



American Customer Satisfaction Index

E-Government Satisfaction Index

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Commentary and Analysis

by Larry Freed

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Web Helps Improve Citizen Experience, Even as E-Government Satisfaction Drops for Third Straight Quarter

The web channel continues to be a critical component in providing citizens with a satisfying experience when they interact with federal government agencies and departments, according to the 4th quarter 2007 release of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. While the aggregate citizen satisfaction score has fallen for the third straight quarter, it continues to outpace citizen satisfaction with the federal government as a whole.

In the fourth quarter, citizen satisfaction with a cross-departmental list of 100+ federal government websites fell .5% from third quarter to a score of 72.9. This represents the third straight quarter of declining satisfaction with federal government websites. While the decreases have been relatively small, they are part of a larger trend of stagnating satisfaction: since 4th quarter 2006, citizen satisfaction has wavered between 73.9 and 72.9 on the ACSI's 100-point scale. Moreover, it is somewhat of a concern that citizen satisfaction is now a full point lower than it was one year ago, indicating that government entities need to do more to keep pace with the needs of the public.

“The web is truly helping the federal government do a better job at meeting the needs of citizens, which is impressive. However, we’ve reached a point where websites may have to kick it up a notch or risk an eventual erosion of satisfaction.”

- Errol Hau, Senior Director of Government Markets, ForeSee Results

The good news is that the web continues to be the most satisfying piece of citizens' interaction with the federal government. The quarterly e-government citizen satisfaction score of 72.9 compares favorably to the ACSI's aggregate, annual citizen satisfaction score of 67.8, which is based on responses from citizens who interacted with 50+ federal government agencies and departments. Further proof of the value of the web is that satisfaction jumps when the web is part of the channel mix. The ACSI reports an annual citizen satisfaction score of 73.4 for the sub-set of citizens who used the web as part of their interaction with the government.

From last quarter, 40% of the sites measured this quarter now have higher satisfaction scores, while 33% saw their scores decline. The year-over-year comparison also trends positive: 39% of sites measured in both 4th quarter 2006 and 4th quarter 2007 now have higher scores, while 35% decreased.

Satisfaction drives citizens' future behaviors. This quarter, scores for citizens' likelihood to recommend the site and likelihood to use it as a primary resource remained unchanged from last quarter, while likelihood to return to the site decreased by one point.

This quarter, the number of sites measured as part of the quarterly E-Government Satisfaction Index has increased by an impressive 13%, proof that an increasing number of websites are focused on measuring and improving citizen satisfaction. The index contains 103 sites, most fall into one of four functional categories: portals/department main sites, information/news sites, career/recruitment sites and e-commerce/transactional sites, and into three organizational categories: department-level, agency-level and program sites.

The ACSI Methodology & Data Collection Methods

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the ACSI, which is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ), ForeSee Results and the CFI Group. The ACSI is a cross-industry measure of offline customer satisfaction that measures the performance of approximately 200 private sector companies, as well as many government agencies.

This report contains three ACSI-derived scores:

- *ACSI E-Government quarterly aggregate citizen satisfaction score.* ForeSee Results collects and analyzes the data for the 100+ government websites in this report. A random sampling of site users on each of these ForeSee Results' client sites is presented with an online survey; responding is voluntary. Visitors rate the site on various components of the web experience, as well as on overall satisfaction with the website. The scores published in this report are 90-day average satisfaction scores from data gathered from August 6 – November 5, 2007.
- *ACSI Federal Government annual aggregate citizen satisfaction score:* The ACSI collects and analyzes data via random digit dialed phone calls for this yearly measure, which assesses the overall satisfaction of citizens who interacted with 50+ federal government departments or agencies in 2007.
- *ACSI Federal Government Multi-Channel annual aggregate citizen satisfaction score:* This score is a sub-set of the ACSI Federal Government annual score, and contains data from citizens who used the website as part of their interaction with the federal government.

Comparisons to Other ACSI Scores

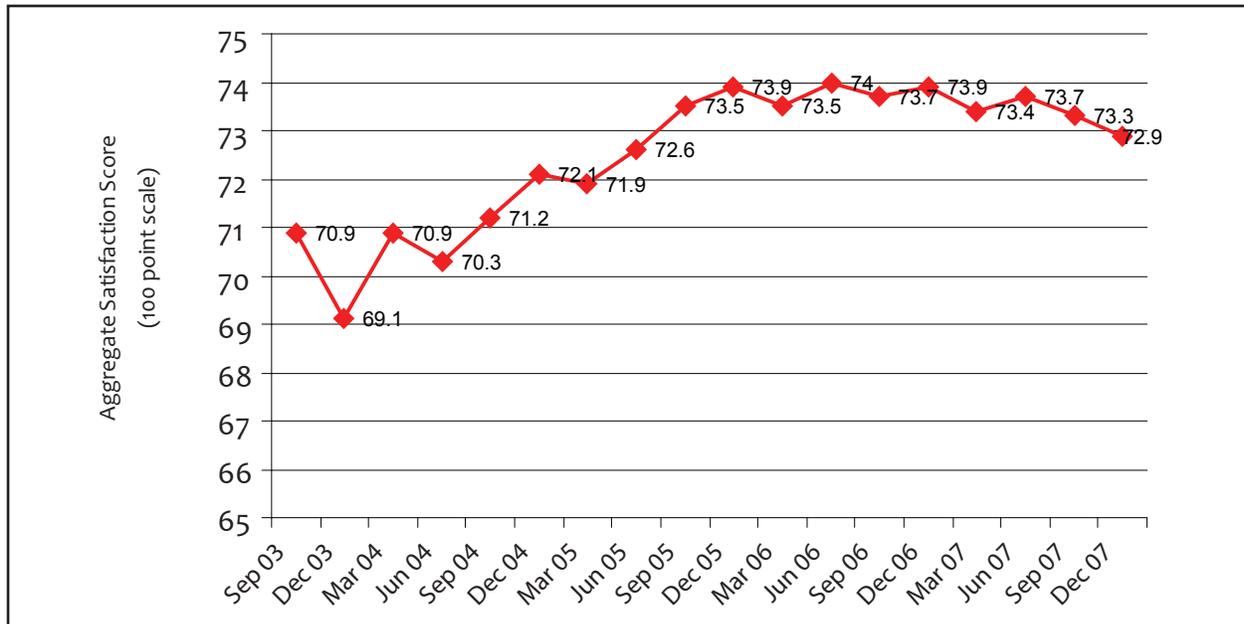
Citizens' perceptions of the government sites they visit are shaped by their experiences at other private and public sector sites. Therefore, a comparison to comparable private sector online industries can be instructive. The chart below shows that satisfaction with government websites lags the aggregate score for e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals) and more significantly lags behind the e-commerce sector (online retail, travel, auction and brokerage sites).

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Online Private Sector Scores

Industry	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
e-Government Q4 2007	72.9
e-Business Q2 2007	75.2
e-Commerce Q4 2006	80.0

E-retail and e-business sites are measured once a year; e-government is measured every quarter.

E-Government Satisfaction Over Time



Citizen Satisfaction Over Time

The chart above shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites from 3rd quarter 2003 through 4th quarter 2007.

While the aggregate citizen satisfaction score is down from last quarter, more of the sites measured both this quarter and last had score increases than decreases. When comparing 4th quarter 2007 scores to 3rd quarter 2007:

- 40% of sites now have higher scores
- 33% now have lower scores
- 27% stayed the same

The site with the largest quarter-over-quarter increase is the National Institute on Drug Abuse's teen-oriented site, NIDA for Teens website (<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/>). This site's score rose six points from last quarter.

It's also important to take a longer-term look at citizen satisfaction by comparing yearly scores. When comparing 4th quarter 2007 scores to satisfaction scores in 4th quarter 2006:

- 39% of sites now have higher scores
- 35% have lower scores
- 26% remained the same

Two sites show a six-point increase from one year ago: the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service (www.fms.treas.gov) and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's My Plan Administration Account site, My PAA (<https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa>).

Two Social Security Websites Top List of 20 Top Performers

This quarter, 20 sites (19% of the total) have scores of 80 or higher, making them “top performers.” The index is led by the Social Security Administration’s Internet Social Security Benefits Application (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html>) with a score of 88, the same score as last quarter. Another Social Security Administration site, Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (<http://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>), has the second-highest score in the entire index: an 87. Half of the sites in this top-performers group are health-related, showing that the federal government has succeeded in becoming a credible source of online health information.

Top Performers

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html	88
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html	87
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	85
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/	84
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov/	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanol www.cancer.gov/espanol	82
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website www.cdc.gov	81
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	81
Office on Women’s Health	National Women’s Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website www.4woman.gov	81
Free Application for Federal Student Aid	FAFSA website www.fafsa.ed.gov	81
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website http://www.cia.gov/employment	81
Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS	OSE main website http://science-education.nih.gov/	81
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website www.gobiernousa.gov	81

Top Performers, Continued

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog http://catalog.usmint.gov	80
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	80
Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative http://www.dna.gov	80

While a high satisfaction score is impressive, even more significant is the result of high satisfaction. Analysis of the data shows that sites with high satisfaction scores have much higher scores for key future behaviors tied to loyalty: likelihood to return to the site, likelihood to recommend the site and likelihood to use the site as a primary resource.

In comparing the top 20% of federal government sites (based on satisfaction scores) to the bottom 20% in the index this quarter, we found dramatic differences, as shown in the table below.

Comparative Future Behaviors: Top vs. Bottom Performers

Future Behavior	Index Aggregate Score	Score for Top Performing Sites	Score for Bottom Performing Sites	% Difference (Bottom vs. Top Performers)
Likelihood to Return to the Site	82	89	76	17%
Likelihood to Recommend the Site	79	86	71	21%
Likelihood to Use the Site as a Primary Resource	75	81	70	16%

Search Still Top Priority for Government Websites

The ACSI methodology employs a cause and effect model that measures elements of the online experience that drive satisfaction (such as navigation, search and content), assesses overall satisfaction and projects future behaviors that are affected by satisfaction. A unique function of the ACSI methodology is its ability to prioritize these elements according to which have both the lowest scores and the biggest impacts on satisfaction and citizens' future behaviors.

Search remains the first or second most important priority for the majority of measured sites: 85%, up from 79% last quarter. Also as compared to last quarter, several elements are now cited by a greater percentage of websites as their first or second biggest priority:

- Navigation is a priority for 47% of sites, compared to 42% last quarter
- Look and feel is a priority for 34% of sites, compared to 27% last quarter

Functionality, on the other hand, has declined as a priority: from 50% last quarter to 41% this quarter. Tasks and transactions, only measured by 11 sites in the index, declined from being a priority for 80% of sites last quarter to 64% this time.

Quarter-Over-Quarter Category Comparison

The table below shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the four functional categories.

Citizen Satisfaction Scores by Category

Category	Q4 2007	Q3 2007	Quarter-over-Quarter Percentage Change
News/Information	72.3	72.7	-.6%
Portals/Department Main Sites	72.8	73.0	-.3%
E-commerce/Transactions	74.6	74.6	0%
Career/Recruitment	77.6	77.2	-.5%*

* Note: Because of the low number of sites and response volumes, this decrease is not statistically significant.

News/Information Sites

The 59 sites in this category in the index have an aggregate citizen satisfaction score of 72.3 this quarter, down slightly from last quarter's 72.7. Scores range from a high of 85 for two health-related National Institutes of Health websites – MedlinePlus (<http://medlineplus.gov>) and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases site, NIDDK (<http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/>) – to a low of 56.

In this category, NIDA for Teens (<http://teens.drugabuse.gov/>) had a six-point satisfaction increase from last quarter and the General Services Administration's main website (www.gsa.gov) had a five-point increase from last quarter as it continues to reap the benefits of a summer relaunch.

Although the overall category score is down from last quarter, the story is more positive on a site-by-site basis. Forty-three percent of sites in the News/Information category have higher scores this quarter than last, the highest percentage of any category.

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for News/Information Sites

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/	85
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov/	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanolwww.cancer.gov/espanol	82

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for News/Information Sites, Continued

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website www.4woman.gov	81
Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS	OSE Main http://science-education.nih.gov/	81
Free Application for Federal Student Aid	FAFSA website www.fafsa.ed.gov	81
Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative http://www.dna.gov	80
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook http://www.bls.gov/oco/	79
NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health http://nihseniorhealth.gov	79
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov	79
National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA main website www.drugabuse.gov	79
National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health www.girlshealth.com	78
National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA for Teens website http://teens.drugabuse.gov/	78
National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website www.ncjrs.gov	78
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html	76
Center for Nutrition Policy Promotion, Agriculture	MyPyramid Website www.MyPyramid.gov	76
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	FMCSA Protect Your Move www.protectyourmove.com	76
General Services Administration	WebContent.gov http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/	76
General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center http://pueblo.gsa.gov	75
Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality www.ahrq.gov	75
National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website http://www.ojp.gov/nij	74
Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website www.fsis.usda.gov	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications www2.fdic.gov	74
Department of Justice	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/	73
U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/	73

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for News/Information Sites, Continued

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Kenya http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/	73
Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website http://www.bea.gov	73
Department of State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://educationusa.state.gov	72
Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice	OVC website www.ovc.gov	72
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website https://alumni.state.gov	72
Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service www.fms.treas.gov	72
International Information Programs, State	IIP main website http://usinfo.state.gov	72
Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website www.ers.usda.gov	72
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in China http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/	71
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	70
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	70
Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website www.fas.usda.gov	70
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Turkey (in Turkish) http://turkish.turkey.usembassy.gov/	69
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Perú (in Spanish) http://spanish.peru.usembassy.gov/	69
National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website www.nal.usda.gov	69
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/saudi-arabia/	69
Environmental Protection Agency	ENERGY STAR Building & Plants Website http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=business.bus_index	68
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Germany (in German) http://german.germany.usembassy.gov/	67
Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website www.ttb.gov	67
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in India http://india.usembassy.gov/	67

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for News/Information Sites, Continued

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website www.csrees.usda.gov	66
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Nigeria http://abuja.usembassy.gov/	64
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Pakistan http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/	64
Bureau of Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://exchanges.state.gov/	63
Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website http://www.fs.fed.us	62
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	National Flood Insurance Program http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/	61
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov	61
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases www.archives.gov/aad/index.html	61
Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE www.tricare.osd.mil/	58
General Services Administration	GSA E-Library http://www.gsa-elibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome	57
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	FEMA Map Service Center http://store.msc.fema.gov	56

Portals/Department Main Sites

The 26 sites in this category have an aggregate satisfaction score of 72.8, down .3% from last quarter. Scores range from a high of 82 for the National Cancer Institute's main website (www.cancer.gov) to 57.

Thirty-eight percent of Portal/Department main sites score higher this quarter than last, while 29% declined and 33% stayed the same. The main General Services Administration site (www.gsa.gov) saw its score go up five points from last quarter, as the site continues to enjoy the benefits of improved citizen satisfaction due to a summer site redesign. The main site for the Veterans Administration (www.va.gov) had an impressive four-point, quarter-over-quarter increase to a satisfaction score of 72.

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for Portal/Department Main Sites

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	82
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website www.cdc.gov	81
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	81
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website www.gobiernousa.gov	81

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for Portal/Department Main Sites, Continued

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	80
National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website www.nps.gov	79
United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website www.usmint.gov	78
National Library of Medicine, HHS	NLM main website www.nlm.nih.gov	77
General Services Administration	GSA main website www.gsa.gov	74
National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website www.nist.gov	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website www.fdic.gov	73
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website www.sba.gov	72
Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website www.va.gov	72
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website www.gao.gov	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) www.socialsecurity.gov/	71
Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website www.irs.gov	71
Department of State	Department of State main website www.state.gov	71
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website www.treasury.gov	70
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website www.samhsa.gov	70
Small Business Administration	Business Gateway www.business.gov	70
United States Access Board	United States Access Board http://www.access-board.gov	70
General Services Administration	Federal Asset Sales (GovSales) http://www.govsales.gov/html/index.htm	69
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website www.pbgc.gov	66
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website www.archives.gov	66
United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website http://www.usitc.gov/	65
General Services Administration	Forms.gov www.forms.gov	57

E-commerce/Transaction Sites

The score for the E-commerce/Transactions category stays flat from last quarter with a score of 74.6.

The two top-performing sites in the entire index are in this category: Internet Social Security Benefits Application (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html>) with an 88 and Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan (<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html>) with a score of 87. In fact, 30% of the sites in the E-commerce/Transactions category have a score of 80 or higher, making it the category with the highest percentage of top-performing websites.

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Scores in this category, which contains 13 sites, range from 88 to 49.

Citizen Satisfaction for E-commerce/Transaction Sites

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html	88
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html	87
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	85
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog http://catalog.usmint.gov	80
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPAA - https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	79
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA - https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	78
SSA Retirement Planner	Social Security Retirement Planner www.socialsecurity.gov/r&m1.htm	76
Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/	71
General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website https://www.gsaadvantage.gov	71
General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov	68
Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect www.treasurydirect.gov	67
General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov	69
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	FEMA Map Modernization http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/fhm/mm_main.shtm	49

Career/Recruitment Sites

The aggregate score this quarter for the small category of Career/Recruitment sites is 77.6. Scores range from 81 for the Central Intelligence Agency's Recruitment website (<http://www.cia.gov/employment>) to 76.

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for Careers

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website - http://www.cia.gov/employment	81
Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listings - www.doors.dol.gov	78
Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website - www.usajobs.opm.gov	76
Department of State	Recruitment website - www.careers.state.gov	76

Search Engine

This quarter, the commentary also includes a site-specific search engine: BuscadorUSA.gov, which is the search function on the Spanish-language portal to the federal government, GobiernoUSA. Since this site doesn't fall into any of the established categories, it is reported separately in the table below.

Citizen Satisfaction for BuscadorUSA.gov

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
General Services Administration	BuscadorUSA (Spanish language search) http://www.buscadorusa.gov	68

Citizens Most Satisfied with Program Sites

In addition to looking at sites by the four functional categories, we also analyze customer satisfaction data by the 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) and Program sites (all others).

From last quarter, the aggregate score for the category of Program sites rose the most: 1.5%.

Comparative Citizen Satisfaction by Organizational Category

	Q4 2007	Q3 2007	% Change
Department Sites	71.6	70.8	1.1%
Agency Sites	73.1	73.4	-0.4%
Program Sites	73.4	74.5	-1.5%

Satisfaction Starts with Department Sites

Citizen satisfaction often starts with providing a satisfying online experience at the department level. The table below shows the satisfaction scores for the 14 department and department-level sites included in the benchmark. Scores range from 80 for NASA's main site (www.nasa.gov) to 65. NASA is the only department-level site with a score of 80 or higher, putting it in the top-performer group.

Citizen Satisfaction Scores for Department Level Sites

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	Score 12/07
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website www.nasa.gov	80
General Services Administration	GSA main website www.gsa.gov	74
National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website www.nist.gov	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website www.fdic.gov	73
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website www.sba.gov	72
Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website www.va.gov	72
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website www.gao.gov	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) www.socialsecurity.gov/	71
Department of State	Department of State main website www.state.gov	71
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website www.treasury.gov	70
United States Access Board	US Access Board http://www.access-board.gov	70
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website www.pbgc.gov	66
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website www.archives.gov	66
United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website http://www.usitc.gov/	65

Department of Health & Human Services Atop Department Rankings

This quarter, the Department of Health & Human Services has the highest aggregate score for departments with five or more sites in the index.

Comparative Citizen Satisfaction Scores by Department

Department	Score 12/07
Department of Health & Human Services	79.8
Social Security Administration	78.4
Department of Treasury	72.4
General Services Administration	70.7
Department of State	69.4
Department of Agriculture	68.7

Conclusion

It is clear that the web plays a critical role in helping citizens conveniently and cost-effectively interact with the federal government. Citizen satisfaction with websites is higher than satisfaction with the federal government as a whole. Even for citizens who prefer to interact with the federal government via multiple channels, the web is a key driver of overall satisfaction with the government.

Despite these positive statistics, the federal government needs to continually take strides to better meet the needs of the public. This is clear from the fact that customer satisfaction levels have been stagnating for the past three quarters. Now is the time for government to truly leverage the superior potential of the web channel to deliver better quality service to citizens by investing in their websites. The alternative is continued erosion of satisfaction with this critical channel.

About the Author

Larry Freed is an expert on 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

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. In 1999, the Federal government selected the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. Over 100 Federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction of more than 200 services and programs. The Index is produced by the University of Michigan, in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ) and CFI Group, an international consulting firm. ForeSee Results sponsors the e-commerce, e-business and e-government indices.

About ForeSee Results, Inc.

As the leader in online customer satisfaction measurement, ForeSee Results uses online voice of customer data to help organizations increase loyalty, recommendations and website value.

Using the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results scientifically quantifies the elements that drive online customer satisfaction and predicts future behaviors, including the likelihood to return to the site or recommend the site to others. ForeSee Results, a privately held company located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, can be found online at www.ForeSeeResults.com.

About the Federal Consulting Group

The Federal Consulting Group, a franchise of the Department of the Treasury, serves as the executive agent in the government for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), and holds generic clearance from the Office of Management and Budget that enables agencies to utilize the ACSI without having to obtain a separate clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act to conduct customer satisfaction surveys. Agencies can participate in the ACSI through an arrangement between the Federal Consulting Group and ForeSee Results.

For More Information

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