

GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

REPORT | 2020

*More Important Than Ever
For Serving The Public*



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INTRODUCTION

U.S. Government websites continue to be a vital source of information for Americans and people around the world. Current data suggests that federal government websites are on course for traffic volume of about 18 billion visits, representing about a 80% increase over last year.

Fueled by an increased need for knowledge about world events including the novel COVID-19 virus, traffic on government websites will likely reach historical levels. During the past 90 days, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) websites alone have experienced 1.54 billion visits and visits to the CDC websites experienced an increase of 70.92% from January 20 to February 20, 2020.

In addition to being a critical source of information, federal government websites are a convenient and cost-effective way to interact with citizens. For the first time this year U.S. Census is available online through the website [2020census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov) to make collecting this crucial data used by lawmakers as convenient and easy as possible for citizens.

The CFI Group Government Website Report measures website performance among citizens regarding their experience interacting with the federal government online. This year's study provides the latest information on citizen satisfaction, the pain points that exist, trends in mobile access, how chat functionality is paving the way to superior customer service, and the financial rewards that continued investment can provide.

CFI GROUP SOLUTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT



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Sheri manages offices across 4 continents from the CFI Group world headquarters in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



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Kelly manages CFI Group's practice for Citizen Satisfaction, Website Satisfaction, and Contact Center Satisfaction for public sector clients.



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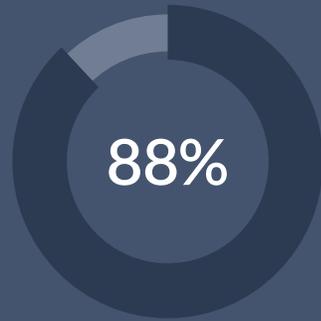
David works with the Veterans Administration and other public sector clients to help measure and manage citizen and employee experience.



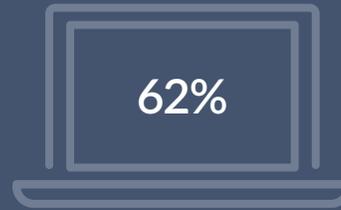
RODGER PARK
Director of Customer Analytics

Rodger manages accounts in the public/military sector as well as others in both consumer and business-to-business contexts.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS AT A GLANCE



of respondents primarily interact with an agency via website



use desktop or laptop

32%



use mobile phone



use tablet



45%

visit every few months



visit to perform a transaction



49%

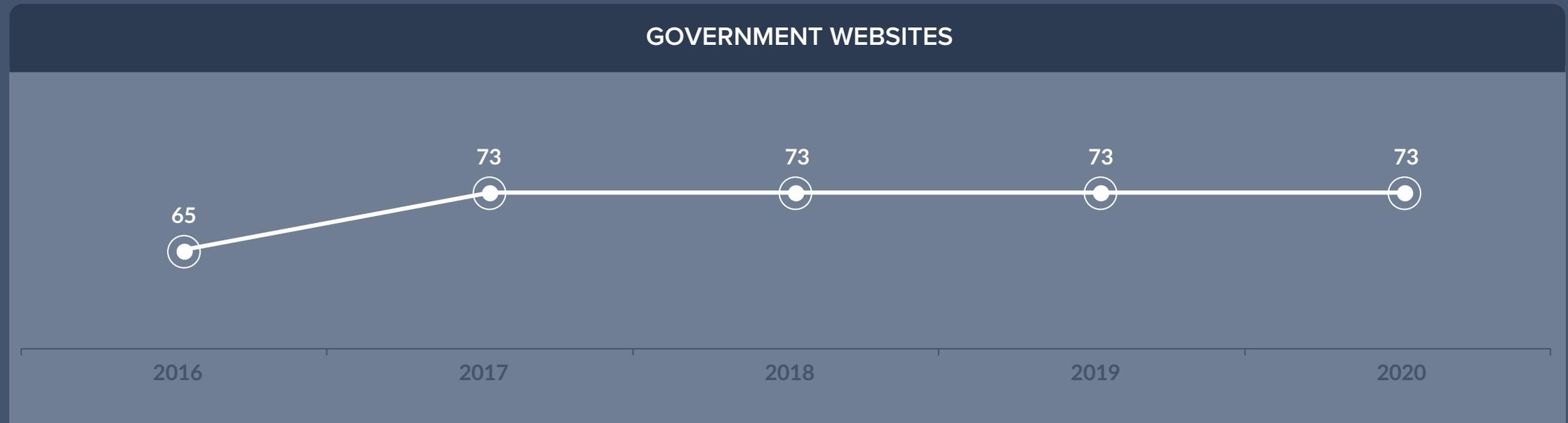
visit outside of regular business hours



say their opinion of the agency improved based on interaction

OVERALL SATISFACTION REMAINS FLAT

Since 2017, the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) score for federal government websites has remained unchanged at 73. Based on these results, some may conclude that little effort is being put into improving government websites. However, it's important to note that retaining the score of 73 suggests efforts are being taken to keep up with ever-changing technology and the increased expectations of visitors. Additionally, this score exceeds the 2019 Federal Government Citizen Satisfaction score of 68.





1

NAVIGATION AND WEBSITE SEARCH

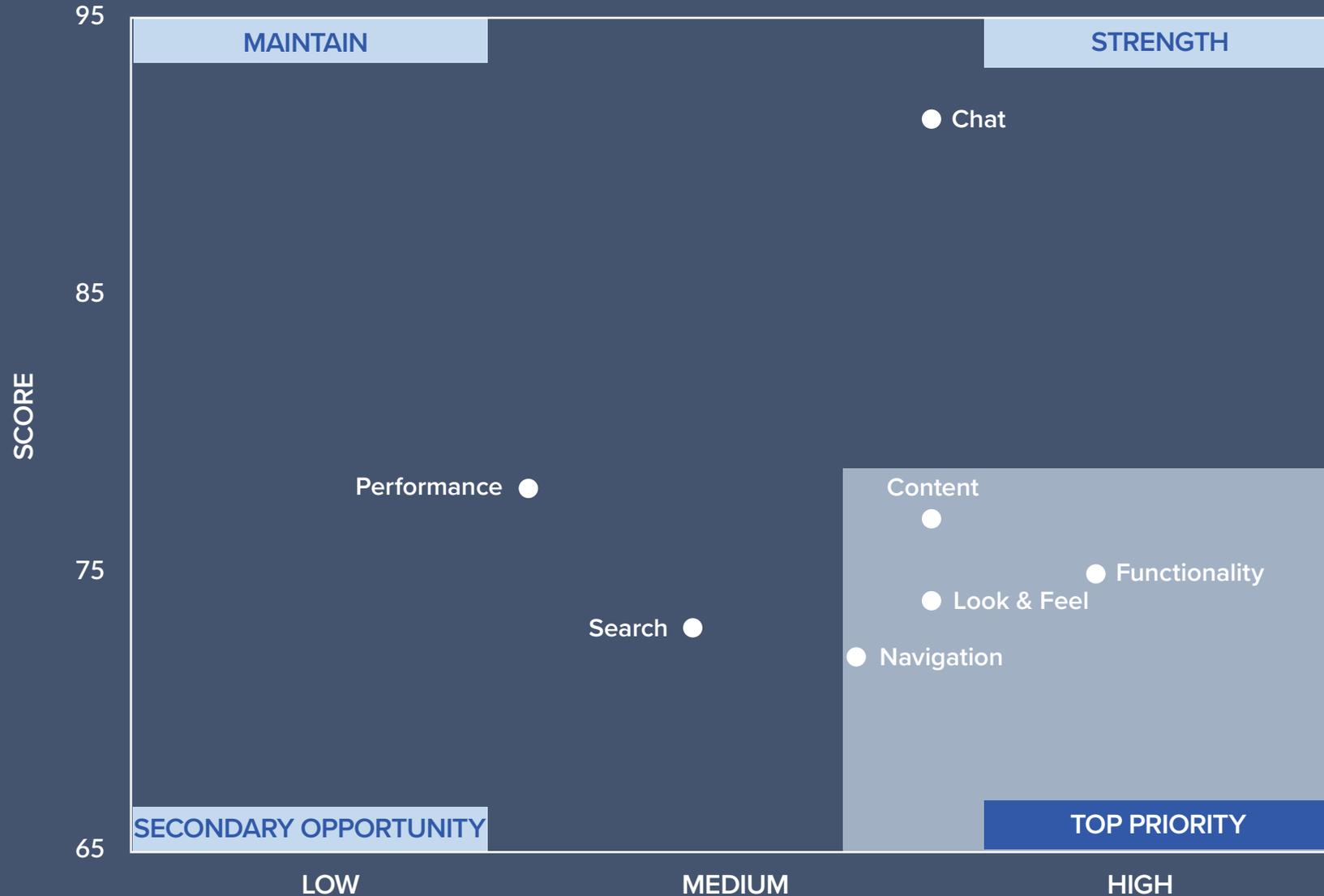
NAVIGATION REMAINS AN ISSUE

SEVEN ELEMENTS OF THE WEBSITE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE		
SCORE	ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
91	 CHAT	Accessible agents who are knowledgeable, effective, and empowered
78	 PERFORMANCE	Quick-loading pages and apps that are consistent and error-free
77	 CONTENT	Quality, engaging information that is accurate and up-to-date
75	 FUNCTIONALITY	Useful features/services helping the visitor to accomplish their specific task
74	 LOOK & FEEL	Visually appealing layout that makes information clear and accessible
73	 SEARCH	Easy search tool with results that are relevant, organized, and filterable
72	 NAVIGATION	Intuitive navigation that allows a visitor to easily find what they need

Navigation remains the biggest challenge for federal government website visitors and designers alike due to the enormous amount of information most sites attempt to make available. The sheer depth of information being presented as well as the wide variety of visitors to government sites makes it extremely difficult to get everyone the information they need in as few clicks as possible.

While the Likelihood to Return metric measured in the CFI Group annual survey is reasonably high at 81, likely due to limited options for the information available on many federal government websites, the Likelihood to Recommend the website metric is more telling in terms of how site visitors view their experiences, coming in at 76.

PRIORITY MATRIX

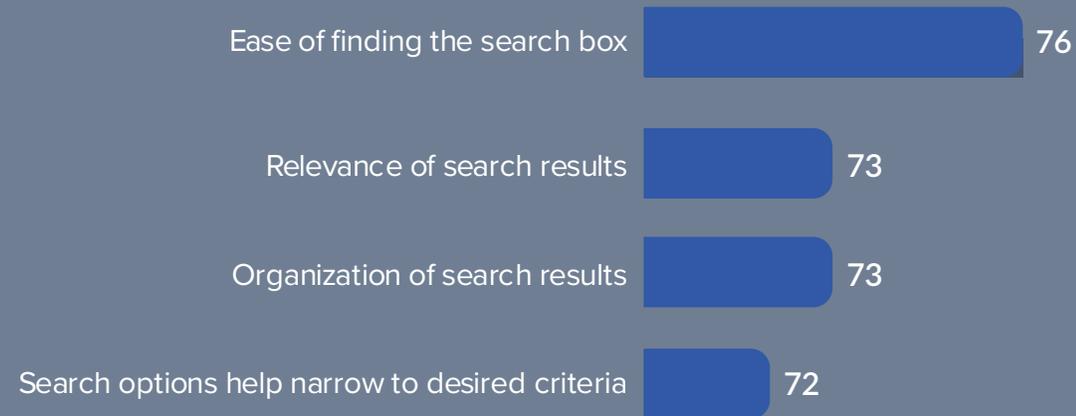


Mapping the survey results on a priority matrix shows chat as a strength for those websites who offer this option. Low scores for navigation and search place them in the categories of “top priority” and “secondary opportunity” indicating the need to give these elements consideration when developing improvement plans. The site performance element of the federal website experience scores relatively high making it an area that agencies will need to maintain in order to keep the current federal website CSI score.

WEBSITE SEARCH CONTINUES TO DISAPPOINT VISITORS

Government website search continues to frustrate visitors especially when it comes to having options that help narrow desired criteria. Content rich sites need to provide visitors with more help in this area so that they receive a reasonable number of results. Strides taken to provide narrow and relevant results, while challenging, is key to improving visitor experiences.

SEARCH FUNCTION PERFORMANCE SCORES



WHAT USERS SAY

“Need to be less cluttered and more user-friendly (which means using consumer's terminology not official legalese) Search mechanism needs to be more specific with results---when I search I tend to get far more possibilities than I should as many are inappropriate.

Work on some search parameters. I often get somewhat irrelevant results for other than basic searches.

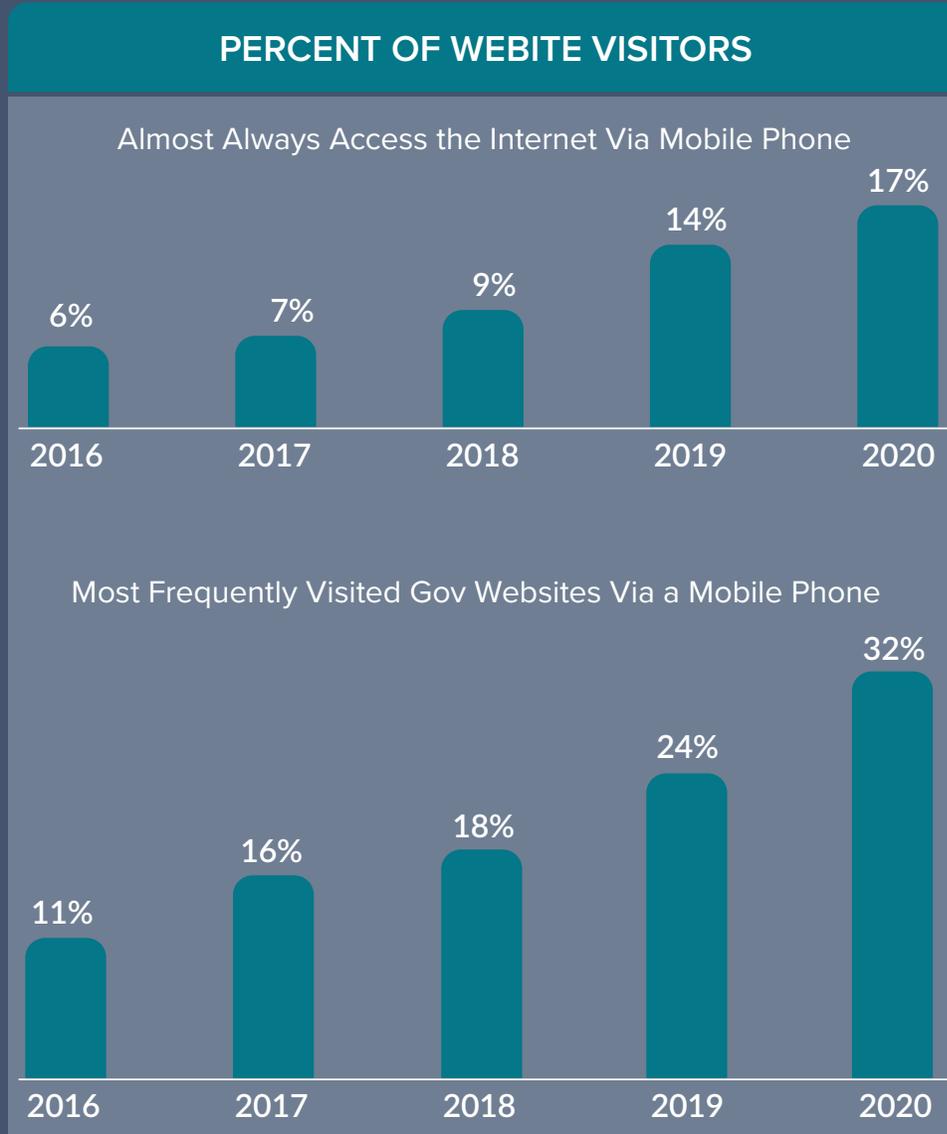
Hard to find the exact information I was looking for. They need a better way to search through the site.”



2

MOBILE ACCESS

MOBILE ACCESS CRITICAL FOR REACHING BROAD AUDIENCE



The Connected Government Act, signed into law in January 2018, requires new and redesigned agency websites to be mobile-friendly. Unfortunately, based on past third-party assessments by the [Information Technology & Innovation Foundation \(ITIF\)](#), this is an area in which the Federal Government has struggled. While government agencies continue their efforts to address these requirements and improve their mobile capabilities, website access by mobile phone is significantly increasing and is predicted to accelerate.

This year's CFI Group website survey results indicate exclusive use of mobile phones to access the internet continues to rise, nearing 20% this year. Although recent data from the [Pew Research Center](#) indicates reliance on smartphones for online access is especially common among younger adults, non-whites, and lower-income Americans currently, a report published by the [World Advertising Research Center \(WARC\)](#) predicts that as early as 2025, nearly three-quarters of internet users will access the web solely via their smartphones.

Also underscoring how important the mobile experience is for citizens accessing federal government sites, the CFI Group website study shows the percentage of visitors saying their most recent visit to a government site was via a mobile phone has nearly tripled since 2016. As this percentage continues to climb, optimizing the mobile experience will be critical for meeting the needs of citizens.

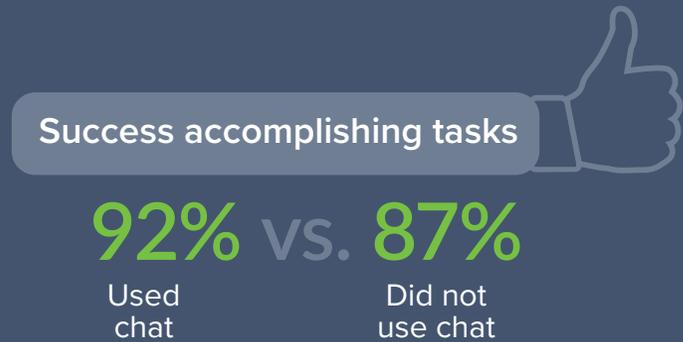
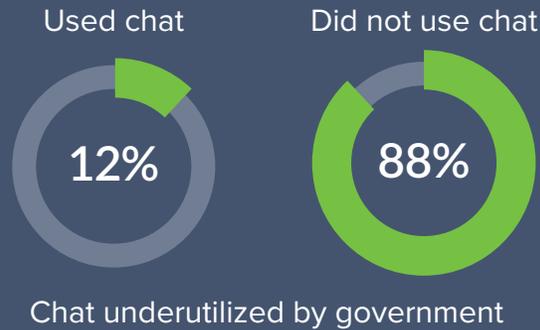


3

CHAT AND SELF SERVE

CHAT IS A BIG WIN FOR GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

While few visitors to government websites are reporting they used chat during their recent visit, those who do report having a much better experience.

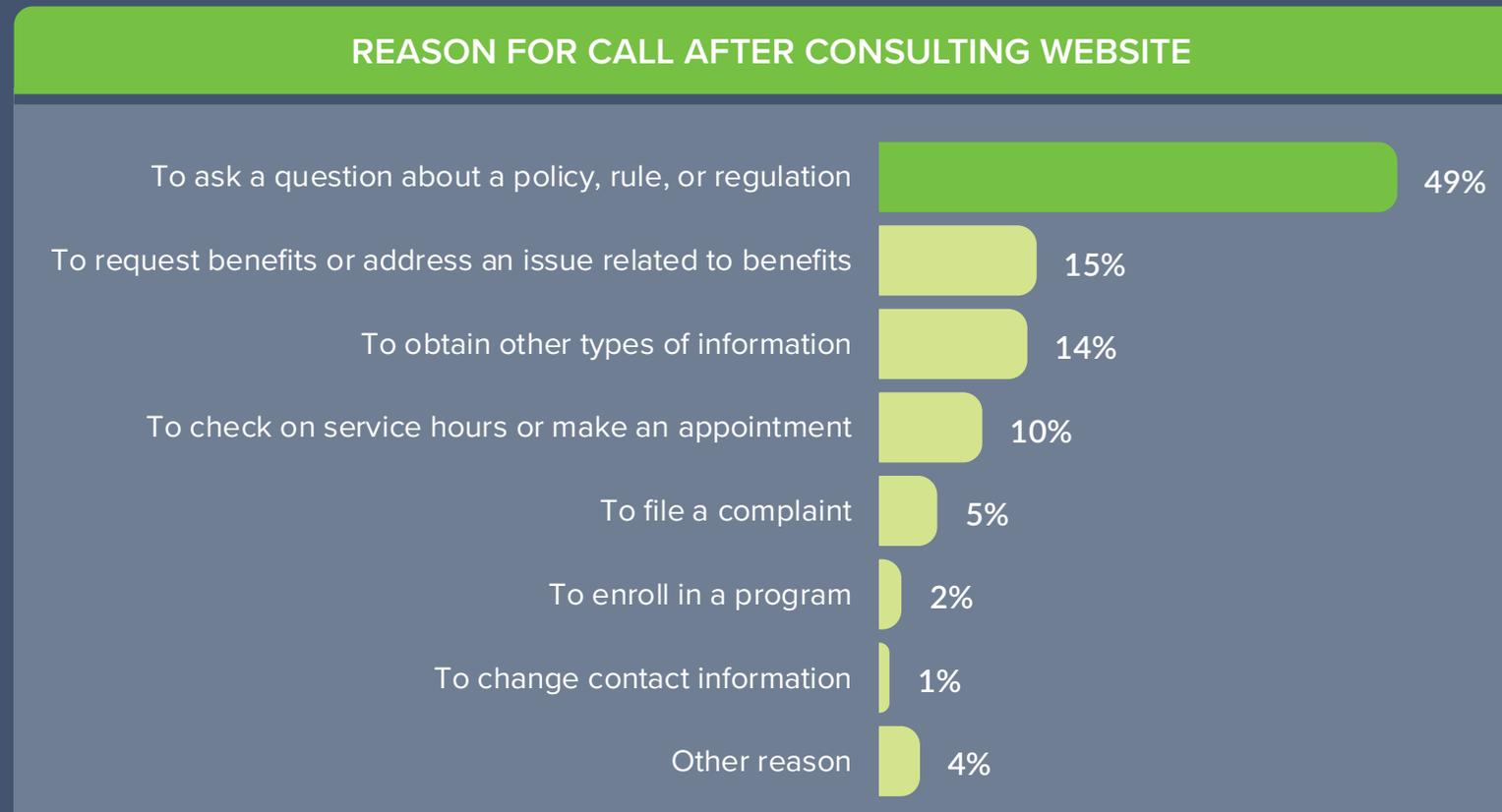


Those accessing government sites via their mobile phones are heavier users of chat compared to those using computers

The primary users of chat are young, highly educated, higher-income males

GOVERNMENT WEBSITE SELF-SERVICE FAILURES

When websites fail to provide citizens with the information they are seeking, citizens will use a more costly channel to answer their questions. Data from CFI Group's [Government Contact Center Satisfaction Index \(GCCSI\)](#) study shows that when citizens try to self serve on a website and fail, it is primarily to get information about a policy, rule, or regulation. Others are on agency websites to request benefits, file a complaint, or make an appointment. Agencies with websites that provide details on policies, rules and regulations as well as opportunities to transact online will provide those who are open to self serving the flexibility and convenience to do so.



Note: Filtered by used website prior to contacting

IMPROVED WEBSITES COULD SPELL SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

Improving citizen satisfaction with the services provided by the federal government is important at face value and has proven to increase citizen trust in the government. But that is not the only pay off for investing in improved federal government websites. Ensuring that citizens can get the information they need and accomplish their tasks online, can result in fewer phone calls and office visits to agencies resulting in significant savings. While currently, most visitors can accomplish their tasks on federal government websites, further reducing the percentage of those who can't complete their tasks online could dramatically reduce cost by lessening the need for contact centers and office visits.

10 BILLION

number of visits to government websites annually¹

1.2 BILLION

unable to accomplish their task²

~3.5 BILLION SAVINGS

31% or 372 Million website visitors call the agency after failing to accomplish task X \$9.30 per call³

~2.1 BILLION

18% or 216 Million website visitors visit a local office after failing to accomplish task X \$9.30 per visit⁴

1. [Digital Analytics Program](#), which collects web traffic from around 400 executive branch government domains across about 5,700 websites, including every cabinet-level department

2. CFI Group 2020 Website Satisfaction Research

3. An estimate of the average cost of completing a call through federal contact centers

4. An estimate of the average cost of an office visit to a federal agency local office

ABOUT THE APPROACH

In 2016, CFI Group released its inaugural Government Websites report in partnership with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). This study is unique in that it measures not only the performance of the agency websites, but also the respondent profile of government website users.

Understanding who is using government websites and for what purpose is the first step for agencies in tailoring the content and features to strategically improve website user satisfaction. This report identifies insights from the respondent base that will help government executives to better manage agency websites. The results are based on analysis using the proven methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index, the only national indicator of customer satisfaction.

In order to provide an accurate representation of the state of government websites as a whole, CFI Group collected data from users of a wide array of government websites.

Respondents to this year's survey were chosen at random through the use of a market research panel. In order to be eligible for the survey, individuals needed to have accessed a federal agency's website within the past year.

ABOUT US

Since 1988, CFI Group has delivered customer experience measurement and business insights from its Ann Arbor, Michigan headquarters and a network of global offices. As founding partner of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), CFI Group is the only company within the United States licensed to apply customized ACSI methodology in the federal government. Using this patented technology and top research experts, CFI Group helps agencies improve the citizen experience with the federal government.

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