



# THE SILENT CITIZEN: MEASURING SATISFACTION OF EVERY VOICE

## ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

October 23, 2012

Commentary and Analysis by:  
Dave Lewan, Vice President of Sales, ForeSee

Larry Freed, President and CEO, ForeSee

Research by:  
Rhonda Berg, Research Manager, ForeSee



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This quarter's report on the American Customer Satisfaction Index E-Government Satisfaction Index has two parts:

- > Part 1: Feedback vs. Measurement: Listen to the Silent Majority
- > Part 2: Citizen Satisfaction: A quarterly update on citizen satisfaction with e-government at the aggregate level, including individual satisfaction scores for the 106 federal government sites participating in the Index.

### PART ONE:

## FEEDBACK VS. MEASUREMENT: LISTEN TO THE SILENT MAJORITY

One of the things that the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Gov Satisfaction Index continues to demonstrate every quarter is that people prefer to interact with their government online versus traditional means. It is often easier and more convenient for them to do so. While it's true many citizens complain about their experiences in dealing with the government, especially with the presidential elections right around the corner, ForeSee data demonstrates that frustration is less often true in the online realm.

This is great news since online service is the more cost-effective route for budget-conscious government entities to travel over other avenues of citizen engagement such as contact center and branch offices. In order for these agencies and departments to experience the cost-saving benefits they need to drive citizens to their online experience and ensure future participation, recommendations, return visits, trust, and use of the site as a primary resource. This establishes the need to meet and exceed the citizens' online wants, needs, and expectations so they start and continue to engage online with the agencies.

What it comes down to is finding the proper measuring technology to deliver intelligent information that allows directors and managers to make the right decisions that will improve their entities' status with the American people and earn the necessary funding to excel.

Herein lies the problem. There sometimes is a misconception about asking citizens to provide feedback through an opt-in mechanism and measuring the actual customer experience. There is actually a critical difference between feedback and measurement, and it really comes down to being reactive vs. proactive.

Feedback is necessary and important and can do some good because it offers something to react to (broken links, missing items, missing pages, etc.) – things you can, and should, act on. However, it's easier to react to complaints than it is to proactively identify and measure big-picture needs.

ForeSee data consistently illustrates that people are more likely to speak up by seeking out a feedback mechanism when they have a bad experience, less likely to do so when they have a great experience, and hardly ever when they're somewhere in the middle.

This means there's a silent majority whose voice is going unheard. This expansive group can quietly undermine an organization's online performance if their expectations and needs – the basis of customer satisfaction analytics – are not met.

Feedback can certainly identify a lot of minor problems and perhaps some major ones, but the biggest hurdle is trying to use feedback (and feedback alone) to manage priorities. It then becomes a matter of managing to the ends of the spectrum where the angry squeaky wheels and diehard loyalists start dictating strategies rather than the middle – the masses. On the other hand, those voices, if listened to, can direct agency leaders to make informed decisions that will make them more citizen-centric.

Being proactive is essential if government agencies want to get ahead. If they wait for feedback to determine where to focus their priorities, there's a risk of losing engagement with and trust of citizens because their expectations and needs were not met.

Good citizen research must randomly intercept users to create a more representative sample of the entire visitor base than simple feedback mechanisms can provide – not just the disengaged and the super happy but those in between – at the right time with the right survey. This helps determine, strategically and tactically, where to focus improvements to move forward by applying resources to the right areas that will make the biggest impact.

Having a scientific and predictive survey technology is an essential step in measuring the citizen experience. It is critical to:

- > Take steps to ensure that recipients of the survey are as representative as possible. This is the first step toward having a useful system of metrics.
- > Understand what drives citizen satisfaction and what is likely to result from the online experience (participate in the future, use as a primary source, trust, return, recommend, etc.) is even more vital than having just descriptive information such as demographics.

- > Understand the relationship between the drivers of satisfaction, overall satisfaction, future behaviors, and financial success. It is great to understand what happened yesterday and what is happening today, but it's essential to know what improvements to make - and what impact it is likely to have on tomorrow's success. This is not an easy task, but it is the key to turning voice of citizen into actionable information.
- > Rely on a proven analytical methodology. ForeSee uses the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) as a cornerstone for customer satisfaction and builds on it to give e-government agencies the actionable insights needed to succeed.
- > Follow **ForeSee's 5 Rs** when building your online survey strategy. Be: Respectful, Relevant, Real, Results Oriented, and Random.

With more and more satisfaction "methodologies" sprouting up every day, it is important to keep in mind that simple, single-item measures lack the reliability and sensitivity for making improvements that multi-item measures can accommodate for. Although single-question survey tactics are easy and simple to implement and administer, they are not suitable for measuring multifaceted attitudinal constructs needed to make real improvements on citizen's experiences.

Using a credible, reliable, precise, accurate, actionable, and predictive methodology can show agency managers how their digital channels are performing in the eyes of citizens. Better yet, it prescribes where improvements should be made and illustrates the likely outcomes those improvements will yield before limited time, money, and resources are allocated to those efforts.

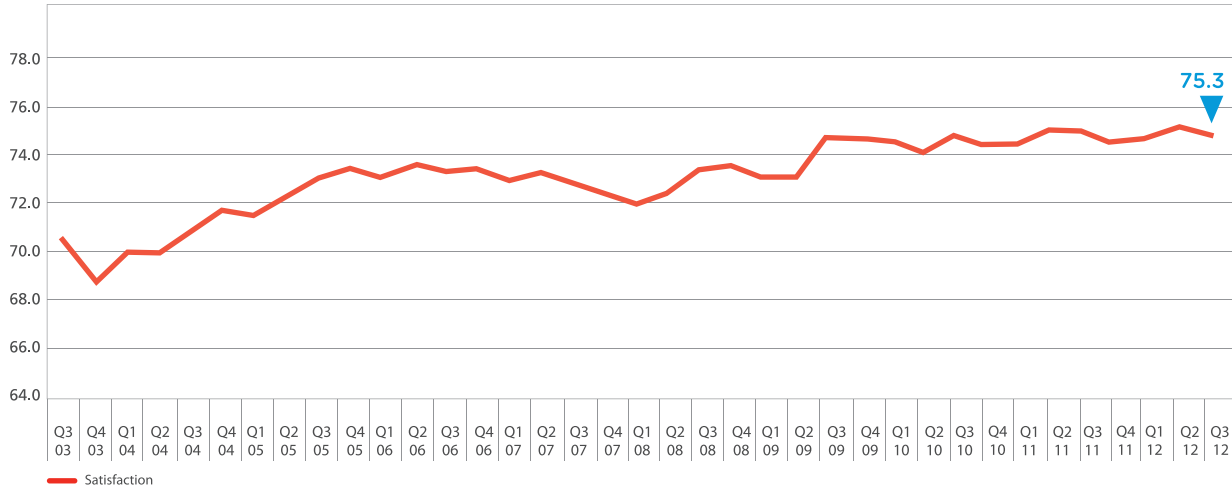
In these tough economic times, rattled with stringent budgets and fragile citizen sentiment, it's imperative for federal government agencies to measure, measure correctly, and to measure continuously with a proven analytics methodology to gain the actionable insights needed to improve and succeed in the eyes of the American people.

## PART TWO:

### SATISFACTION WITH E-GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO CLIMB

The ForeSee E-Government Satisfaction Index is a comprehensive reflection of the citizen experience with federal government websites and it serves as a critical checkpoint for evaluating the success and performance of the

federal government’s online initiatives. Almost 300,000 responses were collected for this third quarter Index. This demonstrates that citizens are willing and able to provide feedback to government websites to help agencies and departments, with the use of ForeSee’s technology, to determine which site improvements will have the greatest impact on future usage and recommendations.



After reaching an all-time high of 75.6 in Q2 2012, the aggregate satisfaction score registered a slight dip this quarter, posting a 75.3 to match its 2010 Q3 score. Despite the slight decline, citizen satisfaction has been at 75 or higher for 12 out of the last 13 quarters. Below is a 10-year historical look at Q3 satisfaction scores.

Q3 Satisfaction Scores Over Time	
Year	Sat
2012	75.3
2011	75.5
2010	75.3
2009	75.2
2008	73.9
2007	73.3
2006	73.7
2005	73.5
2004	71.2
2003	70.9

Government agencies have a responsibility to the public to be fiscally responsible by using taxpayers’ money as wisely as possible. The use of ACSI technology has proven there are definite cost savings associated with offering a highly satisfying website experience. Therefore, government agencies need to maintain the highest online standards by meeting or exceeding citizen expectations, wants, and needs. Federal websites that are already successfully meeting their users’ needs should take note of their achievements without letting their guard down. As people’s expectations constantly change, agencies need to continuously look for new ways to improve the citizen experience in order to increase their likelihood to participate with government in the future, use their sites as a primary resource (rather than costlier channels), and recommend the site to others.



## Q3 2012 ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

The following table displays scores for all 106 participating federal websites in the E-Gov Satisfaction Index. In later pages of the commentary, scores are shown by category for more specific benchmarking purposes.

ForeSee measures satisfaction across multiple channels. Every year, we measure customer satisfaction with the top 100 retail websites by revenue, allowing us to compare satisfaction between some companies' websites and mobile experiences. While Amazon leads both indices in terms of satisfaction, the company also has the largest score gap (5 points) between the two channels in favor of web. Even leaders may have some work to do to get their mobile satisfaction on par with their web experience. The problem is that most consumers don't understand the fundamental differences between a traditional website and a mobile-optimized site. The truth is, they don't care either. They expect a seamless experience between the two channels.

As more people adopt mobile as their preferred way to engage companies, will we see Amazon's mobile score slide? Amazon and other retailers that offer mobile experiences need to gauge their mobile performance from the customer's point of view to better understand what their mobile expectations, needs, and wants are.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, retailers' mobile experiences can outperform the web. Sears has a two-point difference in favor of mobile. This may mean that they are doing something especially well with their mobile initiative and that the success can be translated to the web.

**The Following Table Shows the Difference Between Mobile and Web Satisfaction for the Top 20**

Department	Website	Q3 2012
SSA	SSA iClaim -- socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	92
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator -- ssa.gov/estimator	91
SSA	Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs -- socialsecurity.gov/i1020	89
HHS	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website -- nhlbi.nih.gov	88
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center -- uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship	87
HHS	MedlinePlus en español -- medlineplus.gov/esp	87
HHS	MedlinePlus -- medlineplus.gov	87
HHS	HHS Healthy People -- Healthypeople.gov	85
SSA	SSA Electronic Access/Online Statement -- ssa.gov/mystatement	85

The Following Table Shows the Difference Between Mobile and Web Satisfaction for the Top 20 (continued)

Department	Website	Q3 2012
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Español -- <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es</a>	85
Boards, Commissions, Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission -- <a href="http://abmc.gov">abmc.gov</a>	84
SSA	Social Security Internet Disability Report -- <a href="http://ssa.gov/applyfordisability">ssa.gov/applyfordisability</a>	84
HHS	Girls Health -- <a href="http://girlshealth.gov">girlshealth.gov</a>	84
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online -- <a href="http://ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm">ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm</a>	84
FTC	FTC Complaint Assistant website -- <a href="http://ftccomplaintassistant.gov">ftccomplaintassistant.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español -- <a href="http://cancer.gov/espanol">cancer.gov/espanol</a>	83
HHS	National Library of Medicine AIDS information -- <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov">aidsinfo.nih.gov</a>	83
HHS	NIDDK -- <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov">www2.niddk.nih.gov</a>	83
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services -- <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis</a>	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website -- <a href="http://cancer.gov">cancer.gov</a>	82
PBGC	MyPBA -- <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba</a>	82
CIA	Recruitment website -- <a href="http://cia.gov/careers">cia.gov/careers</a>	82
HHS	CDC main website -- <a href="http://cdc.gov">cdc.gov</a>	82
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website -- <a href="http://womenshealth.gov">womenshealth.gov</a>	82
HHS	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange -- <a href="http://innovations.ahrq.gov">innovations.ahrq.gov</a>	82
NASA	NASA main website -- <a href="http://nasa.gov">nasa.gov</a>	82
PBGC	MyPAA -- <a href="https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa">https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa</a>	82
DOC	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website -- <a href="http://ngs.noaa.gov">ngs.noaa.gov</a>	82
DOS	Recruitment website -- <a href="http://careers.state.gov">careers.state.gov</a>	82
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website -- <a href="http://usmint.gov">usmint.gov</a>	81
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency Ready Campaign -- <a href="http://ready.gov">ready.gov</a>	81
DOJ	FBI main website -- <a href="http://fbi.gov">fbi.gov</a>	81
DOD	Pentagon Channel -- <a href="http://pentagonchannel.mil">pentagonchannel.mil</a>	81
HHS	AHRQ Effective Health Care Program -- <a href="http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov">effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov</a>	80
HHS	NIAMS public website -- <a href="http://niams.nih.gov">niams.nih.gov</a>	80
DOJ	National Institute of Justice -- <a href="http://nij.gov">nij.gov</a>	80
DOD	DoD Air Force -- <a href="http://af.mil">af.mil</a>	80
HHS	SAMHSA Store -- <a href="http://store.samhsa.gov">store.samhsa.gov</a>	80
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality -- <a href="http://ahrq.gov">ahrq.gov</a>	80
DOD	DoD Navy -- <a href="http://navy.mil">navy.mil</a>	80
FTC	FTC OnGuardOnline -- <a href="http://onguardonline.gov">onguardonline.gov</a>	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website -- <a href="http://nlm.nih.gov">nlm.nih.gov</a>	79
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services -- <a href="http://uscis.gov/e-verify">uscis.gov/e-verify</a>	79
DOD	Department of Defense portal -- <a href="http://defense.gov">defense.gov</a>	79
HHS	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development -- <a href="http://nichd.nih.gov">nichd.nih.gov</a>	78
DOL	Department of Labor Job Listings -- <a href="http://doors.dol.gov">doors.dol.gov</a>	78
DOI	National Park Service main website -- <a href="http://nps.gov">nps.gov</a>	78
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research -- <a href="http://nidcr.nih.gov">nidcr.nih.gov</a>	77

**The Following Table Shows the Difference Between Mobile and Web Satisfaction for the Top 20 (continued)**

Department	Website	Q3 2012
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics -- bls.gov	77
GAO	GAO main public website -- gao.gov	77
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs alumni website -- https://alumni.state.gov	77
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs -- travel.state.gov	76
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration -- faa.gov	76
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases -- www3.niaid.nih.gov	76
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs exchanges website -- exchanges.state.gov	76
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website -- nrc.gov	75
USDA	Recreation One-Stop -- recreation.gov	75
HHS	AHRQ National Guideline Clearinghouse -- guideline.gov	75
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website -- nist.gov	74
HHS	SAMHSA website -- samhsa.gov	74
GSA	GSA main website -- gsa.gov	74
SBA	SBA main website -- sba.gov	74
Treasury	Making Home Affordable -- makinghomeaffordable.gov	74
DOS	Department of State blog website -- blogs.state.gov	74
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation -- fhwa.dot.gov	74
HHS	HHS National Health Information Center -- Healthfinder.gov	73
HHS	National Library of Medicine Clinical Trials website -- clinicaltrials.gov	73
OPM	Recruitment website -- usajobs.gov	72
NARA	NARA main public website -- archives.gov	72
DOS	Department of State main website -- state.gov	72
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website -- hrsa.gov	72
USDA	FAS main website -- fas.usda.gov	72
FDIC	FDIC main website -- fdic.gov	71
USDA	ERS main website -- ers.usda.gov	71
VA	VA Main website -- va.gov and myhealthva.gov	71
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website -- pbgc.gov	71
FTC	FTC main website -- ftc.gov	71
SSA	Social Security Online (Main Website) -- socialsecurity.gov	71
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website -- usitc.gov	70
USDA	FSIS main website -- fsis.usda.gov	70
SSA	Social Security Online: Frequently Asked Questions -- ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	70
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website -- fda.gov	70
GSA	GSA Auctions -- gsaauctions.gov	69
FDIC	FDIC Applications -- www2.fdic.gov	69
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -- epa.gov	69
DHS	Department of Homeland Security main website -- dhs.gov	69
Treasury	Financial Stability -- financialstability.gov	69
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey -- usgs.gov	67



The Following Table Shows the Difference Between Mobile and Web Satisfaction for the Top 20 (continued)

Department	Website	Q3 2012
DOC	BEA main website -- bea.gov	67
OPM	OPM Veterans Employment website -- fedshirevets.gov	67
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website -- fra.dot.gov	67
Treasury	IRS main website -- irs.gov	66
Treasury	USTTB website -- ttb.gov	65
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website -- rita.dot.gov	64
USDA	NRCS website -- nrcs.usda.gov	64
Treasury	Treasury main website -- treasury.gov	64
DOD	TRICARE -- tricare.mil	63
DOL	Disability -- Disability.gov	63
GSA	Official Site to Buy U.S. Government Property -- govsales.gov	63
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website -- www.census.gov	62
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website -- fmcsa.dot.gov	62
USDA	Forest Service main website -- fs.usda.gov	61
HHS	HHS -- grants.gov	60
GSA	General Services Administration GSAXcess -- gsaccess.gov	60
Treasury	TreasuryDirect -- treasurydirect.gov	51
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency main website -- fema.gov	51



## SATISFACTION BY FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY:

### PERENNIAL LEADER E-COMMERCE/TRANSACTIONAL SITES LEAD THE INDEX

In this report, federal government websites are organized by both functional category and organizational structure, allowing for benchmarking against peers. The functional categories include:

- > News and Information websites
- > Portals and Department main websites
- > E-commerce and Transactional websites
- > Career and Recruitment websites

It is useful for a government website to benchmark its score against others in the same category rather than against the overall aggregate average, since missions can vary greatly by category. It should be noted that because there are only four sites measured in the Career and Recruitment category, they are not included in the benchmark aggregate scores with the other categories. In order to provide the most accurate and precise data

that is the ForeSee standard, it is required that there be at the very least five entities in the category. However, we do list this category sites' individual scores at the end of this section.

## AGENCY/DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM SATISFACTION SCORES BY CATEGORY

Satisfaction Scores by Category									
Category	Q3 2004	Q3 2005	Q3 2006	Q3 2007	Q3 2008	Q3 2009	Q3 2010	Q3 2011	Q3 2012
E-commerce/Transactional	69	72	75	75	78	82	81	79	78
News/Information	71	73	73	73	73	74	75	75	75
Portals/Department Main Sites	71	74	75	73	74	76	75	75	74



## E-GOVERNMENT MAKES GAINS AGAINST PRIVATE SECTOR

Federal government websites have long lagged their private sector counterparts in customer satisfaction, but a recent slide for the E-Business sector breaks the trend. Private sector e-Business scored 74.2 in the ACSI annual report on the sector in July 2012. E-government is still far behind private sector E-Commerce, which scored 80.1 in the E-Commerce annual report published in February 2012.

Federal news and information websites score 3% better in aggregate than the news and information category (75 vs. 73) of the ACSI E-Business report. Meanwhile, e-government portals and department main sites lag the private sector measure of portals and search engines by 6% (74 vs. 79).

## FEDERAL E-COMMERCE/TRANSACTIONAL SITES

E-commerce/Transactional sites remain at the top of the list, with a 78 – the same as last quarter but a one-point drop from a year ago – with a range of 92-51. The Social Security Administration continues to set the bar high with six entities leading this chart. Two of the sites score in the 90s, which outdoes every top-performing private sector e-commerce site measured by the ACSI, including Amazon, with the private sector top performers scoring between 84 and 89.

The biggest improvement in this category was TreasuryDirect (treasurydirect.gov), which witnessed a six-point gain – the largest in the index – to 51. Although it's not a great score, and they have a long way to go before they truly excel at meeting citizen expectations, it is a positive sign that they are headed in the right direction.

The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 16 of the federal government department sites in this category.

E-Commerce/Transactional Federal Websites		
Department	Website	Q3 2012 Satisfaction Score
SSA	SSA iClaim -- socialsecurity.gov/applyonline	92
SSA	SSA Retirement Estimator -- ssa.gov/estimator	91
SSA	Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs -- socialsecurity.gov/i1020	89
SSA	SSA Electronic Access/Online Statement -- ssa.gov/mystatement	85
SSA	Social Security Internet Disability Report -- ssa.gov/applyfordisability	84
SSA	Social Security Business Services Online -- ssa.gov/bso/bsowelcome.htm	84
FTC	FTC Complaint Assistant website -- ftccomplaintassistant.gov	83
PBGC	MyPBA -- https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypba	82
PBGC	MyPAA -- https://egov.pbgc.gov/mypaa	82
Treasury	U.S. Mint Online Catalog and main website -- usmint.gov	81
HHS	SAMHSA Store -- store.samhsa.gov	80
USDA	Recreation One-Stop -- recreation.gov	75
GSA	GSA Auctions -- gsaauctions.gov	69
GSA	Official Site to Buy U.S. Government Property -- govsales.gov	63
GSA	General Services Administration GSAXcess -- gsaccess.gov	60
Treasury	TreasuryDirect -- treasurydirect.gov	51



## FEDERAL E-COMMERCE/TRANSACTIONAL SITES

The news/information aggregate category score is 75 – one point down from last quarter but on par with its Q3 2011 satisfaction score – with an 87-60 range.

Twenty of this category’s sites are considered top performers (scoring 80 or higher). The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center shares the lead with both the English and Spanish versions of the MedlinePlus site with an 87 (a one-point increase for each of the MedlinePlus sites).

The American Battle Monuments Commission (abmc.gov) and Financial Stability (financialstability.gov) join the index this quarter with 84 and 69, respectively.

The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 53 of the federal government news and information sites.

News/Information Federal Websites		
Department	Website	Q3 2012 Satisfaction Score
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Resource Center -- <a href="http://uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship">uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/citizenship</a>	87
HHS	MedlinePlus en español -- <a href="http://medlineplus.gov/esp">medlineplus.gov/esp</a>	87
HHS	MedlinePlus -- <a href="http://medlineplus.gov">medlineplus.gov</a>	87
HHS	HHS Healthy People -- <a href="http://Healthypeople.gov">Healthypeople.gov</a>	85
Boards, Commissions, Committees	American Battle Monuments Commission -- <a href="http://abmc.gov">abmc.gov</a>	84
HHS	Girls Health -- <a href="http://girlshealth.gov">girlshealth.gov</a>	84
HHS	National Cancer Institute Site en Español -- <a href="http://cancer.gov/espanol">cancer.gov/espanol</a>	83
HHS	National Library of Medicine AIDS information -- <a href="http://aidsinfo.nih.gov">aidsinfo.nih.gov</a>	83
HHS	NIDDK -- <a href="http://www2.niddk.nih.gov">www2.niddk.nih.gov</a>	83
HHS	National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) main website -- <a href="http://womenshealth.gov">womenshealth.gov</a>	82
HHS	AHRQ Health Care Innovations Exchange -- <a href="http://innovations.ahrq.gov">innovations.ahrq.gov</a>	82
DOC	National Geodetic Society, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website -- <a href="http://ngs.noaa.gov">ngs.noaa.gov</a>	82
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency Ready Campaign -- <a href="http://ready.gov">ready.gov</a>	81
DOD	Pentagon Channel -- <a href="http://pentagonchannel.mil">pentagonchannel.mil</a>	81
HHS	AHRQ Effective Health Care Program -- <a href="http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov">effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov</a>	80
DOJ	National Institute of Justice -- <a href="http://nij.gov">nij.gov</a>	80
DOD	DoD Air Force -- <a href="http://af.mil">af.mil</a>	80
HHS	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality -- <a href="http://ahrq.gov">ahrq.gov</a>	80
DOD	DoD Navy -- <a href="http://navy.mil">navy.mil</a>	80
FTC	FTC OnGuardOnline -- <a href="http://onguardonline.gov">onguardonline.gov</a>	80
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services -- <a href="http://uscis.gov/e-verify">uscis.gov/e-verify</a>	79
HHS	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development -- <a href="http://nichd.nih.gov">nichd.nih.gov</a>	78
DOL	Bureau of Labor Statistics -- <a href="http://bls.gov">bls.gov</a>	77
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs alumni website -- <a href="https://alumni.state.gov">https://alumni.state.gov</a>	77
DOS	Bureau of Consular Affairs -- <a href="http://travel.state.gov">travel.state.gov</a>	76
DOT	Federal Aviation Administration -- <a href="http://faa.gov">faa.gov</a>	76
HHS	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases -- <a href="http://www3.niaid.nih.gov">www3.niaid.nih.gov</a>	76
DOS	U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs exchanges website -- <a href="http://exchanges.state.gov">exchanges.state.gov</a>	76
NRC	U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission website -- <a href="http://nrc.gov">nrc.gov</a>	75
HHS	AHRQ National Guideline Clearinghouse -- <a href="http://guideline.gov">guideline.gov</a>	75
Treasury	Making Home Affordable -- <a href="http://makinghomeaffordable.gov">makinghomeaffordable.gov</a>	74
DOS	Department of State blog website -- <a href="http://blogs.state.gov">blogs.state.gov</a>	74

**News/Information Federal Websites (continued)**

Department	Website	Q3 2012 Satisfaction Score
DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation -- fhwa.dot.gov	74
HHS	HHS National Health Information Center -- Healthfinder.gov	73
HHS	National Library of Medicine Clinical Trials website -- clinicaltrials.gov	73
HHS	Health Resources and Services Administration main website -- hrsa.gov	72
USDA	FAS main website -- fas.usda.gov	72
USDA	ERS main website -- ers.usda.gov	71
USDA	FSIS main website -- fsis.usda.gov	70
SSA	Social Security Online: Frequently Asked Questions -- ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov	70
FDIC	FDIC Applications -- www2.fdic.gov	69
Treasury	Financial Stability -- financialstability.gov	69
DOI	U.S. Geological Survey -- usgs.gov	67
DOC	BEA main website -- bea.gov	67
OPM	OPM Veterans Employment website -- fedshirevets.gov	67
Treasury	USTTB website -- ttb.gov	65
DOT	DOT Research and Innovative Technology Administration website -- rita.dot.gov	64
USDA	NRCS website -- nrcs.usda.gov	64
DOD	TRICARE -- tricare.mil	63
DOC	U.S. Census Bureau main website -- www.census.gov	62
DOT	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration main website -- fmcsa.dot.gov	62
USDA	Forest Service main website -- fs.usda.gov	61
HHS	HHS -- grants.gov	60



**FEDERAL PORTALS/DEPARTMENT MAIN SITES**

The portals/department main sites category scored a 74 for three consecutive quarters. This quarter’s website satisfaction scores range from 88-51. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website increased its citizen satisfaction by one point (87) to lead the pack. The NARA main public website (archives.gov) saw one of the biggest increases in citizen satisfaction this quarter – up five points to 72. However, with eight sites in the category scoring 80 or higher (the threshold for excellence) there’s still plenty of room for the NARA site to improve.

The FTC main website (ftc.gov) enters the index this quarter with a citizen satisfaction score of 71. The following chart shows the citizen satisfaction scores for all 33 of the federal government department sites in this category.

Federal Portals/Department Main Sites		
Department	Website	Q3 2012 Satisfaction Score
HHS	National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute website -- nhlbi.nih.gov	88
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Español -- uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis-es	85
DHS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services -- uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis	83
HHS	National Cancer Institute main website -- cancer.gov	82
HHS	CDC main website -- cdc.gov	82
NASA	NASA main website -- nasa.gov	82
DOJ	FBI main website -- fbi.gov	81
HHS	NIAMS public website -- niams.nih.gov	80
HHS	National Library of Medicine main website -- nlm.nih.gov	79
DOD	Department of Defense portal -- defense.gov	79
DOI	National Park Service main website -- nps.gov	78
HHS	National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research -- nidcr.nih.gov	77
GAO	GAO main public website -- gao.gov	77
NIST	National Institute for Standards and Technology main website -- nist.gov	74
HHS	SAMHSA website -- samhsa.gov	74
GSA	GSA main website -- gsa.gov	74
SBA	SBA main website -- sba.gov	74
NARA	NARA main public website -- archives.gov	72
DOS	Department of State main website -- state.gov	72
FDIC	FDIC main website -- fdic.gov	71
VA	VA Main website -- va.gov and myhealthva.gov	71
PBGC	U.S. PBGC main website -- pbgc.gov	71
FTC	FTC main website -- ftc.gov	71
SSA	Social Security Online main website -- socialsecurity.gov	71
ITC	U.S. International Trade Commission main website -- usitc.gov	70
HHS	U.S. Food and Drug Administration main website -- fda.gov	70
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -- epa.gov	69
DHS	Department of Homeland Security main website -- dhs.gov	69
DOT	Federal Railroad Administration main website -- fra.dot.gov	67
Treasury	IRS main website -- irs.gov	66
Treasury	Treasury main website -- treasury.gov	64
DOL	Disability -- Disability.gov	63
DHS	Federal Emergency Management Agency main website -- fema.gov	51



## FEDERAL CAREER/RECRUITMENT SITES

Among the four measured career websites, there was little movement compared to last quarter, but Usajobs.gov saw a two-point increase.

**Career/Recruitment Federal Websites**

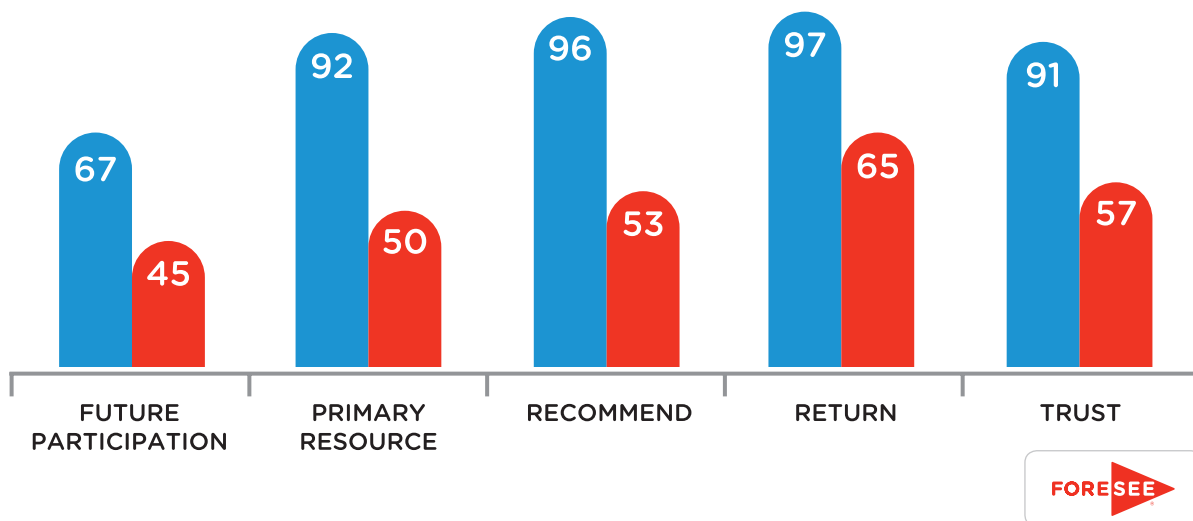
Department	Website	Q3 2012 Satisfaction Score
CIA	Recruitment website -- cia.gov/careers	82
DOS	Recruitment website -- careers.state.gov	82
DOL	Department of Labor Job Listings -- doors.dol.gov	78
OPM	Recruitment website -- usajobs.gov	72



## WHY SATISFACTION MATTERS?

Satisfaction, as measured using the ForeSee methodology, has been shown to have a direct impact on behavior. If federal government agencies focus on improving their websites' priority areas, citizen satisfaction with the sites should also improve.

Every quarter in this index we compare less satisfied visitors (with satisfaction scores 69 or less) to highly satisfied website visitors (with satisfaction scores of 80 or higher) to produce likelihood scores of what citizens will do in the future such as participate again, use the site as a primary resource, recommend to others, return to the site, and trust the agency. Below is a graph that shows the range of satisfaction for each measured future behavior.



Based on likelihood scores, citizens who are highly satisfied with a federal government website rate their trust in the agency 60% higher. Satisfied citizens also report being 49% more likely to participate in government by expressing their thoughts to the agency than citizens who are less satisfied.

Highly satisfied citizens (scores of 80+) report being...	Direct Benefit
49% more likely to participate with the government entity in the future.	Citizens are more likely to participate with and express their thoughts to their government, which strengthens the democratic process.
60% higher ratings of trust in the government entity being measured.	Citizens believe the agency is trustworthy and acting in their best interests, which fosters faith in the democratic process.
Satisfaction also increases the likelihood that the citizen will return to the website again (49%), use it as a primary resource (84%) as opposed to utilizing more costly channels, or recommend the site to others (81%).	
Highly satisfied citizens (scores of 80+) report being...	Direct Benefit
84% more likely to use the federal website as a primary channel for interaction with the government.	When citizens use a website to get information or services instead of using an office, call center, or postal mail, it saves the government money on personnel, printed materials, and postage. Estimates indicate that hundreds of millions of dollars are being saved on postage alone.
49% more likely to return to the website again.	
81% more likely to recommend the site to a friend, family member, or colleague.	



These figures illustrate how vital it is to measure the citizen experience and proves that the results produced by the ForeSee methodology are more than just numbers. The information here demonstrates technology-driven customer satisfaction analytics, when done right, can predict site visitors' future behaviors and the data-driven findings can guide agencies to make improvements that will increase desired citizen behaviors.

High customer satisfaction is clearly important for federal websites, but how do we increase it?

The federal websites that are using ForeSee to measure citizen satisfaction also measure a number of website elements, or drivers of satisfaction. Although there are variations in the set of elements that are relevant to each site, the most common elements are:

- > Look and Feel: The visual appeal of the site and its consistency throughout the site.
- > Navigation: The organization of the site and options for navigation.
- > Site Performance: The speed, consistency, and error-free loading of pages on the website.



- > Content: Perceptions of the accuracy, quality, and freshness of information on the website.
- > Search: The relevance, organization, and quality of search results available on the site.
- > Functionality: The usefulness, convenient placement, and variety of online features and tools available on the website.
- > Online Transparency: How thoroughly and quickly the website discloses information about what the agency is doing, and how accessible agency information is to citizens.

By measuring these elements, agencies can pinpoint and prioritize areas of improvement from the citizens' perspective leading to increased satisfaction. If federal websites fail to scientifically measure and analyze the results, they will have a hard time making the changes that will enhance their value and usefulness to citizens in a cost-effective manner.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dave Lewan manages ForeSee's sales organization focused on the public sector, including government departments and agencies, non-profit organizations, and higher education institutions. He leads ForeSee's continuing expansion in these markets to help organizations measure and manage satisfaction of their website visitors. Dave brings more than 20 years of experience with sales, leadership, online strategy, technology, and consulting. Most recently, he served as vice president of product marketing and management at Gevity HR, where he served as the primary leadership and planning force for Gevity's product and solutions strategy. Dave graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Speech Communications

As President and CEO of ForeSee, Larry is responsible for managing the company's strategy and significant growth, since the company's founding in 2001. Larry brings more than 20 years of experience in senior management and in directing ForeSee's e-commerce and technology initiatives. An expert on the cross-channel customer experience and author of *Managing Forward: How to Move From Measuring the Past to Managing the Future*, Larry speaks extensively on the topic at private and public sector industry events and has been quoted in numerous publications and media, including *CNN*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Investor's Business Weekly*, *Internet Retailer*, *Multichannel Merchant*, *DM News*, *Computerworld*, *Federal Computer Week*, and *Government Executive*, among many others.

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

Rhonda Berg, Research Manager at ForeSee, leads the research team that produces the quarterly E-Government Satisfaction Indices and the quarterly E-Government Transparency Indexes. She also serves as an internal consultant regarding statistics, methodology, and survey design. Rhonda has been a research professional for 20 years in a number of industries and holds advanced degrees in business and sociology.

## ABOUT THE ACSI E-GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION INDEX

The ACSI E-Government Satisfaction Index is a special quarterly report of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in partnership with customer experience analytics firm, ForeSee.

The ACSI, created at the University of Michigan, is the only uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States, both in the private and public sectors. In 1999, the federal government selected the ACSI to be a standard metric for measuring citizen satisfaction. More than 100 federal government agencies have used the ACSI to measure citizen satisfaction with more than 200 services and programs and more than 100 websites. The report on offline federal government services is released annually in December. The E-Government Index is released quarterly.

ForeSee collects and analyzes the data for the e-government websites included in the report. The ACSI e-government scores were calculated based on data gathered from voluntary online surveys of randomly selected site visitors. Each government website was rated by its visitors on various components of overall satisfaction. The ratings were converted to a score on a 100-point scale using the ACSI methodology.

The ACSI methodology identifies key drivers of online satisfaction (such as navigation, look and feel, search, site functionality, etc.) and quantifies their relationship to overall citizen satisfaction. This cause-and-effect methodology demonstrates the impact of website enhancements in these areas on overall customer satisfaction. In turn, customer satisfaction, as measured by the ACSI, has been proven to predict how citizens will behave in the future. Improvements to customer satisfaction will make citizens more likely to choose to interact with an agency online (the more cost-effective channel), return to the site, and recommend it to others. Monitoring and improving customer satisfaction has a tangible impact on citizen usage of the web channel and on the bottom line.

## ABOUT THE ACSI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is a national economic indicator of customer satisfaction with the quality of products and services available to U.S. consumers. It is updated quarterly with new measures for differing sectors of the economy, building on the previous year's data. The overall ACSI score for a given quarter factors in scores from more than 200 companies in 44 industries and from government agencies over the previous four quarters. The Index was founded at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business and is produced by ACSI, LLC.

## ABOUT FORESEE

As a pioneer in customer experience analytics, ForeSee continuously measures satisfaction across customer touch points and delivers critical insights on where to prioritize improvements for maximum impact. Because ForeSee's superior technology and proven methodology connect the customer experience to the bottom line, executives and managers are able to drive future success by confidently optimizing the efforts that will achieve business and brand objectives. The result is better business for companies and a better experience for consumers. Visit [www.foresee.com](http://www.foresee.com) for customer experience solutions and original research.