High Satisfaction with E-Government Shows Value in Times of Deficits and Budget Cuts, According to ACSI and ForeSee

E-Government satisfaction remains near all-time high; Citizens are going mobile

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (February 6, 2013) – Citizen satisfaction with e-government remains near an all-time high and continues to outperform the satisfaction with the federal government overall, according to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) E-Government Satisfaction Index, released today in partnership with customer experience analytics firm ForeSee. The E-Government Satisfaction Index dips slightly to a 75 on the study’s 100-point scale from 75.3, which is far above the overall federal government score 68.4, reported in the annual measure of the federal government, also released today. At a time when deficits and fiscal woes dominate headlines, the study indicates that citizens prefer to interact with the government using the most cost-efficient channels available—web and mobile.

“Satisfaction drives behavior, and behavior should drive investment. The data show that citizens are more satisfied with the online channel, and the more satisfied they are, the more likely they are to use it,” reported Dave Lewan, Vice President at ForeSee and co-author of the e-government report. “Now that citizens are accessing government services using mobile devices in addition to the web, government initiatives should address the changing engagement landscape to ensure that citizens are satisfied with these cost-efficient channels.”

When compared to dissatisfied citizens, highly satisfied citizens are 92% more likely to use the federal website as a primary resource; 92% are more likely to recommend the site; 63% are more likely to put their trust behind the agency; 54% are more likely to return to the site; and 47% are more likely to participate with the government in the future.

This report is the first to look at how citizens interact with government via mobile devices or tablets. According to surveys collected in the fourth quarter of nearly 300,000 respondents, one in three citizens who accessed a federal government website did so using a mobile phone or tablet, and nearly half indicated that they might or plan to access a government site via their mobile device in the future.
“There is a huge opportunity for the federal government to provide fast access to information and services through mobile applications and websites, and it is worrisome that satisfaction with this growing channel is so far behind. Consumer adoption of smartphones and tablets is surging and the federal government is currently behind the curve,” said Larry Freed, President and CEO of ForeSee. “The key to capitalizing on a mobile development investment will be ensuring that the mobile application or website is meeting the citizens’ needs in both content and performance. The only way to find that out is by asking the citizens if they're getting what they want.”

Federal government websites have mixed results relative to the private sector. E-Government lags behind ACSI E-Commerce, which scored 80.1 in the E-Commerce annual report published in February 2012. However, it has an edge over ACSI E-Business, which scored 74.2 as reported in July 2012. The highest performing government websites outperform the highest scoring private sector site (Amazon.com at 86). Two websites from the Social Security Administration (SSA), Retirement Estimator (91) and iClaim (90) lead the Index with the top overall scores and have outperformed all other private sector companies measured by the ACSI. A third SSA site (Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs) scored a 90 in Q2 2012. These are the only three sites (public or private) to ever break out of the 80s into the 90s.

“Taxpayers are getting a better value through automated channels like websites and mobile. In addition to being more cost efficient, data suggest consumers prefer digital channels,” said Claes Fornell, founder of the ACSI. “Efficient provision of government services should appeal to federal agencies facing increasing budget pressure. In a landscape of evolving consumer behavior, agencies need to strike the right balance in their e-government investment strategies and wisely consider where to commit resources.”

In the fourth quarter report, 100 federal government websites are measured. A full set of scores and analysis can be found at www.ForeSee.com.

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 organization’s 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, Michigan 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 of 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, and all measures are 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 that of their competitors. Stock portfolios based on companies that show strong performance in ACSI deliver excess returns in both up and 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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