

Things to improve in the user interface.

The bottom right button.

In some screens it is “continue” and in other screens it is “submit”. The problem is that the user gets in the habit of simply always clicking the button at the lower right as the way to get to the next screen. Yet the consequences of clicking that button at a time that later turns out to be the wrong time, change immensely when the button changes to “submit”.

So the UI needs to change when the button changes. When the button becomes “submit” it needs to change color and get bigger.

The screenshot shows a web interface for EFS Registered users. At the top, there is a blue header with the text "EFS Registered". Below this, there are two buttons: "Registered eFilers" with a checkmark icon and "Please Read Announcements". The main content area is titled "Certification" and contains a warning message: "A submission has not been filed officially at the USPTO until the e-filer executes the Submit f USPTO. The Acknowledgement Receipt is evidence of this submission." Below the warning, it states "All items denoted by \* are required." The next section is "Your Digital Certificate has been authenticated - please certify your identity:". There are two radio button options: "I certify that I am the certificate holder Carl Oppedahl" (selected) and "I certify that I am working under the authority of the certificate holder: Carl Oppedahl". Below this is a question: "Is this a New Application or an existing Application?". There are four radio button options: "New application" (selected), "Existing application", "Saved Submission Package", and "View last 10". The next section is "\* Select Type of New Application:". There are four radio button options: "Design", "Utility" (selected), "Provisional", and "U.S. National Stage under 35 USC 371". At the bottom right, there is a "Privacy Policy" link and two buttons: "Cancel" and "Continue".

The location of the “what you can do next” buttons.

Right now on a given screen the “what you can do next” buttons are scattered all over the screen. The user is stuck having to scan the entire screen to try to guess what is the right thing to do next.

These “what you can do next” buttons need to be clustered together.

Indeed another problem is that in several cases, the “what you can do next” button is not even a button at all.

For example. On the “Certification” screen, the true “what you can do next” buttons are the four radio buttons in the middle (“new application”, “existing application” etc.). Meanwhile the screen is cluttered with four other buttons that are quite irrelevant to the user at this point (“design”, “utility” etc.).

The “continue” button on this page is meaningless to any “person working under authority”. It is meaningless to anybody who is trying to respond to an Office Action. It is meaningless to anybody who is trying to view recent ack receipts.

In fact this screen should be blank except for two buttons, one labeled “I am the cert holder” and a second one labeled “I am working under the authority of the cert holder”.

Then you need to show a new screen for “is this a new application or an existing application?”

The problem with this question is that it is unclear what you mean by “this”. I guess you mean to be asking something like “are you filing a new application or are you wishing to file a paper in an existing application?” In context, I guess by “this” you mean “the thing you want to file”. The problem is that it is impossible to “file” “an existing application”.

So what really needs to be on this page is something like “what do you want to do next?” And there needs to be nothing else on the page except four text buttons:

- file a new application
- file a paper in an existing applications
- view my saved submission packages
- view my last ten ack receipts
- 

These four things should not be radio buttons at all. They should be real text buttons and there should not be a “continue” button at all.

Only after the user presses one of these four buttons should the later questions appear.

Let me describe the design mistakes on this page in different words.

This page, as portrayed, seems to suggest that the user is supposed to click three radio buttons (one in the top field, one in the middle field, and one in the bottom field) and then click “continue”. You, the designer, have arbitrarily chosen three default values in these three fields. That is, you have filled in one of the radio buttons in the top field, and one of the buttons in the middle field, and one of the buttons in the bottom field. You have chosen the wrong default values, because nearly always some other combination will be correct for a user. The combination you chose comes up only maybe half a percent of the time. But more to the point you ought not to be selecting and displaying default values on this page. There simply need to be text buttons, and the flow of this screen needs to be broken up into two or more screens in sequence.

There is also the legally incorrect statement here that “US national stage” somehow counts as “filing a

new application”. The filer who files papers to enter the US national stage is, in fact, not filing a new application at all.

Probably the correct thing on this page is to get rid of the “continue” text button altogether and instead display the following text buttons:

- file a new design application
- file a new utility application
- file a new provisional application
  
- enter the US national stage from a PCT application (section 371)
  
- file a paper in an existing application
  
- view in-progress submission packages saved under this certificate
  
- view recent acknowledgment receipts for filings under this certificate

These should not be radio buttons at all. They should be text buttons.

Registered eFilers | Please Read Announcements | Application Data | Attach Documents | Review Documents | Calculate Fees | Confirm & Submit | Pay Fees | Receipt

**Attach Documents**

A submission has not been filed officially at the USPTO until the e-filer executes the Submit function and the documents are received at the USPTO. Acknowledgement Receipt is evidence of this submission.

➔ I have no documents for this filing, please continue to [Calculate Fees](#).

**This is the application data associated with your filing. If any information is incorrect, please click [Cancel](#)**

Title of Invention	Specialty pharma visibility network
First Named Inventor	
Customer Number or Correspondence Address	53556
Filed By	Carl Oppedahl
Attorney Docket Number	VAI.P-057-PV
Application Type	U.S. National Stage under 35 USC 371

**If your PDF file contains multiple parts, check the *Multi-Doc* checkbox and choose the appropriate document descriptions.**

Files to be Submitted	Multi-Doc	Category	Document Description
1 <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/> View All Categories	<input type="text"/>

[Privacy Policy](#) |  |  |

Please Upload & Validate before Review

Now let's talk about what is wrong with this page. What are the “things to do next” on this page? It turns out they are scattered all over. There is the “cancel” button near the top of the page next to “if any information is incorrect”. There is the “cancel” button toward the bottom. Are they the same thing? If so, then why are there two separate “cancel” buttons on this page? Why is the first one not a button at all, but a mere hyperlink that turns out to be a button? There are nine buttons across the top. Are they all available to me to click at this time? No? Some of

them are not permitted at this time? If not all of them are permitted at this time, then why are they all the same color? When a row of buttons are the same color, the message is that they are all permitted.

You need to gray out the buttons (tabs, here) that are not permitted at this time.

Now on this page you seem to have in mind that the user should not click “review” but should instead click “upload and validate”.

But on this page as displayed, “upload and validate” makes no sense. There aren't any files to upload or validate. The plain fact is that the “upload and validate” should be grayed out at this point.

Likewise on this page, at this point, “review” makes no sense. It should also be grayed out.

Another problem with this page is that it was designed by a designer who had a screen that was two feet wide, and that designer forgot that not everybody has a screen that is two feet wide. On my screen (which is a very common size of screen), this page is so wide that it has a horizontal scroll bar. That is unacceptable. I cannot even see the most important thing on this page, namely the pull-down for “document description”. I am stuck having to scroll the page to the right just to see this all-important pull-down.

And meanwhile the page is cluttered on the right side with all those background menu links, the ones that nobody ever uses. If I use the right-hand “maximize” button, that still does not suffice to eliminate the horizontal scroll bar.

**EFS Registered**

Registered eFilers  Please Read Announcements Application Data Attach Documents Review Documents Calculate Fees Confirm & Submit Pay Fees Receipt

**Review Documents**

**A submission has not been filed officially at the USPTO until the e-filer executes the Submit function and the documents are r USPTO. The Acknowledgement Receipt is evidence of this submission.**

**This is the application data associated with your filing. If any information is incorrect, please click [Cancel](#)**

Title of Invention	Specialty pharma visibility network
First Named Inventor	
Customer Number or Correspondence Address	53556
Filed By	Carl Oppedahl
Attorney Docket Number	VAI.P-057-PV
Application Type	U.S. National Stage under 35 USC 371

**To Review a Document, please click on the document name. To add more files please [Attach Files](#)**

Validation Status	Files to be Submitted	Multi-Doc PDF	Document Description	Page Count	Size	
PASS	<a href="#">vaip057.pdf</a>	NO	Applicant Response to Pre-Exam Formalities Notice	5	80023 bytes	<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
◆ No errors found.						
WARNINGS	<a href="#">ads.pdf</a>	NO	Application Data Sheet	5	77709 bytes	<a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Remove</a>
▲ This PDF is not a standard USPTO fillable form.						

[Privacy Policy](#) [Cancel](#) [Attach Files](#) [Revalidate](#) [Continue](#)

Now what are the “what to do next” buttons? Are they all in one place? No. They are again scattered

all over the page. For example we seem to have not one, not two, but three different “attach files” buttons, one that looks like a tab, one that looks like a hyperlink, and one that looks like a text button. We have at least two different “cancel” buttons, one that looks like a hyperlink and one that looks like a text button.

Now imagine we are on the “calculate fees” page. (You have to imagine it because the page is so big that I cannot get a screen capture of the whole thing.) What are the “things to do next” on this page? For example there is a “continue” button at the bottom, and a “confirm/submit” link toward the top, and a “confirm and submit” tab at the top. Are they the same thing? It turns out they are the same thing. Why do they contain different text?

Ah, but there are other “things to do next” also. There is “attach documents” and there is “review documents”. And there is “application data” which as far as I can tell is the same thing as “attach documents”. Oh, and of course there is the “cancel” button. Scattered all over the page.

What about the “receipt” tab? Can I click that? Yes, I can, but it won't do anything. Or it is not permitted, I am not quite sure. Why is it not grayed out? If it is not permitted, it should be grayed out.

What about the “pay fees” tab? Can I click that? Yes, I can, but it won't do anything. Or it is not permitted, I am not quite sure. Why is it not grayed out? If it is not permitted, it should be grayed out.

Oh, and another option is “save for later submission”. That needs to be a text button. It is wrong for that to be a mere hyperlink.

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Now another screen that needs to be scrapped and redesigned. I finished with my filing and I am now trying to view my saved submissions. Presumably that is because I plan to open one of them to make

more changes, or perhaps to submit it. I certified who I was, twenty minutes ago.

So why is the screen cluttered a second time with all of this “please certify your identity” stuff? I already certified who I was, twenty minutes ago. The system should not ask me a second time to certify who I am.

**EFS Registered**

Registered eFilers  Please Read Announcements

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**Certification**

**A submission has not been filed officially at the USPTO until the e-filer executes the Submit function. The Acknowledgement Receipt is evidence of this submission.**  
All items denoted by \* are required.

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**Your Digital Certificate has been authenticated - please certify your identity:**

I certify that I am the certificate holder **Carl Oppedahl**

I certify that I am working under the authority of the certificate holder: **Carl Oppedahl**

**Is this a New Application or an existing Application?**

New application    Existing application    Saved Submission Package    View last 10 eFiling Acknowledgment Receipts

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**View Last 10 eFiling Acknowledgment Receipts:**

Receipt [PDF]	EFS-ID	Application Number	Receipt Date	Title of Invention
<a href="#">View</a>	1000114	11275029	03-DEC-2005	AUDITABLE SECURITY FOR CARGO CONTAINERS AND OTHER REPOSITORIES
<a href="#">View</a>	1000014	11275004	01-DEC-2005	title
<a href="#">View</a>	1000013	10416719	01-DEC-2005	DATA RETRIEVAL AND REPORT GENERATION FOR FOODSTUFFS

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[Privacy Policy](#)

I have now filed two or three filings. I decide to go back and look at my last ten Ack Receipts. And what happens? The system asks me a third time to certify who I am. This makes no sense and it wastes my time.

You need to maintain an internal state which is “filer has certified who he or she is” and when that state is set, you need to stop demanding that the user certify who he or she is.

One of the evils of the present screen flow is that the filer who is “under authority of” will do a first filing, and will then go back to do a second one, and the system will have defaulted to “I am the certificate holder”. The filer will likely forget to do a second certification. Or will be annoyed at having to do the “under authority” certification a second or third or fourth time.