

# **Delivering Services to Ontario**



## **About the study**

Launched in 1996, EKOS' Rethinking the Information Highway study grew out of a need to better understand how information technologies were reshaping the environment governments and companies were operating within.

Now in its eighth edition and more than 20 surveys later, the study is one of the largest and longest running studies in this area in Canada today. Given its big-picture focus on the full range of issues relating to technology usage, such as the interaction between traditional and electronic service delivery channels and privacy and security-related issues, Rethinking the Information Highway remains one of the most relied upon sources for senior decision makers who are tasked with guiding their organization through what continues to be a rapidly changing environment.

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# Overview of Results

The Ontario service delivery environment has undergone some dramatic changes in the past decade. The Internet has become a prevalent source of information and has revolutionized how Canadians interact with their government. However, despite largely favourable views regarding online government service delivery, there are still concerns expressed about some online transactions.

## **Broad service delivery environment**

Current efforts by governments across the country to modernize service delivery are occurring against a backdrop of low levels of trust. Few Ontarians or Canadians feel governments can be trusted to do the right thing.

Results also reveal that while Ontarians and Canadians overwhelmingly believe that greater emphasis on the use of information technology by governments is a move in the right direction, they are more divided on whether governments are at the forefront in its implementation.

## **Mixed views on future quality of service from provincial government:**

Canadians as a whole hold a more positive rather than negative outlook in terms of the quality of service they expect to receive from provincial governments five years from now. However, results are more mixed for Ontario residents: roughly equal proportions feel provincial service quality will get worse as feel it will get better in the future.

## **Recent contact with the Ontario government**

Ontarians continue to use e-channels and the telephone as their main method of contact with their provincial government. Tracking this data reveals that telephone and in-person channels are up significantly since 2006.

A large majority of Ontarians report being satisfied with the service received from their provincial government, with highest satisfaction reported among Internet users and those who interacted in-person.

## **Multiple channels:**

Uses of multiple channels continue to play an essential role in defining the service delivery environment. About 4 in 10 Ontarians with recent contact with the federal government report using multiple channels, and a large majority of those who used multiple channels express satisfaction with the service experience.

## **Channel preferences**

### **Methods of contact vary according to activity:**

Ontarians are increasingly comfortable doing many government interactions online, however, there are still certain activities, such as updating a license or resolving a problem with a health card, where Ontarians prefer a more direct method such as the telephone or personal contact.

Ontarians continue to believe the Internet will play a prominent role in future government interactions

### Online channels

Ontarians continue to lack familiarity with provincial government services online, however, familiarity levels have increased over the past few years.

Ontarians overwhelmingly agree that the Internet is an effective way for governments to make information available to citizens, and that the Internet has made it easier to find information. Almost half of Ontarians say they would do most of their interactions online if they could.

Ontarians also express positive views about the effectiveness of the Internet as a way for governments to communicate with citizens.

Despite largely favourable views regarding online government service delivery, a significant proportion continue to express discomfort with some types of online government interactions, particularly those involving a credit card payment.

The majority of Ontario Internet users have visited at least one provincial government website in the past year, and about 9 in 10 report success in finding the information they were looking for.

Results also reveal that the majority of Ontario Internet users continue to believe that applying for programs and services from different government departments or ministries should require having to visit only one federal, or one provincial, website.

