

**State and Federal E-Government  
in the United States, 2003**

by

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## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary

A Note on Methodology

Readability

Readability by State

Disability Access

Disability Access by State

Online Information

Services Provided

Services by State

Privacy and Security

Security by State

Privacy by State

Foreign Language Access

Ads, User Fees, and Premium Fees

Restricted Areas

Democratic Outreach

Email Responsiveness

Overall State E-Government Ranking

Overall Federal Agency E-Government Ranking

State-Federal Differences

Differences by Branch of Government

Differences by Agency Type

Conclusions

Appendix

Table A-1 Overall State E-Govt Ratings, 2002 and 2003

Table A-2 Overall Federal Agency E-Govt Ratings, 2002 and 2003

Table A-3 Individual State/Fed Profiles for Publications, Databases, and Foreign Language, 2003

Table A-4 Individual State/Fed Profiles for Ads, Premium Fees, Restricted Areas, User Fees, Services, and Readability, 2003

Table A-5 Individual State/Fed Profiles for Disability Access, Privacy, and Security, 2003

Table A-6 Best Practices of Top Federal and State Websites, 2003

## Executive Summary

This report presents the fourth annual update on the features that are available online through American state and federal government websites. Using a detailed analysis of 1,663 state and federal government sites, we measure what is online, what variations exist across the country as well as between state and national government sites, and how e-government sites respond to citizen requests for information. We examine the differences that exist across the 50 states and between the state and federal governments as well as compare the Summer, 2003 results to 2000, 2001, and 2002.

We use three new features in our study this year. First, we rely on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Readability test to evaluate the readability of government websites. With half of Americans reading at no higher than the 8th grade level, we wanted to determine how accessible government sites are to the citizenry. Second, we test actual disability accessibility using the "Bobby" evaluation software operated by Watchfire. Relying on both Section 508 and W3C Priority One Level guidelines, we examine every state and federal website for accessibility. Third, we look to see whether websites are accessible through any type of handheld device or personal digital assistant. This included mechanisms such as pagers, mobile phones, or other types of PDAs.

*Among the more important findings of the research are the following:*

- 1) 89 percent of government websites are not easily accessible to the citizenry because the sites read at higher than an eighth grade level of literacy. Fully two-thirds of all sites have language consistent with a 12th grade reading level, which is much higher than that of the average American.*
- 2) Only 34 percent of state and federal sites in the United States meet the W3C disability guidelines and only 24 percent satisfy Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Federal sites (47 percent) are more likely to meet the W3C standard than states (33 percent).*
- 3) The presence of online services has improved over the last year. This year, 44 percent of state and federal sites have services that are fully executable online, compared to 23 percent last year.*
- 4) One percent of government sites are accessible through personal digital assistants, pagers, or mobile phones.*
- 5) There continue to be high levels of access to publications (98 percent) and data bases (80 percent).*
- 6) A growing number of sites offer privacy and security policy statements. This year, 54 percent have some form of privacy policy on their site, up from 43 percent in 2002. Thirty-seven percent now have a visible security policy, up from 34 percent last year.*
- 7) 13 percent of sites offered any sort of foreign language translation feature, up from the seven percent we found last year.*
- 8) 17 percent of government websites have restricted areas, less than one percent have premium features requiring payment for access, and one percent feature ads.*
- 9) States vary enormously in their overall ranking based on web presence. The highest ranking sites include Massachusetts, Texas, Indiana, Tennessee, California, Michigan, Pennsylvania,*

*New York, Florida, and Kentucky. The lowest ranking states are Alaska, New Mexico, Nebraska, Mississippi, Alabama, Hawaii, and Vermont.*

*10) In terms of federal agencies, top-rated websites include FirstGov (the U.S. portal), Federal Communications Commission, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Library of Congress, Postal Service, Dept. of Treasury, and Securities and Exchange Commission. The lowest-rated sites are the various federal circuit courts of appeals. The new Homeland Security Department scores in the lower third of federal agencies.*

*11) Government officials are more responsive this year in answering email queries. Whereas 55 percent answered our sample query last year, 68 percent did so this year. This is just below what other studies have found in the private sector. Emails sent to America's 100 largest corporations have a 70 percent response rate, according to a recent study done by the Customer Respect Group.*

### **A Note on Methodology**

This project is based on two sources of data. First, we undertake a comprehensive analysis of 1,663 government websites (1,603 state government websites, the federal portal firstgov.gov, 47 federal government legislative and executive sites, and 13 federal court sites). The list of web addresses for the 50 states can be found at [www.OutsidePolitics.org/states.html](http://www.OutsidePolitics.org/states.html), while the federal government sites are located through the national portal, FirstGov.gov. Among the sites analyzed are portal or gateway sites as well as those developed by court offices, legislatures, elected officials, major departments, and state and federal agencies serving crucial functions of government, such as health, human services, taxation, education, corrections, economic development, administration, natural resources, transportation, elections, and agriculture. Websites for obscure state boards and commissions, local government, and municipal offices are excluded from the study. An average of 32 websites is studied for each individual state so we could get a full picture of what is available to the general public, plus all the major federal government sites. Tabulation for this project was completed at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island by Joanne Chiu and Erica Dreisbach during June and July, 2003.

Websites are evaluated for the presence of a number of different features, such as online publications, online databases, audio clips, video clips, foreign language or language translation, advertisements, premium fees, restricted areas, user payments or fees, two measures of actual disability access (W3C and Section 508 guidelines), several measures of privacy policy, multiple indicators of security policy, presence of online services, the number of online services, digital signatures, credit card payments, email addresses, comment forms, automatic email updates, website personalization, PDA accessibility, and readability level.

In addition, in order to examine responsiveness to citizen requests, we sent an email to the human services department within each state (or a comparable department if there was no human services division). The message was short, asking the question, "I would like to know what hours your agency is open during the week. Thanks for your help." Email responses are recorded based on whether the office responded and how long it took in days for the agency to respond. The remainder of this report outlines the detailed results that came out of this research.

### **Readability**

Literacy is the ability to read and understand written information. According to national statistics, about half of the American population reads at the eighth grade level or lower. A number of writers have evaluated text from health warning labels to government documents to see if they are written at a level that can be understood by citizens. The fear, of course, is that too many government documents and information sources are written at too high of a level for citizens to comprehend.

To see how government websites fare, we use a test of the grade-level readability of the front page of each state and federal government website that we studied. Our procedure is to employ the Flesch-Kincaid standard to judge each site's readability level. The Flesch-Kincaid test is a standard reading tool evaluator and is the one used by the United States Department of Defense. It is computed by dividing the average sentence length (number of words divided by number of sentences) by the average number of syllables per word (number of syllables divided by the number of words).

As shown below, the average grade readability level of American state and federal websites is at the 11th grade, which is well above the comprehension of the typical American. Sixty-seven percent of sites read at the 12th grade level. Only 12 percent fell at the eighth grade level or below, which is the reading level of half the American public.

	<b>Percentage Falling within Each Grade Level</b>
Third Grade	1%
Fourth Grade	1
Fifth Grade	1
Sixth Grade	2
Seventh Grade	2
Eighth Grade	5
Ninth Grade	5
Tenth Grade	9
Eleventh Grade	7
Twelve Grade	67
Mean Grade Level	11th grade

There are some differences between state and federal sites. Sixty-eight percent of state sites read at the 12th grade level, while 63 percent of the federal sites do so. It matters a bit what the branch of government is. Sixty-nine percent of executive branch sites are written at the 12th grade level, compared to 65 percent of legislative sites, 60 percent of judicial sites, and 56 percent of portal sites.

Agency type matters much more, although not always in a manner consistent with the particular audience served by the website. One might expect that agencies serving more educated clientele would gear their website to a higher level than those serving more poorly educated people.

However, as shown below, agencies potentially geared toward the less educated do not have lower grade-level readability levels. For example, corrections departments reports the highest percentage (83 percent) of websites written at the 12th grade level. Other agencies that have a high percentage of sites written at the 12th grade level are budget (81 percent), economic development (79 percent), elementary education (74 percent), housing (69 percent), health (69 percent), human services (67 percent), and taxation (46 percent).

	<b>Elem Educ</b>	<b>Hum Serv</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Hous</b>	<b>Correc</b>	<b>Budge</b>	<b>Tax</b>	<b>Econ Dev</b>
<i>Read at 12th grade level</i>	74%	67%	69%	69%	83%	81%	46%	79%

### **Readability by State**

Readability levels vary significantly across individual states and the federal government. The state whose sites are geared to the highest grade level (meaning the least accessible in terms of average readability) is Utah with a mean grade level of 11.7 across its websites. It is followed by Mississippi (11.5), Texas (11.5), Virginia (11.5), Minnesota (11.4), Arkansas (11.4), and Idaho (11.4). The state whose websites are geared to the lowest grade level (meaning the most accessible) is Rhode Island, which has an average readability level of grade 10.1.

***Average Readability of State and Federal Government Websites***

<i>UT</i>	<b>11.7</b>	<i>MS</i>	<b>11.5</b>
<i>TX</i>	<b>11.5</b>	<i>VA</i>	<b>11.5</b>
<i>MN</i>	<b>11.4</b>	<i>AR</i>	<b>11.4</b>
<i>ID</i>	<b>11.4</b>	<i>AZ</i>	<b>11.3</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>11.3</b>	<i>VT</i>	<b>11.3</b>
<i>WA</i>	<b>11.3</b>	<i>OR</i>	<b>11.2</b>
<i>CA</i>	<b>11.2</b>	<i>HI</i>	<b>11.2</b>
<i>CT</i>	<b>11.2</b>	<i>LA</i>	<b>11.2</b>
<i>IN</i>	<b>11.2</b>	<i>WV</i>	<b>11.2</b>
<i>ND</i>	<b>11.2</b>	<i>KS</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>SC</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<i>IL</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>KY</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<i>DE</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>MI</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<i>NE</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>FL</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<i>MT</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>TN</i>	<b>11.1</b>	<i>GA</i>	<b>11.1</b>
<i>PA</i>	<b>11.0</b>	<i>OH</i>	<b>11.0</b>
<i>NC</i>	<b>11.0</b>	<i>MA</i>	<b>10.9</b>
<i>OK</i>	<b>10.9</b>	<i>WY</i>	<b>10.8</b>
<i>IA</i>	<b>10.8</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>10.8</b>
<i>MD</i>	<b>10.8</b>	<i>NM</i>	<b>10.7</b>
<i>NY</i>	<b>10.7</b>	<i>NJ</i>	<b>10.6</b>
<i>AL</i>	<b>10.6</b>	<i>US</i>	<b>10.6</b>
<i>AK</i>	<b>10.5</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>10.5</b>
<i>MO</i>	<b>10.4</b>	<i>NH</i>	<b>10.4</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>10.4</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>10.3</b>
<i>RI</i>	<b>10.1</b>		

**Disability Access**

This year, we altered our test of disability access by examining the actual accessibility of government websites, not just claims of accessibility. In the past, we looked at whether sites displayed TTY (Text Telephone) or TDD (Telephonic Device for the Deaf) phone numbers which allows hearing-impaired individuals to contact the agency by phone, provided text labels for graphics, or claimed that they were disability-accessible. This approach has the obvious disadvantage of not providing an actual test of accessibility so this year we use the online "Bobby" service at <http://bobby.watchfire.com> to test actual accessibility.

We rely on two different standards of website accessibility: compliance with the Priority Level One standards recommended by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and compliance with the legal requirements of Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973. For each test, we enter the URL of the particular agency being evaluated and use this "Bobby" analysis to determine whether the website complies with either the W3C or the Section 508 guidelines. Sites are judged to be either in compliance or not in compliance based on the results of these two tests.

In this year's study, 33 percent of state and federal sites satisfy the W3C standard of accessibility and 24 percent meet the guidelines for Section 508. Federal sites (47 percent) are more likely than state sites (33 percent) to meet the W3C standard of accessibility. There are few differences between states (24 percent) and federal sites (22 percent) when it comes to meeting Section 508 accessibility standards, as measured by our Bobby analysis.

	<b>Federal Sites</b>	<b>State Sites</b>
W3C Accessibility	47%	33%
Section 508 Accessibility	22	24

There are some agencies that indicate on their website that they are in compliance with the Bobby standard yet do not pass the test. These agencies include the South Carolina Dept of Education, the North Carolina Division of Aging, the Delaware Dept of Revenue, the Georgia Dept of Education, and the North Dakota's Governor's office. It is possible that these sites were in compliance at one point in time, but that later changes to the site removed them from compliance. As we suggest in our conclusion, it would be useful for agencies to list the date of Bobby compliance so visitors know when the site passed the test.

### **Disability Access by State**

When looking at disability access by individual states, there is tremendous variation in the percentage of each state's sites that are accessible. The states doing the best job on disability access are North Dakota (84 percent of its sites are accessible using the W3C standard), Kansas (74 percent), New Hampshire (68 percent), and Texas (67 percent). The poorest states when it came to W3C accessibility are New Jersey (none of its sites met the Bobby test), Mississippi (3 percent were accessible), and Iowa (10 percent compliance).

#### ***Percentage of State and Federal Government Websites with W3C Disability Access***

<i>ND</i>	<b>84%</b>	<i>KS</i>	<b>74</b>
<i>NH</i>	<b>68</b>	<i>TX</i>	<b>67</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>59</b>	<i>MO</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>PA</i>	<b>53</b>	<i>MI</i>	<b>52</b>
<i>NY</i>	<b>48</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>48</b>
<i>US</i>	<b>47</b>	<i>KY</i>	<b>46</b>
<i>HI</i>	<b>44</b>	<i>RI</i>	<b>43</b>
<i>WY</i>	<b>43</b>	<i>MN</i>	<b>41</b>
<i>CT</i>	<b>39</b>	<i>FL</i>	<b>39</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>38</b>	<i>NC</i>	<b>38</b>
<i>DE</i>	<b>35</b>	<i>TN</i>	<b>35</b>
<i>AK</i>	<b>33</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>32</b>
<i>SC</i>	<b>32</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>31</b>
<i>MA</i>	<b>30</b>	<i>IN</i>	<b>28</b>
<i>VA</i>	<b>27</b>	<i>WV</i>	<b>27</b>
<i>IL</i>	<b>26</b>	<i>CA</i>	<b>25</b>
<i>GA</i>	<b>24</b>	<i>NE</i>	<b>24</b>
<i>AZ</i>	<b>22</b>	<i>ID</i>	<b>22</b>
<i>OH</i>	<b>22</b>	<i>WA</i>	<b>22</b>
<i>AR</i>	<b>39</b>	<i>MD</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>MT</i>	<b>19</b>	<i>NM</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>OR</i>	<b>19</b>	<i>VT</i>	<b>19</b>

<i>LA</i>	<b>16</b>	<i>AL</i>	<b>16</b>
<i>OK</i>	<b>16</b>	<i>UT</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>IA</i>	<b>10</b>	<i>MS</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>NJ</i>	<b>0</b>		

### Online Information

In looking at the availability of basic information at American government websites, we find that access to publications and databases are excellent. Ninety-eight percent of sites provide access to publications (up from 93 percent last year), while 80 percent have databases (up from 57 percent in 2002).

Similar to the patterns found in previous years, most websites do not incorporate audio clips or video clips into their sites. Only eight percent provide audio clips, up from six percent last year, and 10 percent have video clips (up from eight percent last year).

#### *Percentage of Websites Offering Publications and Databases*

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<i>Phone Contact Info.</i>	91%	94%	96%	--
<i>Address Info</i>	88	93	95	--
<i>Links to Other Sites</i>	80	69	71	--
<i>Publications</i>	74	93	93	98
<i>Databases</i>	42	54	57	80
<i>Audio Clips</i>	5	6	6	8
<i>Video Clips</i>	4	9	8	10

### Services Provided

Fully executable, online service delivery benefits both government and its constituents. In the long run, such services offer the potential for lower cost of service delivery and it makes services more widely accessible to the general public, who no longer have to visit, write, or call an agency in order to execute a specific service. As more and more services are put online, e-government will revolutionize the relationship between government and citizens.

Of the web sites examined this year, 44 percent offer services that are fully executable online. This is nearly double the 25 percent that had online services last year. Of the sites this year, 56 percent have no services, 15 percent offer one service, 8 percent have two services, 5 percent have three services, 3 percent have four services, 2 percent have five services, and 11 percent have six or more services. Clearly, both state and federal governments are making significant progress at placing fully executable services online.

#### *Percentage of Government Sites Offering Online Services*

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<i>No Services</i>	78%	75%	77%	56%
<i>One Service</i>	16	15	12	15
<i>Two Services</i>	3	4	4	8
<i>Three or More Services</i>	2	6	7	21

Common services that are available online include: ordering a copy of birth or death certificates; filing consumer complaints; filing business and payroll taxes; placing new hire

reports; updating professional licenses; filing Uniform Commercial Code reports online; reserving a hotel or campsite; purchasing hunting, fishing, or sporting license; renewing motorboat/snowmobile/all-terrain vehicle registrations; renewing driver's licenses; paying speeding tickets; renewing car registration; ordering duplicate driver's license; ordering special plates; purchasing transportation passes; ordering duplicate registration for motor vehicles; registering to vote, and subscribing to national "Do Not Call" registry.

Some states offer unique and innovative services online. For example, Maine and Virginia have a "live" help feature in which citizens can get instant help from a real person if they encounter a problem at that website. The Washington portal has six foreign language options, including Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese. Florida offers documents in English, Spanish, and Creole. The Alaska DMV waiting room has an online webcam so people can see a real-time measure of how crowded lines are and thereby judge when a good time to go would be. Massachusetts has an "online services" banner for each site. Washington offers online services right off its portal in an easy to find place. The Virginia portal has wireless access on its portal site.

One area where government sites are starting to make better progress is in offering the ability to make credit card purchases online. Of the government websites analyzed, 19 percent accept credit cards, nearly double the 10 percent found last year. With the increase in online services, more and more sites have created a means for credit card payments. However, most sites still do not allow digital signatures for financial transactions. We find less than 1 percent (eight sites in all) are set up for digital signatures.

### Services by State

Of the 50 states and the federal government analyzed, there is wide variance in the percentage of states' web sites with online services. The following table shows the average number of online services found in various states and in the federal government. Massachusetts is the leader, with an average of 25.4 online services across its websites. This is followed by Kansas (5.4 services), the United States national government (4.8 services), New York (4.7 services), Maine (4.2 services), and Louisiana (3.8 services). The states having the lowest average number of online services are Alaska with an average of 0.2 services, Wyoming (0.3 services), and New Mexico (0.5 services).

#### *Average Number of Online Services at State and Federal Government Websites*

<i>MA</i>	<b>25.4</b>	<i>KS</i>	<b>5.4</b>
<i>US</i>	<b>4.8</b>	<i>NY</i>	<b>4.7</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>4.2</b>	<i>LA</i>	<b>3.8</b>
<i>MN</i>	<b>3.8</b>	<i>CA</i>	<b>3.4</b>
<i>ID</i>	<b>3.3</b>	<i>KY</i>	<b>3.3</b>
<i>FL</i>	<b>3.3</b>	<i>MD</i>	<b>3.2</b>
<i>MI</i>	<b>3.1</b>	<i>IA</i>	<b>3.0</b>
<i>MO</i>	<b>2.8</b>	<i>TX</i>	<b>2.7</b>
<i>IN</i>	<b>2.7</b>	<i>DE</i>	<b>2.5</b>
<i>PA</i>	<b>2.5</b>	<i>VA</i>	<b>2.5</b>
<i>WA</i>	<b>2.3</b>	<i>AR</i>	<b>2.2</b>
<i>NJ</i>	<b>2.1</b>	<i>MS</i>	<b>2.0</b>
<i>CT</i>	<b>2.0</b>	<i>IL</i>	<b>1.8</b>
<i>TN</i>	<b>1.8</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>1.7</b>
<i>AZ</i>	<b>1.6</b>	<i>GA</i>	<b>1.6</b>

<i>OH</i>	<b>1.5</b>	<i>NC</i>	<b>1.5</b>
<i>SC</i>	<b>1.4</b>	<i>WV</i>	<b>1.1</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>1.1</b>	<i>OR</i>	<b>1.1</b>
<i>HI</i>	<b>1.0</b>	<i>NE</i>	<b>1.0</b>
<i>NH</i>	<b>1.0</b>	<i>ND</i>	<b>1.9</b>
<i>OK</i>	<b>.9</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>.8</b>
<i>MT</i>	<b>.8</b>	<i>VT</i>	<b>.8</b>
<i>WI</i>	<b>.7</b>	<i>RI</i>	<b>.7</b>
<i>UT</i>	<b>.7</b>	<i>AL</i>	<b>.6</b>
<i>NM</i>	<b>.5</b>	<i>WY</i>	<b>.3</b>
<i>AK</i>	<b>.2</b>		

### Privacy and Security

A growing number of sites offer privacy and security statements. In 2003, 54 percent have some form of privacy policy on their site, up from 43 percent in 2002. Thirty-seven percent now have a visible security policy, up from 34 percent last year.

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Privacy Policies	7%	28%	43%	54%
Security Policies	5	18	34	37

In order to assess particular aspects of privacy and security, we evaluate the content of these publicly posted statements. For privacy policies, we look at several features: whether the privacy statement prohibits commercial marketing of visitor information; use of cookies or individual profiles of visitors; disclosure of personal information without the prior consent of the visitor, or disclosure of visitor information with law enforcement agents. There has been a decrease in the degree to which consumer interests are protected compared to previous years. For example, whereas 39 percent of government websites in 2002 prohibit the commercial marketing on visitor information, this year that number dropped to 32 percent. The same is true for policies that prohibit the disclosure of personal information. In 2002, 36 percent of sites have this feature, but that figure declined to 31 percent this year.

### Assessment of E-government Privacy and Security Statements

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Prohibit Commercial Marketing	12%	39%	32%
Prohibit Cookies	10	6	10
Prohibit Sharing Personal Information	13	36	31
Share Information with Law Enforcement	--	35	35
Use Computer Software to Monitor Traffic	8	37	24

### Security by State

Despite the importance of security in the virtual world, there are wide variations across states in the percentage of websites showing a security policy. New Jersey is doing the best job in showing a security policy as 90 percent of its sites have a visible security policy that visitors can read. This is followed by Indiana (88 percent), Utah (83 percent), Michigan (81 percent), Tennessee (81 percent), and South Dakota (77 percent).

### *Percentage of State and Federal Government Websites Showing Security Policy*

<i>NJ</i>	<b>90%</b>	<i>IN</i>	<b>88</b>
<i>UT</i>	<b>83</b>	<i>MI</i>	<b>81</b>
<i>TN</i>	<b>81</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>77</b>
<i>MA</i>	<b>73</b>	<i>CT</i>	<b>71</b>
<i>CA</i>	<b>69</b>	<i>NH</i>	<b>68</b>
<i>NY</i>	<b>64</b>	<i>US</i>	<b>62</b>
<i>IL</i>	<b>60</b>	<i>PA</i>	<b>59</b>
<i>WY</i>	<b>55</b>	<i>WA</i>	<b>50</b>
<i>AZ</i>	<b>47</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>44</b>
<i>KY</i>	<b>43</b>	<i>GA</i>	<b>39</b>
<i>NC</i>	<b>38</b>	<i>OH</i>	<b>38</b>
<i>AR</i>	<b>34</b>	<i>VA</i>	<b>30</b>
<i>RI</i>	<b>30</b>	<i>DE</i>	<b>29</b>
<i>ND</i>	<b>28</b>	<i>KS</i>	<b>26</b>
<i>MO</i>	<b>26</b>	<i>MT</i>	<b>26</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>25</b>	<i>TX</i>	<b>24</b>
<i>VT</i>	<b>22</b>	<i>HI</i>	<b>21</b>
<i>SC</i>	<b>19</b>	<i>OK</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>MD</i>	<b>16</b>	<i>OR</i>	<b>16</b>
<i>ID</i>	<b>16</b>	<i>MN</i>	<b>16</b>
<i>LA</i>	<b>10</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>AL</i>	<b>9</b>	<i>FL</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>IA</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>MS</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>NM</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>WV</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>AK</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>ME</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>NE</i>	<b>0</b>		

### Privacy by State

The state with the highest percentage of its sites showing a visible privacy policy is Illinois with 91 percent of its sites, followed by New Jersey (90 percent), Indiana (88 percent), Texas (85 percent), Michigan (84 percent), and Kentucky (83 percent).

Some states have linked individual agencies to official privacy statements on their portal, thereby guaranteeing a common approach to privacy protection. This helps to publicize privacy statements among visitors who are worried about online privacy. It also works to make sure there is consistency across government departments.

### Percentage of State and Federal Government Websites with Privacy Features

<i>IL</i>	<b>91%</b>	<i>NJ</i>	<b>90</b>
<i>IN</i>	<b>88</b>	<i>TX</i>	<b>85</b>
<i>MI</i>	<b>84</b>	<i>KY</i>	<b>83</b>
<i>UT</i>	<b>83</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>81</b>
<i>TN</i>	<b>81</b>	<i>MA</i>	<b>76</b>
<i>AZ</i>	<b>75</b>	<i>CA</i>	<b>75</b>
<i>US</i>	<b>75</b>	<i>VA</i>	<b>73</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>72</b>	<i>CT</i>	<b>71</b>
<i>MD</i>	<b>71</b>	<i>NH</i>	<b>71</b>
<i>NY</i>	<b>70</b>	<i>WA</i>	<b>69</b>
<i>PA</i>	<b>66</b>	<i>MO</i>	<b>61</b>

<i>WY</i>	<b>57</b>	<i>DE</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>FL</i>	<b>55</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>OH</i>	<b>50</b>	<i>NC</i>	<b>47</b>
<i>ND</i>	<b>47</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>46</b>
<i>GA</i>	<b>45</b>	<i>KS</i>	<b>42</b>
<i>AR</i>	<b>41</b>	<i>HI</i>	<b>41</b>
<i>RI</i>	<b>37</b>	<i>SC</i>	<b>35</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>34</b>	<i>ID</i>	<b>34</b>
<i>WV</i>	<b>33</b>	<i>IA</i>	<b>32</b>
<i>MT</i>	<b>32</b>	<i>OR</i>	<b>29</b>
<i>MS</i>	<b>26</b>	<i>MN</i>	<b>25</b>
<i>OK</i>	<b>25</b>	<i>VT</i>	<b>25</b>
<i>AL</i>	<b>22</b>	<i>LA</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>AK</i>	<b>12</b>	<i>NM</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>NE</i>	<b>3</b>		

We also look at the quality of privacy policy by state. We do this by creating a zero to four point scale for the presence or absence of the following four dimensions: whether the policy prohibits commercial marketing of visitor information (meaning it does not give, sell, or rent visitor information to third parties), whether the site prohibits creation of cookies or individual profiles of visitors, whether the site prohibits sharing personal information without prior user consent, and whether the site says it can share personal information with legal authorities or law enforcement. Each of these items is coded a zero for no and a one for yes. The quality index is an additive scale measuring the presence of zero to four privacy protections.

Overall, Massachusetts had the highest quality privacy index (an average of 2.8 on the four-point scale) followed by New Jersey (2.7), Indiana (2.6), Minnesota (2.5), Utah (2.3), Illinois (2.3), Kentucky (2.3), Maine (2.2), Connecticut (2.1), and New Hampshire (2.1). The United States national government sites have an average privacy quality score of 1.9 out of four points.

### **Foreign Language Access**

Government sites are making slow but steady progress in providing foreign language accessibility. In our analysis, 13 percent of sites offer any sort of foreign language translation feature, up slightly from the 7 percent last year. By foreign language feature, we mean any accommodation to the non-English speaker, from a text translation into a different language to translating software available for free on the site to translate pages into a language other than English.

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Foreign Language Access	4%	6%	7%	13%

Texas leads the list with 55 percent of its sites having foreign language adaptability; followed by Nevada (42 percent), the U.S. government (40 percent), Rhode Island (33 percent), North Carolina (31 percent), and New York (30 percent).

### ***Percentage of State and Federal Government Websites with Foreign Language Translation***

<i>TX</i>	<b>55%</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>42</b>
<i>US</i>	<b>40</b>	<i>RI</i>	<b>33</b>
<i>NC</i>	<b>31</b>	<i>NY</i>	<b>30</b>

<i>OR</i>	<b>29</b>	<i>CA</i>	<b>28</b>
<i>WA</i>	<b>25</b>	<i>AZ</i>	<b>22</b>
<i>DE</i>	<b>19</b>	<i>FL</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>ID</i>	<b>19</b>	<i>VA</i>	<b>18</b>
<i>IN</i>	<b>16</b>	<i>MD</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>NJ</i>	<b>13</b>	<i>SC</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>TN</i>	<b>13</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>13</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>13</b>	<i>IL</i>	<b>11</b>
<i>KY</i>	<b>11</b>	<i>NE</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>IA</i>	<b>10</b>	<i>NM</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>SD</i>	<b>10</b>	<i>MN</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>OK</i>	<b>9</b>	<i>UT</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>KS</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>AL</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>OH</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>PA</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>VT</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>GA</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>CT</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>LA</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>MI</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>MS</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>ND</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>MA</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>AK</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>AR</i>	<b>0</b>	<i>HI</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>MO</i>	<b>0</b>	<i>MT</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>NH</i>	<b>0</b>	<i>WV</i>	<b>0</b>
<i>WY</i>	<b>0</b>		

### **Ads, User Fees, and Premium Fees**

Despite the fiscal problems facing state and national government, there has been no increase this year in the use of ads to finance government websites. One percent of sites have commercial advertisements on their sites, meaning non-governmental corporate and group sponsorships, compared to two percent last year. When defining an advertisement, we eliminate computer software available for free download (such as Adobe Acrobat Reader, Netscape Navigator, and Microsoft Internet Explorer) since they are necessary for viewing or accessing particular products or publications. Links to commercial products or services available for a fee are included as advertisements as are banner, pop-up, and fly-by advertisements.

Examples of advertisements on the states' sites are the Arizona tourism site (Hilton and Four Seasons hotel packages), Colorado higher education ("Colorado Mentor" organization with the Xap Corporation and the "College Invest" organization), Colorado tourism ("Copper Mountain Resort," "Now This Is Colorado", "Buffalo Joe Whitewater Rafting", and "Grand-County.com"), New Mexico agriculture ("The Weather Channel"), and South Dakota economic development ("TravelSD.com").

#### ***Percentage of Sites with Ads, User Fees, and Premium Fees***

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Ads	2%	2%	1%
User Fees	2	2	3
Premium Fees	--	1	0.4

Three percent of state and federal sites require user fees to access information and services, including archived databases of judicial opinions and up-to-the-minute legislative updates. This is about the same as last year (two percent).

Examples of state websites with user fees include the Indiana driver's license renewal and motor vehicle registration (a \$3 charge in addition to the normal renew charges for processing the renewal through the online service, BMV express), Massachusetts wildlife license registration (a \$1.00 and \$2.00 shipping and handling fees), Massachusetts Department of conservation (an \$8 reservation transaction charge for customers making reservations through "ReserveAmerica"), Arkansas portal (\$6 for ordering death or birth certificates), Texas portal (\$1 convenience fee for change of address and many other DMV services), and Wisconsin hunting commission (a \$3 convenience fee for purchases that include any combination of licenses, permits, or applications).

Less than one percent of government websites require premium fees to access portions of the e-government site. By a premium fee, we mean financial charges that are required to access particular areas on the website, such as business services, access to databases, or viewing up-to-the-minute legislation. This is not the same as a user fee for a single service. For example, we do not code as a fee the fact that some government services require payment to complete the transaction (a user fee). Rather, a charge is classified as a premium fee if a payment is required in order to enter a general area of the website or access a set of premium services. Subscription services are considered a premium fee if there is a cost associated with the subscription.

Examples of states with premium service areas include the Kansas Secretary of State's website (Uniform Commercial Code filings may be done on-line but require a fee of \$15 for the first 10 pages of filing and \$1 for each additional page), the Kansas legislature's website (a \$1 or \$2 subscription fee for online bill viewing and \$50 per month for a "Lobbyist-In-A-Box" option to create profiles of bills), Maine's secretary of state (an annual fee of \$75 for access to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Special request services, Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, UCC Searches, UCC filing, Bulk Databases and Bureau of Identification), and Arkansas Portal Information Network (an annual fee of \$50 is required to access specific services such as database searching, workers compensation claims, and the Board of Nursing registry).

### **Restricted Areas**

A growing number of government websites have restricted areas requiring a username and password to enter (17 percent this year, up from 6 percent last year). This could be access to government contract information or procurement bidding, or access to a subscription or business services area that is password protected. We do not consider a section a restricted area if there is a registration requirement for a password just for information purposes, i.e., sending free email notifications or free subscriptions to the visitor because these are not restrictions on a general area of the website. In addition, individual services that require a password for execution, such as income tax filing, are not considered a restricted area because the password involves that specific service, not a general area of the website.

Examples of states with restricted areas include part of South Dakota's portal page with access to Service Direct (an archive of all the state's forms that requires a log-in name and password), the Kansas Secretary of State's website (which requires a connection to access Kansas Subscriber Services in order to conduct a Uniform Commercial Code search, file a UCC document, and view Kansas administrative regulations), the Texas Attorney General's website (requires a login and password to view subscriptions to weekly columns, senior alerts, consumer alerts, and law enforcement updates), the Utah Administrative Services "InnerWeb" (a center for state employees that allows them to look at and change information on their W-4), and the Washington Courts portal page (which requires attorneys to submit their bar number to have access to the dates of the court appearances in which they are an attorney of record and schedule appearances for the next week).

## Democratic Outreach

One of the most promising aspects of e-government is its ability to bring citizens closer to their governments. In our examination of state and federal government websites, we look for several key features within each website that would facilitate this connection between government and citizen. The first of these features is email capability. In this instance, we determine whether a visitor to the website could email a person in the particular department other than the Webmaster. In 2003, 91 percent have email addresses, up from 81 percent last year. Other methods that government websites employ to facilitate democratic conversation include areas to post comments (other than through email), the use of message boards, surveys, and chat rooms. Websites using these features allow citizens and department members alike to read and respond to others' comments regarding issues facing the department. This technology is becoming more prevalent. In 2003, 24 percent of websites offer this feature, more than double the 10 percent from the previous year.

	2000	2001	2002	2003
<i>Email</i>	68%	84%	81%	91%
<i>Search</i>	48	52	43	--
<i>Comments</i>	15	5	10	24
<i>Email Updates</i>	5	9	5	12
<i>Broadcast</i>	2	7	4	--
<i>Personalization</i>	0	1	2	2
<i>PDA Access</i>	--	--	--	1

Twelve percent of government websites allow citizens to register to receive updates regarding specific issues, up from five percent in 2002. With this feature, web visitors can input their email address, street address, or telephone number to receive information about a particular subject as new information becomes available. The information can be in the form of a monthly e-newsletter highlighting an attorney general's recent opinions to alerts notifying citizens whenever a particular portion of the website is updated. Two percent of sites allow for personalization of the site in order to tailor the website information directly to the individual viewer, the same as last year. Some state portal pages are beginning to apply this technology (California and Michigan, for instance) by allowing users to customize the site to highlight the information that they indicate as the most important and useful.

## Email Responsiveness

It is important to have email addresses available on government websites, but they serve no purpose unless someone actually reads and responds to the messages received. To test democratic responsiveness, we sent sample email messages to human services departments in the 50 states asking for information regarding what hours the government agency was open. If there was no human services department, we used a similar department, such as health, instead. We monitored their responses to see whether anyone responded and how long it took in days.

Government officials are more responsive this year than last year. Whereas 55 answered our question last year, 68 percent did so this year. Response times are shorter with 62 percent responding within a single day, up from 35 percent in 2002. Two percent take three days or more to respond. Even though email volumes are increasing in many government offices, this increase in responsiveness suggests government officials are reconfiguring their offices to deal with the volume of citizen email.

These response times are just below comparable studies on the private sector. A recent Customer Respect Group study of email responsiveness from America's 100 largest companies finds that 70 percent respond and 31 percent do not to email questions. Of those responding, 58 percent do so within one or two days, six percent take three days, and six percent respond within four days.

<b>Response Time</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
<i>None</i>	9%	20%	45%	32%
<i>One day</i>	73	53	35	62
<i>Two days</i>	6	12	10	4
<i>Three days</i>	4	2	4	0
<i>Four days</i>	4	2	2	0
<i>Five days</i>	3	4	2	0
<i>Six days or more</i>	1	7	2	2

### **Overall State E-Government Ranking**

In order to see how the 50 states rank overall, we created a 0 to 100 point e-government index for each website within that state. Four points are awarded each website for the following 20 features: publications, databases, audio clips, video clips, foreign language access, not having ads, not having user fees, not having premium fees, not having restricted areas, W3C disability access, having privacy policies, security policies, allowing digital signatures on transactions, an option to pay via credit cards, email contact information, areas to post comments, option for email updates, allowing for personalization of the website, PDA or handheld device accessibility, and readability levels below grade 10. These features provide a maximum of 80 points for particular websites.

Each site then qualifies for up to 20 additional points based on the number of online services executable on that site (zero for no services, one point for one service, two points for two services, three points for three services, four points for four services, and so on up to a maximum of 20 points for 20 services or more). The e-government index therefore runs along a scale from zero (having none of these features and no online services) to 100 (having all 20 features plus at least 20 online services). This total for each website is averaged across all of the state's web sites to produce a zero to 100 overall rating for that state. On average, we assess around 32 government websites in each state across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

Some states see decreases in their e-government rating this year compared to last year because this year's index places a heavier weight on having online services. In addition, we added measures of readability and disability access to the index. Fully 20 percent of the index score is based on number of services, whereas last year, online service delivery comprised only four percent of the overall performance index. This change is in keeping with the general effort of state and federal governments to put more and more services online. Details on last year's ranking for each state and how each state has changed can be viewed in the Appendix.

The top state in our ranking is Massachusetts. Looking across all of its websites on the dimensions we analyzed, it scores an average of 46.3. It is followed by Texas (43), Indiana (42.4), Tennessee (41.1), California (41.1), Michigan (40.7), Pennsylvania (40.5), New York (40.5), Florida (40.3), and Kentucky (40.0). The most poorly performing e-government states are Alaska (30.3), New Mexico (30.9), Nebraska (31.3), and Mississippi (31.5).

### ***Overall State E-Government Performance***

<i>MA</i>	<b>46.3</b>	<i>TX</i>	<b>43</b>
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<i>IN</i>	<b>42.4</b>	<i>TN</i>	<b>41.1</b>
<i>CA</i>	<b>41.1</b>	<i>MI</i>	<b>40.7</b>
<i>PA</i>	<b>40.5</b>	<i>NY</i>	<b>40.5</b>
<i>FL</i>	<b>40.3</b>	<i>KY</i>	<b>40.0</b>
<i>IL</i>	<b>39.7</b>	<i>MO</i>	<b>39.7</b>
<i>NJ</i>	<b>39.6</b>	<i>SD</i>	<b>39.5</b>
<i>AZ</i>	<b>39.1</b>	<i>WA</i>	<b>38.6</b>
<i>UT</i>	<b>38.1</b>	<i>MD</i>	<b>38.1</b>
<i>VA</i>	<b>38.1</b>	<i>NC</i>	<b>38.0</b>
<i>KS</i>	<b>38.0</b>	<i>CT</i>	<b>37.9</b>
<i>NH</i>	<b>37.6</b>	<i>DE</i>	<b>37.4</b>
<i>ME</i>	<b>37.4</b>	<i>OH</i>	<b>37.4</b>
<i>MN</i>	<b>36.8</b>	<i>LA</i>	<b>36.6</b>
<i>ND</i>	<b>36.4</b>	<i>ID</i>	<b>35.9</b>
<i>GA</i>	<b>35.8</b>	<i>NV</i>	<b>35.7</b>
<i>RI</i>	<b>35.3</b>	<i>OR</i>	<b>34.9</b>
<i>IA</i>	<b>34.6</b>	<i>WI</i>	<b>34.2</b>
<i>AR</i>	<b>34</b>	<i>OK</i>	<b>33.2</b>
<i>CO</i>	<b>33.1</b>	<i>WY</i>	<b>33.0</b>
<i>WV</i>	<b>32.7</b>	<i>SC</i>	<b>32.7</b>
<i>MT</i>	<b>32.7</b>	<i>VT</i>	<b>32.3</b>
<i>HI</i>	<b>32.1</b>	<i>AL</i>	<b>31.9</b>
<i>MS</i>	<b>31.5</b>	<i>NE</i>	<b>31.3</b>
<i>NM</i>	<b>30.9</b>	<i>AK</i>	<b>30.3</b>

### **Overall Federal Agency E-Government Ranking**

Federal sites are rated by the same criteria as the 50 states. An identical e-government index is devised that rated federal websites on contact information, publications, databases, portals, and number of online services. The unit of analysis is the individual federal agency.

Overall, federal government websites do better than the states on our e-government index. The federal government clearly has made substantial progress in e-government than many of the 50 states.

However, there is considerable variation among the 60 federal agencies and departments we assess (Homeland Security is added to our study for the first time this year). The best e-government performers are Firstgov, the United States national government portal, which scores an 84 out of 100. It is followed by the Federal Communications Commission (73), Social Security Administration (69), Internal Revenue Service (68), Library of Congress (68), Postal Service (68), Dept. of Treasury (64), Securities and Exchange Commission (64), Housing and Urban Development (62), and the Consumer Produce Safety Commission (52).

At the low end of the ratings are the various circuit court of appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court. Eleven of the 12 lowest performers on our e-government index come in the federal judiciary. Their score ranges from a low of 24 (Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals) to 41 (Fifth Circuit). The new Homeland Security Department scores a 38, putting it in the lower third of federal agencies.

### **Overall Federal Agency E-Government Performance, 2003**

Firstgov Portal	84.0	Fed Commun Comm	73.0
Soc Security Admin	69.0	IRS	68.0

Library of Congress	68.0	Postal Service	68.0
Dept of Treasury	64.0	Sec/Exchange Comm	64.0
Housing/Urban Dev	62.0	Cons Product Safety	57.0
Dept of Agriculture	56.0	Dept of Defense	56.0
Gen Services Admin	56.0	Natl Science Found	56.0
Small Bus Admin	56.0	Dept of State	54.0
Food Drug Admin	53.0	White House	53.0
Fed Trade Comm	52.0	Health/Human Serv	52.0
Dept of Education	51.0	Dept Transportation	51.0
Dept Commerce	50.0	Env Protect Agency	50.0
Dept of Energy	49.0	Dept of Labor	49.0
Gen Account Office	47.0	Veterans Affairs	47.0
Fed Elect Comm	46.0	Cent Intelligence Ag	45.0
Fed Reserve	45.0	Cong Budget Office	44.0
NASA	44.0	Office Man Budget	44.0
House of Rep	42.0	5 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	41.0
Eq Employ Opp	41.0	Gov't Printing Office	41.0
Dept of Justice	40.0	Fed Deposit	40.0
Natl Endow Human	40.0	Natl Transpt Safety	40.0
Homeland Security	38.0	Natl Labor Relations	38.0
Dept of Interior	36.0	Senate	36.0
Supreme Court	36.0	US Trade Rep	36.0
11 Circuit Ct Appeal	34.0	10 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	33.0
Fed Circuit Ct Appeal	33.0	3rd Circuit Ct Appeal	32.0
Natl Endow Arts	32.0	1 <sup>st</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	29.0
9 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	29.0	7 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	28.0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	25.0	6 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	25.0
4 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeal	24.0	8th Circuit Ct Appeal	24.0

### State-Federal Differences

Since we examine both state and federal government websites, we compare the two levels of government to see how each is faring. In general, federal sites are systematically ahead of the states. For example, there are substantial differences in the area of citizen access to online databases. Whereas 95 percent of federal government sites have databases, only 79 percent of state sites do. On electronic services, 68 percent of federal government sites offer some kind of services, compared to 44 percent of state sites (although both levels are up substantially over last year's numbers).

The federal government also has made greater progress in the area of privacy (75 percent) compared to state government (53 percent). Sixty-two percent of federal sites have a visible, online security policy, compared to 36 percent of those in the states.

	Federal Sites			State Sites		
	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
<i>Database</i>	90%	90%	95%	53%	55%	79%
<i>Services</i>	34	44	68	24	22	44
<i>WC3 Disability Accessibility</i>	--	--	47	--	--	33
<i>Section 508 Accessibility</i>	--	--	22	--	--	24
<i>Privacy Policy</i>	81	76	75	26	42	53

<i>Security Policy</i>	56	54	62	16	33	36
<i>Publications</i>	98	100	100	93	93	98
<i>Comment</i>	19	14	52	5	10	23
<i>Links to Other Sites</i>	81	80	--	68	70	--
<i>Link to Portal</i>	64	61	--	43	55	--
<i>Foreign Language</i>	25	44	40	5	5	12
<i>Email</i>	86	90	93	84	80	90
<i>Ads</i>	0	0	2	2	0	1
<i>User Fees</i>	19	7	0	2	2	3
<i>Premium Fees</i>	--	0	0	--	1	0
<i>Restricted Areas</i>	--	12	30	--	6	17
<i>Credit Cards</i>	27	10	32	9	10	19
<i>Searches</i>	80	75	--	51	41	--
<i>Email Updates</i>	41	15	32	8	5	11
<i>Website Personalization</i>	1	5	5	0	2	2
<i>PDA Access</i>	--	--	0	--	--	1

### Differences by Branch of Government

There are some differences in e-government across branches of government. Legislative sites have the greatest percentage of databases, audio clips, and video clips. Executive sites are more likely to have privacy and security policies, disability access, and online services. Legislative and judicial pages generally lag executive pages in providing online services.

	<b>Executiv</b>	<b>Legislative</b>	<b>Judicial</b>
<i>Publication</i>	98%	98%	96%
<i>Database</i>	78	87	82
<i>Audio Clip</i>	6	36	6
<i>Video Clip</i>	8	28	12
<i>Foreign Lang</i>	14	4	10
<i>Ads</i>	2	0	0
<i>Premium Fee</i>	0	2	0
<i>Restricted Area</i>	17	9	16
<i>User Fees</i>	3	0	0
<i>Privacy</i>	56	29	38
<i>Security</i>	39	22	18
<i>WC3 Disability Access</i>	33	31	37
<i>SEC508 Access</i>	23	22	34
<i>Services</i>	47	12	25
<i>Digital Sign.</i>	0	0	0
<i>Credit Cards</i>	19	4	9
<i>Email</i>	91	90	82
<i>Comment</i>	24	17	21
<i>Updates</i>	13	7	4
<i>Personalization</i>	1	2	0
<i>PDA Access</i>	0	3	0

### Differences by Agency Type

There are interesting differences by agency type in e-government performance. Health departments are the most likely to have databases, while budget departments are the least likely. Economic development sites (which are typically geared toward business interests) are the most likely to offer online services, while budget departments are the least likely. Health and housing agencies are the most likely to offer foreign language translation. Economic development sites are the least likely to be accessible to the disabled.

	<b>Educ</b>	<b>Hum Serv</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Hous</b>	<b>Correc</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Tax</b>	<b>Econ Dev</b>
<i>Publication</i>	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Database</i>	92	86	98	78	88	73	88	88
<i>Audio Clip</i>	6	7	6	0	0	3	0	2
<i>Video Clip</i>	14	2	2	6	2	3	0	12
<i>Foreign Lang</i>	16	19	31	31	2	3	4	9
<i>Ads</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
<i>Premium Fee</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
<i>Restricted Area</i>	32	21	18	22	17	19	25	12
<i>User Fees</i>	2	2	4	6	4	0	6	2
<i>Privacy</i>	54	51	67	58	52	51	73	58
<i>Security</i>	38	30	45	32	35	35	52	32
<i>WC3 Disability Access</i>	30	26	33	28	25	46	33	19
<i>Section 508 Access</i>	18	19	28	22	21	38	27	9
<i>Services</i>	42	37	47	39	29	24	39	46
<i>Digital Sign.</i>	0	0	2	0	0	3	4	0
<i>Credit Cards</i>	4	12	28	11	10	5	62	5
<i>Email</i>	96	84	94	97	90	86	92	93
<i>Comment</i>	24	26	24	28	17	16	29	28
<i>Updates</i>	14	0	10	11	6	0	21	28
<i>Personalization</i>	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
<i>PDA Access</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Conclusions

Based on this study, there are several things government websites need to consider in order to improve accessibility and navigation. Readability should be improved so that websites are understandable to a wider range of individuals. With half of Americans reading at no better than an eighth grade level, it is crucial that government sites be written at a level that most people can understand. With current readability averaging around the 11th grade, websites are not connecting with the people who seek to access them.

There also needs to be greater attention paid to disability access. Visitors who are visually or hearing-impaired need help in being able to access and make use of the tremendous amount of information and the growing number of services that are online. This is particularly the case in state government, which generally is lagging the federal government in facilitating access by the disabled.

Claims of W3C compliance and Bobby compliance should be verified on a regular basis. We find several sites that claim to be in compliance with standards for disability access (meaning they have an icon of "Bobby approved") yet do not pass the Bobby test. This could be because the site underwent changes after passing an initial Bobby evaluation that rendered it less

accessible to the disabled. Placing a time stamp on the Bobby compliance would give visitors a chance to evaluate when the site passed the Bobby test.

Sites should include clear privacy policies and not simply disclaimers or liability statements. These policy statements should be on the portal and easy to find. Online services should be lumped together so they are easy to access rather than scattered around the site. The sites of particular agencies should include a link back to the portal site to facilitate site navigation. PDF forms should not be mixed with on-line forms because they cannot be submitted online and thus do not constitute a viable government service.

The homepage should be organized and uncluttered. Translation into other languages should be easy to find and access. Sites should use descriptors such as "en Espanol" rather than "in Spanish" to identify foreign language options. For within-site searches to yield meaningful results, the index for the search engine should be complete and up to date. Comment forms should be setup so that e-mail can be sent without an e-mail reader. "Kids' pages" should be lively and fun, not boring or patronizing. By making these kinds of changes, government planners can do a much better job serving the people who visit their websites.

## Appendix

**Table A-1 Overall State E-Govt Ratings in 2003 (with previous year's ranking in parentheses)**

Rank	State	Rating Out of 100 Pts	Rank	State	Rating Out of 100 Pts
1.(24)	Massachusetts	46.3(45.6)	2.(6)	Texas	43(52.8)
3.(12)	Indiana	42.4(51.5)	4.(1)	Tennessee	41.4(56)
5.(3)	California	41.1(54.8)	6.(19)	Michigan	40.6(48.2)
7.(5)	Pennsylvania	40.5(52.9)	8.(11)	New York	40.5(51.6)
9.(13)	Florida	40.3(51.5)	10.(44)	Kentucky	40(42)
11.(16)	Illinois	39.7(49.3)	12.(22)	Missouri	39.7(46.3)
13.(2)	New Jersey	39.6(55)	14.(9)	S. Dakota	39.5(51.9)
15.(32)	Arizona	39.1(44.2)	16.(7)	Washington	38.6(52.4)
17.(10)	Utah	38.1(51.7)	18.(27)	Maryland	38.1(44.9)
19.(15)	Virginia	38.1(49.6)	20.(17)	N. Carolina	38(48.6)
21.(23)	Kansas	38(45.6)	22.(4)	Connecticut	37.9(53.3)
23.(14)	N. Hampshire	37.6(51.1)	24.(41)	Delaware	37.4(42.4)
25.(34)	Maine	37.4(43.7)	26.(21)	Ohio	37.4(46.4)
27.(37)	Minnesota	36.8(43.3)	28.(43)	Louisiana	36.6(42.3)
29.(20)	N. Dakota	36.4(46.9)	30.(39)	Idaho	35.9(42.8)
31.(38)	Georgia	35.8(43.1)	32.(8)	Nevada	35.7(51.9)
33.(35)	Rhode Island	35.3(43.5)	34.(18)	Oregon	34.9(48.5)
35.(28)	Iowa	34.6(44.9)	36.(46)	Wisconsin	34.2(40.4)
37.(30)	Arkansas	34(44.5)	38.(29)	Oklahoma	33.2(44.9)
39.(47)	Colorado	33.1(40)	40.(50)	Wyoming	33(34.8)

41.(36)	West Virginia	32.7(43.5)	42.(26)	S. Carolina	32.7(45.4)
43.(25)	Montana	32.7(45.5)	44.(42)	Vermont	32.3(42.4)
45.(45)	Hawaii	32.1(41.9)	46.(49)	Alabama	31.9(35.8)
47.(48)	Mississippi	31.5(37.4)	48.(40)	Nebraska	31.3(42.6)
49.(33)	New Mexico	30.3(44.1)	50.(33)	Alaska	30.3(44.1)

**Table A-2 Overall Federal Agency E-Govt Ratings in 2003 (with previous year's ranking in parentheses)**

Rank	Site	Rating Out of 100 Pts.	Rank	Site	Rating Out of 100 Pts.
1.(7)	FirstGov portal	84(90)	2.(1)	Fed Commun Comm	73(92)
3.(6)	Soc Security Admin	69(80)	4.(9)	Internal Revenue Serv	68(76)
5.(18)	Library of Congress	68(68)	6.(17)	Postal Service	68(68)
7.(4)	Dept of Treasury	64(84)	8.(29)	Sec/Exchange Comm	64(60)
9.(27)	Housing/Urban Dev	62(64)	10.(34)	Cons Product Safety	57(60)
11.(23)	Dept pf Agriculture	56(68)	12.(33)	Dept of Defense	56(60)
13.(28)	Gen Services Admin	56(64)	14.(26)	Natl Science Found	56(64)
15.(25)	Small Bus Admin	56(64)	16.(5)	Dept of State	54(84)
17.(43)	Food Drug Admin	53(52)	18.(12)	White House	53(72)
19.(19)	Fed Trade Comm	52(68)	20.(14)	Health/Human Serv	52(72)
21.(22)	Dept of Education	51(68)	22.(10)	Dept of Transportation	51(76)
23.(12)	Dept of Commerce	50(76)	24.(3)	Env Protect Agency	50(84)
25.(21)	Dept of Energy	49(68)	26.(2)	Dept of Labor	49(88)
27.(15)	Gen Account Office	47(72)	28.(41)	Veterans Affairs	47(52)
29.(31)	Fed Elect Comm	46(60)	30.(24)	Cent Intelligence Ag	45(68)
31.(38)	Fed Reserve	45(56)	32.(40)	Cong Budget Office	44(56)
33.(8)	NASA	44(76)	34.(36)	Office Man Budget	44(56)

35.(13)	House of Rep.	42(72)	36.(58)	5 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	41(32)
37.(44)	Eq Employ Opp	41(52)	38.(42)	Govt Printing Office	41(52)
39.(20)	Dept of Justice	49(68)	40.(39)	Fed Deposit	40(56)
41.(30)	Natl Endow Human	40(60)	42.(46)	Natl Transp Safety	40(48)
43.	Homeland Security	38	44.(45)	Natl Labor Relations	38(48)
45.(32)	Dept of Interior	36(60)	46.(16)	Senate	36(68)
47.(50)	Supreme Ct	36(40)	48.(35)	US Trade Rep	36(56)
49.(48)	11 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	34(48)	50.(49)	10 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	33(48)
51.(51)	Fed Circuit Ct Appeals	33(40)	52.(54)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	32(40)
53.(37)	Natl Endow Arts	32(56)	54.(56)	1 <sup>st</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	29(36)
55.(52)	9 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	29(40)	56.(57)	7 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	28(32)
57.(55)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	25(40)	58.(53)	6 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	25(40)
59.(47)	4 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	24(48)	60.(59)	8 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Ct Appeals	24(24)

Note: The following table shows the percentage of websites in each state and the U.S. federal government that have each feature, such as phone numbers, addresses, and publications.

	<i>Pubs</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Audio</i>	<i>Video</i>	<i>ForLan</i>	<i>PDA</i>		
<b>AK</b>	94%	91%	3%	6%	0%	0%		
<b>AL</b>	100	81	16	6	6	0		
<b>AR</b>	97	69	14	3	0	3		
<b>AZ</b>	100	88	3	16	22	0		
<b>CA</b>	97	78	9	13	28	6		
<b>CO</b>	97	66	9	6	13	3		
<b>CT</b>	100	65	0	10	3	0		
<b>DE</b>	100	87	3	16	19	0		
<b>FL</b>	100	84	16	26	19	0		
<b>GA</b>	100	70	9	21	6	0		
<b>HI</b>	97	47	0	9	0	0		
<b>IA</b>	97	74	13	3	10	0		
<b>ID</b>	100	72	3	9	19	0		
<b>IL</b>	100	86	20	14	11	0		
<b>IN</b>	100	84	6	13	16	0		

KS	100	65	13	0	6	0		
KY	100	83	3	6	11	0		
LA	100	81	16	23	3	3		
MA	97	85	0	0	3	0		
MD	97	94	10	10	13	0		
ME	97	75	9	0	3	3		
MI	100	94	3	10	3	0		
MN	94	84	16	19	9	0		
MO	100	94	13	19	0	0		
MS	100	84	0	13	3	0		
MT	100	81	0	0	0	0		
NC	100	84	13	6	31	0		
ND	100	59	16	9	3	0		
NE	93	86	10	3	10	0		
NH	97	55	6	0	0	0		
NJ	100	90	10	16	13	0		
NM	100	87	6	6	10	0		
NV	97	81	0	10	42	0		
NY	97	79	3	3	30	0		
OH	100	04	3	9	6	0		
OK	94	84	6	16	9	0		
OR	94	68	13	16	29	0		
PA	100	84	0	9	6	0		
RI	100	80	0	3	33	0		
SC	97	68	3	13	13	3		
SD	94	71	10	16	10	0		
TN	100	87	10	13	13	0		
TX	100	94	24	24	55	3		
US	100	95	20	25	40	0		
UT	97	74	11	6	9	0		
VA	100	85	6	6	18	9		
VT	97	72	6	3	6	0		
WA	100	84	9	13	25	0		
WS	85	90	13	8	13	0		
WV	93	83	10	10	0	0		
WY	85	68	3	5	0	0		

Note: The following table shows the percentage of websites in each state and the U.S. federal government that have each feature, such as ads, premium fees, restricted areas, user fees, and services.

<b>Table A-4 Individual State/Fed Profiles for Ads, Premium Fees, Restricted Areas, User Fees, Services, and Readability (%)</b>								
	<i>Ads</i>	<i>Premfee</i>	<i>Restrict Areas</i>	<i>Userfee</i>	<i>Has Services</i>	<i>Number of Services</i>	<i>Credit</i>	<i>Digital Sign.</i>
AK	0%	3%	12%	6%	18%	.24	6%	0%
AL	0	0	3	0	25	.56	9	0
AR	0	3	21	3	38	2.21	17	0

AZ	3	3	13	0	53	1.59	28	0
CA	0	0	6	0	28	3.41	16	0
CO	6	0	9	3	28	1.09	9	0
CT	0	0	13	0	52	2	19	0
DE	0	0	16	6	45	2.52	16	0
FL	0	0	13	3	52	3.26	19	0
GA	3	0	9	3	36	1.58	15	0
HI	0	0	6	0	21	1	12	0
IA	0	0	6	0	45	2.97	10	0
ID	0	0	13	0	44	3.34	22	0
IL	0	0	11	0	40	1.8	11	0
IN	0	0	6	6	59	2.66	13	0
KS	0	6	19	6	42	5.42	26	0
KY	0	3	9	3	69	3.34	37	0
LA	0	0	23	3	61	3.84	19	3
MA	0	0	15	52	73	25.36	55	0
MD	0	0	13	3	61	3.16	19	3
ME	0	3	9	0	44	4.22	13	3
MI	0	0	58	3	45	3.13	23	0
MN	0	0	6	16	34	3.78	19	0
MO	0	0	19	6	42	2.77	16	0
MS	0	0	6	3	26	2.03	13	0
MT	0	0	13	0	35	.81	13	0
NC	3	0	28	0	41	1.47	19%	0
ND	0	0	16	0	28	.94	16	0
NE	3	0	17	0	41	1	10	0
NH	0	0	16	0	48	.97	16	0
NJ	0	0	13	0	55	2.1	23	0
NM	3	0	13	3	32	.55	13	0
NV	0	0	10	0	35	.84	13	3
NY	3	0	15	0	64	4.67	24	0
OH	0	0	38	0	53	1.53	22	0
OK	0	0	13	0	44	.94	9	0
OR	0	0	0	0	35	1.06	13	3
PA	0	0	44	0	63	2.47	22	3
RI	3	0	20	3	33	.67	13	0
SC	10	0	42	3	55	1.35	19	0
SD	3	0	32	3	48	1.74	13	0
TN	0	0	6	0	39	1.77	26	0
TX	6	0	21	3	61	2.67	21	0
US	2	0	30	0	67	4.83	32	0
UT	6	0	29	0	31	.66	71	0
VA	3	0	36	6	58	2.45	18	3
VT	3	0	13	0	41	.75	28	0
WA	0	0	34	6	50	2.28	13	3
WI	0	0	18	8	44	.74	10	0
WV	0	0	23	0	47	1.13	23	0
WY	0	0	10	0	18	.3	3	0

Note: The following table shows the percentage of websites in each state and the U.S. federal government that have each feature, such as disability access, privacy, and security statements.

<b>Table A-5 Individual State/Fed Profiles for Disability Access, Privacy, and Security</b>									
	<i>Email</i>	<i>Comme nt</i>	<i>Update</i>	<i>Persona lization</i>	<i>W3C Disabil</i>	<i>508 Disabil</i>	<i>Privacy</i>	<i>Secur</i>	
<b>AK</b>	94%	0%	3%	3%	33%	21%	12%	3%	
<b>AL</b>	91	6	3	0	16	16	22	9	
<b>AR</b>	79	31	21	0	21	14	41	34	
<b>AZ</b>	97	31	19	0	22	16	75	47	
<b>CA</b>	88	44	9	6	25	6	75	69	
<b>CO</b>	72	19	13	3	38	19	34	25	
<b>CT</b>	87	16	16	0	39	19	71	71	
<b>DE</b>	87	26	3	6	35	35	55	29	
<b>FL</b>	100	19	42	3	39	19	55	6	
<b>GA</b>	88	21	9	3	24	21	45	39	
<b>HI</b>	79	21	3	0	44	38	41	21	
<b>IA</b>	100	26	0	0	10	10	32	6	
<b>ID</b>	91	25	6	3	22	22	34	16	
<b>IL</b>	91	29	0	3	26	29	91	60	
<b>IN</b>	97	53	6	3	28	41	88	88	
<b>KS</b>	97	10	13	0	74	42	42	26	
<b>KY</b>	100	20	0	0	46	37	83	43	
<b>LA</b>	87	29	23	6	16	13	19	10	
<b>MA</b>	88	21	9	3	30	24	76	73	
<b>MD</b>	87	39	3	0	19	16	71	16	
<b>ME</b>	88	16	3	3	59	44	72	0	
<b>MI</b>	84	32	19	10	52	13	84	81	
<b>MN</b>	94	38	6	0	41	31	25	16	
<b>MO</b>	97	26	13	0	55	39	61	26	
<b>MS</b>	90	19	3	0	3	3	26	6	
<b>MT</b>	94	23	3	0	19	10	32	26	
<b>NC</b>	97	25	22	3	38	16	47	38	
<b>ND</b>	100	19	6	0	84	81	47	28	
<b>NE</b>	97	21	7	0	24	17	3	0	
<b>NH</b>	94	19	13	0	68	65	71	68	
<b>NJ</b>	90	10	0	3	0	0	90	90	
<b>NM</b>	97	3	0	0	19	16	6	6	
<b>NV</b>	94	19	3	0	32	29	55	10	
<b>NY</b>	91	12	9	3	48	45	70	64	
<b>OH</b>	91	44	28	3	22	19	50	38	
<b>OK</b>	97	16	9	3	16	13	25	19	
<b>OR</b>	97	23	16	0	19	16	29	16	
<b>PA</b>	91	41	38	6	53	22	66	59	
<b>RI</b>	90	13	10	3	43	37	37	30	
<b>SC</b>	84	16	16	6	32	23	35	19	
<b>SD</b>	71	48	19	0	38	35	81	77	

<b>TN</b>	90	29	10	0	35	23	81	81	
<b>TX</b>	91	33	30	0	67	30	85	24	
<b>US</b>	93	52	32	5	47	22	75	62	
<b>UT</b>	89	11	17	0	14	14	83	83	
<b>VA</b>	88	30	33	3	27	21	73	30	
<b>VT</b>	88	28	13	0	19	13	25	22	
<b>WA</b>	97	22	19	3	22	13	69	50	
<b>WI</b>	82	18	3	0	31	21	46	44	
<b>WV</b>	90	20	7	0	27	20	33	03	
<b>WY</b>	88	5	0	0	43	35	57	55	

**Table A-6 Best Practices of Top Federal and State Websites, 2003**

### I. Top Five States

1) Massachusetts <http://www.mass.gov/portal/index.jsp>

Massachusetts took the top ranking spot this year with a score of 46.3 percent, using an easy, accessible format to provide services for visitors which allowed Massachusetts to stand out among the other states. Most of the sites that linked to the portal (agencies, elected officials, etc.) carried the same banner heading that provided links to the 48 online services offered, a listing of agency sites, a search option, and a link to the portal. With this heading, the user could visit any site under the Massachusetts portal and still have immediate access to all online services. The organization of the site was clear and concise, with different services accessible in an organized fashion.

2) Texas <http://www.state.tx.us>

Texas, the number two ranked state, has an attractive and clutter-free portal page. The website displays its fifty on-line services which include such vital functions as paying taxes and renewing vehicle registrations. The privacy policy is well outlined, comprehensible, and comprehensive including web traffic monitoring by software to protect data security. The drop down menus at the left side of the portal provide dozens of links at the users fingertips to varied and oft-requested topics such as nutrition, public records, consumer protection, and taxes. Each link is included with a brief synopsis of the services that the link offers and approximately how long it will take to process the service. The listing of all state agencies from the portal page included not only a link to the website itself but to the “TRAIL” page—a detailed directory listing—and to related on-line publications. Many of Texas’ websites included at least one on-line service.

3) Indiana <http://www.state.in.us/>

Indiana placed third in this year’s research, with a total of 42.4 percent. The portal site was direct and easy to use, with several services gracing the homepage and easy accessibility to further links. Indiana also incorporated a banner heading for each of the sites under its portal, providing links to a listing of agencies, a “text-only” version, link to the portal, contacting the webmaster, and a search option. With this banner, visitors could easily check the privacy policy for each site, search the entire “Access Indiana” site for a particular subject, find a contact-person for questions, etc. Indiana also clearly expressed desire to know preferences and experiences of its visitors with “IN.gov Fan” stories posted on the portal.

4) Tennessee <http://www.state.tn.us>

From the catchy banner at the top of the portal, to the photos of Memphis' swinging nightlife, Tennessee's websites are characterized by attractive pages and easy-to find services. Many of the services, including applications for unemployment benefits and submission for a state job application include on-line demos. The Tennessee.gov portal banner heads most department and officials' websites which provides an easy link back to the portal, to on-line services, and to contact information. Tennessee websites frequently utilized multi-media options, such as offering Public Service Announcements on the Department of Labor's website or video and audio recording of arguments from the Assembly's page. Many of the links to different agencies from the portal include synopses of the services that each link offers. The long list of on-line services that Tennessee offers is on a well-organized page and includes the option of getting e-mail notification when a new service is offered. A "survey" link at the bottom of each page solicits feedback from users. State agency websites are organized in a similar fashion to the portal, in that most information is categorized in easy-to-use drop down menus rather than scattered around the page.

5) California [http://www.state.ca.us/state/portal/myca\\_homepage.jsp](http://www.state.ca.us/state/portal/myca_homepage.jsp)

California ranked fifth in this year's e-government research survey, proudly displaying a clear "Online Services" link right on its homepage and offering PDA accessibility. With personalization, an enormous amount of online services available, and clear format for navigation, California's site offered much of what one could hope for from a state site. A heading with a link to the portal site lined the tops of sites within the portal, providing an easy way back to the "MyCalifornia" homepage.

## II. Top Five Federal Agencies

1) Firstgov.gov Portal <http://www.firstgov.gov>

The number one ranked federal website is firstgov.gov, the federal government's portal page. From the banner at the top of the page it is possible to translate firstgov into one of 25 other languages. The portal also includes a video welcome from President Bush in video format viewable on Realplayer, an archive of press releases from the federal government, and directories for e-mail, phone, and in-person contact with government officials. Firstgov's privacy policy protects the personal information of users by prohibiting cookies, expressly prohibiting marketing and sharing of information, and employing software technology to monitor web traffic and protect security. Firstgov also includes a whopping 62 services and gives users the option to receive e-mail notification from Firstgov when the website is updated. The bottom of the page also includes the option to link to Firstgov.gov or to suggest a page that Firstgov.gov should link to.

2) Federal Communications Commission <http://www.fcc.gov/>

The FCC ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in this year's federal site e-government survey. The front page boasted distinct categories for audio/visual events, commissioners, general information, and consumer information (including links to links to numerous services and language options). The site fulfilled a majority of the measures coded for, including privacy policy, subscription to a daily report, contact information, a link to the portal, search tool, and the like. The FCC site was comprehensive, covering a range of services, and easily accessible to the visitor.

3) Social Security Administration <http://www.ssa.gov>

The Social Security Administration's website ranks third out of the federal websites and includes useful information such as how to protect against identity theft as well as a host of databases and statistics including a "monthly statistic snapshot". From a menu bar at the top the user may select foreign language translation into 15 separate languages. Following accessibility

standards, the SSA's website is both WC3 and Section 508 compliant. The website offers 17 separate services which include applying for retirement benefits on-line and requesting a Medicare card on-line. There is also a link soliciting feedback on the website's "new look" and the option to receive the SSA's electronic newsletter. A convenient drop-down menu at the top of the screen provides answers to hundreds of frequently asked questions arranged by topic. The SSA's website also includes fun information like a "kids" page and a list of the most popular baby names for 2002.

4) Internal Revenue Service <http://www.irs.gov>

The Internal Revenue Service's webpage, the fourth ranked federal website, is far more inviting than the IRS's reputation. The website offers eight different services, the most prominent of which is the "e-file" service or the ability to file taxes on-line using a major credit card. The website offers a bevy of statistics, a convenient directory of office phone numbers accessed by clicking on your area of the map of the U.S., and detailed instructions on filling out forms. The website is offered in both Spanish and English and also includes a search engine that yields accurate and up-to-date results. The IRS icon at the top of every page provides an easy link back to the portal. The website also includes a game "The Perfect Match" as a fun quiz for users to test their knowledge of tax benefits.

5) Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/>

The Library of Congress placed fifth with a total of 68 percent. With services from interactive sites for children to extensive international databases, this site brought to life the statement "more than a library" on the front page. Visitors could shop at the "LOC" store, use the live help "Ask a Librarian" service, or browse through the exclusive online library "exhibitions" that one would expect to see at a museum, certainly not on a website! The "Global Gateway" connects visitors to a dearth of world resources, and the site has links geared towards particular visitors (researchers, lawyers, teachers, kids, blind persons, newcomers, persons with disabilities, etc.) In all, a truly impressive site that provides the visitor with much more than one would expect.