Minnesota
Office of Technology

CITIZEN INPUT on ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT SERVICES

January 2002
A Management Analysis Division report

Department of Administration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

T he State of Minnesota's Office of Technology (OT) is in the process of making extensive improvements to the state's Internet portal, North Star. As part of this process, the Department of Administration's Management Analysis Division conducted a statewide survey of Minnesota residents on their experiences with and preferences for electronic government services. In addition, four focus groups of specific users were conducted.

Following are major findings and suggested directions resulting from this work, not in rank order:

$ Minnesotans most likely to have Internet access are under 44 years old, have some level of college education, relatively higher household incomes, and live in the Twin Cities seven-county metropolitan area.

$ Much of the reported interest in electronic state government information and services is "new" interest; that is, is not based on prior experience with state government web sites. The types of information that received the highest percentages of interest – information on places to visit in Minnesota, status of weather and/or road conditions, and public health information – are already available on various state agency web sites.

$ OT can assist agencies in developing their content and transaction capabilities in the areas that hold significant interest for Minnesotans. For example, OT could work with the Office of Tourism in expanding the Explore Minnesota site to meet anticipated demand and with DNR staff to develop their site's content areas and transaction features.

$ OT can transform some staff-intensive services into simpler electronic transactions, such as purchasing driver's licenses electronically and renewing professional licenses online.

$ OT can provide more seamless public services to residents by strengthening the ties with local governments. OT could plan work with some select cities or counties to develop a model for packaging services and information in a way that's user friendly to residents. For example, organize services so searches could be done by ZIP code, enabling residents to find their "basket" of common, publicly provided information and services (at the state and local levels of government) by doing one search.

$ Minnesotans indicated a strong interest in electronic democracy, from finding their representatives' e-mail addresses and registering to vote to tracking legislation, looking up legislators' voting records, and streaming debates. OT can begin to gauge the interest, among legislators, state officials, non-profit advocacy organizations, and perhaps foundations, in implementing some of these ideas to facilitate greater and more informed civic participation.

$ Providing information and services in multiple languages and meeting disability challenges will take on increasing importance as Minnesota's population becomes older and more diverse. Related, given the current Internet accessibility gap between younger and older Minnesotans, perhaps some targeted Internet or computer education and training can be developed for senior citizens, working in conjunction with local libraries or community groups.

$ Residents have a strong concern about privacy of their information, to the point where they may be reluctant to conduct transactions with the state over its web site. OT should provide clear explanation of existing data privacy protections on relevant areas of its web site and also determine if further protections should be legislatively pursued.

$ With regard to promoting North Star, OT can begin marketing the web site by including its URL on state mailings, particularly those of the Department of Revenue and Department of Public Safety's Driver and Vehicle Services, as these are two agencies that currently mail to a large percentage of Minnesota households.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Minnesota's Office of Technology (OT) is in the process of making extensive improvements to the state's Internet portal, North Star. OT's goal is to make North Star a more user-friendly and relevant tool for improving the state's ability to provide information and services to all Minnesotans. As part of this process, OT contracted with the Department of Administration's Management Analysis Division to conduct a statewide survey of Minnesota residents on their experiences with and preferences for electronic government services. In addition, Management Analysis conducted four focus groups with specific users whose opinions and recommendations complement the survey data. This report summarizes findings and recommendations from these efforts.

The data collection described in this report took place in November 2001.

This report is organized by:
- $ Results, which includes issues of access, types of services desired, and policy issues;
- $ Recommended directions; and
- $ Appendices, which contains the survey instrument and focus group scripts.

Methodology

SURVEY

A statewide telephone survey was completed by 754 respondents, from a sample of 1,019. This 74 percent response rate assures that survey results can be understood as applicable to Minnesota as a whole, beyond the opinions of those actually surveyed. Of the 754 respondents, 413 indicated that they have Internet access and thus were asked the survey's complete set of questions. The remaining 341 respondents who indicated that they did not have Internet access were asked what prevented them from having access as well as demographic questions.

The sample is geographically representative of the state. Households were reached through a random-digit dialing process, with at least six attempts made on each working, residential phone number. Households were called from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week over a period of one-and-a-half weeks. To avoid certain demographic biases, the respondent selected within a household was the person, aged 16 and older, who had the most recent birthday. Households or identified respondents who refused to participate were re-contacted to try to win response.

Unless otherwise indicated, the results are significant at at least a 95 percent confidence level. That is, if twenty same-sized samples were taken from the Minnesota population, nineteen out of the twenty samples would provide similar results. Results from the questions themselves have a sampling error no greater than plus or minus five percent;

that is, another sample would provide responses no more than five percentage points higher or lower than the responses in this report. The survey instrument is provided in Appendix A.

FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to the statewide survey, focus groups of specific users were conducted:
- Local government staff.
- Educators, which included school technology personnel as well as teachers.
- Small business owners.
- Minnesota consumers of travel and entertainment.

The information from the focus groups helps to confirm and expand upon many of the findings from the statewide survey. In addition, focus group participants addressed questions that were not amenable to a survey format and so provided useful insights.

Focus group participants were asked questions regarding their need for electronic government services as representatives of their particular user group. For example, educators were asked what types of information they would use for curricula development, and small business owners were asked what types of government transactions would be relevant to them in running their business. In addition, all groups were asked more policy-oriented questions, for example, those related to privacy of information and advertising. Finally, participants were asked questions from the perspective of being Minnesota residents (not as members of a particular user group), related to civic participation through the Internet as well as types of information on public education that they would like to be able to access electronically. Focus group scripts are provided in Appendix B.

Unlike survey respondents, who as a whole were representative of Minnesotans at large, the focus group participants were not demographically representative of their particular user group. For example, due to time and other constraints, participants of three of the four focus groups were primarily from the Twin Cities seven-county metro area. Participants at the educators' focus group were primary from Greater Minnesota. Participants in the travel and entertainment focus group were generally older.

RESULTS

Issues of Access

The survey's results provide some understanding of who in Minnesota has access to the Internet. Overall, 55 percent of respondents reported having access to the Internet; 45 percent reported that they did not. These responses are broken down by several demographic variables, as detailed in the tables below. A number of these factors may themselves be correlated, such as age and income.

Age is a significant factor in whether one has Internet access. Table 1 shows that while 33 percent of the survey sample were 55 years old or older, 50 percent of those who reported not having access were in this age category. Conversely, while 25 percent of the overall sample were between 16 and 34 years old, 32 percent of those who have access are in this age bracket. When respondents without access were asked what prevented them from having access to the Internet, a number of them replied that they were "too old."

TABLE 1. Age and Internet access

Age categories	Overall	Yes	No
16 – 34	25%	32%	16%
35 – 44	20	26	13
45 – 54	18	22	12
55 or over	33	19	50
refused answer	4	1	9
Total	100%	100%	100%

Having some level of college education is an indicator of whether one has Internet access. As shown in Table 2, among the respondents without Internet access, 48 percent had not completed some college compared to 19 percent of those with Internet access at that same level of education. Put another way, 80 percent of those with Internet access attended some level of college.

TABLE 2. Education and Internet access

Education categories	Overall	Yes	No
less than a high school diploma	6%	3%	9%
high school grad or GED	26	16	39
some college up to associates degree	33	40	24
bachelor's degree	19	24	12
some graduate school or more	10	16	2
refused answer	6	1	14
Total	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

Table 3 shows that household income is correlated with whether respondents indicated having Internet access. Of the respondents who do not have access, 37 percent have a household income of under $35,000, compared to 20 percent of those who do have access. The difference is more pronounced at higher incomes: 40 percent of those who have access have household incomes of at least $60,000, compared to seven percent of those who report not having access.

TABLE 3. Annual household income and Internet access

Income levels	Overall	Yes	No
under $20,000	11%	6%	17%
$20,000 - $34,999	17	14	20
$35,000 - $59,000	25	27	22
$60,000 - $74,000	11	18	4
$75,000 and over	13	22	3
refused answer	23	13	34
Total	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

There is not a statistically significant difference between men and women regarding Internet access in Minnesota.

TABLE 4. Gender and Internet access

	Overall	Female	Male
Yes	55%	52	59
No	45	48	41
Total	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

Respondents also were asked their county of residence, and those responses were categorized as either Twin Cities seven-county metro area or Greater Minnesota. Table 5 shows that location is significant regarding whether respondents had Internet access − approximately 60 percent of Twin Cities metro residents report having Internet access compared to 50 percent of those living in Greater Minnesota.

TABLE 5. Geographic area and Internet access

	Overall	Greater Minnesota	Twin Cities metro
Yes	55%	50%	61%
No	45	50	39
Total	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

The remaining results are based on the 413 respondents with Internet access.

Where and how often?

Respondents were asked where and how often they used the Internet. Most people who have Internet access have it at home (85 percent) and use the Internet there at least once per week (74 percent). For those with access at work (58 percent), 52 percent access the Internet daily from work. Majorities of respondents reported that they do not use the Internet at school or at public libraries. See Tables 6 and 7 for more detail. Respondents also mentioned other places where they use the Internet − these included relatives' and friends' homes, laptops, and hotels and Internet cafes.

TABLE 6. Access by location

Location	
home	85%
work	58%
school	16%
library	20%

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

TABLE 7. Frequency of Internet use by location*

	at least weekly	at least monthly	never/ almost never	not applicable/ don't know	Total
home	74%	9%	17%	0%	100%
work	52	3	36	9	100
school	14	1	43	42	100
library	5	6	89	0	100

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001
*"At least weekly" includes every day, a couple of times a week, and once a week. "At least monthly" includes a couple of times a month and once a month. "Almost never" includes less than once a month.

Internet service satisfaction

A dimension of access concerns the quality of Internet service provision. Respondents who use the Internet at home more than once per month were asked about their satisfaction with their Internet connection and service. In general, the majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of their Internet service about which they were asked. Results also were analyzed in terms of geographic area (Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota); however, differences between the two populations were not statistically significant. See Table 8 for detail. "Satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses are combined, as are "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied."

TABLE 8. Internet service satisfaction

	satisfied/ very satisfied	dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied	neutral	don't know/ refused
accessibility (no busy signals)	80	10	9	1
reliability (system is "up")	75	10	15	0
your choice of providers (competition)	66	15	12	7
price of services	62	16	18	4
support from customer service	56	10	17	17
speed of operation	55	24	21	0

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

"Speed of operation," with which the fewest number of respondents (55 percent) were satisfied, may be of particular interest as it relates to residents' ability to telecommute, stream video and audio communications, and take advantage of other technologies. The survey asked respondents about their history and likelihood of telecommuting and taking online classes if high-speed connections were available. See Tables 9 and 10.

TABLE 9. Telecommuting*

In the past year, how often have you used the Internet at home for telecommuting?	
never or almost never	83%
at least monthly	4
at least weekly	13

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

*"At least weekly" includes every day, a couple of times a week, and once a week. "At least monthly" includes a couple of times a month and once a month. "Almost never" includes less than once a month.

TABLE 10. High-speed connection*

If the following applications were available to you using high-speed connection, what is the likelihood that you would use them?				
	likely/ very likely	unlikely/ very unlikely	not applicable	not sure/ refused answer
telecommuting to work	29%	44%	27%	0%
remotely participating in live classes from schools and colleges	47	46	6	1
using "video-on-demand" technology to take classes any time of day from home	43	50	6	1

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

*"Likely" and "very likely" responses are combined, as are "unlikely" and "very unlikely."

Regarding telecommuting, almost 30 percent of respondents indicated that they would telecommute if they had a high-speed connection compared to the 17 percent that have telecommuted in the past year. Almost half of respondents indicated that they would take classes remotely using a high-speed connection, while the other half thought it unlikely. It can be noted that respondents 16 to 44 years of age indicated greater likelihood of using these applications.[1] Residents in Greater Minnesota indicated a somewhat stronger likelihood of taking classes remotely than residents of the Twin Cities metro area, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Types of services desired

Demand for electronic government services and information

Respondents were asked how likely they would be to research various types of information or conduct various types of transactions with Minnesota state government

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[1] Statistically significant at at least a 90 percent level of confidence.

over the Internet if available in the future. Some of these services and information are already available, such as renewal of license plate tabs; and some would require policy changes and substantial investment, such as voter registration.[2] The wide range of options listed in this survey is intended to illustrate relative interest among services as well as strength of interest in conducting transactions and researching government information online. Table 11 provides details. "Likely" and "very likely" responses were combined as well as "unlikely" and "very unlikely," sorted by highest percent of "likely."

TABLE 11. Types of information and services

	Likely/very likely	Unlikely/very unlikely	Not applicable	Refused
research places to visit in Minnesota	82%	17%	0%	1%
check status of weather and/or road conditions	79	20	1	0
look up public health information	77	22	0	1
renew driver's license	75	24	1	0
renew license plate tabs	74	25	1	0
look up historical facts about the State of Minnesota	74	26	0	0
find out about arts and cultural events in Minnesota	71	29	0	0
locate government contact and location information	69	31	0	0
register a change of address with government agencies	69	30	1	0
register to vote	66	28	5	1
research legislation and/or your legislators' voting records	63	36	1	0
communicate with elected officials or state departments	62	37	0	1
research job opportunities with the state	61	34	5	0
file state income taxes	60	37	2	1
obtain a hunting or fishing license	58	30	12	0
make a state park camp reservation	58	38	4	0
renew a professional license	44	26	30	0

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

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[2] The report prepared by Deloitte Consulting in conjunction with this project provides a more comprehensive list of the services and information currently available on various state agency web sites.

For all of the types of services and information except renewing professional licenses, which was not applicable to 30 percent of respondents, more than half of respondents indicated that they would conduct research or transactions through the Internet, if available. Some of the services and information with the highest amounts of interest, such as researching places to visit in Minnesota (82 percent), checking status of road conditions (79 percent), and looking up public health information (77 percent) are already available on state web sites. It is possible that some respondents' prior exposure to this information increased their projected likelihood of researching this information online; however, in response to the question, "How frequently have you done business online with the Minnesota state government, or researched information from Minnesota state government web sites?," 44 percent of respondents reported never having been to state web sites. (See Table 12 for more detail.) Therefore, it can be assumed that much of the interest in the above information is "new" interest and that the state already has high priority information electronically available, if not widely disseminated.

Some of the other services and information that many respondents indicated they were likely to access online were expanded upon in respondents' comments as well as in focus groups. In particular, topic areas that were raised included information and services related to travel and recreation, with a particular focus on natural resources; democracy and civic participation; vital records; property and tax information; and consumer information. Other topic areas also are discussed briefly below.

TABLE 12. State government web sites

In the past year, how frequently have you done business online with Minnesota state government, or researched information from Minnesota state government web sites?	
at least weekly	9%
at least monthly	15
less than once a month	32
never	44

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

It should be noted that a number of services and types of information, such as marriage records and zoning regulations, are provided at the county or city level, not directly through state agencies. Some focus group participants recommended that the state provide a "civics lesson" on its web site for residents as well as new immigrants, explaining the distinction between state and local governments and their respective services. The participants suggested that the state provide links where possible, so that users would be able to find vital records, social services, driver's license information, and information on polling stations, schools, housing, medical services, and other information needed for daily living.

$ **Travel and recreation**

Information and services related to travel and recreation garnered some of the highest likelihood responses on the survey. Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely that they would research places to visit in Minnesota through the state's web site. In addition, 71 percent reported they would use the web site to find out about arts and cultural events in Minnesota; and 58 percent said that they would use the site to obtain a hunting or fishing license and/or make a camp reservation in a state park.

In their comments, survey respondents expressed the desire to obtain hunting, fishing, snowmobile and boat trailer licenses over the Internet. Many wanted to research public access boat ramps, trail information, golf course locations and conditions, hunting statistics and season opening information, lake information, biking trail locations, and forest and wildlife management information. Others suggested providing sports teams' schedules, information about craft fairs and festivals, and other regional events. Participants from the tourism focus group provided similar responses. In addition, they suggested information on snow depth, ski conditions, museums (public and private), and recreational events.

$ **Democracy and civic participation**

The survey asked several questions related to democratic participation. Approximately two thirds of respondents reported that they would likely register to vote, research legislation and/or their legislators' voting records, and communicate with their elected officials or state departments. In survey comments, respondents said they would like to research statutes; the state budget; the state's voting history; candidate information; the Governor's activities; legislative debates, and be notified through e-mail of such debates.

In focus groups, participants expanded upon these ideas. Participants in all four focus groups listed some aspect of civic participation that they would like available through the state's web site. Educators said that they would like information on the Legislature, including e-mail addresses of legislators, the state constitution, laws, bills, and election information. Staff from local government offices expressed the desire for real-time legislative information, that is, the status of bills as they are debated in committees and on the floor. Some small business owners suggested voting online. Participants from the travel and tourism group suggested public forums or chat rooms to debate policy issues as well as online polls. They also suggested providing the e-mail addresses for state and elected officials.

$ **Vital records**

The survey did not ask about researching or obtaining vital records specifically; however, quite a few survey respondents indicated that they would like to access these through the state's web site. Specifically, they mentioned marriage records, divorce decrees, wills, birth records, death records, and any other information related to genealogy.

$ **Property and tax information**

Survey respondents reported that they would like to be able to access their property tax information and personal tax accounts, find information on tax rebates, and download tax forms. In addition, some said that they would like the ability to ask tax questions online. Others said that they would like to access property and house title information, and more broadly, zoning regulations.

$ **Consumer information**

A number of survey respondents would like information from the Attorney General's Office or similar source concerning consumer issues. Specifically, respondents wanted information about companies conducting business over the Internet, telemarketers, and contractors. They want to be able to look up companies as well as file complaints through the state's web site.

$ **Health information**

Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents indicated that they would likely research public health information on the state's web site. In their comments, respondents said that they would look up vaccination schedules, Medicare information, first aid instructions, organ donation, and information on disease outbreaks. Some focus group participants suggested providing a link to health concerns of senior citizens.

$ **Education information**

Focus group participants were asked what types of education or school-related information they would like to access through the state's web site. Regarding K-12 education, a number of participants listed various types of statistical information, such as standardized test scores, student survey results, comparative performance of school districts, funding per pupil, and districts' balance sheets.

Beyond K-12, some participants wanted information on community education, scholarships, financial aid, and extra-curricular activity information. One participant thought it would be helpful to provide an overview of the Minnesota college system (MnSCU and the U of M schools) that includes graduation rates, number of years to graduate, and programs.

$ **Other desired information and services**

Survey respondents and focus group participants reported that they would like to be able to access a variety of statistics from the state's web site. These include: accident statistics, census data, business demographics, and quality of life indicators.

Other areas of desired research include: state agency regulations, particularly MnDOT, CFL, and Commerce; criminal records; driving records; and status of lawsuits. A number of survey respondents and focus group participants wanted employment law and regulations on the web site.

Some respondents and participants suggested a variety of information related to children and families, including program information (for example, the Early Childhood and Family Education program); licensed daycare information; child support information, such as notification of when checks are available; and information on housing.

Almost 80 percent of survey respondents said that they would likely check the state's web site for weather and road conditions. In their comments, respondents said they

wanted updates on public works, especially road construction; commercial development; and snow emergencies, including school and government office closings and snow plowing.

Respondents would like to be able to conduct a number of state transactions through the Internet. Three quarters of survey respondents indicated that they would like to renew their driver's license and car registration through the Internet; these also were mentioned by focus group participants. In addition, some said that they would like to pay traffic tickets and other fines electronically. Forty-four percent (of the 70 percent of survey respondents for whom this question was applicable) indicated that they would likely renew their professional license on the state's web site; small business owners concurred.

Finally, although less than half, a good percentage of respondents indicated interest in creating a personalized "MyMinnesota" home page, with information from state government specifically relevant to them, such as notices to renew their state licenses, updates on conditions in nearby state parks, and legislative information. See Table 13 for details.

Table 13. Likelihood of creating personalized "MyMinnesota" home page

very likely	likely	unlikely	very unlikely	not applicable / not sure
12%	27%	40%	19%	2%

Policy issues

On-line transaction fees

The survey asked respondents if they would be willing to pay additional fees (under $5) for the convenience of conducting transactions with the state on line. In most cases, the majority of respondents indicated they are not willing to pay additional fees for the services about which they were asked. Some focus group participants indicated the cost of delivering these services online should cost the state less. On the other hand, in most cases, at least 25 percent of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay a small fee, and at least 10 percent more responded "maybe." See Table 14 for details.

TABLE 14. Willingness to pay additional fees under $5

	Yes	No	Maybe	Not applic./ refused
renew driver's license	38%	48%	13%	1%
renew license plate tabs	33	52	15	0
file state income taxes	27	61	10	2
make a camp reservation in a state park	27	60	10	3
renew a professional license	22	55	6	17

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

Further analysis showed that willingness to pay an additional fee is, to some extent, positively correlated with respondents' household income. See Table 15 for details.

TABLE 15. Willingness to pay additional fees based on income*

	under $60,000	over $60,000
renew driver's license		
Yes	37%	46%
No	48	41
Maybe	14	13
Not applic./refused	1	0
renew license plate tabs		
Yes	32%	39%
No	51	42
Maybe	16	18
Not applic./refused	1	0
file state income taxes		
Yes	29%	30%
No	55	61
Maybe	13	8
Not applic./refused	3	1
make a camp reservation in a state park		
Yes	27%	32%
No	59	56
Maybe	13	8
Not applic./refused	2	4
renew a professional license		
Yes	22%	26%
No	53	56
Maybe	7	7
Not applic./refused	19	11

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001
* the data for the first three categories are significant at at least a 95 percent confidence level; the last two categories are not.

It was theorized that respondents living farther away from state government offices in the Twin Cities might have a greater willingness to pay to conduct state business over the Internet; however, analysis indicated that there are no statistically significant differences in responses based on whether the respondent resides in the seven-county metro area or in Greater Minnesota.

Internet security and information privacy

The survey asked respondents a number of questions related to their comfort level with
Internet security, privacy of information, and other aspects of conducting transactions
through the Internet. See Table 16 for details. "Very comfortable" and "comfortable"
responses were combined, as were "uncomfortable" and "very uncomfortable."

TABLE 16. Internet security and privacy

	very comfortable/ comfortable	neutral	uncomfortable/ very uncomfortable	not sure/ refused
feeling that your order will be handled accurately	63%	17%	17%	3%
feeling that your payment will be handled accurately	53	19	26	2
helpfulness of customer service	53	25	15	7
storing personal information at the state government web site to streamline ordering publications, renewing licenses, or applying for other services	45	17	36	2
providing personal information to a state government Internet site	40	19	39	2
providing personal information over the Internet	38	22	40	0
providing your credit card number	21	11	66	2

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

Respondents seemed to feel most comfortable with the service aspects of conducting
transactions over the Internet; at least half felt their orders and payments would be
handled accurately. On questions regarding providing such personal information as name
and address over the Internet, respondents were split fairly evenly, with about 20 percent
expressing neutrality on the question. There was no significant difference between
respondents' comfort level with providing information to government agencies or to
private organizations over the Internet. The one aspect of conducting transactions that
yields the most discomfort is providing credit card information (66 percent).

The survey data indicate a significant difference on the security questions in particular
relative to respondents' age. Specifically, at least 50 percent of respondents aged 45 or
older reported that they were uncomfortable with providing personal information over the
Internet, compared to approximately 30 percent of those aged 16 to 44. It is possible that
the more limited exposure of the older population to the Internet may make them more
wary of providing personal information. See Table 17 for details.

TABLE 17. Comfort level by age

	Overall	age 16 - 44	age 45 and older
providing personal information over the Internet			
comfortable/very comfortable	38%	44%	31%
neutral	22	24	19
uncomfortable/very uncomfortable	40	32	50
providing personal information to a state government Internet site			
comfortable/very comfortable	40	49	29
neutral	20	21	18
uncomfortable/very uncomfortable	40	30	53
storing personal information at the state government web site to streamline ordering publications, renewing licenses, or applying for other services			
comfortable/very comfortable	45	51	38
neutral	18	21	12
uncomfortable/very uncomfortable	37	28	50

SOURCE: Management Analysis Division, 2001

Focus group participants had strong feelings about Internet security and protection of their personal information. One issue discussed in all four groups was whether the state sells information about residents to private companies. Participants were adamant that the state should not sell data about users of electronic government services. Related questions concerned data privacy. Would users' personal information, such as name, address, demographic data, and type of information or service requested, be considered public information if users provide this data on the state's web site? What existing legal protections are in place? What new legislation should be considered as the state moves forward with providing more transactional services over its web site?

Participants also suggested that the state offer a consistent and clear statement of its privacy policies at all transactional points on the web site. Participants observed that, currently, such statements are "buried," worded inconsistently, or are not there at all.

Some participants were reluctant to give private information to the state and wondered why it would be necessary. Others indicated they were afraid of hackers and wanted more information about the state's Internet security provisions.

Other policy considerations

$ **Advertising**

Many focus group participants said the state should not sell advertising space on its web site. Some thought the state would realize enough staff savings from transactions conducted over the web site to pay for the site and thus they questioned why advertising would be necessary. Many thought advertising would damage at least the appearance of

objectivity of information, and others thought it would simply be an annoyance. Some questioned legal and liability issues associated with carrying advertisements.

On the other hand, some suggested that links to local Chambers of Commerce would be helpful in researching tourist destinations and amenities. A few participants compared the state carrying ads on its web site to local governments selling ad space in community newsletters, likening the state's web site to an electronic "newsletter."

$ **Accessibility**

Participants in focus groups, as well as some survey respondents, suggested the state's web site be accessible to non-English speakers, as they are a growing segment of the state's population. In addition, it was suggested the state's web site be accessible to those with disabilities or who suffer from various infirmities, as the state's aging population will present more of these challenges.

$ **Website promotion**

More than 72 percent of survey respondents indicated that they never heard of the North Star web site. However, 56 percent indicated that they had conducted transactions or researched information through the Internet with the state at least once in the past year, demonstrating an interest in electronically conducting transactions with the state or researching state information. Survey respondents volunteered the following suggestions for promoting the state's web site: the state should send mailings about North Star to households, use print and electronic media, develop a logo, and place links to North Star on other frequented web sites, including local government sites.

Focus group participants echoed many of these suggestions; in addition, they recommended the following:
- include the URL on common state mailings, such as tax forms and vehicle registration
- put the URL on license plates, as Pennsylvania has done
- register on popular search engines
- promote the web site in large user group newsletters, at sporting events, schools, libraries, resorts, conventions, and the State Fair
- have the Governor promote the web site
- on local government web sites, provide the links at the relevant level of service; that is, the link should not be to the North Star home page necessarily but to the actual service that the user is seeking.

One focus group participant suggested that the state license plate replace "Land of 10,000 Lakes" with the state's URL to get the message out. The overall consensus was that North Star does not have "brand recognition" at this point and that the state should undertake extensive promotional efforts so that residents are aware of the services and information available.

This topic is discussed more fully in Deloitte Consulting's companion strategic planning document.

RECOMMENDED DIRECTIONS

Based on data from the statewide resident survey and the four user focus groups, some areas for the state to focus on with regard to electronic government services seem to rise to the top. However, the areas identified in this report should be reviewed in light of the work and strategic planning developed by Deloitte Consulting in conjunction with this project. Their work included interviews and focus groups with state agencies' staff, a review of existing state agencies' online services and information and residents' requests for same, and a review of and experience with other states' electronic government initiatives.

Content areas

OT can assist agencies in developing their content and transaction capabilities in the areas that hold significant interest for Minnesotans. For example, 82 percent of survey respondents indicated that they were likely to electronically research places to visit in Minnesota. The Office of Technology could work with the Office of Tourism in expanding the Explore Minnesota site to meet anticipated demand for information and services. Additionally, many respondents listed specific types of natural resource information and related recreational services, discussed above, that they would like to access from the state's web site, some of which are not currently available. OT could work with DNR staff to develop these content areas and transaction features.

Popularity of services is one way to establish work priorities; however, OT also could focus on transforming some staff-intensive services into simpler electronic transactions. For example, significant numbers of survey respondents would like to purchase driver's licenses electronically. A percentage of respondents, for whom this issue is relevant, indicated that they would like to renew their professional licenses online.

From another perspective, there seems to be great potential to provide more seamless public services to residents by strengthening the ties with local governments. As some focus group participants pointed out, many residents don't know (or care) which level of government provides a service or information; they want to be able to easily access it. OT could plan work with some select cities or counties to develop a model for packaging services and information in a way that's user friendly to residents. Specifically, survey respondents indicated significant interest in property information and vital records. Some focus group participants suggested organizing services so searches could be done by ZIP code, enabling residents to find their "basket" of common, publicly-provided information and services by doing one search.

Survey respondents also indicated a strong interest in electronic democracy, from finding their representatives' e-mail address and registering to vote to tracking legislation, looking up legislators' voting records, and streaming debates. OT can begin to gauge the

interest, among legislators, state officials, non-profit advocacy organizations, and perhaps foundations, in implementing some of these ideas to facilitate greater and more informed civic participation.

Policy decisions

In addition to considering the content areas discussed above, there are several policy decisions that seem pertinent to further development and use of electronic government services by Minnesota residents.

Specifically, providing information and services in multiple languages and to meet disability challenges in a growing elderly population will take on increasing importance as Minnesota's population becomes older and more diverse. Related, given the current Internet accessibility gap between younger and older Minnesotans, perhaps some targeted Internet or computer education and training can be developed for senior citizens, working in conjunction with local libraries or community groups.

Residents have a strong concern about privacy of their information, to the point where they may be reluctant to conduct transactions with the state over its web site. To encourage such transactions, OT will need to provide clear explanation of existing protections on relevant areas of its web site and also determine if further protections should be legislatively pursued. In pursuing the latter, it should be noted that the local government focus group participants suggested that local governments be given the same data privacy protections that apply to state data obtained through the Internet.

With regard to promoting North Star, OT can begin marketing the web site by including its URL on state mailings, such as the Departments of Revenue's and Public Safety/Driver and Vehicle Service's, as these are two agencies that currently mail to a great percentage of Minnesota households. More extensive efforts also can be pursued, as discussed in the strategic plan developed by Deloitte Consulting.

APPENDICES

Survey instrument

Focus group scripts
        Local Government
        Educators
        Business Owner
        Tourism and Entertainment

CITIZEN SURVEY
ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT SERVICES
FALL 2001

(1)   Survey Code Number

[   ]

(2)   Do you have access to the Internet? IF YES, SKIP TO QUES 4

❏1 yes   ❏2 no   ❏3 don't know / refused answer

(3)   What prevents you from having access to the Internet? SKIP TO QUES 55

❏1 no computer at home
❏2 Internet service too expensive
❏3 haven't learned how to use the Internet
❏4 not interested in using the Internet
❏5 Other: _____

How frequently do you use the Internet at the following locations?

	every day	a couple of times a week	once a week	a couple of times a month	once a month	less than once a month	never
(4) work	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(5) home	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(6) school	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(7) library	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(8) other (SPECIFY) _____	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(9) In the past year, how often have you used the Internet at home for telecommuting, that is, connecting from home to your workplace through the Internet to accomplish your job?	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7
(10) In the past year, how frequently have you done business online with Minnesota state government, or researched information from Minnesota state government websites?	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6	❏7

IF ANSWERED AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH FOR QUES 5 (HOME), CONTINUE. IF LESS THAN ONCE A MONTH, SKIP TO QUES 17. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your Internet service at home?

	very satisfied	satisfied	neutral	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	don't know / refused answer
(11) speed of operation	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(12) price of services	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(13) support from customer service	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(14) reliability (system is "up")	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(15) accessibility (no busy signals)	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(16) your choice of providers (competition)	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6

If the following applications were available to you using high-speed connection, what is the likelihood that you would use them?

	very likely	likely	unlikely	very unlikely	not applicable	not sure / refused answer
(17) telecommuting to work	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(18) using an Internet connection at home to remotely participate in live classes from schools and colleges as they are happening	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(19) using "video-on-demand" technology to take classes from schools and colleges at any time of day from home	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6

(20) **What is your experience with Minnesota's North Star website for accessing state government information and services? IF NEVER VISITED, SKIP TO QUES 23.**

❏1 visited the North Star website more than once
❏2 visited the North Star website once
❏3 heard of the North Star website, but never visited
❏4 never heard of the North Star website

(21) **How would you describe your experience with the North Star website? IF DISSATISFIED OR VERY DISSATISFIED, GO TO QUES 22.**

❏1 very satisfied　　　　　❏4 dissatisfied
❏2 satisfied　　　　　　　❏5 very dissatisfied
❏3 neutral　　　　　　　　❏6 don't know / refused answer

(22) **What problems or frustrations did you have with the North Star website? USE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES AS PROMPTS IF NECESSARY; DO NOT READ IMMEDIATELY.**

❏1 couldn't find information I was looking for
❏2 wanted more extensive information
❏3 didn't have the service I was looking for
❏4 unclear labeling of services or information
❏5 site was "slow"
❏6 Other: _____

I'm going to read a list of government transactions and types of information. Please tell me how likely would you be to research this information or conduct these transactions through the Internet in the future, if they are available.

	very likely	likely	unlikely	very unlikely	not applicable	not sure / refused answer
(23) renew license plate tabs	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(24) renew driver's license	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(25) file state income taxes	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(26) renew a professional license	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(27) obtain a hunting or fishing license	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6

Column headers (rotated): very likely | likely | unlikely | very unlikely | not applicable | not sure / refused answer

(28) look up public health information . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(29) research legislation and / or your legislators' voting records . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(30) communicate with elected officials or state departments . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(31) locate government contact and location information ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(32) register a change of address with government agencies . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(33) register to vote . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(34) check status of weather / road conditions . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(35) research job opportunities with the state . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(36) make a camp reservation in a state park . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(37) look up historical facts about the State of Minnesota ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(38) find out about arts and cultural events in Minnesota ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(39) research places to visit in Minnesota . . . . ❑1 ❑2 ❑3 ❑4 ❑5 ❑6

(40) What other state government information or transactions would you want to access on the Internet in the future?

_____

_____

_____

(41) How likely would you be to create a personalized "My Minnesota" home page with information from state government specifically relevant to you, such as notices to renew your state licenses, updates on conditions in nearby state parks, or legislation information? IF NEEDED, This is similar to the "MyYahoo" service available with Yahoo. . . . .

	very likely	likely	unlikely	very unlikely	not applicable	not sure / refused answer
	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6

I'm going to read a short list of government transactions. Tell me if you would be willing to pay an additional fee (under $5) to conduct these transactions with the state if you could do it over the Internet. (IF NEEDED, The fee would be in addition to the cost of the license or service.)

	yes	maybe	no	not applic. / refused answer
(42) renew license plate tabs	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4
(43) renew driver's license	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4
(44) file state income taxes	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4
(45) renew a professional license	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4
(46) make a camp reservation in a state park	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4

I'm now going to ask you a few questions about Internet privacy and security. When you think about using the Internet, how comfortable are you with

	very comfortable	comfortable	neutral	uncomfortable	very uncomfortable	not sure / refused
(47) providing personal information, such as your name or mailing address, over the Internet in general? . . .	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6
(48) providing personal information to a state government Internet site?	❏1	❏2	❏3	❏4	❏5	❏6

	very comfortable	comfortable	neutral	uncomfortable	very uncomfortable	not sure / refused

(49) providing your credit card number . . . . ❏¹ ❏² ❏³ ❏⁴ ❏⁵ ❏⁶

(50) feeling that your payment will be handled accurately ❏¹ ❏² ❏³ ❏⁴ ❏⁵ ❏⁶

(51) feeling that your order for services or products will be handled accurately . . . . ❏¹ ❏² ❏³ ❏⁴ ❏⁵ ❏⁶

(52) helpfulness of customer service . . . . ❏¹ ❏² ❏³ ❏⁴ ❏⁵ ❏⁶

(53) storing personal information, such as your name and address, at the state government website to streamline ordering publications, renewing licenses, or applying for other government services . . . . ❏¹ ❏² ❏³ ❏⁴ ❏⁵ ❏⁶

(54) Minnesota state government is in the process of improving its website, Northstar, to make it more user-friendly for citizens. What suggestions do you have for the staff doing this work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(55) The last set of questions will help us ensure we have obtained the opinions of a wide variety of Minnesotans. First, please select your age bracket from the following list:

❏¹ 16 - 34   ❏² 35 - 44   ❏³ 45 - 54   ❏⁴ 55 or over   ❏⁵ refused answer

(56) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

❏¹ less than high school diploma
❏² high school graduate or GED
❏³ some college up to associates degree

❏⁴ Bachelor's degree
❏⁵ some graduate school or more
❏⁶ refused answer

(57) Please tell me which of these brackets fits your approximate annual household income.

❏¹ under $20,000
❏² $20,000 to $34,999

❏³ $35,000 to $59,999
❏⁴ $60,000 to $74,999

❏⁵ $75,000 and over
❏⁶ refused answer

(58) What county do you live in? _____

_____

(59) Gender (interviewer record)

    ❏₁ male   ❏₂ female   ❏₃ unsure

Appendix B

Local Government Focus Group Script

Educators Focus Group Script

Business Owner Focus Group Script

Tourism and Entertainment Focus Group Script

**Local Government
Focus Group Script**

Introduction

Thank for coming, etc.

The Minnesota Department of Administration is in the process of improving the state's Internet portal, North Star. North Star provides links to all state agencies, other branches of government, and various special events and information related to Minnesota State Government. We want to make North Star more user-friendly and relevant to various user groups as well as Minnesotans at large.

As part of this process, Admin is conducting a statewide survey of citizens on electronic government service, including questions on content preferences, functionality, and policy recommendations.

To complement the survey, Admin is convening focus groups to gather opinions, insights and recommendations from specific user groups.

I'm going to ask you questions primarily based on your perspective as an a local government staff person, and then a few questions based on your perspective as a private citizen and user of government services and information.

Ground rules: There are no wrong answers; you don't have to raise your hand to speak.

Introductions, "What interested you in participating in this focus group?"

Local government perspective

1. What types of things do you use the Internet for? What features make a website appealing to you? (probes: easy to use, interesting, efficient)

2. Have you been to Northstar, Minnesota State Government's website? What has been your experience while using the site?

3. What other government websites (federal, state, local) have you visited that you found easy to use or helpful? What specifically did you like about the sites? What do you like and dislike about *your* government's website?

4. What types of information and services do you or other offices in your government most commonly need from the state? What are your government's most common interactions, most time-sensitive interactions?

5. What types of information and services would it make the most sense for state government to make available to you or other parts of your government through its website? Why? What would be your concerns about this?

6. How would you feel about receiving electronic updates or reminders from the State's website regarding these transactions that are relevant to you? (probes: Would it be bothersome or useful? What concerns would you have about this service?)

7. (Privacy) Are you comfortable with giving information about yourself and your office over the Internet? What is your level of concern about security of information? What are your privacy concerns about your personal information being collected by an organization? Does it make a difference whether the information goes to a company or the state government?

8. If the state were to promote or market the services/information it provides over the Internet, what would be the most effective way of getting the word out? What would persuade you to visit the State's website?

9. How would you feel about the State selling advertising on its website? What types of advertising would be appropriate? What types would not be? Would you feel differently if the advertising offset the costs of the website?

Citizen user perspective

10. From a private citizen perspective, as a parent or a homeowner, what types of information related to schools and education would you like to see on the State's website? (probes: standardized test scores, school district demographics, other statistics, financial aid information)

11. As a citizen in general, how interested would you be in looking up specific legislation, committee meeting schedules, and your legislators' voting records on-line? Have any of you already done this? What has been your experience?

12. How else do you think the state can promote citizen involvement in governance through on-line information and services?

13. In general, what are the three most important things that you would like to see or be able to do on Minnesota State Government's website, North Star?

14. Are there any other comments that you'd like to make about improving the State's portal that we haven't touched on already?

Educators Focus Group Script

Introduction

Thanks for coming -

The Minnesota Department of Administration is in the process of improving the state's Internet portal, North Star. North Star provides links to all state agencies, other branches of government, and various special events and information related to Minnesota State Government. We want to make North Star more user-friendly and relevant to various user groups as well as Minnesotans at large.

As part of this process, Admin is conducting a statewide survey of citizens on electronic government service, including questions on content preferences, functionality, and policy recommendations.

To complement the survey, Admin is convening focus groups to gather opinions, insights and recommendations from specific user groups.

I'm going to ask you questions primarily based on your perspective as an educator, and then a few questions from your perspective as a Minnesota resident in general.

Ground rules: There are no wrong answers, and you don't have to raise your hand to speak.

Introductions, and "What interested you in participating in this focus group?"

Educators' perspective

1. What types of things do you use the Internet for? What features make a website appealing to you? (probes: easy to use, interesting, efficient)

2. Have you been to North Star, Minnesota State Government's website? If not, why not? If so, what has been your experience while using the site?

3. What government websites (federal, state, local) have you visited that you found easy to use or helpful? What specifically did you like about the sites?

4. From an instructional perspective, what kinds of content would you like to see on the State of Minnesota website? What would you use to develop teaching materials? What would you want your students to be able to find? (probes: info from DNR, PCA, Health, Human Services, MnDOT, Legislature, etc.)

5. What other kinds of education-related information and services would you want, for your students or for yourself as an educator, available on the State's website? (probes: scholarship information and electronic application forms, employment and internship information, etc.)

6. In terms of administration, what types of information would you like to be able to electronically submit to or receive from the state's Department of Children, Families and Learning? (probes: budgets, statistics, other required paperwork)

7. How would you feel about receiving electronic updates or reminders from the State's website, either to you or your students, about these kinds of information we've been discussing? (probes: Would it be bothersome or useful? What concerns would you have about this service?)

8. What are the distinct needs for different age groups within the student population as far as how they will use the State's website? How can these needs be addressed?

9. What concerns do you have about students using the State of Minnesota website?

10. (Privacy) Are you comfortable with giving information about yourself and your school over the Internet in general? What is your level of concern about security of information? What are your privacy concerns about your personal information being collected by an organization? Does it make a difference whether the information goes to a company or state government?

11. If the State were to promote or market the services/information it provides over the Internet, what would be the most effective way of getting the word out? What would persuade you to visit the State's website?

12. How would you feel about the State selling advertising on its website? What types of advertising would be appropriate? What types would not be? Would you feel differently if the advertising offset the costs of the website?

Parent/Citizen perspective

13. From a private citizen perspective, as a parent or a homeowner, what types of information related to schools and education would you like to see on the State's website? (probes: standardized test scores, school district demographics, other statistics, financial aid information)

14. As a citizen in general, how interested would you be in looking up specific legislation, committee meeting schedules, and your legislators' voting records on-line? Have any of you already done this? What has been your experience?

15. What are the three most important things that you would like to see or be able to do on Minnesota State Government's website, North Star?

**Business Owner
Focus Group Script**

Introduction

Thank for coming, etc.

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As part of this process, Admin is conducting a statewide survey of citizens on electronic government service, including questions on content preferences, functionality, and policy recommendations.

To complement the survey, Admin is convening focus groups to gather opinions, insights and recommendations from specific user groups.

I'm going to ask you questions primarily based on your perspective as a business owner, and then a few questions based on your perspective as a private citizen.

Ground rules: There are no wrong answers; you don't have to raise your hand to speak.

Introductions, "What interested you in participating in this focus group?"

Business owners' perspective

1. What types of things do you use the Internet for? What features make a website appealing to you? (probes: easy to use, interesting, efficient)

2. Have you been to Northstar, Minnesota State Government's website yet? If not, why not? If so, what has been your experience while using the site?

3. What government websites (federal, state, local) have you visited that you found easy to use or helpful? What specifically did you like about the sites?

4. From a business owner's perspective, what kinds of content would you like to see on the State of Minnesota website? Which of the following have you searched for at State websites, if any? Describe your experience.
    a. information on licensing
    b. taxes
    c. employment or other law
    d. state demographics
    e. training or career development workshops

5. What kinds of transactions and services would you want available on the State's website? Which of the following have you done at State websites, if any? Describe your experience.
   - on-line application and renewal of professional licenses
   - registration for state-offered training and workshops
   - applying for grants
   - applying to do business with the State as a contractor
   - filing taxes, unemployment insurance, or workers compensation payments

6. How would you feel about receiving electronic updates or reminders from the State's website regarding these transactions that are relevant to you? (probes: Would it be bothersome or useful? What concerns would you have about this service?)

7. (Privacy) Are you comfortable with giving information about yourself and your business over the Internet? What is your level of concern about security of information? What are your privacy concerns about your personal information being collected by an organization? Does it make a difference whether the information goes to a company or the state government?

8. If the state were to promote or market the services/information it provides over the Internet, what would be the most effective way of getting the word out? What would persuade you to visit the State's website?

9. How would you feel about the State selling advertising on its website? What types of advertising would be appropriate? What types would not be? Would you feel differently if the advertising offset the costs of the website?

Citizens' perspective

10. From a private citizen perspective, as a parent or a homeowner, what types of information related to schools and education would you like to see on the State's website? (probes: standardized test scores, school district demographics, other statistics, financial aid information)

11. As a citizen in general, how interested would you be in looking up specific legislation, committee meeting schedules, and your legislators' voting records on-line? Have any of you already done this? What has been your experience?

12. How else do you think the state can promote citizen involvement in governance through on-line information and services?

13. In general, what are the three most important things that you would like to see or be able to do on Minnesota State Government's website, North Star?

14. Are there any other comments that you'd like to make about improving the State's portal that we haven't touched on already?

Tourism and Entertainment
Focus Group Script

Introduction

Thank for coming, etc.

The Minnesota Department of Administration is in the process of improving the state's Internet portal, North Star. North Star provides links to all state agencies, other branches of government, and various special events and information related to Minnesota State Government. We want to make North Star more user-friendly and relevant to various user groups as well as Minnesotans at large.

As part of this process, Admin is conducting a statewide survey of citizens on electronic government service, including questions on content preferences, functionality, and policy recommendations.

To complement the survey, Admin is convening focus groups to gather opinions, insights and recommendations from specific user groups.

I'm going to ask you questions primarily based on your perspective as a consumer of Minnesota travel and entertainment, and then a few questions based on your perspective as a citizen.

Ground rules: There are no wrong answers; you don't have to raise your hand to speak.

Introductions, "What interested you in participating in this focus group?"

Travel and entertainment perspective

1. What types of things do you use the Internet for? What features make a website appealing to you? (probes: easy to use, interesting, efficient)

2. Have you been to Northstar, Minnesota State Government's website yet? If not, why not? If so, what has been your experience while using the site?

3. Have you been to the Office of Tourism's Explore Minnesota website? If not, why not? If so, what has been your experience while using the site?

4. From the perspective of someone seeking information about travel or entertainment in Minnesota, what kinds of content would you like to see on the State of Minnesota website? (probes: camping and hunting information, boat registration, museums, exhibits, road conditions, construction reports, links to local chambers of commerce)

5. What kinds of transactions and services would you want available on the State's website? (probes: renew hunting or fishing license, reserve campsite)

6. Of the information and services we just discussed, are there any that would make sense to be packaged together? Why do these fit together?

7. What other relevant information sources external to State government should be offered with this information?

8. What are the distinct needs for different groups of travelers (families, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, others)? How can these needs be addressed in terms of information on the State's website?

9. How would you feel about receiving electronic updates or reminders from the State's website regarding these transactions that are relevant to you? (probes: Would it be bothersome or useful? What concerns would you have about this service?)

10. (Privacy) Are you comfortable with giving information about yourself over the Internet? What is your level of concern about security of information? What are your privacy concerns about your personal information being collected by an organization? Does it make a difference whether the information goes to a company or the state government?

11. If the state were to promote or market the services/information it provides over the Internet, what would be the most effective way of getting the word out? What would persuade you to visit the State's website?

12. How would you feel about the State selling advertising on its website? What types of advertising would be appropriate? What types would not be? Would you feel differently if the advertising offset the costs of the website?

Citizen perspective

13. From a private citizen perspective, as a parent or a homeowner, what types of information related to schools and education would you like to see on the State's website? (probes: standardized test scores, school district demographics, other statistics, financial aid information)

14. As a citizen in general, how interested would you be in looking up specific legislation, committee meeting schedules, and your legislators' voting records on-line? Have any of you already done this? What has been your experience?

15. How likely would you be to *register* to vote on-line? What do you think of providing the ability for citizens to actually vote on-line? What would be the benefits of this? What are your concerns about it?

16. How else do you think the state can promote citizen involvement in governance through on-line information and services?

17. Are there any other comments that you'd like to make about improving the State's portal that we haven't touched on already?