AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

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GROWTH OF CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITES STAGNATES

Citizen satisfaction with federal government websites is down slightly from last quarter, according to the third quarter 2006 release of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index. The 95 sites included in this quarter's index have an average score of 73.7 on a 100-point scale, down .4% since last quarter. While this decline is not significant, it continues the trend of relatively stagnant satisfaction with federal government websites over the past year. Since third quarter 2005, the aggregate citizen satisfaction score as measured by the ACSI has varied by only ½ point—from a low of 73.5 in third quarter 2005 and second quarter 2006 to a high of 74 in second quarter 2006.

Despite the fact that citizen satisfaction is not improving by leaps and bounds, some sites and departments have managed to stay ahead of the curve—even while funding for e-government projects is somewhat restricted. Twenty-five percent of measured sites experienced an increase in citizen satisfaction from last quarter and 19% of sites fell into the category of "top performers" as defined by having scores of 80 or higher.

This quarter, we looked at the data in several ways. As always, we divided the 95 sites into four categories based on the primary function of the site: portals/department main sites, information/news sites, e-commerce/transaction sites and career/recruitment sites. We found that satisfaction is highest for the smallest category of career/recruitment sites, although each category's overall score fell slightly from last quarter.

We also segmented the sites in a way more akin to how government organizations view themselves: by departments/independent organizations (administrations, agencies, corporations), agencies and programs. Programs, with the most specific content and functionality, had the highest aggregate satisfaction score.

Also new to the analysis, we looked at aggregate scores for all departments and independent agencies, administrations and similar organizations with representation in the index (regardless of the number of sites).

"It's helpful for e-government sites to benchmark their performance against scores for departments, agencies and programs, because these benchmarks reflect the structure of government," said Anne Kelly, CEO of the Treasury's Federal Consulting Group. "These kind of comparisons can provide reference in making business cases for improvements."

2

THE ACSI METHODOLOGY

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the 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 a cross-industry measure of offline customer satisfaction that measures the performance of approximately 200 private sector companies, as well as many government agencies. 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 satisfaction and quantifies their relationship to overall customer satisfaction. Going further, this cause-and-effect methodology predicts how customers will behave in the future and demonstrates the impact of website enhancements on customer satisfaction, customer behavior and ultimately, the bottom line.

Comparison of ACSI Aggregate and E-Government Scores	Q2 2006	Q3 2006	Quarter over Quarter Change
ACSI E-Government Aggregate	74.0	73.7	-0.4%
	Q1 2006	Q2 2006	Quarter over Quarter Change
ACSI Aggregate (Cross-industry, offline and online)	74.1	74.4	0.4%

Note that the comparison period for the cross-industry ACSI score is different because the scores are published later than the e-government scores.

The chart below shows the trend in citizen satisfaction with government websites since it was first measured on a quarterly basis using the ACSI methodology in third quarter 2003.
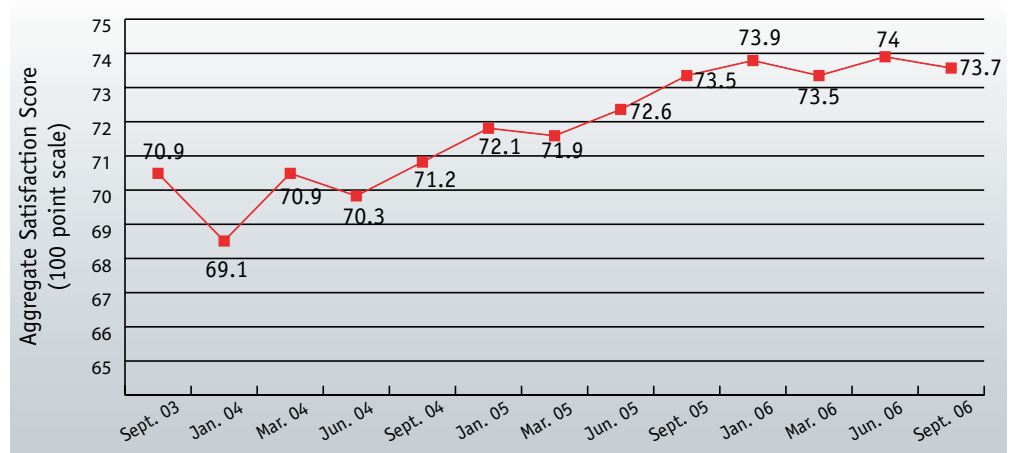
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The chart below shows that the aggregate score for e-government satisfaction continues to trail the most recent scores for e-commerce (online retail, travel, auction and brokerage) and e-business (news/information sites, search engines and portals) by a significant margin.

Comparison of ACSI E-Government and Online Private Sector Scores	Aggregate Satisfaction Score
e-Government Q3 2006	73.7
e-Business Q2 2006	76.5
e-Commerce Q4 2005	79.6

RELATIVELY FLAT SATISFACTION RESULTS IN LITTLE CHANGE FOR ELEMENT AND FUTURE BEHAVIOR SCORES

A number of "elements" drive overall citizen satisfaction. These drivers of satisfaction include search, navigation, content and site performance, among others. On an aggregate basis, satisfaction with each of the specific elements stayed relatively flat from last quarter, with no one element rising or falling more than one point.

Satisfaction as measured using the ACSI methodology impacts several future behaviors tied to channel loyalty: likelihood to recommend the site, likelihood to return to the site and likelihood to use it as a primary resource.

As a result of the minimal movement in the overall satisfaction score from last quarter, scores for future behaviors also stayed close to where they were last quarter. Likelihood to recommend stayed flat at a score of 79, while likelihood to return and use the site as a primary resource both rose one point, to scores of 83 and 75, respectively.

CITIZEN PRIORITIES FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITES

While satisfaction levels haven't changed much since last quarter, some interesting differences can be observed in what's most important to site visitors of government websites. As part of the analysis, we looked at which elements, or drivers of satisfaction, were top priority for government websites, as defined by where enhancements would have the greatest positive impact on satisfaction and loyalty.

Look and feel—which has consistently been a top priority for improvement for between 29% and 37% of sites—has this quarter dropped to being a top priority for only 19% of sites.

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4

Although it's measured by a smaller number of sites, tasks/transactions has gone from being top priority for 90% of sites last quarter to only 72% of sites this quarter. On the other hand, functionality is the top priority for 52% of sites this quarter – the greatest percentage since we started measuring this a year ago. As citizens become more internet-savvy, the expectations regarding functionality increase and government sites must strive to meet the higher standards set by the best sites in the private sector.

Search remains top priority for the greatest percentage of sites (82%), though even this is 10% less than a year ago. In addition, some sites have made strides to improve search through improvements to navigation or through better search technology, such as FirstGov, which has embraced Vivisimo's Clusty technology to facilitate more accurate search results.

On the other hand, content remains a top priority for the smallest percentage of sites, 8%, although this number has been trending upward from last year when it was only 3%. Government sites often have a monopoly on content they provide and the content source is highly trustworthy, so improving satisfaction with content will have relatively little impact on increasing overall satisfaction.

Image tends to fluctuate the most from quarter-to-quarter in terms of its priority. Image this quarter is top priority for 44% of the sites that measure it– a fairly significant percentage but the number of sites measuring Image is relatively small. Yet image is the only element score that has not increased since we first started reporting on element-level data one year ago. Instead, its score has decreased from a 79 in third quarter 2005 to a 78 this quarter.

There are some differences in priorities when comparing sites by function (e.g., information/ news vs. e-commerce/transactions) and when comparing sites by whether they are programs, agencies or departments. These differences are covered throughout the commentary.

PROGRAM SITES FARE BETTER THAN DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

To provide an additional means for e-government sites to compare themselves against others, this quarter we derived an aggregate score for three categories of sites:

- Department: This includes all measured sites that are the primary site for a particular department e.g., Department of State, or independent government entity (agency, administration, corporation, etc.) with no department above it, e.g., Social Security Administration

- Agency: This includes all entities directly below a department, e.g., Food Safety and Inspection Service is an agency of the USDA

- Programs: All sites that are not classified as departments or agencies, e.g., TOXNET

There are some differences and commonalities in priorities when comparing the groupings of program, agency and department sites. Search is a comparable challenge for both Program and Department sites (top priority for 85% of sites in both categories) but less so for Agency sites, 69% of which consider it a top priority. For Program sites, which are more targeted to their audiences, it is less of a challenge, although still top priority for 60% of sites in the program category.

It's interesting to note that the percentage of agency sites that have Look & Feel as a top priority (29%) is significantly higher than department sites (23%) and double the percentage for program sites (14%). While program sites can develop a look and feel that is relevant to smaller target audience segments, a department level site must look and feel fairly uniform. Agency sites struggle the most at providing a satisfactory look and feel for the sites across a broad range of site visitor segments.

The table below shows aggregate satisfaction and future behavior scores for each of the three groupings:

	Satisfaction	Likelihood to Return	Likelihood to Recommend	Likelihood to Use Site as Primary Resource
Department	72.0	84	79	77
Agency	71.1	82	77	74
Program	75.2	83	80	75

Program Sites

As shown above, program sites, on aggregate, outperform both department and agency-level sites, as well as the index average score of 73.7. Fifty-eight of the sites in the index fall into the program grouping. In many cases, program sites are more specific than other types of sites and sometimes more targeted to a specific audience. Higher satisfaction with this grouping of sites may be due to the fact that citizens come to these sites with a particular purpose in mind and are able to quickly and efficiently accomplish what they set out to do.

In addition to looking at current satisfaction, the ACSI methodology predicts future behaviors, or how likely citizens are to return to the site, recommend it to others and engage in other desired future behaviors based on how satisfied they are. As shown in the table above, citizens are slightly more likely to recommend program sites than both agency and department sites.

Analysis of the drivers of online satisfaction, or elements, shows that program sites significantly outperform the other two groupings for functionality, look and feel, navigation and search. This could be because many of these sites don't have to be "everything to everyone" as some of the less specific sites do.

In addition to looking at how satisfied citizens are with specific website elements, the ACSI methodology calculates their impact – or how increasing satisfaction with a specific element would positively impact satisfaction and future behaviors. For program sites, search is a high priority item for the vast majority of sites (85%), which is consistent with the general e-government trend. Tasks and transactions is also a high priority for the six of the 58 sites that measure this element. Functionality, which measures the ability to accomplish the intended objective on a site, is a priority for enhancement for 58% of sites. Content, while a lower priority, is more of an issue for program sites than for department and agency sites, perhaps because citizens go to many of these sites in search of very specific content.

Agency Sites
The 24 sites in this category have an aggregate satisfaction score of 71.1, the lowest of the three groupings. Agency sites have the dual challenge of serving multiple audience segments with different needs, expectations and terminology for information they seek which makes it difficult to satisfy all site visitors. As a result of lower satisfaction, future behavior scores (likelihood to return to the site, recommend it and use it as a primary resource) are also the lowest of the three groupings.

Satisfaction with each of the measured elements (e.g., search, navigation, functionality) is also lowest for the agency sites. In terms of priorities, search is a high priority element for 85% of sites, the same percentage as for program sites. This is followed by functionality, which 58% of sites identified as a high priority.

Department Sites
These 13 top-level sites have an aggregate satisfaction score of 72. Department sites have the highest likelihood to return score: 84. This could be because many of these sites serve as portals to agencies and programs within their domain.

The high priority elements are slightly different for department sites than for program and agency ones. Search is the highest priority , which is due in no small part to the limited real estate available on the home page and the vast body of information available via the department sites. However, search is top priority for only 69% of department sites (compared to 85% of both program and agency sites).

Unlike program and department sites, navigation is a high priority for the second largest grouping of department sites: 62% (compared to being a top priority for 34% and 38% of program and agency sites, respectively). This is because department sites contain the most information and links to agency sites, and navigation are ways that site users find what they are looking for. The data shows that users prefer to use a combination of search and navigation to find what they need on department sites, as compared to use of search also for agency and program sites.

AGGREGATE SCORES BY DEPARTMENT SITES

This quarter, we looked at the number of measured sites falling under each department (or other "top-level" organization). The chart below shows each department with representation in the index, the number of sites and the aggregate score. Half of the 20 departments or other top-level government entities have aggregate scores above the index average score of 73.7, while half fall below this mark.

Department	# of Sites	Satisfaction	Return	Recommend	Primary Resource
CIA	1	79.2	84.4	70.7	79.0
DHS	1	65.3	85.9	80.3	83.4
DOC	2	72.0	87.4	82.8	80.4
DOD	3	71.4	81.7	76.7	70.1
DOI	1	78.0	87.2	84.0	82.4
DOJ	3	74.5	82.4	79.8	74.0
DOL	2	77.4	86.1	83.5	n/a
DOS	7	72.0	79.4	75.9	74.3
FDIC	1	74.8	88.2	83.5	82.3
GAO	1	73.8	87.4	82.7	n/a
GSA	10	70.0	81.6	76.1	75.3
HHS	33	76.9	83.3	81.5	74.6
NARA	3	68.5	75.8	72.8	n/a
NRC	1	69.2	85.9	78.5	80.6
OPM	1	76.7	89.5	85.8	n/a
PBCG	1	73.2	81.5	75.2	n/a
SBA	2	74.8	83.9	81.0	73.2
SSA	6	79.8	85.7	84.5	73.6
Treasury	7	70.6	83.3	77.1	75.0
USDA	9	67.4	79.7	74.4	73.1

For benchmarking purposes, we typically consider a grouping to be significant if it contains five or more sites. Of the six departments with five or more sites measured, the Social Security Administration has the highest score: 79.8, up .2 points since last quarter. The Social Security Administration has impressively had the highest aggregate citizen score since the third quarter of 2005, the first quarter that department aggregate scores were reported. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with 33 sites in the index, has an average satisfaction score of 76.9.

Because citizen satisfaction starts at the top, we also looked at which main department and other top-level entities have chosen to measure satisfaction using the American Customer Satisfaction Index. Scores for these sites are below. Of these 11 sites, four have scores above the index average score.

E-Government US Agency/Department/Office	Website	9/06 Score
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website—www.sba.gov	75
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website—www.fdic.gov	75
Department of Defense	Department of Defense main website http://www.dod.mil	75
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website—www.gao.gov	74
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website—www.pbgc.gov	73
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (main website) www.socialsecurity.gov	72
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website—www.archives.gov	72
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website—www.treasury.gov	70
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	69
Department of State	Department of State main website—www.state.gov	69
General Services Administration	GSA main website—www.gsa.gov	68

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES

For consistency with reporting in previous quarters, we also looked at the sites from a functional perspective for a more appropriate comparison with private sector websites measured by the ACSI.

The table below shows how satisfied citizens are, on aggregate, with each of the four types of measured sites as categorized on a functional basis. All categories experienced a very slight aggregate score decline from last quarter.

Category	Q3 2006	Q2 2006	% Change
Portals/Department Main Sites	74.8	75.2	-.5%
News/Information	72.7	73	-.4%
E-commerce/Transactions	74.5	74.6	-.1%
Recruitment/Careers	77.2	77.3	-.1%

Portals/Department Main Sites
The 25 sites that comprise the portals/department main site category have an aggregate citizen satisfaction score of 74.8. While this score is above the average of 73.7 for all sites in the index, it has fallen slightly from last quarter's average score of 75.2.

Scores range from 68 to 82, with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's main website (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov) leading or tied for the top score for the fifth quarter in a row.

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	9/06 Score
Portals/Department Main Sites		
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute National Institutes of Health, HHS	NHLBI main website www.nhlbi.nih.gov/	82
Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS	Office of Science Education website http://science.education.nih.gov	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute main website www.cancer.gov	81
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIAMS Public Website http://www.niams.nih.gov/index.htm	80
National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Eye Institute main website http://www.nei.nih.gov	79
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC main website—www.cdc.gov	79
General Services Administration	FirstGov.gov website (Spanish) http://firstgov.gov/Espanol/index.shtml	78
National Parks Service, Interior	National Parks Service main website—www.nps.gov	78
National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NHGRI Website www.genome.gov	77
United States Mint, Treasury	U.S. Mint main website—www.usmint.gov	76
National Library of Medicine, HHS	NLM main website—www.nlm.nih.gov	75
U.S. Small Business Administration	SBA main website—www.sba.gov	75
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	FDIC main website—www.fdic.gov	75
Department of Defense	Department of Defense main site http://www.dod.mil	75
National Institute of Dental & Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDCR Web Site http://www.nidcr.nih.gov	75
Government Accountability Office	GAO main public website—www.gao.gov	74
General Services Administration	FirstGov website—www.firstgov.gov	74
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online (Main Website) www.socialsecurity.gov/	72
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA main public website—www.archives.gov	72
Internal Revenue Service, Treasury	IRS main website—www.irs.gov	70
Department of the Treasury	Treasury main website—www.treasury.gov	70
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, HHS	SAMHSA website www.samhsa.gov	69
Department of State	Department of State main website—www.state.gov	69
General Services Administration	GSA main website—www.gsa.gov	68
Fogarty International Center, National Institutes of Health, HHS	Fogarty International Center http://www.fic.nih.gov	68

FirstGov (www.firstgov.gov), the main portal to the U.S. government, is a great example of a website able to respond quickly and maintain satisfaction during a time of crisis. In May 2006, a laptop with social security numbers and other private information on over 26 million Veterans was stolen from the home of a Veterans Affairs employee, an event that received considerable publicity. To address the needs of the public, FirstGov added prominent links to the Veterans Affairs information to its home page and created a new page on the issue which was updated frequently as new information was learned. FirstGov also distributed regular updates via RSS and e-mail subscription services. Following this event, we started to segment the site data in additional ways to assess the ability of the site to provide information during this critical time. The analysis showed that satisfaction of veterans and their relatives/friends and the satisfaction of people coming to the site for information related to the issue was close to or on par with overall satisfaction for the site, which is impressive considering the nature of the issue.

Search is a high priority element for 83% of sites, although satisfaction with search is three points higher than the index average (76 vs. 73). Although search is still an area of focus for portals/department main sites, it is not as much of a priority as it was last quarter, when it was the first or second priority of 92% of sites in this category. Look and Feel has also gone down markedly as a priority: from 46% last quarter to 12% this quarter.

At the same time, Functionality and Image have become higher priorities than they were last quarter. This is likely due to the fact that standards of citizens are continually rising as they experience e-commerce, e-business and other private sector websites. While government sites have been under increasing budgetary pressure while private sector websites continue to evolve quickly, setting the bar ever higher in terms of Internet-savvy citizen expectations.

News/Information Sites

The 54 news/information sites have an aggregate satisfaction score of 72.7, down .4% since last quarter's score of 73. Scores in this largest of the four categories range from 56 to 85. While 21% of sites in this category experienced increases in their scores since second quarter 2006, 50% have lower scores this quarter.

Medline Plus (www.medlineplus.gov) and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's Diseases and Conditions Index (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/index.html), a score that both sites have maintained since fourth quarter of 2005.

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	9/06
Information/News		
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NHLBI Diseases and Conditions Index www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/index.html	85
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus http://medlineplus.gov	85
Office of Science Education, National Institutes of Health, HHS	OSE Curriculum Supplements http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	AIDSinfo http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/	84
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	MedlinePlus en español http://medlineplus.gov/esp/	84
National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDDK Clearinghouses http://www.niddk.nih.gov	83
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NHLBI Aim for Healthy Weight www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt	82
General Services Administration	Federal Citizen Information Center www.pueblo.gsa.gov/	82
National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español www.cancer.gov/espanolwww.cancer.gov/espanol	82
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIDCD Website http://www.nidcd.nih.gov	81
NIH Senior Health, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Senior Health http://nihseniorhealth.gov	79
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook http://www.bls.gov/oco/	79
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, State	State Alumni website https://alumni.state.gov	78

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RESULTS

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	9/06 Score
Information/News Continued		
National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, HHS	TOXNET http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov	77
National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Justice	NCJRS website www.ncjrs.gov	76
Office on Women's Health	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website—www.4woman.gov	76
NIH Health Information, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Health Information http://www.health.nih.gov	76
General Services Administration	Consumer Action Website, Federal Citizen Information Center	76
Center for Nutrition Policy Promotion, Agriculture	MyPyramid Website www.MyPyramid.gov	75
Small Business Administration	SBA Business.gov—www.business.gov	74
U.S. Department of Commerce	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website http://www.ngs.noaa.gov/	74
Social Security Administration	Social Security Online: Answers to Your Questions http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	74
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA Presidential Library websites http://archives.gov/presidential_libraries/index.html	74
National Institute of Justice, Justice	NIJ main website—http://www.ojp.gov/nij	74
Office of Animal Care and Use, National Institutes of Health, HHS	Office of Animal Care and Use http://oacu.od.nih.gov	74
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, HHS	NIAID main website www.niaid.nih.gov	74
Office for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice	OVC website www.ovc.gov	73
Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER), National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, HHS	SEER website http://seer.cancer.gov	72
Department of State	U.S. Department of State Education USA http://educationusa.state.gov	72
NIH Office of Research Services, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Office of Research Services http://www.ors.od.nih.gov	72
Economic Research Service, Agriculture	ERS main website—www.ers.usda.gov	72
Bureau of Cultural Affairs, State	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website http://exchanges.state.gov/	71
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIEHS main website www.niehs.nih.gov	71
International Information Programs, State	IIP main website—http://usinfo.state.gov	70
Bureau of Economic Analysis, Commerce	BEA main website—http://www.bea.gov	70
National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Stem Cell Information http://stemcells.nih.gov	70
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website www.nrc.gov	69
Department of State	Student website—http://future.state.gov	69
Financial Management Service, Treasury	Financial Management Service—www.fms.treas.gov	68
Food Safety and Inspection Service, Agriculture	FSIS main website—www.fsis.usda.gov	68
Foreign Agricultural Service, Agriculture	FAS main website—www.fas.usda.gov	68
Risk Management Agency, Agriculture	RMA website—www.rma.usda.gov	68

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	9/06
Information/News Continued		
National Agricultural Library, Agriculture	NAL main website—www.nal.usda.gov	66
U.S. Food and Drug Administration, HHS	FDA main website—www.fda.gov	66
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Agriculture	CSREES main website www.csrees.usda.gov	65
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Homeland Security	FEMA Flood Map Store http://store.msc.fema.gov	65
Forest Service, Agriculture	Forest Service main website—http://www.fs.fed.us	64
Office of Rare Diseases, National Institutes of Health, HHS	NIH Office of Rare Diseases http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov	64
Department of the Treasury, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau	USTTB website www.ttb.gov	63
Military Health System, Defense	TRICARE—www.tricare.osd.mil/	61
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Agriculture	NRCS website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov	61
National Archives & Records Administration	NARA AAD - Access to Archival Databases www.archives.gov/aad/index.html	59
General Services Administration	GSA E-Library http://www.gsaelibrary.gsa.gov/ElibMain/ElibHome	56

The Office of Science Education's Curriculum Supplements site (http://science.education. nih.gov/supplements) and the National Library of Medicine's AIDSinfo site (http://aidsinfo. nih.gov), follow closely with scores of 84. For AIDSinfo, this score represents a leap of four points since last quarter, a continued after-effect of a site redesign in 2004 and promotion of the site.

The Center for Nutrition Policy Promotion's MyPyramid site (www.MyPyramid.gov), experienced the largest quarter-over-quarter increase: six points. This was due to a factor that affects many government sites used as research resources by students: seasonality. Data for this quarter was collected during a time period when less students, who tend to rate the site lower, were using the site. Two sites – the National Institute of Health's Office of Rare Diseases (http://rarediseases.info.nih.gov) and the Risk Management Agency (www.rma.usda. gov) – rose three points from last quarter. The Risk Management Agency has seen its score go up six points since it was first measured by the ACSI two quarters ago as a result of redesign at the end of last year.

For sites in the news/information category, search is a high priority element (as defined by ranking as the first or second priority) for 80% of sites. Navigation, which is closely tied to search, is high priority for 37% of news/information sites.

E-commerce/Transactional Sites

The 11 sites in this category have an average score of 74.5. While this score tops the index average score of 73.7, it is a slight decline of .1% since last quarter.

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	9/06 Score
E-Commerce/Transactions		
Social Security Administration	Internet Social Security Benefits Application https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html	87
Social Security Administration	Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html	87
Social Security Administration	Social Security Business Services Online http://www.ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	82
United States Mint, Treasury	Online Catalog—http://catalog.usmint.gov	80
Social Security Administration	Social Security Retirement Planner www.socialsecurity.gov/r&m1.htm	77
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	PBGC main website—www.pbgc.gov	73
General Services Administration	GSA Advantage website https://www.gsaadvantage.gov	69
General Services Administration	GSA E-Buy—http://www.ebuy.gsa.gov	68
Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt	TreasuryDirect www.treasurydirect.gov	67
General Services Administration	GSA Global Supply website https://www.globalsupply.gsa.gov	71
General Services Administration	USDA Advantage—http://www.usdaadvantage.gsa.gov	59

Search is a high priority for 55% of the sites measured, up significantly from 40% last quarter. As agencies attempt to conduct e-commerce and migrate more transactions to the web, they are challenged with organizing products and information in ways that make intuitive sense to citizens. At the same time, satisfaction with search is below-average for sites in this category with a score of 69, four points below the index average for this element. Enhancements to tasks and transactions would also positively impact satisfaction for a large number of sites: 80% named it as a top priority.

Five of the highest-scoring sites in this category belong to the Social Security Administration, with the Internet Social Security Benefits Application (https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6a/ISBA/main.html) tying for first place in this category with another Social Security site, Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (https://s044a90.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1020/main.html). Both sites have a score of 87. The Internet Social Security Benefits Application site has had or tied for the highest score in this category since it was first measured in fourth quarter 2005.

The range of scores for e-commerce/transactional sites is from 59 to 87.

Fifty percent of sites in this category have higher scores this quarter than last, while 40% decreased. But, the score movement was moderate, as no one site saw its score go up or down by more than two points.

Recruitment/Career Sites

The five sites in this smallest of functional categories has the highest aggregate score at 77.2, down just .1% from last quarter. Both the Central Intelligence Agency's Recruitment Website (http://www.cia.gov/employment) and the Military Spouse Career Center (http://www.military.com/spouse/) have the highest scores in the cateogry: 79. The scores range just four points, from 75 to 79.

E-Government U.S. Agency/ Department/Office	Website	
Recruitment/Career Sites		
Military Community and Family Policy Office, Defense	Military Spouse Career Center http://www.military.com/spouse/	79
Central Intelligence Agency	Recruitment website http://www.cia.gov/employment	79
Office of Personnel Management	Recruitment website—www.usajobs.opm.gov	77
Department of Labor	Department of Labor Job Listings—www.doors.dol.gov	76
Department of State	Recruitment website—www.careers.state.gov	76

Navigation is a high priority element for 80% of recruitment/career sites, indicating that citizens would prefer to browse for jobs, rather than do a specific search. Site Performance, which is typically a lower impact item for other types of sites, is high priority for 40% of job-related sites.

This quarter, we looked at two additional elements, or drivers of satisfaction, that are specific to sites in the recruitment/career category: Job Descriptions and Job Search. Job Search is top priority for only 20% of the sites measuring it, while Job Descriptions doesn't fall into the high priority category for any of the sites.

CONCLUSION

While a functional analysis of e-government sites is more citizen-centric, it's also important to benchmark satisfaction, key satisfaction drivers and future behaviors against comparable structural categories of government sites, especially as resources tighten and performance is scrutinized. Comparing departments, agencies and programs gives government website managers a new frame of reference for tracking progress relative to their perceived peers. It also affords comparative data to make business cases for improvements that will have the greatest impact on satisfaction and the cost of providing services to the public.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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 FORESEE RESULTS, INC.

ForeSee Results is the market leader in online customer satisfaction measurement and management and specializing in converting satisfaction data into user-driven web development strategies. Using the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results has created a model that scientifically quantifies the elements that drive online customer satisfaction and predicts future behaviors, including the likelihood to return to the site or recommend the site to others. ForeSee Results, a privately held company located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, can be found online 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.

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