ACSI e-Government Satisfaction Up Slightly to Reach New High, According to ForeSee

President’s Digital Government Directive May Provide Necessary Push for Further Gains in Citizen Satisfaction with E-Government

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (July 24, 2012) – Citizens are happier than ever with government websites according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index, released today in partnership with customer analytics firm ForeSee. Citizen satisfaction with federal government websites climbs 0.7 percent to a new all-time high of 75.6 on ACSI’s 100-point scale.

Citizen satisfaction with e-government is significantly higher than with the overall federal government, which scored 66.9 in ACSI’s 2011 report on the federal government. The record high for e-gov satisfaction set this quarter is just 0.3 points below the National ACSI score, which is the average of all private companies measured by the ACSI.

Despite the high score, e-government still has room for gains. E-government satisfaction has not varied more than a half point in 11 of the last 12 quarters. Two important keys to improvement are outlined in President Obama’s recent memo Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People: mobile and measurement.

“Government needs to recognize the growing importance of mobile devices in our everyday lives. It makes perfect sense that federal agencies should meet the needs of its customers and optimize the customer experience across all platforms,” said Larry Freed, president and CEO of ForeSee. “But just as important is performance measurement to hold agencies accountable. By the measure of the ACSI, improving the mobile experience may be the only way for e-government satisfaction to climb from its current plateau.”

More than a third of federal websites measured in the E-Government Satisfaction Index score 80 or higher, the threshold for superior performance. Three websites from Social Security Administration top the list: iClaim website (92), Retirement Estimator website (90), and Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (90). Websites such as these are in the e-commerce/transactional category, which scores 78. News and information websites score 76 as a category, while portal/department main sites score 74.

“Customers already interact with friends, family, companies and brands on multiple platforms. As consumers access the web from mobile devices in greater numbers, it is natural for them to
expect to interact no differently with the government,” said Claes Fornell, founder of the ACSI. “The federal government needs to connect with its users on multiple platforms or risk alienating them.”

“There is so much innovation happening in the private sector around mobile and the federal government is playing catch up,” said Dave Lewan, vice president of public sector business at ForeSee. “The Digital Government initiative just may be the boost the public sector needs.”

Nearly 300,000 surveys were collected in the second quarter for the Index.

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. ForeSee is headquartered in Ann Arbor, MI and can be found online at www.foresee.com.

About ACSI
The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is a national economic indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of products and services available to household consumers in the United States. The ACSI uses data from interviews with roughly 70,000 customers annually as inputs to an econometric model for measuring satisfaction with more than 230 companies in 47 industries and 10 economic sectors, as well as over 100 services, programs, and websites of federal government agencies.

ACSI results are released on a monthly basis, with all measures reported using a scale of 0 to 100. ACSI data have proven to be strongly related to a number of essential indicators of micro and macroeconomic performance. For example, firms with higher levels of customer satisfaction tend to have higher earnings and stock returns relative to competitors. Stock portfolios based on companies that show strong performance in ACSI deliver excess returns in up markets as well as down markets. And, at the macro level, customer satisfaction has been shown to be predictive of both consumer spending and gross domestic product growth.

The Index was founded at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business and is produced by ACSI LLC and supported in part by ForeSee, corporate sponsor for the e-commerce, e-business, and e-government measurements.

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