U.S. General Services Administration

Citizens' Service-Level Expectations

Final Report

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MITRE

Center for Enterprise Modernization
McLean, Virginia

Executive Summary

A primary mission of the General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Citizen Services and Communications' USA Services program, one of the President's 24 e-government initiatives, is to assist other agencies with customer-service activities for citizens, particularly as they relate to telephone, email, and Web applications. This assistance includes developing, operating, and improving services that provide or direct U.S. citizens to information about federal agencies and those agencies' services, benefits, regulations, and operations. GSA operates and maintains the FirstGov Internet Web site, which serves as the gateway to federal agencies' Web services, and its counterpart FirstGov email information service. GSA also operates a toll-free central telephone information number to the National Contact Center (1-800-FED-INFO) and provides U.S. mail and Internet access to publications from its Pueblo, Colorado, distribution center.

GSA had over 240 million citizen contacts in fiscal year 2004 through these channels. Even though these services are in place, USA Services needs to undertake additional work to analyze objectively how citizens prefer to interact with the federal government, to identify their concerns about dealing with agencies to get what they need, and to determine thereby what best practices or technologies might be used to improve existing services and fill service gaps.

USA Services asked The MITRE Corporation (MITRE) to identify the expectations of members of the public who contact government agencies today as well as expectations they have about contacting government agencies in the future. This document provides a summary of the observations and conclusions MITRE identified through a literature review and from data derived from a series of focus group sessions conducted by Daston Corporation.

All of the focus group results in this report are based on participant responses discussed during each session. Responses were scored using a 'code phrase' methodology and are purely qualitative in nature. The intent was to review trends in these responses and to then provide the specific, indexed transcript responses to the government as a rich data source for further review and analysis.

The focus group responses revealed that:

C1. The preference for using the Internet to contact the government has increased overall; the expectation for in-person contact in the future is declining.

C2. Citizens expect to continue using all current channels to contact the government in the future.

C3. Citizens expect that the information they need will be accessed through a combination of channels and be consistent, no matter how they contact the government.

C4. The manner in which citizens contact the government is dependent upon the reason for and the nature of the contact.

C5. Citizens expect improvements in the channels they use the most.

C6. The government is not effectively communicating the availability of existing government services and contact channels.

C7. Citizens expect the government to 'push' certain information and services to them.

C8. Citizen expectations are changing, with growing emphasis on convenience.

C9. Citizens overwhelmingly expect competent service, even to the exclusion of successful outcomes.

C10. Citizens' service-level expectations vary by demographic.

Based on its analysis of citizens' service-level expectations, MITRE recommends that the government consider the following recommendations:

R1. Develop and emphasize performance measures for competent service, timely response, and courteous service in contact services. Make better use of best practice benchmarks and interagency standards.

R2. Promote the availability of 1-800-FED-INFO and FirstGov.gov to the American public.

R3. Make access to government services more convenient by expanding the options (e.g., through Internet-based services) for citizens who try to reach offices and call centers when they are closed.

R4. Provide citizens with continued access, in addition to Internet, through the telephone and through government offices.

R5. Develop and refine citizen relationship management strategies, data sharing, and other technologies to allow better cross-channel overlap and coordination in order to support and respond to citizens.

R6. Make government contact information easy to locate. Organize and present it in a way that is meaningful to the citizens (e.g., not necessarily just by government organization, context, and structure).

R7. Promote the availability of services—state, local, and federal—from one internet location; provide citizens with contact information for other appropriate contact channels to obtain those services.

R8. Tailor channels and services to best address the expectations and needs of citizens engaged in specific transactions or trying to resolve specific problems.

R9. Redesign informational government Web sites to be more interactive, with advanced outreach and response confirmation capabilities.

R10. Start now to plan for newer technologies (e.g., smart phones) and to devise strategies for display and search functions. In order to prepare for future implementations of new or improved contact center strategies for their organizations' missions, government agencies should consider today's expectations in light of the contact methods citizens will be using in the future, the types of technology to which they will be exposed (both in the public and the private sectors), and the likely needs of the population in the future.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

A primary mission of the General Services Administration (GSA) Office of Citizen Services and Communications' USA Services program, one of the President's 24 e-government initiatives, is to assist other agencies with customer-service activities for citizens, particularly as they relate to telephone, email, and Web applications. This assistance includes developing, operating, and improving services that provide or direct U.S. citizens to information about federal agencies and those agencies' services, benefits, regulations, and operations. GSA operates and maintains the FirstGov Internet Web site, which serves as the gateway to federal agencies' Web services, and its counterpart FirstGov email information service. GSA also operates a toll-free central telephone information number to the National Contact Center (1-800-FED-INFO) and provides U.S. mail and Internet access to publications from its Pueblo, Colorado, distribution center.

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USA Services asked The MITRE Corporation (MITRE) to identify the expectations of members of the public who contact government agencies today as well as expectations they have about contacting government agencies in the future.

1.2 Purpose

The goal of MITRE's research has been to identify information on citizens' service-level expectations from government that USA Services and other government contact service organizations can use to develop and improve their citizen contact strategies. The results of this research will be used as input into the USA Services Citizen Service Level Interagency Committee's efforts to develop recommendations for the Office of Management and Budget on customer service performance levels and best practices for inquiry/response services that deal with the American public.

This document summarizes the observations and presents the conclusions that MITRE developed through its review of pertinent literature and its analysis of data from a series of focus group sessions conducted by the Daston Corporation (Daston).

1.3 Approach

MITRE's approach to identifying the expectations of the public that contacts government agencies today as well as the expectations the public might have for contacting government in the future consisted of five major steps:

I. Conduct literature review
II. Plan focus groups

III. Execute focus group sessions[1]
IV. Analyze and summarize participant responses
V. Summarize findings on citizens' service-level expectations

Figure 1-1 illustrates the steps taken, the resulting outputs of each step, and the organization responsible for developing each of the outputs.

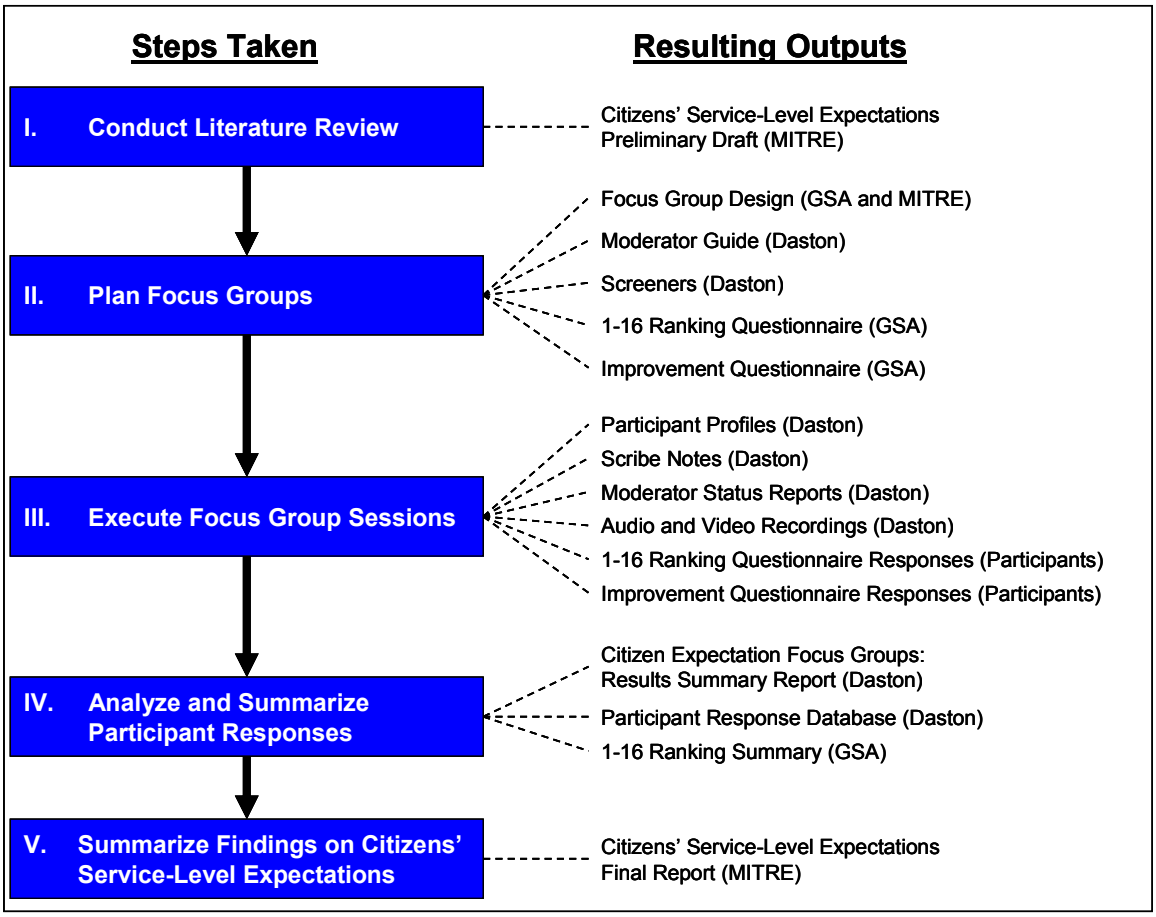


Figure 1-1. Approach to Identifying Citizens' Service-Level Expectations

Figure 1-2 illustrates the flow of the process and data in implementing the above steps. The categorization of service-level expectations drove the design of the focus group implementation, the scribe notes, the moderator guides, and the required participant profiles. The various artifacts from the execution of the focus group sessions (scribe notes, code phrase mapping [described in detail in Appendix A], status reports, and demographic profiles) then fed into the master focus group results expectations database. MITRE's analysis and this report are based on the results generated from that database. MITRE reviewed the actual transcripts for random verification of the code phrase process Daston performed to build the core citizen's expectations database.

[1] Focus groups were executed by Daston Corporation.

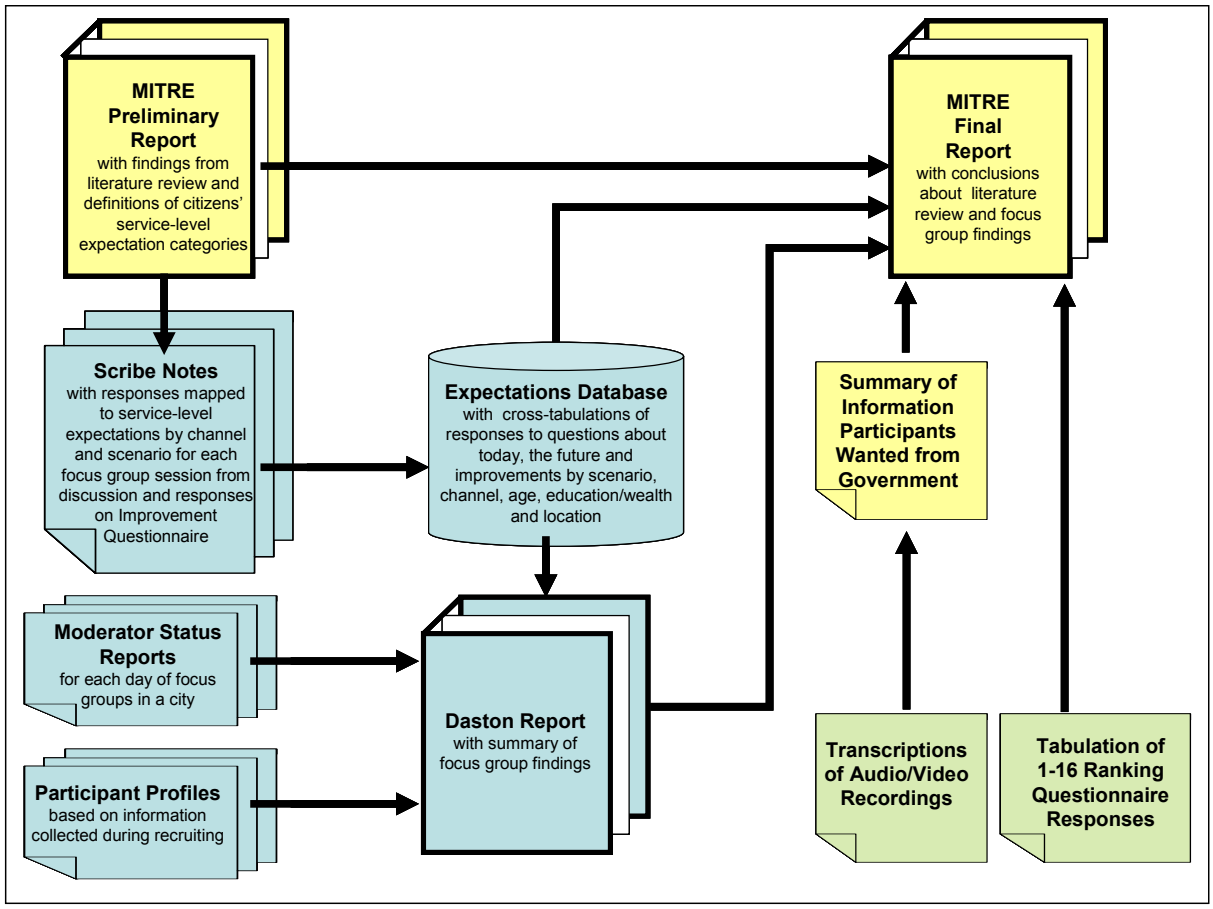


Figure 1-2. Sources Used to Create MITRE's Final Report

The remainder of this section provides additional detail about MITRE's approach.

I. Conduct Literature Review

In support of GSA's efforts to provide guidance and support to contractors and to other government agencies involved in contact services, MITRE began a review of recent literature on citizen's service-level expectations of government. Finding no explicit research on citizens' expectations pertaining specifically to contact services via Web sites, cell phone/telephone, in-person office visits, email, or other channels, MITRE looked to literature (mainly based on surveys completed within the previous three years) about citizens' recent experiences in contacting government agencies. This research resulted in the accumulation of large amounts of information on citizens' general expectations and on citizens' specific expectations related to contacts. MITRE reviewed and organized these findings into the baseline 12 service-level expectation categories, shown in Table 1-1 together with MITRE's definitions.

Table 1-1. Categories of Expectations Derived from MITRE's Literature Review

Expectation Category	Definition
Competent Service	Citizens expect to receive clear and accurate information and that the government be able to provide the services citizens expect. For automated services, competence also means that tasks are easy and understandable to the citizen.
Timely Response	Citizens expect that their service requests will be addressed within acceptable amounts of time.
Convenience	Citizens expect the government to provide services during the hours and at the locations convenient to citizens.
Courteous Service	Citizens expect to be treated with common courtesy.
Easy-to-Locate Contact Information	Citizens expect that government contact information (e.g., addresses and phone numbers) will be located where they are most likely to find it (e.g., in phone books, on Web sites, and in government publications).
Reliable Service	Citizens expect that the government will follow through on the commitments it makes to provide the requested services.
Privacy and Security	Citizens expect that the government will protect their personal information and not share it unlawfully.
Successful Outcome	Citizens expect that the government will complete the services as expected by the citizens.
Consistent Response	Citizens expect that they will receive the same response from the government regardless of the channels they use for contact.
Availability	Citizens expect that they will successfully make contact using the contact information they have.
Social and Ethical Responsibility	Citizens expect that the government will act in the interests of the citizens, and that the government will provide mechanisms (e.g., guarantees of freedom of the press) to ensure that citizens can monitor the government's exercise of that responsibility.
Fair Treatment	Citizens expect to receive the same level of service (e.g., courtesy and responsiveness) as all other citizens.

To give GSA a sense of what might influence expectations over time, MITRE also investigated some trends in the U.S. population, consumer communication technologies, and contact service technologies. Combining the information MITRE gleaned from its findings on population and technology trends with the service-level expectations it derived from its literature review, MITRE made some assumptions about what expectations citizens might have in the future. This research and these assumptions then contributed to the design of the focus group activities discussed later in this document.

MITRE has summarized its literature review findings in this report. MITRE's sources are listed by name in the References at the end of this document.

II. Plan Focus Groups

Many of MITRE's primary literature sources were based on surveys of citizens' experiences that did not ask citizens about their expectations and did not give citizens opportunities to provide open-ended responses to survey questions. Because the previous research methods lacked those two elements, GSA sponsored a series of focus groups to hear from citizens in an open forum. These focus groups also provided qualitative data on service-level expectations from citizens who contact government. Daston was contracted to recruit participants, plan and execute focus group sessions, analyze the participants' responses, and summarize the focus group session findings in a raw data report that MITRE could incorporate into this final report.

Daston, MITRE, and GSA worked collaboratively to design the focus groups, addressing requirements for participation, objectives, and locations. Initially, 16 focus groups were planned involving 30-to-65-year-old participants in eight cities, plus one pilot in Richmond, Virginia. Later, six focus groups involving 18-to-29-year-olds in three cities were added to provide information on service-level expectations from the younger demographic.

The objectives of the focus group sessions were to gather qualitative information about the service-level expectations of people who contact government agencies and to identify the channels they use to make contact. An approach was developed that incorporated several scenarios involving different reasons for and natures of contacts with government to seed the focus groups' discussions. The scenarios themselves were intended to be illustrative only, and were developed to support analyses that would determine whether, and how, service-level expectations and preferred channels for contact varied along the scenarios' parameters of the reason for the contact and the nature of the contact. The scenarios were not important in and of themselves. They simply represented possible situations in which citizens might realistically contact government for given reasons. Figure 1-3 provides a grid showing the reason for the contact and the nature of the contact covered by each scenario.

Scenarios					
1 Vacation	2 Highway	3 Disaster	4 Passport	5 Medicare	6 Rare & Serious Illness
Reason for Contact					
Conduct a Transaction	Express an Opinion	Get Information	Solve a Problem	Get Information	Solve a Problem
Nature of Contact					
Simple Non-Urgent	Simple Non-Urgent	Simple Urgent	Complex Urgent	Complex Non-Urgent Personal	Complex Urgent Personal

Figure 1-3. Scenarios by Reason for and Nature of Contact

The approach included several questions to provoke discussion about the channels participants would use and the services they would expect for each scenario. At GSA's request, the sessions included a question regarding the kinds of information participants wanted to get from government and two paper questionnaire forms developed by GSA. One form, the "1-16 Ranking Questionnaire," asked participants to rank in order of preference 16 different communication channels. The other, the Improvement Questionnaire, asked participants to indicate how government could improve its service to them.

Another objective of the focus group sessions was to explore how differences in service-level expectations might change over time. Two approaches were used to explore potential differences over time. The first was to ask participants what methods of contact they would like to use in the future and what their service-level expectations would be regarding those methods. The second approach examined differences in responses across demographic characteristics (i.e., age, education, and household income) and compared them to trends in the U.S. population that have been identified in existing literature. Participation requirements for each session varied along these characteristics.

In order to minimize the risk of not recruiting a sufficient number of participants within the time constraints of the project, a decision was made to recruit people who were most likely to contact government and who all had a common level of experience receiving services over a base set of communication channels (e.g., cell phone/telephone, postal mail, in-person office visits, and Internet [both Web sites and email]). The target was the recruitment of citizens who were between 18 and 65 years old and would represent 80 percent of the citizens who are documented in existing research as contacting government.

Figure 1-4 summarizes the recruiting requirements for the various focus group sessions.

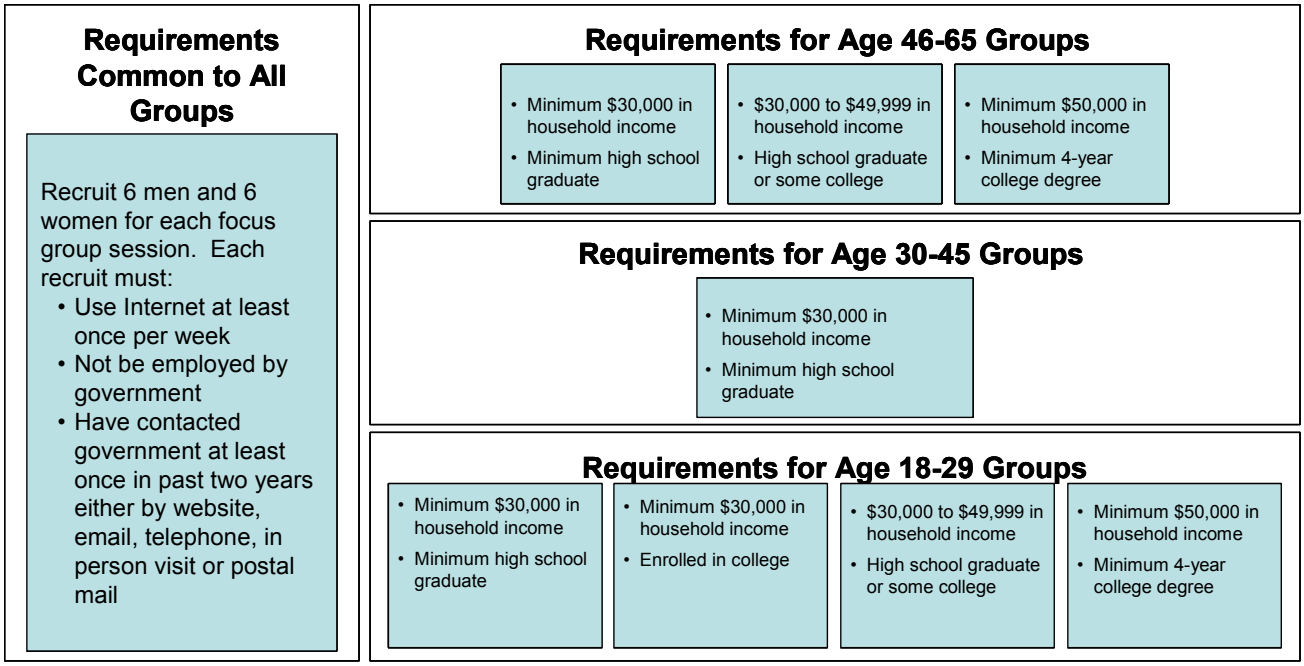


Figure 1-4. Summary of Requirements for Each Focus Group

Locations for the focus group sessions were determined by the availability of focus group facilities across the country, the ability to quickly recruit people who could meet the requirements for participating in the focus groups, and the limited scope and schedule of the project. Each group was required to recruit 50 percent of its participants from urban areas and 50 percent from either suburban or rural areas. An attempt was made to balance the sessions across different regions of the country (i.e., eastern, mid-western, western, northern, and southern areas). Only facilities used in the first set of focus group sessions were considered for the second, smaller set of focus group sessions in order to avoid introducing new variables into the data analysis.

The selected cities for each set of focus groups are shown in Table 1-2, along with the scenarios and demographic characteristics included in each session. This information is presented in the order in which the sessions occurred across the country. A and B, respectively, represent the 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. sessions run on a given day in a given city.

Table 1-2. Focus Group Coverage of Scenarios and Demographic Characteristics by Location

	Location:	First Set of Focus Groups																Second Set of Focus Groups						Total Sessions	Document Section
		New York 1		Charlotte 1		Miami		Detroit		Kansas City		Houston 1		San Francisco		Seattle		New York 2		Charlotte 2		Houston 2			
	Session:	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B		
Scenario	Vacation	X	X			X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	X				13	2.1
	Highway			X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X					X	X	X	X		12	
	Disaster					X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		14	
	Medicare		X	X	X					X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X						11	
	Passport	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		21	
	Rare & Serious Illness	X	X	X	X	X	X															X	X		8	
Preferred Channels *(max 6 channel categories per session)*		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		22	2.2
Age Group	18-29																	X	X	X	X	X	X		6	2.3
	30-45	X		X		X		X		X				X											6	
	46-65		X		X		X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X								10	
Education	High School or Some College	Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of a high school education.										X		Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of a high school education.		X		Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of a high school education.				X			3	
	Currently Enrolled in College																			X					1	
	Min. 4-Year Degree												X				X				X		X		4	
Household Income	$30,000-$49,999	Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of $30,000 in household income.										X		Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of $30,000 in household income.		X		Focus Group participants required to have a minimum of $30,000 in household income.				X			3	
	Minimum $50,000												X				X			X			X		4	

III. Execute Focus Group Sessions

Daston recruited 264 individuals in total, 225 of whom attended the sessions. Table 1-3 summarizes the participants' profiles by age, education, and household income.

Table 1-3. Summary Profile of Participants

Demographic Characteristic	Number of Participants
Age	
18-to-29-year-olds	57
30-to-45-year-olds	61
46-to-65-year-olds	107
Education Level	
High School or some college	113
Minimum 4-year college degree	112
Household Income	
$30,000 to $49,999	106
Minimum $50,000	119

Participants responded to questions from the moderators' guide and in questionnaires. Responses were recorded for each focus group session, for every scenario, and for every channel identified during the discussion. The responses contained in the session notes and those in the completed improvement questionnaires were later mapped to the service-level expectations (see Figure 1-5).

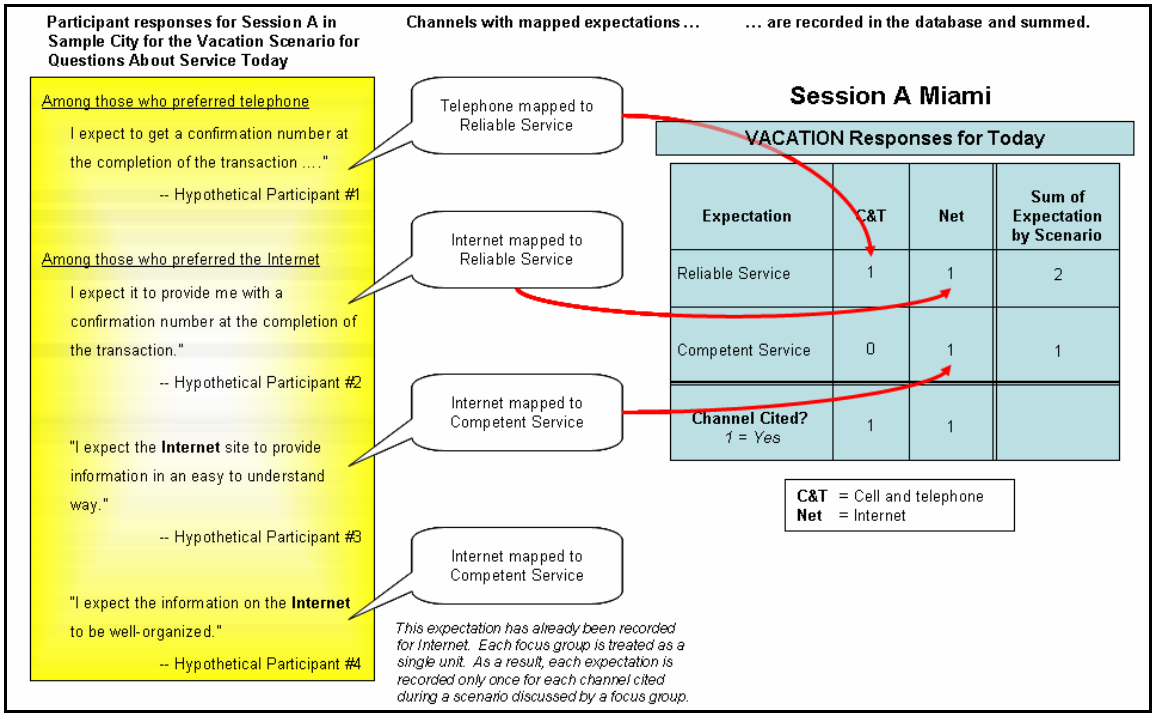


Figure 1-5. How Participant Responses Were Recorded in the Expectations Database

For each scenario discussed in a session, all the responses to questions about today and then all the responses to questions about the future were recorded in the expectations database. The responses to the improvement questionnaire were also mapped to service-level expectations and captured in the expectations database, but these responses were not tied to any scenario.

All of the focus group sessions, including the pilot, were recorded in video and audio to back up the session notes.

IV. Analyze and Summarize Participant Responses

In addition to summarizing focus group responses by session, the responses recorded in the expectations database were used to tabulate the responses across focus groups by their design elements (i.e., scenario, channel, and demographic characteristics [age, education level, household income, and location]). These tabulations were used as the basis for the rankings of channels and expectations found in Appendix D.

The responses to the question, "What kinds of information do you want from government?" were summarized from the session transcripts (see Appendix C).

GSA tabulated all the "1-16 Ranking Questionnaire" data and provided a summary to MITRE.

V. Summarize Findings on Citizens' Service-Level Expectations

MITRE incorporated its findings from its literature review and Daston's findings from the focus group sessions into this report. Other sources used to augment the focus group findings include:

- Daston's report, Citizen Expectation Focus Groups
- Daston's expectations database, which was used to cross-tabulate the focus group responses by age, channel, education/wealth, and location for today and for the surmised future, and to identify areas that need to be improved
- GSA's tabulation of the responses to the "1-16 Ranking Questionnaire"
- MITRE's summary of the responses to the question about what information participants wanted from government (see Figure 1-2)

1.4 Document Organization

This document provides MITRE's findings from its literature review and from the focus group sessions, the implications of both sets of findings, and a summary set of conclusions together with recommended next steps for developing contact center strategies and suggested areas for further study on this topic.

Table 1-4 provides an overview of each of the sections that follow in this document.

Table 1-4. Document Organization

Section		Purpose
Section 2:	Citizens' Service-Level Expectations	Provides a general summary of MITRE's findings on citizens' service-level expectations based on literature review and focus group findings from Daston. This information is organized by: • Reason and Nature of Contact • Channels • Demographic Characteristics – Age – Education – Household Income – Location
Section 3:	Conclusions and Recommendations	Provides MITRE's conclusions and recommendations for using the data collected through its literature review and the focus group sessions conducted by Daston.
Appendix A:	Expectation Code Phrase Scoring Methodology	Describes the methodology used to capture and analyze responses from the focus groups.
Appendix B:	Daston Report	Contains Daston's summary report of focus group findings.
Appendix C:	Information Participants Wanted from Government	Summarizes responses to the question "What information do you want from government?" taken from focus group session transcripts.
Appendix D:	Detailed Summary Tables of Results	Presents detailed tables and data from the analysis of the focus group results.
Glossary		Defines key terms used in this document.
References		Lists sources used in developing this report.

2. Citizens' Service-Level Expectations

This section focuses on three factors that can influence citizens' service-level expectations: the reason for and nature of contacting government, the channels citizens prefer to use to contact government, and the demographic characteristics of populations being served (see Figure 2-1). The following three sections analyze the data from three different perspectives: the reason for and the nature of the contact, the channel of contact, and demographic characteristics. MITRE reviewed and analyzed the findings from these three perspectives to form its final conclusions and recommendations.

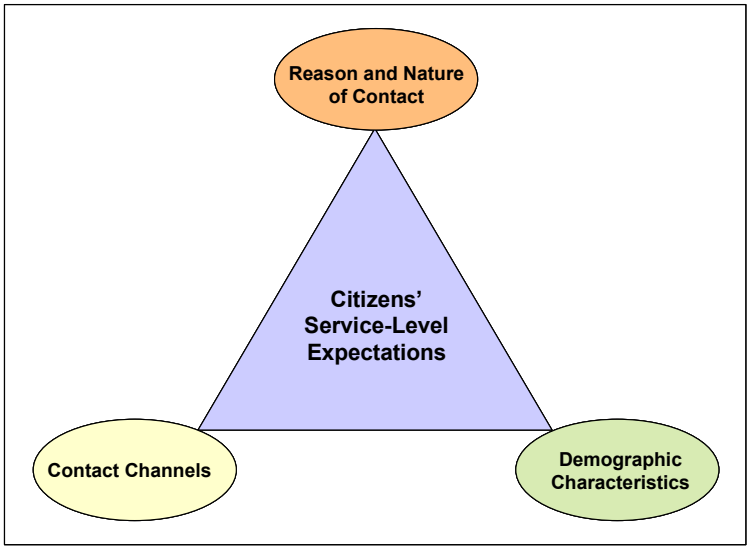
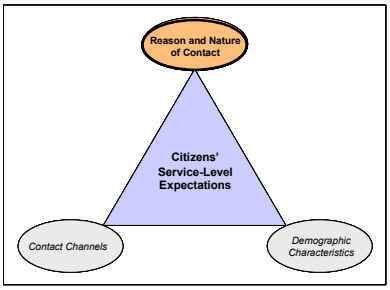


Figure 2-1. Factors Influencing Citizens' Service-Level Expectations

2.1 Research and Findings by Reason for and Nature of Contact



Service-level expectations can vary by the reason a citizen contacts government and the nature of that contact. This section provides some findings on different service-level expectations generated by the reason for and the nature of contact, as represented by different contact scenarios (vacation, highway, disaster, passport, Medicare, and rare and serious illness).

The first part of this section, 2.1.1, "Research of Relevant Literature by Reason for and Nature of Contact," outlines the research and key concepts that provided the inputs that MITRE used to define and identify the expectations and the design parameters for the scenarios.

The second part of this section, 2.1.2, "Focus Group Findings by Reason for and Nature of Contact," highlights the findings of the recent focus group sessions and discusses trends and information gathered from the citizens. Additional expectations and information gathered from the focus groups are also presented, by scenario, in this section.

2.1.1 Research of Relevant Literature by Reason for and Nature of Contact

Following are findings from MITRE's literature review, presented by scenario, that are relevant to this research. Findings specific to channels and demographic factors are presented in subsequent corresponding sections. The key result of the literature review was the definition of the master set of citizens' contact expectations (see Table 1-1). MITRE's literature review also drove the process of defining focus group scenarios by revealing reasons for and natures of contacts. Moreover, the literature review pointed up the need to take a closer look through focus groups by uncovering some channels that did not seem to be meeting the expectations of citizens. For example:

> The gap between the means people use to contact government and how people prefer to contact government suggests that the Internet may not fulfill all of the needs of Internet users. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Examples of contacts were included in Pew's 2003 survey on *How Americans Get in Touch with Government*. This survey found that 71 percent of citizens contacted the government for personal reasons, 21 percent contacted the government for business reasons, and 7 percent contacted the government for a combination of the two reasons.

From another perspective, the core reasons for contact are:

- To conduct a transaction
- To express an opinion
- To get information
- To solve a problem

> The most common reason cited by 30 percent of [citizens] was to carry out a transaction of some sort, such as filing taxes or registering the car. Another 25 percent said they had contacted government to get an answer to a specific question, nearly one-fifth (19 percent) said they had contacted government to get an answer or to express an opinion, and 11 percent sought out help for a specific problem. A few (5 percent) offered that they had contacted government for a combination of reasons mentioned above, with the balance giving some other or no response. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Pew found that information seeking was the most common online interaction with government in the United States. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004) This finding is consistent with *Government Online, An International Perspective 2003*: *Global Summary*, which indicated that information seeking was the major reason for contacting the government online. (Dexter and V. Parr, 2003)

MITRE reasoned from this review of the research and an assessment of types of citizen contacts that citizens would have a range of complexity and urgency in their contacts and their expectations for those contacts. So complexity and urgency ranges were also designed into the scenarios:

- Simple/non-urgent
- Simple/urgent
- Complex/urgent

- Complex/non-urgent/personal
- Complex/urgent/personal

Once a matrix of reasons for contact and types of contacts was constructed as a basis for the focus group approach (see Figure 1-3), a set of sample scenarios was defined to explore the citizen expectations related to each area. MITRE's literature review revealed the following details for contacts related to those scenarios:

Conducting Transactions – Simple/Non-Urgent Scenario

MITRE's initial research literature review showed that citizens' expectations were most likely to be satisfied during government transactions if they were straightforward.

> Most government patrons (82 percent) are successful when conducting a transaction such as getting a license, probably because transactions have clear-cut conclusions. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Channel expectations were less clear. Pew found that the Web and email have become more prominent for conducting transactions with government agencies. When those transactions are personal, however, channels other than Web or email were preferred.
(Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Expressing Opinions – Simple/Non-Urgent Scenario

Pew did not identify a preferred method of contact when the reason for contact was to express an opinion. However, Pew did find that "[people] contacting government with more complicated issues in mind are more likely to be expressing an opinion [than conducting a transaction, solving a problem, or getting information] (24 percent versus 19 percent for all government patrons)." (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

> Only about a third (36 percent) [of government patrons] say they are successful when they express an opinion to government. This is not surprising given the low probability that the opinion of a single individual will influence a government outcome. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Getting Information – Simple/Urgent and Complex/Non-Urgent Scenarios

Pew found that the Web and email channels of contact were preferred when people sought information from the government. Pew also found that, in situations that required citizens to disclose personal information, citizens preferred the cell phone/telephone or some other channel (e.g., presumably in-person visit) over the Internet. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

According to Nohrstedt's findings, people expect government services during catastrophes and states of emergency to be credible, reliable, clear, comprehensive, immediate, and legitimate.

Solving a Problem – Complex/Urgent and Complex/Urgent/Personal Scenarios

MITRE found that the research listed below shows that only about half of citizens' problems are successfully resolved, and that citizens with urgent needs often prefer to communicate via cell phone/telephone or in person. Is this channel preference due to channel performance and/or design issues? What are citizens' expectations for problem-solving services?

> The complexity of a Government Patron's problem matters to the outcome. Nearly half (49 percent) of those with complicated problems say they have successful outcomes, and slightly more than half (52 percent) who contact government to solve a specific problem were successful.
> (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

Pew found that people who had urgent reasons (i.e., they needed a response within 24 hours) or complex reasons for contacting the government preferred cell phone/telephone or in-person visits. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

2.1.2 Focus Group Findings by Reason for and Nature of Contact

The focus group scenarios were designed to provide a framework for each citizen's reason for, and urgency of, contact expectations. This framework allowed for a consistency between previous and current research on citizens' expectations. The scenarios themselves also created a dynamic, however. Some interesting and significant details and new concepts about citizen expectation did appear. This section outlines the basic findings by scenario and addresses trends from the focus group sessions.

Table 2-1 maps the nature of and the reason for citizen contacts, by scenario, to the city/session pairs. Scenarios were discussed a total of 79 times in the 11 days of focus group sessions, with two sessions each day. Some sessions covered three scenarios, some four, depending on the time available during the focus groups. Table 2-1 shows the key relationships among the design of the scenarios, the sessions in which the scenarios were used, and the distribution of the scenarios among total sessions run. Cities with a "2" after them represent the second-day set of focus group sessions in that city, which were targeted to a younger demographic.

Table 2-1. Cities and Sessions by Nature of Contact, Reason for Contact, and Scenario

Simple Non-Urgent		Simple Urgent	Complex Urgent	Complex Non-Urgent Personal	Complex Urgent Personal
Conduct a Transaction	Express an Opinion	Get Information	Solve a Problem	Get Information	Solve a Problem
Vacation	Highway	Disaster	Passport	Medicare	Rare and Serious Illness
New York 1 – Sessions A & B New York 2 – Sessions A & B Miami – Sessions A & B Detroit – Sessions A & B Charlotte 2 – Sessions A & B San Francisco – Session B Seattle – Sessions A & B	Charlotte 1 – Sessions A & B Detroit – Sessions A & B Kansas City – Sessions A & B San Francisco – Sessions A & B Charlotte 2 – Sessions A & B Houston 2 – Sessions A & B	Miami – Sessions A & B Kansas City – Sessions A & B Houston 1 – Sessions A & B San Francisco – Sessions A & B New York 2 – Sessions A & B Charlotte 2 – Sessions A & B Houston 2 – Sessions A & B	All Cities and Sessions except: Miami – Session A	New York – Session B Charlotte – Sessions A & B Kansas City – Sessions A & B Houston – Sessions A & B Seattle – Sessions A & B New York 2 – Sessions A & B	New York – Sessions A & B Charlotte – Sessions A & B Miami – Sessions A & B Houston 2 – Sessions A & B
13 Runs	12 Runs	14 Runs	21 Runs	11 Runs	8 Runs

Finding 1: Many citizens expect to be able to use a combination of channels to contact the government today.

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 map the nature of and reasons for contacts (by scenarios) to the contact channels. (See Appendix D for data tables.) For example, Table 2-1 shows a mapping to the passport scenario of the set of expectations of citizens who have a complex and urgent issue that requires a service from the government. Figure 2-2 then shows that the currently preferred channel for citizen contact for this scenario is in-person, and Figure 2-3 shows that the preferred future channel for citizen contact for this scenario is the Internet.

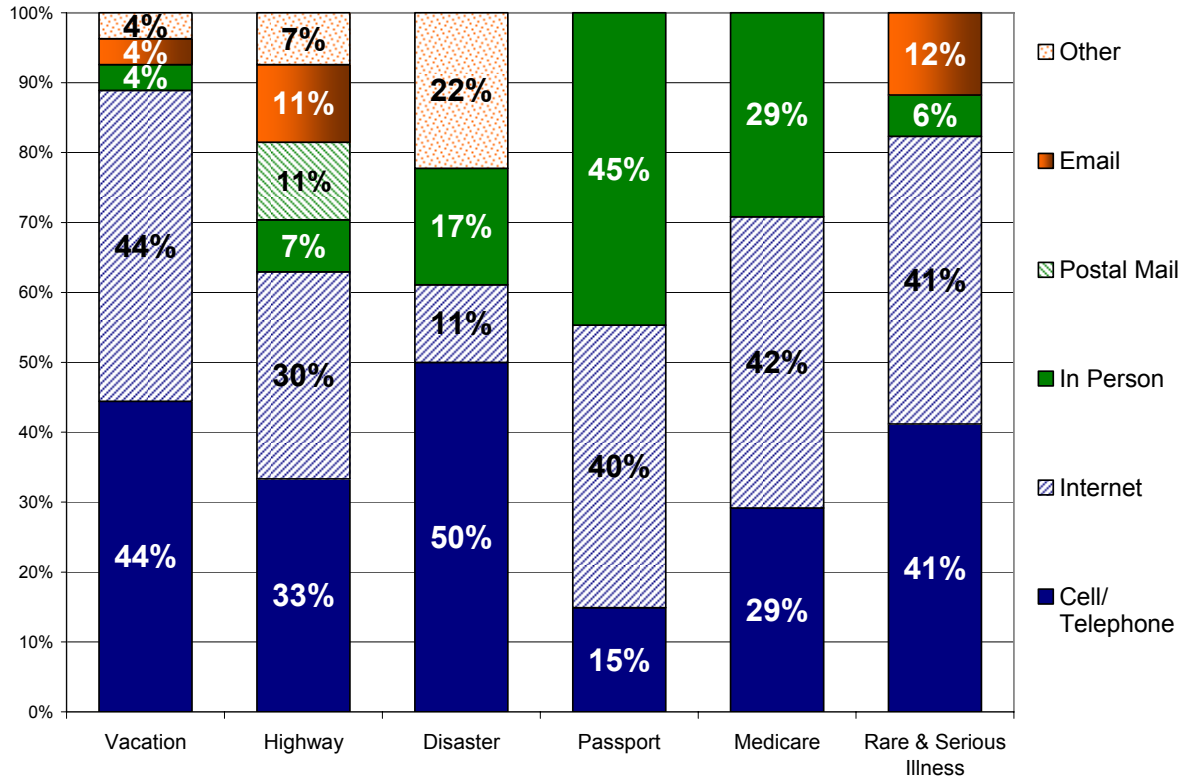


Figure 2-2. Current Channel Rankings by Scenario

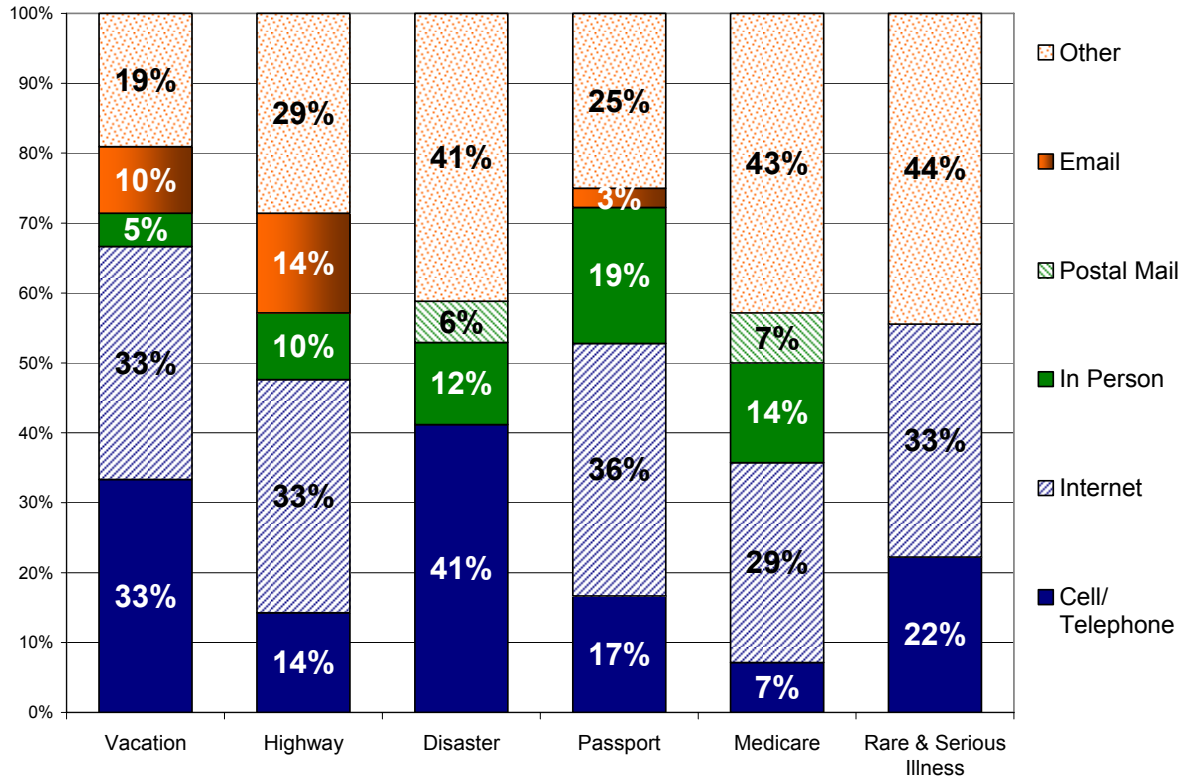


Figure 2-3. Future Channel Rankings by Scenario

Additional patterns outlined in the two figures above show that, despite the availability of other channels, citizens still expect the cell phone/telephone to be a significant part of meeting most of their current service expectations. While the Internet also plays a significant role in enabling contact, neither it nor cell phone/telephone can be seen as totally meeting citizen's expectations.

Daston's data reveals that citizens expect to be able to use a combination of channels to contact the government today. An example of this expectation is a quotation from the New York City focus group: *"Get on the Internet…Check out the packages…make a phone call from the contact information that I get from the Internet."*

This current expectation of being able to use a combination of channels is supported in all of the scenario except the passport scenario, which trends toward in-person. MITRE believes that this trend is in a large part due to the current government requirements for processing passports.

Finding 2: Citizens' expectations are trending toward reducing the cell phone/telephone and in-person channel requirement in the future, but not toward eliminating them as major channels.

Across most scenarios, the preference for cell phone/telephone in the future is significantly less than it is today (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3). Comparing the preference for cell phone/telephone today to what it might be in the future, a decrease of:

- 11 percent can be seen in the vacation scenario
- 19 percent can be seen in the highway scenario

- 9 percent can be seen in the disaster scenario
- 22 percent can be seen in the Medicare scenario
- 19 percent can be seen in the rare and serious illness scenario

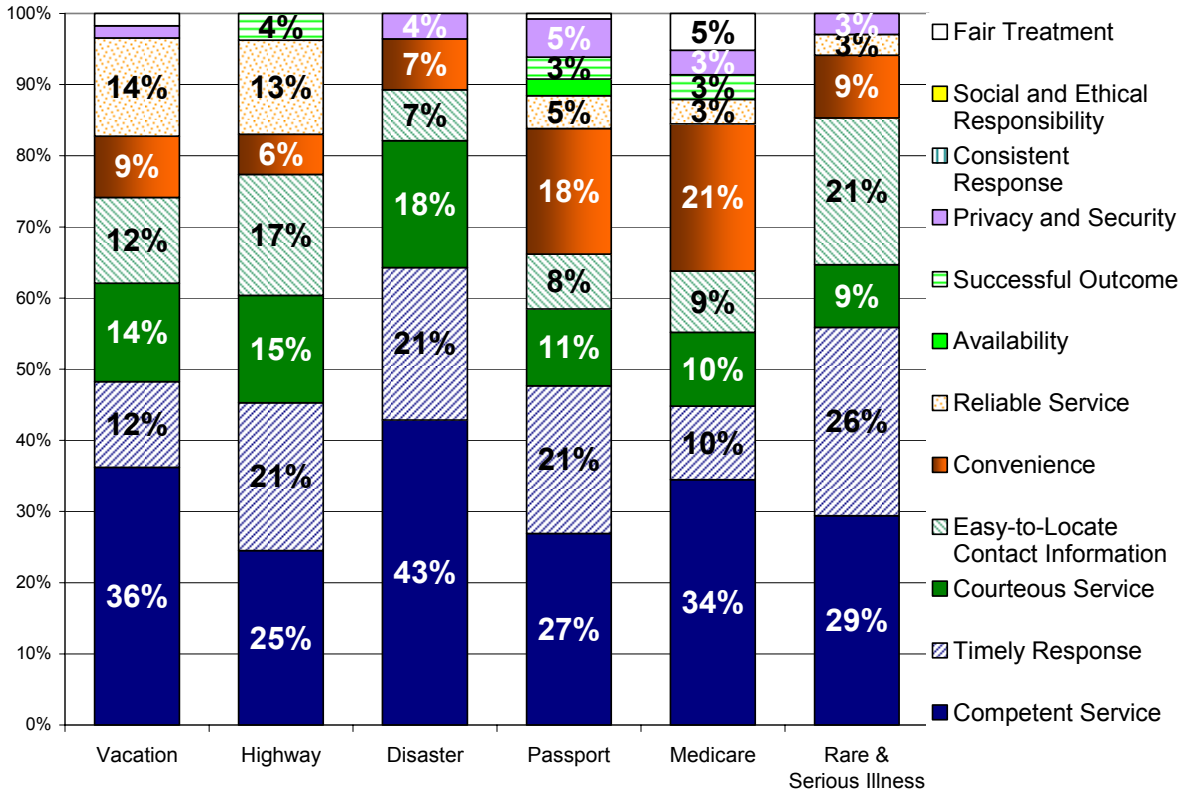


Figure 2-4. Today's Expectation Rankings by Scenario

Finding 3: Today's top expectations center on competent service, courteous service, and a timely response independent of scenario. Privacy and security, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information often fell in the bottom half of the responses heard by scenario.

Figure 2-4 maps citizens' expectations and the rankings of those expectations by scenario. (See Appendix D for detailed data.) These expectations were defined in Table 1-1. Using the example of the passport scenario, Figure 2-4 shows that the top current expectations for these complex and urgent interactions are competent service, timely response, and convenience. These expectations are cited more often than courtesy.

Competent service, courteous service, and timely response are the primary current expectation trends highlighted in Figure 2-4. Surprisingly, privacy and security, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information often fell in the bottom half of the responses heard. Fair treatment, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and successful outcomes were not widely discussed as current expectations.

Convenience also was seen as a key expectation in the Medicare scenario.

One other surprising trend in the data on current expectations is a low expectation of availability. This implies that focus group participants have a low expectation of successfully contacting the government using the contact information that they have.

Finding 4: Many citizens were unaware of services that currently exist. This pattern repeated in several focus groups and scenarios.

For example, Daston's summary report said:

> Participants expressed considerable interest when speaking about the possibilities for Web site for the National Parks in the Vacation scenario. Many people had no idea that there were very prestigious lodges in the western National Parks and people would like to have information about lodging, weather forecasts for the parks, notices of construction and forest fires. Again, many of these services already exist, but most focus group participants were unaware of that fact. …It seems very relevant to GSA's efforts, given the participants' requests for outreach as well as the often heard request for safe Web site and "one-stop" information, that GSA markets its 1-800 Number and FIRSTGOV Web site. Very few participants had any awareness of these channels. Participants in New York expressed much satisfaction with the Bloomberg 311 phone number as an information seeking channel specifically about New York. The suggestion is that the same could be true for the GSA 1-800 number if more people knew about it.

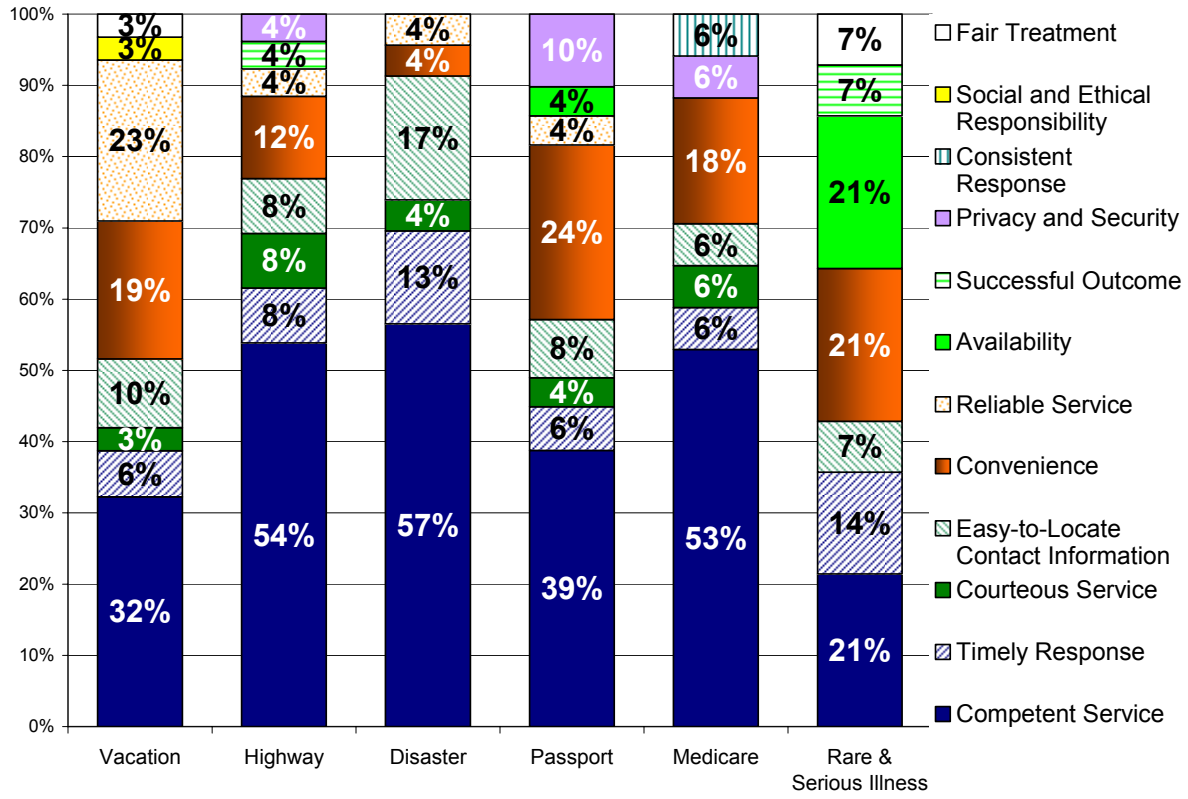


Figure 2-5. Future Expectation Rankings by Scenario

Finding 5: Future expectations are driving toward competent service and convenience across most scenarios.

Figure 2-5 maps citizens' likely future expectations and their rankings by scenario. (See Appendix D for detailed data.) Using the example of the passport scenario again, the figure shows a trend toward the importance of competent service during a complex and urgent interaction for which a service is required. Convenience, however, is starting to emerge as a critical future expectation, and expectations for privacy and security also are becoming more important.

Figure 2-5 shows some subtle shifts in the trends for citizens' future expectations. Current citizen expectations are high for competent service, courteous service, and timely responses. Trends in future expectations show competent service remaining high, but courteous service and timely responses starting to fall. Convenience and easy-to-locate contact information grow in importance. Examining the actual responses showed a trend toward citizens expecting technology to make life more convenient. Below are sample quotations from focus groups:

> *I would expect something like video conferencing that had a touch screen where I could get assistance as well as filling out the necessary paperwork. Houston*
>
> *I like the Internet because it is easy…I can do it on my own time…I don't have to wait in line. Kansas City*

This trend is further explored in the specific scenario detail sections below.

Fair treatment, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and successful outcomes were, once again, not widely discussed as key expectations in focus groups.

MITRE's Specific Findings on Focus Group Expectations Grouped by Scenario

The following sections summarize the findings from the focus group sessions on citizens' expectations by reason for and nature of contact. Each section first looks at implications from Figures 2-2 and 2-3, then compares and contrasts Figures 2-4 and 2-5 for each reason and nature. Numbers in parenthesis represent the actual data value from the database for reference and magnitude. (See Appendix D for detailed data.)

Conducting Transactions – Simple/Non-Urgent – Vacation Scenario

Finding 6: Citizens' channel expectations for simple, non-urgent transaction scenarios clearly were the cell phone/telephone and the Internet for today and in the future.

MITRE found that citizens' communications channel expectations for this simple, non-urgent transaction scenario clearly were the cell phone/telephone and the Internet for today and in the future. The "other" channel was listed as an emerging trend in the future expectations (see Figures 2-4 and 2-5).

Finding 7: Convenience in simple government transactions was more prevalent in responses for future expectations than for today's expectations.

Competent service (21), courteous service (8), reliable service (8), timely response (7), and easy-to-locate contact information (7) were the top five current expectations for simple, non-urgent scenarios. Competent service had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom four

expectations were successful outcome, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (10), reliable service (7), convenience (6), and easy-to-locate contact information (3) were the top four future expectations for simple, non-urgent scenarios. The bottom four expectations were successful outcome, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and privacy and security (see Figure 2-5).

The results indicated a trend toward a higher expectation for convenience in simple government transactions. In addition, participants indicated an increasing expectation for improvements to government contact channels in the future. This trend is shown in Figure 2-3 as a significant expectation of using "other" channels in the future.

Expressing Opinions – Simple/Non-Urgent – Highway Scenario

Finding 8: Cell phone/telephone and the Internet are the preferred channels for expressing simple/non-urgent opinions today and in the future, but "other" channels become increasingly important in the future.

Citizen's communications channel expectations for this simple, non-urgent opinion scenario were again the cell phone/telephone and the Internet, both for today and in the future. The "other" channel was again listed as an emerging trend in the future expectations (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3).

A frequent future expectation to use "other" channels shows that citizens expect to use new channels as they are developed and to use existing channels in new ways.

This expectation for new channels to be developed, and for current channels to be improved, is often implied when citizens cite "other" channels (channels other than cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person contact, postal mail, or email) in their expectations. For example, talking computer interactions were often an "other" channel response, but these new capabilities may still use the current Internet as a base. The expectations to use new channels and to use existing channels in new ways, combined with a low occurrence of security concerns, drive the selection of preferred channels toward Internet and "other." This trend is seen in the future expectations for the passport interaction.

Finding 9: Convenience was more prevalent in responses to questions about the future than about today for expressing simple, non-urgent opinions.

Competent service (13), timely response (11), easy-to-locate contact information (9), and courteous service (8) were the top four current expectations for simple, non-urgent opinion scenarios. Competent service had the highest frequency. The bottom five expectations were privacy and security, consistent response, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (14), convenience (3), courteous service (2), timely response (2), and easy-to-locate contact information (2) were the top five future expectations for simple, non-urgent opinion scenarios. The bottom four expectations were consistent response, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-5).

These results indicate a trend toward increasing convenience in channels used to express opinions to the government. In addition, there is an increasing expectation for improvements to

the government contact channels that respondents currently use, shown in Figure 2-3 as a significant "other" channel expectation.

Citizens' expectations as represented by quotations from the groups also centered on being heard and being responded to. This finding agrees with the basic Pew findings.

Getting Information – Simple/Urgent – Disaster Scenario

Finding 10: Cell phone/telephone, "other," and in-person contact methods were preferred for today and in the future for getting simple, urgent information.

Citizens' communications channel expectations for the simple, urgent, getting-information scenario clearly were the cell phone/telephone, "other," and in-person for today and in the future. "Other" significantly increased, cell phone/telephone slightly decreased and was tied for first place with "other." In-person remained steady in the data at third overall for the future. Internet was not suggested for the future. Daston reported that citizens reported in several transcripts that the "other" channel was a reasonable response to their expectation that cell phone/telephone and Internet technology might not be available during disasters (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3).

Finding 11: Competent service and timely response were among the top expectations for getting information in simple, urgent situations today and in the future.

Competent service (12), timely response (6), courteous service (5), easy-to-locate contact information (2), and convenience (2) were the top five current expectations for simple, urgent getting-information scenarios. Competent service again had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom six expectations were consistent response, reliable service, successful outcome, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (13), easy-to-locate contact information (4), timely response (3), courteous service (1), convenience (1), and reliable service (1) were the top six future expectations for simple, urgent, getting-information scenarios. The bottom six expectations were consistent response, privacy and security, successful outcome, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment. Citizens' comments in the focus groups focused on clear lines of well-defined communication channels. Radio and cell phones were mentioned several times for the disaster scenario (see Figure 2-5).

Solving a Problem – (Complex/ Urgent) – Passport Scenario

Finding 12: In-person contact was the current preferred method of communication for solving a complex, urgent problem. The appearance of the "other" channel again shows an expectation for future improvements in government contact channels.

Citizens' current communications channel expectations for this complex, urgent problem/transaction scenario were in-person, Internet, and cell phone/telephone. The trends for the future were Internet, "other," and in-person (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3).

The following quotation is an example of an innovative suggestion from New York City (Passport 45-65):

> *What would be totally ideal is…if I could… if they could set up a Web site for instance where I wouldn't have to make phone calls, where I could just type in*

what my question is and then get an email maybe in a couple of hours or the next day answering my question… that would save me like three months.

Finding 13: For complex, urgent problems that incorporate personal data, privacy and security, as well as convenience, are emerging as future expectations.

Competent service (35), timely response (27), convenience (23), and courteous service (14) were the top four current expectations for complex, urgent, problem-solving scenarios. Competent service had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom four expectations were availability, consistent response, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (19), convenience (12), privacy and security (5), and easy-to-locate contact information (4) were the top four future expectations for complex, urgent, problem-solving scenarios. The bottom four expectations were consistent response, successful outcome, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-5).

Getting Information – Complex/Non-Urgent/Personal – Medicare Scenario

Finding 14: For complex, non-urgent contacts for getting information, the Internet was the preferred channel today, while "other" channels were most often suggested for the future.

The Internet leads in citizens' current communications channel expectations for the complex, non-urgent, getting information scenarios. In-person and cell phone/telephone are tied for second, for today. "Other" significantly leads the Internet and in person for the future (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3). The "other" channel was again listed as a key emerging trend in the future expectations.

Finding 15: Competent service and convenience are the top expectations for complex, non-urgent problem-solving contacts today and in the future.

Competent service (20), convenience (12), courteous service (6), and timely response (6) were the top four current expectations for complex, non-urgent information-getting scenarios. Competent service again had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom three expectations were availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (9), convenience (3), courteous service (1), timely response (1), easy-to-locate contact information (1), consistent response (1) and privacy and security (1) were the top future expectations for complex, non-urgent information-getting scenarios. The bottom five expectations were successful outcome, reliable service, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-5).

The Pew research indicated citizens used the cell phone/telephone for sensitive queries (e.g., personal tax questions) because they were worried about the disclosure of personal information. The focus groups did express current concerns with disclosing information over the Internet. An example of this comes from Daston's report: "…participants were hesitant to provide personal information over the Internet."

This concern was repeated consistently across the country. In Seattle, focus group participants commented:

> *I'm very fearful of sending my information out there into cyberspace…giving my social security number. You can't get around the security issues with all the identity theft going on. If government could make its Web site safe we could use it.*

Channel expectations by scenario centered on both the cell phone/telephone and the Internet.

Daston reports:

> The findings indicated that the citizens who participated in the twenty-two focus groups overwhelmingly want to use a combination of the Internet first and one or more of the other channels to obtain information. Participants in most of the present environment scenarios preferred to use the Internet for the initial contact with the government, followed by a personal back-up (usually the cell phone/telephone) when they run into obstacles. This theme was repeated in the majority of the scenarios, with the exception of the passport scenario.
>
> The following [is a comment] from the group in New York when making a reservation in a national park:
>
> *Get on the Internet…check out the packages…make a phone call from the contact information that I obtain through the Internet.*

This expectation may also account for the findings regarding security and social and ethical responsibility.

Solving a Problem – Complex/Urgent/Personal – Rare and Serious Illness Scenario

Finding 16: For complex, urgent, personal problems, the cell phone/telephone is tied with the Internet as the top preference for today, but "other" channels were preferred for the future.

Citizens' communications channel expectations for this complex, urgent personal problem scenario were cell phone/telephone, Internet, and email for today. The future channel expectations were "other," the Internet, and cell phone/telephone (see Figures 2-2 and 2-3).

The fact that the ranking of channels was changed and that the "other" channel was added to future expectations indicated that citizens expect government contact channels to improve for this type of urgent and personal interaction. Combined with the low prevalence of future security expectations, this finding also highlights Web and news channels as ways citizens expect to communicate about complex, urgent issues with the government.

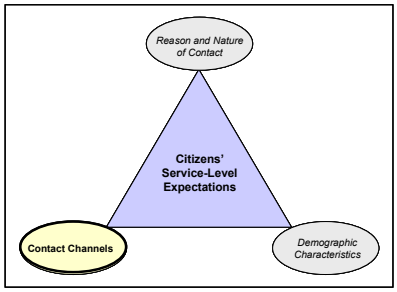
Finding 17: For complex, urgent, personal problems, competent service and timely response were the top expectations for today. Competent service, availability, and convenience were cited equally as the top expectation for the future.

Competent service (10), timely response (9), easy-to-locate contact information (7), convenience (11), and courteous service (3) were the top five current expectations for complex, urgent, personal problem-solving scenarios. Competent service had the highest frequency of

expectation. The bottom five expectations were consistent response, successful outcome, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-4).

Competent service (3), availability (3), convenience (3), and timely response (2) were the top four future expectations for complex, urgent, personal problem-solving scenarios. The bottom five expectations were courteous service, social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, reliable service, and privacy and security (see Figure 2-5).

2.2 Research and Findings by Channel of Contact



In developing contact center strategies, government must consider the channels for communication it makes available to its citizens, the platforms its citizens use to access those channels, the service-level expectations citizens have, and the real transactional needs of the population segment it serves. This section points out some trends in contact methods and services MITRE uncovered through its literature research, as well as the service-level expectations for different contact channels uncovered through focus group sessions.

The first part of this section, 2.2.1 "Research of Relevant Literature by Channel," outlines the research and key concepts MITRE identified in its initial literature review. This initial research provided the inputs for MITRE to define and identify the channels, expectations, and design parameters for the scenarios.

The second part of this section, 2.2.2 "Focus Group Findings by Channel," highlights the findings of the recent focus group sessions by channel as they relate to the trends and information gathered from the participants.

The focus group phase of this investigation looks at finding out which channels citizens prefer, given a base set of experiences with different channels. (This is the key reason why participants had to have used the Internet.) The focus group phase then examined what citizens' future expectations for those channels might be. MITRE also looked at emerging trends in technology identified in the available literature and then researched those trends by channel in the available literature. These two literature research areas are discussed below, followed by the focus group information summaries by channel.

2.2.1 Research of Relevant Literature by Channel

MITRE found that the existing Pew research did not identify the use of a single preferred channel, or mode of contact, as having more success in the final outcome.

> No single mode of contact, whether phone, email, Web, or letter, is associated with greater success than others. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

However, according to the results of a 2003 survey, Pew found that most people (40%) preferred to contact the government by cell phone/telephone, followed by Web site, in-person visit, email, and letter. Pew also found that:

> Among Internet users, the telephone is the preferred means of contact, but the magnitude of preference depends on the type of connection people have. Dial-up

> users are most likely to turn to the telephone to contact government. For those with high-speed Internet connections at home, the Web is narrowly preferred to the telephone as a way to contact government. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

MITRE's focus was to understand why citizens had particular channel preferences and how service-level expectations differed across channels. Because many contacts with government represent a single step toward achieving a desired outcome (e.g., a citizen may look up information and download pertinent forms on the Internet before going in person to obtain a permit), the relationship among channels is important to understand. The reasons for a contact and the nature of a contact are important in understanding the overall expectations of citizens and in understanding which channels, or combinations of channels, they truly prefer for different situations.

Because each communication channel has its own way of processing inputs, the citizen's expectations for each channel must be taken in context. For example, telephone and most cell phone dial pads have fewer keys than laptop or desktop computers, and cell phones with Internet access (also known as smart phones) have smaller screens than laptop and desktop computers.

Given the concepts of an overall transaction (not just one communication channel) and technical differences among the channel, GSA and MITRE decided to investigate how expectations differed across the channels today and in the surmised future. This investigation would give a better picture of possible trends in how citizens prefer to use these channels to contact government.

Technology Trends over the Next Ten Years

Over time, citizens will be exposed to new communication platforms and channels and to new service models in the public and private sectors. MITRE believes that this exposure will influence the baseline standards by which citizens determine whether their expectations for contact with government are being met.

Based on MITRE's research in the available literature on platforms, technologies, and service models that are likely to be widely adopted in the next ten years,[2] the following trends should be examined when citizen contact strategies are being developed:

- **Increased access to the Internet.** Most citizens' Internet access is limited today because computer users work in single, fixed locations. Future technologies, such as wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi), home broadband, mobile broadband, and other home network technologies, will enable more citizens to access the Internet from multiple places in and around the home, "hot spots," and urban areas. Devices such as smart phones, interactive TVs, and telematics also will increase accessibility to the Internet.
- **Increased ability to use real-time channels via the Internet.** MITRE uses the term real-time communication to refer to a channel's ability to contact a real person (on the phone, in person, or over the Internet) and communicate in real time (as opposed to email and postal mail, which have relatively longer delays between sending and receiving a response). Today, citizens can use the cell phone/telephone and office visits to

[2] Some of the technologies already exist, but may not be widely adopted by the public or not widely used between individuals and contact centers.

communicate in real time. In the near future, more contact centers will adopt real-time Internet channels in the form of instant messaging (IM), chat, and other Web collaboration technologies.

- **Increased mobility.** Devices such as smart phones, mobile broadband Internet access, interactive TVs, and telematics can make access to the Web more convenient in mobile situations. The physical characteristics of these platforms will continue to impact the way communications are sent and received (e.g., smart phones have much smaller screens than laptop and desktop computers, which may make display and search functions for contact services more challenging). Speech recognition can enable citizens to respond to automated prompts without using their hands to provide input.
- **Improved search capabilities.** Technologies such as wikis[3] and social network analysis will improve citizens' ability to search data; unified communications and other technologies will allow them to search voice data in addition to text-based data.
- **Increased collaborative ability.** Web call through, Web collaboration, chat, and Instant Messenger will enable citizens to collaborate with service centers.
- **Increased visibility into the customer service process.** Universal queue management, unified communications, and speech analytics will allow contact center representatives to access more information about in-process calls than they are able to access today.
- **Increased ability to use one platform to access more than one channel.** Much of the research today treats the cell phone/telephone as a single channel, but MITRE sees it as a platform for accessing at least three different channels (voice mail, Interactive Voice Response, and voice-to-voice). In the future, MITRE believes, channels should be discussed in terms of the platforms used to access them. For instance, cell phone/telephone channels now are accessible over the Internet (via Voice over Internet Protocol). Web sites and email are accessible using smart phones, and some Web sites are accessible to some degree over traditional phones via Web portals.

These technology and channel trends are already widespread among certain demographics of the population. The following sections review research by channel in the available literature.

Cell Phone and Telephone

The existing Pew research showed some interesting baseline data on the cell phone/telephone channel. For example:

> Those who use the phone are more likely to report problems than those who use the Web. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

A summary of the Pew findings below also seemed to indicate that, while the cell phone/telephone was a preferred channel for most citizens, there were concerns and some implied service expectations.

- Pew's 2003 survey, *How Americans Get in Touch with Government*, showed that the telephone was the most preferred channel for contacting government and the channel

[3] A wiki is "a shared workspace that is essentially a hyperlinked common workspace that can be accessed and edited online via Web browsers".

> most commonly used for last contact with government, but it also showed that "[for] those with high-speed Internet connections at home, the Web is narrowly preferred to the telephone as a way to contact government." (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004) Pew also found that people who had an urgent or a complex reason for contacting the government preferred telephone or in-person visits. When they were required to disclose personal information, Pew found that people preferred the telephone or some other way (e.g., presumably in-person visit) to the Internet. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

- Of the participants in the Pew study who had used an automated government telephone system, one-third said the service was not helpful. Two-thirds of the people who reached a live person via telephone found the service very helpful. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Eighteen percent of participants in the Pew study reported that being unable to call during business hours was a problem they encountered when they needed to telephone government. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Of the people in the Pew study who contacted government by telephone, 31 percent reported being put on hold for long periods of time, 30 percent reported getting transferred to many people, and 24 percent said no one returned their call. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Pew reported that 52 percent of those surveyed had to make more than one call before finding the appropriate person via telephone. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- The two most frequently reported problems encountered by citizens contacting the government by telephone in the Pew study were not having enough time to stay on the phone, and having to make repeated phone calls. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

A search of Canadian research also revealed some expectations for service levels by channel. Erin Research reported that:

- One minute was an acceptable time to wait before speaking to a person via phone. (Erin Research, 2003)
- Most Canadian citizens who contacted the government by phone for routine requests thought that dealing with two or fewer contact service representatives was acceptable. (Erin Research, 2003)
- Three common problems were busy phone lines, getting bounced from person to person, and trouble with answering systems or voice mail. (Erin Research, 2003)

Internet

MITRE found that the research on Internet showed an apparent trend toward increased acceptance and favorable impressions.

> Because use of the Net is not a predictor of positive outcomes with government, it seems that the Net nonetheless leaves a favorable enough impression with users that it improves users' perceptions of how they interact with the government. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

As discussed in Section 2.2, information seeking is the most common reason for online activity, although people use the Internet for other reasons as well.

- Of the 32 percent of citizens in the Pew study who reported using a site's search engine, 90 percent found it to be very or somewhat helpful. Of the 44 percent who reported using the frequently asked questions section of a site, 84 percent found it helpful. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Freed reported that improving the ability to find content on a Web site was more important than adding more content. "Government sites tend to have vast amounts of information and often organize the information in ways that make sense to agency insiders, but are difficult for first-time visitors to navigate successfully. Where navigation efforts are unfruitful, citizens turn to search to find what they're looking for.…The needs and expectations of first-time visitors can be very different from those of frequent visitors. The key to improving satisfaction for the site overall lies with truly understanding how visitor audiences use the site…." (Freed, 2005)

MITRE also found a mix of expectations on privacy and security:

- According to ForeSee's March 2005 report, "privacy [was] one of the highest scoring and lowest priority elements for eGovernment Web sites…. [This indicates that] the government is doing a good job of ensuring citizens that the online information is secure." (Freed, 2005.)
- In Momentum Research Group's 2000 study, 35 percent of eCommerce users and 20 percent of people who do not use eCommerce trusted that government would keep their records confidential. "One-third of eCommerce users trust the government to safeguard their social security number and feel comfortable with the government maintaining a master profile database." By contrast, "only 5 percent of those without eCommerce experience would trust the government to keep their social security number safe and only 18 percent would feel comfortable with the maintenance of a master profile database." (Momentum Research Group, 2000)
- Based on an international study of online government conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres in 2003, people are increasingly feeling safer online. Taylor Nelson Sofres also concluded, however, that "despite an increase in the perception of safety, there remain substantial levels of concern among the total adult population when providing personal information to Government over the Internet." In the Taylor Nelson Sofres study, 36 percent of American participants reported feeling safe using government online, 61 percent said they felt unsafe, and 4 percent said they didn't know. (Dexter and V. Parr, 2003)

In Person

Data on expectations in the United States for in-person channels was limited. The available Canadian research is not always directly applicable because of significant differences between the two countries in the structure and grouping of government services. For in-person contacts, however, Canadian research found:

- Five to nine minutes was an acceptable wait in any line to receive routine service at a government office. (Erin Research, 2003)
- Most citizens who visited offices for routine services thought that dealing with two or fewer contact service representatives was reasonable. (Erin Research, 2003)

- The distance between citizens and federal offices could make face-to-face contacts inconvenient for many people. Erin Research reported that 48 percent of Canadians said that 30 minutes was a reasonable amount of time to spend traveling one way to a government office, while 41 percent said that 15 minutes was reasonable. (Erin Research, 2003)

Postal Mail

Canadian research found that two weeks was a reasonable amount of time for mail transactions.

- Two weeks from the day a letter was sent until the day the needed information or documents were received was acceptable. (Erin Research, 2003)

Email

More information was available from the literature for email expectations in the United States (Pew Research, Horrigan, Double Click, 2004) and Canada (Erin Research, 2003).

- The following business day was an acceptable amount of time to wait for a reply to an email sent at 10:00 a.m. (Erin Research, 2003) This finding is similar to those reported in Double Click's 2004 consumer email study: "On average, consumers expect customer service response emails within 24 hours." (Double Click, 2004)
- Forty-one percent of Americans surveyed by Pew said they had to send multiple emails before they got the right contact. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- "Of those who used email to contact government, two-thirds said they wanted or expected a response, and 79 percent of them said they received a response." (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

2.2.2 Focus Group Findings by Channel

This section outlines the findings from the focus group sessions by channel. Technology utilization by the focus group participants is outlined below in Table 2-2. Out of 225 participants, 83 percent used the Internet daily, 93 percent had a cell phone, and 89 percent had a landline phone. While this is not a statistically representative sample, and does not indicate trends in the overall U.S. population, it does provide an interesting baseline for the analysis of expectations and trends derived from the focus group results. This group was specifically recruited to represent a population familiar with the technologies being investigated.

Table 2-2. Profile of Participants by Channel Use

Total Number of Participants	225
Used the Internet Daily	183/83%
# with Broadband	165/73%
# with Cell Phone	209/93%
# with Voice over Internet	28/12%
# with Landline Phone	200/89%
# with Blackberry	12/5%

Finding 18: For current expectations, the Internet, cell phone/telephone, and in-person contacts were preferred. Email, "other," and postal mail also were consistently mentioned. For future expectations, "other" channels were suggested more frequently, and in-person contact was cited significantly less frequently.

Internet, cell phone/telephone, and in-person visits were cited far more frequently as current channel preferences than postal mail, email, and "other" channels (see Figure 2-6).

The most commonly cited preferred channels for today's expectations, in order of frequency across all groups, were the Internet, the cell phone/telephone, and in-person. For future expectations, "other" became the channel preferred above all others. During discussions about the future, in-person contacts were discussed significantly less frequently, while Internet and cell phone/telephone were still discussed frequently (see Figure 2-6).

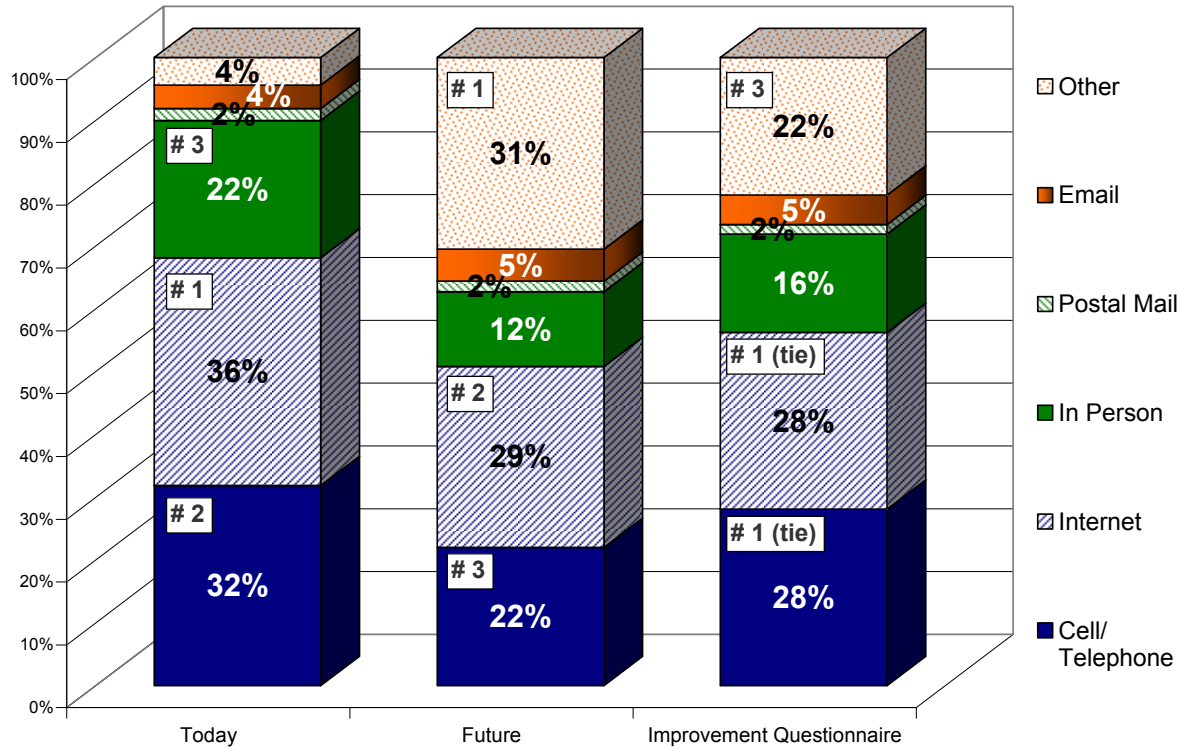


Figure 2-6. Focus Group Channel Preferences

For details on the preferred channels by age group, see Section 2.3.2.

Finding 19: Competent service is the top current expectation for cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person, and "other" channels (tied with timely response for "other"). Timely response and reliable service are the top expectations for postal mail and email.

Figure 2-7 maps citizens' current expectations and the ranking of those expectations by channel. These expectations were defined in Section 1.3. Service-level expectations differed slightly across channels, although the themes of competent service and timely response remained high

Using the Internet channel as an example (the number-one cited channel for today's citizen expectations), Figure 2-7 shows a trend in citizens' expectations for the importance of competent service. In this example, the expectation of competent service and easy-to-locate contact information on the Internet were more important to citizens than convenience or timely response.

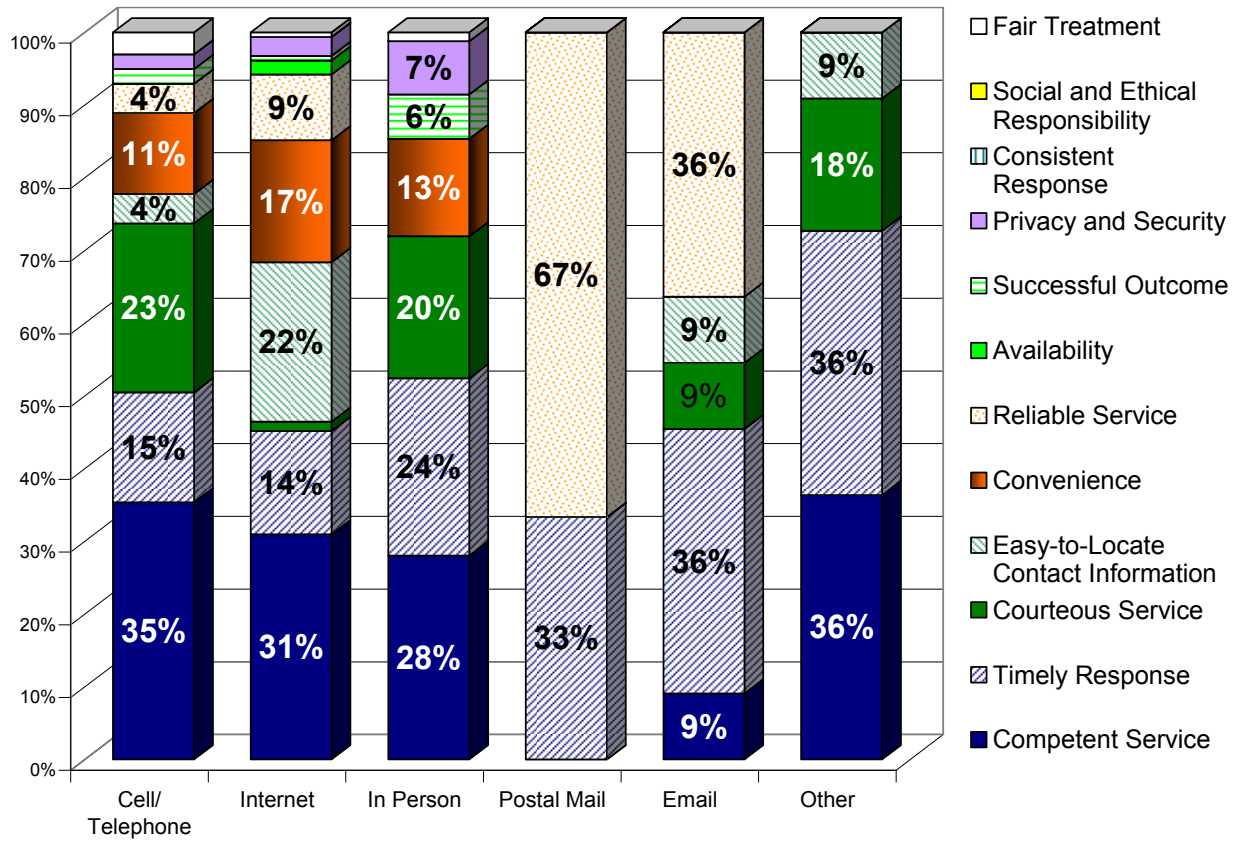


Figure 2-7. Today's Focus Group Expectations by Channel

Some of the key patterns in today's citizen expectations by channel outlined in Figure 2-7 include an overall expectation for competent service, reliable service, and a timely response.

Finding 20: Successful outcome and consistent response were either not cited or were cited the least frequently of all responses across all channels.

Fair treatment, availability, and social and ethical responsibility were not widely discussed as key current expectations (see Figure 2-7).

Figure 2-8 shows citizens' likely future expectations by channel. Using the same example of the Internet, the table again shows a trend toward the importance of competent service. Convenience, however, is starting to emerge as a future expectation over references to other channels.

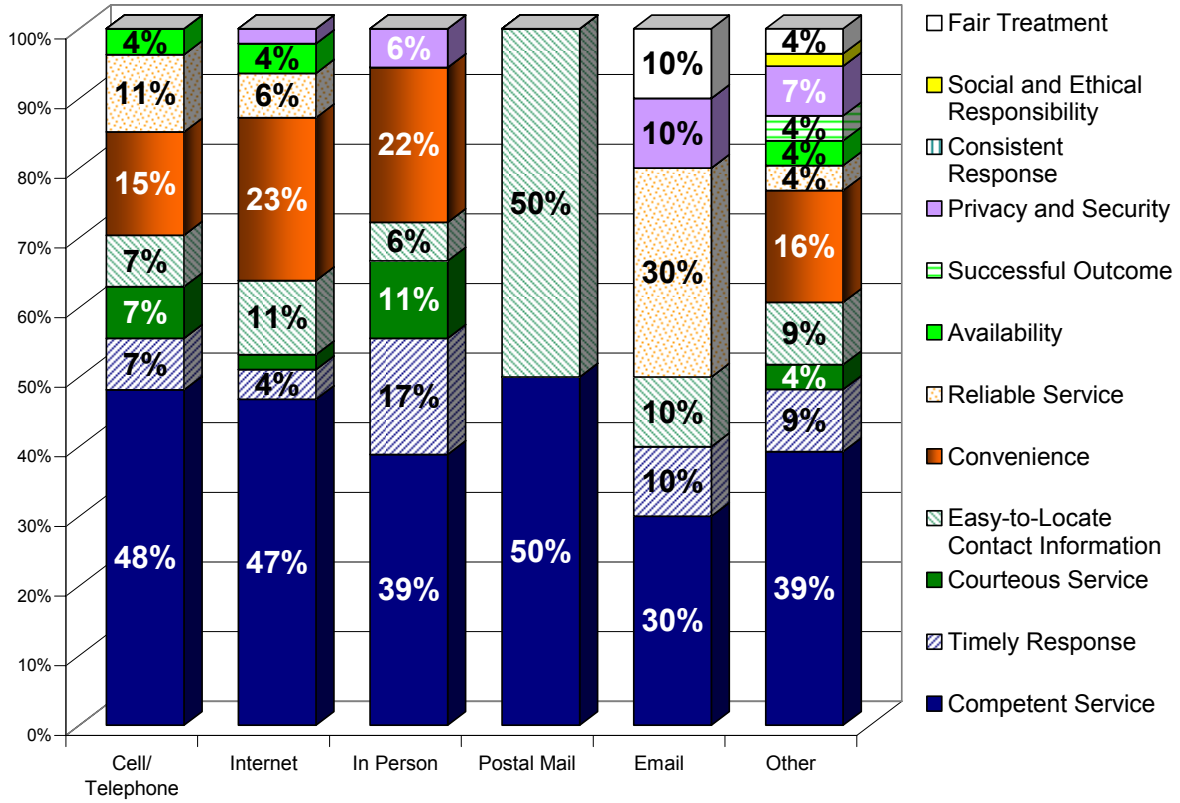


Figure 2-8. Future Focus Group Expectations by Channel

Key trends in future citizen expectations by channel, outlined in Figure 2-8, include some subtle shifts in trends from today's expectations to future expectations. In Figure 2-7, overall expectations for competent service, courteous service, and timely response showed up frequently as current expectations. Figure 2-8 showed that competent service remained high among expectations for future interactions, but courteous service and a timely response started to drop. Convenience and easy-to-locate contact information trended higher.

Finding 21: Competent service is the top future expectation for all channels studied. Convenience rises to second among expectations for cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person, and "other" channels, while easy to locate contact information is second for postal mail. Reliable service is second for email.

Finding 22: Privacy and security was identified as a current expectation for only in-person, Internet, and cell phone/telephone contacts, and as a future expectation for only Internet, in-person, email, and "other" channels.

Finding 23: Fair treatment, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and successful outcome again were not widely discussed as key expectations for today or the future.

Expectations by each channel are discussed below. The following sections summarize the findings from the focus group sessions. Each section first looks at implications from Figure 2-6, then compares and contrasts Figures 2-7 and 2-8 for each channel. Numbers in parenthesis represent the actual data value from the database for reference and magnitude (see Appendix D).

Cell phone and Telephone

Finding 24: Clearly the cell phone/telephone and the Internet are seen as key expected government channels for today and the future, but "other" became the dominate channel for the future. Citizens have an emerging expectation that all three of these government contact channels will be improved in the future.

Today's citizen expectations ranked the cell phone/telephone channel as second to the Internet and ahead of in-person visits. Cell phone/telephone was third, Internet was second, and "other" was first in future expectations (see Figure 2-6).

Finding 25: Competent service is the top current expectation for the cell phone/telephone channel, followed by courteous service and timely response. For the future, competent service remains the top expectation, but convenience ranks higher than courteous service and timely response.

The results of the improvement questionnaire by channel and by future expectations show that preference for "other" channels is increasing (see Figure 2-6). This suggests that participants expect government contact channels to improve.

Competent service (35), courteous service (23), timely response (15), and convenience (11) were the top four current expectations for the cell phone/telephone channel. Competent service again had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom three expectations were social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, and availability (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (13), convenience (4), reliable service (3), timely response (2), courteous service (2), and easy-to-locate contact information (2) were the top six future expectations for the cell phone/telephone channel. The bottom five expectations were social and ethical responsibility, privacy and security, fair treatment, consistent response, and successful outcomes (see Figure 2-8).

Internet

Finding 26: The Internet is seen as a key expected government channel for today and the future. Citizens again have an emerging expectation that "other" channels with non-traditional technology will be part of innovative channel solutions in the future.

MITRE found that today's citizen expectations ranked the Internet communication channel as first, followed by cell phone/telephone and in person. Internet was second, "other" was first, and cell phone/telephone was third in future expectations (see Figure 2-6).

The results of the improvement questionnaire show that Internet and cell phone/telephone have the same ranking, indicating that participants felt that they were the top priorities for improving government channels. "Other" channels were ranked second, indicating that they are second in priority for improvement.

Finding 27: Competent service is the top expectation for the Internet today, followed by easy-to-locate contact information, convenience, timely response, and reliable service. Competent service is the top future expectation, followed by convenience, while all of the other expectations are much less frequently cited.

Competent service (48), easy-to-locate contact information (34), convenience (26), and timely response (22) were the top four current expectations for the Internet channel. Competent service again had by far the highest frequency of expectation. The bottom two expectations were social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (22), convenience (11), easy-to-locate contact information (5), and reliable service (3) were the top four future expectations for the Internet channel. The bottom four future expectations were social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, consistent response, and successful outcome (see Figure 2-8).

The following quotation is an example from a citizen in New York City:

> *"I use the Internet for just about everything, I find it most efficient, sometimes you have to dig kind of deep but I know how to do that and you know you can do it through the comfort of sitting down like home or in the office and control your environment and then if you need any follow up stuff you can make a phone call or write a letter or send an email."*

The same respondent spoke about interaction:

> *"What would be totally ideal is…if I could… if they could set up a Web site for instance where I wouldn't have to make phone calls, where I could just type in what my question is and then get an email maybe in a couple of hours or the next day answering my question…that would save me like three months."*

In-Person Visit

Finding 28: Expectations trend toward minimizing the need for in-person visits as averaged across all channels. Only when examined in specific complex scenarios does in-person emerge as a top expectation.

MITRE found that the in-person visit communication channel was ranked third among today's citizen expectations and fourth among future citizen expectations. The channel also came in fourth in the responses to the improvement questionnaire (see Figure 2-6).

Competent service (23), timely response (20), courteous service (16), and convenience (11) were the top four current expectations for the in-person visit channel. The bottom five current expectations were easy-to-locate contact information, reliable service, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (7), convenience (4), timely response (3), and courteous service (2) were the top four future expectations for the in-person visit channel. The bottom ten future expectations were social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, consistent response, successful outcome, availability, and reliable service (see Figure 2-8).

Postal Mail

Finding 29: Citizens tend to minimize the need for postal mail as compared across all channels.

MITRE found that the postal mail communication channel was ranked sixth among current and future citizen expectations. The channel also came in sixth in the questionnaire (see Figure 2-6).

Reliable service (2) and timely response (1) were the top two current expectations for the postal mail channel. The bottom ten expectations were competent service, courteous service, convenience, privacy and security, successful outcome, consistent response, easy-to-locate contact information, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (1) and easy-to-locate contact information (1) were the only future expectations for the postal mail channel. The other ten future expectations—convenience, timely response, courteous service, privacy and security, social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, consistent response, successful outcome, availability, and reliable service—were not cited at all (see Figure 2-8).

Email

Finding 30: The expectations of reliable service and timely response were ranked higher than competent service for email channels today. Competent service and reliable service are the top expectations for email in the future. The email channel was ranked fifth among both current and future expectations. Email also came in fifth in the questionnaire.

Reliable service (4), timely response (4), competent service (1), easy-to-locate contact information (1), and courteous service (1) were the top five current expectations for the email channel. The bottom seven expectations were convenience, privacy and security, successful outcome, consistent response, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (3), reliable service (3), easy-to-locate contact information (1), and timely response (1) were the top four future expectations for the email channel. The bottom six expectations were convenience, courteous service, social and ethical responsibility, fair treatment, successful outcome, and availability (see Figure 2-8).

"Other"

Finding 31: Citizens have an emerging expectation that "other" channels will help improve government contact service in the future. The "other" channel was ranked fourth among today's citizen expectations, tied with email, and first among future expectations.

Clearly the cell phone/telephone and the Internet are seen as key expected government channels today and for the future. This finding again shows, however, that citizens have an emerging expectation that "other" channels will be part of innovative channel solutions in the future (see Figure 2-6).

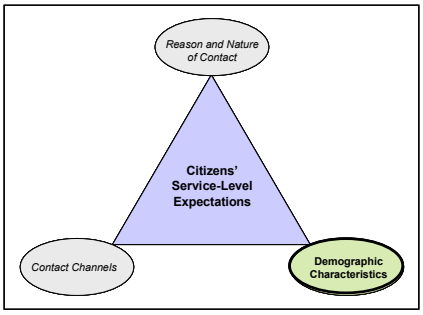
The results of the improvement questionnaire and the focus groups' "future" results show that expectations for "other" channels are increasing over today (see Figure 2-6).

Finding 32: Citizens expect competent service from government over "other" channels today and in the future.

Timely response (4), competent service (4), courteous service (2), and easy-to-locate contact information (1) were the top four current expectations for the "other" channel. The bottom eight expectations were reliable service, convenience, privacy and security, successful outcome, consistent response, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and fair treatment (see Figure 2-7).

Competent service (22), convenience (9), easy-to-locate contact information (5), and timely response (5) were the top four future expectations for the "other" channel. The bottom expectation was social and ethical responsibility (see Figure 2-8).

2.3 Research and Findings by Demographic Characteristics



In developing contact center strategies, each government center must consider the needs and expectations of the population segment it serves. Initial research was conducted to define the appropriate demographic characteristics of the focus groups. This research resulted in the identification of age, education, household income, and location as key demographic factors, and these factors were then used to qualify focus group participants. The research also uncovered expected differences in citizen expectations. These differences were used to create the design parameters of the focus group sessions. The first part of this section, 2.3.1 "Research of Relevant Literature by Demographic Characteristics," summarizes the results of the research conducted. The second part of this section, 2.3.2 "Focus Group Findings by Demographic Characteristics," provides the findings by demographic characteristic of the service-level expectations discovered through focus group sessions. Additional supporting data extracted from Daston's expectations database are contained in Appendix C.

2.3.1 Research of Relevant Literature by Demographic Characteristics

The demographics of the American population, and that population's needs, will change over time as the population grows.[4] [5] Demographic characteristics can be used to predict how, and the degree to which, citizens will contact government. "Demographically, those who contact government are better educated, wealthier, younger, and more likely to be male than the general population. Among the factors that do not come into play in people's tendencies to contact government are race, political affiliation, marital status, or being a parent." (Pew Research,

[4] The number of people in the United States will be 19 percent higher in 2020 than it was in 2000.

[5] MITRE's summary of selected demographic characteristics of the general U.S. population is based on data collected by the Census. Demographic characteristics of Americans who contact government are based primarily on data and reports from Pew's *How Americans Get in Touch with Government*, unless otherwise noted.

Horrigan, 2004) The relevant facts MITRE gathered about citizen demographics and expectations are presented below.

Age

Citizens between the ages of 30 and 49 contact the government more often than those over 50.

- "54% of Americans–both Internet users and non-users–contact government in a typical year."[6]
- Younger adults (less than 50 years old) are more likely to contact government than the general population.
  - The peak age range at which Americans contact the government is 30 to 49 years.
  - 57% of the population between 18 and 29 years old contacted the government in 2004. This age group represents 21% of the population.

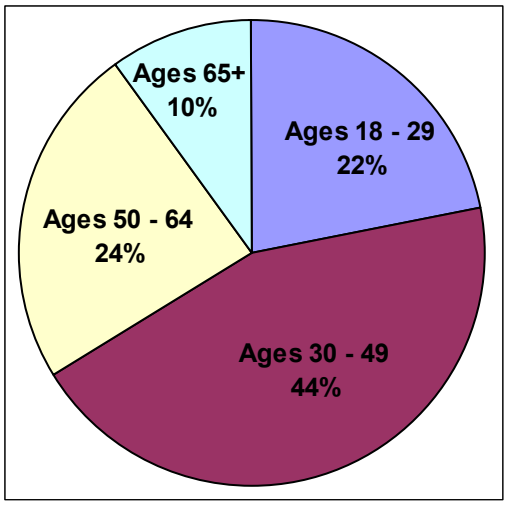


Figure 2-9. Age Profile of Citizens Who Contact Government

6 Pew, *How American's Contact Government,* page iii.

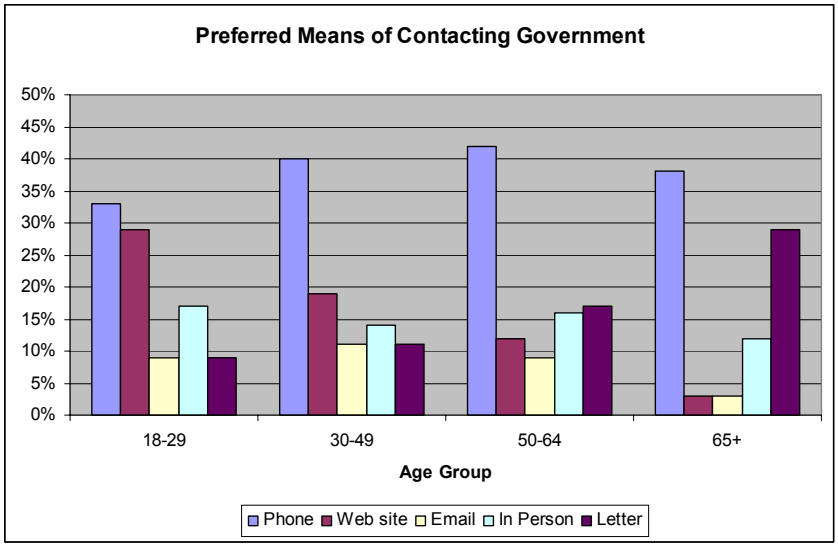
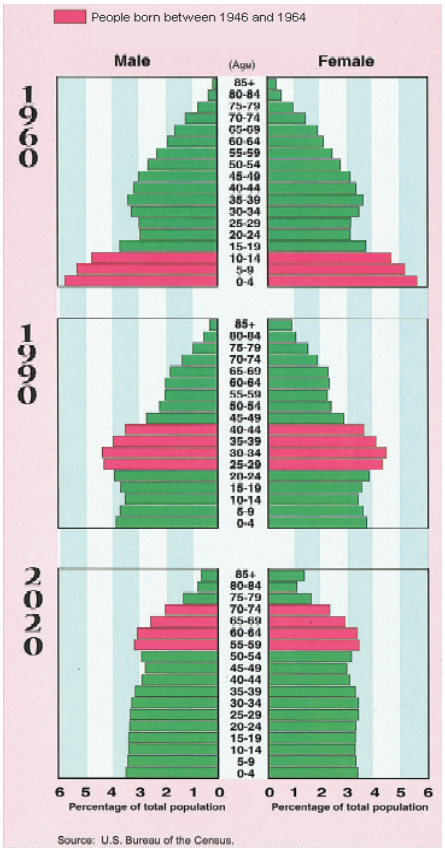


Figure 2-10. Preferred Contact Channel, by Age

- As depicted in Figure 2-10, cell phone/telephone is the most preferred communication channel for all age groups, but the younger demographic prefers the Internet almost as much as it prefers the cell phone/telephone. As expected, the older demographic segments use Internet and email significantly less.



- "People over age 65 report lower levels of success than others, although intriguingly they express higher rates of satisfaction with government. This may be due to the different motivations senior citizens have when they contact government. Those over 65 are much more likely to contact government to express an opinion (33% versus the 19% average) and this reason for contact is associated with much lower reported rates of success, but only somewhat lower-than-average rates of satisfaction."
  (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- The average age of the U.S. population in 2001 was 36.7 years. The median age in the United States is expected to increase over the next several years. Based on the United Nations' population data, the estimated median age in the United States will be 37.0 by 2015, 37.6 by 2020, and 38.3 by 2025.
- In 10 to 15 years, all age groups under 65 will contain roughly the same number of people.

Figure 2-11. Population Age Structure: 1960 to 2020

Education

MITRE's research found that better educated people are more likely to contact government than the general population.

- Success in government interactions is influenced by education level. "…[The] difference in success between those who have not completed high school and those who are college graduates suggests that the human capital that people bring to interactions with government has something to do with success." (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Although the percentage of people graduating from high school will not change significantly from today, the percentage of people who attain higher levels of education than their cohorts in previous generations did will be greater. Increased education brings increased contact with the government.
- Over the past 20 years, the number of young adults (age 25 to 29) who completed high school has remained in the 85 to 88 percent range, while the number of young adults with bachelor's degrees has increased in the past decade by 10 percentage points. Figure 2-12 illustrates educational trends in the overall U.S. population over the past several decades. The Census found that the younger population is more educated than the older population. (Stoops, 2004) Based on Census' data, MITRE assumes that, on the whole, the U.S. population will be more educated in 10 to 20 years than it is today.

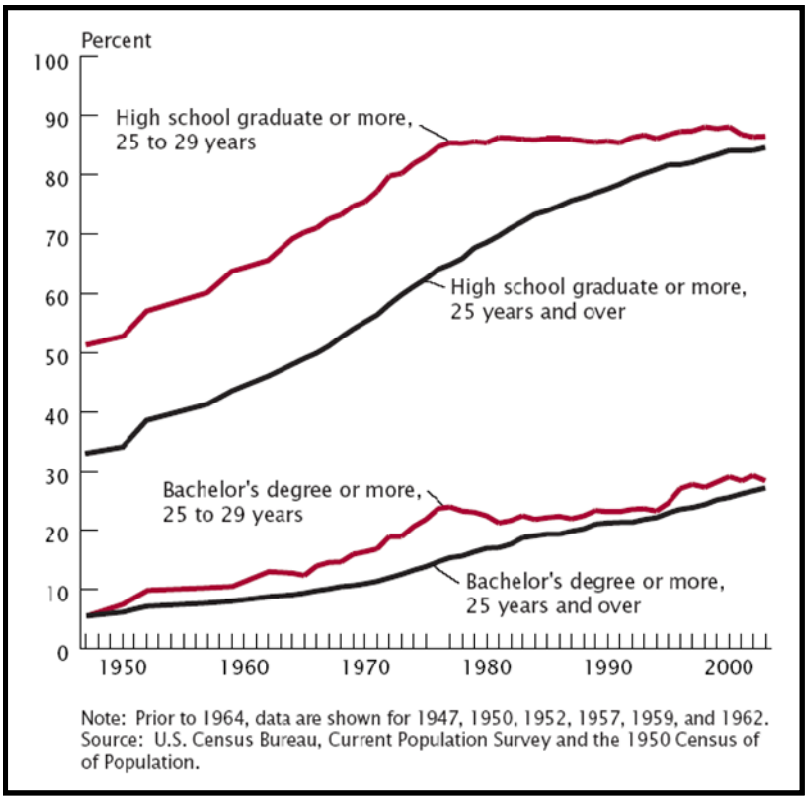


Diagram taken from Educational Attainment in the United States: 2003 by Nicole Stoops

Figure 2-12. Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over by Age: 1947 to 2003

Household Income

Research indicates that citizens who contact the government tend to be wealthier than the general population.

- Data from Census' 2003 American Community Survey Data Profiles and Multi-Year Profiles indicate that "both the poverty rate and the number in poverty for children under 18 increased—to 17.6 percent and 12.9 million, up from 16.7 percent and 12.1 million in 2002. The poverty rate for children was higher than rates for both adults 18 to 64 years old (10.8 percent) and people 65 and older (10.2 percent). …In addition, children represented 35.9 percent of the people in poverty, compared to 25.4 percent of the total population." (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Mills, 2004)

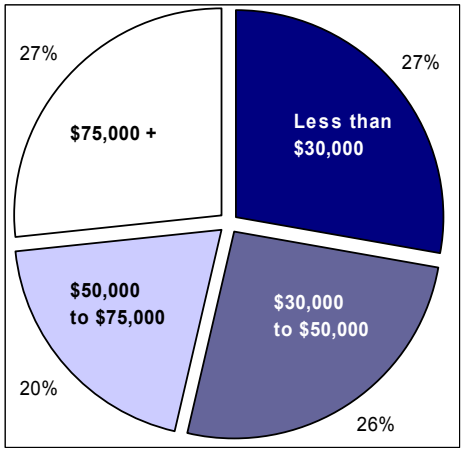


Figure 2-13. Income Profile of Citizens who Contact Government (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

- In 2003, the median household income was $41,994, while the median family income was $50,046.
  - 56 percent of American households and 47.4 percent of families in America had less than $50,000 in income.
  - Almost 10 percent of families and 13 percent of individuals were below the poverty level.
- The Department of Labor's 2002 National Summit on Retirement Savings communicated that the "Have" to "Have Not" gap is greatest in the youngest generation.

Internet Access

MITRE's research indicates that there is a strong correlation between citizens who have Internet access and citizens who contact government. This implies a preference for the Internet as an access channel.

- Pew conducted statistical analyses that show that being an Internet user has a large and independent impact on whether one contacts government.
- Seventy-two percent of Internet users say they contacted the government in the past year, versus 23 percent of non-Internet users.

2.3.2 Focus Group Findings by Demographic Characteristic

The focus groups were demographically qualified by age, household income, education level, and use of the Internet. The geographic location selection was constrained by resources, but effort was made to select locations in different regions. Although race and disability characteristics were identified as differentiators in the research, the limited scope of this analysis precluded the use of race and disability as demographic factors.

The focus group participants ranged from 18 to 65 years of age. Participants were grouped into three predetermined age groupings, with 47 percent of the participants in the 46-65 age group, 28 percent in the 30-45 age group, and 25 percent in the 18-29 age group. Age aside, participants were largely evenly distributed across gender, household income, and education. Table 2-3 summarizes the demographic characteristics of each focus group session by age.

Table 2-3. Profile of Participants by Age Group

	All Age 18–29 Groups	All Age 30–45 Groups	All Age 46–65 Groups
	6 Groups 24 Scenarios	6 Groups 19 Scenarios	10 Groups 35 Scenarios
Total Number of Participants	57	62	106
Geographic Location and Session	New York 2 – Session A New York 2 – Session B Charlotte 2 – Session A Charlotte 2 – Session B Houston 2 – Session A Houston 2 – Session B	New York 1 – Session B Charlotte 1 – Session B Miami – Session B Detroit – Session B Kansas City – Session B San Francisco – Session B	New York 1 – Session A Charlotte 1 – Session A Miami – Session A Detroit – Session A Kansas City – Session A San Francisco – Session A Houston 1 – Session A Houston 1 – Session B Seattle – Session A Seattle – Session B
Household Income			
$30,000 to $49,999	22	29	52
$50,000 or More	35	32	54
Education Level			
High School or Some College (Including Those Enrolled in College)	25	34	54
Minimum 4-Year College Degree	32	27	52
Other Information			
Used the Internet Daily	54/95%	48/77%	82/80%
# with Broadband	52/91%	43/69%	71/70%
# with Cell Phone	55/96%	58/94%	96/94%

Only eight of the focus groups differentiated education and household income demographics, so these groups are the only ones contained in the analysis of education and household income. Table 2-4 presents the profile of focus group participants by education and household income.

Table 2-4. Profile of Participants by Education/Household Income Group

	High School or Some College	Enrolled in College	Minimum of 4-Year College Degree
	3 Groups 10 Scenarios	1 Group 4 Scenarios	4 Groups 14 Scenarios
Total Number of Participants	33	10	39
Geographic Location and Session	Houston 1 – Session A Seattle – Session A Houston 2 – Session A	Charlotte 2 – Session A	Houston 2 – Session B Seattle – Session B Charlotte 2 – Session B Houston 2 – Session B
Age			
18–29	10	10	17
46–65	23	0	22
Household Income			
$30,000–$50,000	33	3	0
$50,000 or more	0	7	39
Other Information			
Used the Internet Daily	24/72%	8/80%	36/92%
# with Broadband	21/64%	8/80%	33/85%
# with Cell Phone	29/88%	9/90%	39/100%

Focus Group Findings by Age

Changes in citizens' needs, and consequently changes in their expectations, will be partially influenced by changes in age distribution across the population. Today, research shows that the younger generation uses the Internet more than the older generations do, but the 30-49-year-old segment of the population contacts government the most. In ten years, the younger generation will be in the peak age range for contacting government, which will bring different service-level expectations. These changes in expectations will have implications for contact centers over time as the segments of the population that they serve change.

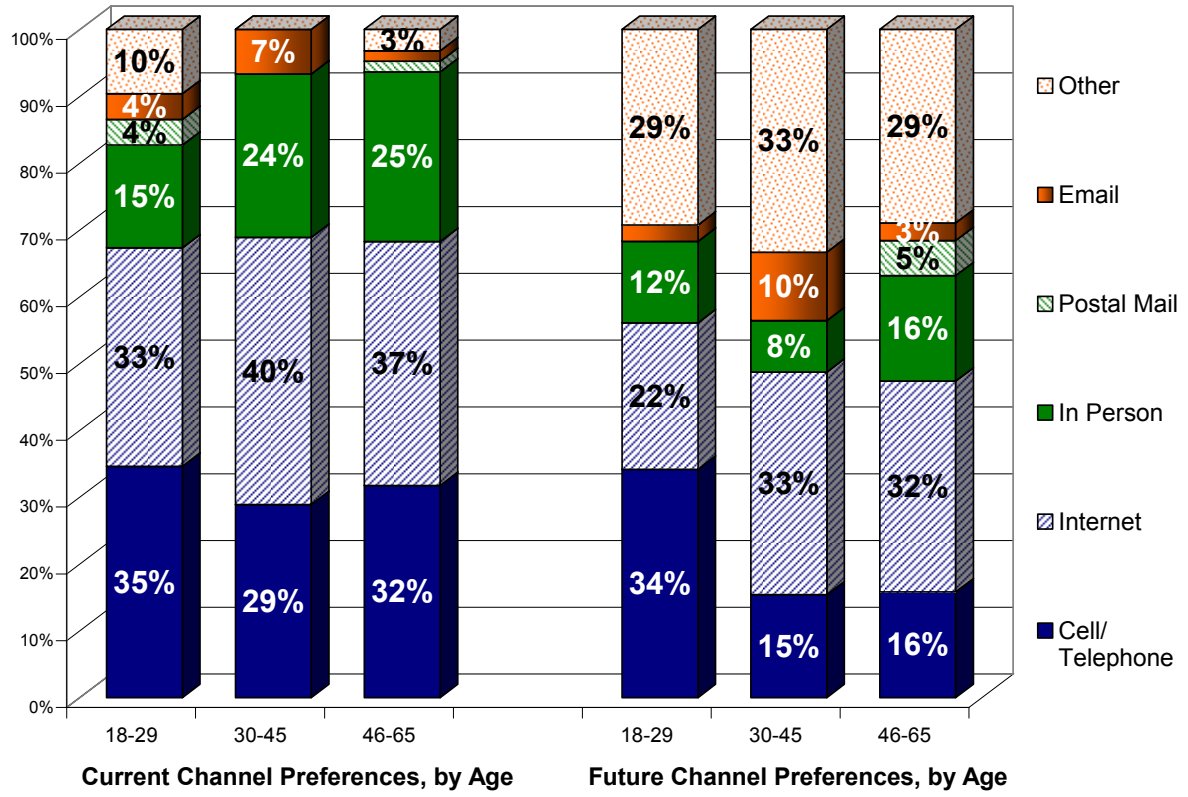


Figure 2-14. Preferred Channels by Age

Finding 33: Today, the 18-to-29-year-old population prefers the cell phone/telephone over the Internet, while the 30-to-45-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups prefer the Internet over the cell phone/telephone.

Differences in the current preferences between cell phone/telephone and the Internet were relatively small in the 18–29 and the 46–65 age groups. The differences in preference among 30-to-45-year-old groups were more pronounced. Ninety-one percent of the participants in the 18-to-29-year-old groups were broadband users, but those groups still preferred the phone. Observations of the two older groups were slightly different from the literature review, which indicated that all age groups preferred phone over Internet, even among broadband users. Although fewer of the participants in the 30-to-45-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups were broadband users, compared to those in the 18-to-29-year-old groups, the 30-to-45-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups preferred the Internet over the cell phone/telephone (see Figure 2-14).

Finding 34: Differences in preferences for cell phone/telephone and Internet continue from today into the future, and they become more pronounced within each age group.

Observations of the responses to questions about preferred channels in the future showed a wider difference between preferences for cell phone/telephone and Internet channels. The 18-to-29-year-old focus groups showed a stronger preference for cell phone/telephone in the future, while the other two age groups showed stronger preferences for Internet (see Figure 2-14).

Finding 35: All age groups indicated that "other" communication channels would be more preferred in the future than they are today.

Fewer than 10 percent of participants preferred communication methods other than cell phone/telephone, Internet, postal mail, email, and in-person visits today. For the future, however, at least 29 percent of the preferred channels fell into the "other" category (see Figure 2-14).

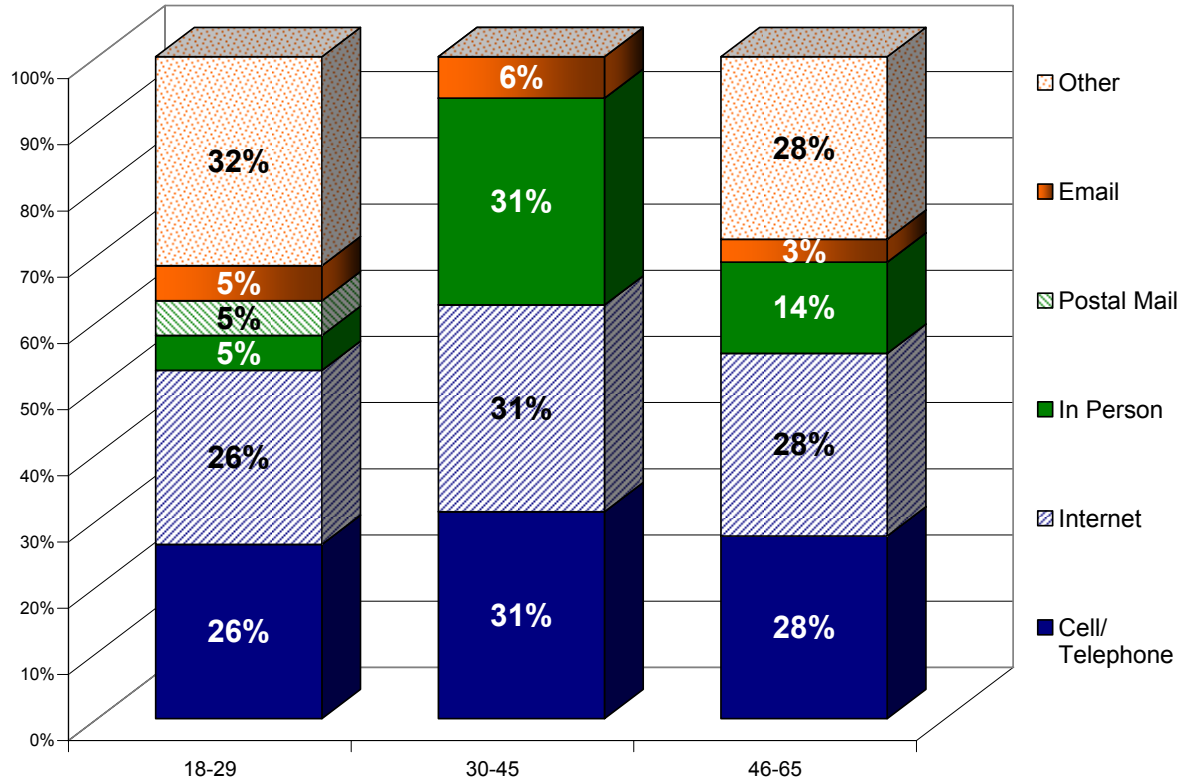


Figure 2-15. Participants' Improvement Priorities for Channels by Age

Finding 36: The 18-to-29–year-old groups identified "other" channels as areas for improvement slightly more often than they identified cell phone/telephone and Internet.

"Other" was most commonly cited by the 18-to-29-year-old groups as the method of communication that needed improvement. "Other" was also commonly cited as a method of communication to be improved by the 46-to-65-year-old groups (see Figure 2-15).

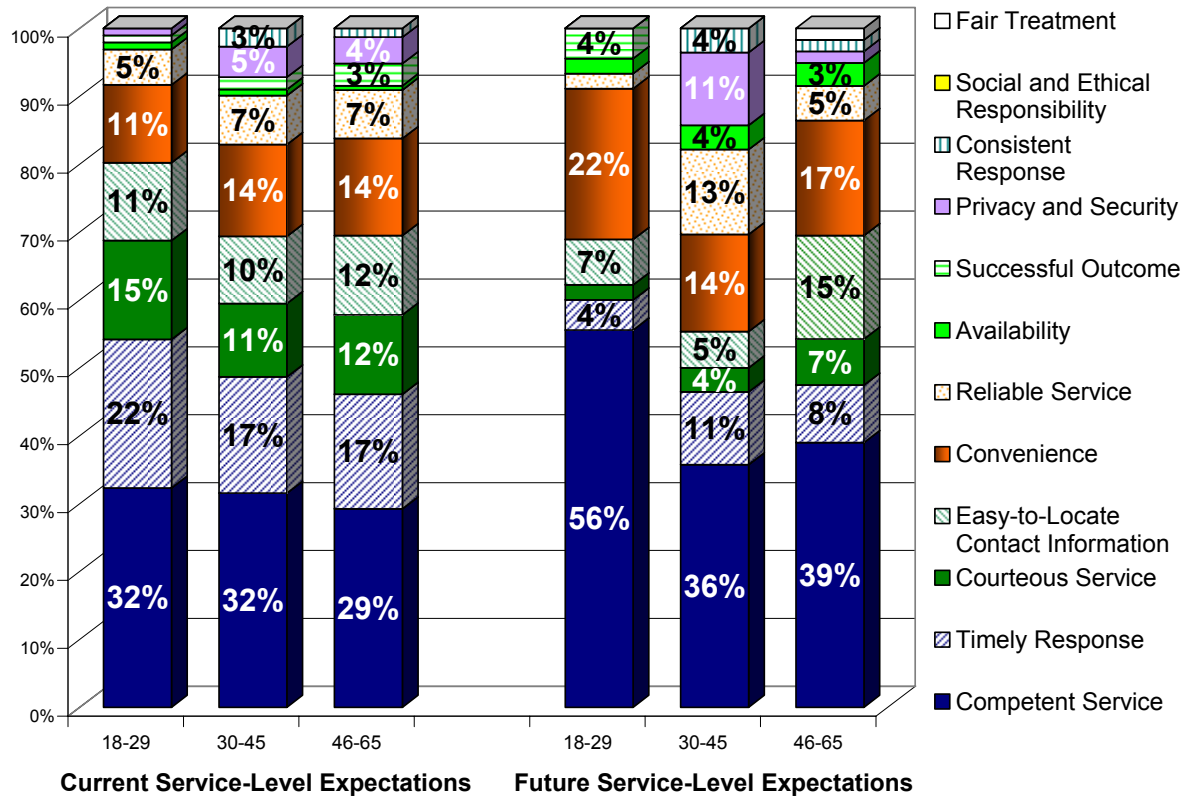


Figure 2-16. Preferred Service-Level Expectations by Age

Finding 37: Competent service and timely response were the top two current expectations across all age groups and the top two current expectations that needed improvement. Competent service and convenience were the top two future expectations across all age groups.

Focus group participants across all age groups consistently identified competent service and timely response as the top two current service-level expectations for government contacts. They also indicated that these were the top two expectations that needed to be improved. When talking about the future, competent service and convenience were to the top two expectations across all age groups (see Figures 2-16 and 2-17).

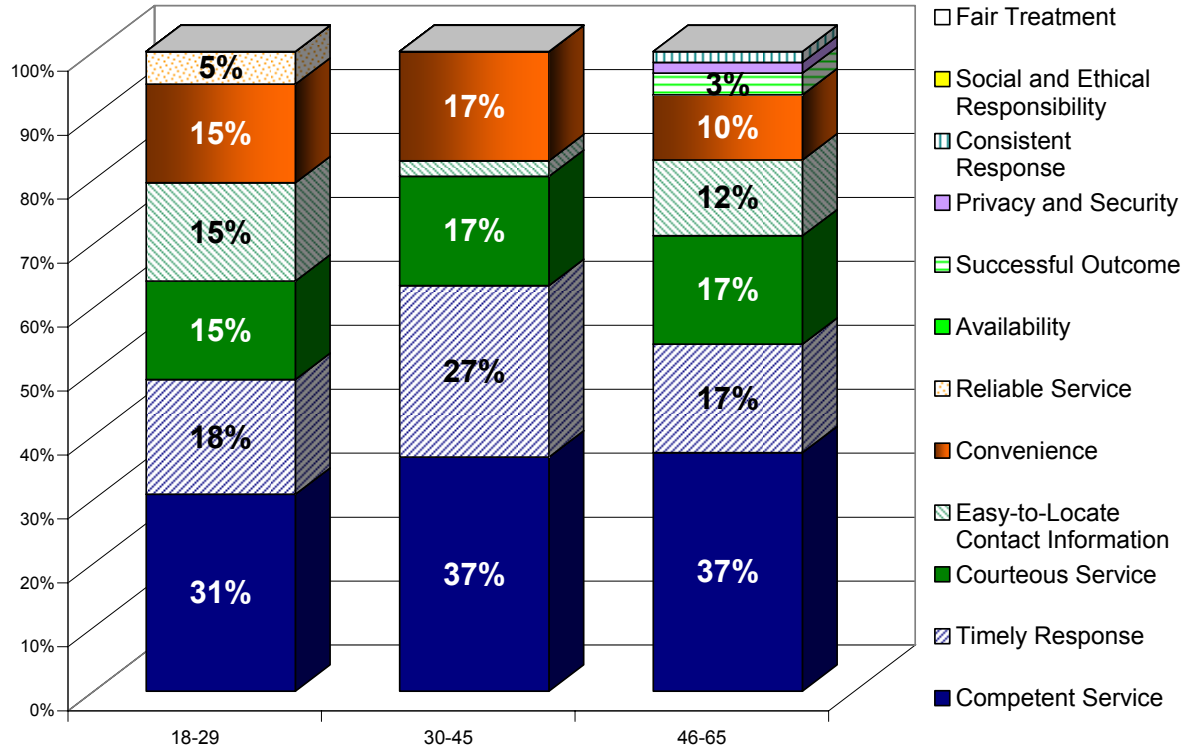


Figure 2-17. Participants' Improvement Priorities for Service-Level Expectations by Age

Finding 38: Competent service, timely response, courteous service, easy-to-locate contact information, and convenience were the top five expectations for today, for the future, and for needed improvement across all age groups.

Across all age groups and across all questions, competent service, timely response, courteous service, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information were ranked as the top five service-level expectations (see Figure 2-16).

Finding 39: Reliable service and privacy and security were more prevalent among the 30-to-45-year-old groups' expectations for the future than they were among the other two age groups' expectations for the future.

While the expectations for reliable service and privacy and security did not differ much across age groups in response to questions about today, the differences were more marked in response to questions about the future. The 30-to-45-year-old groups cited reliable service and privacy and security as future expectations more frequently than the 18-to-29-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups did. Less than 5 percent of the responses for future expectations were related to reliable service and less than 4 percent of the responses were related to privacy and security in the 18-to-29-year old groups and in the 46-to-65-year-old groups. (See Figure 2-16) NOTE: Session A in Seattle, which consisted of 46-to-65-year-olds, provided four out of the six noted responses regarding reliable service today among the 46-to-65-year old groups.

Finding 40: Expectations for availability, fair treatment, and social and ethical responsibility were less dominant than all other expectations across all age groups in response to questions about both today and the future.

Availability, fair treatment, and social and ethical responsibility accounted for less than five percent of all responses across all age groups in response to questions about today and the future (see Figures 2-16 and 2-17).

Finding 41: Easy-to-locate contact information was cited as a future expectation more often by the 46-to-65-year-old groups than by the other age groups.

Little difference in expectations across age groups was observed for easy-to-locate contact information in response to questions about service today. However, a more significant difference was observed across the age groups in looking at the responses for the future: Easy-to-locate contact information accounted for 15 percent of the future responses across the 46-to-65-year-old groups, while it accounted for 5 percent of the 30-to-45-year-olds' and 7 percent of the 18-to-29-year olds' responses (see Figure 2-16).

Finding 42: All age groups consistently identified competent service, timely response, courteous service, and convenience as the top areas that needed to be improved.

Competent service, timely response, courteous service, and convenience were the top four categories of service-level expectations cited as needing improvement across all age groups. (See Figure 2-17.)

Finding 43: Improving the ease of locating government contact information was cited more often by the 18-to-29-year-olds and the 46-to-65-year-olds than by the 30-to-45-year-olds.

At least 12 percent of the improvement responses in the 18-to-29-year olds and the 46-to-65-year-old groups centered on easy-to-locate contact information. Easy-to-locate contact information accounted for only 2 percent of the improvement responses from the 30-to-45-year-old groups (see Figure 2-17).

Focus Group Findings by Education and Household Income

Prior research did not suggest that household incomes influenced citizens' success or satisfaction with government contacts, but education level was positively correlated with citizens' success.

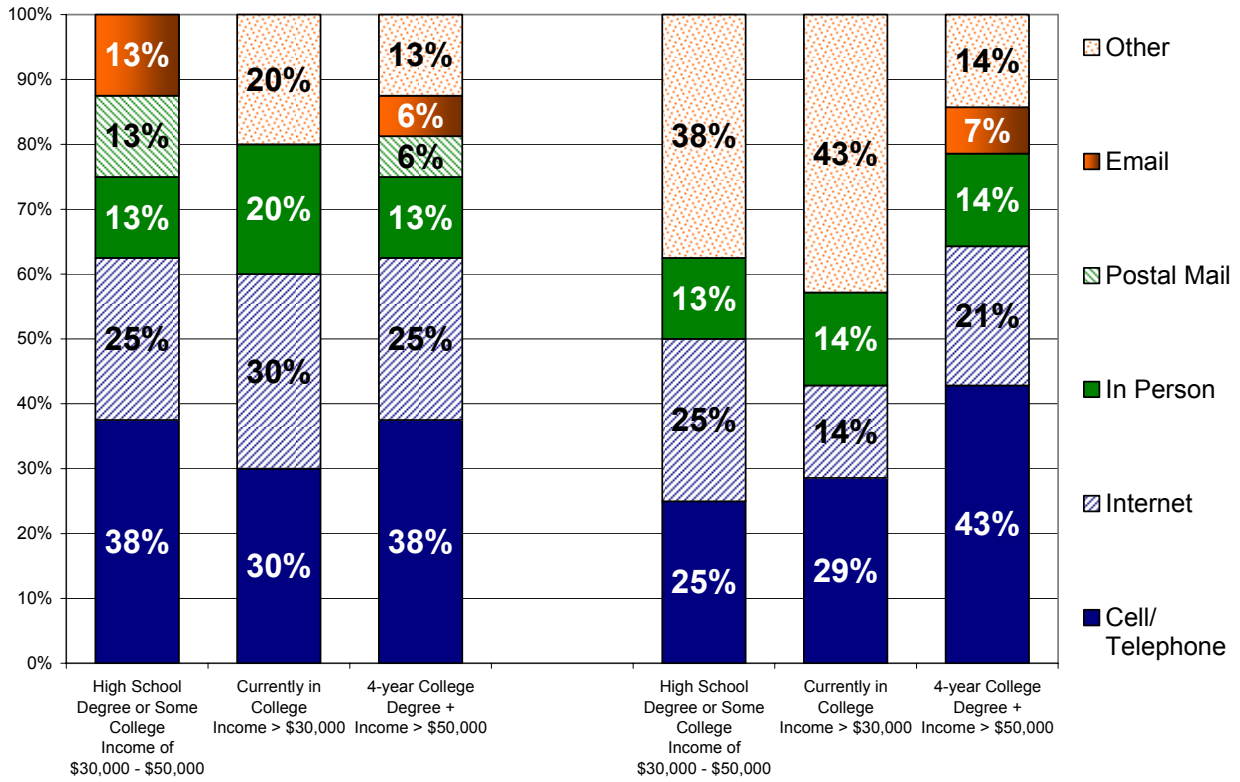


Figure 2-18. Participants' Channel Preferences by Education and Household Income

Finding 44: Internet and cell phone/telephone are the preferred channels across all education and household income groups for today.

Internet and cell phone/telephone were the top ranked channels across all education and household income groups. (See Figure 2-18.)

Finding 45: "Other" channels were cited as future expectations more frequently by groups with less than a college degree than by other groups.

The cell phone/telephone remained a top future channel choice for groups with at least a four-year college degree and at least $50,000 in household income. Those in the other groups preferred "other" channels more than cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person visits, email, and postal mail in the future. (See Figure 2-18.)

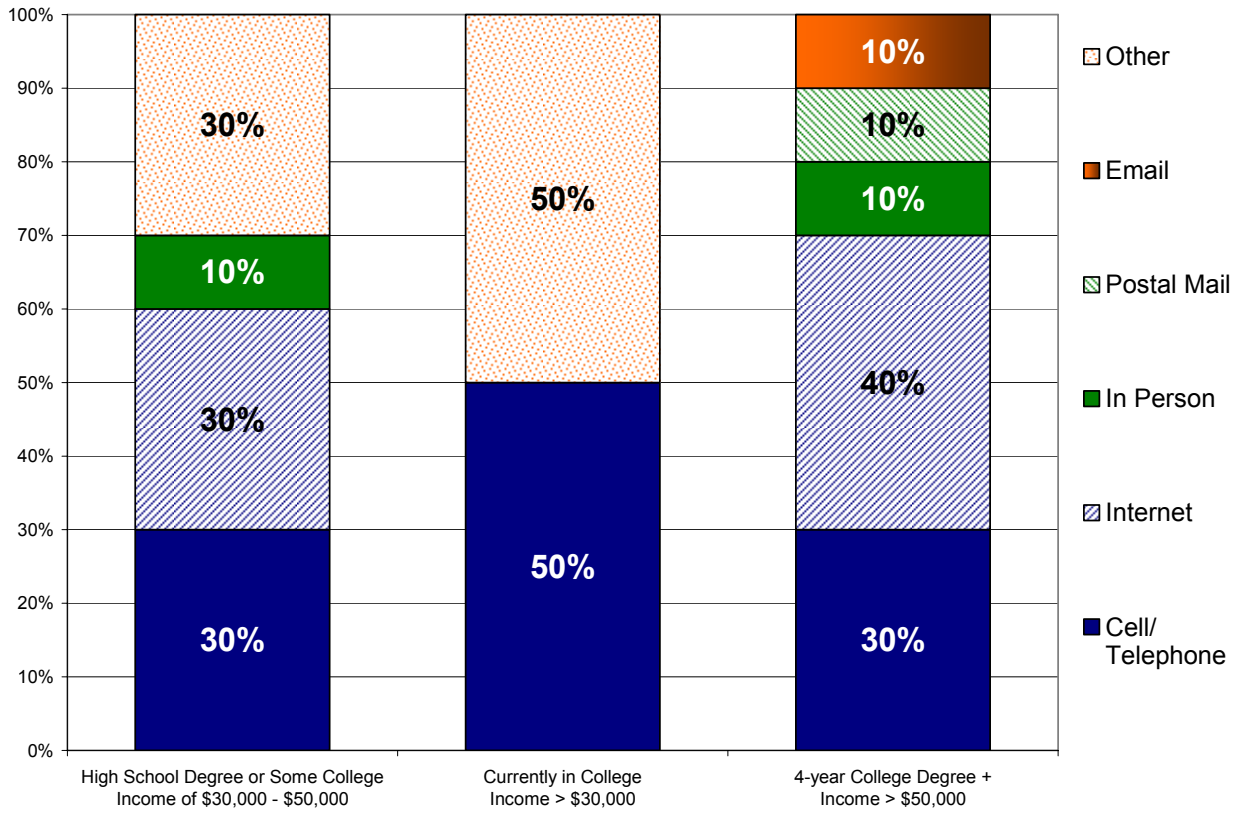


Figure 2-19. Participants' Channel Improvements by Education and Household Income

Finding 46: Channels that needed improvement varied across education and household income groups.

Groups with at least a four-year college degree and $50,000 in household income identified the Internet as a channel that needed improvement more frequently than they identified any other channel. Those in college with at least $30,000 in household income identified cell phone/telephone and "other" channels equally as the contact methods that needed improvement. Those who had a high school degree or some college and $30,000 to $50,000 in household income identified cell phone/telephone, Internet, and "other" channels equally as the contact methods that needed improvement (see Figure 2-19).

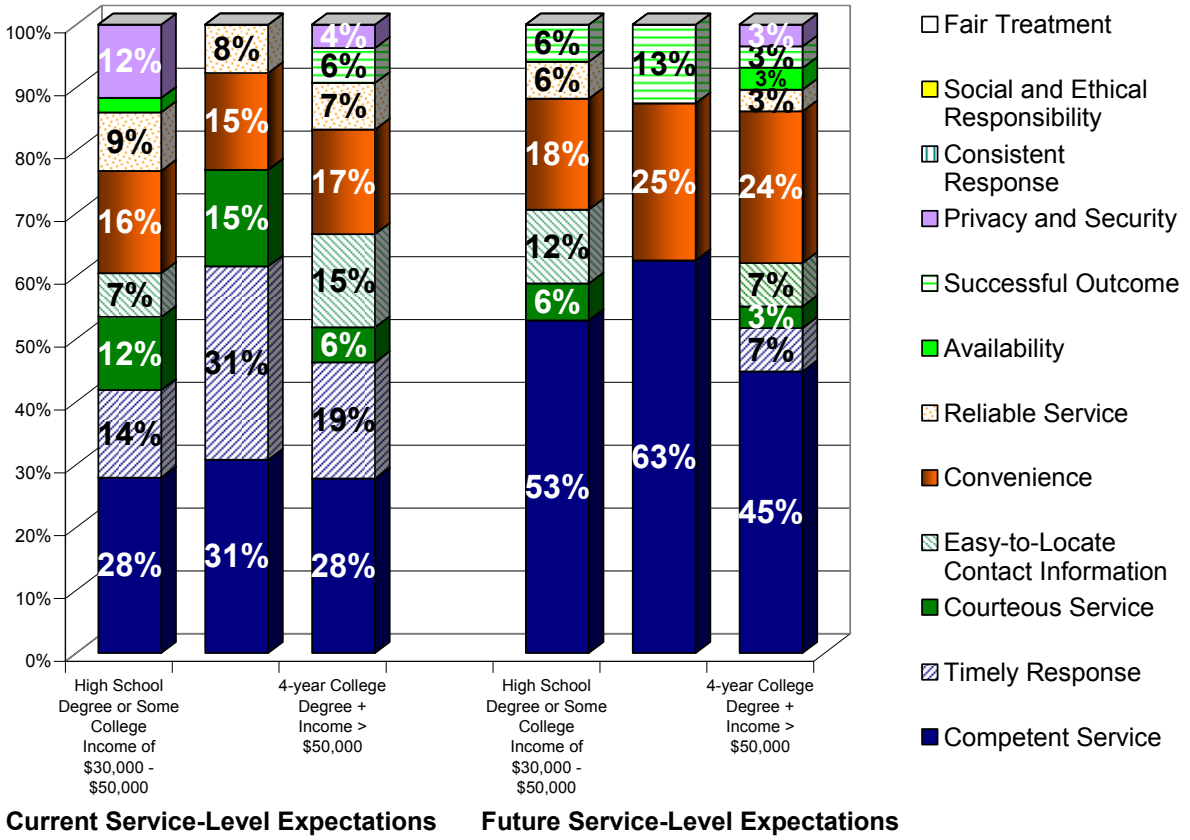


Figure 2-20. Participants' Service Expectations by Education and Household Income

Finding 47: Competent service, timely response, and convenience were the top three current service-level expectations identified across all education and household income groups. Competent service and convenience were the top two future expectations across all education and household income groups.

Competent service represented at least 28 percent of responses for current service-level expectations across all education and household income groups, timely response accounted for at least 14 percent, and convenience accounted for at least 15 percent (see Figure 2-20).

Finding 48: Participants who had less than a college degree did not include timely response among their future expectations.

This finding directly contradicts the other education and income findings, in which timely response was among the top five citizen expectations (see Figure 2-20). The enrolled-in-college groups also did not mention timely response in their improvement questionnaires. This anomaly should be evaluated further.

Finding 49: Easy-to-locate contact information was cited more frequently as a current expectation by groups with at least a four-year college degree and $50,000 in household income than by other education and household income groups. It was cited more frequently as a future expectation by groups with a high school degree or some college and between $30,000 and $50,000 in household income than by the other education and household income groups.

Easy-to-locate contact information represented 15 percent of current responses by groups with at least a four-year college degree and $50,000 in household income. It represented 7 percent of current expectations in the other groups. For the future, easy-to-locate contact information represented 12 percent of responses by groups with a high school degree or some college and between $30,000 and $50,000 in household income. For the other groups, it represented 7 percent of future responses (see Figure 2-20).

Focus Group Findings by Location

Finding 50: Citizens' expectations do not appear to vary significantly by location.

MITRE's analysis of focus group results did not identify significant differences by city chosen for this study. A preference was noted, however, in the data from Seattle Group A, which reported one-third of all responses associated with the privacy and security expectation.

2.4 Other Relevant Research

The following items provide additional information related to citizens' service-level expectations:

- "Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of government patrons say they change channels during contact with government, say from telephone contact to Web contact. Of these channel changers, 40 percent say it was because they were not getting the response they needed…." (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Forty-six percent of participants said the service they received took about the amount of time they expected, while 28 percent said it took longer than they expected. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Pew found that only 3 percent of Americans used a government information number, such as 1-800-FED-INFO, to find government telephone numbers, and only 8 percent used a general information site, such as FirstGov and AOL's government guide, to find a government Web site. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Pew found that 20 percent of its participants who used the telephone to contact the government had trouble figuring out where to call, and 18 percent of the participants had difficulty figuring out which government Web site to use. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)
- Pew also found that Americans who contacted government had "reasonably high success" with the government's contact services. Of the Americans who contacted the government in the past year, 63 percent said their outcome was successful. (Pew Research, Horrigan, 2004)

- Erin Research linked courtesy with service representatives' demonstration of "going the extra mile" to make sure that citizens got what they needed. It also reported courtesy as a driver of satisfaction for Canadian citizens. (Erin Research, 2003)
- Erin Research reported that successful outcome drives satisfaction in Canadians' interactions with their government. (Erin Research, 2003)
- Erin Research identified competence (knowledge) as a driver of satisfaction in its study of Canadian citizens. (Erin Research, 2003)
- "Timeliness has the greatest impact on satisfaction scores, while the other four drivers [competence, courteous staff, fair treatment, and outcome] were similar in strength." (Erin Research, 2003)
- "Fairness is the only one of five original drivers [of satisfaction] that does not appear anywhere in [the] channel-by-channel analysis. The probable reason for this is that only single-channel service experiences were used [in Erin Research's study], in order to clearly separate the channels. This tends to skew the sample towards quick, routine services, where fairness is less likely to be an issue than it is with longer and more complex services." (Erin Research, 2003)
- Cleveland reported that "while courtesy was used to mean an agent who communicated with customers with skill and a smile in his or her voice, today it is more process-dependent. That means don't make customers repeat the same information. Don't transfer them around. And don't make them go over their account history again." (Cleveland, 2003)
- Cleveland indicates that people will trust call centers if they:
  - Tell citizens what to expect
  - Meet their commitments
  - Keep their promises
  - Do it right the first time
  - Follow-up
- "[Customers] are mystified—and put off—by incompatibilities among retail, on-line or call center services (e.g., not being able to exchange an item purchased on-line at a retail outlet of the same company). They don't empathize with the organizational, process and technological developments necessary to create seamless services across all channels." (Cleveland, 2003)
- "Lapses, or perceived lapses, in ethics or social responsibility quickly make the rounds in networked, digital communities. Corporate ethics and responsibility concern the entire organization, but the call center as a hub of communication tends to be in the center of these issues, which can literally develop overnight." (Cleveland, 2003)

2.5 Matrices of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The following tables present MITRE's conclusions and recommendations mapped to the findings from this report. The findings are assembled here by section and perspective to allow a simple reference point between the findings and the conclusions and recommendations section that follows. All findings are numbered in a sequential order and can be found by that number and order in the main body of this report.

Table 2-5. Matrix of Findings to Conclusions

#	Finding	Conclusion #
	Reason and Nature	
1	Many citizens expect to be able to use a combination of channels to contact the government today.	C2, C4
2	Citizens' expectations are trending toward reducing the cell phone/telephone and in-person channel requirements in the future, but not toward eliminating them as major channels.	C2, C4
3	Today's top expectations center on competent service, courteous service, and a timely response independent of scenario. Privacy and security, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information often fell in the bottom half of the responses heard by scenario.	C3, C4, C8, C9
4	Many citizens were unaware of services that currently exist. This pattern repeated in several focus groups and scenarios.	C6
5	Future expectations are driving toward competent service and convenience across most scenarios.	C8
6	Citizens' channel expectations for simple, non-urgent transaction scenarios clearly were the cell phone/telephone and the Internet for today and in the future.	C2, C4
7	Convenience for simple government transactions was more prevalent in responses for future expectations than for today's expectations.	C8
8	Cell phone/telephone and the Internet are the preferred channels for expressing simple/non-urgent opinions today and in the future, but "other" channels become increasingly important in the future.	C1, C2, C4
9	Convenience was more prevalent in responses to questions about the future than about today for expressing simple, non-urgent opinions.	C8
10	Cell phone/telephone, "other," and in-person contact methods were preferred for today and in the future for getting simple, urgent information.	C2, C4
11	Competent service and timely response were among the top expectations for getting information in simple, urgent situations today and in the future.	C9
12	In-person contact was the current preferred method of communication for solving a complex, urgent problem. The appearance of the "other" channel again shows an expectation for future improvements in government contact channels.	C1, C2, C4
13	For complex, urgent problems that incorporate personal data, privacy and security, as well as convenience, are emerging as future expectations.	C8
14	For complex, non-urgent contacts for getting information, the Internet was the preferred channel today, while "other" channels were most often suggested for the future.	C2, C4
15	Competent service and convenience are the top expectations for complex, non-urgent problem-solving contacts today and in the future.	C9
16	For complex, urgent, personal problems, the cell phone/telephone is tied with the Internet as the top preference for today, but "other" channels were preferred for the future.	C1, C2, C4
17	For complex, urgent, personal problems, competent service and timely response were the top expectations for today. Competent service, availability, and convenience were cited equally as the top expectation for the future.	C8, C9
	Channel	
18	For current expectations, the Internet, cell phone/telephone, and in-person contacts were preferred. Email, "other," and postal mail also were consistently mentioned. For future expectations, "other" channels were suggested more frequently, and in-person contact was cited significantly less frequently.	C1, C2
19	Competent service is the top current expectation for cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person, and "other" channels (tied with timely response for "other"). Timely response and reliable service are the top expectations for postal mail and email	C8, C9
20	Successful outcome and consistent response were either not cited or were cited the least frequently of all responses across all channels.	C3, C9
21	Competent service is the top future expectation for all channels studied. Convenience rises to second among expectations for cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person, and "other" channels, while easy to locate contact information is second for postal mail. Reliable service is second for email.	C2, C8
22	Privacy and security was identified as a current expectation for only in-person, Internet, and cell phone/telephone contacts, and as a future expectation for only Internet, in-person, email, and "other" channels.	C8, C9

#	Finding	Conclusion #
23	Fair treatment, availability, social and ethical responsibility, and successful outcome again were not widely discussed as key expectations for today or the future.	C9
24	Clearly the cell phone/telephone and the Internet are seen as key expected government channels for today and the future, but "other" became the dominate channel for the future. Citizens have an emerging expectation that all three of these government contact channels will be improved in the future.	C1, C2
25	Competent service is the top current expectation for the cell phone/telephone channel, followed by courteous service and timely response. For the future, competent service remains the top expectation, but convenience ranks higher than courteous service and timely response.	C8, C9
26	The Internet is seen as a key expected government channel for today and the future. Citizens again have an emerging expectation that "other" channels with non-traditional technology will be part of innovative channel solutions in the future.	C1, C2
27	Competent service is the top expectation for the Internet today, followed by easy-to-locate contact information, convenience, timely response, and reliable service. Competent service is the top future expectation, followed by convenience, while all of the other expectations are much less frequently cited.	C8, C9
28	Expectations trend toward minimizing the need for in-person visits as averaged across all channels. Only when examined in specific complex scenarios does in-person emerge as a top expectation.	C2
29	Citizens tend to minimize the need for postal mail as compared across all channels.	C2
30	The expectations of reliable service and timely response were ranked higher than competent service for email channels today. Competent service and reliable service are the top expectations for email in the future. The email channel was ranked fifth among both current and future expectations. Email also came in fifth in the questionnaire.	C2
31	Citizens have an emerging expectation that "other" channels will help improve government contact service in the future. The "other" channel was ranked fourth among today's citizen expectations, tied with email, and first among future expectations.	C2
32	Citizens expect competent service from government over "other" channels today and in the future.	C9
Demographics		
33	Today, the 18-to-29-year-old population prefers the cell phone/telephone over the Internet, while the 30-to-45-year old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups prefer the Internet over the cell phone/telephone.	C1, C5
34	Differences in preferences for cell phone/telephone and Internet continue from today into the future, and they become more pronounced within each age group.	C1, C2, C5
35	All age groups indicated that "other" communication channels would be more preferred in the future than they are today.	C5
36	The 18-to-29-year-old groups identified "other" channels as areas for improvement slightly more often than they identified cell phone/telephone and Internet.	C5
37	Competent service and timely response were the top two current expectations across all age groups and the top two current expectations that needed improvement. Competent service and convenience were the top two future expectations across all age groups.	C8, C9, C10
38	Competent service, timely response, courteous service, easy-to-locate contact information, and convenience were the top five expectations for today, for the future, and for needed improvement across all age groups.	C9, C10
39	Reliable service and privacy and security were more prevalent among the 30-to-45-year-old groups' expectations for the future than they were among the other two age groups' expectations for the future.	C10
40	Expectations for availability, fair treatment, and social and ethical responsibility were less dominant than all other expectations across all age groups in response to questions about both today and the future.	C10
41	Easy-to-locate contact information was cited as a future expectation more often by the 46-to-65-year-old groups than by the other age groups.	C10
42	All age groups consistently identified competent service, timely response, courteous service, and convenience as the top areas that needed to be improved.	C9, C10
43	Improving the ease of locating government contact information was cited more often by the 18-to-29-year-olds and the 46-to-65-year-olds than by the 30-to-45-year-olds.	C10
44	Internet and cell phone/telephone are the preferred channels across all education and household income groups for today.	C1, C2, C5
45	"Other" channels were cited as future expectations more frequently by groups with less than a college degree than by other groups.	C2
46	Channels that needed improvement varied across education and household income groups.	C5

#	Finding	Conclusion #
47	Competent service, timely response, and convenience were the top three current service-level expectations identified across all education and household income groups. Competent service and convenience were the top two future expectations across all education and household income groups.	C10
48	Participants who had less than a college degree did not include timely response among their future expectations.	C9, C10
49	Easy-to-locate contact information was cited more frequently as a current expectation by groups with at least a four-year college degree and $50,000 in household income than by other education and household income groups. It was cited more frequently as a future expectation by groups with a high school degree or some college and between $30,000 and $50,000 in household income than by the other education and household income groups.	C10
50	Citizens' expectations do not appear to vary significantly by location.	C10

Table 2-6. Matrix of Conclusions to Recommendations

#	Conclusion	Recommendation #
C1	The preference for using the Internet to contact the government has increased overall; the expectation for in-person contact in the future is declining.	R2, R6, R9, R10
C2	Citizens expect to continue using all current channels to contact the government in the future.	R2, R4, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10
C3	Citizens expect that the information they need will be accessed through a combination of channels and be consistent, no matter how they contact the government.	R2, R5, R7, R8, R9, R10
C4	The manner in which citizens contact the government is dependent upon the reason for and the nature of the contact.	R2, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10
C5	Citizens expect improvements in the channels they use the most.	R2, R5, R8, R9
C6	The government is not effectively communicating the availability of existing government services and contact channels.	R2, R6, R7, R9
C7	Citizens expect the government to 'push' certain information and services to them.	R2, R9, R10
C8	Citizen expectations are changing, with growing emphasis on convenience.	R3, R6, R8, R9, R10
C9	Citizens overwhelmingly expect competent service, even to the exclusion of successful outcomes.	R1, R9
C10	Citizens' service-level expectations vary by demographic.	R2, R7, R8, R10

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is the summary of conclusions based on MITRE's review of the findings and the research detailed throughout this report. The second part presents the recommendations MITRE has generated from these findings and conclusions. The conclusions MITRE has drawn apply only with regard to the participants in the focus groups and not necessarily to all citizens.

3.1 Conclusions

GSA sponsored a series of focus groups to hear from citizens what their preferred channels for contacting government are and what expectations they have for the services they receive over those channels. Daston recruited 264 individuals, 225 of whom attended the various sessions. Twenty-three sessions were held in nine cities across the nation. All of the following conclusions are mapped to the findings in Table 2-5 to allow reference back to the source focus group findings in this document.

From the focus group responses, MITRE found that:

C1. The preference for using the Internet to contact the government has increased overall; the expectation for in-person contact in the future is declining.

Looking at the focus group responses independent of city, age group, and scenario, the most commonly cited preferred channels, in order of frequency heard across all groups, were the Internet, cell phone/telephone, and in-person contacts for today's expectations. In discussions about the future, in-person contacts were discussed significantly less, while Internet and cell phone/telephone were still discussed frequently. Internet and cell phone/telephone were the top ranked channels across all education and household income groups for today and the future. MITRE's examination of technology trends in the next ten years also indicates an increasing preference toward using the Internet.

Overall preference for the Internet has increased, even with cell phone/telephone and in-person contacts emerging as preferred channels in some situations and for specific demographics. For example, citizens still expect to solve complex, urgent problems in person.

Channel preferences varied by age across demographic characteristic. The 18-to-29-year-old groups still preferred the cell phone/telephone over the Internet for current contacts, even though 91 percent of their members have broadband access. The 30-to-45-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups preferred the Internet for current contacts. For future contacts, each group expressed an even stronger preference for the same channels they prefer today. Even with these exceptions, however, citizens all consistently included the Internet as one of the top expectations.

C2. Citizens expect to continue using all current channels to contact the government in the future.

All of the focus group findings related to channel preferences suggest that while the Internet is growing in popularity today and for the future, cell phone/telephone and in-person channels still have an important role to play in government contact strategies today and for the future.

An examination of all the current and future trends in channel rankings by reason for and nature of contact shows that while the Internet plays a significant role in the overall preferred channel expectations, it cannot totally meet all citizen contact expectations.

A review of the expectations for all channels, by reason for and nature of contact, shows that citizens mentioned all six channels and reveals that citizens had consistent expectations of competent service and/or timely response for every channel.

C3. Citizens expect that the information they need will be accessed through a combination of channels and be consistent, no matter how they contact the government.

Daston's data reveals that this pattern is reflective of an expectation by many citizens to be able to use a combination of channels to contact the government today. Focus group responses indicated that people want to use a combination of the Internet first and follow up with one or more of the other channels.

A quote from a focus group in New York City illustrates this point:

> *"Get on the Internet…Check out the packages…makes a phone call from the contact information that I get from the Internet."*

A second quote, also from New York City, further illustrates this point:

> *"... what would be totally ideal is…if I could… if they could set up a Web site for instance where I wouldn't have to make phone calls, where I could just type in what my question is and then get an email maybe in a couple of hours or the next day answering my question… that would save me like three months…."*

Another key finding is that citizens do not actually anticipate that the government will give them consistent responses, even though citizens may want consistent responses. Consistent response was one of the expectations heard at the bottom (or not heard at all) of the list of citizens' expectations for government service today and for the future.

C4. The manner in which citizens contact the government is dependent upon the reason for and nature of the contact.

Results from the focus group sessions show that channel preferences both for today and for the future varied by reason for and nature of contact. For example, cell phone/telephone is the preferred current channel of contact for a simple, urgent expression of opinion (highway), while in-person is the preferred channel of contact for a complex, urgent problem (passport). For the future, however, the Internet is preferred for both scenarios. Citizens expect to use the most convenient, competent, and timely channels, as determined by specific reason for and the nature of the interaction.

Further examination of the passport scenario shows how the reason for and nature of the contact can drive the selection of a future channel. A frequent future expectation to use "other" channels for this interaction shows that citizens expect to use new channels as they are developed, and to use existing channels in new ways (this is often citizens' intent when they express expectations of using "other" channels. For example, talking computer interactions were often an "other" channel response, but, in channel technology these new technologies may still use the current internet as a base). The expectations to use new channels and to use existing channels in new ways, combined with a low occurrence of security concerns, drive the selection of preferred channels toward Internet and "other." This trend is seen in the future expectations for the passport interaction.

Even though there is an increase in the overall preference by citizens to use the Internet, therefore, cell phone/telephone, in-person, and "other" channel preferences vary in specific situations today and for the future.

C5. Citizens expect improvements in the channels they use the most.

Internet and cell phone/telephone were the most preferred channels across all age, education, and household income groups for today and the future. When demographics by age, education, and household income of the citizens were examined, the expectations for improvements varied.

For example, citizens with at least a four-year college degree and $50,000 in household income identified the Internet as a channel that needed improvement more frequently than they identified any other channel. Those in college with at least $30,000 in household income, and those who had high school or some college and $30,000-$50,000 in household income, identified cell phone/telephone and "other" channels as the contact methods that needed improvement.

Expected improvements to "other" channels was cited more frequently when talking about contacts in the future than today. These citations show an expectation for improvements in the use of new channels (as they are available to the government) and improvements in the form of new uses of existing channels.

These priorities in improvement directly map to the channels preferred by, and most available to, those citizens' demographic groups.

C6. The government is not effectively communicating the availability of existing government services and contact channels.

A general lack of awareness of the currently available government channels and services was observed in all focus group sessions. Groups often expressed an expectation for the availability of a particular channel and a particular service, and then outlined possible implementations. In many cases, these channels and services currently exist in some format, but citizens were unaware of them. For example, many focus group participants opined that "there should be a single Web site where you can get information from all government agencies. These participants were usually surprised when they learned that such a Web site exists in FirstGov.gov." (Daston)

C7. Citizens expect the government to 'push' certain information and services to them.

Except for social and ethical responsibility, focus group sessions identified all of the service-level expectations MITRE had derived from its literature review. In addition to the 12 service-level expectations originally identified by MITRE and included in the baseline methodology and database for this report, Daston identified another significant expectation based on inputs from the citizens as the focus group sessions were executed—an expectation that the government should reach out to deliver services to individuals. Outreach, in this context, is defined as the proactive providing of information or services relevant to the citizen at the appropriate time and level of detail. This capability would be based on the availability of preexisting, integrated government/citizen data and systems.

For example, during discussions of the disaster and Medicare scenarios, participants indicated that they would expect the government to establish outreach programs. In these scenarios, citizens would like the government to reach out to them with the appropriate data

at the correct time based on 'trigger' data the government already should have in various disparate systems. In fact, this idea of government outreach was so prevalent that MITRE believes it should be considered as a new expectation for further study.

In San Francisco, for example, participants suggested the government use emergency broadcast systems to broadcast pertinent government information. Others mentioned creative billboards. Participants in New York City suggested that the government should reach out to youth through the public school systems and educate them about national parks.

MITRE understands that this new expectation may require a level of information integration that is currently available only in limited segments of the government because of various privacy, security, and operational issues. It was, however, expressed as a citizen expectation by the focus groups.

C8. Citizen expectations are changing, with growing emphasis on convenience.

MITRE found a general trend toward easy to obtain, convenient, and secure channels in citizens' service-level expectations for the future.

Competent service (defined as clear, accurate, easy to obtain, and understandable service) consistently was one of the top-ranked service expectations for today and the future. Timely response, easy-to-locate contact information, and reliable service also were seen as key expectations across channels today. For cell phone/telephone, Internet, and in-person contacts in the future, convenience rises to the second-ranked expectation. Privacy and security was also seen as a key future expectation.

C9. Citizens overwhelmingly expect competent service, even to the exclusion of successful outcomes.

Competent service (defined as clear, accurate, easy to obtain, and understandable service) and timely response were the top two current expectations and areas for improvement across all age groups.

Successful outcome and consistent response were either not heard, or were at the bottom of the list of citizens' expectations for government service across all channels. In general, citizens currently do not anticipate successful outcomes or consistent responses when they interact with the government.

C10. Citizens' service-level expectations vary by demographic.

Looking at differences across age groups from the focus group responses, MITRE noted the following significant findings:

- Expectations of reliable service and privacy and security were more prevalent in the discussions about the future with the 30-to-45-year-old groups than with the other two age groups.
- Easy-to-locate contact information was more frequently cited by the 46-to-65-year-old groups than by the other two age groups when discussing the future. When discussing improvements, easy-to-locate contact information was a significant finding in the 18-to-29-year-old groups and the 46-to-65-year-old groups, but not in the 30-to-45-year-old groups.

While some differences in service-level expectations exist across age groups, there were some commonalities:

- Competent service and timely response were the top two current expectations and the top two areas for improvement across all age groups.
- Timely response, courteous service, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information were among the top five current and future expectations and areas for improvement across all groups.
- All age groups consistently identified competent service, timely response, courteous service, and convenience as the top areas for service improvement.
- All age groups consistently ranked availability, fair treatment, and social and ethical responsibility at the bottom of their expectations for today and for the future.
- Education and household income also appeared to be a factor in determining people's service-level expectations. Competent service, convenience, and timely response were the top three current service-level expectations across all education and household income groups. Competent service and convenience were the top two future expectations across all groups.

Citizens' service-level expectations did not appear to vary significantly by location.

3.2 Recommendations

3.2.1 Considerations for Action

The following recommendations are mapped to the conclusions in Table 2-6 to allow reference back to the source focus group findings and conclusions in this document. Based on its analysis of citizens' service-level expectations, MITRE recommends that the government consider the following:

R1. Develop and emphasize performance measures for competent service, timely response, and courteous service in contact services. Make better use of best practice benchmarks and interagency standards.

R2. Promote the availability of 1-800-FED-INFO and FirstGov.gov to the American public.

R3. Make access to government services more convenient by expanding the options (e.g., through Internet-based services) for citizens who try to reach offices and call centers when they are closed.

R4. Provide citizens with continued access, in addition to Internet, through the telephone and through government offices.

R5. Develop and refine citizen relationship management strategies, data sharing, and other technologies to allow better cross-channel overlap and coordination in order to support and respond to citizens.

R6. Make government contact information easy to locate. Organize and present it in a way that is meaningful to the citizens (e.g., not necessarily just by government organization, context, and structure).

R7. Promote the availability of services—state, local, and federal—from one internet location; provide citizens with contact information for other appropriate contact channels to obtain those services.

R8. Tailor channels and services to best address the expectations and needs of citizens engaged in specific transactions or trying to resolve specific problems.

R9. Redesign informational government Web sites to be more interactive, with advanced outreach and response confirmation capabilities.

R10. Start planning now for newer technologies (e.g., smart phones) and to devise strategies for display and search functions. In order to prepare for future implementations of new or improved contact center strategies for their organizations' missions, government agencies should consider today's expectations in light of the contact methods citizens will be using in the future, the types of technology to which they will be exposed (both in the public and the private sectors), and the likely needs of the population in the future. (See Figure 3-1.)

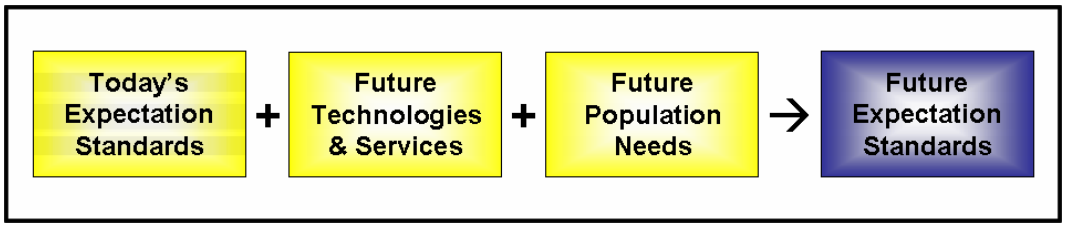


Figure 3-1. Model for Predicting Future Expectations

3.2.2 Areas for Further Research

MITRE recommends that the USA Services program consider further study on the following topics in its efforts to improve citizen services across government.

- **Service-level expectations of people less likely to contact government.** The focus groups excluded people who have less than $30,000 in household income, who have less than a high school education, who do not use the Internet regularly, and who were over age 65. Although MITRE did not find any significant differences in expectations across groups with different education and household income levels in the focus groups, MITRE feels that further study is warranted, given suggestions that a digital divide exists across education and household income levels. Some people with these characteristics may face more challenges in reaching contact centers, so they may have suggestions for making government more accessible to others with these characteristics. This recommendation coincides with Daston's suggestions for further study on the expectation it identified as outreach.
- **Methods for promoting the sources of government services.** The program might want to investigate how related services from federal, state, and local governments can be made easier for citizens to find and more convenient for them to access (e.g., one-stop shop). This study would involve methods for linking information from multiple levels of government. The study should also include methods of promoting the availability of existing government information (e.g., branding).

- **The full value of the qualitative data collected through the focus group sessions conducted by Daston.** Given the current project's scope and schedule, MITRE was able to extract only an initial summary of the rich amount of data collected from the citizens. Further, deeper analysis could create a better understanding of the responses mapped to the top five expectation categories: competent service, timely response, courteous service, convenience, and easy-to-locate contact information.

  Further study could also investigate and draw out other facets, rich details, and innovative ideas from the focus group session discussions. For example, although the vacation scenario was intended to identify expectations about transactions, some participants also discussed how they would like to get information and what information they would want to get before they made their reservations.

- **The impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (especially Section 508) on contact services.** Further study should consider how service features optimized for disabled population segments, particularly over automated systems such as the Internet, have affected the disabled and non-disabled populations' satisfaction with services.

MITRE also suggests that future research about citizens' contacts distinguish among the channels being used by type of communication and platform. This distinction will become more important as platforms such as computers and cell phone/telephones with Internet begin to provide access to multiple channels. For example, voice communications are already accessible by both telephone and computer.

Appendix A. Expectation Code Phrase Scoring Methodology

This appendix supplements Section 1.3, Approach, with more information on the mapping of expectations and the code phrase scoring methodology used to build the citizen expectations database. It presents an overview of the design of the focus groups and how the code phrase methodology was applied and used in tabulations.

Figure A-1 provides an overview of the processes and data sources for the implementation of the methodology. In this figure, the scribe notes and the expectations database are highlighted in a box to show the location of the expectations mapping and code phrase scoring methodology in the process. As shown, MITRE's report is based on the results of the code phrase analysis and scoring.

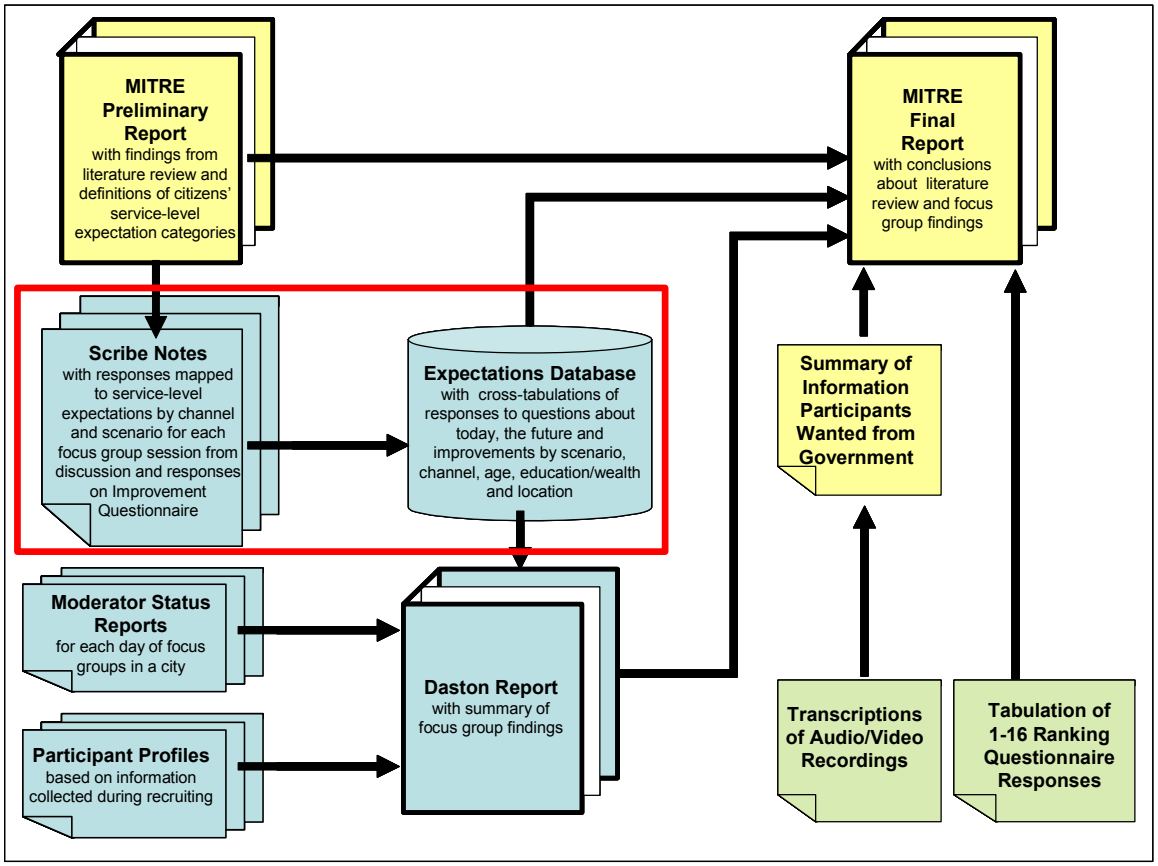


Figure A-1. Overview of the Processes and Data Sources for the Implementation of the Methodology

A.1 Design Focus Groups and Code Phrase Analysis

The primary objective of the focus group sessions was to gather qualitative information on the service-level expectations of people who contact government and the channel(s) they use to make contact. To seed discussions in the focus groups, an approach was developed that incorporated various scenarios involving different reasons for, and natures of, contacts with government. Scenarios also were used to support analysis to determine whether, and how,

preferred channels for contact and service-level expectations varied along those baseline reason and nature of contact parameters. The scenarios were not important in and of themselves. They simply represented possible situations in which citizens realistically might contact government for a given reason and degree of urgency.

In order to collect and organize the citizens' responses, a methodology had to be applied to:

- Control the scope of the effort
- Identify key expectations in all sessions
- Accurately record the number of times, and when, participants voiced specific expectations in the focus group process

Daston implemented a code phrase methodology to identify, record, and analyze the responses.

Written moderator guides provided the key guidance for moderators in the field. They contained instructions for the moderators of all of the focus group sessions. The instructions were configured by location, by session (A versus B), the set of scenarios covered, and the flow of questions within each scenario. Participants responded to the questions in the moderator guide as well as to questionnaires supplied by GSA.

The approach included several questions per scenario. The questions were intended to provoke discussion about the channels participants would use and the levels of service they would expect today and in the future.

Another objective of the focus groups was to explore how differences in service-level expectations might change over time. Two approaches were used to explore these changes over time. The first approach involved asking participants what methods of contact they would like to use today and in the future and what their service-level expectations for those methods would be. The second approach involved looking at the differences in responses across demographic characteristics (i.e., age, education, and household income) and comparing them to trends in the U.S. population from previous literature research. Participation requirements for each session varied along demographic characteristics. Table 1-2 in the body of this report shows the mapping of these two approaches to the design of the focus group sessions, to the scenarios used at each session, and to the demographic mapping of the citizens to the focus groups.

In addition to information covered in the scenarios, additional information was obtained from the participants during the sessions:

- At GSA's request, a question regarding the kinds of information participants wanted to get from government was added to the beginning of the question series for each focus group session. These results were not included by Daston in the code phrase database process.
- Two paper questionnaire forms, developed by GSA, also were included in the sessions. One form, the "Improvement Questionnaire," which asked participants to indicate how government could improve its service to them, was included in the code phase process and the resulting database. The other form, the "1-16 Ranking Questionnaire," which asked participants to rank, in order of preference, sixteen different communication channels, was not included in the code phase process or database.

Figure A-2 shows all of the questions asked of the participants.

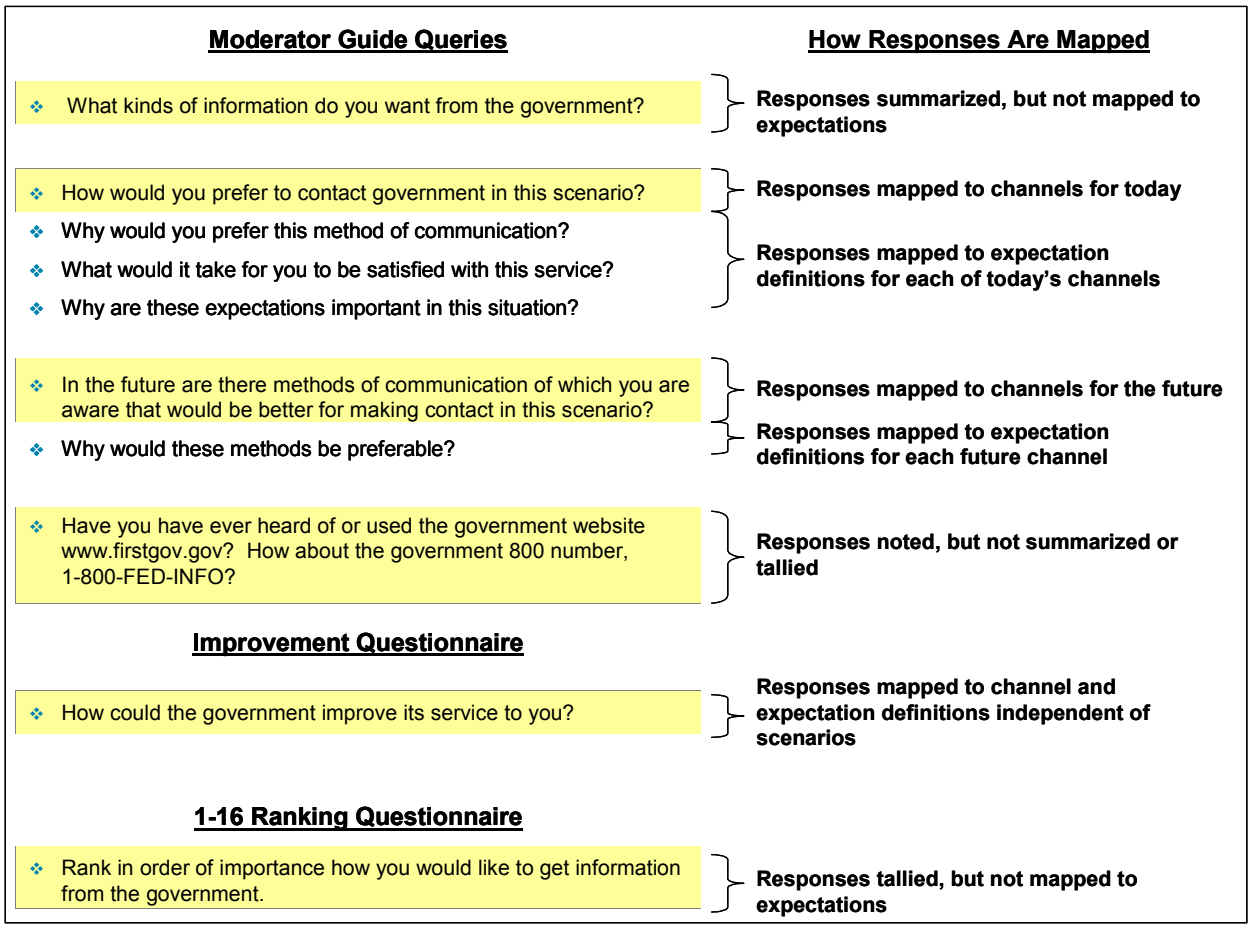


Figure A-2. Questions Asked of Focus Group Participants

The scribe recorded participants' responses to every question for every scenario during each focus group session. The scribe mapped the responses contained in the scribe notes and those in the completed improvement questionnaires to the service-level expectations defined by MITRE (see Table A-1 for MITRE's abbreviated definitions, and Figure A-3 for a sample of responses mapped to service-level expectations). As the scribe mapped the responses, he or she identified additional themes associated with the service-level expectations.

Table A-1. Service-Level Expectations, MITRE Definitions, and Corresponding Themes Associated with Service-Level Expectation Categories Identified by Daston

Service-Level Expectation Category	MITRE Definition	Themes/Concepts Identified by Daston
Competent Service	Citizens expect to receive clear and accurate information and that the government to be able to provide the services citizens expect. For automated services, competence also means that tasks are easy and understandable to the citizen.	• Receives clear and accurate information • Web site is easy to understand and navigate • Web site provides required information • Contact is articulate and communicates clearly • Contact is a knowledgeable source
Timely Response	Citizens expect that their service requests will be addressed within acceptable amounts of time.	• Response to request received in time quoted • Prompt response

Service-Level Expectation Category	MITRE Definition	Themes/Concepts Identified by Daston
Convenience	Citizens expect the government to provide services during the hours and at the locations convenient to citizens.	• Accessible by more than one means (e.g., Web site and phone) • 24-hour customer service • On-line presence
Courteous Service	Citizens expect to be treated with common courtesy.	• Prompt and respectful service • Contact is friendly and polite and gives the impression that they care to help citizen • Transfer, if made, is to appropriate contact
Easy-to-Locate Contact Information	Citizens expect that government contact information (e.g., addresses and phone numbers) will be located where they are most likely to find it (e.g., in phone books, on Web sites, and in government publications).	• Contact information clearly noted and referenced • Ability to access local information, such as phone numbers and address • Expect to find the number in the phone book
Reliable Service	Citizens expect that the government will follow through on the commitments it makes to provide the requested services.	• Receive confirmation of service or request • Email confirmation preferred for services
Privacy and Security	Citizens expect that the government will protect their personal information and not share it unlawfully.	• Privacy of information provided will be protected • Internet security of personal information provided • Web site secure from hackers
Successful Outcome	Citizens expect that the government will complete the service as expected by the citizens.	• Receive the information and/or service expected • Obtain all desired information on first contact
Consistent Response	Citizens expect that they will receive the same response from the government regardless of the channels they use for contact.	• Information provided is consistent, regardless of contact or method of contact
Availability	Citizens expect that they will successfully make contact using the contact information they have.	• Citizens expect that they will successfully make contact using the contact information they have
Social and Ethical Responsibility	Citizens expect that the government will act in the interests of the citizens, and that the government will provide mechanisms (e.g., guarantees of freedom of the press) to ensure that citizens can monitor the government's exercise of that responsibility.	• Expectation that the government will act in the interest of the citizens • Government will provide mechanisms (e.g., guarantees of freedom of the press) to make citizens aware of lapses in fulfilling responsibility
Fair Treatment	Citizens expect to receive the same level of service (e.g., courtesy and response) as all other citizens.	• Each citizen expects to receive the same level of service (e.g., courtesy and response) as every other citizen

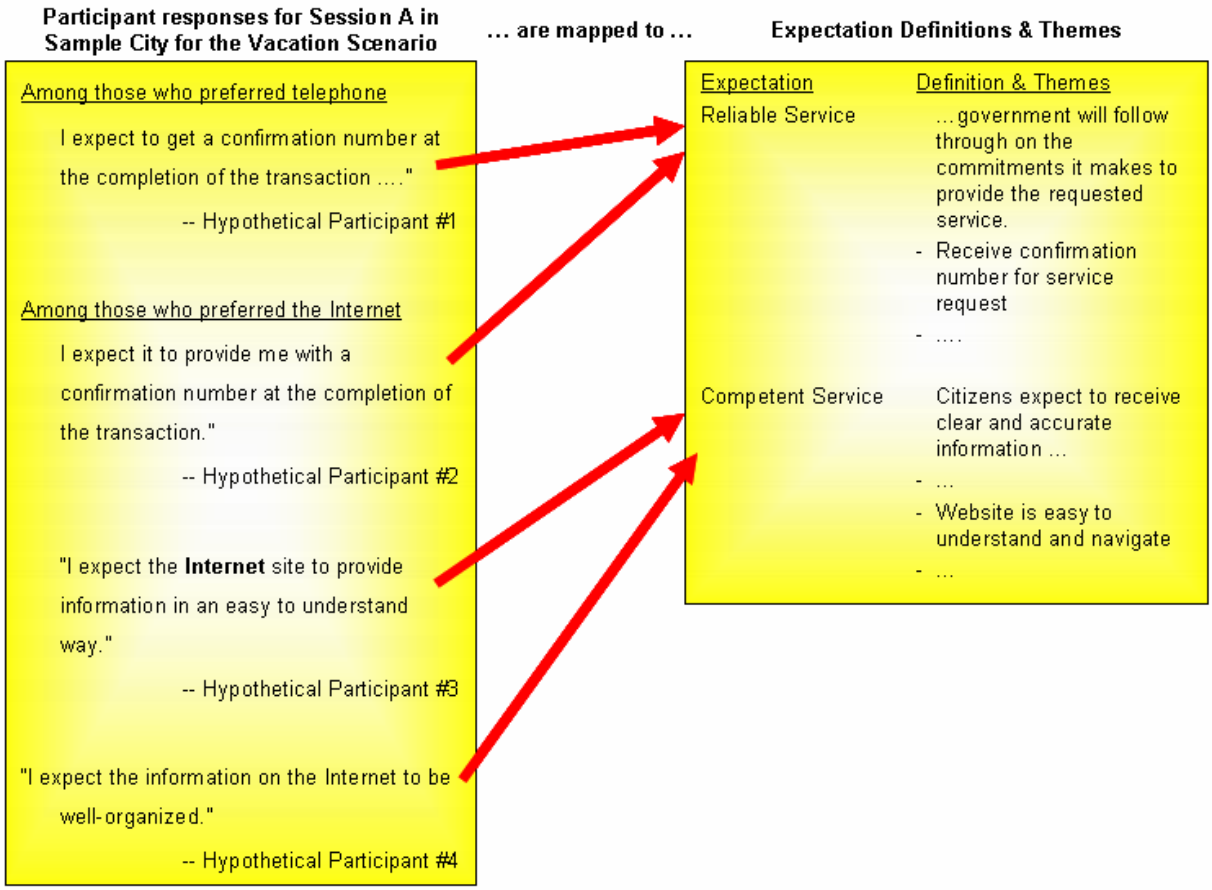


Figure A-3. How Participant Responses Are Mapped to Service-Level Expectations

The scribe used the expectations database to record the responses from each session for each scenario and for the set of improvement questionnaires collected. Mapped responses from a session for a particular scenario's questions about service were recorded on a database worksheet designated for the city (e.g., Miami). The worksheet was divided into several areas organized by session (e.g., A), question type (e.g., today, future, or improvement questionnaire), and scenario (e.g., vacation). Data tables within each area had columns labeled with six different channel categories (i.e., cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person visits, email, postal mail, and other) and rows labeled with each of the twelve service-level expectation categories.

The scribe recorded the channel-expectation mappings found in his or her notes to the set of questions about channels preferred and service expected (see Figure A-3):

- When the scribe identified an expectation associated with a channel in his or her notes (e.g., cell phone/telephone mapped to reliable service) for the first time, he or she recorded a "1" in the cell at the intersection of the appropriate channel column and expectation row.
- When the scribe encountered the expectation associated with a channel that was already recorded, he or she did not record it again for that cell.

The database then summed the total number of channels associated with each expectation. For example, in Figure A-4 below, reliable service was associated with two channels (i.e., cell phone/telephone, and Internet), so a "2" is located in the cell under the column labeled "Sum of Expectation by Scenario" in the row labeled Reliable Service.

The database also indicated whether a channel was cited by the focus group during the discussion of a scenario. In Figure A-4, both cell phone/telephone and Internet were identified in the scribe notes. Thus, a "1" (indicating that a cell or telephone contact was reported by at least one participant) is contained in the row labeled "Channel Cited?" under the column labeled "C&T."

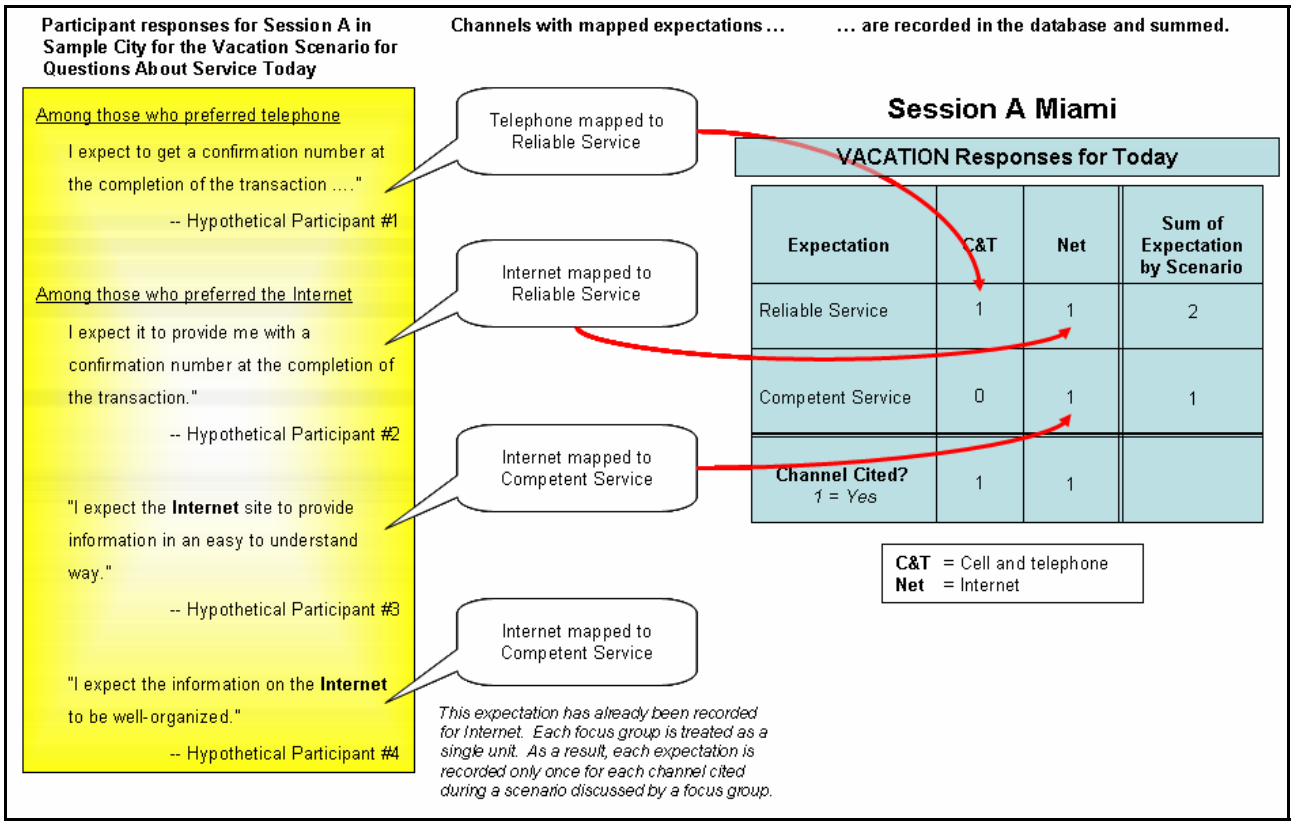


Figure A-4. How Participant Responses Were Recorded in the Expectations Database

When the scribe finished recording all the responses to questions about today for a given scenario, he or she then repeated the same process for the responses to questions about the future. Once the scribe finished recording the responses for a scenario, he or she repeated the same process for the other scenarios discussed during the session. The same process was used for recording responses to the improvement questionnaires, except that these responses were not tied to any scenario.

During the execution of the focus groups, GSA tallied the responses to the "1-16 Ranking Questionnaires" for each focus group session and provided transcription services for each focus group session based on audio and video tape recordings. MITRE later used the transcripts to summarize the responses to the question, "What kinds of information would you like to get from government?" and to spot check the scribe notes.

During the execution of the focus groups, the Daston team obtained the profiles of the participants based on the questions contained in the screeners, which were used during the recruiting process. Daston gave MITRE a subset of that information, along with the scenarios run during each focus group and status reports from the moderators on issues encountered during the sessions. MITRE used profile and scenario information, along with any changes to the moderator guide, in the status reports to GSA.

Video and audio recordings of all focus group sessions, including the pilot, were taken to back up the scribe notes. The audio recordings were transcribed so that additional analysis of the responses could be done at a later date, if desired. Transcripts of the sessions were made available to GSA, MITRE, and Daston.

A.2 Analyze and Summarize Participant Responses

In addition to summarizing focus group responses by session, MITRE and Daston used the responses recorded in the expectations database to tabulate the responses across focus groups by their design elements (i.e., scenario, channel, and demographic characteristics [age, education level, household income, and location]). These tabulations were used as the basis for the rankings of channels and expectations found in Section 2 and to build the summary calculation tables included in Appendix D. Specific detailed information was summed from the database according to the element of interest. For example, to determine the ranking of expectations for the rare and serious illness scenario, the following steps would be taken:

- Identify all sessions that ran the rare and serious illness scenario using Table 1-2. These were:
  - Sessions A and B in New York from the first set of focus groups
  - Sessions A and B in Charlotte from the first set of focus groups
  - Sessions A and B in Miami from the first set of focus groups
  - Sessions A and B in Houston from the second set of focus groups
- Tabulate the sums of each expectation from each of the aforementioned sessions from the appropriate worksheet in the expectations database.

The cells indicating whether a channel was cited would be summed to determine the most commonly cited channel(s) for this scenario. Figure A-5 illustrates what the tabulated totals would look like across three sessions in a hypothetical scenario involving a rare and serious illness.

Session A Miami

RARE & SERIOUS ILLNESS Responses for Today

Expectation	C&T	Net	Sum of Expectation by Scenario
Reliable Service	1	1	2
Competent Service	0	1	1
Channel Cited? *1 = Yes*	1	1	

Session B Miami

RARE & SERIOUS ILLNESS Responses for Today

Expectation	C&T	Net	Sum of Expectation by Scenario
Reliable Service	1	0	1
Competent Service	1	1	2
Channel Cited? *1 = Yes*	1	1	

Session A Charlotte 1

RARE & SERIOUS ILLNESS Responses for Today

Expectation	C&T	Net	Sum of Expectation by Scenario
Reliable Service	0	0	0
Competent Service	1	0	2
Channel Cited? *1 = Yes*	1	0	

Total

RARE & SERIOUS ILLNESS Responses for Today

Expectation	C&T	Net	Sum of Expectation by Scenario
Reliable Service	2	1	3
Competent Service	2	2	4
# of Sessions Citing Channel	3	2	

C&T = Cell and telephone
Net = Internet

Figure A-5. Sample of Tabulated Totals for Three Sessions

MITRE spot checked the algorithms in the database against this methodology and created a temporary MITRE database to double check some of the algorithms and data in the Daston database.

MITRE also reviewed the transcripts from each of the sessions and summarized the responses to the question, "What kinds of information do you want from government?" contained in those transcripts (see Appendix C).

Appendix B. Daston Report

Citizen Expectation Focus Groups

Volume I: Results Summary Report

Prepared for:

MITRE Corporation

Prepared by:

DASTON CORPORATION

October 6, 2005
Final Version

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION

MITRE Corporation (MITRE) engaged Daston Corporation to plan and deliver a series of focus groups in collaboration with MITRE and the United States General Services Administration (GSA). The data and session results were to be collected and analyzed to augment the existing data on citizen expectations when contacting federal agencies across multiple channels of communication for their services.

2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The following is an overview of the Daston Corporation's focus group project delivered to MITRE and GSA. The project consisted of the development and delivery of 23 focus groups, including a pilot group, executed in nine major cities across the United States. The project also included the collection and analysis of participant demographic data, session summary results, and the supporting audio and video tapes from all 23 focus groups.

2.1 BACKGROUND

MITRE is conducting a study of citizen expectations when contacting federal agencies across multiple channels for their services. This study is sponsored by the USA Services division of GSA to support a larger initiative aimed at helping government agencies improve citizen services and satisfaction. MITRE in conjunction with the USA Services initiated a research project for improving citizen services earlier in 2005. The first effort in this project consisted of a research review entitled the *Citizen Service Level Expectation Study*. A second study entitled the *Benchmarks and Best Practices Study* was also conducted. More than 70 sources were used in these two studies and considerable data was collected and analyzed. The data was compiled and delivered by MITRE in a report entitled *Citizen Service-Level Expectations*. While a lot of quantifiable information was obtained from the review of these surveys and is documented in the paper, MITRE felt that the data derived from these efforts needed to be augmented and validated by focus groups in which qualitative, in-depth inquiry and analysis could enhance their research and point to areas of further study.

MITRE engaged Daston Corporation to plan and deliver twenty-three focus groups, including a pilot focus group, in nine cities across the United States. The purpose of the focus groups was to augment data already collected by MITRE on citizen expectations for satisfaction when contacting the government. Specifically, MITRE and GSA wanted to better understand the relationships between already identified service level expectations; the channels of contact used by citizens; the reasons citizens contact the government; and the nature of the contact against certain demographics of those who currently use services and primary users of government services of the future. Finally, the focus groups provided some additional information to determine what technological trends might be emerging so that GSA and other agencies could better respond to the future expectations of its citizens.

2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall project objective was to provide further qualitative information through a series of focus groups with a defined participant demographic in cities across the United States to support existing data on citizen expectations for MITRE's current study and support the design and execution of future surveys. MITRE was interested in research concerning: 1) the impact of adopting newer technologies, by both younger and older generations, on future technology requirements in government contact centers; 2) the factors underlying the current preferences for channels of contact; 3) the public's security and privacy concerns when deciding how to contact a government agency, and 4) the public's awareness of available channels and methods of contact. Given the direction to conduct a defined set of focus groups and the research interest above, the project objectives included the following:

- Design and develop a focus group methodology to deliver one pilot focus group and 22 subsequent focus groups to collect a subset of qualitative information to support MITRE's citizen expectations study;
- Develop and design a recruitment strategy that will deliver a minimum of 8 to 10 participants at each focus group that represent identified demographics from the supportable number of locations;
- Design and develop a moderator guide that will be used to conduct the focus groups around agreed upon subjects and themes that will produce the desired additional data on citizen expectations;
- Design, develop and deliver an electronic data base that will be the repository of all data collected in those sessions to support the analysis and report results; and,
- Develop and deliver a written report on the focus group project results.

3 PROJECT APPROACH

Daston designed and developed a project approach that leveraged the collaboration desired by MITRE and GSA and an experienced team that Daston formed to deliver the project. Daston's team included an experienced project manager, two moderators who were seasoned organization development experts with years of focus group experience, one additional staff member to support data collection, and Shugoll Research, a national industry leader in focus group recruitment. The project approach had six tasks: 1) Project Initiation; 2) Focus Group Methodology Design and Development; 3) Focus Group Planning; 4) Pilot Focus Group Design and Delivery; 5) Focus Group Execution; and 6) Focus Group Analysis and Reporting.

3.1 PROJECT INITIATION

Daston initiated this project with a series of meetings with MITRE and GSA key individuals and the Daston project team in the first week after the project award. Through those meetings Daston introduced Daston's team members to all key individuals from MITRE and GSA; obtained relevant information on the background of the citizen services improvement initiative; learned about the current findings on citizen expectations; clarified project objectives; agreed to a project management approach; agreed to regular status meetings; and begin the discussion on project design.

3.2 FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The key step in this project was the design and development of a focus group methodology that would guide the successful delivery of the desired focus groups. To be successful, Daston needed to recruit focus group participants in designated cities; conduct the focus groups; deliver all focus groups within the timeframes determined; and collect, analyze and report the data obtained through the focus group sessions. This was accomplished by developing a focus group methodology that included:

- Collaboration with MITRE and GSA to agree to areas of research for the Citizen Expectation Focus Group Study which was to augment and support the objectives of MITRE's broader study on citizen expectations;
- Definition of population segments and locations with the desired focus group demographics;
- Development of a moderator guide that designed focus group questions, and question sequencing to successfully obtain the specific and in-depth information desired; and,
- Design and development of a data collection approach that included a data base to collect demographics, focus group results, and a status report on relevant issues as the project proceeded.

3.2.1 Focus Group Research Objectives

Daston's first step for accomplishing this was to collaborate with MITRE and GSA to refine the research objectives of the Citizen Service Expectation Focus Group effort. The basis for the focus groups was the areas of research that MITRE was interested in augmenting from their broader study. Clarifying those objectives and refining them formed the basis for the design of the focus group methodology. Those research objectives included the following:

- Validation of the citizen expectations identified in MITRE's *Citizen Service-Level Expectations* study;
- Understanding the relationship, if any, between expectations and reason for contact with the government;
- Understanding the relationship between expectations and the nature of contact with government;
- Understanding whether government can predict future citizen expectations based on assumptions about population and technology trends; and
- Determining why certain channels for contact are preferable under specific circumstances.

3.2.2 Focus Group Location and Demographics

Given the research objectives, finalizing the locations for the focus groups and defining the demographics for the make-up of the participants in those sessions formed the next critical component of the focus group methodology.

3.2.2.1 Focus Group Locations

As a first step, MITRE and GSA finalized the locations and number of focus groups that they wanted for this additional research. In order to draw a sample representative of all citizens in the United States, MITRE and GSA decided on one pilot group location, and eight others across the continental United States for the execution of the focus groups. Those locations included cities in the East, South, Midwest and West. Additionally, cities represented populations living on the two coasts and in the heartland.

A pilot focus group was held in Richmond, Virginia on July 21, 2005. The objective was to provide an opportunity to test the draft methodology, allow for MITRE and GSA observers to attend the session at a more accessible location, and provide time to revise the methodology prior to executing the other focus groups. The locations and dates of the focus groups are listed below:

- New York City – July 26, 2005
- Charlotte, North Carolina – July 28, 2005
- Miami, Florida – August 2, 2005
- Detroit, Michigan – August 3, 2005

- Kansas City, Kansas – August 4, 2005
- Houston, Texas – August 9, 2005
- San Francisco, California – August 10, 2005
- Seattle, Washington – August 11, 2005
- New York, New York – September 8, 2005
- Charlotte, North Carolina – September 13, 2005
- Houston, Texas – September 14, 2005

3.2.2.2 Focus Group Demographics

After the locations were determined, the next step was to define the segments of the population for the desired participants at the focus groups. The key variables considered in that segmentation process were age, income, and education. MITRE and GSA agreed to an age demographic for participants that spanned from 18 to 65 years old. The breakdown of those age groups varied between cities. The income demographic was stratified by annual household income ($30,000 to $49,999, and over $50,000). The education demographic was split between the minimum of a high school degree with some college, and a college degree. One exception to these variables was the full time college student focus group held in Charlotte, North Carolina. The income and education demographics varied by city.

MITRE and GSA decided to segment the demographics differently for certain focus groups in a set of cities. They chose one set of demographics for the pilot focus group in Richmond, a second set for the two focus groups in six cities, a third set for two focus groups in two cities, and three additional sets in three cities focusing on youth and college students. Tables 1 through 6 below describe these sets in more detail.

Table 1: Pilot Group – Richmond

Demographic Segment	Half of Pilot Group	Half of Pilot Group
Age	**45-54**	**55-65**
Annual Household Income	**$30,000 - $49,999**	**Over $50,000**
Education	**Minimum of High School Diploma; Some College no Four Year Degree**	**Minimum of a Four Year College Degree**

Table 2: Six Locations – New York, Charlotte, Miami, Detroit, Kansas City, San Francisco

Demographic Segment	Focus Group A - 6:00 PM	Focus Group B – 8:00 PM
Age	**46-65**	**30-45**
Annual Household Income	**Over $30,000**	**Over $30,000**
Education	**Minimum of High School Diploma**	**Minimum of High School Diploma**

Table 3: Two Locations -- Houston and Seattle

Demographic Segment	Focus Group A - 6:00 PM	Focus Group B – 8:00 PM
Age	45- 65	45-65
Annual Household Income	$30,000 - $49,999	Over $50,000
Education	Minimum of High School Diploma; Some College no Four Year Degree	Minimum of a Four Year College Degree

Table 4: Younger Population – New York

Demographic Segment	Focus Group A - 6:00 PM	Focus Group B – 8:00 PM
Age	18-29	18-29
Annual Household Income	Over $30,000	Over $30,000
Education	Minimum of High School Diploma	Minimum of High School Diploma

Table 5: Younger Population – Charlotte and Houston

Demographic Segment	Focus Group A - 6:00 PM	Focus Group B – 8:00 PM
Age	**18-29**	**18-29**
Annual Household Income	**$30,000 - $49,999**	**Over $50,000**
Education	**Minimum of High School Diploma; Some College no Four Year Degree**	**Minimum of a Four Year College Degree**

Table 6: College Students – Charlotte

Demographic Segment	Focus Group A - 6:00 PM
Age	**18-29**
Annual Household Income	**Over $30,000**
Education	**Minimum of High School Diploma**

Although the recruiting for the focus groups was conducted locally, the recruiters tried to deliver a mix of participants by gender of 50% men and women and a racial and ethnic mix that reflected the local population demographics. In addition to the characteristics of the groups listed above, focus groups participants must have had the following attributes to be included in the groups:

- Must use a computer with internet access at least once per week; and

- Must have contacted the government, local, state or federal, for some reason other than paying taxes, within the past two years.

Additionally, individuals were excluded from participation in the focus groups for the following reasons:

- Employed by a market research firm, advertising or public relations agency, radio or TV stations, magazine or newspapers, or local, state or federal government; or

- Attended a focus group discussion in the past six months.

3.2.3 Focus Group Moderator Guide

The design and flow of the discussions in focus groups is critical to obtaining the desired qualitative data results from those sessions, Daston developed a moderator guide for conducting the focus groups in all locations. The moderator guide was designed to assure that the requested information was obtained from each group, in a consistent fashion, in order to have some confidence in the delivery of reliable results among all focus groups. The moderator guide included the following:

- Designed and sequenced questions to obtain the specific and in-depth information supporting the research objectives for the project outlined by MITRE and GSA;

- Specific follow-on questions for increased qualitative understanding; and

- Specific outline and timeline for the focus group regarding purpose, duration, confidentiality, notice of being recorded, etc.

Using the earlier MITRE research as a basis, Daston designed six scenarios related to citizen services to guide the discussions in the focus groups. They included the following:

- ***Vacation Scenario*** – planning a vacation in the next six months at a National Park facility;

- ***Highway Scenario*** – interstate highway in community is being repaired and it's causing tremendous traffic congestion throughout the day;

- ***Disaster Scenario*** – a natural disaster has just hit the area and caused considerable damage;

- ***Passport Scenario*** – presented with an opportunity to travel to a foreign country in the next month and need to obtain a passport;

- ***Medicare Scenario*** – about to turn sixty-five, live alone, would like to get information about government benefits; and

- ***Rare and Serious Illness Scenario*** – loved one contracted a rare and potentially fatal disease, medical resources exhausted, and no one is able to diagnose the disease.

These scenarios were developed taking into consideration MITRE's study identifying citizen's reasons for contact and the nature of that contact. The questions sequenced in these scenarios were designed to elicit information from the participants as to citizen's expectations about the quality of service they expect to receive through different channels of communication for the government services described in those scenarios. The following table shows the relationship between the scenarios and the reason for contact and the nature of contact.

Table 4: Moderator Guide Scenarios

Scenario	Reason for Contact	Nature of Contact
Vacation	**Conduct a Transaction**	**Simple-Non-Urgent**
Highway	**Express an Opinion**	**Simple-Non-Urgent**
Disaster	**Get Information**	**Simple-Urgent**
Passport	**Solve a Problem**	**Complex-Urgent**
Medicare	**Get Information**	**Complex-Non-Urgent-Personal**
Rare & Serious Illness	**Solve a Problem**	**Complex – Urgent - Personal**

A draft moderator guide was developed for the pilot focus group, and then it was refined and finalized to support the subsequent focus groups in the 8 locations across the United States. The final Moderator Guide for the focus groups is included in Appendix A**.**

3.2.4 Focus Group Data Collection Approach

Daston designed and developed a data collection approach to collect several sources of information from the focus group project to support three objectives: 1) Monitor the progress of the focus group project; 2) Support the results analysis and recommendations; and 3) Provide additional information on government services from the participants. Collaborating with MITRE and GSA, Daston identified what data requirements and respective sources were needed to support the focus group project. The following describes those sources within the context of those objectives.

3.2.4.1 Monitor Progress of Focus Group Project

Two sources were identified to monitor progress of the focus group project: 1) Participant Demographic Reports; and 2) Moderator Status Reports. The first represented the result of the participant recruitment process. While the screeners were designed to recruit a certain demographic for the focus groups, the results of that recruitment effort were in the demographics of the actual participants that attended the sessions. Each facility host collected that information as participants arrived and then provided a table of all participant demographics that attended the session to Daston at the conclusion of the two focus groups in each location.

The moderator status reports were designed to be completed by each moderator within 24 hours in each location. The purpose was to provide an update on the progress of the project to forward to MITRE and GSA. The report gave a short synopsis of the results of the two focus groups and also highlighted any issues that the moderators felt were important to raise on the execution of those groups.

3.2.4.2 Analysis and Recommendation Support

In order to support the focus group analysis and recommendation, four sources were identified: 1) Scribe Notes; 2) Focus Group Citizen Expectation Data; 3) Focus Group Stationary Video Tapes; and 4) Focus Group Audio Tapes. The scribe notes were designed to capture the narrative highlights of the focus group discussions. The scribe for the focus groups collected narrative responses during the sessions and then transmitted them with the moderator status reports to MITRE and GSA within 24 hours of the completion of the groups at a particular location.

The scribe notes formed the basis for the next source of data which was an excel data base that would be used as the repository for the data that was accumulated from the interpretation and translation of the scribe notes. Using a translation guide about citizen expectations, the scribe notes were reviewed and the information converted into this data base for analysis. In addition, this data base was designed to provide a series of reports and summaries on the results of the focus groups. These summaries by focus group, by location were transmitted to MITRE within 48 hours of the completion of the focus groups at a particular location.

The video tapes and audio tapes were designed to be a record of the focus group for reference to support the analysis as needed. These were also collected at the close of the focus groups at each location and transmitted to MITRE.

3.2.4.3 Additional Participant Information on Government Services

The final two sources for data collection included: the Post Group Questionnaires; and, the Participant Rankings of Preferred Government Information Methods. Both of these sources were designed at the request of MITRE and GSA to provide additional information from the participants. The post group questionnaires provided information on how to improve government services. The other documents provided a ranked preference of sixteen methods of obtaining government information. These forms were distributed and completed by the participants at the close of the focus group and collected as they departed.

3.3 FOCUS GROUP PLANNING

Daston developed a Focus Group Plan that outlined all the activities associated with the successful delivery of the appropriate number of focus groups, with the agreed-upon participant demographics, at the pre-determined locations and with the desired results within the prescribed timeframe. The two primary components of this plan included: 1) focus group participant recruitment strategy; and 2) focus group locations and facilities arrangements.

Daston engaged Shugoll Research, a national leader in focus group recruiting, and their recruitment resources to assist in meeting the limited timeframe for the project and the need for absolute assurance of adequate citizen participation. Shugoll Research is also a member of a national network of focus group facilities, and agreed to make arrangements for all focus group facilities through this network and others throughout the country.

3.3.1 Focus Group Recruitment

Immediately following the project award, Daston began to work with Shugoll Research to assist in the project design with respect to the participant recruitment strategy. Once the locations for the focus groups were finalized and the participant demographics were identified for the various focus groups, Shugoll immediately began to execute their recruitment strategy. This strategy had the following assumptions to maximize recruitment effectiveness:

- Recruiting from the general consumer population, within the prescribed demographics;
- Assuming that the qualifying incidence for each group would not fall below 50%;

- Recruiting 12 participants for each group to assure a minimum of 8 to 10 would attend;
- Providing the appropriate monetary incentive to attendees;
- Providing food for participants when focus groups were scheduled around meal times;
- Defining criteria for participation as tightly as possible; and
- Using appropriate facilities that adequately support focus group delivery.

The recruitment process was done by the local facilities in the national network of focus group facilities, who were working from established data bases built through advertising. Given the demographics of the citizens which MITRE and GSA outlined, participants were recruited by these facilities in the nine specified cities. The instrument used to recruit participants with the required demographics is called a focus group screener. Six focus group screeners were developed using as a basis the agreed upon participant demographics described in Section 3.2 of this report. These included: 1) one for the pilot focus group; 2) one for six locations and twelve focus groups; 3) one for two locations and four focus groups; 4) one for two younger focus groups in one city; 5) one for three younger focus groups in two cities; and, 6) one for one college focus group in one city. Those screeners are included in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Focus Group Location and Facility Arrangements

Using the network of focus group facilities that Shugoll Research is associated with, all focus groups were scheduled and held in facilities designed for optimum focus group facilitation. All facilities not only conducted the recruitment of the participants, but hosted the sessions, provided state-of-the art facilities that included observation rooms for outside observers of the sessions, collected the demographic of the actual attendees, arranged for the audio and stationary video taping, provided food and refreshments for the participants, and distributed the monetary incentives to the actual attendees.

3.4 Pilot Focus Group Design and Delivery

One week in advance of the full execution of the sixteen focus groups, a pilot focus group was planned and held. The purpose of the pilot focus group was to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the focus group recruitment process, the completeness of the moderator's guide, the effectiveness of the focus group scenarios, the efficiency and effectiveness of the data collection process, and the efficiency and flow of the basic process for conducting the focus groups. The intent was to take the results of the pilot focus group and make adjustments as needed to improve the process for the remainder of the project.

The pilot focus group was conducted in Richmond, VA on July 21, 2005 at 6:00 PM. For this focus group, 12 participants were recruited, utilizing the desired demographics described in Section 3.2.2.2 Focus Group Demographics, Table 1. Of the participants recruited, 11 attended, of which, six were between the ages of 45 and 54 and five were between the ages of 55 and 65. Six of the participants had household income between $30,000 and $49,999 and five had household income over $50,000. Additionally, of those attending, six had the minimum of a high school diploma and some college, while five had at least a four year college degree. Five of the eleven were women, and six were men.

Although six scenarios were developed for the focus group discussion, three were used for the Richmond pilot. They were the Highway, Medicare, and Rare and Serious Illness scenarios. The scribe for the session recorded notes on the group discussion and then translated that information into the designed data base to collect references to the participants' expectations that was subsequently transmitted electronically to MITRE and GSA. This was accompanied by the participant demographics and the moderator's status report summarizing the results of the sessions and any issues that were raised from the execution of the focus group.

Following an evaluation of the pilot focus group, the following adjustments were made to the focus group design:

- The moderator guide was updated to reflect a new question which would be presented at the beginning of the session to inquire what kind of services the participants wanted from the government;
- The focus group screeners were altered to reflect MITRE and GSA's desired participant demographics for all remaining focus groups;
- A questionnaire was added for all participants to complete at the close of each session to address how the government could improve services; and
- An additional form was also added for all participants to complete at the close of each session asking each to rank in relative importance, among sixteen methods, their preference for the receipt of government information.

3.5 FOCUS GROUP EXECUTION

Twenty-three focus groups were planned and delivered in eight locations across the United States. Sixteen focus groups were held in a three week period from July 26, 2005 through August 11, 2005. An additional six focus groups were held during a one week period from September 8, 2005 to September 14, 2005.

In the initial set of sixteen focus groups the set of participant demographics varied between a group of six locations and a second set of two cities and further by Group A (the 6:00 PM session) and Group B (the 8:00 PM session). In all cities but Houston and Seattle, Group A included participants between the ages of 46 – 65 years old and Group B included participants between the ages of 30 and 45. In those six cities both Group A Group B all participants had the minimum of a household income of $30,000 and at least a high school diploma.

All participants in the Houston and Seattle groups were between the ages of 44 and 65 years old, and had a minimum household income of $30,000. Group A in Houston and Seattle consisted of individuals with household income between $30,000 and $49,999, with at least a high school diploma. Group B in Houston and Seattle included participants with at least a college degree and a household income of $50,000 or more.

In the second set of six focus groups, held in three locations, all participants were between the ages of 18-29. In New York, all participants had a minimum household income of $30,000 and at least a high school diploma. In Charlotte and Houston the participant demographics varied. Group A (Houston only) participants had a household income between $30,000 and $49,999, with at least a high school diploma. Group B (both Charlotte and Houston) had participants with at least a college degree and a household income of $50,000 or more. Finally, Group A (Charlotte only) had only full-time college students with at least a household income of $30,000

3.5.1 Focus Groups Demographics for Actual Participants

Of the 264 individuals recruited for the twenty-two focus groups, 225 attended the groups. Except for age, they were, for the most part, evenly divided among all the key variables of gender, age, household income and education. With respect to gender, there were slightly more men attending than women, with 117 men and 108 women attending. In terms of age, 57 participants were between the ages of 18 and 29. Among those older than 30, the majority of the participants were over 45 years old. Sixty-one participants were between the ages of 30 to 45 and 107 participants between the ages of 46 to 65. When considering household income, there were slightly more individuals who's income exceeded $50,000. Finally, the participants were almost evenly split between a minimum of a high school diploma and some college (113) and those with at least a four year college degree (112).

Upon review of the attendance between the two groups of locations, the Houston and Seattle groups had slightly more attendees with incomes between $30,000 to $49,999 and slightly more men than women, but were evenly split among the other variables. Upon review of the younger population participants, slightly more of the attendees had incomes over $50,000 and the minimum of a college degree, and slightly more men than women.

The following table summarizes the demographics of the focus groups participants by city, age, annual household income, education, and gender.

Table 5: Summary of Participant Demographics

City	Number	Age 18-29	Age 30-45	Age 46-65	Household Income - $30,000 -- $49,999	Household Income – Over $50,000	Education: Minimum High School Diploma	Education: Minimum Four Year College Degree	Male	Female
New York	23	0	12	11	11	12	13	10	12	11
Charlotte	20	0	10	10	10	10	11	9	9	11
Miami	21	0	10	11	11	10	11	10	11	10
Detroit	20	0	10	10	9	11	11	9	9	11
Kansas City	23	0	11	12	12	11	13	10	12	11
San Francisco	16	0	8	8	8	8	6	10	8	8
Subtotal – Six Locations	**123**	**0**	**61**	**62**	**61**	**62**	**65**	**58**	**61**	**62**

City	Number	Age 18-29	Age 30-45	Age 46-65	Household Income - $30,000 -- $49,999	Household Income – Over $50,000	Education: Minimum High School Diploma	Education: Minimum Four Year College Degree	Male	Female
Houston	22	0	0	22	11	11	11	11	13	9
Seattle	23	0	0	23	12	11	12	11	12	11
Subtotal – Two Locations	**45**	**0**	**0**	**45**	**23**	**22**	**23**	**22**	**25**	**20**
New York	20	20	0	0	9	11	9	11	12	8
Charlotte	19	19	0	0	3	16	6	13	10	9
Houston	18	18	0	0	10	8	10	8	9	9

City	Number	Age 18-29	Age 30-45	Age 46-65	Household Income - $30,000 -- $49,999	Household Income – Over $50,000	Education: Minimum High School Diploma	Education: Minimum Four Year College Degree	Male	Female
Subtotal -- Younger Population	**57**	**57**	**0**	**0**	**22**	**35**	**25**	**32**	**31**	**26**
TOTAL	**225**	**57**	**61**	**107**	**106**	**119**	**113**	**112**	**117**	**108**

3.5.2 Focus Group Flow

In each city, two sessions were conducted in one day. The first session, Group A was conducted from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and the second session, Group B, was conducted from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Each focus group team consisted of a moderator and a scribe. Various individuals from MITRE, GSA and Daston attended as observers.

At the beginning of each focus group, the moderator defined the ground rules, informed the participants that they were being observed and that the group was being recorded and videotaped. The moderator initiated the discussions with an ice breaker, described the scenarios to the participants, and generated discussions around the scenarios that would allow the appropriate data to be collected. The moderator was also responsible for keeping the discussion on track and maintaining an orderly and respectful environment so that all participants could freely express their ideas.

The role of the scribe and observers were less visible. The scribe documented the comments and discussion notes during the meeting and summarized the events of each day. The scribe also translated the results of the focus groups after each session and submitted that information to MITRE. The observer role was strictly to listen to the session and observe the feedback and information gathering process.

At the conclusion of the focus groups, the data obtained was compiled, analyzed and input into the excel data base. Status reports were created for each of the cities by the moderators. The moderator status reports, scribe notes, data base information, completed questionnaires, video and audio tapes, and demographic information were transmitted to MITRE within 48 hours of the completion of the focus groups in each location.

3.6 FOCUS GROUP DATA COLLECTION

The methodology developed to translate the narrative discussions into an excel data base to reference citizen expectations was the most challenging to design and assure credible execution. By far the most complex set of data collected at those sessions was the data extracted from the focus group narrative scribe notes and then inserted into the excel data base on citizen expectations.

The data collection involved reviewing the scribe notes and interpreting comments from participants that referred to citizen expectations, assigning a particular citizen expectation and then translating that data into the data base. The following table represents that guide used by the scribe to translate notes accumulated during the sessions into data on citizen expectations.

Table 6: Citizen Expectations Data Translation Guide

Expectation	Associated Themes/Concepts
Easy-to-locate (contact information)	• Contact information clearly noted and referenced • Ability to access local information such as phone numbers and address • Expect to find the number in the phone book
Convenience	• Accessible by more than one means (e.g., website and phone) • 24 hour customer service • On-line presence
Availability	• Citizen expects that they will successfully make contact using the contact information that they have
Social and Ethical Responsibility	• Expectation that the government will act in the interest of the citizens • Government will provide mechanisms (e.g., guarantees of freedom of the press) to make citizens aware of any discretion.
Privacy and Security	• Privacy of information provided will be protected • Internet Security of personal information provided • Website secure from hackers
Courteous Service	• Prompt and respectful service • Contact is friendly and polite and gives impression that they care to help citizen • Transfer, if made, is to appropriate contact
Competent Service	• Receives clear and accurate information • Website is easy to understand and navigate • Website provides required information • Contact is articulate and communicates clearly • Contact is knowledgeable source
Fair Treatment	• Citizen expects to receive the same level of service (e.g., courtesy and response) as any other citizen
Consistent Response	• Information provided is consistent regardless of contact or method of contact
Reliable Service	• Receive confirmation of service or request • Email confirmation preferred for services
Timely Response	• Response to request received in time quoted • Prompt response
Successful Outcome	• Receive the information and/or service expected • Obtained all desired information on first contact

This citizen expectation data was collected by location, by focus group, by scenario, but also by the channel of communication. The channels of communication included: 1) Cell and Telephone; 2) Internet; 3) In-person; 4) Postal Mail; 5) Email; and 6) Other.

Additionally, the completed participant questionnaires were transcribed and the content analyzed for references to citizen expectations. The results of that analysis were also collected and included in the citizen expectation data base. This particular data was collected by location, by focus group, and by channel of communication. Finally, all focus group sessions were video taped and audio taped. These tapes were retained for future reference for the project.

Following each focus group, the participant demographics, moderator status report, scribe notes, citizen expectation data, and participant questionnaires were electronically transmitted following the focus groups to MITRE.

That complete list of data sources collected for this project included the following and, where noted, is found in Volume II: Results Report Appendices:

- ***Participant Demographics –*** *demographics of actual participants at focus groups – Appendix C;*
- ***Moderator Status Reports –*** *status reports by moderators delivered immediately following focus groups on themes and any issues that surfaced during the sessions- Appendix D;*
- ***Scribe Notes –*** *notes prepared by scribe during focus groups to summarize discussions on citizen expectations by scenario – Appendix E;*
- ***Focus Group Citizen Expectation Data –*** *citizen expectation data extracted from scribe notes and collected in an excel data base by location, focus group, scenario, channels of contact, and citizen expectation - Appendices F and G;*
- ***Post Group Questionnaires –*** *focus group participant responses to a questionnaire on improving government service – Appendix H;*
- ***Participant Rankings of Preferred Government Information –*** *focus group participant rankings of 16 methods of obtaining government information – Appendix I;*
- ***Stationary Video Tapes of Focus Groups –*** *stationary video tapes of each focus group; and*
- ***Audio Tapes of Focus Groups –*** *audio tapes of each focus group.*

4 FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bearing in mind that the purpose of focus groups is to provide qualitative analysis, MITRE's objective for the focus groups was to validate its existing knowledge of current citizens' service level expectations, to determine whether new expectations might be derived from the groups, and to determine possible future expectations. Our analysis of the focus group results are presented below. The general observations are presented first, followed by the group-specific. When appropriate, specific focus group comments supporting the analysis are included.

4.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

One unmistakable conclusion from the focus groups is that the most important expectation, by far, which citizen's have for satisfaction when contacting the government is competent service. In reviewing the results for all cities, all age groups and all scenarios, there were no exceptions to this. This was also true for the results from all groups from the questionnaire. As the group in Detroit commented in regard to lodging a complaint to the government:

> *…I would like to have access to the right person… I don't want to be passed around to fifteen reps…I want to be told the truth even though it might not be good.*[1]

The second leading expectation for the entire population is timely response. Other significant expectations which consistently pervade the focus groups and the questionnaire are convenience, courteous service, and easy to locate contact information.

The findings indicated that the citizens who participated in the twenty-two focus groups overwhelmingly want to use a combination of the internet first and one or more of the other channels to obtain information. Participants in most of the present environment scenarios preferred to use the internet for the initial contact with the government, followed by a personal back-up (usually the cell and telephone) when they run into obstacles. This theme was repeated in the majority of the scenarios, with the exception of the passport scenario. The following are comments from the group in New York when making a reservation in a national park:

> *Get on the internet…check out the packages…make a phone call from the contact information that I obtain through the internet.*[2]

Kansas City participants also commented:

> *I like using the internet because it's easy…I can do it on my own time…I don't have to wait in line…*[3]

In-person contact registered higher than internet and cell and telephone in the Passport scenario. The reason for this is that participants were hesitant to provide personal information over the internet. This concern was repeated consistently across the country. In Seattle, focus group participants commented:

> *I'm very fearful of sending my information out there into cyberspace…giving my social security number. You can't get around the security issues with all the identity theft going on. If government could make its website safe we could use it.*[4]

Although the results did not vary significantly between the expectations in the current environment scenarios and the future environment of the scenarios, the participants indicated that channels of communication may be different in the future. Many focus group participants suggested other future channels which were not among the five noted by MITRE in their research review. Participants were often very creative in their imagining future channels and the satisfaction these could provide. Holograms were mentioned at times as a technological means of personal contact. Interactive TV in which the government had its own channel was mentioned in several cities. One individual in Kansas City suggested calling it "Just Ask U.S." Other channels collected from the focus groups, participants suggested information Kiosks with touch screen TV similar to airports, text messaging, Amber Alerts on highways, billboards, live chat rooms, among others.

In the discussion of Disaster and Medicare scenarios, participants indicated that they would expect the government to establish outreach programs. In these scenarios, citizens would like the government to reach out to them. In fact, this idea of government outreach was so prevalent that we believe it should be considered a new expectation for further study. In San Francisco, for example, participants suggested the government use emergency broadcast systems to mention pertinent government information. Others mentioned creative billboards. Participants in New York City suggested that the government should reach out to youth through the public school system and educate them about the National Parks.

> *…CDs and DVDs (the government should) get acquainted with the public school system so all of the kids can become aware of them…make it available…educate…outreach program for all kids and all varieties of income…*[5]

It seems very relevant to GSA's efforts, given the participants requests for outreach as well as the often heard request for safe website and "one-stop" information, that GSA markets its 1-800 Number and FIRSTGOV website. Very few participants had any awareness of these channels. Participants in New York expressed much satisfaction with the Bloomberg 311 phone number as an information seeking channel specifically about New York. The suggestion is that the same could be true for the GSA 1-800 number if

more people knew about it. In regard to finding information about highway construction and lodging a complaint, San Francisco participants commented:

> *I would like to see a link on the government web site…I would like to see something like "Ask Jeeves" where I can give it a voice command in order to find a government agency. I would like to go to a search engine and type in "traffic problem" and I would be directed to a web site.*[6]

In summary, Table 7 illustrates the total results of top citizen expectations by channel for all age groups in all cities, for the present and future focus group scenarios as well as the questionnaire.

Table 7: Citizen Expectations by Channel

Channel	Present Scenario	Future Scenario	Questionnaire
Cell & Telephone	1. Competent Service 2. Courteous Service 3. Timely Response	1. Competent Service 2. Convenience	1. Competent Service 2. Courteous Service & Timely Response
Internet	1. Competent Service 2. Easy-to-Locate 3. Convenience	1. Competent Service 2. Convenience	1. Competent Service 2. Easy-to-Locate
In-Person	1. Competent Service 2. Timely Response 3. Courteous Service	1. Competent Service 2. Convenience 3. Timely Response	1. Competent Service 2. Convenience & Courteous Service
Postal Mail	1. Reliable Service	1. Easy-to-Locate & Competent Service	1. Easy-to-Locate
E-mail	1. Reliable Service & Timely Response	1. Competent Service 2. Reliable Service	1. Timely Response
Other	1. Competent Service 2. Timely Response	1. Competent Service 2. Convenience	1. Competent Service 2. Timely Response 3. Courteous Service

4.2 COMBINED SUMMARY RESULTS – ALL CITIES, ALL GROUPS

The combined summary of all cities and all groups indicates that in the current environment, the two highest customer expectations are competent service and timely response. The results also indicate the preferred channels for initial contact are the internet and cell and telephone for the Vacation, Highway, and Disease scenarios. This suggests that to conduct a transaction, express an opinion or solve a complex and urgent problem, people want to begin the process with the internet.

The following is a breakdown of the preferred channels for each age group in the present scenarios, the future scenarios, and the questionnaires:

- The 46-65 year olds in the present scenarios prefer internet slightly over cell and telephone. Their third preference is in-person. In the future scenarios they prefer internet just barely over "Other." On the questionnaire internet, cell and telephone and "other" were all preferred with equal weight.

- The 30-45 year olds in the present scenarios prefer internet over cell and telephone and in-person. In the future they prefer internet and "other" over cell and telephone. On the questionnaire in-person, internet and cell and telephone were preferred equally.

- The 18-29 year olds in the present scenarios equally prefer cell and telephone and internet first over in-person. In the future they prefer cell and telephone first and "other" second. On the questionnaire they prefer equally "other," cell and telephone and internet.

When looking at preferred channel by age in the present scenarios, all groups prefer internet first, however internet is equally preferred with cell and telephone in the 18-29 year olds. The 46-65 and 30-45 year olds also preferred cell and telephone as the second channel of choice.

In San Francisco, Group A commented:

> *I use the phone because it is more effective to me…I would like them to provide me information…I would like them to be honest and tell me what they don't know instead of making up something...in the case that they don't know, I would like them to take down my information and reply to me once they have obtained their answer.*[7]

Among all age groups, In-person was the third leading channel in the present scenario. Charlotte Group B (30-45) participants noted:

> *I don't want to have to come back…I want it to be one stop shop…someone friendly and knowledgeable that can get it done.*[8]

All age groups expressed a desire for competent service and timely response when contacting government In-person. Group A (46-65) expressed a desire for reliable service and timely response for email, while Group B (30-45) only expressed a desire for timely response. Email was not a preferred channel for the younger population.

For the Disaster and Medicare scenarios, cell and telephone was the preferred channel. Houston participants commented:

> *I use the phone to gain more information about my benefits and what I need to bring.* [9]

Participants expressed considerable interest when speaking about the possibilities for website for the National Parks in the Vacation scenario. Many people had no idea that there were very prestigious lodges in the western National Parks and people would like to have information about lodging, weather forecasts for the parks, notices of construction and forest fires. Again, many of these services already exist, but most focus group participants were unaware of that fact.

> *I would like to have a virtual tour once I access the website…would like to have a link for directions…it would be nice if they would have the hotel, airfare, etc. on the site to have a one-stop shop.*[10]

Like the current environment, the highest customer expectation in the future environment is competent service. Convenience was the second most preferred expectation for the younger population in the future environment. Houston participants suggested that for a Medicare inquiry:

> *I would expect something like video conferencing that had a touch screen where I could get assistance as well as filling out the necessary paperwork.*[11]

In the Passport future environment, competent service was discussed more than reliable service and convenience. The results also indicate the preferred channel of communication in the future is the internet and cell and telephone for the Vacation, internet and other for Highway, internet and other for Passport, and other and internet for Medicare scenarios. Kansas City participants in response to the highway scenario offered:

> *I would like to have a website where I can see the situation of the highways...like to have a website in the case that I want to lodge a complaint…I would like an email within 24 hours with confirmation stating that they have received my complaint.*[12]

For the Disaster scenario, other and cell and telephone are preferred and for Rare and Serious Illness scenarios, the preferred channels are cell and telephone, internet and other. For the Disaster Scenario, San Francisco participants suggested:

> *I would like a disaster package with a list of numbers and how to be prepared in case something occurs…I would like to receive a pamphlet with information on what I should do in case a disaster occurs…maybe there could be a simple*

> *number like 911 where I can receive a prerecorded message on where I can go to obtain information.*[13]

In the future environment, the younger population also preferred the cell and telephone and other channels. This was consistent across all scenarios and suggested preferences for text messaging or interactive touch screen kiosks, along with the cell and telephone.

Based on the focus group discussions, participants identified a desire for a government outreach program, as in the above reference, in the event of disasters and potential rare and serious illnesses. In addition, changes in technology may create better channels of communication that may impact the service level expectations of the public. For receiving information about Medicare a Kansas City participant noted:

> *I would like to have instant messaging…I would like to have live video chat through the internet.*[14]

The summary of the questionnaires for all cities and all groups helped to confirm some of the results identified during the focus groups. Specifically, the participant responses to the questionnaires identified the two highest customer expectations as competent service and timely response. All age groups identified internet, cell and telephone and other channels with equal frequency.

4.3 GROUP A (46-65) RESULTS (EXCLUDING HOUSTON AND SEATTLE)

Group A was made up of the 46-65 year old participants in all cities, excluding Houston and Seattle. The results for this group in the current environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and timely response. In addition, the results indicate the preferred channel for initial contact is the internet for the Vacation and Rare and Serious Illness scenarios. For the Medicare scenario, participants preferred cell phones and cell and telephone as the initial contact channel. The preferred channel for the Passport scenario was In-person. Based on the results of this group, participants were equally likely to use the internet and cell and telephone as the initial channel of communication for the Highway scenario. No strong preferences were indicated in the Disaster scenario, as participants were equally likely to use the cell and telephone, in-person, or other as the communication channel. Miami participants commented:

> *I would go to a FEMA office and apply for a loan…it would be nice if FEMA had certain locations that are set up before the hurricane season and make the public aware of where the satellite locations are…*[15]

The results for this group in the future environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and easy-to-locate contact information. For the Highway scenario, participants identified email and the internet as the preferred

mechanisms. The preferred channel for the Disaster and Medicare scenarios was In-person.

For the Vacation and Rare and Serious Illness scenarios, participants preferred other as the initial contact channel. The preferred channel for the Passport scenario was In-person. Based on the results of this group, participants were equally likely to use the internet and cell and telephones as the initial channel of communication for the highway scenario.

The summary of the questionnaires for this group indicated that the participant responses identified the two highest customer expectations as competent service and courteous service. However, based on the responses to the questionnaire, participants identified the use of cell phones and cell and telephone as the preferred channel.

4.4 GROUP B (30-45) RESULTS

Group B was made up of the 30-45 year old participants in all cities, excluding Houston and Seattle. The results for this group in the current environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and timely response.

> *I would like them to provide us with better hours that are convenient so I don't have to take off work…It is important for me to have short lines…I would like all of the necessary documentation that I need to be posted inside the facility.*[16]

The results also indicate that the preferred channel for initial contact is the internet for the Vacation, Highway, and Rare and Serious Illness scenarios. For the Medicare and Disaster scenarios, participants preferred cell phones and cell and telephone as the initial contact channel. The preferred channel for the Passport scenario was In-person.

When discussing the future environment, the results for this group indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and convenience. The results also indicate the preferred channel for initial contact is the internet for the Medicare scenario. For the Highway scenario, participants identified other as the preferred channel. The preferred channel for the Disaster and Passport scenarios was other. For the Rare and Serious Illness scenario, participants were equally likely to use other channels or the internet for initial contact. Based on the results of this group, participants were equally likely to use the internet, cell and telephone, and email as the initial channel of communication for the Vacation scenario.

The summary of the questionnaires for this group indicated that the participant responses identified the two highest customer expectations as competent service and timely response. However, based on the responses to the questionnaire, participants identified the use of cell and telephone as the preferred channel, followed by In-person contact.

4.5 HOUSTON AND SEATTLE GROUP A (46-65; $30,000 TO $49,999; MINIMUM HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA) RESULTS

Group A was made up of participants in Houston and Seattle that had an annual income of $30,000 - $49,999, and at least a high school education. All participants were between the ages of 46 and 65 years old. The Rare and Serious Illness and Highway scenarios were not used for these focus groups.

The results for this group in the current environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service, timely response and convenience. The results also indicate the preferred channels for initial contact are the internet and in-person for the Passport and Medicare scenarios. For the Vacation scenario, participants were equally likely to use the internet or cell and telephone. The preferred channel for the Disaster scenario is cell and telephone. Houston participants noted:

> *I would expect them to have a sufficient number of lines so that I won't have to get a busy tone. I would expect them to stay on the phone with me the whole time.*[17]

The results for this group in the future environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and convenience. Also, the results indicate the preferred channel for initial contact is the internet for the Passport scenario. For the Vacation scenario, participants identified cell phones and cell and telephone as the preferred channel. The preferred channels for the Disaster scenario were other channels. For instance, Houston participants suggested that in the case of a disaster:

> *I would expect the government to set up facilities in a preset location that they have made citizens aware of it through community meetings, newspaper, radio TV and mail…I would expect some center in my area would have a similar On Star device that would work in times of disaster.*[18]

For the Medicare scenario, participants were equally likely to use other channels or the internet for initial contact.

The summary of the questionnaires for this group indicated that the participant responses identified the highest customer expectations as competent service, timely response, and courteous service. Participants were equally likely to use cell and telephone, the internet, or other as the preferred channels, followed by In-person contact.

4.6 HOUSTON AND SEATTLE GROUP B(46 -65;OVER $50,000; MINIMUM OF A FOUR YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE) RESULTS

Group B was made up of participants in Houston and Seattle that had an annual income of over $50,000, and a college education. All participants were between the ages of 45

and 65 years old. The Rare and Serious Illness and Highway scenarios were excluded from this focus group.

The results for this group in the current environment indicate that the primary customer expectations are competent service and convenience. The results also indicate the preferred channel for initial contact is the cell and telephone and internet for the Vacation, internet and in-person for Passport and Medicare scenarios. Houston participants noted:

> *I would go on the internet and gain more information and then make a phone call or go to the office.*[19]

The preferred channel for the Disaster scenario is other.

The results for this group in the future environment indicate that the two highest customer expectations are competent service and convenience. The results also indicate the preferred channel for initial contact is the internet for the Vacation and Passport scenarios. For the Disaster scenario, participants identified cell and telephone as the preferred channel. The preferred channel for the Medicare scenario was other.

The summary of the questionnaires for this group indicated that the participant responses identified the highest customer expectations as competent service, timely response, and courteous service. The internet was the preferred channel of communication, followed by cell and telephone and in-person and other.

4.7 YOUNGER POPULATION -- NEW YORK

Two focus groups were held in New York with participants between the ages of 18 to 29, who had a minimum of a high school diploma and a household income of over $30,000. The results of this group are similar to the results for Group A and B in Sections 4.3 and 4.4, which excluded Houston and Seattle. The top three service level expectations for these groups were competent service, timely response and courteous service. The results also indicate that the preferred channel in the current environment was the internet, followed by cell and telephone.

As an example of competent service, participants commented:

> *I just want to get the answer to my question.*[20]

Like the other groups, competent service was the leading expectation in the future environment, followed by convenience. Preferred channels for future are other. These included live chats, text messaging, information kiosks, and enhanced libraries. Participant responses to the questionnaires confirmed that the competent service was the

leading expectation, and the internet and other were the preferred channels of communication.

4.8 YOUNGER POPULATION -- CHARLOTTE AND HOUSTON

Three focus groups were held in Charlotte and Houston with participants between the ages of 18 and 29. Except for age, these groups had similar demographics to the Houston and Seattle noted in Section 4.5 and 4.6. The results for this group in the current environment indicate that the top customer expectations were competent service and timely response. The desire for a timely response is indicated in a response to the questions for lodging a complaint in the Highway scenario. One participant in the Charlotte stated:

> *I would send an email. I want them to send me a confirmation in five to ten minutes.*[21]

The preferred channels of communication in the current environment were the cell and telephone and internet, followed by in-person. Unlike the younger groups in New York who generally preferred the internet and phone for the Disaster scenario, the participants in this group indicated that the cell and telephone was the dominant channel. As an example, one participant in Houston stated:

> *I would call my insurance agent and see who they would refer me to.*[22]

Like the current environment, participants identified competent service as the leading expectation in the future environment. In terms of the preferred channels, the cell and telephone was slightly favored of the internet in the future.

The summary of the questionnaires for this group confirmed that competent service and timely response were the highest expectations, followed by courteous service, easy-to-locate and convenience. This group also identified the cell and telephone, internet, and other as equally important channels of contact.

4.9 YOUNGER POPULATION -- COLLEGE STUDENTS -- CHARLOTTE

One focus group was dedicated to full time college students between the ages of 18-29 in Charlotte. Consistent with the majority of the other focus groups, this group identified competent service as the top expectation in the current environment, followed by timely response. Similarly, the preferred channels of communication in the current environment were internet and cell and telephone.

Competent service was also the highest expectation for the future environment. However, the group identified convenience as the second highest expectation in the future as opposed to timely response. The preferred channel of communication in the

future was identified as other. The group provided two examples of "other" methods of communications.

> *Place a digitized sign on highways where it states what to do because a disaster is about to occur…I would like a government channel where I can get the information that I need.*[23]

The responses to the questionnaires confirmed that competent service was the highest expectation in this group. However, none of the channels stood out as preferred in this group. Due to the fact that the participants were full-time students, comparisons with older population with similar demographics cannot be made.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the focus groups, the following recommendations are provided:

- ***Reevaluate the citizen expectations that were provided for the focus groups.*** From MITRE's list of twelve expectations, the most important expectations for satisfaction are competent service, timely response, convenience, courteous service, and easy-to-locate. After those five, the importance of the other expectations drops off considerably. Social and ethical responsibility and fair treatment were never mentioned during the focus groups.

- ***Develop future expectations.*** Participants expressed a desire to have internet links between all levels of government so that if one program wasn't available at the state level, they could link to the government site where the service was available.

- ***Consider other channels of communication as possible channels for future study.*** Current technologies such as Instant Messaging, Video Conferencing, and Interactive TV were mentioned in many cities as channels for communication. The "other" category includes many potential channels which were only collected as a group due to the project design. It would be useful to do further inquiry into which of these other channels might become strong preferences for the future.

- ***Develop a marketing strategy for existing government channels of communication.*** There was very little awareness of the existing government channels of communication including 1-800 FEDINFO and www.firstgov.gov. Since internet and cell and telephone were the top channels of choice, GSA should continue to enhance the functionality and content of the FirstGov website, considering all options to ease use, increasing relevant links to other agencies and new services. Also, they should pursue all opportunities to assure competent and courteous service for the 1-800 number.

6 ENDNOTES

[1] Volume II: Appendix E: Focus Group Scribe Notes, page E-15.
[2] Ibid, page E-2.
[3] Ibid, page E-33.
[4] Ibid, page E-44.
[5] Ibid, page E-2.
[6] Ibid, page E-43.
[7] Ibid, page E-43.
[8] Ibid, page E-13.
[9] Ibid, page E-42.
[10] Ibid, page E-42.
[11] Ibid, page E-3.
[12] Ibid, page E-30.
[13] Ibid, page E-44.
[14] Ibid, page E-36.
[15] Ibid, page E-18.
[16] Ibid, page E-22.
[17] Ibid, page E-37.
[18] Ibid, page E-37.
[19] Ibid, page E-42.
[20] Ibid, page E-58.
[21] Ibid, page E-68
[22] Ibid, page E-72
[23] Ibid, page E-65

Appendix C. Information Participants Wanted from Government

Age Group: 46-65 Household Income: $30,000-$50,000 Education Level: High school or some college	
Houston 1 – Session A	**Seattle – Session A**
• Social Security • Disability • Identity theft • Parks & wildlife activities • Grants for small businesses • IRS/tax issues • Student loans, grants • Renewing driver's license • Programs for senior citizens • American Disabilities Act • Summary of what Reps are doing in Congress • Tracking stocks	• Senior healthcare benefits • Voting information (i.e., absentee ballots) • Searching genealogy backgrounds • Postal Service • Veterans Administration – health benefits • Tax information

Age Group: 46-65 Household Income: Over $50,000 Education Level: Minimum 4-year college degree	
Houston 1 – Session B	**Seattle – Session B**
• The truth • Social Security • Passport information • Driver's license • NIST – technical information • IRS/taxes • Library information • Real estate information • Health information • Information on how to start a business • Travel information • Research information • Grants • Regulations • Schedules (i.e., closings and trash pick-up) • Internet fraud • Congressional rules and regulations • Consumer information • State and parks information • Birth certificate	• Answers to "why" questions • Taxes • Property history/assessments • Social Security • Veterans Administration • Zoning regulations

Age Group: 46-65 Household Income: At least $30,000 Education Level: High school minimum	
New York 1 – Session A	**Charlotte 1 – Session A**
• Accurate, truthful information • Public transportation schedules • Immigration forms • Small jobs – contracts • Department of Motor Vehicles • Unemployment benefits • Parking tickets • Taxes • Neighborhood info (i.e., municipal changes) • Postal information • Office of Emergency Management • Passport information • Birth/death certificates • State Department • Veterans Affairs	• Honesty; the truth • Country's financial status • What we're spending taxes on • Taxes • Small business loans • Education loans • Housing information • Road closings • Medicaid • Medicare
Miami – Session A	**Detroit – Session A**
• More information • Tax information • Driving information (i.e., registering cars) • Building permits • Available government programs for taxpayers • Financial aid for your house • Healthcare • Social Security • Information on recently passed laws/bills • Ordering new recycling bins	• The truth • Saving money on taxes • Driver's license • IRS/tax information • Medicare • Medicaid • Veterans' benefits • Money available for citizens • School mileages • Ballot for the local elections
Kansas City – Session A	**San Francisco – Session A**
• FAFSA info (college financing) • Gasoline prices • Bush's exit strategy from Iraq • Passport information • Federal grant money • Veterans' benefits • Grants to start a business • Social Security • HARP (heard it on the news) • National driver's license	• Grants for starting own business • Emailing Senators and Reps in Congress • Watch groups • Government spending • Student financial aid • California Secretary of State • California Department of Operations • Passport renewal

Age Group: 30-45 Household Income: At least $30,000 Education Level: High school minimum	
New York 1 – Session B	**Charlotte 1 – Session B**
• Passport information • Traffic devices • Taxes • Federal grants • Healthcare issues • Assistance programs • Better information	• Social Security • Taxes • DMV • State parks, attractions
Miami – Session B	**Detroit – Session B**
• Tax information • Social Security • Driver's license, registration • Public records • Passports • Building permits • Property sales • Health insurance • Auto insurance • Lottery money • Weather, hurricane information	• Tax refund • Driver's license • Property info (i.e., liens) • School information • City department contact information • Regulations • Zoning • LLCS, self-employment
Kansas City – Session B	**San Francisco – Session B**
• Nuclear energy • Social Security • Taxes • Clear information • Medical questions • EPA • Fish & Game; wildlife • Census Bureau • Public television funding • FBI – trying to find sexual predators • Identity theft • Highway funding • What "they" spend money on • Student financial aid • Terrorist alerts • Veterans' benefits	• Jobs • Concrete answers • Statistics, records • Tax information • DMV • Laws, bylaws, regulations, codes • Lobby issues • Gov't record on environmental issues

Age Group: 18-29 Household Income: At least $30,000 Education Level: High school minimum	
New York 2 – Session A	**New York 2 – Session B**
• FBI employment • Passport Info • Driver's license • Street parking rules • Birth certificate • State ID • Parking tickets • Student loans • Teaching certification • Immigration • Public parks, recreation • Laws and regulations • Jobs • Operations of government offices • Emergency updates • Voting information • FBI info for abroad • Owing the government money • Unemployment • Social Security	• FBI employment • Passport Info • Driver's license • Street parking rules • Birth certificate • State ID • Parking tickets • Student loans • Teaching certification • Immigration • Public parks, recreation • Laws and regulations • Jobs • Operations of government offices • Emergency updates • Voting information • FBI info for abroad • Owing the government money • Unemployment • Social Security

Age Group: 18–29 Household Income: $30,000–$50,000 Education Level: High school or some college	Age Group: 18–29 Household Income: Minimum $30,000 Education Level: Enrolled in college
Charlotte 2 – Session A	**Houston 2 – Session A**
• Accurate information • The truth • Information about the war • Local information/notices about roadwork • Laws and regulations • Programs for people without health insurance	• The truth • Legislative information • School information (i.e., school assignment) • Census information • Flood plan information • Where money is going • Laws • Available government programs • Jury pools

Age Group: 18-29 Household Income: Minimum $50,000 Education Level: Minimum 4-Year college degree	
Charlotte 2 – Session B	**Houston 2 – Session B**
• Tax information • Zoning information • Election policy issues • DMV – registration renewal, property tax, emissions certificates • CDC – statistics, new policies, health-related information • Student research, loans • The truth • Neutral information on foreign, domestic policies • Social Security • Where money is going • Birth certificate • Statistics • Information lawmakers use • Interstate construction • Voting propositions • Accessibility to information	• Tax information • Zoning information • Election policy issues • DMV – registration renewal, property tax, emissions certificates • CDC – statistics, new policies, health-related information • Student research, loans • The truth • Neutral information on foreign, domestic policies • Social Security • Where money is going • Birth certificate • Statistics • Information lawmakers use • Interstate construction • Voting propositions • Accessibility to information

Appendix D. Detailed Summary Tables of Results

This appendix contains the data rankings derived from tabulating the responses found in Daston's expectations database. Numbers in parentheses reflect tabulated values for channels and expectations. These values, which are presented here for reference, were the bases for the bar chart summaries presented in the main body of the report.

Table D-1. Preferred Channels by Scenario

Scenario (# Sessions Run)	Vacation (13 Sessions)	Highway (12 Sessions)	Disaster (14 Sessions)	Passport (21 Sessions)	Medicare (11 Sessions)	Rare and Serious Illness (8 Sessions)
Today (# Focus Group Sessions Channel Cited)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (12) - Internet (12) - In Person (1) - Email (1) - Other (1) - Postal Mail (0)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (9) - Internet (8) - Email (3) - Postal Mail (3) - In Person (2) - Other (2)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (9) - Other (4) - In Person (3) - Internet (2) - Postal Mail (0) - Email (0)	- In Person (21) - Internet (19) - Cell Phone and Telephone (7) - Postal Mail (0) - Email (0) - Other (0)	- Internet (10) - Cell Phone and Telephone (7) - In Person (7) - Postal Mail (0) - Email (0) - Other (0)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (7) - Internet (7) - Email (2) - In Person (1) - Postal Mail (0) - Other (0)
Future (# Focus Group Sessions Channel Cited)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (7) - Internet (7) - Other (4) - Email (2) - In Person (1) - Postal Mail (0)	- Internet (7) - Other (6) - Cell Phone and Telephone (3) - Email (3) - In Person (2) - Postal Mail (0)	- Cell Phone and Telephone (7) - Other (7) - In Person (2) - Postal Mail (1) - Internet (0) - Email (0)	- Internet (13) - Other (9) - In Person (7) - Cell Phone and Telephone (6) - Email (1) - Postal Mail (0)	- Other (6) - Internet (4) - In Person (2) - Cell Phone and Telephone (1) - Postal Mail (1) - Email (0)	- Other (4) - Internet (3) - Cell Phone and Telephone (2) - In Person (0) - Postal Mail (0) - Email (0)
Questionnaire	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table D-2. Expectation Rankings by Scenario for Today

Vacation	Highway	Disaster	Passport	Medicare	Rare and Serious Illness
1 – Competent Service (21) 2 – Courteous Service (8) 3 – Reliable Service (8) 4 – Timely Response (7) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (7) 6 – Convenience (5) 7 – Privacy and Security (1) 8 – Consistent Response (1)	1 – Competent Service (13) 2 – Timely Response (11) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (9) 4 – Courteous Service (8) 5 – Reliable Service (7) 6 – Convenience (3) 7 – Successful Outcome (2)	1 – Competent Service (12) 2 – Timely Response (6) 3 – Courteous Service (5) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2) 5 – Convenience (2) 6 – Privacy and Security (1)	1 – Competent Service (35) 2 – Timely Response (27) 3 – Convenience (23) 4 – Courteous Service (14) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (10) 6 – Privacy and Security (7) 7 – Reliable Service (6) 8 – Successful Outcome (4) 9 – Availability (3) 10 – Consistent Response (1)	1 – Competent Service (20) 2 – Convenience (12) 3 – Courteous Service (6) 4 – Timely Response (6) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (5) 6 – Consistent Response (3) 7 – Reliable Service (2) 8 – Privacy and Security (2) 9 – Successful Outcome (2)	1 – Competent Service (10) 2 – Timely Response (9) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (7) 4 – Courteous Service (3) 5 – Convenience (3) 6 – Reliable Service (1) 7 – Privacy and Security (1)

Vacation	Highway	Disaster	Passport	Medicare	Rare and Serious Illness
Not Heard – Successful Outcome – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Privacy and Security – Consistent Response – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Consistent Response – Reliable Service – Successful Outcome – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment

Table D-3. Expectation Rankings by Scenario for Future

Vacation	Highway	Disaster	Passport	Medicare	Rare and Serious Illness
1 – Competent Service (10) 2 – Reliable Service (7) 3 – Convenience (6) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (3) 5 – Timely Response (2) 6 – Fair Treatment (1) 7 – Consistent Response (1) 8 – Courteous Service (1)	1 – Competent Service (14) 2 – Convenience (3) 3 – Courteous Service (2) 4 – Timely Response (2) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2) 6 – Reliable Service (1) 7- Privacy and Security (1) 8– Successful Outcome (1)	1 – Competent Service (13) 2 - Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (4) 3 - Timely Response (3) 4– Courteous Service (1) 5 – Convenience (1) 6 – Reliable Service (1)	1 – Competent Service (19) 2 – Convenience (12) 3 – Privacy and Security (5) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (4) 5 – Timely Response (3) 6 – Courteous Service (2) 7 – Reliable Service (2) 8 – Availability (2)	1 – Competent Service (9) 2 – Convenience (3) 3 – Courteous Service (1) 4 – Timely Response (1) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1) 6 – Consistent Response (1) 7 – Privacy and Security (1)	1 – Competent Service (3) 2 – Availability (3) 3 – Convenience (3) 4 – Timely Response (2) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1) 6 – Consistent Response (1) 7 – Successful Outcome (1)
Not Heard – Successful Outcome – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Privacy and Security – Consistent Response – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Consistent Response – Reliable Service – Successful Outcome – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Successful Outcome – Reliable Service – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Courteous Service – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Reliable Service – Privacy and Security

Table D-4. Expectations for Today and Future Preferred Channels by Most Frequently Cited Channels

	Telephone	Internet	In Person Visit	Postal Mail	Email	Other
Today **# rank, (#Scenarios Cited)**	**2nd** (51)	**1st** (58)	**3rd** (35)	6 (3)	5 (6)	4 (7)
Future **# rank, (#Scenarios Cited)**	**3rd** (26)	**2nd** (34)	4 (14)	6 (2)	5 (6)	**1st** (36)
Questionnaire **# rank, (#Scenarios Cited)**	**1st** (18)	**1st** (18)	4 (10)	6 (1)	5 (3)	**2nd** (17)

Table D-5. Expectations for Today by Most Frequently Cited Preferred Channels

Cell phone/telephone	Internet	In Person Visit	Postal Method	Email	Other
1 – Competent Service (35) 2 – Courteous Service (23) 3 – Timely Response (15) 4 – Convenience (11) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (4) 6 – Reliable Service (4) 7 – Consistent Response (3) 8 – Privacy and Security (2) 9 – Successful Outcome (2)	1 – Competent Service (48) 2 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (34) 3 – Convenience (26) 4 – Timely Response (22) 5 – Reliable Service (14) 6 – Privacy and Security (4) 7 – Availability (3) 8 – Courteous Service (2) 9 – Consistent Response (1) 10 – Successful Outcome (1)	1 – Competent Service (23) 2 – Timely Response (20) 3 – Courteous Service (16) 4 – Convenience (11) 5 – Privacy and Security (6) 6 – Successful Outcome (5) 7 – Consistent Response (1)	1 – Reliable Service (2) 2 – Timely Response (1)	1 – Reliable Service (4) 2 – Timely Response (4) 3 – Competent Service (1) 4 – Courteous Service (1) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1)	1 – Timely Response (4) 2 – Competent Service (4) 3 – Courteous Service (2) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information – Reliable Service – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Competent Service – Courteous Service – Convenience – Privacy and Security – Successful Outcome – Consistent Response – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Convenience – Privacy and Security – Successful Outcome – Consistent Response – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Reliable Service – Convenience – Privacy and Security – Successful Outcome – Consistent Response – Availability – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment

Table D-6. Expectations for Future by Most Frequently Cited Preferred Channels

Cell phone/telephone	Internet	In Person Visit	Postal Method	Email	Other
1 – Competent Service (13) 2 – Convenience (4) 3 – Reliable Service (3) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2) 5 – Courteous Service (2) 6 – Timely Response (2) 7 – Availability (1)	1 – Competent Service (22) 2 – Convenience (11) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (5) 4 – Reliable Service (3) 5 – Timely Response (2) 6 – Availability (2) 7 – Courteous Service (1) 8 – Privacy and Security (1)	1 – Competent Service (7) 2 – Convenience (4) 3 – Timely Response (3) 4 – Courteous Service (2) 5 – Privacy and Security (1) 6 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1)	1 – Competent Service (1) 2 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1)	1 – Competent Service (3) 2 – Reliable Service (3) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (1) 4 – Timely Response (1) 5 – Privacy and Security (1) 6 – Consistent Response (1)	1 – Competent Service (22) 2 – Convenience (9) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (5) 4 – Timely Response (5) 5 – Privacy and Security (4) 6 – Reliable Service (2) 7 – Consistent Response (2) 8 – Courteous Service (2) 9 – Successful Outcome (2) 10 – Availability (2) 11 – Fair Treatment (1)

Cell phone/telephone	Internet	In Person Visit	Postal Method	Email	Other
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Privacy and Security – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility - Fair Treatment - Consistent Response - Successful Outcome - Availability - Reliable Service	Not Heard – Convenience – Timely Response – Courteous Service – Privacy and Security – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome – Availability – Reliable Service	Not Heard – Convenience – Courteous Service – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Successful Outcome – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility

Table D-7. Preferred Channels by Age Group

	18–29 Years Old	30–45 Years Old	46–65 Years Old
Today	1 –Cell phone/telephone (18) 2 – Internet (17) 3 – In Person (8) 4 – Other (5) 5 – Postal Mail (2) Email (2)	1 – Internet (18) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (13) 3 – In Person (11) 4 – Email (3)	1 – Internet (23) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (20) 3 – In Person (16) 4 – Other (2) 5 – Postal Mail (1) Email (1)
Future	1 – Cell phone/telephone (14) 2 – Other (12) 3 – Internet (9) 4 – In Person (5) 5 – Email (1)	1 – Other (13) Internet (13) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (6) 3 – Email (4) 4 – In Person (3)	1 – Internet (12) 2 – Other (11) 3 – Cell phone/telephone (6) In Person (6) 5 – Postal Mail (2) 6 – Email (1)
Improvement	1 – Other (6) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (5) Internet (5) 3 – In Person (1) Email (1) Postal Mail (1)	1 – Cell phone/telephone (5) Internet (5) In Person (5) 2 – Other (3) 3 – Email (1)	1 – Cell phone/telephone (8) Internet (8) Other (8) 2 – In Person (4) 4 – Email (1)

Table D-8. Service-Level Expectations for Today by Age Group

18–29 Years Old	30–45 Years Old	46–65 Years Old
1 – Competent Service (31) 2 – Timely Response (21) 3 – Courteous Service (14) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (11) Convenience (11) 5 – Reliable Service (5) 6 – Availability (1) Successful Outcome (1) Privacy and Security (1)	1 – Competent Service (35) 2 – Timely Response (19) 3 – Convenience (15) 4 – Courteous Service (12) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (11) 6 – Reliable Service (8) 7 – Privacy and Security (5) 7 – Consistent Response (3) 8 – Successful Outcome (2) 9 – Availability (1)	1 – Competent Service (45) 2 – Timely Response (26) 3 – Convenience (22) 4 – Courteous Service (18) Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (18) 5 – Reliable Service (11) 6 – Privacy and Security (6) 7 – Successful Outcome (5) 8 – Consistent Response (2) 9 – Availability (1)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment

Table D-9. Service-Level Expectations for Future by Age Group

18–29 Years Old	30–45 Years Old	46–65 Years Old
1 – Competent Service (25) 2 – Convenience (10) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (3) 4 – Timely Response (2) Successful Outcome (2) 5 – Courteous Service (1) Availability (1) Reliable Service (1)	1 – Competent Service (20) 2 – Convenience (8) 3 – Reliable Service (7) 4 – Timely Response (6) Privacy and Security (6) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (3) 6 – Courteous Service (2) Consistent Response (2) Availability (2)	1 – Competent Service (23) 2 – Convenience (10) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (9) 4- Timely Response (5) 5 – Courteous Service (4) 6 – Reliable Service (3) 7 – Availability (2) 8 – Fair Treatment (1) Consistent Response (1) Privacy and Security (1)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Privacy and Security – Fair Treatment	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Successful Outcome	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Successful Outcome

Table D-10. Service-Level Expectations for Improvements by Age Group

Data collected from Houston, Seattle, and Charlotte only (eight focus groups)

	High School Educational Level or Some College	Currently Enrolled in College	Minimum of 4-Year College Degree
	Between $30,000 and $50,000 in Household Income	Minimum of $30,000 in Household Income	Minimum of $50,000 in Household Income
Today	1 – Cell phone/telephone (3) 2 – Internet (2) 3 – In Person (1) Postal Mail (1) Email (1)	1 – Internet (3) Cell phone/telephone (3) 2 – In Person (2) Other (2)	1 – Cell phone/telephone (6) 2 – Internet (4) 3 – In Person (2) Other (2) 4 – Email (1) Postal Mail (1)
Future	1 – Other (3) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (2) 3 - Net (2) 4 – In Person (1)	1 – Other (3) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (2) 3 – Internet (1) In Person (1)	1 – Cell phone/telephone (6) 2 – Internet (3) 3 – In Person (2) 4 – Email (1) Other (2)
Improvement	1 – Cell phone/telephone (3) Net (3) Other (3) 3 – In Person (1)	1 – Cell phone/telephone (1) Other (1)	1 – Internet (4) 2 – Cell phone/telephone (3) 3 – In Person (1) Postal Mail (1) Email (1)

Table D-11. Service-Level Expectations for Today by Education/Household Income Group

Data collected from Houston, Seattle, and Charlotte only (eight focus groups)

High School or Some College	Currently Enrolled in College	Minimum of 4-Year College Degree
Between $30,000 and $50,000 in Household Income	**Minimum of $30,000 in Household Income**	**Minimum of $50,000 in Household Income**
1 – Competent Service (12) 2 – Convenience (7) 3 – Timely Response (6) 4 – Privacy and Security (5) Courteous Service (5) 5 – Reliable Service (4) 6 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (3) 7 – Availability (1)	1 – Competent Service (4) Timely Response (4) 2 – Convenience (2) Courteous Service (2) 3 – Reliable Service (1)	1 – Competent Service (15) 2 – Timely Response (10) 3 – Convenience (9) 4 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (8) 5 – Reliable Service (4) 6 – Courteous Service (3) Successful Outcome (3) 7 – Privacy and Security (2)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Successful Outcome	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information – Privacy and Security – Successful Outcome – Consistent Response – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Availability

Table D-12. Service-Level Expectations for Future by Education/Household Income Group

High School or Some College	Currently Enrolled in College	Minimum of 4-Year College Degree
Between $30,000 and $50,000 in Household Income	**Minimum of $30,000 in Household Income**	**Minimum of $50,000 in Household Income**
1 – Competent Service (9) 2 – Convenience (3) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2) 4 – Reliable Service (1) Courteous Service (1) Successful Outcome (1)	1 – Competent Service (5) 2 – Convenience (2) 3 – Successful Outcome (1)	1 – Competent Service (13) 2 – Convenience (7) 3 – Timely Response (2) Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2) 4 – Availability (1) Reliable Service (1) Courteous Service (1) Successful Outcome (1) Privacy and Security (1)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Timely Response – Privacy and Security – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Timely Response – Courteous Service – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information – Reliable Service – Privacy and Security – Consistent Response – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response

Table D-13. Service-Level Expectations for Improvements by Education/Household Income

High School or Some College	Currently Enrolled in College	Minimum of 4-Year College Degree
Between $30,000 and $50,000 in Household Income	**Minimum of $30,000 in Household Income**	**Minimum of $50,000 in Household Income**
1 – Competent Service (7) 2 – Courteous Service (5) 3 – Timely Response (4) 4 – Convenience (3) 5 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (2)	1 – Competent Service (2) 2 – Convenience (1) Courteous Service (1)	1 – Competent Service (7) 2 - Timely Response (6) 3 – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information (5) 4 – Courteous Service (4) 5 – Convenience (3) 6 – Privacy and Security (1) Consistent Response (1) Reliable Service (1) Successful Outcome (1)
Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Consistent Response – Reliable Service – Successful Outcome – Privacy and Security – Availability	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Timely Response – Consistent Response – Easy-to-Locate Contact Information – Reliable Service – Privacy and Security – Successful Outcome	Not Heard – Social and Ethical Responsibility – Fair Treatment – Availability

Glossary

Asynchronous Communication	Communication in which a citizen leaves a message in a mailbox and waits for a response, rather than actively interacts. Examples of channels that provide asynchronous communications include email, voice mail, and postal mail.
Channel	A means by which citizens and government communicate with one another. Examples of channels in this report include: voice conversations via the cell phone/telephone; written correspondence via email, the Internet, and postal mail; and in-person office visits. As in many studies, telephone has in this study been treated as a channel, even though it is a platform that can provide access to several channels, such as voice conversations, Interactive Voice Response systems, voice portals, and voice mail.
Citizen	MITRE uses this term to represent any person living in the United States who is a patron of government services for business or personal reasons, regardless of whether the person is legally qualified as a citizen.
Citizens' Service-Level Expectations	What citizens anticipate from the service they will receive from their contacts with government.
Citizens' Satisfaction	Citizens' levels of contentment with the services they receive from their contacts with government.
Mode of Communication	The manner by which a message between a citizen and the government is handled. Modes of communication include asynchronous communication, self-service, and real-time.
"Other" Channel	A new or innovative communication channel or platform that is not easily defined as, and/or not commonly associated with, existing cell phone/telephone, Internet, in-person, postal mail, or email channels.
Platform	A device that provides access to a channel, such as a computer with Internet access or a telephone with landline or wireless services. Examples of platforms include telephones and computers with Internet access. Government offices also are included as platforms for face-to-face communications and traditional mail.
Real-Time Communication	Synchronous communication in which citizens and government service representatives actively interact. Examples of channels that provide real-time communications include voice conversations via the telephone, office visits, instant messages, and text messages.
Self-Service Communication	Typically, communication between a citizen and an automated system that allows the citizen to receive service without any contact with another person. Examples of channels that can provide self-service communication include Interactive Voice Response systems, voice portals, automated teller machines, kiosks, and Web sites.
Service Period	The time period from when a citizen makes contact with the government until the time an outcome is achieved.

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