



American Customer Satisfaction Index

# E-Government Satisfaction Index

February 3, 2009

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## Introduction: The Role of E-Government in Promoting Accountability, Transparency and Cost-Efficiency

There is perhaps no greater sign for the future of e-gov than the election of Barack Obama. True, the Bush administration supported e-gov through executive orders and key initiatives like the President's Management Agenda, which encouraged all federal government agencies to improve the way they deliver service to citizens. However, for the first time, we have a truly tech-savvy President in office, one who has shown through both word and deed that he understands the power of the Internet. In fact, he has already enacted many of his plans to reach out online within weeks of his inauguration.

But reports are already trickling in about Obama's growing pains in moving from a dot-org to a dot-gov. Obama's online strategists are hampered by rules restricting access to social networking sites from inside the White House, stricter privacy regulations, dated infrastructure that results in occasional email outages, and limited access to instant messaging. President Obama is learning to work within the sometimes challenging limitations that exist when it comes to federal websites and federal Web 2.0. Perhaps these experiences will persuade President Obama and his staff to support e-gov initiatives not only with adequate budgets, but with supportive policies and legislation as well.

The truth is that even before Obama became President, the government was doing a remarkable job satisfying citizens with e-gov initiatives—in fact, as the following report attests, citizen satisfaction with e-government was at its highest point in more than five years at the end of 2008 (the study's surveys were conducted on more than ninety-four federal websites from October 1-December 31, 2008). However, we've only scratched the surface of e-gov's potential, and a new President with a commitment to technology and the Internet is the perfect choice to implement new policies, executive orders, funding, and legislation that will improve the ability of federal departments, agencies, and programs to serve citizens online.

President Obama campaigned on promises to bring change, save money, improve transparency, and increase accountability and efficiency. On inauguration day, there was a blog posted on WhiteHouse.gov listing communication, transparency, and participation as the key objectives of President Obama's new media initiatives. Boosting the adaptation, sophistication, and effectiveness of e-gov initiatives can accomplish each of these objectives.

E-Gov is a powerful tool, and this report measures ninety-four e-gov sites by perhaps the most important performance metric: how well they are satisfying citizens. We use the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which has been used for more than fifteen years 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 the private sector.

The ACSI also allows us to project future behavior based on satisfaction, and today's report makes the case more clearly than ever: the data shows that when compared to dissatisfied citizens, citizens who are highly satisfied with a federal government website are:

- 86% more likely to use the website as a primary resource
- 84% more likely to recommend the website
- 57% more likely to return to the website

These are exactly the behaviors that will allow e-gov to fulfill its promise of increased cost-savings, efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness, advantages that benefit both the citizenry and the government.

The new administration should not only renew but strengthen the federal government's commitment to improving e-government. Government in general is criticized for excessive spending and waste, but e-gov can address those criticisms head-on while also increasing transparency and providing information directly to citizens. When e-gov works, it works incredibly well.

Obama is already on the right track. His promise to appoint a federal Chief Technology Officer combined with his appointment of Nancy Kellifer as Chief Performance Officer indicate that the next four years could be a time of unprecedented growth and effectiveness for online government. The stage is set for e-gov excellence.

## Key Findings of the ACSI E-Government Index: Satisfaction With E-Gov Reaches All-Time High

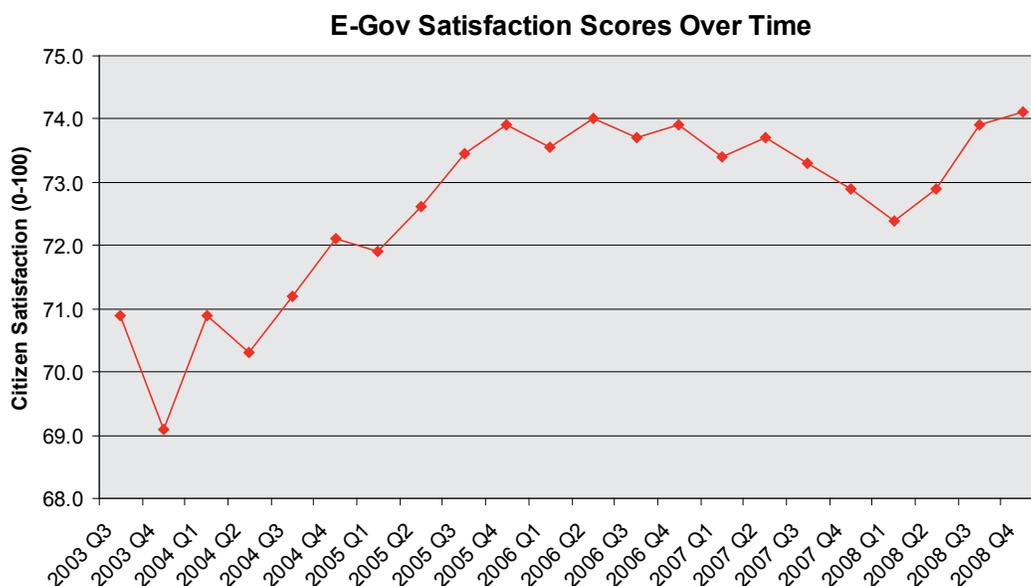
### Key Findings:

- **Citizen satisfaction with e-gov has reached an all-time high.** Satisfaction with e-gov rates a 74.1 on the ACSI's 100-point scale, the highest level of citizen satisfaction with online government since the Index began five years ago. The increase in scores can be largely attributed to increasing satisfaction with e-commerce and transactional sites.
- **E-gov that satisfies citizens is more efficient and cost-effective.** Citizens who are highly satisfied with a federal government website are 86% more likely to use the website as a primary resource (as opposed to other, more costly channels), 84% more likely to recommend the website, and 57% more likely to return to the website, which helps the federal government operate more cost-efficiently.
- **Search, functionality, and navigation remain top priorities for improving many government websites.** 92% of sites that measure citizens' opinions on their search features found it to be a top priority element. This means that improvements to search will have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction, and therefore could increase a citizen's likelihood to return to the site, recommend it, or use it as a primary resource.
- **Citizens are most satisfied with e-commerce/transaction government websites.** Career and recruitment websites come in second in terms of overall citizen satisfaction.
- **Satisfaction with e-gov lags behind satisfaction with private sector sites but consistently beats satisfaction with offline government.** Citizens are more satisfied when they interact with the federal government online than offline, but the government has a long way to go before attaining levels of online satisfaction enjoyed by private sector industries.

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

## Satisfaction with E-Gov Reaches All-Time High

After a long, slow decline in citizen satisfaction with federal government initiatives online in 2007 and early 2008, satisfaction with e-government has rebounded and hit its all-time high: 74.1 on the study's 100-point scale, up significantly from the fourth quarter of 2007 (72.9) and up slightly from last quarter (73.9). The University of Michigan and ForeSee Results have been measuring citizen satisfaction with federal government websites for more than five years (twenty-two consecutive quarters). The chart below shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites from the third quarter of 2003 (when the first E-Gov Index was published) through the end of 2008. There are ninety-four sites included in the Index this quarter.



The above chart represents a substantial amount of data (more than 200,000 surveys conducted during the fourth quarter of 2008 alone and many millions completed since the first ACSI E-Gov Index in 2003). While scores for individual quarters 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.

*"I am so proud of the work that web managers across government have done to assess and improve websites based on customers' perspectives," said Ron Oberbillig, Acting Director of the Federal Consulting Group. "Their willingness to be open, transparent and accountable has much to do with increasing customer satisfaction with their websites. Other drivers include a community that enthusiastically shares lessons learned and best practices across government." The Federal Consulting Group is a government organization and executive agent for website surveys based on the American Customer Satisfaction Index methodology.*

## Government Sites Reap Rewards From Citizen Satisfaction

Before reviewing the scores of individual sites, it's important to examine why satisfaction is so important and why President Obama and a federal government CTO should 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. As shown in the table below, there are significant differences in average scores for all three commonly-measured behaviors. Highly satisfied citizens are:

- 86% more likely to use the website as a primary resource
- 84% more likely to recommend the website
- 57% more likely to return to the site

	Highly Satisfied Citizens (80+)	Dissatisfied Citizens (< 70)	Difference in Scores	The Impact of Higher Website Satisfaction
Aggregate Satisfaction	93	41	124%	
Use Site as Primary Resource	91	49	86%	Cost-savings for departments and agencies as citizens are right channeled to web Citizens get information from credible government source, rather than another online/offline source (in cases where options exist, e.g., health-related information)
Recommend Site	94	51	84%	Use of government websites will grow as citizens recommend them to their friends, families, and colleagues
Return to Site	96	61	57%	Government departments and agencies have ongoing channel to provide information and services to citizens via web channel
Conduct a Future Transaction (applies only to a subset of transactional sites that measure this behavior)	93	52	79%	Cost savings as traffic to call centers and offices is reduced Increased accuracy Reduced redundancy

Providing a satisfying online experience makes sense for government departments and agencies. Citizens are able to easily connect with government to receive information or conduct transactions 24/7 from their homes or offices. For government, the web channel offers a chance to provide a high level of service at a fraction of the cost of phone support, e-mail communication, or staffing of branch offices.

## Prioritize Search, Functionality, and Navigation to Improve E-Gov

Once we understand the value of a satisfied citizen and how it benefits both the citizenry and the government to improve citizen satisfaction online, the next question is always, “what can government websites do to improve satisfaction?”

The ACSI methodology identifies which elements are “top priority” 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.

Because finding information is key, search remains the biggest priority for improvement for many government websites: 92% of sites that measure web experiences with search found it to be a top priority. In other words, improvements to these sites’ search features are likely to have a very notable impact on satisfaction with the sites. It’s not surprising that public sector sites continue to struggle with search; even their better-funded private sector counterparts face challenges with this key driver of satisfaction.

Functionality, which assesses site features, is a top priority element for 45% of sites that measure it. If citizens cannot get the information they need or complete the task they set out to do, they may turn to costlier offline channels, so it’s imperative that government websites improve functionality.

This quarter, Navigation, which assesses site layout and organization, is a top priority for 35% of sites that measure it. Navigation is an essential element: sites that are streamlined and easy to navigate may find that search becomes less of an issue. If citizens can navigate through a site and quickly find the information they are looking for, they will have less need for search.

In fact, the most successful e-gov sites help citizens to find information they are looking for quickly and easily. Since many e-government sites are tasked with the responsibility to manage and organize a wide range of information, search, functionality, and navigation are all crucial to that mission, whether they are looking for tax documents, consumer information, or disaster relief aid. Streamlined, single-purpose, well-organized e-gov sites with a clear mission are often best able to serve citizens online.

The lowest priority elements for sites included in the Index are Content and Site Performance, meaning that improvements in these two 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, 17% of specific sites’ first or second priorities included Site Performance and 5% included Content. This reality underscores the need for each site to understand the specific levers that will have the greatest impact on their own visitors. General findings are interesting and useful to a point, but specific findings are more actionable for individual sites.

## Satisfaction Scores Top Performers Set the Standard

This quarter, twenty-two of the ninety-four measured sites (23% of the all the sites in the Index) are in the “top performers” category with scores of 80 or higher, generally considered the threshold of excellence in the ACSI’s 100-point scale.

The Social Security Administration’s (SSA) Retirement Estimator takes the top spot for the second quarter in a row with a score of 89, and two other SSA sites round out the top three (Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs and SSA iClaim.)

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is another agency that makes a strong showing in the top performers’ category. Eight of the seventeen HHS sites included in the Index are top performers with scores of 80 or higher.

Any website, whether in the private or public sector, with a score of more than 80 is clearly doing a superior job in meeting citizens’ needs and expectations. For context, only the highest caliber private sector sites score 80 and above in the official ACSI releases on e-commerce and e-business: Amazon (88), Google (86), Newegg (87), Netflix (84), Fidelity.com (84), CharlesSchwab.com (82), eBay (81), Overstock.com (80), and TD Ameritrade (80). It is a remarkable accomplishment for twenty-two government websites.

**Figure 1: Top Performers**

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/estimator/">www.ssa.gov/estimator/</a>	89
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/</a>	87
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/</a>	87
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">http://medlineplus.gov</a>	86
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH, HHS	NIDDK <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/">http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/</a>	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, NIH, HHS	MedlinePlus en español <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp/">http://medlineplus.gov/esp/</a>	85
DOD	Department of Defense	America Supports You <a href="http://www.americasupportsyou.mil">http://www.americasupportsyou.mil</a>	85
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculo- skeletal and Skin Diseases, NIH, HHS	NIAMS Public Website <a href="http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm">http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm</a>	84
HHS	National Library of Medicine, NIH, HHS	AIDSinfo <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/">http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/</a>	84
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	My PAA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	83
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	82

**Figure 1: Top Performers, Continued**

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website <a href="http://www.4woman.gov">http://www.4woman.gov</a>	82
Peace Corps	Peace Corps	Peace Corps main website <a href="http://www.peacecorps.gov">http://www.peacecorps.gov</a>	82
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco/">http://www.bls.gov/oco/</a>	81
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.cia.gov/employment">http://www.cia.gov/employment</a>	81
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health <a href="http://www.girlshealth.com">http://www.girlshealth.com</a>	81
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website <a href="http://www.nasa.gov">http://www.nasa.gov</a>	81
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website <a href="http://www.gobiernousa.gov">http://www.gobiernousa.gov</a>	81
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog <a href="http://catalog.usmint.gov">http://catalog.usmint.gov</a>	81
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website <a href="http://www.fbi.gov">http://www.fbi.gov</a>	81
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	My PBA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	80
DOI	National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website <a href="http://www.nps.gov">http://www.nps.gov</a>	80

In addition to looking at top performers, it's important to look at which sites have made the greatest strides to improve citizen satisfaction quarter-over-quarter, year-over-year, and since the first time they were measured as part of the Index. Some of the biggest improvements include:

- The IRS main website (72), which is up eight points quarter-over-quarter
- The Census Bureau's main website (73), up seven points since last quarter
- DOD Tricare (67), up five points since last quarter, nine points since the fourth quarter of 2007, and eleven points since it was first included in the Index
- The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation main website (73), up seven points since last year
- BuscadorUSA (74), up six points since last year
- The GSA main website, up an incredible twenty-two points since it was first included in the Index (from 56 to 78)
- Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, up thirteen points (58 to 71) since it was first included in the Index

For government sites, which are often hampered by budget restraints and resource limitations, to see these kinds of improvements over time should be an inspiration to others. It is possible to increase citizen satisfaction and reap the rewards of increased loyalty and cost savings. Measuring citizen satisfaction and making targeted improvements to respond to citizens' needs are the first steps in the path toward excellence in e-government.

## E-Commerce/Transaction Sites Continue to Top Functional Categories

So that federal government websites can benchmark against their peers, scores are organized by both functional category and organizational structure. The functional categories include news and information, 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	Q4 2007	Q4 2008	Year-over-Year Percentage Change
E-commerce/Transaction (13 sites)	75	78	4.0%
Career/Recruitment (4 sites)	78	77	-1.3%
Portals/Department Main Sites (25 sites)	73	75	2.7%
News/Information (51 sites)	72	73	1.4%

Note: One measured site, Buscador.gov, is not included in this table. As a site-specific search engine, it does not fit into any of these categories.

The preceding table shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the four functional categories of sites, comparing fourth-quarter scores 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, reflecting how the government is starting to have success adopting strategies of private sector e-commerce companies.

In fact, when we look deeper into the data to explain the gradual increase in the aggregate score over the last year, one clear factor stands out. Only one of the four functional categories has experienced a large increase in satisfaction over time: the e-commerce and transactional category, which is up three points in just one year and has a higher score than any of the other categories.

Five years ago, when the Index was started, there was only one website in this category: the U.S. Mint website, which sold collectible coins online. Since then, as more agencies, departments, and programs have recognized the value of allowing citizens to conduct transactions online, the number of sites in this category and the level of satisfaction has dramatically increased. 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.

By providing more and more transactional capabilities online, the government is following the same path of evolution as the private sector. When retail websites first appeared on the scene, they were largely electronic brochures, and consumers still had to purchase from stores or on the phone. As the online retail industry matured, shoppers got over concerns about privacy and reliability, and have now wholeheartedly embraced online shopping, saving retailers untold amounts of money since the overhead is much lower for online shopping.

The same can be said for e-government. Transactional websites are the next big area of growth and opportunity in e-gov, and the category's high aggregate score shows that citizens are more than ready to interact with their government in this way online.

News and information sites, on the other hand, are going to need to step up their efforts. As Obama's administration looks to e-government to increase communication, participation, accountability, and transparency, news and information sites will play a key role in all of these missions. These kinds of sites will have to increase their efforts to provide a satisfying experience to citizens in order to encourage people to use them as their primary channel of communication with the government.

## E-Commerce/Transaction Sites

The average score for the thirteen sites included in the e-commerce or transactional category is 78. This category is one that can realize the most efficiency and cost savings, since transactions conducted online save a lot more time, paper, redundancy, and staff than information stored offline.

The three highest-scoring sites in this category are part of the Social Security Administration, including the SSA Retirement Estimator (89), SSA's Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (87), and Internet Social Security Benefits Application (87). Since this category was first measured in 2004, its score has increased by an impressive nine points, achieving an all-time high score of 78 in Q3 2008 and maintaining it in Q4.

Most-improved sites include:

- The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's My PAA site (83) is up four points since last year and ten points since they were first included in the Index.
- GSA eBuy (72) is up four points since a year ago.

## E-Commerce/Transaction Sites

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/estimator/">www.ssa.gov/estimator/</a>	89
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/</a>	87
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline/</a>	87
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPAA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	83
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog <a href="http://catalog.usmint.gov">http://catalog.usmint.gov</a>	81
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	My PBA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	80
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm">http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm</a>	79
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/">http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/</a>	74
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Recreation One-Stop <a href="http://www.recreation.gov">http://www.recreation.gov</a>	72
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy <a href="http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov">http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov</a>	72

**E-Commerce/Transaction Sites, Continued**

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website <a href="https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov">https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov</a>	70
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website <a href="https://www.gsaadvantage.gov">https://www.gsaadvantage.gov</a>	69
Treasury	Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect <a href="http://www.treasurydirect.gov">http://www.treasurydirect.gov</a>	68

**Career/Recruitment Sites**

Citizen satisfaction with the four sites in this category is steady from last quarter at 77 but down a point from last year's fourth quarter score of 78. The Central Intelligence Agency's recruitment website has the highest score, 81, and has long been the only career/recruitment site ranking at or above 80.

**Career/Recruitment Sites**

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.cia.gov/employment">http://www.cia.gov/employment</a>	81
DOL	Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listings <a href="http://www.doors.dol.gov">http://www.doors.dol.gov</a>	77
DOS	Department of State	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.careers.state.gov">http://www.careers.state.gov</a>	75
OPM	Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.usajobs.opm.gov">http://www.usajobs.opm.gov</a>	74

**Portals/Department Main Sites**

The aggregate citizen satisfaction score for the twenty-five portals/department main sites included in the Index is up, both from last quarter and last year, to 75. The aggregate score provides a good benchmark: any site outperforming the average is doing fairly well.

Scores in this category range from 58 to 84, with the highest score of 84 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: the main site for the CDC (82), The Peace Corps (82), NASA's main site (81), The FBI main website (81), GobiernoUSA.gov (81), and the National Parks website, entering the top performers list in the portals/department main sites category for the first time (80).

Most-improved sites include:

- The IRS main website (72) improved an incredible eight points since last quarter.
- The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation main website (73), up seven points since last year.
- The GSA main website (78) has increased an impressive nine points since last year and twenty-two points since it was first included in the Index.

- The GAO main website (75) is up two points since last quarter and nine points since it was first included in the index.
- NASA's main website (81) is up one point since last quarter and seven points since it was first included in the Index.

### Portals/Departments Main Sites

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website <a href="http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm">http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm</a>	84
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">http://www.cdc.gov</a>	82
Peace Corps	Peace Corps	Peace Corps main website <a href="http://www.peacecorps.gov">http://www.peacecorps.gov</a>	82
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website <a href="http://www.nasa.gov">http://www.nasa.gov</a>	81
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website <a href="http://www.gobiernousa.gov">http://www.gobiernousa.gov</a>	81
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website <a href="http://www.fbi.gov">http://www.fbi.gov</a>	81
DOI	National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website <a href="http://www.nps.gov">http://www.nps.gov</a>	80
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website <a href="http://www.usmint.gov">http://www.usmint.gov</a>	79
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense main website <a href="http://www.defenselink.mil">http://www.defenselink.mil</a>	79
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website <a href="http://www.gsa.gov">http://www.gsa.gov</a>	78
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website <a href="http://www.nist.gov">http://www.nist.gov</a>	75
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website <a href="http://www.gao.gov">http://www.gao.gov</a>	75
HHS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website <a href="http://www.samhsa.gov">http://www.samhsa.gov</a>	74
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website <a href="http://www.pbgc.gov">http://www.pbgc.gov</a>	73
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website <a href="http://www.fdic.gov">http://www.fdic.gov</a>	73
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website <a href="http://www.va.gov">http://www.va.gov</a> and <a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">http://www.myhealth.va.gov</a>	73
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website <a href="http://www.sba.gov">http://www.sba.gov</a>	72
Treasury	Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website <a href="http://www.irs.gov">http://www.irs.gov</a>	72
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website <a href="http://www.state.gov">http://www.state.gov</a>	71

### Portals/Departments Main Sites

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
Access Board	United States Access Board	U.S. Access Board <a href="http://www.access-board.gov">http://www.access-board.gov</a>	71
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online main website <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/</a>	70
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website <a href="http://www.treasury.gov">http://www.treasury.gov</a>	69
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website <a href="http://www.archives.gov">http://www.archives.gov</a>	68
DOL	Office of Disability Employment Policy, Labor	DisabilityInfo <a href="http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov">http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov</a>	63
ITC	United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website <a href="http://www.usitc.gov/">http://www.usitc.gov/</a>	58

### News/Information Sites

Aggregate citizen satisfaction with the fifty-one sites in the news/information category (73) is up one point from last year. The aggregate score provides a good benchmark: any site outperforming the average is doing fairly well. This is one category of e-government that has a direct point of comparison in the private sector. The ACSI measures private sector news and information sites every August, and the aggregate score in 2009 was 75. That's only slightly higher than the government online news and information category, despite the fact that the 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 delivering on their promise fairly well.

MedlinePlus (86), the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases (85), MedlinePlus en español (85), America Supports You (85), and AIDSinfo (84) all have strong scores in the mid-80s.

Several sites deserve mention because they have experienced significant score increases compared to three months ago or a year ago:

- The Census Bureau's main website (73) is up seven points since last quarter (brief case study explaining the increase after the table of scores).
- DOD TRICARE (67) is up five points since last quarter, nine points since the fourth quarter of 2007, and eleven points since it was first included in the Index (brief case study after the table of scores).
- Though down one point since last quarter, the Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau is up thirteen points (58 to 71) since it was first included in the Index and four points since last year.

## News &amp; Information Sites

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">http://medlineplus.gov</a>	86
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/">http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/</a>	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp/">http://medlineplus.gov/esp/</a>	85
DOD	Department of Defense	America Supports You <a href="http://www.americasupportsyou.mil">http://www.americasupportsyou.mil</a>	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/">http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/</a>	84
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website <a href="http://www.4woman.gov">http://www.4woman.gov</a>	82
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco/">http://www.bls.gov/oco/</a>	81
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health <a href="http://www.girlshealth.com">http://www.girlshealth.com</a>	81
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET <a href="http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov">http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov</a>	79
GSA	General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center <a href="http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/">http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/</a>	79
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases <a href="http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/">http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/</a>	78
HHS	NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health <a href="http://nihseniorhealth.gov">http://nihseniorhealth.gov</a>	78
DOD	Defense Media Agency	Pentagon Channel <a href="http://www.pentagonchannel.mil/">http://www.pentagonchannel.mil/</a>	78
DOJ	Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative <a href="http://www.dna.gov">http://www.dna.gov</a>	78
FMCSA	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	FMCSA Protect Your Move <a href="http://www.protectyourmove.com">http://www.protectyourmove.com</a>	77
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality <a href="http://www.ahrq.gov">http://www.ahrq.gov</a>	76
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites <a href="http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html">http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/ index.html</a>	76
DOJ	Department of Justice	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services <a href="http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/">http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/</a>	76
DOJ	National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website <a href="http://www.ojp.gov/nij">http://www.ojp.gov/nij</a>	76
USDA	Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website <a href="http://www.fsis.usda.gov">http://www.fsis.usda.gov</a>	75
HHS	National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA main website <a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov">http://www.drugabuse.gov</a>	75
DOJ	National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website <a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov">http://www.ncjrs.gov</a>	74

## News &amp; Information Sites, Continued

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
HHS	National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA for Teens website <a href="http://teens.drugabuse.gov/">http://teens.drugabuse.gov/</a>	74
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	Force Health Protection & Readiness Policy and Programs <a href="http://fhp.osd.mil/">http://fhp.osd.mil/</a>	73
Com- merce	U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce	U.S. Census Bureau main website <a href="http://www.census.gov">http://www.census.gov</a>	73
DOC	U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website <a href="http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/">http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/</a>	73
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Parents: The Anti-Drug: <a href="http://www.theantidrug.com">http://www.theantidrug.com</a>	72
DOS	International Information Programs, State	IIP main website <a href="http://usinfo.state.gov">http://usinfo.state.gov</a>	72
Trea- sury	Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website <a href="http://www.ttb.gov">http://www.ttb.gov</a>	71
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website <a href="http://www.nrc.gov">http://www.nrc.gov</a>	71
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications <a href="http://www2.fdic.gov">http://www2.fdic.gov</a>	71
SBA	Small Business Administration	Business Gateway <a href="http://www.business.gov">http://www.business.gov</a>	71
DOS	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website <a href="https://alumni.state.gov">https://alumni.state.gov</a>	71
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website <a href="http://www.hrsa.gov/">http://www.hrsa.gov/</a>	70
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Above the Influence <a href="http://www.abovetheinfluence.com">http://www.abovetheinfluence.com</a>	69
GSA	General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center <a href="http://www.consumeraction.gov">http://www.consumeraction.gov</a>	69
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions <a href="http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov">http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov</a>	69
Trea- sury	Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service <a href="http://www.fms.treas.gov">http://www.fms.treas.gov</a>	69
USDA	Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website <a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov">http://www.ers.usda.gov</a>	68
DOC	Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website <a href="http://www.bea.gov">http://www.bea.gov</a>	68
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	ENERGY STAR Building & Plants Website <a href="http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=business.bus_index">http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=business.bus_index</a>	67
USDA	National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website <a href="http://www.nal.usda.gov">http://www.nal.usda.gov</a>	67
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE <a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil/">http://www.tricare.osd.mil/</a>	67

## News &amp; Information Sites, Continued

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
USDA	Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov">http://www.fas.usda.gov</a>	66
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	Military Health System main website <a href="http://www.health.mil/">http://www.health.mil/</a>	65
USDA	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website <a href="http://www.csrees.usda.gov">http://www.csrees.usda.gov</a>	62
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us">http://www.fs.fed.us</a>	62
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases <a href="http://www.archives.gov/aad/index.html">http://www.archives.gov/aad/index.html</a>	61
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA E-Library <a href="http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/Elib-Home">http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/Elib-Home</a>	61
USDA	Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website <a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov</a>	59
HHS	HHS/Grants Policy Committee	HHS/Grants Policy Committee <a href="http://www.grants.gov">http://www.grants.gov</a>	55

**Case Study: Census Bureau**

*The Census Bureau's main website entered the Index for the first time in early 2008 with a score of 65. Since the website is the Census Bureau's main point of nationwide contact with citizens, the Bureau embarked on an attempt to understand which specific website elements were driving satisfaction so that it knew where to focus improvement efforts. Voice-of-citizen feedback indicated that the areas of the website needing the most improvement were look and feel, navigation, search, and the ability of site visitors to complete tasks. Further investigation into these areas guided small site improvements that had a big impact: the addition of job-related links of the home page (for visitors who want to be census takers), changes to the Census Bureau's template masthead, and a greater focus on using improved navigation to aid visitors' task completion.*

*The results have been impressive. The Census Bureau main website has seen a seven point increase (from 66 to 73) in just three short months and eight points since it was first included in the Index a year ago. Scores for each of the individual elements identified by the ACSI methodology as priorities have also continued to improve.*

### **Case Study: DOD TRICARE**

*TRICARE, the Defense Department activity that administers the health care plan for the uniformed services, retirees and their families, serves more than 9.2 million eligible beneficiaries worldwide in the Military Health System (MHS). As one of the lower scoring sites in the Index when it was first measured (56 in early 2005), TRICARE was committed to improving online services for beneficiaries and wanted to use the ACSI methodology to determine which areas they could improve to provide the best online service, a mission of critical importance. Voice-of-citizen feedback provided valuable information that guided site improvements, and after complementary focus groups and usability testing to hone in on specific changes, TRICARE completely redesigned the beneficiary website.*

*TRICARE health coverage is different for each beneficiary based on who they are (active duty military, retiree, family member, etc.), where they live, and which health plan option they use. One feature of the redesigned site is that visitors can create a “profile” based on these three elements. When the profile is entered, the website content is tailored to that beneficiary. They can view only the specific information they need without weeding through content applicable to other beneficiaries.*

*The redesign obviously paid off. TRICARE’s ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index score (currently 67) has increased nine points (more than 16%) from December of 2007 and fourteen points (24%) from its low point in mid 2007 of 54. Every month in 2008, satisfaction was higher than that same month in 2007. Citizens are responding positively to the changes made as part of the redesign, and TRICARE is reaping the rewards: more citizens are likely to use the web as a primary channel of interaction, and more citizens are likely to return to or recommend the site.*

*TRICARE is an excellent example of a website that recognized the need for citizen-centric improvement and leap-frogged ahead as a result of the guidance they got from listening to citizens. Its leadership should be commended for being so responsive to the needs of such an important constituency.*

## Site Search Engine

BuscadorUSA.gov is the search function on the Spanish-language portal to the federal government, GobiernoUSA. As a site-level search engine, this site doesn't fit into the four standard categories, so it is reported separately.

BuscadorUSA.gov has had great success in increasing citizen satisfaction, moving up three points since last quarter (71 to 74) and six points since this time last year.

General Services Administration	BuscadorUSA.gov (Spanish-language search) <a href="http://www.buscadorusa.gov/">http://www.buscadorusa.gov/</a>	74
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## 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)

This second method of categorization further allows federal websites to benchmark against their peers.

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.

	Q4 2007	Q4 2008	Year-over-Year Percentage Change
Department Sites (14 sites)	71.6	72.8	1.6%
Agency Sites (56 sites)	73.1	73.8	1.0%
Program Sites (23 sites)	73.4	75.5	2.9%

## Citizen Satisfaction Starts at the Top

Online citizen satisfaction often starts with providing a satisfying online experience at the department level. The table below shows the satisfaction scores for the fourteen department and department-level sites included in the benchmark. This quarter, only one department-level site is in the "top performer" category: NASA.gov (up one point to 81).

**Top Performers**

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website <a href="http://www.nasa.gov">http://www.nasa.gov</a>	81
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website <a href="http://www.gsa.gov">http://www.gsa.gov</a>	78
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website <a href="http://www.nist.gov">http://www.nist.gov</a>	75
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website <a href="http://www.gao.gov">http://www.gao.gov</a>	75
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website <a href="http://www.pbgc.gov">http://www.pbgc.gov</a>	73
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website <a href="http://www.fdic.gov">http://www.fdic.gov</a>	73
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA Main website <a href="http://www.va.gov">http://www.va.gov</a> and <a href="http://www.myhealth.va.gov">www.myhealth.va.gov</a>	73
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website <a href="http://www.sba.gov">http://www.sba.gov</a>	72
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website <a href="http://www.state.gov">http://www.state.gov</a>	71
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website <a href="http://www.nrc.gov">http://www.nrc.gov</a>	71
Access Board	United States Access Board	U.S. Access Board <a href="http://www.access-board.gov">http://www.access-board.gov</a>	71
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online main website <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/</a>	70
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website <a href="http://www.treasury.gov">http://www.treasury.gov</a>	69
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website <a href="http://www.archives.gov">http://www.archives.gov</a>	68

This quarter, there are five departments that are measuring citizen satisfaction with five or more sites for the Index. The Social Security Administration has the highest aggregate score for departments with five or more sites in the Index this quarter.

Department Comparison	# of Sites Measured	Score Q4 2008
Social Security Administration	7	79
Department of Health and Human Services	17	78
Department of the Treasury	7	73
General Services Administration	9	73
Department of Agriculture	8	66

## E-Gov Lags Behind Private Sector in Terms of Satisfaction

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 methodology of the ACSI allows for direct comparison between individual websites and overall industries because of the unique methodology that is applied to both the private and public sectors.

The chart below shows how satisfaction with e-government compares to satisfaction with e-commerce (including the top e-retail, online travel, online brokerage sites) and e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals), two online sectors also measured by the ACSI.

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Online Private Sector Scores	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
E-Government Q4 2008	74.1
E-Commerce Q4 2007	81.6
E-Business Q2 2008	79.3

The e-commerce and e-business sectors are measured once a year; e-government is measured every quarter.

In addition to comparing satisfaction with e-government to other online industries, it can also be instructive to compare satisfaction with government websites to satisfaction with offline government, measured by the ACSI once a year (every December). As shown below, citizens are considerably more satisfied with government websites (74.1) than they are with the government overall (68.9).

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Offline Government	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
E-Government Q4 2008	74.1
Offline Government Q4 2008	68.9

As Professor Claes Fornell said in his analysis of the offline government scores in December 2008, "Government websites represent an increasingly important channel for delivery of government services and contribute to what some are calling the 'new face of government.' This evolution is motivated by a promise of both better services as well as improved efficiency with cost-savings for government."

That e-gov surpasses traditional government in terms of satisfying citizens is to be expected and is all the more evidence that the Obama administration should put resources into improving e-gov. Doing business with the government online delivers convenience that is unparalleled in the offline world. Citizens can access a wide variety of information and documents with the click of a mouse, and they don't have to wait in long lines at a brick and mortar location or in long queues in a call center. Online service quality is also more consistent.

We see this trend in the private sector as well. E-retail and online brokerage 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 has advantages for both citizens and the government:*

- 1. Savings of time and money for the federal government**—*When citizens do more with the federal government online instead of using other channels, it improves the efficiency of collecting revenue 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.*
- 2. Better service for citizens and businesses**—*The availability of federal government information and services online makes it faster, easier, cheaper, and more convenient for citizens to interact with the government. A GSA report showed that online tax filing, license renewal, recreation, and job search are among the most popular e-gov programs, and the popularity of online benefits application keeps increasing.*
- 3. Accountability and transparency, which leads to support for democracy and more active participation in government**—*More people than ever have access to information that would previously have been much more difficult to obtain. Citizens have the ability to provide their feedback quickly and easily, allowing for unprecedented citizen participation in government. The free flow of information online also facilitates accountability and transparency, which discourages corruption.*
- 4. Streamlined bureaucracy and reduced redundancy**—*Putting government information and services online achieves consolidation and integrates systems and databases to increase efficiency. This enables government to operate more responsively and effectively.*

## Conclusion

When e-gov is executed well and meets the needs and expectations of the citizenry, it has the opportunity to be a real bright spot in a landscape marred by out-of-control spending and concerns about transparency and accountability. There are so many agencies already doing it right and so many more working hard to meet the needs of constituents online. Any website included in this Index should be commended for the effort to improve, and it seems clear that President Obama will be nothing but supportive of their efforts.

The test will come in whether President Obama can and will navigate the tricky restrictions and limitations placed on e-government, especially as he transitions from a dot-org environment to a dot-gov environment. Indications are that he will, but only time will tell.

## 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 the ACSI Government Index

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (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 the only uniform, national, 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 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 with more than 200 services and programs and more than 100 websites. The report on offline federal government services is released annually in December. The E-Government Index is released quarterly. The ACSI 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.

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 tangible impact on citizen usage of the web channel and on the bottom line.

*Note: This quarter marks the third report since moving to calendar-year quarters to make it easier for government agencies and departments to monitor citizen satisfaction in line with government reporting periods. Data was collected from October 1 – December 31, 2008.*

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, including 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 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 University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results identifies improvements to websites and other online initiatives that drive customer satisfaction. With over 30 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](http://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.

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