



EBOOK

# Digital engagement with government – a citizen view

March 2021





## Digital engagement with government – a citizen view.

As part of an ongoing examination into the digital transformation of government departments and agencies, Deloitte and Adobe launched their latest report - *A blueprint for enhanced citizen experiences*: The case for simple, smart and personalised government services.

This research into delivering a world-class digital citizen experience is based on a survey of 1,000 Australians. The survey sought to understand how Australians interact with government, what they look for, what they value most, and crucially, their perceptions of the online experience. This eBook showcases these insights into citizen behaviour and attitudes, which are instructive for departments and agencies looking to take the next step in their digital journey.

## Government steps up to meet digital demand

Even before COVID-19, Australians regularly transacted with government, and registrations, tax matters and government payments remain the most popular. However, the pandemic, and the devastating bushfires before it, has seen people coming to government more regularly for reliable public information. For example, 70% of citizens have turned to government for health advice and 67% for information about employment and work rights.

- **Transactions** relate to citizens utilising a government service such as registrations, benefits or tax.
- **Public information** refers to the official release of government advice on a range of matters, including public health, education or work rights.

**9 in 10**

Australians seek government information at some point, on average twice a year

**1.7bn**

visits to government websites (Mar – Dec 2020) as demand for support and trusted public information surged

## Most Australians now prefer digital

One enduring legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic is embedding digital as citizens' preferred way of engaging with government. What started as a necessity in the earlier stages of the pandemic, has become the channel of choice across all age groups, demographics and locations.

The benefits of optimising the digital citizen experience are also evident. Previous Adobe and Deloitte research found that improving the digital experience can create time savings for citizens and cost savings for government. Ultimately, the government could give one day back to every adult each year<sup>1</sup>.

Where do citizens go to first when searching for public information?



**56%**  
Websites



**11%**  
In-person



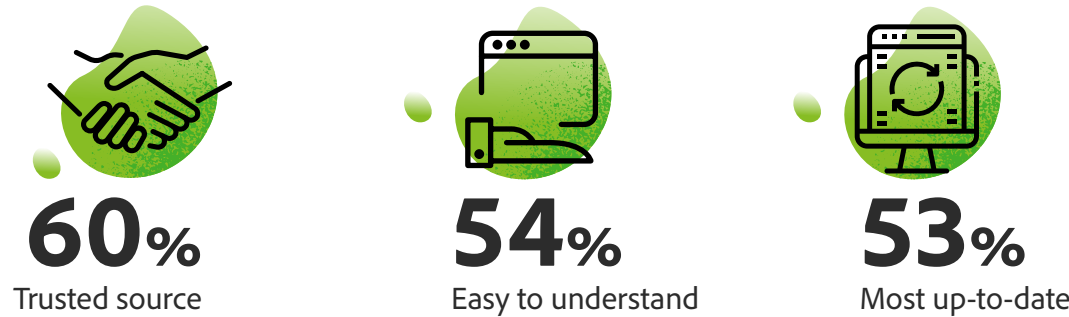
**8%**  
Phone

<sup>1</sup>Reference: Deloitte and Adobe, Rethinking the digital dividend report 2019.

# Trust comes first

In an age where information and disinformation are prolific, Australians rank trusted sources higher than any other factor when choosing how and where to access the public information they need. The majority of citizens also value information that's easy to understand and current.

## Most important factors when accessing public information (ranked in top 3)

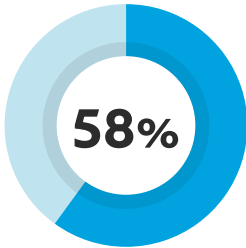


# Confidence in government on the march

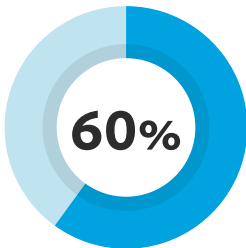
Given an uplift in demand for public information, particularly in relation to health matters amid the pandemic, government is already well placed to deliver trusted information in the eyes of most citizens.

Independent research from Curtin University and the University of Otago months into the pandemic, indicates that citizens' trust in government at all levels has been rising due to their management of the unprecedented health crisis<sup>2</sup>.

This is another compelling reason for government to leverage this opportunity to enhance its role as the central provider of public information. Particularly given the study's authors suggest that trust levels may abate when normalised post-pandemic conditions return.



of citizens find government sources trustworthy

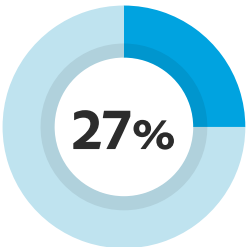


of citizens find government information generally easy to understand

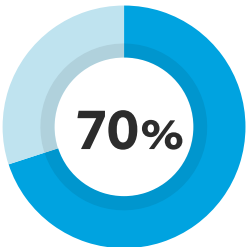
# Where do citizens go for information?

While it's intuitive that the majority of Australians (54%) would go directly to government sources when transacting with government – lodging tax returns or registering a motor vehicle – only one in four go to government sources first when seeking public information. That's despite many citizens viewing government as a trusted source.

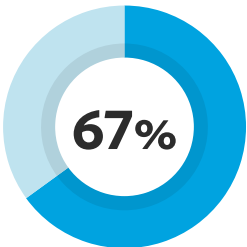
In fact, more than double the number of citizens go collectively to search engines (41%), family and friends (11%) and the media (10%) than those who go directly to government sources.



of Australians go to government sources first when searching for public information



of Australians looked for public health information, but only 31% went to government first



of Australians looked for work rights information, but only 35% went to government first

# Addressing friction in the digital experience

Despite many citizens implicitly trusting government information, people report a number of frustrations. This could help explain why the majority of the population turn to non-government sources to access government-issued information.

According to the survey, half of respondents indicate that information is inconsistent across departments and agencies, and around a quarter say they have to access multiple sites to find what they need. This suggests that improving the digital experience could deliver both efficiency benefits as well as enhance trust in these sources.

## What citizens say when they interact with government online



50%

of Australians find information inconsistent across government sources



22%

of Australians say they access multiple sources when searching for information they need



59%

of Australians are uncertain about how much time it will take to find what they need



53%

of Australians say there are too many passwords to remember

<sup>2</sup>Reference: Riley (2020), Trust in gvt surges through pandemic: Study. Innovation Aus.

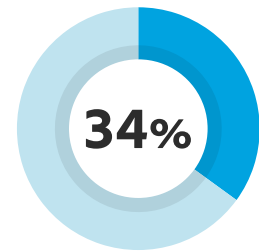
# Delivering to citizen needs

As government seeks to more effectively deliver public information and limit misinterpretation by third party sites, it's worth taking note that three in four citizens said they would be as or more likely to use government sites if they were tailored to their needs.

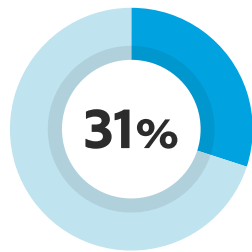
The research illustrates that personalised government information and services based on the digital signals that citizens send online can be harnessed to enhance the digital experience.

Citizens say that if their previous activity was remembered and location recognised, they would be more likely to visit government web sites.

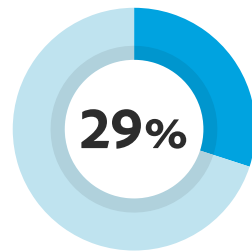
## Citizens are more likely to use a government service if



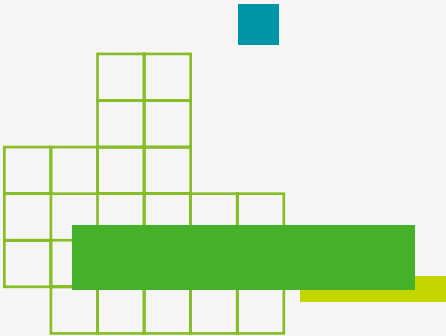
it remembers their previous interactions with all government sites (logged in)



it remembers their previous interactions with the site they are currently on (logged out)



it uses their location to provide information specific to their needs



## What is personalisation?

Personalisation tailors digital experiences to an individual's context. That means collecting information based on a person's digital footprint and online behaviour to make it easier for them to find what they need in their preferred channel.

# The benefits of personalisation

The benefits of personalisation can be viewed through both a citizen and government lens. For citizens, it can drive better uptake of government services, ensure the right information is delivered at the right time and support the timely completion of relevant transactions.

For government, personalisation can improve efficiencies in the delivery of information, and provide more comprehensive access to government services. The latter, according to the OECD, is a primary driver of trust.

# Conclusion

According to the research, Australians prefer digital access to government and value trusted sources of information above anything else. Departments and agencies are well placed to meet this need. However, citizens continue to voice frustration as they navigate the 64 million pages of content that exists across government. As a result, many are turning to non-government sources.

## Delivering a more personalised citizen experience has the potential to:



Ensure the correct messages are consistently reaching the people who need them most



Improve public service outcomes



Allow government to capitalise on elevated trust levels

In the next eBook, we examine more deeply the applications of personalisation and the practical pathways to implementation for departments and agencies.



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