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THIS PAPER DISCUSSES HOW THE NEW JERSEY MOTOR VEHICLE COMMISSION DEMONSTRATES THE SIX OUT OF NINE-FACTOR STRUCTURE; COST, TIME, CONVENIENCE, COMMUNICATION, AVOID PERSONAL INTERACTION, AND TRUST. EXPLAINING IN DEPTH HOW THE SITE IS SUCCEEDING IN THEIR STRUCTURE AND DIVE INTO WHAT IS IT MISSING. IT WILL ALSO DISCUSS RECOMMENDATIONS I SUGGEST ON HOW TO IMPROVE THEIR WEBSITE FOR A BETTER EGOVERNMENT SYSTEM.

NJ Motor Vehicle Website

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Introduction:

In the article titled “Measuring eGovernment success: a public value approach,” written by Murray Scott, William DeLone, and William Golden, they dive into measuring the success of eGovernment systems. As technology is continuously evolving and changing, they discovered that there was a lack of conceptual bases necessary to represent the range of success dimensions. “This study proposes Public Value theory to reposition the DeLone and McLean IS Success Model to encompass three essential success or value clusters: efficiency, effectiveness, and social value.” For their research, they surveyed 346 experience users of US Government Web 2.0 websites. They can confirm that the nine-factor structure (Cost, Time, Convenience, Personalisation, Communication, Ease of Information Retrieval, Trust, Well-Informedness, and Participate in Decision-Making) can explain a significant portion of citizens’ perceptions of eGovernment success.

“Measuring success in the public sector is a difficult task. In contrast, private sector firms focus on efficiency, quality, and reliability, general managers, must combine these concerns with accountability, the creation of the trust, and differing public preferences. The nature and breadth of the purposes and proposed outcomes of public services serve to distinguish the task of eGovernment evaluation from their commercial. Given the pressing need for the assessment of eGovernment to include a broader democratic perspective, several authors have called for a broadening and deepening of scholarly perspectives on eGovernment, to provide social scientific theory and insight adequately.” (Scott, M., Delone, W., & Golden, W. (2016))

Throughout this paper, it will discuss how the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission demonstrates the six out of nine-factor structure; cost, time**,** convenience**,** communication**,** avoid personal interaction, and trust. Explaining in depth how the site is succeeding in their structure and dive into what is it missing. It will also discuss recommendations I suggest on how to improve their website for a better eGovernment system.

Background:

In early 2019, New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission revamped there now website njmvc.gov, intending to assess their readiness to implement REAL ID, a new license format for airline travel for late 2020. During their assessment, they found that their systems were aging out, there was minimal use of online services, the counter staffing dipped below 50% during their busiest time, and there was no method to measure the waiting times in the agencies. Before REAL ID could have offered, the state had to first look into revamping their website.

“To prepare for the coming of REAL ID, one of our first orders of business was to revamp the NJMVC website, turning a dense, difficult-to-navigate site into a pared-down, welcoming one. The fresh new platform is also more intuitive and aligns with agency priorities. These include offering easy access to online license and registration renewals as well as other services enabling customers to “Skip the Trip.”

This effort to reduce agency congestion resulted in the MVC issuing through its online portal more than 128,000 standard licenses and ID renewals and 22,000 standard licenses and ID replacements in 2019. Potentially lowering up to 150,000 fewer customers in the agencies, freeing up resources and personnel for transactions that require agency visits. On top of revamping their website, the state also replaced computer servers and added nearly 900 new PCs at all 39 NJMVC locations. This change is the first significant redesign in five years and reflects the MVC’s commitment to providing excellent customer service.

“Whether accessed from a desktop, tablet, or smartphone, the new MVC website will improve customer service and simplify business practices. Our revamped and streamlined website enables customers to access the information they need faster, and many may even find that they can conduct their motor vehicle business online without ever having to visit an agency.” Said NJMVC Chairman and Administrator Raymond P. Martinez (2017, December 29)

The redesigned website features approximately 750 unique pages – down from nearly 1,300 on the previous site. Making it easier for the almost 900,000 people who visit [njmvc.gov](http://www.njmvc.gov/) every month to access the information and services they need.

The new website for the NJMVC offers many services online. These services range from changing your address, replacing a lost license, or renewing vehicle registration ranging from commuter vans, commercial trucks, ATVs, and dirt bikes. An individual can also renew their standard license, check inspection wait times, and schedule a road test. The website also provides information about what documents are needed and what is to expect while transferring and out of state license, information about materials that are acceptable as their 6 points of identifications and answers most questions someone would have about a surcharge. It is also clear and understanding information for younger drivers getting their initial licenses starting from 16 years old, 17 to 20 years old, and those 21 and up. It explains what the student learner’s permit, probating permit, and a primary driver license is. The site offers manhy services and provides useful information for individuals and drivers.

Dimension

Cost

Since the rollout of the new NJMVC website, they have processed over 150,000 standard licenses, renewals, and replacements. The MVC did not have a good reputation when it came to long wait lines, customer services, and in recent years, computer crashing at the locations. When creating a new website, the board of directors focused on providing nearly every service that was provided in the area online. These online services saved users money in travel regarding gas mileage or public transportation. They were helping many people who had to request off from work before, losing their payment for that day. Being able to register a car, renew a license, or replacing a lost one online is cost-saving for the DMV in response to paperwork cost and processes.

However, according to reports, more can be invested in their operations and website. The MVC collects $1.2 Billion a year in fees but only spends roughly $345 million on their services, almost 30%. Especially with the locations having computer problems such as crashing in their site, creating long wait times, spending will have to change. In 2008, the MVC hired Hewlett Packard for $39 million to replace its 1970s technology. Six years later, they terminated the contract with only parts of it done – at the cost of $21 million, plus $13.3 million paid to a third-party oversight vendor. After the termination of the MATRIX project, the MVC put together a five-part Transformation Project. But only the commercial driver’s license section has been completed, with progress on the other parts put aside in favor of ending the second priority – the $13 million in processing and scanning upgrades needed for secure REAL ID driver’s licenses. “All the expenditures we had for the agency system upgrades, for care upgrades, that’s our information system, for multi-scheduling – all of those funds went to Real ID,” Sue Fulton said.

There should be more oversight on spending, and management does have to make a better decision on how the funds can better help the system both internally and externally. The current website rolled out in early 2019 with its new layout, mainly because of REAL ID. However, this was long overdue. In their 2018 annual report, the main focus for the DMV was implementing social media, while there are costs such as salary, internet, and computer software./ hardware. There hasn’t been much success in their part. As of today, the NJMVC has only 6,000 likes on Facebook and less than 4,000 followers on Twitter, which means that new information about services provided on the website is not being reached out to a more massive crowd. They would have to rethink their tactics in how to engage people by both social media and their website. If people still go to the actual locations to get services that can be provided at the comfort of their own homes, the point of the website becomes a failed project. The information has to spread to every driver, and the number of transactions online would have to exceed those in persons to see actual improvement.

 Time:

A significant problem technology has been able to keep under control is time. Government agencies that have adopted cutting edge technological services since the introduction of e-Governance, like the NJ MVC, have made a lot of progress with regards to time management. Everyone is well aware of the number of times customers spend in long queues at the MVC, just for simple services. To help reduce waiting time at the NJ MVC, services such as License Renewal, License replacement, registration replacement, and address change have been made available online.

Time saved by using online portals of the NJ MVC is an essential benefit of e-government. You can opt for online interactions, which, in comparison to other offline methods of service delivery, saves you more time. From March 2019 to October 2019, NJ MVC was able to process over 75,000 transactions online, up to 7,000 license renewals per week.

Unlike the physical location, it is less likely for computer slowdown, and there has not been any reporting of a crash on the actual website. Meaning, if there was an outage or crash at the Plainfield location, it does not affect the site. The NJ MVC launched a campaign called “Skip the Trip” aiming to inform drivers about the services available on their website. However, the campaign hasn’t been much of a success since there are still a very high number of people who are unaware of the online features. Another problem or barrier with the online features is that for some services such as registering a car or renewing a license, there is a time slot where it can be done online. Usually, the driver would receive a letter from the MVC informing them that it will expire soon and instructions on how to apply online. However, if the driver did not use it during that time, they will then have to go to the location and get their services done there. Lastly, the online feature does not apply to everyone, first-time drivers and commercial drivers are exempt from the “skip the trip” option. Investing in their marketing, or hiring a third party who understands how to market to the younger crowd would perhaps help spread the word of their services. Younger people are more inclined to use technology for their shopping, their credit card payment, and would perhaps be more inclined to use the online services provided by the NJ MVC.

Convenience

“The ability of the individual to easily access information and services is an important component of the convenience benefits from self-service technologies.” The purpose of the NJ MVC website is to provide this type of structure for individuals. As mentioned before is there is a plethora of information available for drivers on the site, and it is written understandably. The website separates the data into common questions individuals ask. On the website, one can download the driver manual to prepare themselves for the written tests as well as take a practice exam online. For new drivers, the site provides a list of driving schools in NJ where one can go practice if needed. There information for drivers of other kinds of vehicles from boats to collection cars and abandoned ones. It falls under the net benefit items described in the article of Golden. “I can use this website around the clock. I can access this website from many different locations (e.g., home, work, library, post office), and this website allows me to terminate what I am doing at any time.”

The aim of the electronic government (e-government) is to increase the convenience and accessibility of government services and information. E-government’s past emphasized the automation of routine government operations. The electronic government aims to increase the comfort and accessibility of government services and information to citizens, businesses, and governmental units. This is generally achieved through the use of information and communications technologies, a broad class of technologies including computers, automation equipment, the internet, and mobile devices.

There is no official app created to form the Motor vehicle commission; however, the website is accessible through a mobile device if one has access to the internet. The site is available to provide information 24 hours a day, even though the office hours are limited. Unlike the NYMVC or PAs, there is is a 24-hour live customer service line that will be there to answer any questions. If one did need to speak to someone, there are many phone numbers and emails depending on the topic. However, a downfall to having multiple phone numbers is that you may not know what number to call, and there is not a universal phone number. Convenience falls into the category of ‘easily accessible to everyone,” and NJ is one of the most diverse states in the country. In the last census, it showed that 1 out of every four homes speaks a language other than English. Unfortunately, unlike the MVC website from the surrounding states, there isn’t an option to switch the language on the site.

Communication Efficient

Although the NJ MVC has made a lot of progress since the establishment of online services, an OLS report revealed that 44 website complaints and seven mail complaints were forwarded between 2016 and 2019, and that merited formal response was not correctly handled. Out of the 51 applicable claims, only one was addressed, averaging a low of 0.001%. While there are board meetings, and the minutes are available to the public as per the sunshine act. The ability of the people to communicate with the board of directors directly is relatively low. In most cases, if there is a consistent issue, the majority of the public would have to contact their local state senator or assemblyperson, since they are the ones in charge of approving the budget for the MVC. Unlike other states websites that provide similar services, the NJMVC does have a feedback option or a survey after the online services are completed. On the website, the search engine that is provided is not an internal search bar but rather a Google search engine. This search engine can confuse users when looking for a particular item.

Avoid personal interaction

To deliver quality service performance and establish a favorable firm–customer relationships, retailers must identify customers’ needs, wants, and preferences (Howard and Worboys, 2003).

In e-retailing, vendors provide online self-services to customers for improved service effectiveness and cost-efficiency. When doing so, vendors must attend to critical issues in service design and delivery, because customers’ desires and intentions to use a self-service depend on their perceived performance of the online customer–firm interface.

There have been studies that show that dissatisfying self-service experiences often result from the vendor’s failure to design services that meet customers’ needs, wants, or preferences. The effort to reduce agency congestion resulted in the MVC issuing through its online portal more than 128,000 standard licenses in 2019. The services that still require interactions with the employees are those who need to take a driving or written test or to get their vehicle inspected. However, the efficient design of the website makes it easy for drivers or individuals to get their services needed without having to go to physical locations. The opportunity to expedite an online service without the need to deal directly with a government representative has been identified as a benefit of eGovernment (Gilbert et al., 2004; Gonzalez et al., 2007; Yang & Rho, 2007; Chanetal., 2010).

The website does update their systems to provide even more services for individuals during times of difficulty. For example, before the Covid-19 pandemic, only standard cars were available for renewable on their vehicle registration. However, on May 12, 2020, the list of vehicles expanded to commuter vans, commercial trucks, moped, ATV, and dirt bikes. It is unclear whether this will be the new normal for these services. But there are also other services that the website does not provide, still requiring that personal interaction such as renewing a license for commercial drivers or even transferring from an out of state license. NJ MVC location has a bad reputation when it comes to customer services. Most people tried to avoid it when they can. However, the MVC services are not available at any time; for example, there is a time for certain services such as renewing a license, if the individual missed the time frame they will have to go to the location to get it replaced. We recommend extending that period so that individuals can avoid going to the sites.

Trust

Empirical research by Scott, Delone & Golden (2016) affirms that trust is a benefit dimension, relating to the direct experience of the user from the e-government website, which acts as an information and service provider. Having a website that serves the public is one step; however, responding to requests, working in the best interest of the citizens, and reliably providing services and meeting obligations is what determines how useful the website is.

The Division of Security, Investigations, and Internal Audit is primarily responsible for the protection of the Motor Vehicle Commission’s infrastructure, employees, and customers. Security & Investigations personnel assist Agency Operations in the detection of routine attempts to defraud the MVC and its customers. The Division is comprised of three Units; Security and Investigations, Investigative Support Services, and Internal Audit. In 2019 there have been 3,248 investigations.

Trust is shown to be related to the extent to which people feel that an e-Government service enhances their sense of being well-informed. People need to feel that engagement with the service fits in with the way they juggle the diverse demands made upon their time by work, family care, and social life. The MVC website covers the net benefit dimensions described in the article. “I feel that this website acts in citizens’ best interests. I feel comfortable interacting with this website since it generally fulfills its duties efficiently. I always feel confident that I can rely on this website to do its part when I interact with it, and I am comfortable relying on the website to meet its obligations.” The MVC holds important information from nearly every individual in New Jersey. It is important that they continue to invest in their security to avoid any potential hackers. Since the NJMVC is not run by a private corporation, but rather a government entity, personal information cannot be sold off, leaving people feeling safe about their identity.

Conclusion:

In all, the NJ MVC website is a very productive, informative, and reliable website. With all the services it provides to the drivers and individuals, the easy layout to make it understandable, and the vast amount of information, the site is a great example of a successful eGovernment website. One of many recommendations we suggest is, increasing the time limit people have to do complete their online services, offer the website in additional languages to make accessible to everyone and to invest more money in their software for their actual location of avoiding shutdowns. We also suggest a different notification service that not only informs people via mail that their registration renewal is due but through email, incase someone moves. We also suggest that the NJ MVC create videos how-tos and audio, so that it makes it accessible for everyone and easy to understand. Lastly, we also suggest, Creating an NJMVC mobile app, including the EZ Pass option in their online services option as they have on the PA DMV website, and creating an online survey for people to give their feedback, and including a register to vote option link as the NY DMV website has.

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