

Among the states that responded, citizen input is a clear priority in developing online electronic services. Eight of the 14 responding states have either asked citizens about electronic government services or plan to do so within the next few months.

A report from the Momentum Research Group, sponsored by the National Information Consortium (NIC) which operates portals in several states, details the e-government needs, opinions, and preferences of 303 people and 103 businesses throughout the United States. In telephone interviews these two groups were asked many questions related to the use of government services, including their opinions about quality of service, confidence in results, funding for e-government, security of information, and whether they would like to find these services on state or local government Web sites. This input from citizens was gathered in several ways. A few open-ended questions asked, "What government services would you use electronically?" Most questions presented a list of services and asked the citizen to pick the one they would be most willing to use. Some questions focused on how the citizen would like to access the government service and asked what people thought about advantages and disadvantages of e-government.

A study conducted by the research firm of Peter D. Hart and Robert M. Teeter for the Council for Excellence in Government investigated experiences and expectations of e-government. They surveyed 1,003 citizens, 150 government officials in federal, state, and local government, and 155 institutional customers of government in the business and non-profit sectors about many areas including potential use of e-government services, benefits of e-government, how quickly e-government should develop, and what concerns them about the digital divide. The findings are compared across the three groups, although they are statistically significant only for the citizen group.

Of the states that have reached out to citizens, California's Life Event and Affinity Design (L.E.A.D.) effort, spearheaded by the Governor's Office of Innovation in Government, is one where citizens and business are being asked to attend focus group-like activities. The first of three regional conferences was held recently where 120 people gathered to discuss and document the government services needed at specific stages in life. People were grouped into seven age categories and three miscellaneous categories (starting a business, non-age-related events, and professional licensing). Each group was then asked to think about information they would need or business they would transact with a government agency from their particular stage of life or perspective. The results from the three conferences will be analyzed to produce recommendations for California's Web portal and e-government services.

The nonprofit Telecommunications and Policy Institute conducted a survey of 1,002 citizens for the state of Texas. In this random telephone survey, citizens were asked about their current and potential use of electronic government services. They were asked about services they currently use, services they would use in the future, concerns about privacy and security, funding options for e-government and several other issues. This study also documented aspects of the digital divide in Texas, identifying different levels of computer and Internet use by income, education, and ethnic group. These results will be used to inform the development of Texas' online government services.

A number of less formal efforts were also reported. Some states embarked on e-government by developing one or two online transactions and then monitored them for frequency of use. In Indiana, the AccessIndiana portal was developed and implemented and, after citizens had some experience with it, the portal began to ask citizens "What other government services would you like provided through this portal?" The Government Information Technology Agency (GITA) in Arizona developed a survey listing government services that could be or will be provided electronically. Citizens then indicated, via a Web or paper ballot, which ones they would most likely use. In Utah, the state asked businesses what government information and services they would like to access online and what the government should provide electronically to citizens.