems I am in the wrong place – I cannot understand this legal speak – I just want an answer"*

### Mark Green: Non-Law professional working in Local Government



#### Perceptions of OPSI / SLD

On the whole I'm satisfied with OPSI and SLD. I think it's brilliant that those services are there and that they are freely available. They are professional and formal, easy to use. I can find individual sections quickly, and it is more convenient than accessing books or hard copies. Visual design is not very impactful, but I'm not bothered. I nearly always find what I am looking for; usually if I don't, it's because it has not been updated. **I must admit I probably have used as enacted in the past when I should not have.** I am getting better at understanding how things work, but it would be easy for someone to make a mistake when looking for the most recent legislation. I use SLD to a lesser extent as I see it for the more advanced user. OPSI is improving all the time, for example by adding more older legislation top the site.

#### Information Sources

- Websites
  - HSE (official and unofficial)
  - Environment Agency
  - OPSI /SLD
- Would very rarely look at hard copy legislation – easier to get it up on screen
- Specific Acts
  - Environmental protection Act 1990, Highways Act 1980, Refuse Disposal Amenity act 1978, etc.
- Colleagues
- Internal sites / intranet
- Counterparts in other L.A.s

#### Triggers

- I am preparing to interview and inspect a business premises.
- I want to keep abreast of what's new, specifically any changes to Acts that affect my job.
- I need to quote legislation in a letter I'm drafting to a business which is in breach of that legislation.
- A colleague has asked for advice about what legislation is being broken by a company he interviewed.
- I'm looking for SI numbers or chapter and verse to reference in my Masters dissertation.

#### Tasks

- I go to my bookmarks to deep link to pieces of legislation (the key ones I use).
- I regularly cut and paste extracts of legislation into correspondence.
- I'll try using the site search, usually quick search, if I'm looking for a piece of legislation that I have not bookmarked. I usually know the act name and year.
- I look for revised legislation as I am interested in up to date information. If I see the warning that a piece of legislation is not up-to-date, I'll check the table for legislative effects (SLD) – or at least try.
- I rarely print – it's a waste of paper and space – but if I do, it's only a small amount.
- I share information with colleagues by emailing them PDFs or I cut and paste extracts of legislation in an email.
- Often I will just make notes or read and digest legislation so I can answer a query.
- I read and reference legislation for my Masters.

#### Frustrations

- OPSI is not complete – some of the legislation I need is not on OPSI.
- Not all amendments that have been made to legislation are on the sites.
- Having to use hard copies sometimes.
- No links between affected AND affecting legislation.
- Navigating through an act can be slow because I have to keep going back to the index – I can't go straight to the next section.
- There is no way of being able to find SIs by scanning. It can be impossible to find an SI unless you know the year and number.
- Not all are available in PDF form.
- Some large pdfs can be difficult to download.
- On the odd occasion I have used a search (OPSI) I have not found what I wanted easily.

### Mark Green: Non-Law professional working in Local Government



*“I need to quote legislation as part of my job and so it is essential that the legislation I access is up-to-date”*

#### Profile

Mark Green, 32, Environmental Enforcement Officer, Birmingham City Council  
Studying part-time for a masters in Environment Health to progress his career.

#### Goal

To ensure businesses are adhering to health and safety regulations. To get my Masters degree.

#### Emotional Motivation

I want to be aware of current legislation, and gain an understanding of the law behind the policies. I don't want to start quoting out of date legislation and look a fool in court or in front of colleagues!

#### Rational Motivation

I need to keep up-to-date with legislation, it is part of the remit of my job role.

#### Web Interaction Style

I use the internet everyday for personal and work use, and my favorite website is eBay. I use the internet mostly for work and consult sites such as OPSI and SLD a few times a week. A lot of the time, I use HSE or Environment Agency sites, but they usually link to OPSI. It is important that I read legislation first hand – I don't want to rely on guidance. I visit forums related to work such as Morpheus, especially if I can't find answers I'm looking for on websites, however I tend not to contribute to them. I access the internet from home when studying for my Masters.

#### Responsibilities

- Carry out inspections of business premises to ensure they are complying with environmental law
- Some visits need to be made outside working hours, especially when monitoring noise
- Inform businesses if they are in breach of legislation, and if necessary, take part in court prosecutions
- Ensure I am acting within the law
- Keeping up-to-date with what is in force now, I rarely need historical versions of legislation
- Update colleagues on new versions of legislation

### Heather Cole: Member of the public seeking to defend their rights



*“I want to prove to my local council that they are not providing the services they are obligated to provide for my disabled son”*

#### Profile

Heather Cole, 40, full time mother caring for her disabled 8 year old son Josh, living in Kent. Very active volunteer involved with local charities that have provided support to the family.

#### Goal

I want to make sure my son has all the opportunities that should be available to him – in this case, swimming lessons at our local leisure centre. Like any mother I want my child to have the best quality of life possible.

#### Emotional Motivation

This something my son really wants to do – I want to make him happy.

#### Rational Motivation

Finding out about current legislation / understand what rights we have and what Josh is entitled to. Understanding the legislation and using it in my arguments or correspondence will make my local council take me more seriously.

#### Web Interaction Style

I use the internet everyday at home from my laptop. It has been invaluable for finding resources since my son’s accident - helping me identify lots of source of support through sites like - <http://www.youreable.com/>. It has also meant I have found plenty of activities for my son to get involved in. I socialise a lot online – emailing, Facebook, forums etc.

I have used sites like Directgov before, but until now I have never actually looked for the Disability Discrimination Act itself.

#### Information Sources

- Websites
- Directgov
- <http://www.wheelchairusers.org.uk/>
- [www.youreable.com](http://www.youreable.com/)
- Facebook
- <http://www.childrensdisabilitiesinfo/>
- Friends made on forums and through the sites and organisations I have become involved with or contacted.

### Heather Cole: Member of the public seeking to defend their rights



#### Perceptions of OPSI / SLD

I had never visited the OPSI site before or looked at an Act – I was really happy to find that I could access the Act I was looking for. On the whole I was satisfied – I got to the Act!

I liked the simple layout of the OPSI site – my search on Google took me straight to the Act –so it was really easy to find. However, I wanted to be sure of what I was seeing and that this was the official source – it looks official. It could have been made clearer as to whether I was looking at the right piece of legislation - I was not sure if I was missing anything as I am unfamiliar with how legislation works.

The legislation is hard to understand , but the language is easier elsewhere on the site – but still professional. Some pages are too text heavy .

I have never heard of the Statute Law Database - is that where I should be looking instead?

#### Triggers

- My local council are not providing the access to leisure facilities that I believe they are obliged to – I want to be sure that this is the case, and find the ammunition I need to take this dispute forward.
- I want advice to help me tackle this problem.

#### Tasks

- Post a message on youreable.com to see if anyone has similar experience or advice for me when dealing with my local council.
- Google search for “Disability Discrimination Act”.
- Click on the top result – it looks like it is the Act I am looking for – *though I did notice the next result looked more recent (2005)*.
- The Act appears on a site I have not visited before (OPSI) – as I am unfamiliar I look at the homepage and About OPSI page and Legislation page before I look at the Act – I want to make sure I am in the right place – that this is “official”.
- I go back to the Act. I want to download it, but cannot, so I spend a long time skimming through each page and make notes and copy and paste parts I think are relevant so I can print them and send them to my LA.
- I add the Act to my bookmarks as I expect I will need to come back to it.
- I thought about using the Help to try and get more advice but instead I went back to Google to look for further information to help me understand the Act.

#### Frustrations

- I cannot download a pdf of the Act (it is a 1995 Act)
- I found the Act, but it was not immediately obvious to me that I was definitely looking at the right thing – is it up to date? This could have been clearer.
- I did not notice the Legislation link till the last minute – but I was hoping for a bit more on how legislation works and what I am looking at .
- I am still not entirely sure what revised and enacted legislation are – surely the law is the law?
- The Act itself is hard to understand - but that is just legal speak isn't it?
- There are many pages to click through.
- I had to use the back button a lot to get back to the Act after I went to other pages – there is no way of easily getting to pages you have already visited.

### Jane Booker: Super user / Legal Librarian



*“I need to respond the solicitors’ requests for information in a timely manner and it is absolutely essential that what I provide is up to date”*

#### Profile

Legal Librarian, 28. I manage a small team of assistants within one of the biggest law firms based in Edinburgh. Member of BIALL.

#### Goal

I want to stay with this company – so I want to exceed the expectations of the partners.

#### Responsibilities

- Carrying out the necessary research respond to solicitors’ / partners requests for legislation and case law for background to court cases
- Training the trainee solicitors that join the firm to do their own legal research
- Keeping the library in good order
- Attend relevant training sessions
- Keep up to date with current affairs pertaining to the specialisms of the firm
- The planning and preparation of the library budget and the monitoring of budget spend throughout the financial year.

#### Emotional Motivation

I love my job and it is important to me to do it well. I would be mortified if any of the solicitors encountered a problem with a case because of inaccurate information I had provided.

#### Rational Motivation

Seeking out information is my job – it is what I get paid to do.

#### Web Interaction Style

I’d say I am an expert when it comes to performing research on the web, both for my job and personal reasons (I use a wealth of price comparison sites as I love to get a bargain online!). When I am browsing I always have loads of tabs open. I love sites that feel really helpful – like Smile bank.

Resources on the web are vital for my work and I am on the computer almost all day. I will sign up to relevant RSS feeds, and I set reminders to check certain resources regularly – to keep up to date.

I have comprehensive bookmarks / favourites – organised in folders, but for many sites I know the URL off by heart.

### Jane Booker: Super user / Legal Librarian



#### Perceptions of OPSI / SLD websites

Of course there could be improvements but I am satisfied with both sites. I prefer to use SLD than OPSI as up to date legislation is usually what I require. SLD takes account amendments to Acts made by later legislation, but it is not fully up to date and this can be frustrating and is the main reason to start with Westlaw. It is fantastic that these sites exist though.

OPSI ‘New Legislation’ section is very useful in keeping up-to-date.

Search does not work well, particularly on OPSI unless you know the exact title and year. Sometimes I need to do keyword searches. It can be better to use Google.

SLD is easy to use. I like the fact the status warning is very clear. I like being able to split it by geography.

I don’t think we need SLD and OPSI – it would be easier to have one site.

#### Information Sources

- SLD
- OPSI
- Lexis Nexis Butterworths
- Westlaw (Sweet and Maxwell)
- BIALL
- <http://www.baillii.org/>
- Subscription to get hard copies (but takes longer)
- Books in the library
- Journals
- Occasionally forums

#### Triggers

- Query from a solicitor – this might be around a broad concept, or a situation where even the section number within the legislation is known
- Training sessions for trainee solicitors – I teach them about SLD and OPSI
- Keeping up to date / aware of what new legislation has been published.

#### Tasks

- Typical SLD search – type in “Housing” and select “Scottish”
- Goes to other sources for case law e.g. BAILII
- Demonstrate SLD and OPSI to trainees – explain how to use them and what their limitations are

#### Tasks

- If know name and date of act, likely to look it up on Westlaw or Lexis Nexis as can’t be sure SLD up to date
- Keyword searches on Google > follow links to OPSI > follow up on SLD as interested in legislation how it stands
- Check status warning (SLD), if necessary go to table of effects and locate affecting legislation
- Regular checks of new legislation pages on OPSI
- Occasionally look at historical versions (for old cases)
- Read legislation on screen
- Copy and paste legislation / sections
- Occasionally print (but environmental concerns)
- May move to books to find out more (depends on enquiry)
- Shares information with colleagues / friend via email e.g. Hyperlinks to Acts or copied and paste into emails

#### Frustrations

- **A lot of legislation is not up to date / amended! If it was we would not need to rely on the subscription services**
- You have to check if revisions are incorporated
- I have to use other sources
- I cannot do effective keyword searches
- Date range in ‘New legislation’ section doesn’t cover a long enough period (OPSI)
- SLD a little slow to note amendments made to statutes
- Could be easier and faster ways to get to affecting legislation when amends have not been made
- Loss of formatting when copy and paste
- Lexis Nexis has better annotation – dates amends came into effect / which SI was brought into effect / hyperlinks to explanatory notes

### Brian Hedges: Lost looking for advice



*“I want to know what I should do about my neighbour’s new fence – I think it is higher than it should be and it is blocking my light!”*

#### Profile

Semi-retired, 62, work as a handyman doing bits and pieces for the village hall committee. He is quite well known in the village.

#### Goal

To get my neighbour to lower his fence so I can enjoy the sun in my conservatory.

#### Comment:

Brian is really in the wrong place, looking for something he cannot find on OPSI. But he will use the help facility anyway – maybe they will answer his question.

Relatively few people like Brian responded to the surveys – but the helpdesk queries certainly indicate that they exist.

#### Emotional Motivation

It’s not just the light – he is always causing problems – making noise and being inconsiderate. It’s about time someone brought him down a peg or two.

#### Rational Motivation

Everyone should stick to the law.

#### Web Interaction Style

I’m no expert with the computer, but I am using the internet more and more to read about things of interest to me. I don’t download anything though - I don’t want to get one of those worm things. I don’t bank or buy anything either – my son bought some flights and ended up having someone else use his card details.

I have a printer at home and find it easier often to print things out to take away to read.

### Brian Hedges: Lost looking for advice



#### Perceptions of OPSI

It is not for the layperson. Once I realised that this was just showing me pieces of legislation I gave up and emailed them – you need a law degree to understand it.

The helpdesk were very friendly and tried to be helpful – I need to go and speak to the CAB.

Disappointed that there is no advice supplied.

The search results were a bit overwhelming – I had no idea what I should look at first.

#### Information Sources

- Public library (potential future)
- Citizen’s advice bureau (potential future)
- Friends
- Many websites, some with forums of people discussing this problem e.g.:
  - [www.diynot.com](http://www.diynot.com)
  - [www.gardenlaw.co.uk](http://www.gardenlaw.co.uk)

#### Triggers

- Needs advice as to what he can do about his annoying neighbour’s fence.
- Wants to talk to someone.

#### Tasks

- Search for “fence height law” on Google.
- Read bits and pieces on different sites – sees a reference to party wall Act, so searches for this > deep link to legislation on OPSI.
- Tries to search for “fence height”, hoping for advice.
- Decides to try and contact OPSI when the search results look confusing.
- Sends and email to the helpdesk.

#### Frustrations

- I do not know how to understand this, or even if I am looking at the right thing.
- It’s too complicated, I only needed to find out the basics and it doesn’t summarise at all.
- I could not get the advice I was looking for. I need to go elsewhere.
- So many search results!
- Not user friendly - it is very ‘government sounding’ - needs to have the use of easy language.
- I was expecting a yes/no answer and I am not getting it.

#### Requirements

- Simple language.
- Explanation of what I am seeing.
- Explanation of what help I can expect to get.
- Someone to just tell me what I need to know and do.
- Links to explanation of legal terms.
- Links to where to go for further guidance (e.g. citizens advice bureau).
- There are many different regulatory bodies within and between acts of law. Advice on which regulatory body to go to would be of help here.