

**Audit of the Office of Citizen  
Services and Communications'  
Performance Measure: "Tax Dollars  
Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing  
FirstGov Technologies"  
Report Number: A040226/O/F/F05005  
December 15, 2004**



U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
Office of Inspector General

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December 15, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR M. J. JAMESON

ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF CITIZEN SERVICES AND  
COMMUNICATIONS (X)

FROM:

*Kristin R. Wilson*  
KRISTIN R. WILSON

REGIONAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDITING  
FINANCE AND STAFF OFFICES AUDIT OFFICE (JA-F)

SUBJECT:

Audit of the Office of Citizen Services and  
Communications' Performance Measure: "Tax Dollars  
Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov  
Technologies"  
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This report presents the results of the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) assessment of the control risk over data and related systems used by the Office of Citizen Services and Communications (OCSC) to support its performance measure entitled "Tax Dollars Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov Technologies." We conducted the audit in conjunction with the Audit of the General Services Administration's (GSA) Fiscal Year 2004 Financial Statements, as required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 01-02, "Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements." OMB Bulletin No. 01-02 requires the auditor to obtain an understanding of the components of internal control relating to the existence and completeness assertions relevant to the performance measure.

### **BACKGROUND**

The performance measure "Tax Dollars Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov Technologies" is compiled and presented by the Office of E-Gov Solutions Support within the Office of Citizen Services and Communications.

The OCSC serves as a central federal gateway for citizens, businesses, other governments, and the media to easily obtain information and services from the



government on the World Wide Web (web), in print, over the telephone, or by e-mail. This Office also provides citizen-centered activities, including leadership and support for electronic government initiatives and for the operation of the official federal portal, FirstGov.gov (FirstGov).

The OCSC is organized into two components – Citizen Services and Communications. Within the Citizens Services component, the Office of E-Gov Solutions Support develops and maintains a government-wide citizen services infrastructure including a search engine, secure hosting, and automated Content Management Services (CMS). Additionally, the Office of E-Gov Solutions Support incorporates new technology solutions to improve the effectiveness of the FirstGov web site.

FirstGov is the United States Government's official web portal to federal, state and local government web resources and services. According to the OCSC, FirstGov is a catalyst for a growing electronic government, allowing citizens to navigate through the governmental red tape. Using FirstGov, citizens are able to apply for benefits online, contact a government agency, or use the Internet's most comprehensive search engine of government websites.

One way to measure the effectiveness of this site is to determine if FirstGov has saved the taxpayers money by eliminating the need for agencies to maintain individual web sites. In order to do so, the OCSC implemented this performance measure “Tax Dollars Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov Technologies.”

This performance measure is calculated by obtaining market cost data for the two types of services provided by OCSC; Managed Web Hosting and Search Engine services. Managed Web Hosting services consist of a three-tier server (Web, Database, and Application Server), and management services, which include tape back up and restore services. Search Engine services provide the capability to search the complete Federal Database or tailored to the individual customer's needs.

Once obtained, the appropriate market cost data for these services is applied to each of the customer agencies based on needs, resulting in the total costs the customer agencies would have paid for the services had they been obtained through the private sector. Subsequently, the amount charged by OCSC for providing Managed Web Hosting and Search Engine Services through FirstGov is subtracted from the calculated market costs for these services in order to determine the “Tax Dollars Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov Technologies.”

## **OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

The objective of our audit was to answer the following question:

***Does the OCSC have systems, policies, and procedures designed to ensure completeness and existence of the data supporting the selected performance measure?***

As required by OMB Bulletin No. 01-02, we limited our audit to obtaining an understanding of the design and operation of controls relating to the existence and completeness assertions<sup>1</sup> on data used to support the performance measure. Accordingly, we did not design audit procedures to test the operational effectiveness of controls. Therefore, we render no opinion on the effectiveness of controls over data systems supporting the performance measure. Additionally, our audit objective did not include a determination of the adequacy or usefulness of the performance measure, pursuant to the requirements of the Government Performance Results Act. Again, we render no opinion on these matters.

To accomplish our objective, we:

- Interviewed OCSC officials to gain an understanding of the methodology used to compute the performance measure.
- Discussed the sources of the data used to compute the performance measure with the Director of E-Gov Solutions Support.
- Examined documentation maintained by OCSC that support the performance measure calculations for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2004.

## **RESULTS OF AUDIT**

In our opinion, there is a low risk that internal controls used by OCSC would not provide reasonable assurance that the data supporting the performance measure exist and are complete. We assessed the internal controls over the existence and completeness of the data and determined the controls to be sufficient to support the existence and completeness of the data and systems supporting the OCSC's performance measure "Tax Dollars Saved as a Result of Agencies Sharing FirstGov Technologies."

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<sup>1</sup> Evidential matter for Existence and Completeness assertions described in AU Sections 326.04 and 326.05 of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants' Codification of Statements on Auditing Standards.

For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2004, OCSC determined that the cost savings for both Managed Web Hosting and Search Engine services was \$19,806,440.

We wish to thank the OCSC staff for their assistance and courtesies extended to us during our review. This report contains no formal recommendations and accordingly, a written response is not required. If you or your staff have any questions please contact me at (202) 501-0006.

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