Accenture Public Services Insights

Digital Government: Your Digital Citizens are Ready, Willing... and Waiting

High performance. Delivered.

Citizens are ready and willing to interact digitally with government. They are waiting for government agencies to make the experience simple, clear, secure and efficient. They want their transactions transparent and centered around their needs. And, if handled well, agencies will earn citizen engagement and trust.

The Accenture Public Services Pulse Survey reveals that citizens today are more engaged digitally than many in government assume.

THE CHALLENGE? Government has work to do to meet demand.

THE OPPORTUNITY? By focusing on the basics, government can bridge the gap between citizen expectations and reality.

Citizen demand... with plenty of room for improvement

Of the more than 1,000 citizens surveyed, 42 percent reported a majority of their government interactions were handled digitally.

But almost 9 in 10 (86 percent) want to maintain or increase their digital interactions.

At present, only one in four (27 percent) said they were satisfied. (See Figure 1.)

Contrary to what some might think, neither technology nor age are significant factors in accessing government services as shown in Figure 2. While respondents across the age spectrum rely mainly upon computers for access, there is growing demand for other platforms as well.

What will it take to grow this opportunity for more digital interaction with government?

"What do you have?" and "How do I reach you?"

More than half (51 percent) of those surveyed, cited a lack of awareness as the key factor preventing them from using government digital services (more than technology or privacy issues). In fact, one third (31 percent) said awareness was the single most important improvement government could make to increase satisfaction. (And as we'll see, getting questions answered definitively online was ranked a top priority by 91%.)

User expectations. Good news?

As Figure 3 shows, when it comes to quality and privacy issues in using government websites, citizens hold government to the same standards as commercial websites. More than 70 percent have the same or higher expectations for government digital services.

When it came to usability of government digital services, 54 percent of citizens cited "poor website organization" as the greatest obstacle to using digital services, followed by 39 percent who cited inefficient search functionality as problematic. Another 37 percent identified poorly organized or dense information as problematic.

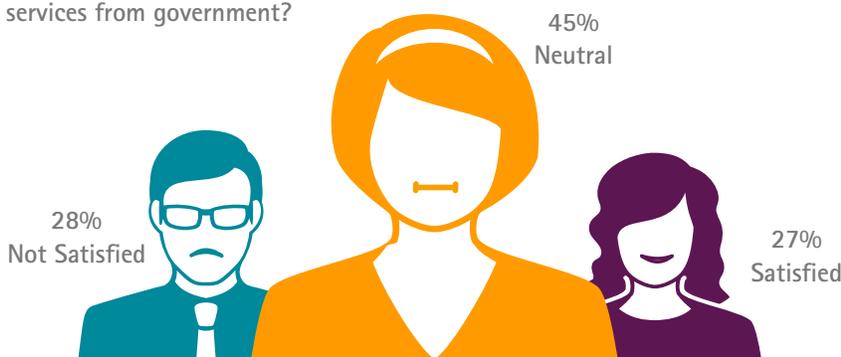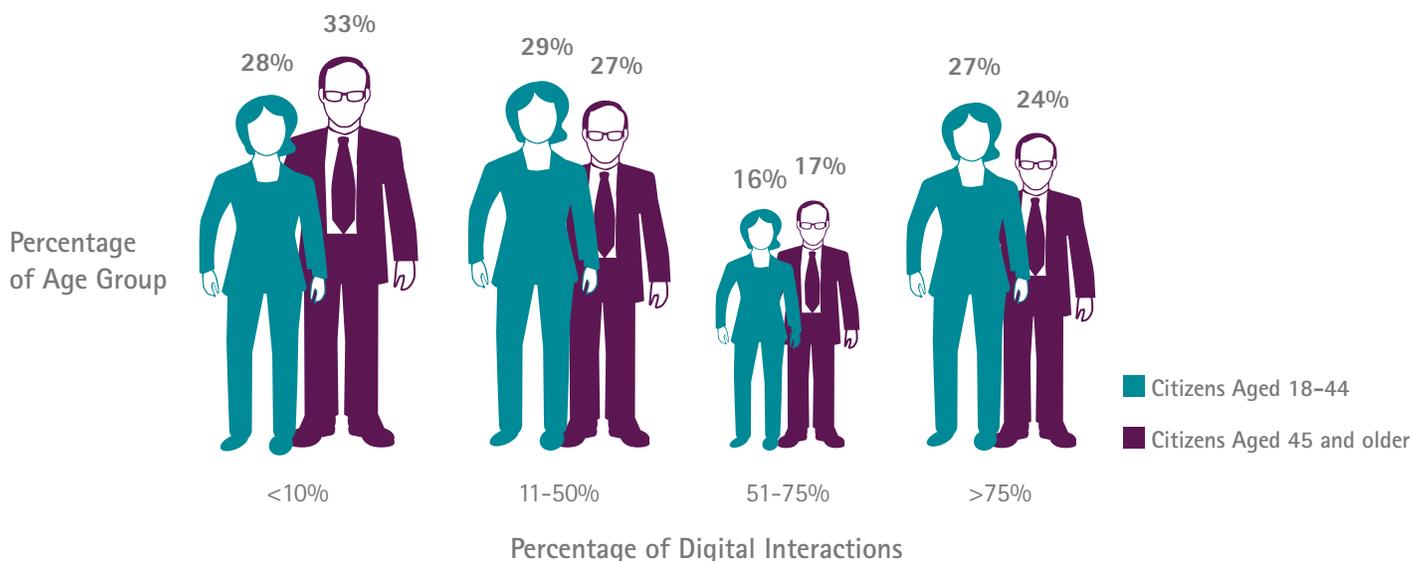Figure 1: How satisfied are you with digital services from government?

45%
Neutral

28%
Not Satisfied

27%
Satisfied

Figure 2: Of all your interactions with government, what percent are digital?

Percentage of Age Group

28%   33%   29%   27%   16%   17%   27%   24%

Citizens Aged 18–44
Citizens Aged 45 and older

<10%   11–50%   51–75%   >75%

Percentage of Digital Interactions

Getting back to basics

As Figure 4 shows, when asked "What is important to creating a positive experience when using digital services from government, the top demand (by 91 percent) was "Ability to get my questions answered definitively" closely followed by "Assurance of privacy and security".

More complex digital functionality, such as integration with social media, was the lowest ranked (at 20 percent).

Between those two ends of the user experience spectrum are other basic requirements, such as "being able to see the status of my request or activity" (79 percent).

Significantly, "Transactions" top the list of activities citizens would prefer to conduct digitally with government. The top three preferred transactions identified were:

- Apply for/renew licenses, registrations and permits
- Pay taxes
- Pay fines/tickets.

Figure 3: Are your quality expectations for government digital services higher, the same or lower than your expectations for commercial digital services?
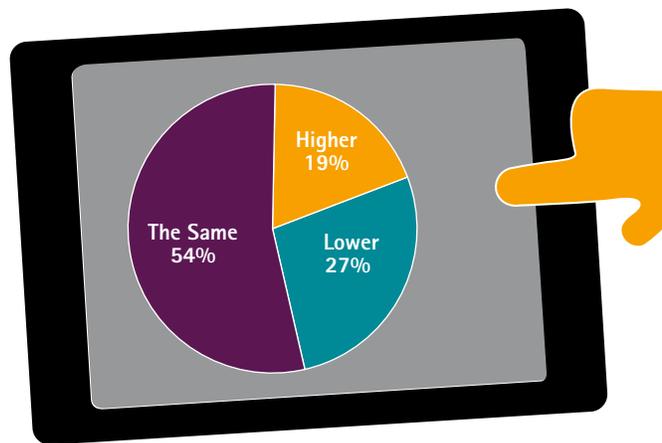
Higher 19%
The Same 54%
Lower 27%

Figure 4: What is important to creating a positive experience when using digital services from government?

Ability to get my questions answered definitively **91%**

Assurance of privacy and security **89%**

Be able to see the status of my request or activity **79%**

Information organized by my need or issue **69%**

Only have to provide information once **68%**

Online interactions similar to non-digital interactions **59%**

Be able to transition from a digital to a non-digital interaction **58%**

Receive recommendations and features tailored to me **40%**

Access to user comments/tips **31%**

Smartphone apps to access specific services/information **28%**

Integration with social media **20%**

Figure 5: Which of the following would change positively if government improved digital services?

My willingness to engage with government
72%

My belief that government is efficent and effective
70%

My overall satisfaction with government
72%

My confidence and trust in government
62%

My belief that government is forward looking
73%

Percentage of citizens answering 3 or higher on a 5-point scale where 1=No Change at All and 5=Extremely Positive Change
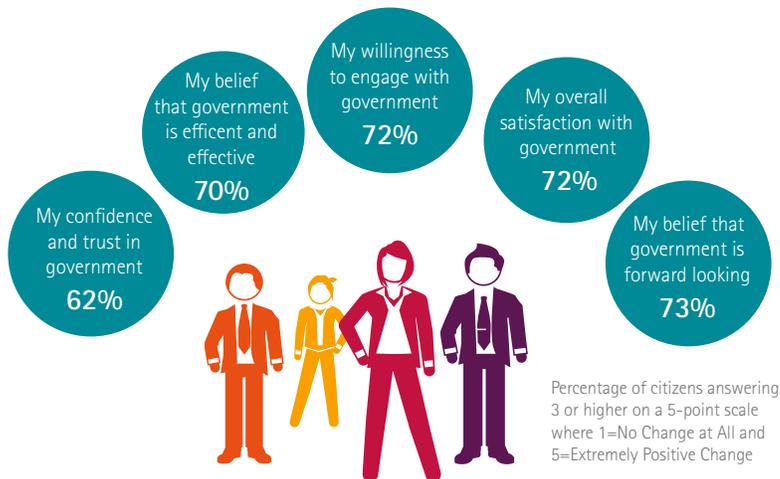
Conclusion: Why it matters

Overall, the Accenture Public Services Pulse Survey uncovered an opportunity for engaging with the digital citizen. Citizens are ready and willing to interact digitally with their governments. They are waiting for government agencies to make the experience simple, clear, secure and efficient. Done well, agencies will earn citizen engagement and trust.

As Figure 5 shows, nearly three-quarters of all citizens report that improvements in government digital services can positively impact their belief that government is "forward looking" and increase their satisfaction, which will, in turn, translate to greater engagement.

The opportunity is there. Your digital citizens are waiting.

Methodology

In November 2014, Accenture conducted a pulse survey of 1,095 U.S. voting-age citizens from across the country, ranging from 18 to 61 years of age. The survey was representative of the U.S. census.

At the same time a survey was conducted of 19 Public Service Leaders from 11 different states. Participating leaders included chief information and technology officers; administration, operations and human resources executives; budget and finance executives; and executives from agencies including Education, Health, and Human Services, and representing state, local and federal government.

For More Information

To learn more about the Accenture Public Services Pulse Survey or Accenture's offerings for state, local and federal government visit: www.accenture.com/PublicService

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