

Participant experience NZTD Pilot 1

Summary of findings

April 2023 – Pilot 01

alphero

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Background and approach

Background

Alphero is supporting New Zealand Customs Service (Customs) in the design and delivery of the New Zealand Traveller Declaration (NZTD) service.

To ensure a quality experience for travellers, Alphero was engaged to conduct short phone interviews gathering experiences on the first pilot of the mobile web version of the NZTD, and the experience of passengers when they arrived at the airport.

Approach

Alphero conducted 8 phone feedback sessions with members of the public who had travelled overseas in the last (two) weeks and had completed the online NZTD.

This report outlines what we learned during these sessions.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982



Caveats to the validity of some findings

- Many of the participants were either government officials themselves who had an a higher than average affinity for government processes - so these findings are not representative of likely responses from the wider population. One participant even knew a Customs officer and was reassured because they'd be able to fall back on that if they had trouble.
- Several of the participants made it clear that they are very tech savvy and were concerned for others who might not be.
- Participants had been given very clear instructions in a pilot email, including photographs for arrival. They were also escorted by a guide at the airport. This makes the findings from the airport part of the pilot nearly void from a user experience perspective (although from a technical perspective it would be valuable). In order to adequately measure the user experience, the questions in any upcoming surveys need to match the maturity of the built solution at each pilot stage.



Key takeaways

- Most people found filling out the declaration quick, easy and straightforward
- Several people felt the experience may have been more difficult if they hadn't had detailed instructions from Customs and a guide at the airport
- There was an even mix between people who mentioned they'd still prefer to fill it out on paper, those who didn't mind either way, and those who preferred the online process
- Some people expressed concern for less technology savvy people
- Many participants didn't know what they should do had something changed by the time they arrived in New Zealand
- Not all participants were clear about the time frames in which they could fill out the declaration
- Participants were forgiving of additional processing times, but not everyone felt it would save them time at the airport
- Several people were pleased to be able to fill the declaration out in advance

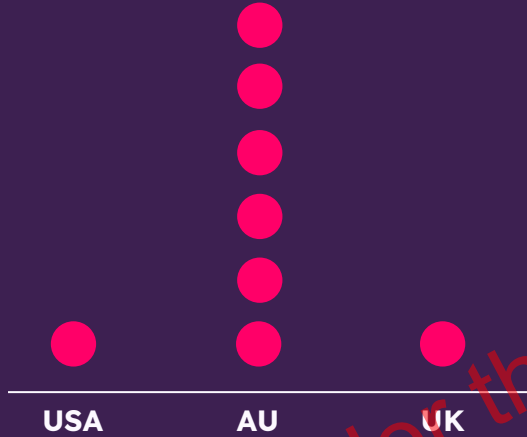
Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Findings

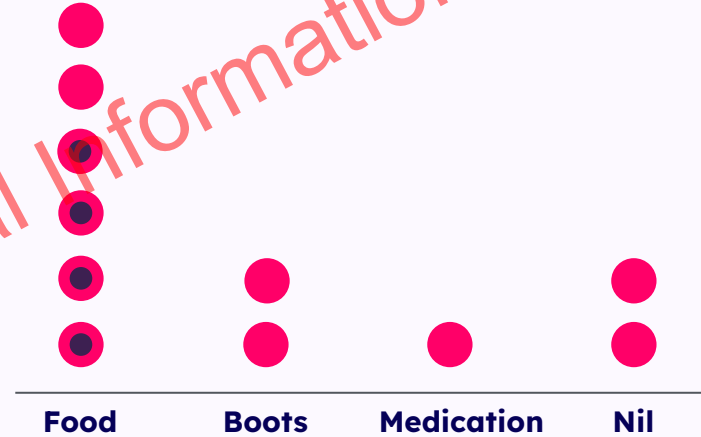


Travel context

Travelling from:



Declared:



 The food declared was chocolate or lollies

Completion



6

completed the day before travel



0

completed en route to airport



2

completed at airport before boarding

One participant had to squeeze it in between many prior consecutive legs of travel and would have benefited greatly from it being available 2-3 days before departure

All participants said it took them from between 5 and 15 minutes



8

Completed all at once



0

Saved and returned

Six of the eight participants said it was easy to notice that they could have saved and returned. One said they only realised at the end when submitting.

Choice of device

Reasons people chose to use the selected device:

- They had already packed away their laptop and iPad
- They had access to a laptop but had easier access to wifi from phone so gave it a go with laptop as a backup plan
- The iPad was the biggest device they had with them
- They had roaming on their work iPhone
- iPad user felt it would be easier on a bigger device than phone
- The convenience of having the link on their phone
- One person could not access the link on their work phone so had to use an iPad but would have preferred phone.

I was walking between places at work just fitting it in so my phone was easiest.



0

Used a computer



2

Used a tablet



6

Used a smartphone

Only one out of the eight participants considered themselves a big user of apps, and several mentioned not liking to clutter their phones.

One person said it's good to have both the web version with an app as a backup plan.

One said they would have found an authorised app more secure and it could be handy for filling out during transit.

Confidence of completion

Only one of eight participants rated their confidence level (that they had fulfilled their requirements) below a 10, (rating it as an eight or nine).

- The majority of participants noticed that the UI indicated somehow - such as a change of colour - a tick mark - or another obvious indication - that they had completed a section, and even those who didn't remember exactly how it was indicated felt sure they had completed everything.
- Several participants mentioned that it was clear and easy to understand, which made them feel confident.
- Three participants mentioned how helpful it was that some fields auto-populated/had selectable nationality etc. and that this increased their confidence that they were getting it right.
- One participant said the confirmation at the end of the form and the confirmation email made them feel confident.
- The person who rated at an eight or nine said they felt it was a bit vague on the timeframes and they weren't 100% sure about 24 hours. They said it was probably in the invitation, but that it had come well before they could use the declaration - so they couldn't remember by the time they started.

It was really easy to work out what you had completed. It took you back to the home screen each time with the colour saying you had filled it in.

It was good that it brought me back to the checklist for each section. If it hadn't gone back I would have started to think 'did that go through ok?'

Concerns about editing

Several participants expressed concerns about whether they'd be able to go back and edit if something changed.

- One participant suggested they'd like to fill it in as close to departure as possible in case something changed.
- Several participants were concerned because they weren't clear on what to do if they needed to modify their answers - and they didn't remember seeing any clear instructions.



They're just going to have to figure out what they do with... like if you've already crossed the line - what do you do if something you've purchased has made your declaration untrue.



I don't remember if it had clear instructions about what I would do if I needed to change an answer.

In Wellington you can clear Customs before Duty Free. I wasn't clear, what does one do? How would you change it after you've landed?

Clarity of content

Participants were asked how easy it was to understand what they needed to declare. They were also asked if they read the privacy statement.

- Only two participants remembered reading the privacy statement, but most of them said they weren't too concerned and they typically just skim read.
- On the whole, most participants found the instructions on what to declare very clear.
- Two participants said they were confused by chocolate being considered food, but there being a separate check box that included dairy products and wondered if they needed to say yes to both.
- Two participants noted that the fact it was the same questions they were used to answering on the paper form made it easy.
- One person who was a frequent traveller said explanations were clearer here than on the paper card.
- One person said it's easier to understand the instructions on the smartphone than on paper where with the small size of the type it's easy to accidentally gloss over something.

The only thing was... it asks if you have any food, including chocolate - but then in 'animal products', it also includes dairy... so chocolate can be both!

I was bringing in chocolate and I got a little bit confused because chocolate was listed under food but then there was a separate area for dairy.

Getting help if needed

Participants were asked what they'd do if they needed help with the form.

- None of the participants remembered a place with clear instructions on what to do if you needed help, but most guessed that they would look for a phone number or email address.
- Two people said if they were at the airport they would be likely to ask AirNZ staff.
- Some participants said they would reference the email they had received inviting them to participate in the pilot.
- Several people expressed concern for others who would not have the email instructions that pilot participants received and felt concern for the elderly, or people who are less technology savvy.
- One person said they would look at the NZTD website and if they were already at the airport they would call the contact number they found there.
- One person suggested a chatbot could be helpful.

I would have referred to the email, but bearing in mind we got them because we're on the pilot so most people won't have instructions.

There needs to be contact details on the form if they need assistance so they can call or email.

I would have had to go to an AirNZ staff member as the only point of contact for an issue.

At the airport

All participants pointed out that their experience at the airport was different than it would normally be because they had a guide facilitating their journey.

- All participants knew where to go because they had a guide.
- One participant noted it was a bit ‘artificial’ on the ground.
- All participants felt that the email they had received from Customs about participating in the pilot gave them very clear instructions of what to do, but some noted that if they hadn’t had the instructions and the guide, it might have been more difficult.
- Most participants assumed (correctly) that their declaration would be linked to their passport and they wouldn’t have to show anything else.
- One person was glad they didn’t have to give a reference number.
- One person noted how well the staff performed the process and felt it was no longer than if they had done it on paper.
- Several people excused delays because they knew staff were doing things for the first time themselves.

It was all standard procedure. Going through the diplomat land didn’t save any time. The process at MPI seemed a bit clunky and we were there for a good 10 minutes. I wouldn’t call it a seamless process, but they were just getting used to it themselves.

Because we were the first pilot participants, Customs had to stay with MPI and guide them through with what they had to do on their computers.

Reflections about it being online

“
It's basically the same questions but easier to do than on paper

“
I personally don't mind filling it out on paper, but online was easy so it's ok I guess it saves paper.

“
I mistyped my name. I think you're more likely to make an error on a mobile than when you're writing it out on paper.

“
It's good that if I travelled regularly it could pre-populate my information.

“
In a lounge it's easier than on a plane where there's low light and you're bouncing around.

“
I liked it because I could do it at the time of my choosing in a comfortable space for me.

“
It's easier rather than scrounging around for a pen on the plane and doing it on the back of a seat.

“
What I liked least was the temporary feeling of helplessness when I couldn't instantly get into it. When you have a piece of paper you feel more in control.

“
I liked doing it online because your choices are validated like you can't put the wrong nationality on there.

What people liked most

Auto-population
made it really
easy to do

It was really
crisp, clear and
fast

It was very clear
and easy to
navigate

I found the process
of going back to
the checklist very
helpful. I was like
'ok yeah I checked
off that one'.

It was nice to have it
out of the way and
not have to do it on
the plane

The fact that you can fill
it out before you even
start your journey. Then
it was done, and we
didn't have to think
about it.

That it was
something I didn't
need to complete
on the aircraft, it
was all just
completed

You can't do it
online in the UK
or Australia. I'm
chuffed that we
can do it here.

What people liked least

“

It's basically the same questions but easier to do than on paper.

“

It was a little bit lengthy, but I guess it has to be.

“

The big thing could be if there were technical issues I'd have no idea who to talk to or what to do.

“

There would be stress involved if I was running late and hadn't downloaded it - if I didn't have awareness that there was a paper fallback.

“

You know how most things it has those red asterisks that you have to fill in? I wasn't sure... Like sometimes email is not required but if they didn't have an email, they might panic.

“

It took at least the 10 minutes they said because there were items I couldn't access from memory such as my passport number and flight number so you have to flick back and forth on your phone.

“

I don't see how it's going to streamline the passenger process and make it any quicker but maybe it could in the future.

Other feedback

They did say there was a fallback to paper, which was reassuring.

It would have been good to have a bit more info up front that it was the paper declaration that they were replacing.

As long as scanning the passports triggers loading fast enough they should be able to handle it.

It's just the awareness telling people they can get it done before they fly.

It didn't ask the Convictions question I guess because it was on a NZ passport?

It was similar in feel to the Covid form but that's not a bad thing.

In retrospect it would have been more convenient for me to fill out closer to departing in the lounge, but some people might want to fill it out way sooner.

Things that felt tricky will go away as people get used to it. It has lots of potential.

I can imagine an edge case where you run out of battery or have connectivity issues and I'm not sure what you would do.

I don't know what the final cut off for the declaration would be... it must be before flying... or whether you can still make a digital declaration as you're landing.

If worse came to worst with a paper declaration, you could always stop in front of a Customs officer and scribble it all out.

Ideas and suggestions



A lot of people answering the nationality question would have been NZ so they could put it at the top.



I had to open each of the seven questions about what to declare, and then go back each time. If I'm going to say no to all of them couldn't they just all be there in one section so you don't have to shut it and go back and wait for a slight pause?



Could you have a scanner so you just take a photo of your passport and it pre-populates. Although I guess even that sometimes scans wrong and gets o's and zeros wrong.



If you were travelling with your family could you add it all under the same reference number so one of the parents could fill out everything?



Technical issues

A few participants struggled with issues in the UI.

- On an android the participant used it in portrait mode and a lot of boxes weren't visible as the keyboard takes up most of the screen. They couldn't see the questions and the place they were writing the answers at the same time.
- For one person the address wouldn't open in full - it only had the number and street so they had to type it manually. They didn't see a way to type it out manually and thought it should be made possible.
- One person found it cumbersome that every time you would have to scroll back and click through to the section - because they said when it takes you back to the checklist it opens halfway or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way down the page.

They said it was the same with a new page.

Each time I would have to scroll up and that it became a bit annoying. I wanted to see if I had missed anything - because I didn't want to miss out on an instruction.

Next steps

- Review insights from this report and determine any improvements that can be made to the User Interface
- Use the results of this pilot to improve the design of future pilots, and to inform the design of subsequent user research/surveys
- Ensure a wide breadth of demographics for the next pilots and that there are no conflicts of interest/participants who may have an existing bias
- Note: None of the seven officers who participated in the pilot completed a survey, so in future rounds a more effective way of engaging with them will need to be determined. An initial suggestion is one-on-one interviews.

