

DIGITAL SERVICES

CHANGE CULTURE, NOT JUST TECHNOLOGY

You might assume the biggest barrier to effective government digital services is the acquisition and deployment of complex technology. **In reality, technology is the easy part. The true barrier to digital innovation is culture.**

Risk aversion, misperceptions about process, hierarchical management structures, and divergent priorities prevent many projects from being executed in the agile, collaborative environment they require. Here's how to address those barriers.

MAKE THE CASE

There are a myriad of priorities which administrators must weigh against digital services initiatives. To gain support for digital projects, make the case that digital services can save money, tap into a large market of users, and increase citizen engagement. Whenever possible, use data to back up your claims.

Citizens want it

63%

Percent of citizens who feel digital interactions will make the government more easily accessible (Accenture)

It saves money

80%

Percent less that citizen digital interactions cost, compared to non-digital interactions (Accenture)

There's a market for it

85%

Percent of Americans (18+) who use the internet (Pew)

49%

Percent of citizens who say digital interactions would make gov more transparent (Accenture)

\$1.2mil

Amount that the State of Hawaii reportedly saved over two years from going paperless (NYT)

It can improve engagement

51%

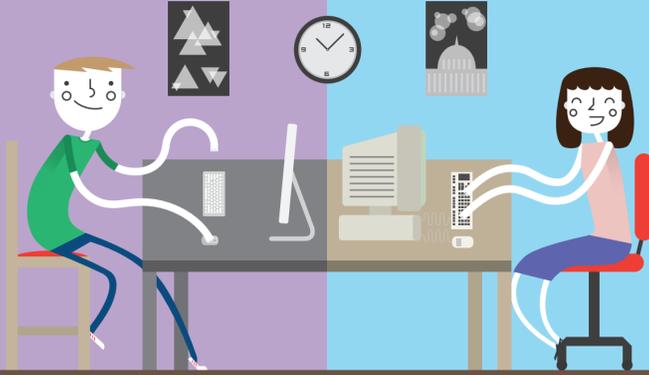
Percent of citizens who believe that the ability to interact digitally with government would encourage them to be more engaged with government (Accenture)

58%

Percent of Americans (18+) who have a smartphone (Pew)

80%

Percent more likely that users will put trust behind an agency if they are highly satisfied with the agency website (Foresee)



COMMUNICATE

Misperceptions about the process and purpose of digital governance can be a major stumbling block to getting leadership buy-in for projects. To dispel these myths, communicate the realities of digital services development, design, and deployment.

Myth #1:

We're going digital for the sake of keeping up with new trends.

REALITY:

Digital services actually improve government by increasing efficiencies, saving money, enhancing customer service, and engaging citizens.

Myth #2:

Designing digital services is resource-intensive.

REALITY:

Many free application program interfaces (APIs) are already user-tested and don't require advanced coding ability to implement. A digital service doesn't have to be complex in order to be useful.

Myth #3:

Agile processes lead to projects that are insecure and unplanned.

REALITY:

Agile means collaborative, not public. And it still requires budgeting, deadlines, and management in order to succeed.

Myth #4:

Digital services are a one-time effort to get our services online.

REALITY:

Digital projects produce measurable results in the short- and long-term, which should be used to help agencies continually improve their digital strategy.

BUILD YOUR TEAM

Transformative digital services are created in a non-hierarchical, collaborative environment, which challenges the traditional, top-down structure of government agencies. To foster change, assemble a new, cross-departmental team of equals that combines necessary technical skill-sets with organizational knowledge and government experience.



Subject Matter Experts



Developers



Potential New Users



Project Manager



Internal Stakeholders



End-users

START SMALL

The risk associated with releasing imperfect products for testing and revision — a critical step to create optimal digital services — concerns many government administrators. To overcome this risk aversion, choose a project, such as a portal to consolidate everyone's suggestions for a work playlist, that's easy to execute and won't impact your organization. Starting small lets employees familiarize themselves with the process of agile, open development before they take on greater risk.



DISCOVER



DESIGN



DEVELOP



TEST

Phase 1



Talk to other employees to determine a common interest that's unrelated to work but could be enhanced with an online service.



Design a form for individual submissions, as well as a repository to compile reviews.



Using free, open source coding, build your portal and create sample reviews.



Ask a sample set of users to test the digital service.

Phase 2



Ask more users to test the improved digital service.



Fix bugs found during discovery to ensure portal is accessible and functioning correctly.



Redesign your input forms to be more intuitive.



Engage with users to determine what would make the portal easier to use. Look for bugs in software.

Phase 3



Scrutinize existing reviews to determine what could enhance the utility of your content.



Revamp your input forms to ask for more information. Redesign layout of final reviews.



Implement new information fields and final reviews.



Deploy to large user base and continue tracking its utilization.

Sources:

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Created by the good people at:

