



American Customer Satisfaction Index
E-Government Satisfaction Index

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Introduction:

Satisfaction with E-Gov Stumbles

For the first time in a year, citizen satisfaction with Federal government websites has declined, according to the first quarter 2009 release of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. The current quarter's aggregate score of 73.6 is half a point lower than last quarter (74.1) but is still higher than it was this time last year (72.4).

There are three possible factors contributing to the decline in satisfaction this quarter:

- **The uncertainty and lack of consistency occurring as the presidency switched hands in late January.** This study reflects citizen satisfaction data collected January 1-March 31, 2009, which was at the height of the transition. Federal government executives are uncertain what the "Internet presidency" will mean for their websites and may be struggling with how to balance existing initiatives with new expectations about transparency, communication, and collaboration from the Obama administration. Therefore, satisfaction with Federal government websites may be stalled because executives may be waiting to make website improvements during this stage, to see what changes will be required of them by the new administration.
- **Rising expectations and impatience for the most tech-savvy president ever elected.** Satisfaction is an evaluation of what you get compared to what you expect. Satisfaction with Federal government websites may have dipped this quarter as citizens went online, prepared to see at least some notable changes enacted by an administration with unprecedented online experience, only to find that not much had changed yet. While changes were made to WhiteHouse.gov and other Executive branch websites immediately, the trickle down to the agency, department, and program websites people use on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis may take longer. Citizens likely understand that change is not immediate, but may have unrealistic expectations about just how quickly it can occur, and those expectations will only grow over time.
- **Satisfaction with program sites declined.** Program sites are defined as Federal government websites that are neither agency nor department sites. Programs often have less secure ongoing resources and less likelihood to continue to exist from administration to administration. This category saw a two-point decline this quarter, while satisfaction with department and agency websites is about the same as last quarter. The decline in this category is contributing to the aggregate citizen satisfaction score decline this quarter. Program sites may be suffering from a lack of attention, focus, and resources during the transition.

Hopes are high for the future of e-government, with a tech-savvy president at the helm, but change is slow and expectations are sky high. With the appointment of the nation's first chief technology officer, chief information officer, and chief performance officer, discussions around strategic improvements are starting to occur, but it may take years to see noticeable differences in functionality, coordinated content, and easier navigation on an average Federal website. We may see citizen satisfaction continue to decline as citizens wonder why the "Internet presidency" has not brought quicker excellence to Federal government websites, but in the long term, we expect the upward trend to continue.

Meanwhile, as changes trickle down, improving citizen satisfaction with e-government is a task that each individual site must tackle on its own. E-Gov is a powerful tool, and this report measures 107 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
- 86% more likely to recommend the website
- 55% 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 renew and 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 needed information directly to citizens. When e-gov works, it works incredibly well.

President Obama is already on the right track. His recent CTO and CIO appointments 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, as long as rising citizen expectations don't create a threshold of excellence that will be impossible to reach.

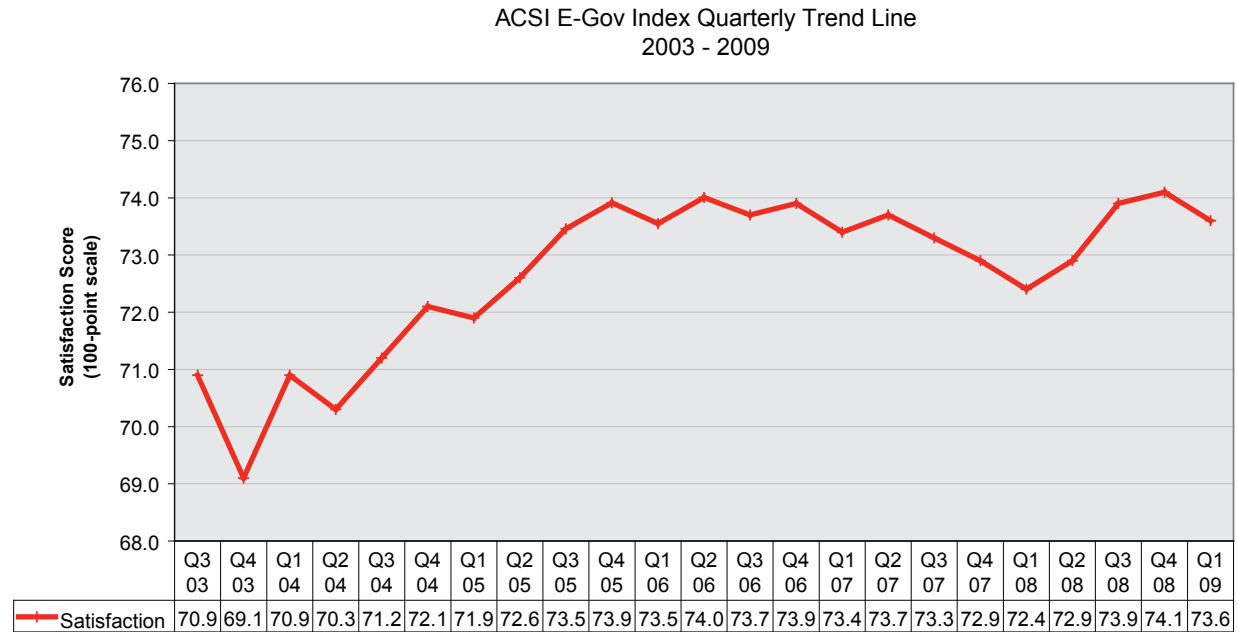
Key Findings of the ACSI E-Government Index

These key findings are explored in further detail in the following report:

- **Citizen satisfaction with e-gov stumbles a bit.** Satisfaction with e-gov rates a 73.6 on the ACSI's 100-point scale, down half a point from last quarter's all-time high score of 74.1.
- **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), 86% more likely to recommend the website, and 55% more likely to return to the website, which helps the Federal government operate more cost-efficiently.
- **Functionality, navigation, and search remain top priorities for improving many government websites.** Functionality and navigation are top priority elements for a large proportion of sites, and 91% of the subset of sites that measure citizens' opinions on their search features found it to be a top priority element. Improvements to these three elements will have the largest impact on overall satisfaction with Federal government websites, in aggregate, and therefore could increase a citizen's likelihood to return to the sites, recommend them, and use them 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 many types of 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 many private sector industries.

Satisfaction with E-Gov Declines

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 2009. This quarter marks the first decline for the aggregate e-government score in a year. There are 107 sites included in the Index this quarter.



The above chart represents a substantial amount of data (nearly 300,000 surveys conducted during the first quarter of 2009 alone and many millions completed since the first ACSI E-Gov Index in 2003). While scores for specific 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 giving citizens easier, more convenient access to information.

Quarter-over-quarter, more sites have seen their citizen satisfaction scores go down than increase, perhaps due to the increased difficulty of making site enhancements that would improve citizen satisfaction as everyone waits to see what the change in administration means for their websites.

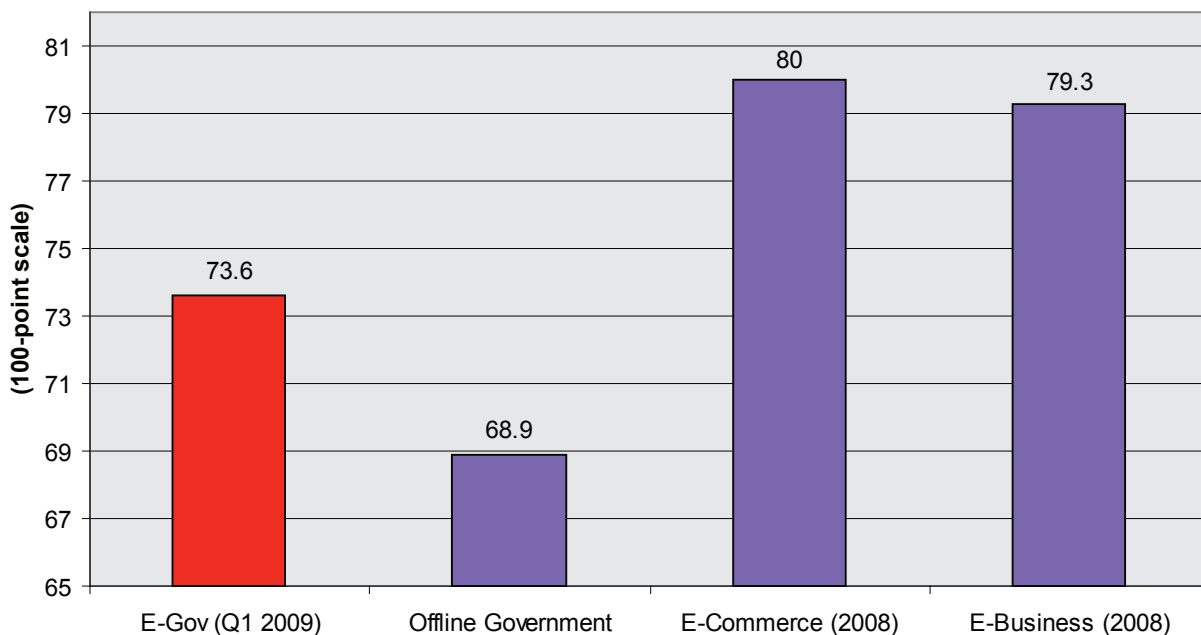
When comparing scores for sites measured both this quarter and last:

- 40% of sites now have lower scores
- 34% now have higher scores
- 26% stayed the same

E-Gov Trails Key Private Sector 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 (including e-retail, online travel, online brokerage) and e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals), two online sectors also measured by the ACSI. E-gov significantly trails these private sector categories, although many individual e-gov sites outperform many individual private sector sites.

How Does E-Government Satisfaction Stack Up?



*Satisfaction with e-gov is measured quarterly, while satisfaction with offline government, e-commerce, and e-business is measured annually.

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 below, citizens are considerably more satisfied with Federal government websites (73.6) than they are with the government overall (68.9). We see similar trends in retail and banking in the private sector.

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 because there is no unknown human factor. 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.

Government Sites Reap Rewards From Citizen Satisfaction

Before reviewing the scores of individual sites, it's important to examine why satisfaction is so important. 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
- 86% more likely to recommend the website
- 55% more likely to return to the site

	Highly Satisfied Citizens (80+)	Dissatisfied Citizens (< 70)	Difference in Scores	The Impact of Higher Website Satisfaction
Use Site as Primary Resource	91	49	86%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	95	51	86%	Use of government websites will grow as citizens recommend them to their friends, families, and colleagues
Return to Site	96	62	55%	Government departments and agencies have ongoing channel to provide information and services to citizens efficiently and relatively inexpensively
Conduct a Future Transaction*	93	53	75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost savings as traffic to call centers and offices is reduced • Increased accuracy • Reduced redundancy

*applies only to a small subset of transactional sites measuring this behavior

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 Functionality, Navigation, and Search 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, recommenda-

tions, and use of the site as a primary resource. The information in the following table is an aggregate view of element priorities. It is important to keep in mind that priorities for specific websites differ, although we are able to make some useful generalizations for e-gov as a whole. Different sites in the Index also measure different elements, as each Federal government website has a custom-built satisfaction model to address the issues that are of greatest relevance to their site visitors.

Element	What It Measures	Priority for Improvement	Analysis
Functionality	The usefulness, convenience, and variety of online features available to the public	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Functionality is a priority for 49% of the sites that measure it, meaning improvements would have a high impact on satisfaction (100 sites).
Navigation	The organization of the site and how easy it is to navigate.	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Scores for navigation dropped one point this quarter. Navigation is often a challenge for information-rich sites, and this element is often lower-scoring and higher-impact for Federal government sites, especially those tasked with offering access to broad and deep information resources.
Tasks and Transactions	The process, security, and verification of online task completion.	Priority 1 = Top Priority	Although only 13 websites measure this element, it is a top priority for 69% of them.
Look and Feel	The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.	Priority 2 = Maintain or Improve	Look and Feel increased in importance this quarter; it is a priority for 38% of sites that measured it (106), compared to 27% last quarter. However, it is less impactful and higher-scoring than the Priority 1 elements.
Content	The accuracy, quality, and freshness of news, information, and content on the website.	Priority 3 = Status Quo Required	Content continues to be a low priority element for more than three-quarters of the sites that measure it. Investments to content will not pay off for most e-gov sites. It's not that website content is unimportant; this element's high scores indicate that, in the eyes of most site visitors, high-quality, up-to-date information is already present for the majority of sites in the Index.
Site Performance	The speed, consistency, and reliability of loading pages on the website.	Priority 3 = Status Quo Required	Site performance is also a relatively high-scoring element for many sites and remains a low priority for more than half the websites that measure it. Most Federal government sites have met site visitors' threshold of acceptability in this area.
Privacy	The customer's perception of the website's commitment to privacy, the control they have over the use of their personal information, etc.	Priority 4 = Status Quo Required	Only measured by a handful of sites, this element is not a high priority for any of them. Due to strict regulations, very little personal information is collected on Federal government websites, so privacy is rarely a concern for site visitors.

Functionality and Navigation are widely-applicable elements that are often identified as top improvement priorities for Federal government websites. Additionally, Tasks and Transactions and Search remain a high priority for many websites that measure these elements.

The lowest-priority elements for Federal government websites continue to be Privacy, Content, and Site Performance (which are also the most highly-rated elements), meaning that improvements in these 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, many specific sites' first or second priorities included Site Performance or 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.

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.

→ Satisfaction Scores

Top Performers Set the Standard

This quarter, twenty-four of the 107 measured sites (22% of the sites in the Index) are in the “top performers” category with scores of 80 or higher, generally considered the threshold of excellence on the ACSI’s 100-point scale.

Two Social Security Administration (SSA) websites tie for the quarter’s top score of 90 on the study’s 100-point scale: iClaim, and Retirement Estimator, and SSA Medicare Subsidy rounds out the top three with a score of 88.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense (DOD) also make a strong showing in the top performers’ category. Eight of the top performers are HHS sites and three are DOD sites, including new entrants Navy and Air Force.

Any website, whether in the private or public sector, with a score of more than 80 is clearly doing a superior job in meeting site visitors’ 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-four government websites to meet this threshold.

Top Performers

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	90
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator http://www.ssa.gov/estimator	90
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020	88
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp	85
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov	85
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	83
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov	83
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Navy http://www.navy.mil	82
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website http://www.gobiernousa.gov	82

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
Peace Corps	Peace Corps	Peace Corps website http://www.peacecorps.gov	82
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website http://www.4woman.gov	82
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	82
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook http://www.bls.gov/oco	81
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website http://www.nasa.gov	81
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website http://www.cdc.gov	81
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website http://www.cia.gov/employment	81
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español http://www.cancer.gov/espanol	81
GSA	General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov	81
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website http://www.fbi.gov	80
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Air Force http://www.af.mil	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET http://http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov	80
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense main website http://www.defenselink.mil	80
DOI	National Park Service, Interior	National Park Service main website http://www.nps.gov	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 notable improvements include:

- Department of State Alumni (75), FCIC Consumer Action (73) and Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service (64) all up four points since last quarter
- DOD TRICARE (69), up two points since last quarter, nine points since the first quarter of 2008, and thirteen points since it was first included in the Index
- The Military Health System main website (67), up two points since last quarter and six points since last year

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 its 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 an e-commerce website with the same score would be performing under par.

Category	Q1 2008	Q1 2009	Year-over-Year Percentage Change
E-commerce/Transaction (13 sites)	76	78	3%
Career/Recruitment (4 sites)	77	76	-1%
Portals/Department Main Sites (25 sites)	72	74	3%
News/Information (64 sites)	72	72	0%

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 first-quarter scores year-over-year. The e-commerce/transaction category, which is the highest-scoring category, had an aggregate score increase of 3% in just one year, reflecting that the government is starting to have success adopting effective strategies of private sector e-commerce companies.

Careers and Recruitment sites actually saw a small dip (down one point both quarter-over-quarter and year-over-year). News and Information sites trail the other three functional categories and have for some time, perhaps because of a difficult mission and high expectations of site visitors.

E-commerce/Transaction Sites

The average score for the thirteen sites included in the e-commerce/transactional category is 78. This category can perhaps 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 iClaim (90) with a 3-point increase since last quarter, the SSA Retirement Estimator (90), and SSA's Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (88).

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
E-Commerce/Transactional Sites Aggregate			78
SSA	Social Security Administration	SSA iClaim http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	90
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator	SSA Retirement Estimator http://www.ssa.gov/estimator	90
SSA	Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs http://www.socialsecurity.gov/i1020	88
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPBA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	83
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	MyPAA https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	79
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	78
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Internet Disability Report http://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability	76
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog http://catalog.usmint.gov	75
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov	73
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Recreation One-Stop http://www.recreation.gov	71
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov	70
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website https://www.gsaadvantage.gov	70
Treasury	Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect http://www.treasurydirect.gov	70

While this functional category of sites is outperforming the other three, it still has opportunity for improvement. Tasks & Transactions is the top priority for improvement in this category.

Career/Recruitment Sites

Citizen satisfaction with the four sites in this category is down one point from last quarter and last year to. 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.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
Career/Recruitment Aggregate			76
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website http://www.cia.gov/employment	81
DOL	Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listing http://www.doors.dol.gov	75
DOS	Department of State	Recruitment website http://www.careers.state.gov	75
OPM	Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website http://www.usajobs.opm.gov	74

Portals/Department Main Sites

The aggregate citizen satisfaction score for the twenty-five portals/department main sites included in the Index is down slightly from last quarter but up 3% year-over-year.

Scores in this category range from 61 to 82, with the highest scores of 82 going to the main websites for the General Services Administration, Peace Corps, and the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. Five additional sites also are considered top performers, all with scores over 80: NASA's main site (81), the main site for the CDC (81), the FBI main website (80), DOD DefenseLINK (80), and the National Park Service (80).

Search is a top priority for improvement for most portals and department main sites. Search is obviously especially important for these sites that serve as a port of entry to various agencies and information sources.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
Portals and Department Main Sites Aggregate Score			74
GSA	General Services Administration	GobiernoUSA.gov website http://www.gobiernousa.gov	82
Peace Corps	Peace Corps	Peace Corps website http://www.peacecorps.gov	82
HHS	National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	82
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website http://www.nasa.gov	81
HHS	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website http://www.cdc.gov	81
DOJ	Federal Bureau of Investigation	FBI main website http://www.fbi.gov	80
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense main website http://www.defenselink.mil	80
DOI	National Park Service, Interior	National Park Service main website http://www.nps.gov	80
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website http://www.cancer.gov	79
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website http://www.gsa.gov	77
Treasury	United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website http://www.usmint.gov	76
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website http://www.pbgc.gov	73
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA main website http://www.va.gov and www.myhealthva.gov	73
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website http://www.state.gov	73
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website http://www.gao.gov	73
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website http://www.nist.gov	73
Treasury	Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website http://www.irs.gov	73
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website http://www.fdic.gov	72
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website http://www.sba.gov	71
HHS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website http://www.samhsa.gov	69
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website http://www.treasury.gov	68
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website http://www.archives.gov	68
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) http://www.socialsecurity.gov/	68
DOL	Office of Disability Employment Policy, Labor	DisabilityInfo http://www.DisabilityInfo.gov	63
ITC	United States International Trade Commission	U.S. International Trade Commission main website http://www.usitc.gov	61

News/Information Sites

Aggregate citizen satisfaction with the 64 sites in the news/information category (72) is down one point from last quarter. The aggregate score provides a good benchmark: any site outperforming the average is doing fairly well.

MedlinePlus (85), the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases (85), MedlinePlus en español (85), AIDSinfo (83), and DOD Navy (82) lead the impressive list of eleven sites with scores of 80 and higher.

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
News and Information Aggregate			72
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp	85
HHS	National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive & Kidney Diseases, NIH	NIDDK http://www2.niddk.nih.gov	85
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov	83
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Navy www.navy.mil	82
HHS	Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website http://www.4woman.gov	82
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook http://www.bls.gov/oco	81
HHS	National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español http://www.cancer.gov/espanol	81
GSA	General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov	81
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Air Force http://www.af.mil	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET http://http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov	80
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center	Girls Health http://www.girlshealth.gov	79
DOD	Defense Media Agency	Pentagon Channel http://www.pentagonchannel.mil	79
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html	78
HHS	NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health http://nihseniorhealth.gov	78
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases http://www3.niaid.nih.gov	78
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Spanish) http://www.america.gov/esp	78

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
DOJ	Department of Justice	President's DNA Initiative http://www.dna.gov	78
DOC	National Ocean Service, U.S. Department of Commerce	National Ocean Service website http://www.oceanservice.noaa.gov	77
DOC	U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website http://www.ngs.noaa.gov	76
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality, HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality http://www.ahrq.gov	76
DOJ	National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website http://www.ojp.gov/nij	75
HHS	National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA main website http://www.drugabuse.gov	75
DOJ	National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website http://www.ncjrs.gov	75
DOS	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://https://alumni.state.gov	75
DOJ	Department of Justice	Office of Community Oriented Policing Services http://www.cops.usdoj.gov	75
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation	FMCSA Protect Your Move http://www.protectyourmove.gov	75
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov website http://www.america.gov	73
GSA	General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center http://www.consumeraction.gov	73
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation	Federal Aviation Administration http://www.faa.gov	72
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	72
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (French) http://www.america.gov/fr	72
USDA	Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website http://www.fsis.usda.gov	72
USDA	Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website http://www.ers.usda.gov	71
SBA	Small Business Administration	Business Gateway http://www.business.gov	71
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau, Commerce	U.S. Census Bureau main website http://www.census.gov	71
HHS	National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDA for Teens website http://teens.drugabuse.gov	71
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	71
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC Applications http://www2.fdic.gov	70

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Parents: The Anti-Drug: http://www.theantidrug.com	70
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website http://www.hrsa.gov	70
DOC	Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website http://www.bea.gov	69
USDA	Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website http://www.fas.usda.gov	69
Treasury	Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website http://www.ttb.gov	69
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE http://www.tricare.mil	69
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Chinese) http://www.america.gov/mgck	68
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	ENERGY STAR Building & Plants Website http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=business.bus_index	68
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Russian) http://www.america.gov/ru	68
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	Force Health Protection & Readiness Policy and Programs http://fhp.osd.mil/	68
DOD	Military Health System, Defense	Military Health System main website http://www.health.mil	67
DOD	Department of Defense	DoD Marine Corps http://www.marines.mil	67
DOS	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://http://exchanges.state.gov	67
USDA	Farm Service Agency, Agriculture	USDA Farm Service Agency http://www.fsa.usda.gov	67
USDA	National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website http://www.nal.usda.gov	67
White House	Office of National Drug Control, White House	Above the Influence http://www.abovetheinfluence.com	66
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Arabic) http://www.america.gov/ar	64
Treasury	Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service http://www.fms.treas.gov	64
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA E-Library http://www.gsaeliblibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome	63
USDA	Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website http://www.csrees.usda.gov	62

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
DOS	Bureau of International Information Programs, Department of State	America.gov (Persian) http://www.america.gov/persian	61
USDA	Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website http://www.fs.fed.us	61
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases http://www.archives.gov/aad/index.html	60
USDA	Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov	58
HHS	HHS/Grants Policy Committee	HHS http://www.grants.gov	51

Case Study: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

When the FAA first measured online satisfaction in 2006 (FY 2006), it registered a score of 66, four points below the Federal government average over the same time period (71). Over the next three years, FAA website leadership embarked on a data-driven journey to increase online citizen satisfaction. By combining data from feedback sources like the ACSI survey, usability testing, and web analytics, the FAA significantly improved online customer satisfaction in order to increase loyalty, task completion rates, and the likelihood that citizens would turn to the web for information rather than to more costly channels. Honing in on problem areas using voice of citizen metrics backed by solid data, FAA was able to make improvements that resulted in a six-point increase since 2006. In 2008 (FY 2008), FAA registered a score of 72, a full point higher than the Federal government aggregate over the same time period. In addition, the FAA's strong ACSI score in the first quarter of 2009 put it at the top of the ForeSee Results Regulatory Agency Benchmark, which only includes agencies that primarily perform a regulatory function.

"Gone are the days when you could make a change to your website based on gut feel," said Carmen Marco, FAA's Chief Web Officer. "Now we listen to the voice of the citizen through our various feedback methods in order to make informed website improvements backed by real data. This data-driven roadmap enables us to deliver enhancements that meet - and exceed - our users' needs."

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. This site's score has increased by one point quarter-over-quarter, and is up an impressive seven points since its entry into the Index. Measuring search engines separately is a powerful way to address this frequently high-priority area in more depth.

General Services Administration	BuscadorUSA.gov (Spanish-language search) http://www.buscadorusa.gov/	75
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Satisfaction With Program Sites Slips

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 have traditionally been most satisfied with program sites, but the category slips two points this quarter to tie with agency sites. The slip in satisfaction for the 26 program sites may be partially responsible for the dip in satisfaction for the aggregate this quarter. Although several program sites improved their scores quarter-over-quarter, more of them declined, and declines were larger than the increases. Some of the score changes for this category appear to reflect seasonal audience differences, while others are driven by specific website elements that have declining scores. Program sites may also be suffering the most from a lack of attention, focus, and resources during the administration transition.

Category	Q4 2008	Q1 2009	Quarter-over-Quarter % Change
Department Sites (14 sites)	73	73	0%
Agency Sites (66 sites)	74	74	0%
Program Sites (26 sites)	76	74	-3%

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-level sites included in the benchmark. This quarter, two department-level sites are in the “top performer” category: NASA.gov (81) and the DOD main website (80).

Dept.	E-Government US Agency/ Department/Office	Website	Satisfaction
Department Sites Aggregate Satisfaction			73
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	NASA main website http://www.nasa.gov	81
DOD	Department of Defense	Department of Defense main website http:// www.defenselink.mil	80
GSA	General Services Administration	GSA main website http:// www.gsa.gov	77
PBGC	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website http:// www.pbgc.gov	73
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs	VA main website http:// www.va.gov and http:// www.myhealthva.gov	73
DOS	Department of State	Department of State main website http:// www.state.gov	73
GAO	Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website http:// www.gao.gov	73
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website http:// www.nist.gov	73
FDIC	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website http:// www.fdic.gov	72
SBA	U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website http:// www.sba.gov	71
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website http:// www.nrc.gov	71
Treasury	Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website http:// www.treasury.gov	68
NARA	National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website http:// www.archives.gov	68
SSA	Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) http:// www.socialsecurity.gov/	68

Once a department or agency has five or more sites in the Index, we calculate aggregate scores for the department overall. This quarter, there are eight qualifying departments, up from 5 reported on last quarter. The Social Security Administration has the highest aggregate score (80.1), followed by Health and Human Services (77.4) and the Department of Justice (76.8).

Department	# of Sites Measured	Satisfaction
Social Security Administration	7	80.1
Health and Human Services	19	77.4
Department of Justice	5	76.8
Department of Defense	8	74.0
General Services Administration	9	73.8
Department of Treasury	7	70.6
State Department	11	70.5
Department of Agriculture	9	66.3

Conclusion

As everyone waits to see what the Obama administration will mean for e-government, citizen satisfaction with Federal government websites slipped for the first time in a year. The Obama 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.

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 many agencies already doing it right and many more working hard to better meet the needs of constituents online. Any website included in this Index should be commended for making a strong effort to improve, because improvement starts with good, benchmarkable measurement. 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. There are early indications that he will, but only time will tell.

About the Author

Larry Freed is an expert on government 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 E-Government Satisfaction 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 January 1 – March 31, 2009.

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, which includes 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 34 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.

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.