



American Customer Satisfaction Index

# E-Government Satisfaction Index

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## Executive Summary: Citizen Satisfaction With E-Gov Lowest in Three Years

For the third straight quarter, citizen satisfaction with federal government websites has declined, according to the first quarter 2008 release of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. The current quarter's aggregate score of 72.4 is half a point lower than last quarter (72.9), a full point lower than first quarter 2007 (73.4), and a point and a half lower than its all-time high (74 in June 2006), making it the lowest e-gov score reported in three years. See the trends over time chart on page 4.

*In this third straight quarter of decline in overall citizen satisfaction with e-gov, some sites still excel at meeting citizens' needs.*

There are two possible factors contributing to the decline in satisfaction this quarter. One cause may be the uncertainty leading up to the presidential election as many federal government agencies are waiting to see what changes a new administration will effect. While some of the candidates have made campaign promises about e-government, some haven't even mentioned it, and there is no clear sense of the level of focus and resources a new administration will devote to improving e-gov. As a result, government agencies may be holding off on

enhancements to their websites. Unfortunately, citizens may be suffering as a result of this "wait and see" attitude, which is reflected in the decline of satisfaction scores.

Secondly, the category of portals and department main sites has seen its aggregate score fall more than three points since reaching a high point of satisfaction in the second quarter of 2006. The decline in this one category of sites is driving down the aggregate citizen satisfaction score. Portals and department main sites — which serve either as the gateway to a department or to link users to information from external sources — often face the challenge of not being able to control all of the site features and content that affect citizen satisfaction. However, the data points to an urgent need for these sites to focus on better meeting the needs of citizens in areas they can control.

But while customer satisfaction scores with the category of portals and department sites are falling, the e-commerce/transaction category is a bright spot in citizen satisfaction with federal government websites. Satisfaction has jumped 1.5% since last quarter for the e-commerce/transaction category, which contains sites that allow citizens to perform transactions or make a purchase. The significant score increase for this group of sites is an indication that citizens are eager for government sites to evolve from information sources to conduits for conducting business with the government.

Additionally, there are individual sites that still manage to excel amidst the gloomy overall climate of citizen satisfaction with e-government. This quarter, 17 of the 105 measured sites (16%) meet our "top performer" criteria with a score of 80 or higher. In general, these top-performing sites score significantly higher on some of the most critical elements of satisfaction with a website, such as navigation, search and functionality. Any website, whether in the private or public sector, with a score of 80 or higher is clearly doing a superior job in meeting citizens' needs and expectations. It's arguable that meeting this high standard is an even greater achievement for federal government websites, which typically don't have the same level of available resources as the private sector.

With the decline in satisfaction this quarter, e-government satisfaction scores are falling further behind their private sector counterparts. For example, the recently-released ACSI E-Commerce report (which measures customer satisfaction with private sector e-retail, online brokerage and online travel sites), showed an all-time high satisfaction score of 81.6 for that sector, significantly higher than the e-government aggregate score of 72.4. Customer satisfaction with private sector e-business sites (news/information sites, search engines and portals, which are more akin to government sites because they are informational in nature), also beats e-government by almost 4%.

Improving citizen satisfaction with e-government is a task that each individual site must tackle individually. However our results show that navigation and functionality remain top priorities for most government websites.

## About the ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index, which is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with the American Society for Quality (ASQ), ForeSee Results and CFI Group. The quarterly ACSI E-Government Index reports individual satisfaction scores for over 100 federal websites on the ACSI's 100-point scale.

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: All scores published in this report are 90-day average satisfaction scores from data gathered from November 6, 2007 – February 5, 2008.*

So that federal government websites can benchmark against their peers, scores in this report are further organized by both functional category and organizational structure. The functional categories include:

- News and information (61 sites)
- Portals and department main (26 sites)
- E-commerce and transactional (13 sites)
- Career and recruitment (4 sites)

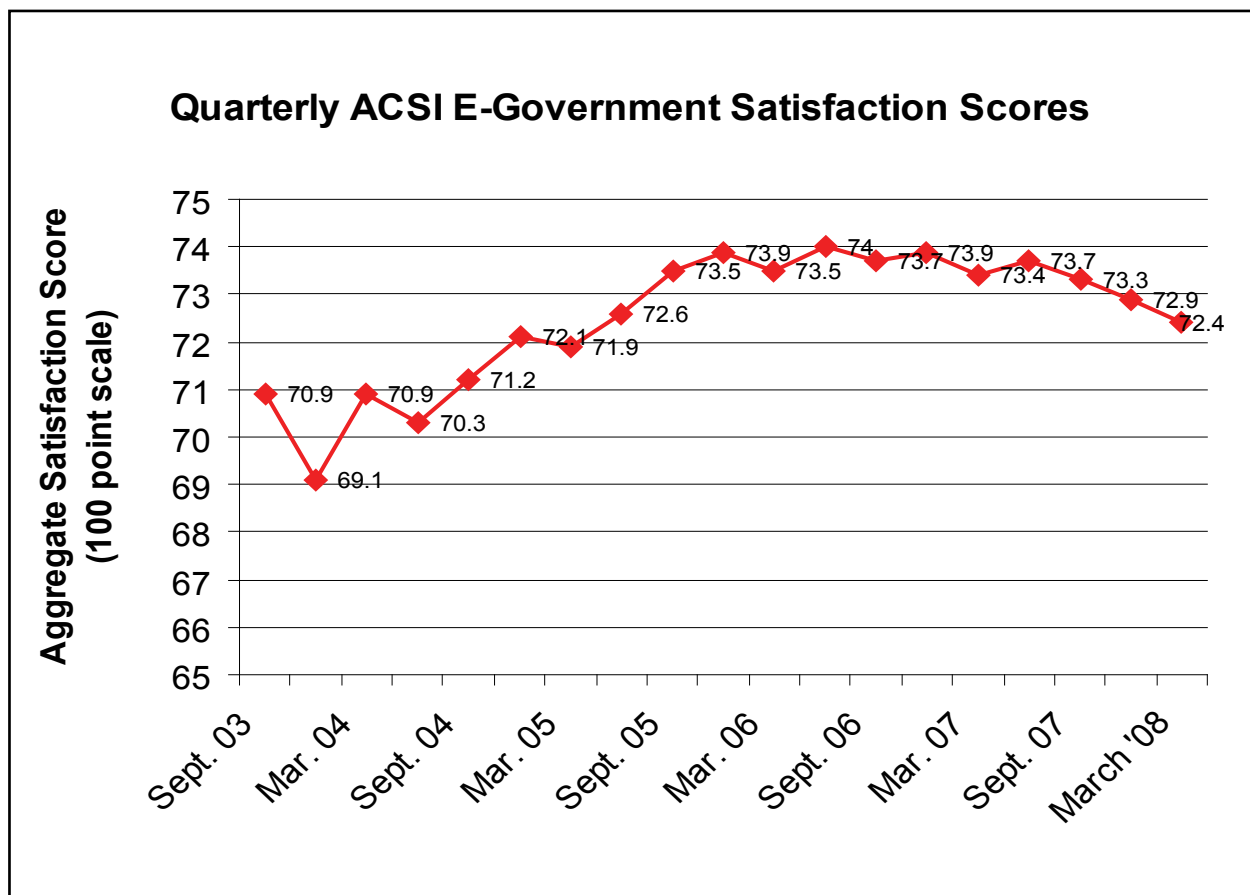
The ACSI E-Government Index also analyzes scores according to three organizational categories that match the way the federal government is structured:

- Department sites: departments, independent agencies, corporations, administrations, and other top-level sites (14 websites)
- Agency sites: entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization (55 sites)
- Program sites: all other sites (35 sites)

The ACSI methodology assesses satisfaction with specific elements of a website, including navigation, functionality, search, and look and feel.

### Satisfaction with E-Gov Declines Over Time

The chart below shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites from 3rd quarter 2003 (when the first E-Gov Index was published) through 1st quarter 2008. This quarter marks the third straight decline for the aggregate e-government score and the lowest score in three years. Quarter-over-quarter, more sites have seen their citizen satisfaction scores go down than increase, perhaps due to the increased difficulty of making site changes that would improve citizen satisfaction as everyone awaits the upcoming administration change.



When comparing scores for sites measured both this quarter and last:

- 42% of sites now have lower scores
- 33% now have higher scores
- 26% stayed the same

(Total exceeds 100% due to rounding)

This represents a “flip flop” from last quarter, when 40% had quarter-over-quarter increases and 33% had score declines. This points to both the need and the challenge of staying ahead of citizens’ continually evolving expectations for what constitutes a “satisfying” online experience.

## E-Gov Trails Other Industries 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 chart below shows how satisfaction with e-government compares to satisfaction with e-commerce (e-retail, online travel, online brokerage) 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 Q1 2008	72.4
E-Commerce Q4 2007	81.6
E-Business Q2 2007	75.2

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

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Offline Government	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
E-Government Q1 2008	72.4
Offline Government 2007	67.8

In addition to comparing satisfaction with e-gov 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. As shown in the second chart citizens are considerably more satisfied with government websites (72.4) than they are with the federal government overall (67.8).

Doing business with the government online delivers convenience that is unparalleled in the offline world. Citizens can access a wide variety of information with the click of a mouse, and they don’t have to wait in long lines or in long queues in a call center. Online service quality is also more consistent. This disparity in scores shows that citizens consider interacting with the government online to be a good alternative in most cases. However, there is clearly room for improvement.

## Top Performers

This quarter, 17 sites (16% of the total) are in the “top performers” category with scores of 80 or higher. All of these sites have been top performers in the past, many for multiple quarters or even years. These sites are to be commended for maintaining such as strong focus on citizen satisfaction and continuing to meet their audiences’ ever-evolving needs.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 3/08
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/</a>	87
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application <a href="https://so44a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html">https://so44a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html</a>	87
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">http://medlineplus.gov</a>	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp/">http://medlineplus.gov/esp/</a>	84
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/">http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/</a>	83
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm">http://www.ssa.gov/bsowelcome.htm</a>	82
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/">http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/</a>	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español <a href="http://www.cancer.gov/espanol">www.cancer.gov/espanol</a>	82
Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative <a href="http://www.dna.gov">http://www.dna.gov</a>	81
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center <a href="http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/">www.pueblo.gsa.gov/</a>	81
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog <a href="http://catalog.usmint.gov">http://catalog.usmint.gov</a>	81
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	81
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	80
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.cia.gov/employment">http://www.cia.gov/employment</a>	80
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website <a href="http://www.gobiernousa.gov">www.gobiernousa.gov</a>	80
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website <a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>	80
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>	80

Once again, the Social Security Administration leads the group, this quarter with two sites at 87 (Help With Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs and Internet Social Security Benefits Application). Three NIH sites trail just slightly with scores of 85 (MedlinePlus), 84 (MedlinePlus en español), and 83 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases).

In addition to measuring overall customer satisfaction, the unique cause-and-effect methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) also assesses satisfaction with a number of elements of the online experience that affect satisfaction overall. Strong satisfaction for the top perform-

ers is driven by high scores in some of these key elements of website satisfaction. The chart below compares element-level satisfaction for select elements between top performers and the group of bottom-performing sites (those with scores of 70 or lower):

Element	Score for Top Performers	Score for Bottom Performers	% Difference
Navigation	82	65	26%
Search	82	66	24%
Functionality	85	67	27%
Look & Feel	85	71	20%

In general, the sites that score greater than 80 do so because they also excel specifically in the website elements that are most important for their category. For example, the element that is generally most important for transactional sites is Functionality, which evaluates the ability to accomplish desired tasks. The three transactional Social Security sites (Help With Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs, Internet Social Security Benefits Application and Social Security Business Online) all have strong scores for Functionality, indicating that citizens are able to accomplish what they intend to on the sites. For news and information sites, Search is the most important element. The English and Spanish-language versions of MedlinePlus both excel at Search, which is critical considering the large volumes of health-related information available on the sites.

MedlinePlus en español and the Spanish-language site from the National Cancer Institute both have strong scores for Navigation, as do two Social Security sites: Business Services Online and Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs.

## Functionality, Navigation are Priorities for Improving E-Gov

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.

It’s no surprise that Search remains the biggest priority for improvement for most government websites. For 83% of sites Search is the top priority element. Search remains a key challenge even for private sector sites with more resources to invest in improvements.

This quarter, Navigation (which assesses ease of moving through the site) and Functionality both grow in importance. Navigation is now ranked top priority for 51% of sites and Functionality is a top priority for 47% of sites, both up from last quarter. The growing significance of these two elements may indicate that citizens are holding government websites to the rising standards of private sector sites. Citizens have become accustomed to fast page downloads and natural, intuitive navigation on top private sector sites and expect the same from government sites.

## Citizens Less Likely to Recommend Government Websites

Citizen satisfaction drives desired “future behaviors,” which the ACSI methodology also measures. The chart below compares this quarter to last quarter’s scores for each of the three measured future behaviors:

Future Behavior	Q1 2008 Score	Q7 2007 Score	% Change
Likelihood to Return to the Site	82	82	0%
Likelihood to Recommend the Site	78	79	-1.3%
Likelihood to Use the Site as a Primary Resource	75	75	0

Despite lower overall satisfaction, the score for Likelihood to Return remains the highest at 82. In many cases, citizens don’t have other options when they seek a particular type of government information. Lower overall satisfaction this quarter is reflected in the aggregate Likelihood to Recommend score; even though citizens have to go back to the websites themselves, they aren’t always happy enough with the experience to recommend the site to family, friends or colleagues.

More importantly, Likelihood to Use The Site as a Primary Resource is the lowest-scoring future behavior, which is bad news for government agencies trying to drive traffic online and away from more costly channels. In order to improve citizens’ likelihood to use the website as the preferred channel, overall satisfaction must be increased. In order for overall satisfaction to increase, each website needs to identify and improve its highest-priority elements, which can include Navigation, Look and Feel, Search and Functionality.

## Quarter-Over-Quarter Category Comparison

The table below shows aggregate citizen satisfaction with each of the four functional categories of sites. While the e-commerce/transactions category shows a strong quarter-over-quarter increase of 1.5%, all other categories have declined. Portals/department main sites suffer the biggest drop of 1.2%.

Category	Q1 2008	Q4 2007	Quarter-over-Quarter Percentage Change
News/Information	71.7	72.3	-0.8%
Portals/Department Main Sites	71.9	72.8	-1.2%
E-commerce/Transactions	75.7	74.6	1.5%
Career/Recruitment	77.1	77.2	-0.1%

## News/Information Sites

Aggregate citizen satisfaction with the 61 sites in the news/information category falls slightly from last quarter to a 71.7. There is a huge range of scores in this category, with top marks going to MedlinePlus for a score of 85. In fact, 11% of news/information sites (seven sites) have scores of 80 or higher, making them top performers.



Four sites in this category have experienced significant score increases (of three points or more) since last quarter. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Map Service Center had the largest quarterly increase: five points. The U.S. Embassy in Nigeria saw its score go up four points since last quarter, driven by increased satisfaction with content, functionality and site performance. The General Service Administration's E-library site and the National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website both had quarter-over-quarter increases of three points.

While some of these improved sites already had strong scores and some still present opportunities for improvement, each of these sites should be commended for increasing citizen satisfaction.

Search is the top priority for improvement for 81% of the news/information sites that measure it.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">http://medlineplus.gov</a>	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp/">http://medlineplus.gov/esp/</a>	84
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/">http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/</a>	83
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/">http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/</a>	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español <a href="http://www.cancer.gov/espanol">www.cancer.gov/espanol</a> <a href="http://www.cancer.gov/espanol">www.cancer.gov/espanol</a>	82
Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative <a href="http://www.dna.gov">http://www.dna.gov</a>	81
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center <a href="http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/">www.pueblo.gsa.gov/</a>	81
Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website <a href="http://www.4woman.gov">www.4woman.gov</a>	79
Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS	OSE main website <a href="http://science-education.nih.gov/">http://science-education.nih.gov/</a>	79
NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health <a href="http://nihseniorhealth.gov">http://nihseniorhealth.gov</a>	79
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET <a href="http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov">http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov</a>	78
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook <a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco/">http://www.bls.gov/oco/</a>	78
National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health <a href="http://www.girlshealth.com">www.girlshealth.com</a>	77
National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA main website <a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov">www.drugabuse.gov</a>	77
National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website <a href="http://www.ncjrs.gov">www.ncjrs.gov</a>	77
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>	76
Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality <a href="http://www.ahrq.gov">www.ahrq.gov</a>	76

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E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
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
National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website <a href="http://www.ojp.gov/nij">http://www.ojp.gov/nij</a>	75
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>	75
General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center <a href="http://www.consumeraction.gov">www.consumeraction.gov</a>	75
National Library of Medicine, HHS	ClinicalTrials.gov <a href="http://ClinicalTrials.gov">http://ClinicalTrials.gov</a>	75
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	FMCSA Protect Your Move <a href="http://www.protectyourmove.gov">www.protectyourmove.gov</a>	75
Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website <a href="http://www.fsis.usda.gov">www.fsis.usda.gov</a>	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications <a href="http://www2.fdic.gov">www2.fdic.gov</a>	73
Department of Justice	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services <a href="http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/">http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/</a>	73
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Argentina <a href="http://spanish.argentina.usembassy.gov/">http://spanish.argentina.usembassy.gov/</a>	73
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in China <a href="http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/">http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/</a>	72
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website <a href="http://educationusa.state.gov">http://educationusa.state.gov</a>	72
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>	72
Small Business Administration	Business Gateway <a href="http://www.business.gov">www.business.gov</a>	72
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Kenya <a href="http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/">http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/</a>	71
Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website <a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov">www.ers.usda.gov</a>	71
International Information Programs, State	IIP main website <a href="http://usinfo.state.gov">http://usinfo.state.gov</a> *	71
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Turkey (in Turkish) <a href="http://turkish.turkey.usembassy.gov/">http://turkish.turkey.usembassy.gov/</a>	70
Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website <a href="http://www.bea.gov">http://www.bea.gov</a>	70
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website <a href="http://www.nrc.gov">www.nrc.gov</a>	69
Military Health System, Defense	Force Health Protection & Readiness Policy and Programs <a href="http://fhp.osd.mil/">http://fhp.osd.mil/</a>	69
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions <a href="http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov">http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov</a>	69
Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website <a href="http://www.fas.usda.gov">www.fas.usda.gov</a>	69

\*Usinfo.state.gov was phased out during this quarter and has been succeeded by www.america.gov.

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E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Saudia Arabia <a href="http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/saudi-arabia/">http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/saudi-arabia/</a>	68
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Nigeria <a href="http://abuja.usembassy.gov/">http://abuja.usembassy.gov/</a>	68
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Perú (in Spanish) <a href="http://spanish.peru.usembassy.gov/">http://spanish.peru.usembassy.gov/</a>	68
National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website <a href="http://www.nal.usda.gov">www.nal.usda.gov</a>	68
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in India <a href="http://india.usembassy.gov/">http://india.usembassy.gov/</a>	68
Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service <a href="http://www.fms.treas.gov">www.fms.treas.gov</a>	67
Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website <a href="http://www.ttb.gov">www.ttb.gov</a>	67
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
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website <a href="http://www.csrees.usda.gov">www.csrees.usda.gov</a>	66
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Germany (in German) <a href="http://german.germany.usembassy.gov/">http://german.germany.usembassy.gov/</a>	66
U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce	U.S. Census Bureau main website <a href="http://www.census.gov">http://www.census.gov</a>	65
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website <a href="http://exchanges.state.gov/">http://exchanges.state.gov/</a>	65
Department of State	U.S. Embassy in Pakistan <a href="http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/">http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/</a>	64
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website <a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov</a>	63
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases <a href="http://www.archives.gov/aad/index.html">www.archives.gov/aad/index.html</a>	62
Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website <a href="http://www.fs.fed.us">http://www.fs.fed.us</a>	62
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	National Flood Insurance Program <a href="http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/">http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/</a>	61
Military Health System, Defense	Military Health System main website <a href="http://www.health.mil/">http://www.health.mil/</a>	61
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	FEMA Map Service Center <a href="http://store.msc.fema.gov">http://store.msc.fema.gov</a>	61
Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE <a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil/">www.tricare.osd.mil/</a>	60
General Services Administration	GSA E-Library <a href="http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome">http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome</a>	60

## Portals/Department Main Sites

The aggregate citizen satisfaction score for the 26 portals/department main sites is 71.7. What is significant, and somewhat troubling, is the sharp decline in satisfaction with this category of sites over time. Since second quarter 2006, when this category achieved a high score of 75.2, it has dropped significantly, and the drop in this category is largely responsible for the decline in the aggregate e-government citizen satisfaction score.

Scores for portals/department main sites range from 80 to 58, with four sites sharing the top score of 80: the main websites for the Centers for Disease Control, the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, along with the Spanish-language portal to the U.S. government, GobiernoUSA.

Unlike in the news/information and e-commerce/transaction categories, there are no sites with scores higher than 80, although those at and around 80 are still delivering very strong citizen service online.

In the portals/department main sites category, the General Service Administration's main site had an impressive four-point quarter-over-quarter increase. To raise a satisfaction score four points in only one quarter is a remarkable achievement showing GSA's dedication to improving citizen satisfaction.

As is the case for most government sites, Search is the top priority for improvement for most portals and department main sites: 82% of those that measure it would benefit from an increased focus on search.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website <a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>	80
General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website <a href="http://www.gobiernousa.gov">www.gobiernousa.gov</a>	80
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website <a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>	80
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>	80
National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website <a href="http://www.nps.gov">www.nps.gov</a>	79
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website <a href="http://www.nasa.gov">www.nasa.gov</a>	78
General Services Administration	GSA main website <a href="http://www.gsa.gov">www.gsa.gov</a>	78
National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website <a href="http://www.nist.gov">www.nist.gov</a>	76
National Library of Medicine, HHS	NLM main website <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov">www.nlm.nih.gov</a>	76

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website <a href="http://www.sba.gov">www.sba.gov</a>	74
Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a>	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website <a href="http://www.fdic.gov">www.fdic.gov</a>	73
United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website <a href="http://www.usmint.gov">www.usmint.gov</a>	73
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website <a href="http://www.gao.gov">www.gao.gov</a>	73
United States Access Board	U.S. Access Board <a href="http://www.access-board.gov">http://www.access-board.gov</a>	71
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website <a href="http://www.treasury.gov">www.treasury.gov</a>	70
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/">www.socialsecurity.gov/</a>	70
Department of State	Department of State main website <a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a>	70
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website <a href="http://www.samhsa.gov">www.samhsa.gov</a>	70
General Services Administration	Federal Asset Sales (GovSales) <a href="http://www.govsales.gov">www.govsales.gov</a>	69
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website <a href="http://www.pbgc.gov">www.pbgc.gov</a>	68
United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website <a href="http://www.usitc.gov/">http://www.usitc.gov/</a>	66
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website <a href="http://www.archives.gov">www.archives.gov</a>	65
Office of Disability Employment Policy, Labor	DisabilityInfo <a href="http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov">www.DisabilityInfo.gov</a>	64
United States Department of Agriculture	U.S. Department of Agriculture main site <a href="http://www.usda.gov">www.usda.gov</a>	59
General Services Administration	Forms.gov <a href="http://www.forms.gov">www.forms.gov</a>	58

## E-commerce/Transaction Sites

Buoyed by increased satisfaction with search, navigation, functionality and look & feel, the e-commerce/transactions category has an aggregate score increase more than a point from last quarter, to a score of 75.7, resulting in the biggest quarter-over-quarter increase of any of the categories.

Scores in this category of 13 sites range from a low of 64 to a high of 87 for two Social Security sites: Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs and the Internet Social Security Benefits Application. Thirty-eight percent of e-commerce/transaction sites, or five sites, have scores of 80 or higher.

While this category of sites is outperforming news/information and portals/department main sites, it still has opportunity for improvement. Tasks & Transactions is the top priority for improvement in this category and the score for this element of the website experience has dropped two points from last quarter.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/">http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020/</a>	87
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application <a href="https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html">https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html</a>	87
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>	82
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog <a href="http://catalog.usmint.gov">http://catalog.usmint.gov</a>	81
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	81
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	77
SSA Retirement Planner	Social Security Retirement Planner <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/r&amp;m1.htm">www.socialsecurity.gov/r&amp;m1.htm</a>	77
General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website <a href="https://www.gsaadvantage.gov">https://www.gsaadvantage.gov</a>	72
Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report <a href="http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/">http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/</a>	71
General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy <a href="http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov">http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov</a>	70
General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website <a href="https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov">https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov</a>	70
Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect <a href="http://www.treasurydirect.gov">www.treasurydirect.gov</a>	68
Forest Service, Agriculture	Recreation One-Stop <a href="http://www.recreation.gov">www.recreation.gov</a>	64

## Career/Recruitment Sites

This four-site category has the highest aggregate score of 77.1. The government has put a lot of effort into increasing satisfaction with recruiting sites and its efforts have clearly paid off. The high scorer in this category is the Central Intelligence Agency's recruitment website with a score of 80.

Navigation is top priority for most of these sites, followed by the elements of Job Search, Job Descriptions and Look & Feel, which are all identified as top priority for half of the sites.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 03/08
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.cia.gov/employment">http://www.cia.gov/employment</a>	80
Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listings <a href="http://www.doors.dol.gov">www.doors.dol.gov</a>	78
Department of State	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.careers.state.gov">www.careers.state.gov</a>	76
Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website <a href="http://www.usajobs.opm.gov">www.usajobs.opm.gov</a>	75

## 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, it doesn't fit the standard categories, and is reported separately.

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Score 3/08
General Services Administration	BuscadorUSA (Spanish-language search) <a href="http://www.buscadorusa.gov">http://www.buscadorusa.gov</a>	69

## Satisfaction By Organizational Category

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 include independent agencies, corporations, administrations, etc.) agency sites (entities that fall directly below a department or equivalent organization) and program sites (all others).

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. The category of program sites has a very modest quarter-over-quarter increase in its aggregate score, while scores for the agency and department categories both fall.

	Q1 2008	Q4 2007	% Change
Department Sites (14 sites)	70.8	71.6	-1.1%
Agency Sites (55 sites)	72.2	73.1	-1.2%
Program Sites (35 sites)	73.6	73.4	0.3%

## Department-Level Sites

Citizen satisfaction often starts with providing a satisfying online experience at the department level. The following table below shows the satisfaction scores for the 14 department and department-level sites included in the benchmark. NASA and GSA's main website grab the top scores (both at 78).

E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website <a href="http://www.nasa.gov">www.nasa.gov</a>	78
General Services Administration	GSA main website <a href="http://www.gsa.gov">www.gsa.gov</a>	78
National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website <a href="http://www.nist.gov">www.nist.gov</a>	76
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website <a href="http://www.sba.gov">www.sba.gov</a>	74
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website <a href="http://www.fdic.gov">www.fdic.gov</a>	73
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website <a href="http://www.gao.gov">www.gao.gov</a>	73
United States Access Board	U.S. Access Board <a href="http://www.access-board.gov">http://www.access-board.gov</a>	71
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website <a href="http://www.treasury.gov">www.treasury.gov</a>	70
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) <a href="http://www.socialsecurity.gov/">www.socialsecurity.gov/</a>	70
Department of State	Department of State main website <a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a>	70
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website <a href="http://www.nrc.gov">www.nrc.gov</a>	69
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website <a href="http://www.pbgc.gov">www.pbgc.gov</a>	68
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website <a href="http://www.archives.gov">www.archives.gov</a>	65
United States Department of Agriculture	U.S. Department of Agriculture main site <a href="http://www.usda.gov">www.usda.gov</a>	59



In addition to measuring 14 department and department-level websites, there are six departments that are measuring satisfaction on at least five of their websites. Of those, the Department of Health & Human Services has the highest aggregate score.

Department	Score 3/08
Department of Health & Human Services	78.8
Social Security Administration	77.3
Department of the Treasury	71.4
General Services Administration	71.0
Department of State	69.7
Department of Agriculture	66.3

## Conclusion

As everyone waits to see what, if anything, the next administration will mean for e-government, government agencies may be holding off on making significant enhancements that could positively impact citizen satisfaction. As a result, citizen satisfaction has slipped for the third straight quarter, the longest-ever record of decreased scores. Any incoming administration will certainly be looking for ways to cut costs, and encouraging citizens to interact with the government online rather than through more costly channels is certainly an effective way to do so.

## 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 with 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

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 25 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 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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