



FORESEE



50TH

**FORESEE
E-GOVERNMENT
SATISFACTION INDEX**

Q4 2015

COMMENTARY & ANALYSIS BY:

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“The ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index is the gold standard in measurement of citizen engagement with the digital government world. Precise, accurate, reliable measurement gives federal agencies, departments, and programs the ability to focus their efforts on improving outcomes rather than just collecting citizen feedback and resorting to business as usual.”

—**Michael Messinger**

*Former Performance Manager at OMB,
Internet Director at Voice of America and
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at FirstGov (now USA.gov)*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE STATE OF THE E-GOV UNION: OUR FEDERAL WEBSITES REMAIN STRONG

This is the 50th consecutive quarter that ForeSee has reported on the state of e-government, and we've seen a sea of change over the past 13 years. So many things have changed, including two presidents (with another on the horizon); acts of Congress, executive orders, and presidential memos about how digital government can and should foster transparency, participation, and collaboration. Over that time, agency and departmental leadership and personnel have shifted, and even technology itself has exceeded our wildest dreams. Who could have imagined responsive mobile websites a decade ago?

One thing has remained fairly constant since e-government's infancy: a consistent, predictive measurement that allows agency, department, and program leaders to confidently prioritize the improvements that will have the greatest impact on citizen satisfaction and outcomes. Collecting feedback, merely asking people what they think, without a methodology that prioritizes improvements and drives results is not enough. In truth, it has never been enough.

ForeSee issued the first E-Government Satisfaction Index in September, 2003. We've collected well over 10 million citizen surveys since that time. This report celebrates the commitment to citizen satisfaction by government leaders, and provides an honest look at where progress still needs to be made.

As we do each quarter, in this index we share satisfaction scores for more than 100 federal websites studied using ForeSee's patented and systematic approach to customer experience measurement. Departments, agencies, and programs using the ForeSee methodology to measure and improve the citizen experience can quantify the effectiveness of all their customer experience efforts over time, across channels, and compare their performance against not only other federal entities but with the best private- and public-sector standards.

With 50 quarters of benchmarks conducted, we can also take a step back and reflect on how e-gov has changed over the past 13 years and why citizen satisfaction is such an important metric for federal departments, agencies, and programs to track. The evidence for measuring satisfaction is compelling. If agencies can deliver a satisfactory experience, they save money and foster transparency, participation, and trust. For example, for this quarter's index, highly satisfied website visitors were 84% more likely to use the website as a primary resource (versus a more costly channel like the contact center), and 66% were more likely to trust the agency, department, or program. When it comes to mobile experiences, those who were highly satisfied with their experience were 97% more likely to return to the site or app, and a whopping 144% were more likely to recommend the site or app.

ForeSee measures satisfaction on a 100-point scale, with scores 80 and higher recognized as meeting or exceeding the threshold of excellence (highly satisfied visitors), and scores below 70 revealing much room for improvement (less satisfied visitors). The following is a summary of high-level findings discussed in this report.



- » During Q4 2015, the ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index held steady at 75.1, up from 74.5 just two quarters ago, and up an even more significant 5.1 points from the earliest recorded score of 70 thirteen years ago in 2002, and the lowest score of 69 recorded in 2003. While it's great to be moving up, remember that expectations are higher than ever.
- » People will give their opinion. More than 185,000 responses were collected during the quarter, and well over 10 million responses have been collected over 50 quarters.
- » Average citizen satisfaction with e-government (75.1) outperforms citizen satisfaction with overall government (63.9, according to the ACSI Federal Government Report 2015). This gap in scores (nearly 12 points and 18%) is confirmation that citizens prefer and value digital channels when they are available.
- » Top priorities for improvement for most sites are navigation and search. Perceptions of functionality and online transparency have improved since last year, and perceptions of all elements have improved over time.
- » Satisfaction with e-government rivals many private-sector sites. Aggregate satisfaction with e-government is 75.1, while average satisfaction for e-business (portals, search engines, etc.) was 74.4 in 2015. While e-retail (79) outperforms e-gov in aggregate, the highest-scoring public-sector sites (89 and 90) are higher than the highest-scoring and most successful private-sector sites like Amazon.com (86), Vanguard.com (80), Google (78), Pinterest (78), Expedia (77), and NYTimes.com (76).
- » Once again, the Social Security Administration (SSA) leads the pack, grabbing the top four spots with scores of 90 and 89 (see Fig. 2).
- » SSA is not the only organization with high performance. Thirty-six sites achieved an “excellent” rating (80 or above), the highest number of sites surpassing the threshold of excellence this year.

Here's to 50 more quarters in the pursuit and achievement of excellence in e-government.

INTRODUCTION

2016 represents a nadir for the public's trust in the American political process, and it's also an election year. There is deep and increasing suspicion of all levels and institutions of government, as demonstrated by the vast support for "outsider" presidential candidates.

Yet there is another, more hopeful force at work in American government that goes largely unseen and unremarked upon by the public and the media. This force is the product of the commitment and dedication of the countless individual federal employees who, for decades, have been working to ensure that the institutions of government are available and accessible to all citizens through rapidly evolving e-gov platforms and customer service best practices. Federal employees' internally driven and administration-supported sense of responsibility toward the citizenry to make federal websites as useful, transparent, and informative as private-sector sites became a calling and a passion.



The results have been nothing short of stunning: e-government is fulfilling its potential better than anyone could have hoped.

While the hard work has been done by committed, passionate federal employees, Congress and the White House have also played a critical role and will need to continue to do so. As the country elects our next president later this year, whomever is elected must understand the legacy of digital government and customer service he or she is joining and to continue to extend that commitment with a vision for the limitless potential we still have ahead.

The federal focus on customer service arguably started in the early 1990s with the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) under the Clinton/Gore administration. NPR's stated mission was to create a government that "works better, costs less, and gets results Americans care about." E-government became a way to fulfil this mission. Passage of the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 required agencies to measure and publicize their performance by setting goals, measuring results, and reporting on progress. In addition to acts of Congress, executive orders and presidential memos have played a

key role in the advancement of e-government and customer service over the last seven years in particular. The day after President Obama's inauguration in 2009, he issued a memo on how technology could and should be used to improve transparency, collaboration, communication, and trust. In 2011, Executive Order 13571 on Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service required agencies to have a plan in place to improve customer service.

These acts and memos and orders have been critical milestones as the federal government has embraced the promise of e-gov. But for the first few years that federal government websites existed, few tools existed to measure the progress of this remarkable and unprecedented human effort to bring transparency and accountability to government. In 2002, the federal government started to apply the method and benchmarks in this report to many of its websites. Thirteen years later, this report is the 50th consecutive installment of what has become the gold standard for precise, accurate, reliable measurement of citizen engagement with the digital world.

The results have been nothing short of stunning: e-government is fulfilling its potential better than anyone could have hoped. Despite complaints about the federal government, federal websites give citizens the ability to get information, participate, and collaborate with the government with transparency and ease that is constantly improving. Satisfaction with websites rivals that of the private sector, and the best federal websites outperform the best private-sector websites, despite limited resources and bureaucratic challenges that should make the pace of change slow and difficult.

Many federal web managers still struggle. Simple tools like quick surveys and feedback forms serve a purpose, but agency leaders need to be focused on the outcomes of the experience, not just on checking a box that feedback has

been collected. Asking citizens what they want on a short, simple survey with no methodology behind it provides no ability to prioritize improvement efforts or predict outcomes based on changes. Federal managers must continue to tie the experience people are having on their websites to actual outcomes like cost savings and trust in government.

Federal websites give U.S. citizens the benefits of greater transparency, responsiveness, and flexibility of critical government resources, but that is, at most, half the story. E-government is spreading beyond the developed world into developing nations that have known almost nothing of good government for generations, if not centuries. E-government is fulfilling the potential that America has always seen in itself—that of a successful experiment in democracy that improves exponentially with time.

THE Q4 2015 SCORES

ForeSee has been measuring satisfaction with e-government since the third quarter of 2003, when the average score was 70.

Figure 1 below provides a summary of e-government customer experience performance for the most recent 12 months, as measured by the ForeSee methodology.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF E-GOV CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PERFORMANCE

	Q4 2015	Q3 2015	Q2 2015	Q1 2015
Number of Sites Measured	101	101	100	101
Number of Responses Collected	187,931	171,131	172,797	250,341
Average E-Government Satisfaction Score (Out of 100)	75.1	75.1	74.5	74.7
Highest Satisfaction Score	90	90	91	90
Lowest Satisfaction Score	54	54	55	55
Number of E-Government Sites Achieving "Excellent" Rating (80 or Higher)	36 (36%)	31 (31%)	27 (27%)	30 (30%)
Number of E-Government Sites Rated 69 or Below	25 (25%)	25 (25%)	22 (22%)	24 (24%)



Figure 2 displays scores for all participating federal websites in the ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index this quarter. The agencies whose satisfaction scores are noted in teal represent those that have reached or exceeded a score of 80, the threshold for excellence in this study. Later pages of this report show scores by category.

FIGURE 2: Q4 2015 E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

Department	Website	Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction Across Sites		75.1
SSA	Extra Help With Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs— socialsecurity.gov/i1020	90
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator— ssa.gov/estimator	90
SSA	SSA iClaim— socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	89
SSA	SSA my Social Security— ssa.gov/mystatement	89
Treasury	Electronic Federal Tax Payment System— eftps.com	88
HHS	MedlinePlus en español— medlineplus.gov/esp	88
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online— ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	87
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center— uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship	85
SEC	U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission— investor.gov	85
HHS	MedlinePlus— medlineplus.gov	85
DOD	DoD Navy— navy.mil	84
NIH	National Institute on Aging – Go4Life— go4life.nia.nih.gov	84
PBGC	U.S. PBGC My Plan Administration Account— egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa/	84
SSA	SSA.gov iClaim – Disability— ssa.gov/applyfordisability	84
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Español— uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es	84
Boards, Commissions, and Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission— abmc.gov	83
CIA	Recruitment website— cia.gov/careers	83
NASA	NASA main website— nasa.gov	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español— cancer.gov/espanol	83
HHS	NIAMS public website— niams.nih.gov	83
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website— womenshealth.gov	83
DOD	Arlington National Cemetery— arlingtoncemetery.mil	82
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases— www.niddk.nih.gov	82
HHS	SAMHSA Store— store.samhsa.gov	82
DOC	NOAA NWS— weather.gov	82
HHS	AIDSinfo— aidsinfo.nih.gov	81
HHS	CDC main website— cdc.gov	81
FTC	FTC Complaint Assistant website— ftccomplaintassistant.gov	81
DOC	National Geodetic Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website— ngs.noaa.gov	81
SSA	SSA iAppeals – Disability Appeal— ssa.gov/disabilityssi/appeal.html	81
DOD	DoD Air Force— af.mil	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine— infosida.nih.gov	80
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website— cancer.gov	80

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FIGURE 2: Q4 2015 E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX (Continued from page 11)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research—nidcr.nih.gov	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine Genetics Home Reference website—ghr.nlm.nih.gov	80
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website—nrc.gov	80
DOS	Recruitment website—careers.state.gov	79
DOJ	FBI main website—fbi.gov	79
DOS	Department of State blog website—blogs.state.gov	78
PBGC	MyPBA—https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	78
DOI	National Park Service main website—nps.gov	78
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality—ahrq.gov	77
OPM	Recruitment website—applicationmanager.gov	77
GAO	GAO main public website—gao.gov	77
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website—nlm.nih.gov	77
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website—pbgc.gov	77
SBA	SBA main website—sba.gov	77
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs—travel.state.gov	77
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey—usgs.gov	77
DOS	Department of State – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs—alumni.state.gov	76
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services—uscis.gov/e-verify	76
VA	MyCareer@VA- http://mycareeratva.va.gov/	76
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases—www3.niaid.nih.gov	76
DOJ	National Institute of Justice—nij.gov	76
VA	MyHealtheVet- https://www.myhealth.va.gov	76
DOD	Department of Defense portal—defense.gov	75
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology main website—nist.gov	75
DOC	NOAA Tides and Currents—tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov	75
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website—usmint.gov	75
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services—uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	75
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics—bls.gov	74
DOD	DoD Marines—marines.mil	74
USDA	ERS main website—ers.usda.gov	74
HHS	National Library of Medicine—clinicaltrials.gov	74
USDA	Recreation One-Stop—recreation.gov	74
SSA	Social Security Online main website—socialsecurity.gov	74
OPM	Recruitment website—usajobs.gov	74

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FIGURE 2: Q4 2015 E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX (Continued from page 12)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
FDIC	FDIC Applications— www2.fdic.gov	73
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website— fda.gov	72
FDIC	FDIC main website— fdic.gov	72
FTC	FTC main website— ftc.gov	71
DOC	NOAA Fisheries— nmfs.noaa.gov	71
SEC	U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission— sec.gov	71
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation— fhwa.dot.gov	70
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website— hrsa.gov	70
DOE	U.S. Department of Education— ed.gov	70
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website— fra.dot.gov	69
USDA	NRCS website— nrcs.usda.gov	69
HHS	SAMHSA website— samhsa.gov	69
GSA	GSA Auctions— gsaauctions.gov	68
DOS	Department of State main website— state.gov	67
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website— census.gov	67
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration— faa.gov	66
DOC	BEA main website— bea.gov	65
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website— usitc.gov	65
DOD	TRICARE— tricare.mil	64
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency— epa.gov	64
USDA	FSIS main website— fsis.usda.gov	64
DOC	U.S. Patent and Trademark Office— uspto.gov	64
USDA	Forest Service main website— fs.usda.gov	63
Treasury	Treasury main website— treasury.gov	63
Treasury	U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau— ttb.gov	63
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website— rita.dot.gov	62
GSA	GSA main website— gsa.gov	61
HHS	U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services grants website— grants.gov	61
NARA	NARA main public website— archives.gov	61
Treasury	IRS main website— irs.gov	60
DOL	Disability— Disability.gov	59
DOJ	Bureau of Justice Statistics— bjs.gov	57
VA	VA main website— va.gov	57
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website— fmcsa.dot.gov	54

MOST IMPROVED

Anytime a federal government department, agency, or program website shows a statistically significant improvement in satisfaction (three points or more), it should be noted as a success, as it is sometimes difficult to keep pace with ever-changing citizen expectations. The organizations that have managed to keep pace, especially those that still show improvements after longstanding measurement efforts, should be commended and studied for their success.

Figure 3 shows the websites that demonstrated significant increases in citizen satisfaction since the last quarter. Fifty consecutive quarters of benchmarks allow for a comparison of improvements year over year (Figure 4), and over time (Figure 5).

FIGURE 3: E-GOV TOP GAINERS (QUARTER TO QUARTER)

Department	Website	Satisfaction Gain
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs—travel.state.gov	7
DOD	DoD Navy—navy.mil	5
DOD	TRICARE—tricare.mil	5
DOD	Department of Defense portal—defense.gov	4
DOD	DoD Air Force—af.mil	4
GAO	GAO main public website—gao.gov	4
HHS	NIAMS public website—niams.nih.gov	4
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website—pbgc.gov	4



FIGURE 4: E-GOV TOP GAINERS (YEAR OVER YEAR, Q4 2014 TO Q4 2015)

Department	Website	Satisfaction Gain
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services—uscis.gov/e-verify	8
DOE	U.S. Department of Education—ed.gov	7
SSA	SSA iAppeals – Disability Appeal—ssa.gov/disabilityssi/appeal.html	6
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs—travel.state.gov	4
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website—nrc.gov	4
GAO	GAO main public website—gao.gov	3
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website—pbgc.gov	3
SBA	SBA main website—sba.gov	3



Though each of the following websites has been measuring for a different length of time, we have seen some significant increases over the last 50 quarters. Some of these sites made their improvements over the course of a decade, some in the course of only a few years.

FIGURE 5: E-GOV TOP GAINERS (SINCE FIRST MEASURE)

Department	Website	Satisfaction Gain
SSA	SSA.gov iClaim – Disability—ssa.gov/applyfordisability	13
GAO	GAO main public website—gao.gov	11
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website—nrc.gov	11
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website—pbgc.gov	11
USDA	Recreation One-Stop—recreation.gov	10
NASA	NASA main website—nasa.gov	9
PBGC	U.S. PBGC My Plan Administration Account—egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa/	8
SSA	SSA iAppeals – Disability Appeal—ssa.gov/disabilityssi/appeal.html	8
DOE	U.S. Department of Education—ed.gov	7
USDA	NRCS website—nrcs.usda.gov	7
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey—usgs.gov	7
HHS	SAMHSA Store—store.samhsa.gov	6
HHS	MedlinePlus en español—medlineplus.gov/esp	6
HHS	HHS—grants.gov	6
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online—ssa.gov/bsa/bsowelcome.htm	6
DOD	TRICARE—tricare.mil	5
HHS	NIAMS public website—niams.nih.gov	5
GSA	GSA main website—gsa.gov	5
DOC	National Geodetic Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website—ngs.noaa.gov	4
DOC	NOAA Fisheries—nmfs.noaa.gov	3
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality—ahrq.gov	3
OPM	Recruitment website—usajobs.gov	3
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website—womenshealth.gov	3
DOD	DoD Marines—marines.mil	3
SEC	U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission—sec.gov	3
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website—nlm.nih.gov	3



SATISFACTION BY WEBSITE FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY

In this report, federal government websites are organized by both functional category and organizational structure to allow for benchmarking against peers. The functional website categories include: e-commerce and transactional sites, news and information sites, portals and department main sites, and career and recruitment sites.

Since missions can vary greatly by category, it is useful to benchmark government websites against other sites in their category, and against the aggregate for all measured websites. To provide the most accurate and precise data, the ForeSee standard requires that a category consist of at least five websites before an average is calculated. All categories met that standard this quarter.



FEDERAL E-COMMERCE AND TRANSACTIONAL WEBSITES

Aggregate satisfaction for e-commerce and transactional websites is 83, the highest scoring of the e-gov categories. It is worth noting that aggregate satisfaction for private-sector e-commerce sites is 79, meaning that people are happier with federal sites of this nature than they are with Amazon, Nordstrom, and Apple. That is a pretty astonishing accomplishment. Six government sites (from the Social Security Administration and Treasury) all beat out Amazon's score of 86. In fact, EFTPS, the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System, has higher satisfaction scores than Amazon and Apple have!

FIGURE 6: FEDERAL E-COMMERCE AND TRANSACTIONAL WEBSITES

Department		Website	Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction for Federal E-Commerce and Transactional Websites			83
SSA		Extra Help With Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs— socialsecurity.gov/i1020	90
SSA		SSA Retirement Estimator— ssa.gov/estimator	90
SSA		SSA iClaim— socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	89
SSA		SSA my Social Security— ssa.gov/mystatement	89
Treasury		Electronic Federal Tax Payment System— eftps.com	88
SSA		Social Security Business Services Online— ssa.gov/bsa/bsowelcome.htm	87
PBGC		U.S. PBGC My Plan Administration Account— egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa/	84
SSA		SSA.gov iClaim – Disability— ssa.gov/applyfordisability	84
HHS		SAMHSA Store— store.samhsa.gov	82
FTC		FTC Complaint Assistant website— ftccomplaintassistant.gov	81
SSA		SSA iAppeals – Disability Appeal— ssa.gov/disabilityssi/appeal.html	81
PBGC		MyPBA— https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	78
Treasury		U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website— usmint.gov	75
USDA		Recreation One-Stop— recreation.gov	74
GSA		GSA Auctions— gsaauctions.gov	68



FEDERAL NEWS AND INFORMATION WEBSITES

Aggregate satisfaction for federal news and information websites is 75, and the highest-scoring website in this category is Medline Plus en español (88). For comparison purposes, satisfaction with private-sector news and information sites was 73 in 2015, with the highest-scoring news websites being Fox News and the New York Times, both with 76.

FIGURE 7: FEDERAL NEWS AND INFORMATION WEBSITES

Department	Website	Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction for Federal News and Information Websites		75
HHS	MedlinePlus en español— medlineplus.gov/esp	88
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center— uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship	85
SEC	U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission— investor.gov	85
HHS	MedlinePlus— medlineplus.gov	85
DOD	DoD Navy— navy.mil	84
NIH	National Institute on Aging – Go4Life— go4life.nia.nih.gov	84
Boards, Commissions, and Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission— abmc.gov	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español— cancer.gov/espanol	83
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website— womenshealth.gov	83
DOD	Arlington National Cemetery— arlingtoncemetery.mil	82
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases— www.niddk.nih.gov	82
DOC	NOAA NWS— weather.gov	82
HHS	AIDSinfo— aidsinfo.nih.gov	81
DOC	National Geodetic Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website— ngs.noaa.gov	81
DOD	DoD Air Force— af.mil	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine— infosida.nih.gov	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine Genetics Home Reference website— ghr.nlm.nih.gov	80
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website— nrc.gov	80
DOS	Department of State blog website— blogs.state.gov	78
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality— ahrq.gov	77
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs— travel.state.gov	77
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey— usgs.gov	77
DOS	Department of State – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs— alumni.state.gov/	76
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services— uscis.gov/e-verify	76
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases— www3.niaid.nih.gov	76
<i>(Continued on page 19)</i>		

FIGURE 7: FEDERAL NEWS AND INFORMATION WEBSITES (Continued from page 18)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
DOJ	National Institute of Justice—nij.gov	76
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics—bls.gov	74
DOD	DoD Marines—marines.mil	74
USDA	ERS main website—ers.usda.gov	74
HHS	ClinicalTrials.gov—clinicaltrials.gov	74
FDIC	FDIC Applications—www2.fdic.gov	73
DOC	NOAA Fisheries—nmfs.noaa.gov	71
SEC	U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission—sec.gov	71
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation—fhwa.dot.gov	70
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website—hrsa.gov	70
USDA	NRCS website—nrcs.usda.gov	69
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website—census.gov	67
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration—faa.gov	66
DOC	BEA main website—bea.gov	65
DOD	TRICARE—tricare.mil	64
USDA	FSIS main website—fsis.usda.gov	64
USDA	Forest Service main website—fs.usda.gov	63
Treasury	U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau—ttb.gov	63
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website—rita.dot.gov	62
HHS	HHS—grants.gov	61
DOJ	Bureau of Justice Statistics—bjs.gov	57
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website—fmcsa.dot.gov	54



Quite a few federal portals and department main websites outperform Google.

FEDERAL PORTALS AND DEPARTMENT MAIN SITES

Aggregate satisfaction for federal portals and department main websites is 72. This group of sites has an incredibly difficult mission to serve as an entryway into any information a citizen could want. Still, six of these sites score over 80. The private sector doesn't have an apples-to-apples comparison, but for reference, average satisfaction for search engines and informational websites in the private sector is 76, and the highest-scoring private-sector search engine is Google at 78. Quite a few federal portals and department main websites outperform Google.

FIGURE 8: FEDERAL PORTALS AND DEPARTMENT MAIN WEBSITES

Department	Website	Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction for Federal Portals and Department Main Websites		72
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Español— uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es	84
NASA	NASA main website— nasa.gov	83
HHS	NIAMS public website— niams.nih.gov	83
HHS	CDC main website— cdc.gov	81
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website— cancer.gov	80
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research— nidcr.nih.gov	80
DOJ	FBI main website— fbi.gov	79
DOI	National Park Service main website— nps.gov	78
GAO	GAO main public website— gao.gov	77
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website— nlm.nih.gov	77
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website— pbgc.gov	77
SBA	SBA main website— sba.gov	77
VA	MyHealtheVet— https://www.myhealth.va.gov	76
DOD	Department of Defense portal— defense.gov	75
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology main website— nist.gov	75
DOC	NOAA Tides and Currents— tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov	75
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services— uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	75
SSA	Social Security Online main website— socialsecurity.gov	74

(Continued on page 21)

Department	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website—fda.gov	72
FDIC	FDIC main website—fdic.gov	72
FTC	FTC main website—ftc.gov	71
DOE	U.S. Department of Education—ed.gov	70
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website—fra.dot.gov	69
HHS	SAMHSA website—samhsa.gov	69
DOS	Department of State main website—state.gov	67
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website—usitc.gov	65
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—epa.gov	64
DOC	U.S. Patent and Trademark Office—uspto.gov	64
Treasury	Treasury main website—treasury.gov	63
GSA	GSA main website—gsa.gov	61
NARA	NARA main public website—archives.gov	61
Treasury	IRS main website—irs.gov	60
DOL	Disability—Disability.gov	59
VA	VA main website—va.gov	57



FEDERAL CAREER AND RECRUITMENT SITES

Aggregate satisfaction for the five career and recruitment sites is 78, with individual sites ranging from a high of 83 to a low of 74.

FIGURE 9: FEDERAL CAREER AND RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

Department	Website	Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction for Federal Career and Recruitment Sites		78
CIA	Recruitment website—cia.gov/careers	83
DOS	Recruitment website—careers.state.gov	79
OPM	Recruitment website—applicationmanager.gov	77
VA	MyCareer@VA—http://mycareeratva.va.gov/	76
OPM	Recruitment website—usajobs.gov	74



SATISFACTION WITH MOBILE SITES AND APPS

With more and more citizens wanting access government resources via mobile devices, the federal government and ForeSee launched the Mobile Federal Government Benchmark in the fourth quarter of 2013, making this report our eighth consecutive report on federal mobile satisfaction.

Figure 10 shows the average aggregate satisfaction scores for the government's mobile sites and apps for the last 12 months, as well as how the scores from this relatively new index compare with scores from other indices.

FIGURE 10: MOBILE SITES AND APPS Q4 2015

Department	Website
Number of Mobile Sites and Apps Measured	13
Number of Responses Collected	61,182
Average E-Government Satisfaction Score (out of 100)	80.7
Highest Satisfaction Score	89
Lowest Satisfaction Score	72
Number of E-Government Sites Achieving Excellent Rating (80 or higher)	8
Number of E-Government Sites Rated Lowest Satisfaction (70 or lower)	0



WHY SATISFACTION MATTERS

ForeSee's multi-patented, algorithmic approach to measuring citizen experience has shown to have a direct impact on behavior. Every quarter, this index compares highly satisfied visitors and users (with satisfaction scores of 80 or higher) to less satisfied website visitors and mobile users (with satisfaction scores of 69 or lower) and calculates likelihood scores that indicate actions citizens may take in the future.

When we compare highly satisfied website visitors to less satisfied visitors, we find that highly satisfied visitors report being:

- » **54% more likely to participate with and express their thoughts to their government, which strengthens the democratic process and may provide useful feedback.**
- » **51% more likely to return to the website, an ongoing channel for providing information and services to citizens efficiently and relatively inexpensively.**
- » **97% more likely to recommend the website, causing usage and cost savings to increase over time.**
- » **84% more likely to use the website as a primary resource, sending citizens to the web, providing information from a credible government source rather than another online/offline source (in cases where options exist, e.g., health-related information).**
- » **66% more likely to trust the agency, department, or program, fostering faith in the democratic process.**

We see the same kind of advantages for mobile sites and apps. When we compare highly satisfied visitors to mobile sites and apps to less satisfied visitors, the highly satisfied visitors report being:

- » **144% more likely to recommend the site or app.**
- » **97% more likely to use the site or app again.**

In short, satisfaction matters because it predicts loyalty, trust, and future usage, all of which contribute to cost savings and the democratic process.

HOW TO IMPROVE SATISFACTION

ForeSee's unique measurement methodology identifies which elements, or drivers, of the citizen experience have the greatest impact on determining how satisfied they are. In the survey instrument, we asked citizens to respond to questions about key elements shared across websites, mobile sites, and apps for the organizations featured in the ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index. If federal government agencies focus on improving the priority areas for their websites and mobile sites and apps, citizen satisfaction should also improve.

However, each web experience is unique to an agency or department. Therefore, these high-priority elements differ depending on the site and whether or not it is meeting its specific audience's needs and expectations. Although there are variations in the set of elements that are relevant to each website (and fewer in general for mobile), the most common elements for websites are: Navigation, Search, Functionality, Online Transparency, Look and Feel, Site Performance, and Content.

By measuring these elements, federal organizations can pinpoint and prioritize areas of improvement from the citizens' perspective, which leads to increased satisfaction.

Figure 11 shows the priority elements identified in the most recent index for websites, and Figure 12 shows priority elements for mobile sites and apps.

FIGURE 11: PRIORITIES FOR E-GOVERNMENT MOBILE SITES AND APPS

Element	What It Measures	Priority for Improvement
Navigation	The organization of the site and options for navigation.	Priority 1 = Top Priority
Site Information	The accuracy, quality and freshness of news, information and content on the mobile site.	Priority 2
Look and Feel	The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the mobile site.	Priority 3
Functionality	The usefulness, convenience and variety of online features and tools available on the mobile site.	Priority 3
Site Performance	The speed, consistency and reliability of loading pages on the mobile site.	Priority 3
Content	The accuracy, quality and freshness of news, information and content on the website.	Priority 3
Online Transparency	How thoroughly, quickly and accessibly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing.	Priority 3



FIGURE 12: PRIORITIES FOR E-GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

Element	What It Measures	Priority for Improvement
Navigation	The organization of the site and options for navigation.	Priority 1 = Top Priority
Search	The relevance, organization and quality of search results available on the site. (Although this element is not applicable universally, it is often extremely impactful for sites where it is relevant.)	Priority 2
Look and Feel	The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.	Priority 3
Functionality	The usefulness, convenience and variety of online features and tools available on the website.	Priority 3
Site Performance	The speed, consistency and reliability of loading pages on the website.	Priority 3
Content	The accuracy, quality and freshness of news, information and content on the website.	Priority 3
Online Transparency	How thoroughly, quickly and accessibly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing.	Priority 3



CONCLUSION

Federal websites have made astonishing progress in the last 50 quarters in terms of performance, experience, and technologies. With more ways than ever for citizens to interact with their government, digital channels are crucial and will become only more important over time. Websites—and more recently, mobile sites and apps—are on the front line when it comes to providing information and increasing transparency, trust, collaboration, and participation.

As overall trust in government wanes, satisfaction with digital channels remains a bright spot. It is critical that agencies, departments, and programs continue to prioritize the citizen experience as they work to develop new sites and improve existing sites. When measured correctly, a digital experience is a predictor of outcomes

essential to the success of the government's mission, including everything from cost savings to increased overall trust in government.

Only those federal entities that are truly measuring the citizen experience (rather than merely collecting feedback alone via short surveys without a foundational methodology) will realize the full potential of online government: digital experiences that outperform private-sector sites with almost limitless resources at their disposal, thereby fostering democracy and fueling trust and transparency.

With the upcoming election fast approaching, it is imperative that the new administration rise to the challenge of fostering, and even improving, transformative digital experiences for citizens by listening to and acting upon their voices.

ABOUT THE REPORT AND AUTHOR

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index is a comprehensive reflection of the citizen experience with federal government websites, and it serves as a critical checkpoint for evaluating the success and performance of the federal government's online initiatives. More than 185,000 responses were collected across the federal government websites for the quarter measured in this index. This demonstrates that citizens are willing to share their voices to help agencies and departments improve. The use of the ForeSee methodology and technology then enables agency leaders to determine which website and mobile site and app improvements will have the greatest impact on future usage and recommendations.

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Dave Lewan is responsible for managing ForeSee's public sector business, including federal and state government departments and agencies, nonprofit organizations, associations, and higher education institutions. He is charged with defining strategy and leveraging internal resources to initiate new business opportunities while delivering to existing ForeSee public-sector clients. Dave leads ForeSee's Canadian business and Stores business in the private sector. Over the past 25 years, Dave has led organizations in sales, marketing, product management, operations, and technology. Prior to joining ForeSee in 2009, Dave held leadership roles at ADP, SalesLogix, Ultimate Software, and Ceridian. Dave graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in speech communications.

ABOUT FORESEE

FORESEE

Founded in 2001, ForeSee is the pioneering leader in [Voice of Customer \(VOC\) solutions](#). Armed with the ForeSee CX Suite, more than 2,000 companies worldwide – in retail, government, financial services, and other industries – have transformed their VOC programs into a strategic and rigorous business discipline that delivers economic impact. Only ForeSee offers a multi-patented algorithmic approach to customer experience measurement, access to an unmatched 150 million benchmarked experiences, and actionable insights from a team of 200 expert analysts that give certainty to CX improvements. A subsidiary of Answers Corporation, ForeSee is headquartered in Ann Arbor, MI and has offices in Mountain View, New York, St. Louis, Cleveland, Vancouver, and London. For more information, visit www.foresee.com.