

THE NEW GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

New technologies such as digital services and data analytics are changing the face of agency interactions.



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GOVERNMENT AGENCIES have made considerable progress in recent years to provide improved digital experiences for the people they serve. From digitized forms to real-time travel updates, a variety of agencies have implemented citizen-centric technologies to modernize the way they provide information and services to the public. Yet citizens' growing expectations for digital government interactions – available at any time, from anywhere, from any device – continue to drive the need for all government agencies to transform their means of digital citizen engagement.

As found in our **Adobe Digital Government Survey** last year, citizens feel that government digital services are years behind private sector services. It's no wonder that citizens sense this immense gap, when 92 percent of U.S. federal government websites have been **found** to be lacking when measured against basic standards for speed, mobile-friendliness, security and accessibility. The private sector model for customer engagement sets a good benchmark for agencies to work toward to close this gap, particularly in terms of accessibility and efficiency of online tools.

Leveraging technology already being used across the private sector, agencies can adapt to keep up with evolving citizen needs. A balance between off-the-shelf commercial tools and custom integration is key for efficiently and successfully achieving government missions. Agencies can innovate by leveraging open standards and tools such as Adobe's **Digital Design Templates for Government**, an open source package that enables public sector website managers to quickly deploy U.S. Digital Service and 18F draft U.S. Web Design Standards.

Agencies also have a huge opportunity to improve citizen engagement by employing analytics. Just as the private sector uses analytics to provide consumers with easier

access to pages that are most relevant to their needs, government agencies can minimize the number of clicks that it takes for a user of government services to access the information they need. Agencies can also provide digital, prepopulated forms, not just for the enhanced, convenient, streamlined experience they provide, but also to minimize risk of errors in forms and to increase the likelihood that forms will be fully completed.

Alongside these types of technical updates that government agencies can make, cultural and operational changes within agencies would go a long way toward improving digital offerings. For example, incentivizing agencies to maintain modernized digital tools, and establishing resources for agencies that fall behind in their ability to meet certain standards for online tools, would spur agencies to prioritize online citizen experiences. From a policy standpoint, passing the Modernizing Government Technology Act would also be an important step in updating U.S. federal IT systems and ensuring that agencies dedicate resources appropriately to better meet public needs.

While there should be available means of interacting with government agencies via phone or in person to ensure accessibility for all users of government services, agencies should take into account that the average online digital transaction costs about 10 cents, while an in-person transaction may cost \$35 or more. Looking at the longer-term cost benefits, day-to-day efficiencies and quality of experience, combined with citizens' growing **preference** for digital government interactions, it's clear where agencies should focus.

The technology for better digital engagement is already here. Let's put it to work for everyone who uses government services.

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