

Project Outcomes

Today, FirstGov.gov provides informational and transactional government-to-citizen, government-to-business and government-to-government electronic services. It covers all three branches of government; executive, judicial and legislative. Its vision statement, "Our work transcends the traditional boundaries of government and our vision is global -connecting the world to all U.S. Government information and services" is being carried on with the addition of state and local government web pages along with the addition of some pages from foreign governments to its vast directory of government information."⁽⁹⁾

FirstGov.gov offers a powerful search engine that searches every word of every U.S. government document in a quarter of a second or less. It also features a topical index, online transactions, links to state and local government, options to contact government directly, and other tools so the user does not have to know the name of the government agency to get the information they need. This is a major accomplishment. The portal further creates and maintains a number of content-specific mini-portals geared to special audience needs, such as students.gov, seniors.gov, workers.gov, science.gov, and consumers.gov. These specialty portals are consistent with the topic or needs-oriented approach to government that FirstGov.gov represents.

The future for this government wide portal looks good at this time. The website has won numerous awards and has strong visibility and usage. It was included in the President's 2002 budget and is poised to play a critical role in the implementation of the President's Management Agenda (2001) and the electronic government initiatives funded in the 2003 Budget of the United States. The 2003 Budget recognizes that the U.S. government will mix its use of Internet and physical assets to become a "click and mortar" enterprise. The agencies that serve citizens,

businesses, internal federal government functions, and inter-governmental needs will, thus, become more accessible, effective and efficient. In adopting a "click and mortar" model, the federal government will use the best practices of industry. The Bush administration's goal is that services and information will rarely be more than 3 clicks away from citizens and business.

With that objective in mind, the Bush Administration, through OMB, established a Task Force in August 2001 to develop a road-map for the implementation of E-Government. The E-Gov Task Force, otherwise known as Quicksilver, had as its objectives to: Recommend highest-return-cross-agency projects that could be rapidly developed; Identify the key barriers to a citizen-centered e-government and determine the actions needed to overcome these barriers, and; Develop an IT architecture that would provide for the integration of government services and information across platforms and across federal agencies. Quicksilver was composed of 70 volunteer participants from 30 federal agencies. The initiative was funded by GSA for a total of \$100,000.

Their resulting recommendations were directed to what they have defined as four citizen-centered groups, each providing opportunities to transform delivery of services. These four groups include individuals, the business community, intergovernmental functionally related organizations, and the federal government itself, to streamline its processes and facilitate internal efficiency and effectiveness. They recommended twenty-four cross-cutting projects which are being funded in the 2003 budget. FirstGov.gov is expected to play a prominent role in developing and hosting many of these new electronic initiatives.⁽¹⁰⁾ In specific, one of the largest and most prominent of the Quicksilver initiatives is expected to be put under the FirstGov.gov umbrella-USA Service, an application which will link together all of the government-to-citizen and government-to-business applications included in the recommended 24 cross-cutting e-gov projects. FirstGov.gov will, thus become transactional as well as informational, bringing the U.S. federal government one step closer to its customers.

⁽⁹⁾ From the FirstGov.gov website at www.firstgov.gov

⁽¹⁰⁾ The Report of the E Gov Task Force is expected to be available in 2002 at the Executive Office of Management and Budget's website. www.whitehouse.gov/OMB