Benchmarking U.S. Government Websites

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Metrics for Measuring Federal Websites

• Legislative requirements.

• Executive orders and federal guidance.

• Private-sector best practices.

Source: Wikimedia Commons
Methodology

• Used “Alexa Search Rankings” to identify 297 federal websites in the top million.

• Assessed four metrics: speed, mobile friendliness, accessibility, and security.

• Utilized seven publicly available tools to measure each metric.

• Established benchmarks for each metric using federal requirements and results for the top 20 nongovernment websites.
Page Load Speed

- Tested websites for both desktop and mobile page load speed.
- 78 percent passed for desktop.
- Only 36 percent passed for mobile.

Federal Websites Failed the Test for Mobile Page Load Speed, Especially Those in the Global Top 100,000
Mobile Friendliness

• Overall, 59 percent of websites were mobile friendly.

• Issues with mobile friendliness:
  • Websites were not configured to adjust size properly.
  • Illegible font sizes.
  • Buttons that were too small.

Source: Google Mobile-Friendly Test
Security

• Tested websites for SSL, DNSSEC, and known vulnerabilities.

• Only 67 percent passed the SSL test.
  • 14 percent lacked HTTPS.
  • 19 percent failed to implement SSL properly.

• 10 percent lacked DNSSEC.
Accessibility

• Tested websites for the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

• 58 percent passed.

• Several popular websites failed, including trade.gov and irs.gov.

Source: Wikicommoms
Overall Rankings

The ten highest-performing websites were:

1. healthdata.gov (HHS)
2. healthfinder.gov (HHS)
3. consumerfinance.gov (CFPB)
4. whitehouse.gov (Trump administration)
5. usembassy.gov (State Department)
6. serve.gov (AmeriCorps)
7. fema.gov (DHS)
8. donotcall.gov (FTC)
9. investor.gov (SEC)
10. guideline.gov (HHS)
Overall Rankings

The ten lowest-performing websites were:

288. fitness.gov (HHS)
289. fsd.gov (GSA)
290. bep.gov (Treasury)
291. rrb.gov (Railroad Retirement Board)
292. irs.gov (IRS)
293. usphs.gov (HHS)
294. fmc.gov (Federal Maritime Commission)
295.osti.gov (Energy)
296. trade.gov (International Trade Administration)
297. ipcc-wg2.gov (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)
**Recommendations**

1. Launch modernization “sprints” to update websites.

2. Mandate websites meet page load speed requirements.

3. Require agencies to monitor and share web metrics.

4. Launch website consolidation initiative.

5. Encourage nonexecutive agencies to adopt best practices.

6. Establish a capital fund for IT modernization.
Thank You!

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