



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Information Society and Media Directorate-General

**STUDY ON USER SATISFACTION  
AND IMPACT IN EU27**

*Management Summary*

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## Management Summary

This document reports on the process and the conclusions and presents the deliverables of a study commissioned by the European Commission (hereafter call the 'Commission'), DG Information Society and Media concerning the measurement of user satisfaction and impact of eGovernment services in the Member States. This study was undertaken by a consortium composed of Deloitte Consultants and Indigov (a spin-off of the University of Leuven, Belgium) in collaboration with Prof. Cristiano Codagnone of the University of Milan, Italy.

Annexed to this report, you will find four questionnaires and some guidelines on how to use these questionnaires for benchmarking and evaluating eGovernment services in Europe. These four instruments are the result of a 12-month study initiative which started with a state-of-the-art study of eGovernment measurement in Europe and beyond. Based on the existing experiences uncovered, and in close collaboration with the European eGovernment agencies, a measurement framework, that includes a toolkit and methodology, was developed: it can now be considered as a new standard for inclusive eGovernment user measurement.

### Five-step process

The objective of this study, the development of a new measurement standard, was reached through a 5-step process:

#### First step:

The study began in January 2008. In a first stage of the study, all Member States were inventoried regarding their recent or ongoing eGovernment user studies. In this phase Indigov and Deloitte worked closely with the eGovernment contacts of the Commission in the 27 Member States. The most significant studies worldwide were also analysed with the aim of developing a feasible and functioning survey instrument.

#### Second step:

Based on the lessons learned and the good practices uncovered in the first step, a survey instrument was designed. Two questionnaires (one for citizens, one for businesses) were fine-

tuned. They were pre-tested and translated into eight European languages (the translations were pre-tested also).

Third step:

In the first half of September 2008 a total of 10,000 citizens and 4,000 businesses in ten European pilot countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) were surveyed using the pre-tested questionnaires. The results of this survey were analysed in order to evaluate the validity of the instrument. The aim of the survey was to understand the following questions: How can satisfaction and impact be measured in relation to eGovernment services? Is a European benchmark instrument feasible? How can we extract relevant policy information from the results?

Fourth step:

Based on the results of the pilot survey, and with the study objectives in mind, the survey instrument was evaluated, re-adapted and further developed into what are proposed to be reusable tools. Hence, the study results include a set of four questionnaires, two of which are intended for citizens as target group and two as business surveys. For both target groups, two types of survey tools are presented. They are: a "User Satisfaction Benchmark" for a general level demand-side monitoring of user satisfaction and impact across European countries, and an "eService Evaluation tool" that public agencies may use to measure user satisfaction and impact concerning specific services which they provide electronically.

Fifth step :

The results of this study were assessed in a workshop (December 2008) with member state experts and final conclusions were formulated in a policy recommendations chapter. This will locate the study and its deliverables in the broad perspective of European Union policy on the Information Society. They will offer both the Commission and the Member States a number of concrete suggestions on how to use the deliverables which constitute the major outcome of this study.

### State of the art as perceived in spring 2008

One of the first initiatives of the study was to undertake a state of the art review in relation to eGovernment services and Europe's citizens' experience of these. The work was undertaken

through both a cross-European perspective, and also involved desk research of the scene worldwide. Here, we highlight the main findings of that review.

Overall experience of eGovernment services is limited. Any standardisation of the frameworks and methodologies available for measuring eGovernment user satisfaction and impact in the EU27 Member States is generally lacking. There is certainly a need for more standardised measurement (to take place via standardised tools).

Furthermore, a standardised EU framework should incorporate a shift from eGovernment to iGovernment. This would mean integrating both the interoperability and connectedness of public agencies, and developing a multi-channel perspective with in-built flexibility to incorporate future developments. Specially the UK and the Netherlands are going in this direction.

This future paradigm shift from eGovernment to “iGovernment” (integrated Government) indicates the need for an holistic approach. This holism is expected to cover measurement of a wide range of contexts and situations. These include eGovernment take-up, user expectations, channel preferences, perceived benefits, future use, and perceived priorities for service improvement. All this benchmarked with non-eGovernment services which are more daily use for most of the online users.

### Insights into survey measurements

The state-of-the art stage of the study highlighted two major sets of findings. It drew attention to the need for the diversity of valid measurements required in today's more complex, multi-cultural, and pluralistic societies. It also indicated how major surveys from countries outside Europe could be useful in designing Europe-specific survey instruments.

Common dimensions of user satisfaction imply the need to measure user expectations and perceptions of service quality. However, valid measurement of the overall levels of satisfaction in random sample survey designs requires a more effective control of preconceived judgements. In order to address aspects of customisation, when dealing with citizen-centric service delivery, attention has to be paid not only to different types and profiles of citizens, in terms of their e-skills, attitudes, and use of information and communication technologies, but also their social groups and customer segments. Decisions have to be made with regard to the focus of

measurement, possibly including eGovernment in general, stages of e-service delivery (such as information, downloading, and transaction), specific public e-services, customer life-events, user activities, and/or generic applications.

The survey framework was inspired by two important non-European examples of large-scale surveys. First was the American Customer Satisfaction Index, as applied to eGovernment (AeGSI). This is an important model because of its highly sophisticated approach and its building of a composite satisfaction index score. Second was the Canadian Common Measurements Tool (CMT). It emerged as a key source of inspiration because it combines a set of standardised core questions, a database for benchmarking purposes, and a customisable evaluation/question toolkit.

### The survey instrument and methodology

The survey instrument that was designed was based on a number of guiding principles. These were defined specifically to guarantee the final objective of the project. The most important starting point was the need to come to a standardised measurement framework that would have a customisable modular structure. An holistic approach was adopted. The actual core of the instrument is a life event based model.

Acknowledging the need for a policy-related instrument meant that the survey results needed to be translated into both advice and action. Attention was therefore paid particularly to a user typology approach, a multi-channel perspective, a follow-up of “non-use of eGovernment services”, and a pragmatic definition of impact elements.

The instrument is presented as a set of four modules. Each module is centred around a crucial issue, and consists of a set of related questions. In the first module, users (who are composed of both citizens and business users) are profiled by using traditional socio-demographic questions as well as by a more in-depth profiling of Internet use and experiences with various eServices.

The second module deals with the use of eGovernment services based on a life events approach. Non-users are approached by using questions that concern perceived barriers and alternative channels.

The third module addresses, using a balanced set of questions, the users' degree of satisfaction with eGovernment services. These are benchmarked in a broader context of eServices; the survey also takes into account a priori (i.e., previous) user expectations and actual achievement of objectives.

The final module poses questions about the perceived impact of using eGovernment, and concludes with various questions on channel preferences and likelihood of future use.

Knowing that this survey instrument needed to be developed so as to question Internet users about their use and satisfaction with public eServices, the choice of an online Internet panel approach as a survey methodology probably seems self-evident. Of course, other fieldwork methods – such as telephone or face to face interviews are feasible also. Nonetheless the authors of this studies are convinced that the online methodology guarantees the best price/quality for this kind of surveys.

For the pilot survey, the choice was made to test the survey instrument in a selection of 10 Member States where high standard, online panels were available.

#### The pilot survey conclusions, evaluation and adjustment towards a final instrument

Two sets of data have resulted from the survey: information about how citizens use eGovernment services, and information on how businesses use these services.

One of the relevant conclusions of the pilot survey is that a more complex profiling of Internet users will be necessary in the future. Knowing a user's years of experience with the Internet, the actual length of time she or he spends on the Internet enriched with traditional socio-demographic data, does not offer enough insight into the variation among the user's motivations to reach in-depth conclusions. More intensive socio-psychological profiling techniques are necessary to enable more profound policy advice to be offered on user target groups. The actual way in which people use the Internet is becoming more and more relevant. The questions about trust in government/administration and trust in the Internet were very useful in the citizens' pilot survey particularly so as to give the results a wider perspective.

In the business pilot survey, the extensive profiling module that focused on eBusiness applications was very useful in order to cluster different types of companies in terms of their eGovernment service take-up and satisfaction.

Choosing for a life-events approach it is specially for the “User satisfaction benchmark” possible to go for a very wide and inclusive intake on the use of eGovernment services. We captured a maximum of the online population in order to express their experiences and opinions about the use of eGovernment services.

When all the different types of Internet users are borne in mind, eGovernment use and satisfaction lags behind their use of “commercial” eServices. eGovernment use is also running behind the availability of the actual services, meaning that governments invest a lot in eServices but failed in communication and motivation towards citizens (business have a better track record in this matter) to use them. This insight came from the comparison of the pilot survey results with the Commission’s eGovernment front-office survey of 20 basic services. This comparison of both sets of study results, and an in-depth analysis of some individual country results, has convinced the authors of this study that more communication efforts by the Member States’ administrations are needed in order to span the difference between the actual availability of services online and the relative lack of awareness of these among Internet user groups.

The study results that relate to the perceived benefits of eGovernment and the barriers to use of eGovernment (and that may result in non-use) are quite clear. What they indicate overall is the validity of today’s combined European focus on efforts to encourage interoperability in parallel with policies intended to reduce red-tape. Saving time, and increasing flexibility and ease of use, are some of the most important differentiators in eGovernment service adoption. This pilot study also proves that use in combination with high satisfaction rate guarantees loyalty and re-use.

The aim of the pilot survey was to test and adjust the survey instrument for the measurement of user satisfaction and impact of eGovernment services in the Member States. However, a lot of additional evidence emerged from this test survey. This evidence shows that the instrument can be very useful in two primary ways: it can assess the Commission’s and Member States’ policies on eGovernment, and it can help to stimulate progress in the whole initiative. We have therefore sought to connect this report’s findings with actual European policy programmes in a final chapter which offers specific policy advice.