

e-GOVERNMENT

THE NEXT

American Revolution



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Senator Fred Thompson (R-TN) *“...The government could do more to harness technology to make the government more results-oriented... I congratulate the Council for Excellence in Government for providing an e-government blueprint.”*

Stephen Goldsmith, Special Advisor to the President for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives *“Electronic government will not only break down boundaries and reduce transaction costs between citizens and their governments but between levels of government as well...”*

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) *“The Internet offers us a unique opportunity to allow the American people to have everyday access to public information. Initiatives like this harness the power of the information age to help open up our government to everyone.”*

Scott Harshbarger, President, Common Cause
“E-government holds the promise of making government more accountable to its citizens. I applaud the Council for Excellence in Government for leading this effort to bring government closer to the American public through technology.”

Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) *“E-government is the wave of the future, and the Council for Excellence in Government deserves enormous credit for energetically promoting the issue with its consensus building approach...”*

Sharon Dawes, Director, University at Albany/SUNY, Center for Technology in Government *“E-government goals are focused on the future of our whole society...the inclusiveness of the Council’s E-Government Initiative moves us all in this direction.”*

Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA) *“...E-government, done right, should mean better government, at a lower cost to taxpayers...this document from the Council for Excellence in Government is an important step toward that goal.”*

Pat Gross, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Co-founder, American Management Systems; Co-chair, Intergovernmental Technology Leadership Consortium
“E-government is revolutionizing the relationship between business, government, and citizens—stimulating economic growth and providing dramatically improved services to constituents nationwide. The Council deserves enormous credit for mobilizing this e-government effort.”

E-Government: The Next American Revolution 1

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What has the greatest potential to revolutionize the performance of government and revitalize our democracy?



The answer is electronic government.

When technology, imagination, and leadership converge, powerful results follow. From Copernicus and Galileo to Gutenberg, Edison, and beyond, history is filled with breakthroughs that forever changed the way we live and think.

The Internet, created by a government research agency, is another revolutionary advance.

It is profoundly changing the way our society communicates, works, and learns. It is touching lives in ways that would have seemed a utopian dream just a decade ago, enabling a sick patient in rural Kansas to have her X-rays read instantly by a radiologist a thousand miles away, or a U.S. Navy sailor in the Indian Ocean to check nightly on children back home.

The dot.gov revolution is next.



Electronic government can fundamentally recast the connection between people and their government. It can make government far more responsive to the will of the people and greatly improve transactions between them. It can also help all of us to take a much more active part in the democratic process.

With new leadership in Washington and across the country, we have an unprecedented opportunity to make government and democracy work in ways our forebears never dreamed of—and work better than ever.





E-the-people

The big idea here is e-the-people. E-government links people not just to each other and the e-commerce marketplace, but also to the public marketplace of ideas, debate, priorities, initiatives, innovation, services, transactions, and results. It puts ownership of government truly in the hands of all Americans—most of whom, according to opinion research sponsored by the Council for Excellence in Government, currently think in terms of *the* government, not *our* government.

This is especially true for young people, who have come of age in a time when political scandals and foibles have tarnished the ideal of public service.

For the next generation of American leaders—young pioneers for whom keyboards and wireless communication are part of their connective existence—the avalanche of emerging technology is a given. Accustomed to the advantages of private-sector application of information technology, they will demand no less when it comes to government.

Yet in their pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, these young trailblazers do not see much role for government or democracy. What young Thomas Jefferson saw as a dramatic enterprise in representative government—a powerful voice for the American people—they reject as boring or irrelevant—“whatever.” Only a third of young people ages 18-24 vote in presidential elections, compared with two-thirds of those 45 and older. Voting is not for them. Neither is public service. The best and brightest simply are not choosing it.

Instead, they are seeking to change the world, and their lives, through new technology and communications in entrepreneurial endeavors in the private and nonprofit sectors.

But what if government embraced information technology with imagination and bold leadership? What if not only young people but all Americans saw e-government as the way to change the world in a meaningful way? What if the current disconnect between people of all ages and their democracy were bridged and revitalized?





Charting the Path

Spurred by the promise in those questions, a hundred industry, government, research, and non-profit leaders in information technology began working together in November 1999 to develop the e-government vision and recommendations set out in this blueprint (eventually, their number swelled to 350). Their work was launched, guided, and coordinated by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Council for Excellence in Government. The project commissioned two surveys conducted in August 2000 and January 2001 by national opinion specialists Peter Hart and Robert Teeter.

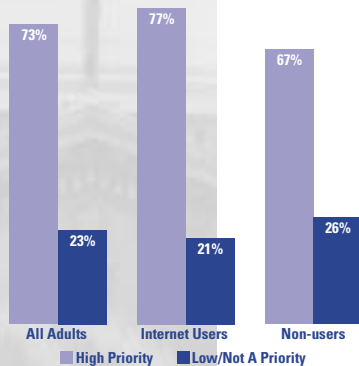
Beyond the quantum improvement e-government could make in the quality, speed, and cost of delivering public-sector services across the board, these experts knew it could bring people closer to their elected officials and public servants.

What they have produced is not just another set of policy recommendations to this country's new leadership. This is not about routine improvement or incremental change. It is about a sweeping transformation that information technology has now made not only imaginable but achievable.

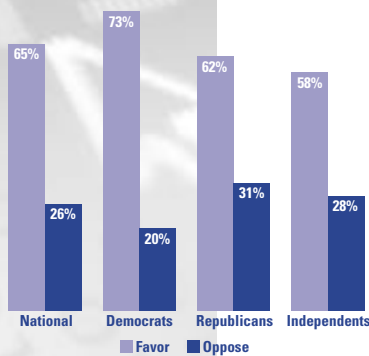
If e-the-people is the big idea, the January 2001 Hart/Teeter poll shows that Americans today believe e-government is the way to get there.

- By a margin of more than 3-to-1, Americans say e-government should be a high priority for the new president.
- Two-thirds support the appointment of a White House technology czar to lead government-wide innovation and service improvements through the Internet.
- By a similar margin, they believe public-private sector partnerships are the best way to get this done, rather than leaving it to government or private industry alone.
- Almost two-thirds favor the use of government funds to help individual states modernize their voting systems, for example by installing electronic voting machines similar to automatic teller machines widely used by banks.

Public Support for Making E-Government a High Priority



Public Support for Modernizing Voting Systems



Vision and Guiding Principles

Imagine government truly of, by, and for the people—where individuals and organizations no longer wait in line between eight and five on weekdays only, but where they can be online at any time or place they wish. A place not only to get information but also to complete transactions with government, get services, talk with elected representatives—even to vote. A government that organizes and furnishes information and services around the needs of people while protecting their privacy.

Imagine people in government who are excited about using the Internet to make a difference and produce results, answering questions instantly, using secure networks that cross organiza-



Guiding Principles

tional boundaries to serve the public. Imagine people in business enjoying fast and easy interactions with government that produce results in the public interest.

Imagine people in all sectors—government, business, non-profits, and the research community—working together to make this happen quickly, creatively, and cost effectively. This is e-government—*our* government of the future, not *the* government of the past.

But don't stop there. E-government is not just about speed, efficiency, or accessing information online. It can also be tailored by individuals according to their preferences and needs.

Imagine individual Americans creating customized, one-stop sites for themselves online, where they can choose to get information, conduct transactions, or communicate with their elected representatives. Imagine having your own self-designed, interactive site where you can directly conduct all your business with government whenever you wish. You can pay taxes, check your Social Security earnings, find out whether your building permit has been granted, renew your driver's license after your site has reminded you without being asked that it is coming due. You can also participate in public hearings, create communities of interest with others online, monitor voting records, and express your views to your representatives. In short, you can choose how and when to connect with government, with the ability to choose appropriate levels of privacy and security.

We do not just advocate substituting electronic for personal communications between people and public servants. Rather, we envision more strategic and satisfying personal communications of higher quality, supported by electronic information, sources, transactions, and interactions.

Challenges

Federal law calls for maximum achievement of electronic information and service delivery in all agencies by 2003. With some notable exceptions, however, government lags other sectors of American society in its capacity to capitalize on the opportunities offered by information technology. By one estimate, less than one percent of current interactions between government and its customers are online. In a country that has pioneered entirely new models for e-commerce, why is the era of e-government lagging behind?

One answer lies simply in the huge amount of information that government must generate, update, and manage and in the difficulties of putting programs and organizations of the government's size and complexity online. Second, government's customer base dwarfs those of even the largest multinational corporations. Its many systems requiring personal data are not connected, so that the public must enter data separately into each system. Sometimes, this is a necessary function of security and privacy. For most purposes, however, automatic data exchange at the public's request should be routine. Again, most of government's myriad systems have been designed independently of the others, with their own word usage and definitions. This is true even of systems dealing with similar activities but in different agencies.

What should e-government be?

1. **Easy to use**, connecting people with federal, state, regional, local, tribal, and international governments according to their preferences and needs.
2. **Available to everyone**, at home, at work, in schools, in libraries and other convenient community locations.
3. **Private and secure**, with the appropriate standards for privacy, security, and authentication—generating trust—required for e-government to grow and serve the public.
4. **Innovative and results-oriented**, emphasizing speed and harnessing the latest advances in technology.
5. **Collaborative**, with solutions developed collectively and openly among public, private, nonprofit, and research partners, on the basis of their experience and expertise.
6. **Cost-effective**, through strategic investments that produce significant long-term efficiencies and savings.
7. **Transformational**, harnessing technology through personal and organizational leadership to change the way government works, rather than merely automate existing practices.

These principles should guide the choices of leaders in pursuit of e-government



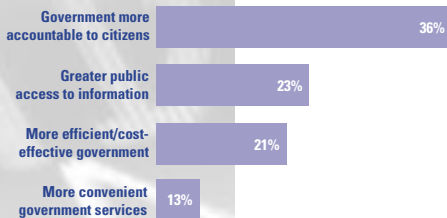
The public must learn each one separately to conduct an adequate, timely search.

The time has come to correct this situation—to make e-government a complete and functioning reality. Society’s needs demand it. Technology’s capabilities make it possible. Consider these facts:

- Internet access has grown with stunning speed. The Hart/Teeter poll in January 2001 showed that 56 percent of Americans use the Internet at least once a week and a majority is online several times a week.
- Parents buy computers for their children today that are far more powerful than those that helped run the nation’s military and domestic programs a generation ago.
- Some \$350 billion worth of business will be transacted on the Internet in the United States in 2001.
- The digital divide is still a significant socioeconomic fact, with about 45 percent of Americans on the wrong side of the gap. Though that figure is projected to drop to 20 percent by 2005, it is incumbent on this society to bring it as close to zero as possible in the shortest possible time.
- Two-fifths of Americans—and two-thirds of Internet users—have already visited a government web site, according to the August 2000 Hart/Teeter survey. Nearly a quarter go online to check a government web page or pages at least once a week. Seven in ten rated the quality as excellent or good.



Most Important Benefits of E-Government



The Hart/Teeter polls also suggest that Americans have even more ambitious goals in mind for e-government. They see it as conferring on citizens the power to hold government more accountable, with 36 percent citing this as one of e-government’s most important benefits. Among other such benefits, 23 percent chose greater public access to information, 21 percent mentioned efficiency, and 13 percent picked convenience.

Examples of the productive use of government web sites abound. Students filed more than two million applications for college financial aid through the U.S. Department of Education’s online service last year. Two thirds of the practicing physicians in Georgia renew their licenses online. In Virginia and other states, driver’s licenses can be renewed with a few clicks of a mouse.

With the use of government web sites surging, information technology has been compared to a huge cresting wave just beginning to break over government. But government cannot allow itself to be swamped. It must surf this wave successfully.

The authors of this blueprint believe the e-government they advocate can provide real—not theoretical—answers to these dilemmas. We don’t pretend that translating those answers into reality will be simple or quick. The blueprint is not a detailed road map. But it poses the fundamental challenge of bringing e-government into being, sets out specific princi-

ples and proposals to meet it, and identifies the resources required. Those who have worked on this blueprint are committed to helping government carry it out, refining and modifying it as experience and circumstances require.

When that job is done, people and organizations will be able to make government work directly for them, whatever the need, however great or small. Note that four in ten Americans doubt government's effectiveness at solving problems and helping people. But note also that a majority of these skeptics thinks e-government will have a positive impact on how government operates.

As people draw closer to government, they will understand more about what self-government is and what it can and cannot do. Greater understanding breeds greater confidence and trust. It is that interaction—government and citizen, government and private organization, government and other governments—that is the essential nature, the ultimate purpose, of e-government.

What follows are our recommendations for achieving e-government: transformational leadership; the strategic investment of significant working capital; broad public/private collaboration; a skilled workforce; creative approaches to the issues of privacy, security, and other technical challenges; and access and education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership

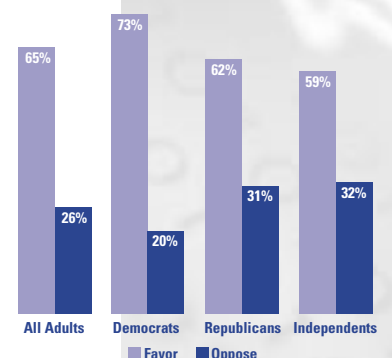
Creative, committed leaders at all levels and all branches of government are essential to make this vision of e-government a reality. Starting with the president—and extending to the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet, the Congress, governors, mayors, state legislators, and the judiciary—public sector leaders must embrace e-government as a tool to transform and improve government and connect it to the people it serves.

We recommend that the president and the Congress clearly express this priority and carry it out by appointing people to the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet who are prepared to build and use e-government strategically and effectively.

To focus the effort, the president should:

- Name an *Assistant to the President for Electronic Government*, with Cabinet-equivalent rank. This new position would confirm the president's personal leadership role. Two-thirds of those surveyed by Hart/Teeter in January 2001 favored the appointment of such an e-government czar to make government information and services more readily available to the public.

Public Support for a "Technology Czar"





- Create a *Public/Private Council on Electronic Government*, chaired by the new assistant to the president. Membership should include representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal governments, the Congress, and leading figures from the private sector and the research community on the cutting edge of innovation in e-government communication.
- Designate the current Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as *Deputy Director for Management and Technology*, responsible for supporting the development of e-government through the OMB budget and management processes. The Deputy Director is uniquely positioned to blend advancement of technology with budget and program implementation. Similarly, departments should designate, at the level of assistant secretary or above, a senior officer with comparable responsibilities for management, budget, and technology.
- This Deputy Director should create an *Office of Electronic Government and Information Policy*, headed by a presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed *federal Chief Information Officer*. The federal CIO would chair an interagency Chief Information Officers Council of assistant secretaries and CIOs. The office of Electronic Government, with private sector collaboration, should organize the effort to define operating rules for the intersection of e-government and e-commerce.
- Insist that nominees to top appointed positions in the executive branch make a commitment to the strategic development of e-government in their departments and agencies.

The Congress

The legislative branch, no less than the executive and judicial branches, needs to make the most of the opportunities that information technology provides to connect the government with the people. In August 2000, the Hart/Teeter survey found that almost three quarters of the public believe e-government will enhance people's ability to communicate with their elected representatives.

- Congressional leaders should create a *Congressional Office of E-Government* that will guide congressional action, giving the public maximum electronic opportunity to receive information from and interact with all members, committees, and agencies of the Congress. It should supply advice and assistance to congressional committees on using e-government to achieve policy goals. The head of the new office should represent the Congress in the president's Public/Private Council on Electronic Government and provide the liaison with state and local government legislatures on electronic government.
- In the confirmation process, Senate committees should ascertain nominees' commitment to e-government. During oversight and appropriations hearings, the Congress should insist that agencies demonstrate their actions to implement e-government.

State, Local, and Tribal Government

Electronic government holds great promise at the state and local levels, and many have taken big steps toward e-government. According to the August 2000 Hart-Teeter survey, 45 percent of Internet users have already accessed a state government web site and 36 percent have visited a local government site. More than two-thirds favored being able to monitor public hearings on local issues.

Use of Government Web Sites

| | Internet Users | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | All Users | Frequent Users | Infrequent Users |
| Federal Government Web Sites | 54% | 66% | 38% |
| State Government Web Sites | 45% | 58% | 29% |
| Local Government Web Sites | 36% | 45% | 26% |

- States, counties, municipalities, tribal governments, school boards, and other entities should appoint leaders who will instill e-government in all their operations.
- Their representatives should work closely with the assistant to the president for electronic government and OMB to create easy-to-use web site links between all levels of government.
- They should join and support the president's Public/Private Council on Electronic Government, ensuring tight linkage between their efforts and federal efforts and continuing to innovate and spread their own successes.
- Their national and regional organizations should establish information exchanges and technical support groups to share successes and help avoid others' errors.

The Judiciary

Federal, state, and local judicial systems should use information technology to make their deliberations and arguments fully open to the public and ensure that the public has broad electronic access to, and interaction with, judiciary branch offices and courts.

- Court calendars, rules, case assignments, sentencing guidelines, decisions, and an easy-to-use guide to the judicial process should be available to and searchable by the public. Subject to appropriate safeguards, information about jury duty (schedule, location, responsibilities) should be online. Citizens should also be able to ask and get answers to questions online.





- The Administrative Office of the United States Courts and the National Center for State Courts should both appoint a liaison to the Public/Private Council on Electronic Government.

International

Around the world, a number of countries are moving along the road to e-government. Together with such other factors as the acceleration of economic globalization, this makes e-government cooperation at the international level as critical as between levels of government within the United States.

- The Public/Private Council on Electronic Government should take the lead in strengthening these relationships and in exchanging best practices with other countries.

The Strategic Investment Fund

The country responded boldly and decisively to the fear that computer systems would crash when the calendar rolled over from 1999 to 2000. The Congress appropriated \$3 billion for federal agencies to address their Y2K problems and ensure that Social Security benefits were paid, Medicare claims processed, air traffic controllers guided planes to safe landings, and a host of other government functions went on without interruption. This one-time capital investment succeeded.

Effective e-government requires a very different type of investment than that currently being directed to information technology projects. It needs capital for projects that address common issues of service delivery or program management across agencies as a whole, or provide technological solutions to critical problems, such as privacy, security, and interoperability. Such investment needs the benefit of creativity in many agencies and the private sector but cannot be adequately funded by any one agency. An e-government transformation on the scale required has to be supported by adequate investment, carefully applied to problem solving across government.

We recommend that:

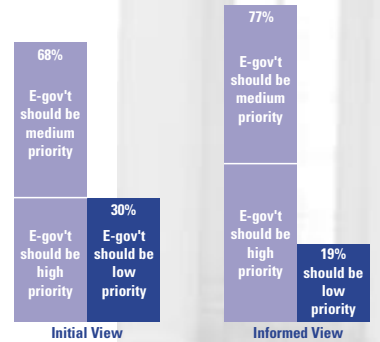
- The president request and Congress appropriate \$3 billion over a five-year period for an e-government Strategic Investment Fund. The total funding level is similar to the investment fund appropriated to repair government's Y2K problems. The federal government now spends \$40 billion annually on information technology, mainly to automate and update old systems. The e-government investment fund, with a first-year level of \$100-\$200 million, represents added spending at an average rate of 1.5 percent a year.
- With guidance from the assistant to the president, and advice from the Public/Private Council, OMB should follow allocation procedures similar to the Y2K fund. OMB

should ensure that every project is approved by agency chief operating officers, has clear results measures, is supported by the best evidence, and takes into account the views of agency CIOs.

- Collaborative ventures with the private sector and other levels of government should be funded. These should feature e-government program and service delivery initiatives that are both cross-sector and multi-agency, as well as research and development for solutions to enterprise-wide problems of privacy, security, and interoperability.
- When e-government efforts result in savings, federal agencies should be allowed to retain a portion of the savings to improve their programs.

Investing in e-government has strong support from the public. The August 2000 Hart/Teeter survey found a majority of Americans feeling that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a priority for Washington. After hearing about the specific features e-government can offer, that majority increased, to 77 percent.

E-Government is Public Priority for Investing Tax Dollars



Information leads to especially large shift among people currently not involved in government and among those with low confidence in government.

Collaboration

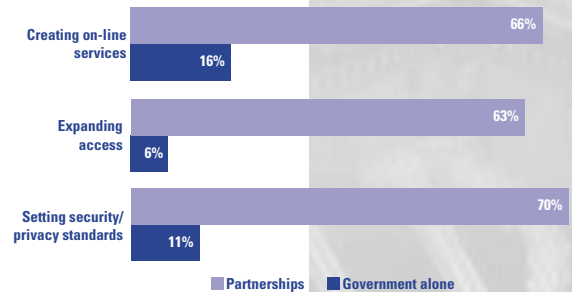
The January 2001 Hart/Teeter poll portrayed a public convinced that the way to proceed down the road to e-government is for government and industry to work together on making more government services available on the Internet, expanding access to greater numbers of people, and ensuring privacy and security on the Internet.

These findings only reinforce the reality that design, implementation, and management of e-government needs unprecedented and non-traditional collaboration between the public, private, nonprofit, and research sectors and within and across every level of government.

We recommend that:

- Government at all levels, in collaboration with the private sector, set policy and goals and invest strategically in e-government initiatives and research. In partnership with the private sector, it should modernize its infrastructure and its electronic accessibility to the public.
- The business community bring its entrepreneurial focus, skills, experience, and agility in innovation, customer service, and return on investment to the e-government enterprise. The private sector should play a larger role in the delivery of online government services by proposing more partnerships and products that deliver government services in a competitive model, encouraging innovation and low transaction costs.

Public Prefers that E-Government be Developed by Public-Private Partnerships





- Government's basic rules on public/private competition, including OMB Circular A-76, be thoroughly reviewed with the private sector to address the complexities of today's intersecting e-commerce and e-government environments. New definitions and workable approaches to issue resolution are needed when government appears to be engaging in commercial activities.
- Civic groups collaborate on the development of e-government solutions to improve programs and service delivery. They should also serve as monitors and evaluators, holding government and business accountable for progress toward e-government. They should recognize and reward success, call attention to opportunities for improvement and innovation, convene public discussion on e-government issues, and encourage collaboration and partnership between all sectors.
- The research community become a full partner in the e-government research and development effort, integrating applied research specifically into government missions.
- Individual Americans be included as participants in the design, building, and ownership of e-government.



The e-Government Work Force

All members of the government work force should embrace e-government approaches as the standard in carrying out their responsibilities wherever applicable. Electronic government is not the sole province of technological experts. For maximum impact, it must become ingrained in the thinking of government leaders, managers, and workers at all levels.

The federal CIO Council has recognized specific shortfalls in the supply and quality of the federal information technology workforce. According to the General Accounting Office, the U.S. economy added 1.6 million IT jobs in 2000. Competition for IT employees is stiff.

The Hart/Teeter poll of August 2000 found that a quarter of government executives feel that the "inability to recruit qualified personnel" and "lack of financial resources" are obstacles to achieving e-government.

We recommend the following steps:

- For all positions, but especially for IT positions, OPM should encourage hiring practices that are competitive with the private sector, through faster hiring procedures, aggressive use of signing and retention payments, flexible pay scales, and premium pay for workers with scarce skills at all levels.
- The government should offer flexible, entrepreneurial workplaces that attract and help retain the people who know best how to apply e-government techniques. Job structures, workplace rules, Senior Executive Service competencies, and performance

assessments should be redesigned to reflect agency program strategy changes based on e-government.

- Funding of aggressive training programs to help workers, managers, and leaders apply e-government strategies to their work. The Strategic Investment Fund should support development of innovative training models and components necessary for carrying out e-government ideas.
- Federal agencies and the White House should design rewards and recognition for highest quality performance at all levels to emphasize excellence in innovation and application of e-government approaches.
- The Office of Personnel Management and the CIO Council should help agencies inventory their requirements and execute strategies for IT work force recruitment. The aging of the federal workforce and the pending retirement of growing numbers of workers pose problems but also open positions for new hires with new skills.
- State and local governments should follow similar strategies, with a constant emphasis on leadership that is committed to making them succeed.

Privacy, Security, and Interoperability

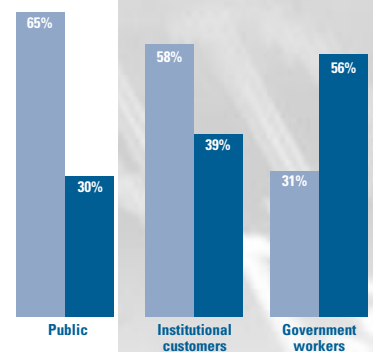
As shown by the Hart/Teeter survey in August 2000, Americans by more than two to one want to proceed slowly rather than quickly in implementing e-government because of concerns about security and privacy.

The survey found that 66 percent of the public is “extremely concerned” about “hackers breaking into government computers.” Such concern is not limited to the general public. Thirty-eight percent of government workers were also extremely concerned about the hacker problems; however, they had far more confidence that those issues can be adequately addressed (only 31 percent feel the need to “go slow”).

Given the potential of e-government to help restore public confidence, it is all the more imperative that public concerns with respect to privacy and security are thoroughly examined and addressed in the move to e-government. Ease of use and the reliability of technical infrastructure will be two keys to the willingness of government agencies to adopt e-government and to the public’s ability to use it. Another will be broad public confidence in government’s ability to keep personal information private and to make systems safe from inappropriate efforts to gain access. The recently released medical privacy regulations created by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-1910) may help in this regard.

With the development of security and privacy protections lagging behind the development of software, these issues must be addressed on a continuing basis, since new challenges arise continually from those who would invade users’ privacy and security.

Should We Proceed Slowly or Quickly on E-Government?



■ Slowly: many have no Internet access, security/privacy issues unresolved
■ Quickly: opportunities for improved services, communication, efficiency in government



We recommend the following actions:

- The Office of Electronic Government should solicit cross-sector and cross-agency proposals to the Strategic Investment Fund for developing and testing methods to improve privacy, security, and interoperability. It should give priority to their funding.
- The president should direct the Office of Electronic Government, in collaboration with the private sector, to issue guidelines on interoperability (on ensuring that systems communicate with other systems efficiently and effectively). This should be a priority for resources from the Strategic Investment Fund.
- Aggressive testing of solutions to technical challenges should be accelerated, with support from the Strategic Investment Fund and the private sector for the most promising of them. Wherever possible, solutions should be based on multi-agency functions that link readily, rather than on program or agency-specific ideas. Emerging and promising developments in technical standards for electronic business that affect interoperability need more attention, research, and testing in operational environments.
- Adequate technical infrastructure must be provided to support easy and reliable access to online information, interactions, and transactions. Attention should focus, for example, on sufficient network capacity or bandwidth to support user loads and demands. Likewise, computer platform and software applications must provide reliable, stable service in the 24 hours a day, seven days a week operating environment of the Internet.
- The public should be able to search directly for answers to problems, not have to find its way first through agency or program portals. The firstgov.gov search engine is a first step. More work in this area should address access to government information, including state and local government information, that goes beyond what is currently displayed on public web pages.

E-The-People

For 30 years, Americans have felt increasingly distant from government. This is clearly evident in declining voter turnout and in opinion polls showing public confidence in government at near-record lows. Yet Americans see the benefits of e-government as more than simply better or more cost-efficient services; they see it as a means of empowering citizens.

While nearly three out of four Americans believe that e-government will make it easier to communicate with their elected officials, too many Americans remain electronically disconnected. The numbers of Americans with access to the Internet is growing rapidly, but the Hart/Teeter poll in January 2001 reports that a third of the public still does not use it. For others, new technologies have increased the speed with which they can communicate with government, but

not the quality of those communications. And though 84 percent of public officials believe their information technologies have contributed to their public outreach, only 29 percent of the public, and only 37 percent of business leaders, are familiar with e-government.

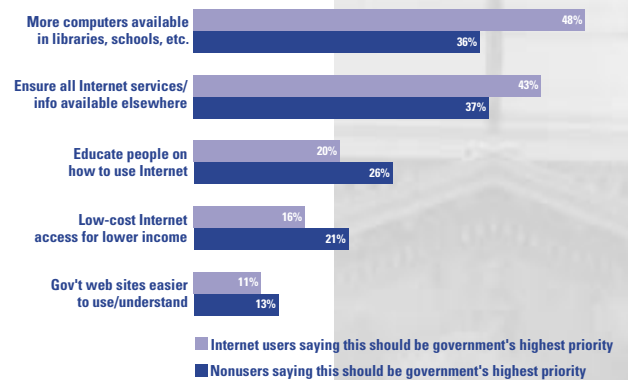
One third of adults, according to the Hart/Teeter August 2000 poll, are concerned that people without Internet access—people on the other side of the digital divide who are disproportionately the poor, minorities, and the disabled—will receive less government services. Almost half of current non-Internet users share this concern.

In short, despite the enormous potential offered by the Internet and new information technologies, governments at all levels have failed to produce a collaborative and interactive dialogue between citizens and their governments. This must change.

We recommend that:

- The president—together with the Congress, state governors, mayors, and legislators across the country—establish a goal of ensuring that all Americans have *access to the Internet in their homes*, regardless of income, disability, or educational background.
- The digital divide be closed. Collaboration with the private sector and other levels of government and non-profit organizations is essential to overcome the technical and financial hurdles to reach this goal.
- In the interim, every effort be made to expand public access to the Internet through libraries, community centers and other locations, focusing first on areas with the greatest need.
- The assistant to the president for electronic government and the Public/Private Council lead a campaign to educate the public on the value of electronic communications and how to use them to interact with government, conduct transactions, and receive services. Special attention should be given to working with segments of the population most often on the wrong side of the digital divide.
- The Public/Private Council organize a national series of public forums on electronic government, including electronic forums, to obtain maximum public input into e-government strategy, and to map a set of long-term policy goals with measurable objectives for the public and private sectors.
- These forums focus particularly on engaging people in the democratic process and the potential for electronic voting technology in which the public can have complete confidence.

Priorities for Addressing Access to the Internet



CONCLUSION



This bold vision of E-the-People electronic government—of the people, by the people, and for the people—is revolutionary in its potential impact on the strength and vitality of our government and our democracy.

We believe that this is one of those exciting moments in history when leaders are challenged to act, with imagination and determination, to achieve the quantum leaps that electronic government makes possible.

Leaders in the public and private sectors must, together, seize this opportunity to take the bold, decisive actions—as we have suggested in this report—to make electronic government a reality. The people are ready. We can do this, together.





e-GOVERNMENT:
THE NEXT
American Revolution

**Reports based on findings of surveys
conducted by Hart-Teeter
for
The Council for Excellence in Government
January 2001 & August 2000**

**This study was made possible by the generosity of two
corporations: KPMG LLP, which provided lead funding; and
Imagitas, Inc., which provided secondary funding.**

From January 4 to 6, 2001, the research firms of Peter D. Hart and Robert M. Teeter conducted a nationally representative survey among 1,017 American adults for the Council for Excellence in Government. The survey findings have a margin of error of 3.1%.

The Internet revolution is just beginning to heat up. The promise of “e-government” could transform how Americans obtain government services and information, interact with their elected representatives, and become involved as citizens. Research conducted in August 2000 for the Council (<http://www.excelgov.org/publication/polls.htm>) indicated that while many Americans were unfamiliar with the term “e-government,” the public sees great potential in the government using technologies. The public’s vision of governmental use of technologies goes beyond a more efficient government that offers accessible high-quality services on-line, to a more informed and empowered citizenry and a more accountable government. The August survey also revealed that the public is concerned with the security of information on the Internet, and so they would prefer that the government proceed slowly rather than quickly in developing e-government.

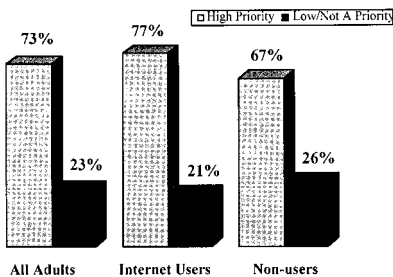
This survey clearly indicates that despite their concerns about the Internet, Americans continue to be enthusiastic about e-government. The public wants to see the government make better use of the Internet and other technologies, and they are looking to the new president to realize the promise of e-government by making it a top priority for his administration.

E-Government is a High Priority

Widespread use of government Web sites has laid a broad foundation of public support for e-government; i.e., using the Internet and other technolo-

gies to increase the availability of services and information. About three in four (73%) Americans believe that the new administration should put e-government at the top of its to-do list. Of those who have used the Internet to access government services or information, 80% say that President Bush should make government a high priority, but even a majority of those who may not benefit directly believe that e-government is of the utmost importance—67% of adults who do not use the Internet believe that e-government should be a top priority for the new president.

Public Support for Making E-Government a High Priority

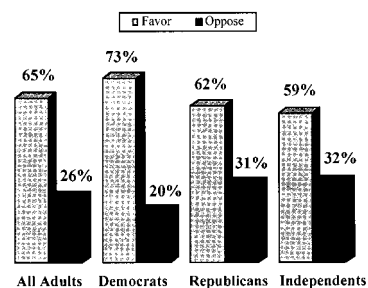


Support for a “Technology Czar”

The public is open to different ideas on how to develop e-government. Sixty-six percent favor President Bush’s appointing a “technology czar,” a high-level White House official who would oversee and encourage government use of the Internet and other technologies, to make information and services more readily available to the public. Support for a technology czar is high across the board, with 71% of Internet users and 71% of those who use “gov” sites once a month or more favoring the idea. Americans who turn to government

Web sites for assistance much less frequently also believe that the White House should be working to ensure the development of e-government, with 75% support for a technology czar.

Public Support for a “Technology Czar”



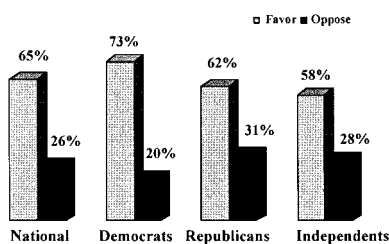
Technology in the Voting Booth

In the August survey, a majority of the public were opposed to on-line voting, in which people would cast their votes over the Internet, but they would like the government to use technologies to modernize how voting is conducted in the voting booth. Just weeks after the election controversy in Florida, Americans favor by a large margin (65% to 26%) having the federal government provide funds to individual states to modernize voting systems, by installing voting machines that work like ATMs, for example.

Modernizing the technology in the voting booth has bipartisan support, with 73% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans favoring federal funding for modernizing voting systems and only 20% of Democrats and 31% of Republicans opposing it. Support for this proposal is greatest among those who have used other e-government

services at least once a month (77% favor), but it is also strong among suburban residents (70%, versus 57% in rural areas and small towns), Northeasterners (70%, versus a low of 60% in the Midwest), and younger Americans (70%, versus 57% among those over age 65).

Public Support for Modernizing Voting Systems

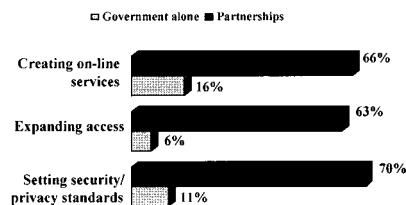


Public-Private Partnerships

The public would prefer that government agencies work with private industry in developing e-government rather than attempting to develop e-government on its own. Specifically, 66% of the public support public-private partnerships to develop e-government services, versus 16% who say that government should do it alone; 63% support partnerships to expand Internet access, versus 6% who say that government should work alone; and 70% support public-private partnerships to set standards for privacy and security on the Internet, versus 11% who say that government should set standards on its own. Those who frequently use the Internet to access government Web sites are particularly supportive of public-

private partnerships; for example, they are among the largest supporters of public-private partnerships' making more government services available on-line (71%).

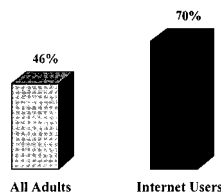
Public Prefers that E-Government be Developed by Public-Private Partnerships



Use of E-Government

There is support for e-government because the public is already making use of the Internet for government services and information. Nearly half (46%) of Americans have used a government Web site, and among Americans who use the Internet, 70% say that they have used the Internet to access a government service or obtain government information. In fact, a large proportion of U.S. adults regularly log on to government Web sites: three in ten (29%, 44% of Internet users) say that they use the Internet to

Proportions Who Have Accessed a Government Web Site



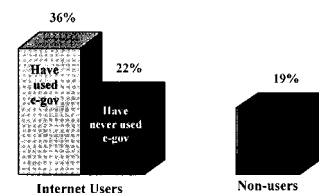
access government services or information once a month or more.

E-Government May Improve Public Confidence in Government

The research conducted in August indicated that e-government has the potential to reshape the public's largely negative attitudes toward government. In that poll, 56% of the public and 67% of those who had visited a government Web site said that e-government would have a positive effect on the way that government operates. If those using government Web sites are more optimistic about the effects of e-government, increased public use of e-government may lead to increased public confidence that government can solve problems.

The beginnings of this process may already be in evidence-36% of those who have used the Internet to access a government Web site have a high level of trust in the government, compared with only 22% of those Internet users who have never visited a government Web site and 19% of those who do not use the Internet at all.

Proportions Who Trust Government to Do What is Right



From August 14 to 16, 2000, the research firms of Peter D. Hart and Robert M. Teeter conducted a three-part study that included surveys of: 150 government officials; 155 business and non-profit leaders; and 1,003 members of the general public. The survey findings have a margin of error of plus or minus 4% for the national sample and a higher margin of error for specific subgroups.

I. Introduction

If the 1990s were the “Dot-Com Decade,” the first decade of the 21st century may well come to be seen as the “Dot-Gov Decade.” The digital revolution already is changing the way that government does business at the federal, state, and local levels. Americans believe that the arrival of “e-government” brings a tremendous potential for positive change, even as they identify some concerns that must be addressed. Over time, e-government promises to revolutionize Americans’ relationship with their government, not only as customers of government services, but also as citizens of a democracy. These are among the findings of a three-part study on the issue of e-government, conducted by Hart-Teeter on behalf of the Council for Excellence in Government, comprising surveys among the general public, government officials, and institutional “customers” of government (businesses and non-profit organizations). The surveys explored the three populations’ direct experience with and involvement in e-government, as well as their expectations of it and goals for the future. The three central conclusions that emerge from the survey data are reviewed in this introduction.

1. Americans believe that e-government will mean better government.

All three groups included in this study—the general public, government officials, and institutional customers—perceive great potential in e-government for improving the way that government

operates. By five to one (56% to 11%), the general public anticipates that e-government’s impact over the next five to 10 years will be positive rather than negative. Among people who use the Internet and thus are more likely to be familiar with e-government (63% of adults and growing quickly), the prediction is an even more decisive eight-to-one positive (62% to 8%). Government officials (92% positive) and institutional customers (76%) are even more convinced that e-government will mean better government.

The public clearly is still learning about e-government. Only half of all adults say that they are at least slightly familiar with the concept of “e-government,” although familiarity is higher among Internet users (64%). Government officials, in contrast, are much more familiar with e-government (93%, including 63% who are very or fairly familiar).

Although e-government is a new concept among the public, government officials indicate that it is already very much a reality: Virtually all (93%) report that their agency or department maintains a Web site, and three-fourths say that their agency has increased its investment in information technologies over the past two years. Moreover, two-thirds of on-line Americans report having visited a government Web site. And they are impressed by what they have seen, with nearly three-quarters (71%) grading the quality of government Web sites as excellent or good.

Among institutional customers of the federal government, 56% say that the ability to communicate via the Internet has made it easier to do business with the federal government.

The survey measures public reactions to several examples of e-government in action, covering various levels of government and a variety of public-sector functions. Majorities of adults express a favorable view of every e-government function tested, including majorities who are very favorable toward most functions. Among the most popular examples are the ability to get medical information from NIH and other agencies (80% favorable), the ability to view candidates’ voting records (77%), access to Social Security benefit information (73%), cost savings produced by on-line motor vehicle registration (71%), and on-line student loan applications (70%).

Two-thirds (68%) of Americans initially say that it should be a high or medium priority for government to invest tax dollars in making more information and services available over the Internet. Customers (87%) and government officials (83%) feel even more strongly that e-government should be a priority investment area. Moreover, after learning specific positive examples of e-government, the proportion of the public saying that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a priority grows to 77%.

It appears that e-government could have a far-reaching and important effect on

the public's perception of government. Among the more than four in ten (44%) Americans who question government's effectiveness at solving problems and helping people, a majority (51%) anticipate that e-government will have a positive effect on the way that government operates, and two in three believe that e-government will improve their ability to get information from government (68%) and government's ability to provide convenient services (64%). Moreover, 42% of this group have visited government Web sites, and most of them (67%) assess the quality of the sites as excellent or good.

Similarly, only 58% of Americans who have low confidence in government (33% of all adults) initially say that investing in e-government should be a high or medium priority. After hearing specific examples of e-government services, however, their support for making e-government a priority increases to 13 percentage points to 71%. While it is too early to know whether direct personal experience with e-government will change broader public attitudes toward government overall, such a positive reaction from people who are critical of government suggests the real possibility that e-government could have a positive impact.

2. The public wants to proceed carefully down the road toward digital government, saying that safeguarding security and privacy is their top priority. Enthusiasm for e-government is accompanied by some very important cautionary messages from the public. People were asked which one of the following statements comes closer to reflecting their own view of e-government:

Statement A: *We should proceed slowly in relying on the Internet for communication between citizens and their government because many people do not have access to the Internet and there are important issues of security and privacy that remain unresolved.*

Statement B: *We should proceed quickly in expanding use of the Internet for communication between citizens and their government because e-government offers opportunities for improved services, communication, and efficiency in government.*

By more than two to one, Americans want to proceed slowly (65%) rather than quickly (30%) in implementing e-government because of concerns about security, privacy, and access.

It is interesting that government officials hold the opposite view, saying by 56% to 31% that we should move quickly toward expanding e-government. This finding is not surprising, as government officials know far more than the public about e-government and have experienced its benefits more directly—80% believe that their agency has done an excellent or a good job of using the Internet to improve the efficiency and quality of its service. However, it will be important for those who carry out government's digital revolution to recognize that the people they serve have serious concerns about this process and that speed of implementation is not their top priority.

In addition, the public's concerns about security and privacy on the Internet are much deeper than their concerns about access. Two-thirds (66%) of Americans

are very concerned about the possibility of hackers' breaking into government computers, making this the number-one public concern about e-government. Majorities also express serious concern about the potential for government employees to misuse personal information (55%) and the general potential for less personal privacy (53%).

Similarly, when people assess the impact of e-government, privacy and security are the only dimensions on which significant proportions think that e-government will change things for the worse. Still, a plurality of Americans expect positive change with regard to both privacy (41% better, 25% worse) and security (40% better, 27% worse), suggesting that they believe that these challenges can be met. Furthermore, the public selects improving security for conducting transactions as its top priority for improving government Web sites.

Government officials also identify the threat of hackers and the loss of privacy as their top concerns about e-government. (They do not worry that government employees would misuse personal information.) Yet, their level of concern is substantially lower than that of the public (fewer than 40% of government officials are very concerned about each). Officials' higher level of confidence in security and privacy protections may well result from having more information. Nonetheless, it appears that those in government need to understand and address the public's serious security concerns.

Americans also worry about the "digital divide" implications for e-government,

but not to the same degree as with security and privacy. One-third (34%) of adults are concerned that people without Internet access will receive less government service (47% among non-Internet users). In the public's eye, the best solutions to this problem include making more computers available in public locations such as libraries and schools, and ensuring that all government information and services available on the Internet also are available in more traditional ways. Government officials and institutional customers also believe that these are the two best ways to address the digital divide.

3. The public's vision of e-government extends beyond efficient and high-quality services to a more informed and empowered citizenry and a more accountable government.

Americans clearly appreciate e-government's potential for producing a more cost-effective government that provides more convenient services. They respond very favorably to such innovations as being able to file taxes or apply for a college loan over the Internet and to the cost savings associated with on-line vehicle registration. However, the survey results suggest that Americans have an agenda for e-government that is more ambitious than just cutting paperwork or time spent waiting in line. They see its potential for giving citizens more information, which gives people the power to hold their government more accountable.

When people are asked to choose the most important one of four possible benefits of e-government, the results are quite instructive, as the following list shows.

- Government that is more accountable to its citizens 36%
- Greater public access to information 23%
- More efficient and cost-effective government 21%
- More convenient government services 13%

By a considerable margin, people believe that greater accountability is the greatest benefit that e-government could confer (chosen almost three times as often as convenient services). Priority number two is greater public access to information.

It is interesting that government officials regard public access to information as the greatest benefit (34%) but rank accountability much lower (19%). While government and the public apparently are in synch in valuing e-government's ability to produce a more informed citizenry, the public is much more focused on its empowering potential.

When people assess various concrete examples of e-government, their reactions provide further evidence of their appetite for information and accountability. As we have seen, the three items rated most favorably all involve the public's ability to get on-line information: medical information from such sources as NIH (69% very favorable), voting records of candidates for public office (63%), and benefit information from the Social Security Administration (58%). Reviewing candidates' voting records also is a good way for citizens to hold elected officials more accountable. Many people also like the Web site established by several senators through which the public can

offer comments on legislation (54% very favorable) and the possibility of monitoring over the Internet public hearings on local issues (50% very favorable).

Americans' interest in information and accountability is confirmed by their expectations for e-government's long-term impact. The area in which the most people predict that e-government will change things for the better is "people's ability to get information they need from government agencies" (75% think e-government will change things for the better). This aspect is followed closely by "people's ability to communicate with their elected representatives" (72%). A majority also anticipate that e-government will have a positive impact on government's level of accountability to citizens (54%), although the public seems somewhat less confident about this result.

It is interesting that majorities in all three surveys oppose on-line voting for federal offices: public (38% favor to 59% oppose), business and nonprofit leaders (39% to 57%), and government officials (39% to 49%). On-line voting apparently is not seen as a helpful way to improve government accountability, perhaps because of concerns about security.

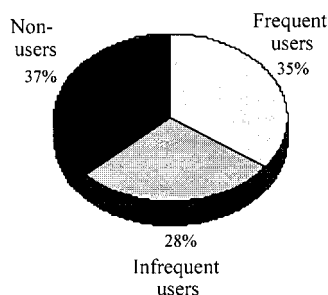
II. E-Government Today

A large majority of Americans now use the Internet.

Fully 63% of adults now use the Internet, including 31% who use it at work. More than half of this group (35% of all adults) are frequent users, who say that they use the Internet "very

often.” Internet use varies greatly along generational lines, being very prevalent among people under age 50 (72%) but not nearly as widespread among those age 65 and over (36%). In addition, clear signs of the digital divide emerge in terms of educational attainment, as Internet use is nearly universal among college graduates (85%) but remains a minority experience for those with a high school diploma or less education (42%).

Americans’ Internet Use



The public has a very positive view of the Internet, but questions its security. Three-quarters (74%) of Internet users say that it has had a positive effect on their lives. Most users, however, do not completely trust it for financial transactions: 55% say that making credit card transactions over the Internet is just somewhat or not at all safe. As this report details, this combination of attitudes toward the Internet—very positive, but not entirely trusting—extends to how people think about e-government.

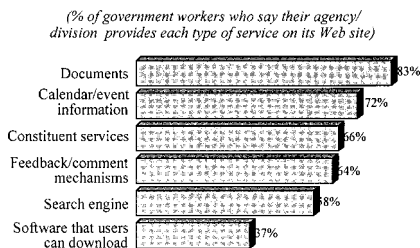
E-government is not just a theory or concept, it already is a reality.

Nearly every federal, state, and local government official we interviewed (93%) reports that their agency or division maintains a public Web site. Most (67%) believe that their sites are doing an excellent or a good job of serving

constituents. Moreover, three in four say that their agency has increased investments in information technologies over the past two years, while just 1% report a decrease. The commitment to implementing e-government appears to be widespread.

Officials at all levels of government report a range of information or services provided through their Web sites. Nearly all the sites offer information, and several allow people to conduct transactions on-line. Yet, fewer of them enable visitors to give feedback or comments on government services or processes, and even fewer provide a search engine as a way to easily navigate through the site.

Services Provided On Government Web Sites



Government is investing in e-government, and government officials believe that the investment is paying off: 75% of officials say that e-government has helped their agency with internal administration, and 84% report that it has helped with public outreach. Majorities also believe that e-government has helped improve the coordination among the different levels of government; 73% say that the federal government has made a lot or a fair amount of progress in this area, 65% say the same for state government, and 55% report the same for local government.

On-line citizens are using and appreciating government Web sites.

A majority of Internet users in the United States are taking advantage of what the government has made available on-line: 66% report having visited at least one of the many federal, state, and local government Web sites. This represents 41%, or not quite half, of the general public. Among those most likely to have visited government Web sites are frequent Internet users (77%, compared with 52% of infrequent users) and those involved in government (51% among people who say that they are very or fairly active in government, compared with only 31% among those not active in government). On-line Americans have encountered e-government more commonly at the federal level (54%) than at the state (45%) or local (36%) levels.

Among Internet users who have visited a government Web site, seven in 10 rate the quality of the sites as excellent (13%) or good (58%). Many (60%) also say that it is very or fairly easy to find the government Web sites that they need; only 36% have found this to be a fairly or very hard task. In addition, frequent Internet users are more likely than less frequent users to say it is easy to find what they need.

Businesses and nonprofits also are accessing e-government. A large majority (79%) of the business and nonprofit leaders interviewed have used government Web sites, and those who have visited these sites rate them favorably (72% excellent or good). Many also indicate that these sites have helped their organization. Among those who report that their

Use of Government Web Sites

| | Internet Users | | | Confidence in Government | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------|-----|
| | All Users | Frequent Users | Infrequent Users | High | Medium | Low |
| Federal gov't Web sites | 54% | 66% | 38% | 56% | 53% | 51% |
| State gov't Web sites | 45% | 58% | 29% | 44% | 48% | 41% |
| Local gov't Web sites | 36% | 45% | 26% | 42% | 37% | 30% |

business or organization interacts at least sometimes with the federal government (73%), three-quarters say that being able to find information or conduct transactions over the Internet has made it easier to do business with federal agencies. In addition, a majority (53%) of business and nonprofit leaders say that the ability to find government information on the Internet has made it easier for them to comply with government regulations.

III. Attitude Toward E-Government

Institutional customers, government officials, and the public all see e-government as having enormous potential.

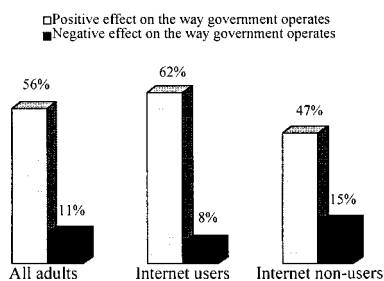
Government officials clearly are excited about the potential they see in e-government, perhaps because of the benefits already in evidence. Virtually all (92%) of them predict that e-government will have a positive effect on their agencies or divisions in the future, including 65% who predict its having a very positive effect. In addition, 83% believe that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a medium to high priority.

Institutional customers share this enthusiasm: 76% expect that e-government will have a positive effect on the

way that government operates. In fact, business and nonprofit leaders are more inclined than government officials to say that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a medium to high priority (87%).

The general public also is supportive of e-government. A 56% majority of adults (62% of Internet users) believe that e-government will have a positive effect on the way that government operates. This level of support is not as high as in the other two surveys, largely because 37% of Americans do not use the Internet and therefore find it hard to evaluate e-government's potential (25% are unable to say what effect e-government will have). In contrast, 67% of frequent Internet users predict that e-government will have a positive effect on the way that government operates.

Public's Perception of Long-Term Effect of E-Government



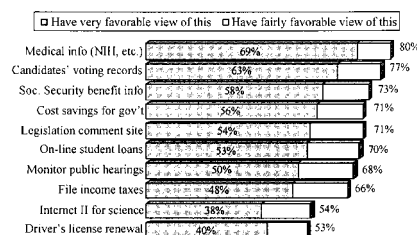
Very few people react negatively to the idea of e-government: Only 11% of

adults expect that e-government will have a negative effect on government, including only 6% of frequent users—those who know the Internet the best.

Younger people are especially enthusiastic about e-government. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of adults age 18 to 34 say that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a high or medium priority, compared with 63% of those age 50 to 64 and only 57% of those 65 and older who say the same. Younger men, in particular, support e-government, as 63% of men age 18 to 44 believe that e-government will have a positive effect on the way that government operates, compared with 51% of their female counterparts who say the same.

The public reacts quite enthusiastically to several specific examples of e-government. The two most popular features are the ability to access medical information from such institutions as the National Institutes of Health and the ability to look up candidates' voting records, although majorities respond favorably to all the examples of e-government.

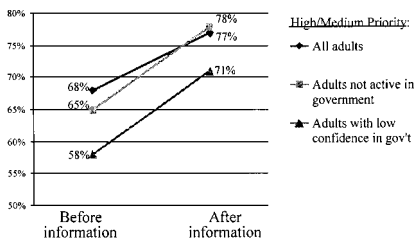
Favorability Ratings for Examples of E-Government



Prior to hearing about these possible features of e-government, two-thirds (68%) of Americans believe that investing tax dollars in e-government should be a medium to high priority, including

a majority who do not use the Internet. Once people learn more about e-government, particularly the specific features it can offer, this priority increases.

Impact of Information on Public's Priority Ratings for E-Government



Learning a little about e-government has a particularly powerful effect on Americans who are not active in government and on those who have little confidence in government. The four in ten adults who say they are not active in government initially put slightly less priority on e-government than does the overall public, but they end up assigning it a higher priority. Among Americans overall, the proportion who give medium or high priority to e-government grows from 68% initially to 77% after the information is presented, a nine-point increase. More telling is the growth among people who are the least active and have the least confidence in government. Among those not active in government, the proportion saying e-government should be a priority rises from 65% to 78%, a 13-point gain. And while a majority (58%) of adults with low confidence in government initially say that e-government should be a priority, this level of support is significantly less than that of the public overall. However, once they hear about the specific features and examples of e-government and have an opportunity to consider its implications, their support also increases by 13 points to 71%. Overall,

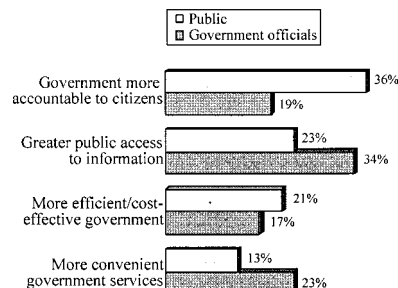
33% of adults increase their priority rating of e-government as a result of what they learn in the survey.

Americans see the benefits of e-government as more than better or more cost-efficient services—they regard e-government as a way for citizens to become better informed and more involved in government.

While the public sees e-government as simply better government, they also see it as making an important contribution to a more participatory democracy. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of adults, including two in three (64%) who do not use the Internet, believe that people's ability to communicate with their elected representatives will get better with e-government. That the public evaluates e-government not only as consumers of government services, but also as citizens is confirmed by the following results.

1. When asked to name the most important outcome of e-government, 59% of adults choose greater participation (36% more accountable government) and a more informed citizenry (23% greater public access to information), compared with 21% who opt for a more efficient and cost-effective government and 13% who select more convenient government services.

Most Important Benefits of E-Government



2. Nearly three in four (72%) Americans believe that their ability to communicate with elected representatives will get better with e-government, and a majority (54%) believe that government accountability will improve.

3. Among the most favorably rated examples of e-government are those that would allow people to become more involved in government and would make government more accountable: being able to look up voting records, being able to comment on federal legislation, and being able to monitor public hearings.

Government officials also are likely to see greater public involvement as an outcome of e-government—78% say that people's ability to communicate with their elected officials will get much or somewhat better, and 75% believe that the government as a whole will be more accountable to its citizens—although they are more likely to say that e-government will result in easy-to-use (89%) and convenient services (87%) and improved coordination among federal, state, and local governments (83%).

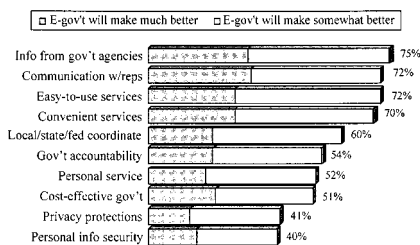
Business and nonprofit leaders are also more optimistic than the general public that e-government will result in better services, but they are more skeptical that accountability will improve. Strong majorities of these customers believe that people's ability to get information from government will get better (86%) and that government will be able to offer more convenient services (80%). But while a solid majority (70%) also expect that people's ability to communicate with their elected officials will improve with e-government,

perhaps due to a perception that greater communication does not equal accountability, only 48% think that government accountability will get better (34% saying that it will not change, only 12% saying that it will get worse).

E-Government has the potential to improve the public’s view of government effectiveness.

Even among people who regard government as ineffective (44% of all adults), a slight majority (51%) think that e-government will make a positive impact on the way that government operates. In addition, two-thirds each believe that e-government will improve people’s ability to get information that they need from government agencies (68%) and government’s ability to provide convenient services (64%). This ambivalent group is not simply assuming that an investment in technology will have to enhance government, as more than four in ten of them have visited a government Web site, with many (67%) rating the site as excellent or good.

Public Expects E-Government to Bring Positive Change



Despite the public’s positive attitude toward e-government, a large majority of people would prefer that e-government be developed slowly rather than quickly.

When asked to choose the statement that comes closer to their own view of e-

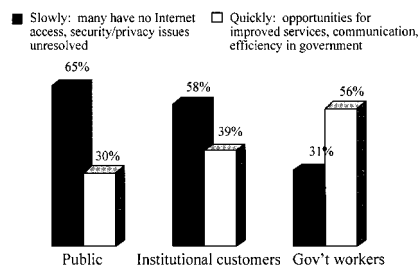
government, Americans line up as follows: 65% agree that “we should proceed slowly in relying on the Internet for communication between citizens and their government because many people do not have access to the Internet and there are important issues of security and privacy that remain unresolved,” and only 30% concur that “we should proceed quickly in expanding use of the Internet for communication between citizens and their government because e-government offers opportunities for improved services, communication, and efficiency in government.”

The public’s sense of caution is due largely to concerns about the security of the Internet, issues surrounding the privacy of personal information, and the digital divide between those with access to the Internet and those without it. (These concerns are described in greater depth in the next section.) The generation gap in Internet use also affects this question: Fewer older Americans use the Internet, so they are less familiar with e-government and therefore are more cautious about its development. Only 19% of seniors, those age 65 and over, think that e-government should be developed quickly, compared with 37% of people age 18 to 34 who say the same. In addition, 42% of frequent users favor proceeding quickly, compared with only 26% of less frequent users who prefer this course; 42% of people who are somewhat or very familiar with e-government opt for the more rapid approach, compared with only 23% of those unfamiliar with e-government who do so.

A majority (58%) of business and non-profit leaders prefer that e-government be developed slowly, including 56% of

those who say that they interact frequently with government (nearly two-thirds of institutional customers). Business and nonprofit leaders share many of the public’s concerns about security, privacy, and the digital divide.

Should We Proceed Slowly or Quickly on E-Government?



Government, on the other hand, would like to move quickly to develop e-government, with 56% of government officials favoring rapid expansion of the public sector’s use of the Internet and e-government. This difference in attitudes between government officials and the other groups interviewed is attributable to two factors. First, the public sees only half of what e-government entails: government’s ability to communicate and provide services to its citizens. Government officials also recognize enhanced administration and improved internal communications: 75% report that e-government already has enhanced their internal administration, and 80% say that their own agency has done an excellent or a good job of using the Internet to improve efficiency and quality of service. Second, government officials are more optimistic than the public that security and privacy issues can be resolved with e-government.

The preference for moving slowly is a result of three main concerns about e-government: security, privacy, and access.

Aside from the generation gap in Internet use, the public's chief concern about e-government is security.

Specifically, 66% of Americans are very concerned about hackers' breaking into government computers, and 55% are very concerned about government employees' misusing personal information. When asked what the government's top priority should be for its Web sites, Americans put making government Web sites more secure (chosen by 33%) at the top of the list, followed by making the sites easier to understand (27%), and expanding the sites to include additional services and information (19%).

The public's anxiety about e-government security, however, is not a concern about government—it stems from a much broader perception of security problems on the Internet. A majority (55%) of Internet users believe that it is just somewhat or not at all safe to buy things over the Internet using a credit card (only 11% think it is very safe), and the public would like the government to be involved in finding a solution (66% believe that the government should have at least some responsibility for improving the security of Internet transactions).

While the business and nonprofit sector is not as concerned as the general public is about security, it is still a top concern. A majority (51%) of institutional customers are very concerned about hackers' gaining access to government computers, and 37% are very concerned about government employees' misusing personal information. Moreover, these leaders are not very optimistic about the security of e-government in the future, as more of them

believe that the government's ability to keep personal information secure will get worse (40%) rather than better (30%).

Government officials also express some concern about security, both as a threat to the security of people's personal information and as the chief impediment to developing e-government. Asked to select the one or two biggest obstacles to e-government, government officials choose security issues (37%) most often, followed by lack of financial resources (26%) and inability to find qualified personnel (23%). In addition, 38% of government officials have serious concerns about hackers, and 67% name hackers as one of their top two concerns.

Yet, government officials are more optimistic that the security problems can be overcome, including 47% who believe that government's ability to keep personal information secure will get better with e-government and 19% who say that it will stay the same (only 17% think that it will get worse). Only 40% of the public believe that the security of personal information will get better with e-government; 27% believe that it will get worse.

Privacy is also a significant concern among the public but not at the same level as is security. While 53% of people are very concerned about e-government's resulting in less personal privacy, only 35% include this problem among their list of top concerns (compared with 48% who put hackers on the list and 40% who cite employees' misusing information). Among government officials, 46% include privacy as one of their top concerns, and 35%

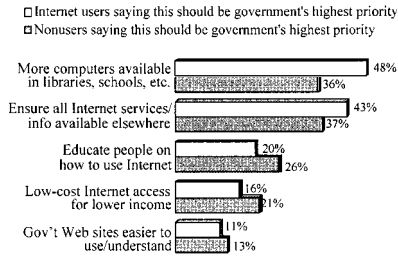
express serious concern about less personal privacy for visitors to government sites. Business and nonprofit leaders have similar responses: 37% are very concerned about less privacy, and 32% cite it as one of their top concerns.

Government officials and the public are more optimistic than business and nonprofit leaders that privacy protections will improve with e-government: 45% of government officials believe that privacy protections will improve (17% say they will get worse), as do 41% of the public (25% get worse); yet, only 30% of business and nonprofit leaders concur (34% get worse).

Government needs to recognize the challenge of the digital divide. One in three (37%) adults in the United States do not use the Internet. They are older and have lower levels of education on average than the public as a whole, and about half (47%) are very concerned that they will receive less government service. They also put a lower priority on investing in e-government (22% say this should be a high priority versus 35% of Internet users who say the same), and they are more likely than average to say that e-government should be developed slowly (72%, compared with 61% of Internet users).

Half (50%) the American public believes that government should play a role in addressing the digital divide. The priorities of Internet users are similar to those of non-Internet users: Both groups believe government should make sure that e-government services and information are available in other ways and that more computers are available in public spaces.

Priorities for Addressing Access to the Internet



The government must do a better job of promoting its e-government initiatives.

Notwithstanding the shared concerns about security, privacy, and access, the public needs to be better informed about ongoing e-government initiatives and the full range of benefits that government agencies have seen from investments in e-government, including enhanced internal administration and better coordination across federal, state, and local levels of government. Fully three-quarters of government officials report that their agency or division has increased its resources devoted to information technologies like the Internet, 84% believe that these technologies have contributed to their public outreach, and 75% say that this has helped their internal administration, but only 29% of the public (including 49% of frequent Internet users and 26% of infrequent users) and 37% of business leaders are at all familiar with e-government.

There are limits to what is regarded as acceptable for e-government. The public, business and nonprofit leaders, and even government officials do not support voting over the Internet.

All three sectors in the study express opposition to allowing people to cast their votes for federal offices over the

Internet. The public opposes this idea by 59% to 38% (even frequent Internet users are opposed, 53% to 45%). Business and nonprofit leaders oppose the idea by 57% to 39%, as do government officials, by 49% to 39%. The only segments of the public who favor Internet voting are those who would like to see e-government developed quickly (51% favor, 46% oppose) and 18- to 34-year-olds (51% favor, 47% oppose). Of course, these are the groups who use the Internet more frequently than average.

By a small margin, Americans would prefer paying for e-government services through tax dollars rather than service fees.

By 46% to 39%, the public favors paying for the development of e-government through taxes rather than a service fee. While neither "side" has a majority, it is unlikely that support for service fees will grow. The more familiar that people are with e-government and the more importance that they place on developing it, the more they prefer using tax dollars to pay for it. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of adults who put a high priority on investing in e-government believe it should be paid for through tax dollars, compared with 27% of those who put a low priority on e-government who feel the same. In addition, 60% of people who are very or fairly familiar with e-government favor paying for it through tax dollars, compared with only 36% of those not at all familiar with e-government who say the same.

IV. Methodology

This study on e-government was conducted by the research firms of Peter D.

Hart and Robert M. Teeter for the Council for Excellence in Government. The study comprised four parts: 1) an initial focus group among the general public; 2) a survey among a representative cross section of 1,003 adults nationwide; 3) a survey among 150 government officials in federal, state, and local government; and 4) a survey among 155 institutional customers of government divided evenly between leaders in business and the not-for-profit sector. This research explored all three populations' direct experience with and involvement in e-government, as well as their expectations of and goals for e-government. The methodology for each component of the study is described in greater depth in the following paragraphs.

1) Focus Group

Hart-Teeter began this study with an exploratory focus group conducted in Towson, Maryland, a suburb of Baltimore, to guide the subsequent quantitative components, particularly the survey among the general public. The focus group included Internet users and nonusers, people of different ages and ethnicities, and men and women, to gain the perspective of a cross section of people regarding their current use of government Web sites, their familiarity with the idea of e-government, and their concerns both with what is currently available on-line from government and what they see as the future implications of e-government.

2) Public Survey

Hart-Teeter conducted a survey among 1,003 randomly selected adults in the United States, including an oversample

among 200 frequent Internet users, from August 14 to 16, 2000. The survey was conducted by telephone using the random-digit-dial (RDD) sampling technique while stratifying by geographic area to ensure a nationally representative sample. The data were weighted in line with the demographic makeup of the U.S. population. The margin of error (MOE) for results among all adults is (3.5%.

3) Government Officials

For the survey of government officials, Hart-Teeter drew a random sample of government officials from the Leadership Library database, which includes the Yellow Books for federal, state, and municipal government. The sample was stratified by three levels of government-federal, state, and local. Hart-Teeter conducted telephone interviews among 75 officials in the federal government (randomly selected from the 70 or more federal agencies), 40 state government officials, and 35 local officials in city and county governments across the country from August 10 to 18, 2000. It should be noted that the sample is too small to be representative of the larger population of government officials. The titles of those interviewed are indicated in the table below

Titles of Government Officials in Sample

| | Proportion of Sample (N = 150) |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Director | 68% |
| Chief | 7% |
| Manager | 7% |
| Administrator | 4% |
| All other | 14% |

4) Institutional Customers

For the business component of the survey of e-government institutional customers, Hart-Teeter drew a random sample of companies stratified by size from the Dun & Bradstreet Marketplace database. Company size was defined as the number of employees, and the sample was stratified as follows: representatives of 26 large businesses (with more than 1,000 employees), 25 medium-size businesses (those with 50 to 1,000 employees), and 26 small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) for a total of 77 business interviews. Hart-Teeter interviewers are trained to interview opinion-leaders, and in this instance, they were instructed to complete interviews with decision-makers who allocate significant resources within their organization and are familiar with the nature and extent of the interaction between their company and government.

For the not-for-profit component of the institutional customer survey, Hart-Teeter drew a random sample of not-for profit organizations using the Leadership Library database of not-for-profits, stratifying the sample, in part, by type of nonprofit. The Leader Library database includes the Associations Yellow Book, a collection of 1,175 trade and professional organizations, and a separate collection of a diverse list of other not-for-profit organizations, including foundations, colleges and universities, charitable service organizations, and others. Hart-Teeter interviewed 26 representatives from a randomly selected sample of trade and professional organizations and 52 representatives from a randomly

selected sample of organizations from the larger not-for-profit sector. As with the business interviews, the leaders interviewed are decision-makers within the not-for-profit organization who are familiar with the nature and extent of interaction between their organization and government and who allocate resources within their organization.

The interviews of business and non-profit leaders were conducted from August 10 to 22, 2000. Again, it should be noted that this sample is too small to be representative of the larger population of business and nonprofit leaders. Categories of the titles of those interviewed are indicated in the following table.

Titles of Business and Nonprofit Leaders in Sample

| | Proportion of Sample (N = 155) |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Manager (general/operational/program) | 25% |
| Director, Executive | |
| Director, CEO | 21% |
| Controller, Comptroller, CFO, Treasurer | 10% |
| Administrator, Coordinator, Supervisor | 10% |
| President | 8% |
| Vice President | 7% |
| All other | 19% |



THE E - GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

This blueprint is the product of an unprecedented 14-month effort, launched and led by the Council for Excellence in Government. It spanned the public, private, nonprofit, and research sectors and harnessed the creative energies of scores of leaders across the country.

About a hundred in number at the outset, this extraordinary group ultimately grew to 350. It first gathered in November 1999 at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. They began by envisioning the key issues involved in achieving full electronic government and organizing into task forces to focus on specific elements of the e-government challenge. In subsequent meetings—at Virginia's Center for Innovative Technology in March 2000, the Decatur Hall in Washington in June 2000, and the American Institute of Architects in September 2000—they identified issues and goals, developed ideas, and drafted working papers and recommendations. The project commissioned two national surveys by opinion experts Peter Hart and Robert Teeter to inform its recommendations with public views on the desirability, benefits, and priorities of e-government.

Those who took part in the development of the blueprint, listed below, have contributed to a trail blazing effort. Keenly aware of the stakes involved for effective government and the vital connection between the government and the people of this country, they are ready to continue their efforts to help bring complete e-government into being. They firmly believe that this could be the next American revolution.

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Just as the 1990s were the dot-com decade, the first decade of the 21st century will be regarded as the dot-gov decade. At Internet speed and in historic ways, technology is fundamentally transforming government at all levels. This revolution will bring unprecedented opportunities for innovative, results-oriented public-sector leadership.

The Council is poised to seize these opportunities while strengthening the bridge between the public and private sectors. Through our partnerships, we have built the Intergovernmental Technology Leadership Consortium into the premiere coalition of business, government, non-profit, and research leaders in technology. With the active support of our members, the Consortium champions and showcases the use of technology as a resource for leaders in government to:

- Improve the delivery of services at and across all levels of government: local, state, tribal, regional, federal, and international
- Encourage economic growth through innovative, technology-enabled public programs
- Increase citizen participation as stakeholders in the governance process

Since 1997, the Consortium has served as an advocate of cross-sector programs and partnerships that include:

- **E-Government Excellence Initiative**—Developing cross-sector solutions to support the implementation of a transformed, seamless, and interactive e-Government. This effort has spawned the: *Imagine E-Government Award Competition* highlighting new ways that government can connect with citizens electronically, and the *E-Government Fellows Program* preparing government leaders to use technology as a leadership tool.
- **Digital Government of the 21st Century**—Linking research and education communities with government mission in partnership with the National Science Foundation.
- **Tribal Technologies Initiative**—Creating cross-sector opportunities between tribes, businesses, and all levels of government.
- **Sustainable Development Extension Network**—Building electronic and organizational networks that serve the sustainability efforts of communities.
- **Finance Office of the Future**—Harnessing technologies to support a financial information portal.
- **Share-In-Savings**—Yielding improved government services through private sector upfront investment.

The Consortium serves as a high-level forum for exploring information technology priorities and best practices. It helps to frame the direction of government's use of technology by providing objective advice without reference to specific vendors. Through these activities, the Consortium is creating constantly expanding communities of learning, practice, and collaboration, while addressing the challenges facing a fully-linked, interdependent world.

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Democracies Online
Department of the Interior
 • US Geological Survey
 • Federal Geographic Data Committee
Department of Labor
 • Employment and Training Administration
Department of the Treasury
 • Financial Management Service
Digital 4Sight
Digital Commerce Corporation
Digital Government Institute
Economic Strategy Institute
EDS
Federal Government Information Processing
 Councils (FGIPC)
 • Industry Advisory Council
FedNet
General Services Administration
 • Federal Technology Service
 • Office of Intergovernmental Solutions
GovWorks
Group Decision Support Systems
GTSI
Highway1
IBM
 • Institute for Electronic Government
Imagitas
Information Technology Association of
 America
Intuit
JRH Associates
KPMG
Lockheed Martin
Microsoft Corporation
NASIRE
National Indian Business Association
National Science Foundation
 • CISE
NIC
Office Of Management and Budget
OMB Watch
Oracle
Partnership for Intergovernmental Innovation
Primark
Public Technologies, Inc
Rel-Tek
Rochester Institute of Technology
SAIC
ScienceWise.com
Sustainable Development Extension Network
The Finance Project
The Innovation Groups
University at Albany/SUNY
 • Center for Technology and Government
Xerox
1492 Technologies/Primus
 Telecommunications



*N*onpartisan, nonprofit, and national in scope, the Council works to improve the performance of government at all levels and government's place in the lives and esteem of American citizens. It believes that the continued economic and social progress of the United States requires government to demonstrate creativity, responsiveness, and accountability in managing its tasks, employ a motivated, empowered work force, and retain public respect and trust. Council programs address two primary goals. The first is strong public-sector leadership and management, driven by innovation and focused on results. Second is increased citizen confidence and participation in government and governance, achieved through better understanding of government and its role.

*F*our assets enable the Council to build a record of success in conceiving and carrying out its programs: its independent, nonpartisan approach; the background, access, and credibility of its membership; its long-term commitment to its mission; and its reputation for innovative, results-oriented initiatives. The Council creates frameworks in which those with responsibility for, or a stake in, effective government can engage in dialogue, widen horizons, achieve solutions across boundaries, and get results.

*M*embers, or Principals, of the Council—private-sector and nonprofit leaders who have served in government—are united by a strong, sustaining commitment to better government performance. They are closely familiar with government’s policy and regulatory environments and the dynamics of decision making in the current public sector context. Their public/private experience and collective profile add unusual value to their participation in Council programs and distinguish the Council as the only organization that can bring an experience-based, cross-sector approach to the challenge of sustained high performance in the public sector.

*F*ounded in 1983, the Council for Excellence in Government is an independent 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. The Council is supported by project grants and other funding from government agencies, corporations, and philanthropic foundations as well as individual membership contributions. Former Presidents Carter, Ford, and Bush are honorary chairs of the Council. A volunteer chair and board of trustees lead the organization, working with the president and CEO, and a small permanent staff.





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IN GOVERNMENT

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