



American Customer Satisfaction Index
E-Government Satisfaction Index

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→ Introduction:

President Obama and E-Gov Appear to Be Hitting their Strides

E-government under President Barack Obama is continuing to enjoy the highest levels of citizen satisfaction since the Index first began in 2003. As agencies experience and handle the change of a new administration in 2009, they see a significant year-over-year increase in satisfaction during a presidency that embraces Web 2.0 and is in the process of following through on steps outlined in the Open Government Directive.

Effective e-government that takes advantage of Web 2.0 functionalities, which include social media, is now an imperative. Citizens' expectations as to what they can accomplish online are higher than ever before, especially with an administration that has implemented so many pro-e-government initiatives. But the value of e-government is not only about what citizens prefer; an increase in the use of the web channel provides a huge potential for cost-savings compared to interacting with citizens via call centers and offices.

For three quarters in a row, federal agencies in the Index are upholding high levels of satisfaction with their web channels. While there often tends to be a slight dip in satisfaction for the first quarter of each year, the E-Government Satisfaction Index trend is holding steady, which reflects the good work of agencies and departments that are making improvements aimed at giving citizens what they need and expect online.

President Obama needs to continue his emphasis on responsive and open government and support all agencies in their efforts to provide website and social media experiences that satisfy citizens. While we are close to all-time high levels of citizen satisfaction (down only 0.1 point, which is within the margin of error), it would be a mistake to rest on laurels and not continue to make improvements aimed at increasing satisfaction, which has a direct impact on increasing use of the online channel, as well as trust and participation in government.

The following report goes into more detail about which websites are top performers, which elements of the website experience are highest priority for site visitors, and how e-government satisfaction compares to businesses within the private sector.

This report measures 106 e-gov sites by perhaps the most important performance metric: how well they are satisfying citizens. We use the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which was developed at the University of Michigan. It has been used since 1994 to rate both online and offline federal government departments and agencies. In the quarterly ACSI E-Gov Index, each participating website is rated on a 100-point scale, allowing for comparisons between websites, departments, agencies, and even comparisons to offline government and the private sector.

Key Findings of the ACSI E-Government Index: Satisfaction with E-Gov Remains Strong

- **Citizen satisfaction with e-gov remains at high levels.** Satisfaction with e-gov in the first quarter of 2010 rates a 75.1 on the ACSI's 100-point scale, 1.5 points higher than Q1 2009. It is also on par with the highest level of citizen satisfaction with online government (75.2) since the Index began in 2003.
- **E-gov that satisfies citizens achieves the goals of providing convenient and cost-efficient resources for citizens while increasing citizens' likelihood to participate with the government and improving citizens' level of trust in the government.** Highly satisfied citizens are 80% more likely to use the website as a primary resource (as opposed to other, more costly channels); 79% more likely to recommend the website; and 52% more likely to return to the website, which helps the federal government operate more cost-efficiently. Furthermore, citizens who are highly satisfied with a federal government website are 54% more likely to trust the government unit and 50% more likely to participate in government by expressing their thoughts to the agency or department than those who are less satisfied.
- **Search and Transparency are top priorities for improvement.** This means that websites can realize great improvement in their satisfaction scores by improving search functionality and improving perceptions of agency/department transparency and information accessibility on their websites.
- **Compared to other types of government websites, citizens are most satisfied with e-commerce/transaction websites.** Career and recruitment websites come in second in terms of overall citizen satisfaction.
- **Satisfaction with e-gov beats satisfaction with offline government and is close to many private sector sites.** Citizens are more satisfied when they interact with the federal government online than offline. Some government sites' satisfaction scores outshine sites in the private sector, but the aggregate average trails private sector sites' average.

Each of these findings is discussed in more detail in the following report.

Satisfaction with E-Gov Remains Strong

With a score of 75.1 this quarter, satisfaction with e-government remains very close to its all-time high. The following chart shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites from the first quarter of 2004 through the first quarter of 2010.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Q1 E-Gov Satisfaction Score	70.9	71.9	73.5	73.4	72.4	73.6	75.1

The above chart represents a substantial number of website visitors (more than 250,000 surveys conducted during the first quarter of 2010 alone and many millions completed since the first ACSI E-Gov Index in 2003). While scores for individual years have fluctuated, the clear trend over time is rising satisfaction, which reflects increased government attention to citizens' online needs. As more sites make meaningful improvements, more citizens will choose to interact with the federal government online, thereby defraying the costs of more expensive communication channels and also giving citizens easier, more convenient access to information.

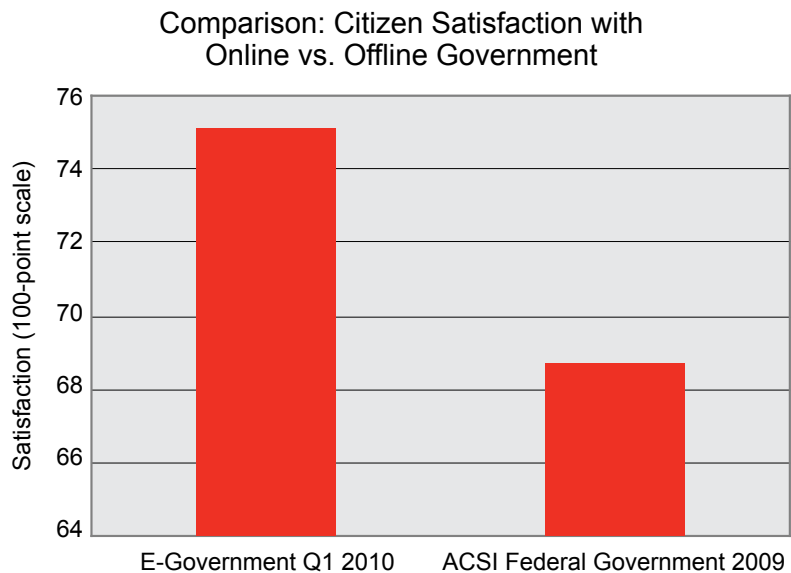
The first quarter score of 75.1 is 1.5 points higher than it was this time last year, when Obama had first taken office. This is a significant achievement considering that satisfaction with private sector sites has also increased over the same time period, and citizen expectations have adjusted accordingly.

Satisfaction Over the Last Year

Quarter	Q1 2009	Q2 2009	Q3 2009	Q4 2009	Q1 2010
E-Gov Aggregate Satisfaction	73.6	73.6	75.2	75.2	75.1

E-Gov Dominates Offline Government in Terms of Satisfaction

The ACSI measurement methodology allows for direct comparison between individual websites and overall industries—whether private or public, online or off. It can be instructive to compare satisfaction with government websites to satisfaction with overall government, which is measured by the ACSI once a year in the fourth quarter of the calendar year. As shown in the following chart, citizens are considerably more satisfied with government websites (75.1) than they are with the government overall (68.7).



It makes sense that citizens are happier to interface with the government by using the online channel. Being able to access information and perform transactions at one's own leisure is far more preferable to waiting in long lines at customer service centers or long queues using a call center.

Conducting business online also means cost savings for agencies. Putting government information and services online achieves consolidation and integrates systems and databases to increase efficiency. This process enables government to operate more responsively and effectively. When citizens interact with the federal government online instead of using other channels, it improves the efficiency of the agency while also cutting costs by reducing paperwork, printing and mailing costs, staff, call center and office traffic, and fees related to facilities, training, travel, repairs, materials, and supplies.

With the convenience and consistency of the online channel, the upward trend in satisfaction online as opposed to offline is reflected in the private sector, as well. E-retail and online brokerages outperform their offline counterparts but provide a critical continuum of contact with the customer, allowing the customer to choose the right channel for their specific needs.

E-Gov Closely Trails Key Private Sector Industry Satisfaction Scores

Citizens' perceptions of government sites are shaped by the sum total of their online experiences, so it's important to compare federal government sites to private sector sites. The chart below shows how satisfaction with e-government compares to satisfaction with other online sectors also measured by the ACSI. While e-gov significantly trails private-sector industries like portals and search engines (83) and e-retail (83), e-gov outperforms online news and information sites (including sites like CNN.com and MSNBC.com) which score 74, on average.

Any website, whether in the private or public sector, that scores an average of 80 or higher can be considered superior in meeting site visitors' needs and expectations. We refer to sites scoring over 80 as "top performers." When we look at a list of the top-performing websites measured using the ACSI over the last year in both the private and public sectors, we see that many individual government websites outperform individual private sector sites. In fact, in the Q1 ACSI E-Gov Index, 29 of 106 (27%) measured websites score 80 or higher. In 2009 ACSI studies of top e-retail and news and information websites, six of 23 sites (26%) scored 80 or higher.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	E-Gov Websites, as Measured in the Q1 2010 ACSI E-Gov Satisfaction Index	Score
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator www.ssa.gov/estimator	90
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	90
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020	87
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	87
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp	86
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS public website http://www.niams.nih.gov	85
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website www.4woman.gov	84
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov	84
USDA	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion www.cnpp.usda.gov	84
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Navy www.navy.mil	84
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website www.gobiernousa.gov	83
PBGC	U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	83
HHS	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange www.innovations.ahrq.gov	83
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	82
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bsb/bsowelcome.htm	82
DOJ	Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative www.dna.gov	82
DOC	National Ocean Service, U.S. Department of Commerce	National Ocean Service website www.oceanservice.noaa.gov	82
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website www.cia.gov/careers	82
DOI	National Park Service, Interior	National Park Service main website www.nps.gov	82
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol	82
HHS	National Human Genome Research Institute	National Human Genome Research Institute www.genome.gov	82

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	E-Gov Websites, as Measured in the Q1 2010 ACSI E-Gov Satisfaction Index	Score
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	81
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog http://catalog.usmint.gov	81
GSA	General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov	80
GSA	General Services Administration	Consumer Action website, Federal Citizen Information Center www.consumeraction.gov	80
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website www.fbi.gov	80
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases http://www3.niaid.nih.gov	80
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Air Force www.af.mil	80
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website www.cdc.gov	80

2009 ACSI Scores for Private Sector Companies	Score	2009 ACSI Scores for Private Sector Companies	Score
Netflix.com	87	TD Ameritrade.com	76
Newegg.com	86	Travelocity.com	75
Amazon.com	86	MSN.com	75
Google.com	86	Ask.com	74
Overstock.com	82	USAToday.com	74
Fidelity.com	79	ETRADE.com	74
eBay.com	79	MSNBC.com	73
CharlesSchwab.com	79	NYTimes.com	73
Expedia.com	79	CNN.com	71
Yahoo.com	77	ABCNews.com	71
Orbitz.com	76	AOL.com	70
Priceline.com	76		

Four federal websites meet or exceed the private sector's highest score (Netflix at 87): SSA's Retirement Estimator (90), SSA's iClaim (90), SSA's Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs website (87), and HHS's MedlinePlus (87). These sites set the bar high for government agency excellence on the web and show that government sites can satisfy visitors just as well as, or even better than, private-sector sites.

→ Satisfaction Scores

Top Performers

As shown in the comparison between private and public sector websites, 29 of the 106 measured e-gov sites (27% of the sites in the Index) in this quarter are in the “top performers” category with average satisfaction scores of 80 or higher, generally considered the threshold of excellence on the ACSI’s 100-point scale.

The Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Retirement Estimator and iClaim remain in the top spots, each with a score of 90. SSA’s Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs website (87) and HHS’s MedlinePlus (87) round out the top four.

Although satisfaction remains practically unchanged compared to last quarter, citizen satisfaction has improved over the last year, both at the aggregate level and with many individual websites. A whopping 11 websites had year-over-year increases of five points or more, and most of these sites also achieved their highest scores ever. (These increases are all statistically significant at the 90% level of confidence.) They include:

- U.S. International Trade Commission’s main website, up nine points to 70
- General Services Administration’s Consumer Action website, up seven points to 80
- The U.S. Mint’s Online Catalog, up six points to 81
- Department of Labor’s Disability.gov website, up six points to 69
- The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration main public site, up six points to 74
- The Department of Defense’s Military Health System main website, up six points to 73
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ grant application site, up five points to 54
- U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website, up five points to 72
- The Department of Defense’s Marine Corps website, up five points to 73
- The National Ocean Service website, up five points to 82
- USDA’s National Agricultural Library website, up five points to 72

Satisfaction with e-gov has trended consistently upward over time, which shows an increasing commitment from government agencies and departments to provide better services online. When the Index started in 2003, only three of the 22 sites that were included had a score over 80 and 59% had a score of 69 or lower. Compare that to 106 sites included today: 29 sites score 80 or above and only 15% of sites score a 69 or lower.

Year	# of Sites Included in E-Gov Index	# of Sites Achieving "Top Performer" Status*	# of Sites Achieving "Bottom Performer" Status**
2003	22	1 (<5% of all sites)	13 (59% of all sites)
2004	54	7 (13%)	19 (35%)
2005	89	16 (18%)	19 (21%)
2006	87	18 (21%)	19 (22%)
2007	91	19 (21%)	30 (33%)
2008	99	26 (26%)	26 (26%)
2009	103	28 (27%)	17 (17%)
2010	106	28 (27%)	16 (15%)
Change since first year	Participation is up 368% since 2003	% of "top performer" sites has gone from being less than 5% to almost 1 in 3 sites	% of "bottom performer" sites has gone from being almost 2/3 to less than 1/6

*Top performers are sites with scores at or above 80 on the ACSI's 100-point scale.

**Bottom performers are sites with scores 69 and below on the ACSI's 100-point scale

Identifying and making targeted improvements in response to citizens' needs has allowed for federal government websites to increase their satisfaction scores and remain on top. Top performers reap the rewards of loyalty and cost savings that are a result of citizens turning to the agency's or department's website before going to costlier channels.

E-Commerce/Transaction Sites Continue to Top Functional Categories

Scores are organized by both functional category and organizational structure, so federal government websites can benchmark against their peers. The functional categories include news and information websites, portals and department main websites, e-commerce and transactional websites, and career/recruitment sites. It can often be more instructive for a government website to benchmark their score against others in their category rather than the overall aggregate, since missions vary so much by category. For example, a news and information site with a score of 75 is doing quite well and is above average, but a recruitment website with the same score would be performing under par.

Category Scores	# of Sites	Q1 2009 Satisfaction	Q1 2010 Satisfaction
E-Commerce/Transactional	10	78	81
Information/News	62	72	74
Portal/Dept Main	30	74	75
Recruitment/Careers	4	76	77

The preceding table shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the four functional categories of sites, comparing first-quarter scores year over year. Satisfaction with federal websites has increased to varying degrees in all four measured functional categories, on average, year over year.

The e-commerce/transaction category, which is the highest-scoring category, had an aggregate score increase of 4% in just one year. This indicates that citizens are successfully conducting transactions with the government online and that agencies are continuing to implement best practices to ensure user-friendly transactions.

There is no question that the way customers have been able to interact with government over the past six years has shifted from call centers and brick-and-mortar service centers to online. Citizens are happier to interact with the government online. The high (and rising) levels of satisfaction with this category indicate citizens' eagerness to interact with the government in this way and government's success in meeting their needs and expectations.

News and information sites still need to step up their efforts to improve satisfaction. When compared to other categories, the small improvements in these categories indicate that users are happy to interact with the government online. However, they are having difficulty finding the information they need. News and information sites will play a key role in President Obama's objective to increase communication, participation, accountability, and transparency.

E-Commerce/Transaction Sites

The average score for the 10 sites included in the e-commerce or transactional category is 81. Improvements in this category could have the greatest impact on efficiency and cost savings as agencies move to paperless processing of transactions. Online transactions have resulted in saving time and money once spent scanning and entering data from transactions conducted by paper. Additionally, citizens are saving money on paper, printing, postage, transportation, and other expenses incurred by conducting their transactions—from booking a campsite at a federal park to applying for social security benefits—online.

The top three highest-scoring sites in this category, and the Index as a whole, are part of the Social Security Administration: the Retirement Estimator (90), Internet Social Security Benefits Application (90), and Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (87).

The highest priorities for e-commerce/transactional sites overall are Functionality and Tasks and Transactions.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator www.ssa.gov/estimator	90	90	0
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	90	90	0
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020	87	88	-1
PBGC	U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	83	83	0
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm	82	78	4
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog http://catalog.usmint.gov	81	75	6
PBGC	U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPAA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	79	79	0
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability	78	76	2
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Recreation One-Stop www.recreation.gov	72	71	1
Treasury	Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect www.treasurydirect.gov	68	70	-2

Career/Recruitment Sites

Citizen satisfaction with the four sites in this category is up by one point over last year, at 77. The Central Intelligence Agency's recruitment website has the highest score, 82, and remains the only career/recruitment site to rank at or above 80.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website www.cia.gov/careers	82	81	1
DOS	Department of State	Recruitment website www.careers.state.gov	76	75	1
DOL	Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listings www.doors.dol.gov	76	75	1
OPM	Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website www.usajobs.opm.gov	74	74	0

Portals/Department Main Sites

The aggregate citizen satisfaction score for the 30 portals/department main sites included in the Index increased to 75, compared to 74 last year. The aggregate score provides a good benchmark; any site outperforming the average is doing fairly well.

Scores in this category range from 65 to 85, with the highest score of 85 going to the main website for the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Six additional sites also are considered top performers, all with scores over 80: GobiernoUSA (83), National Aeronautics and Space Administration main website (82), National Park Service website (82), the main site for the National Cancer Institute (81), Federal Bureau of Investigation main website (80), and the main site for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (80).

Search remains a top priority for improvement for many portals and department main sites, followed by Functionality. Search is especially important for sites that serve as a port of entry to various agencies and information sources. The more content a website is responsible for, or responsible to direct visitors to, the more challenging it is to do Search well.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year- Over- Year
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS public website www.niams.nih.gov	85	82	3
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA website www.gobiernousa.gov	83	82	1
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	82	81	1
DOI	National Park Service, Interior	National Park Service main website www.nps.gov	82	80	2
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	81	79	2
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website www.fbi.gov	80	80	0
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website www.cdc.gov	80	81	-1
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense portal www.defense.gov	78	NM	NA
DHS	Department of Homeland Security	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	77	NM	NA
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website www.gsa.gov	77	77	0
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website www.usmint.gov	76	76	0

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Library of Medicine main website www.nlm.nih.gov	76	NM	NA
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website www.gao.gov	75	73	2
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website www.nist.gov	74	73	1
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website www.archives.gov	74	68	6
Treasury	Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website www.irs.gov	73	73	0
PBGC	U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	U.S. PBGC main website www.pbgc.gov	73	73	0
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website www.sba.gov	73	71	2
HHS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website www.samhsa.gov	72	69	3
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website www.state.gov	72	73	-1
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website www.va.gov and www.myhealthva.gov	72	73	-1
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website www.treasury.gov	72	68	4
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website www.fdic.gov	72	72	0
DHS	Department of Homeland Security	Department of Homeland Security main website www.dhs.gov	71	NM	NA
ITC	United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website www.usitc.gov	70	61	9
DOL	Office of Disability Employment Policy, Labor	Disability www.disability.gov	69	63	6
HHS	Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology	Health Information Technology http://healthit.hhs.gov	68	NM	NA
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website www.fda.gov	68	NM	NA
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online main website www.socialsecurity.gov	68	68	0
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior	U.S. Department of the Interior www.doi.gov	65	NM	NA

News/Information Sites

Aggregate citizen satisfaction with the 62 sites in the news/information category is up two points year over year to 74, which is also the ACSI-measured aggregate score for private-sector news and information sites. This is a major accomplishment for the government sites included in the Index since private sector category is comprised of major players like NYTimes.com and ABCNews.com. When compared to private sector counterparts, government news and information sites seem to be satisfying citizens fairly well. However, as the lowest-scoring category in the Index, there is still room for improvement.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	87	85	2
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en Español http://medlineplus.gov/esp	86	85	1
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website www.4woman.gov	84	82	2
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK www2.niddk.nih.gov	84	85	-1
USDA	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion	Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion www.cnpp.usda.gov	84	NM	NA
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Navy www.navy.mil	84	82	2
HHS	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange www.innovations.ahrq.gov	83	NM	NA
DOJ	Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative www.dna.gov	82	78	4
DOC	National Ocean Service, U.S. Department of Commerce	National Ocean Service website www.oceanservice.noaa.gov	82	77	5
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol	82	81	1
HHS	National Human Genome Research Institute	National Human Genome Research Institute www.genome.gov	82	NM	NA
GSA	General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov	80	81	-1
GSA	General Services Administration	Consumer Action website, Federal Citizen Information Center www.consumeraction.gov	80	73	7
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases www.niaid.nih.gov	80	78	2

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Air Force -- www.af.mil	80	80	0
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html	79	78	1
DOJ	National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website www.ojp.gov/nij	79	75	4
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health www.girlshealth.gov	79	79	0
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Spanish) www.america.gov/esp	79	78	1
HHS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	SAMHSA www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov	79	NM	NA
DOD	Defense Media Agency	Pentagon Channel www.pentagonchannel.mil	78	79	-1
DOJ	National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website www.ncjrs.gov	78	75	3
DOJ	Department of Justice	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services www.cops.usdoj.gov	77	75	2
DOS	Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs	Bureau of Consular Affairs http://travel.state.gov	76	NM	NA
FTC	Federal Trade Commission	FTC OnGuardOnline www.onguardonline.gov	76	NM	NA
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality www.ahrq.gov	76	76	0
DOC	U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website www.ngs.noaa.gov	76	76	0
USDA	Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website www.fsis.usda.gov	76	72	4
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov website www.america.gov	75	73	2
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce	U.S. Census Bureau main website www.census.gov	75	71	4
DOS	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website https://alumni.state.gov	75	75	0
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics	Bureau of Labor Statistics www.bls.gov	74	NM	NA

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation	Federal Aviation Administration www.faa.gov	74	72	2
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Parents: The Anti-Drug www.theantidrug.com	73	70	3
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	Military Health System main website www.health.mil	73	67	6
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Marine Corps www.marines.mil	72	67	5
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission www.nrc.gov	72	71	1
USDA	National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website www.nal.usda.gov	72	67	5
USDA	Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website www.ers.usda.gov	72	71	1
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE www.tricare.mil	72	69	3
DOS	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://exchanges.state.gov	72	67	5
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (French) www.america.gov/fr	72	72	0
DOI	United States Geological Survey	U.S. Geological Survey www.usgs.gov	72	NM	NA
DOC	Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website www.bea.gov	71	69	2
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	ENERGY STAR Building & Plants website www.energystar.gov	71	68	3
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications www2.fdic.gov	71	70	1
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation	FMCSA Protect Your Move www.protectyourmove.gov	71	75	-4
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website www.hrsa.gov	70	70	0
Treasury	Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website www.ttb.gov	70	69	1
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Russian) www.america.gov/ru	70	68	2

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Chinese) www.america.gov/mgck	70	68	2
USDA	Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website www.fas.usda.gov	70	69	1
USDA	Farm Service Agency, Agriculture	USDA Farm Service Agency www.fsa.usda.gov	67	67	0
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	67	72	-5
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Above the Influence www.abovetheinfluence.com	66	66	0
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Arabic) www.america.gov/ar	65	64	1
Treasury	Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service www.fms.treas.gov	63	64	-1
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Persian) www.america.gov/persian	62	61	1
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases www.archives.gov/aad/index.html	61	60	1
USDA	Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website www.nrcs.usda.gov	59	58	1
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website www.fs.fed.us	59	61	-2
HHS	HHS/Grants Policy Committee	HHS www.grants.gov	56	51	5

Citizens Remain Most Satisfied With Program Sites

In addition to looking at sites by the four functional categories, we also analyze customer satisfaction data by three organizational categories that match the way the federal government is structured:

- Department sites (which includes independent agencies, corporations, administrations, etc.)
- Agency sites (all entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization)
- Program sites (all others)

	Q1 2009	Q1 2010	Year-over-Year % Change
Program Sites (23 sites)	74.1	75.6	2%
Agency Sites (67 sites)	73.5	75.4	3%
Department Sites (16 sites)	72.8	73.1	1%

This second method of categorization further allows federal websites to benchmark against their peers. All organizational categories increase their scores from last year. Citizens continue to be most satisfied with program sites, which often have the advantage of providing more targeted information or functionality than broader department or agency sites.

Online Satisfaction at the Department Level

Citizen satisfaction often starts with providing a satisfying online experience at the department level. The table below shows the satisfaction scores for 16 department and department-level sites included in the benchmark.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/Department/ Office	Website	Q1 2010	Q1 2009	Year-Over-Year
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	82	81	1
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense portal www.defense.gov	78	NM	NA
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website www.gsa.gov	77	77	0
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website www.gao.gov	75	73	2
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website www.nist.gov	74	73	1
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website www.archives.gov	74	68	6
PBGC	U.S. Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	U.S. PBGC main website www.pbgc.gov	73	73	0
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website www.sba.gov	73	71	2
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	72	71	1
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website www.state.gov	72	73	-1
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website www.va.gov and www.myhealthva.gov	72	73	-1
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website www.treasury.gov	72	68	4
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website www.fdic.gov	72	72	0
DHS	Department of Homeland Security	Department of Homeland Security main website www.dhs.gov	71	NM	NA
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online main website www.socialsecurity.gov/	68	68	0
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior	U.S. Department of the Interior www.doi.gov	65	NM	NA

Department-Level Aggregate Scores

Aggregate scores are calculated for all departments or agencies that have five or more sites in the Index. Seven departments meet this threshold. The Social Security Administration has the highest aggregate score (80), followed by the Department of Justice (up 3% to 79) and the Department of Health and Human Services (up one point to 78). The Department of Agriculture has the biggest year-over-year increase, up 6% to 70.

Department or Agency Aggregate	# of Sites Included in Index	Q1 2009	Q1 2010	Year-Over-Year Percentage Change
SSA	7	80	80	0%
DOJ	5	77	79	3%
HHS	20	77	78	1%
DOD	7	74	77	4%
DOS	12	71	72	1%
Treasury	7	71	72	1%
USDA	9	66	70	6%

Government Agencies Benefit from Citizen Satisfaction

It's important to look at why satisfaction is so important and why President Obama should continue to make online citizen satisfaction an administration priority. In order to illustrate the value of high citizen satisfaction, we've compared two groups of citizens: highly satisfied citizens (satisfaction scores of 80 or higher) and dissatisfied (satisfaction scores below 70) across all of the Index sites. Highly satisfied citizens are:

- 80% more likely to use the website as a primary resource
- 79% more likely to recommend the website
- 52% more likely to return to the site
- 54% more likely to trust the federal government unit
- 50% more likely to participate with and express their thoughts to the government department or agency

What does that mean for the federal government? Cost savings, improved efficiency, and increased participation. As shown in the table below, there are significant differences in most of the average scores. The greatest difference in averages is for those that would use the website as a primary web-site. This means that government agencies have a lot to lose when citizens are left unsatisfied by their online experience and turn to costlier channels.

Likely Future Behavior	Advantage	Highly Satisfied >80	Dissatisfied <70	% Difference Between Highly Satisfied & Dissatisfied
Future Participation	Citizens are more likely to participate with and express their thoughts to their government, which strengthens the democratic process.	63	42	50%
Return	Government departments and agencies have an ongoing channel to provide information and services to citizens efficiently and relatively inexpensively.	96	63	52%
Recommend	Use of government websites will grow as citizens recommend them to their friends, families, and colleagues.	95	53	79%
Primary Resource	Cost-savings for departments and agencies as citizens are right-channeled to web; citizens get information from a credible government source, rather than another online/offline source (in cases where options exist, e.g., health-related information).	92	51	80%
Trust	Citizens believe the agency is trustworthy and acting in their best interests, which fosters faith in the democratic process.	88	57	54%

Prioritized Website Functionality and Transparency to Improve E-Gov

Providing a good experience for website visitors clearly has value, so it's in an agency's best interest to see where their weaknesses lie and make improvements in order to keep citizens happy. The ACSI methodology identifies and prioritizes website elements for improvement, meaning that improvements in these areas will result in increased satisfaction, return site visits, recommendations, and use of the site as a primary resource. Priorities differ for each website, but we are able to make some generalizations for e-gov as a whole.

Different sites in the Index also measure different elements, as each federal government website has a custom-built satisfaction model to address the issues that are of greatest relevance to their site visitors. The below chart details the top priorities for improvement for the sites that measure those elements.

Element	What It Measures	Priority for Improvement	Analysis
Transparency	How thoroughly, quickly, and accessibly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing.	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Many of the websites in the E-Government Satisfaction Index are now measuring Online Transparency as a driver of satisfaction (as a result of President Obama's executive memo about Transparency, and Open Government). For sites measuring it, it is a top priority for nearly three-quarters, and the methodology shows that online transparency can actually have an impact on overall trust in government, mediated through satisfaction.
Functionality	The usefulness, convenience, and variety of online features available to banking customers.	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Functionality is a priority for 49% of the sites that measure it, meaning improvements would have a high impact on satisfaction (89 sites).
Navigation	The organization of the site and how easy it is to navigate.	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Scores for navigation increased by one point this quarter. Navigation is often a challenge for information-rich sites, and this element is often lower-scoring and higher-impact for Federal government sites, especially those tasked with offering access to broad and deep information resources.
Tasks and Transactions	The process, security, and verification of online task completion.	Priority 2 = Maintain or Improve	Although only 12 websites measure this element, it is a top priority for 50% of them.
Site Performance	The speed, consistency, and reliability of loading pages on the website.	Priority 3 = Status Quo Required	Site performance is also a relatively high-scoring element for many sites and remains a low priority for more than half the websites that measure it. Most Federal government sites have met site visitors' threshold of acceptability in this area.
Content	The accuracy, quality, and freshness of news, information, and content on the website.	Priority 4 = Status Quo Required	Content continues to be a low priority element for more than three-quarters of the sites that measure it. Investments to content will not pay off for most e-gov sites. It's not that website content is unimportant; this element's high scores indicate that, in the eyes of most site visitors, high-quality, up-to-date information is already present for the majority of sites in the Index.
Look and Feel	The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.	Priority 4 = Status Quo Required	Look and Feel is a priority for only 9% of sites that measured it (106), compared to 27% last quarter.

Online Transparency is listed as one of the top priorities for improvement, along with website functionality. A landmark ForeSee Results study of thousands of visitors to federal websites demonstrated the impact of online transparency and satisfaction on both overall trust in government and on citizen engagement with government. The study, which used the ACSI methodology, reinforces the crucial role of the online channel in President Obama's Open Government Directive. ForeSee Results will release the next benchmark report for the Transparency Index in May 2010.

In addition to the aggregate priorities above, the elements Search or Tasks and Transactions are often priorities for sites that measure them. The lowest-priority elements for federal government websites continue to be Content and Site Performance; this means that improvements in these areas will have the least impact on website satisfaction and therefore on citizens' likelihood to return to the website, recommend it, or use it as a primary channel of interaction with the government.

These findings do not mean that changes to content and site performance should not be made. In fact, although they were the lowest priority elements for e-gov sites overall, many specific sites' first or second priorities included Site Performance or Content. This reality underscores the need for each site to understand the specific levers that will have the greatest impact on their own visitors.

Conclusion

Satisfaction with e-government continues to stay around an all-time high aggregate score. It is heartening to see that it is beginning to realize its potential, which is the culmination of presidential support throughout the years and the dedicated federal employees who strive to improve their agencies' web channels. As President Obama continues to pursue goals related to Open Government, we look forward to higher satisfaction scores and ways that e-government can help meet his goals. In May 2010, ForeSee Results will be releasing the next Transparency Index that quantifies the link between online satisfaction and the likelihoods that citizens will trust the government and participate in it.

About the Author

Larry Freed is an expert on government web effectiveness and web customer satisfaction. He is also President and CEO of ForeSee Results, a market leader in customer satisfaction measurement on the web, which utilizes the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

About the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in partnership with ForeSee Results.

The ACSI, created at the University of Michigan, is the only uniform, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States, both in the private and public sectors. In 1999, the federal government chose the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. Over 100 federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction with more than 200 services and programs and more than 100 websites. The report on offline federal government services is released concurrently with this report. The E-Government Index is released quarterly.

ForeSee Results collects and analyzes the data for the e-government websites included in the report. ACSI e-government scores were calculated based on data gathered from voluntary online surveys of randomly selected site visitors. Each government website was rated by its visitors on various components of overall satisfaction. The ratings were converted to a score on a 100-point scale using the ACSI methodology.

The ACSI methodology identifies key drivers of online satisfaction (such as navigation, look and feel, search, site functionality, etc.) and quantifies their relationship to overall citizen satisfaction. This cause-and-effect methodology demonstrates the impact of website enhancements in these areas on overall customer satisfaction. In turn, customer satisfaction, as measured by the ACSI, has been proven to predict how citizens will behave in the future. Improvements to customer satisfaction will make citizens more likely to choose to interact with an agency online (the more cost-effective channel), return to the site, and recommend it to others. Monitoring and improving customer satisfaction has a tangible impact on citizen usage of the web channel and on the bottom line.

So that federal government websites can benchmark against their peers, scores in the ACSI E-Government Index are organized by both functional category and organizational structure. The functional categories include:

- News and information
- Portals and department main sites
- E-commerce and transactional
- Career and recruitment

The ACSI E-Government Index also analyzes scores according to three organizational categories that match the way the federal government is structured:

- Department sites, which includes independent agencies, corporations, administrations, etc.
- Agency sites, which includes all entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization
- Program sites, which includes all other sites

The ACSI methodology assesses satisfaction with specific elements of a government website experience, including but not limited to:

- Navigation
- Functionality
- Search
- Look and feel

About the ACSI

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About ForeSee Results

As the leader in online customer satisfaction measurement, ForeSee Results captures and analyzes online voice of customer data to help public and private sector organizations increase loyalty, recommendations and website value. Using the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results identifies improvements to websites and other online initiatives that drive customer satisfaction. With over 45 million survey responses collected to date and benchmarks across dozens of industries, ForeSee Results offers unparalleled expertise in customer satisfaction measurement and management. ForeSee Results works with hundreds of clients across the public and private sectors. ForeSee Results, a privately held company, is located in Ann Arbor, Michigan and on the web at www.ForeSeeResults.com.

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About the Federal Consulting Group

The Federal Consulting Group (FCG) operates as a fee-for-service franchise in the National Business Center (Dept of the Interior) and serves as the executive agent in the government for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The Federal Consulting Group uses a generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget to obtain expedited approval of ACSI surveys as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act. This enables agencies to conduct ACSI surveys without obtaining a separate clearance. Agencies can assess and improve programs, call centers and websites using the ACSI methodology through an Interagency Agreement with the Federal Consulting Group.

For More Information:
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