



Delivering Services to Ontario

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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INTERNET USE AND VIEWS ON TECHNOLOGY

Respondents were first asked about their Internet use, either at home or elsewhere, over the past three months. Results reveal that Internet use remains high in Ontario: the majority of respondents (85 per cent) report using the Internet recently, mirroring results for the same question in 2007, when 84 per cent reported recent Internet use.

Respondents were also asked if they currently have access to the Internet, at home, work, or elsewhere. Results reveal that over eight in ten Ontario residents (83 per cent) report Internet access at home, while almost half (47 per cent) say they have access to the Internet at their place of work. Only one in ten (10 per cent) say they have no Internet access. These results are largely similar to those found in 2007.

When asked whether they felt that the greater emphasis on the use of information technology (IT) by governments was a move in the right or wrong direction, findings reveal strong support for this idea: almost eight in ten (79 per cent) believe the emphasis on IT by governments is a move in the right direction (although this is down slightly from 2007, when 82 per cent of Ontarians felt this way). Interestingly, while still low, the number of Ontarians who feel the emphasis on technology is a move in the wrong direction has more than doubled from five per cent in 2007 to 12 per cent currently.

RECENT CONTACT WITH THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT

Ontarians were asked how many times they had had contact with their provincial government for non-work related reasons in the past three months. Over half (57 per cent) say they have had no recent contact with the Ontario government, however, a substantial minority (41 per cent) indicate they have had at least one contact with the provincial government in the past three months. Tracking reveals that reported contact between Ontarians and their provincial government has increased significantly over the past two years (up 12 points since 2007).

Respondents who reported recent contact with the provincial government were asked what method of contact they had used. Over four in ten (44 per cent) say they used the Internet or email to contact the government, while almost three in ten (29 per cent) say they used the telephone. One in seven (15 per cent) dealt with the government in-person, and two per cent used an electronic kiosk to access government services. Tracking reveals that use of e-channels (i.e., Internet and email) as a method of contacting the provincial government has increased significantly since 2007 (from 37 per cent to 44 per cent currently).

Respondents were also asked if they had had any occasion in the last year to seek out information from the Government of Ontario. Results suggest that a large proportion of Ontarians (62 per cent) have sought information from the Government of Ontario in the past year. Those who said they had contacted the Government of Ontario were then asked if they obtained the information they needed. An overwhelming majority (90 per cent) report that they did indeed get the information they were looking for, while only a small minority (nine per cent) said they did not.

Ontario Internet users were asked how many times they had visited Government of Ontario websites over the previous twelve months. Results reveal an increasing number of Ontarians are accessing their provincial government website. Only 18 per cent of these respondents had not visited a Government of Ontario website in the previous year (and this is down substantially from 2002 when fully 54 per cent had not accessed a Government of Ontario website).

Respondents who said they had visited a Government of Ontario website were then asked if they had found the information they were seeking. Results reveal that an overwhelming majority of these respondents were successful in finding the information they were looking for: almost nine in ten (89 per cent) say that they found the information they were looking for (these results have remained largely stable over the past several years).

Ontarians who contacted the provincial government were also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the service or response they received from the provincial government during their most recent contact. Results reveal high levels of satisfaction: over seven in ten Ontarians (72 per cent) say they are satisfied with the service they received from the provincial government. Results also reveal a significant increase in satisfaction with the quality of service received from the provincial government: satisfaction levels are up six points since 2007, and up a full 16 points since 2000.

CHANNEL PREFERENCES

Ontario residents were also asked a series of questions about their preference for contacting the provincial government across a range of situations (e.g., obtaining information, notifying the government about a change of address, renewing a licence). Results reveal that channel preference varies depending on the reason for the contact.

The majority of Ontarians (59 per cent) prefer the Internet or email when contacting the provincial government to obtain information, while three in ten (28 per cent) say they prefer the telephone. Tracking reveals a significant increase in preference for e-channels (i.e., Internet and email) when contacting the provincial government to obtain information, and a corresponding decrease in preference for telephone contact.

Respondents were also asked to identify their preferred method of contact when notifying the government of an information change. A plurality of respondents (43 per cent) say they prefer to use the

Internet or email for such transactions, and almost one-third (31 per cent) say they would rather provide such information by telephone. Tracking again reveals a steady increase in preference for using e-channels (i.e., Internet and email) to provide updated information to the provincial government.

In terms of the preferred method of contacting the provincial government for renewing their license or vehicle registration, half of Ontarians (50 per cent) say they prefer to conduct such a transaction in-person, while one-quarter (24 per cent) say they prefer to use the Internet or email. Results have remained fairly consistent since we first asked this question in 2001, although preference for in-person contact is down nine points since 2007.

When asked about resolving a problem with their health card, results reveal a strong preference for some sort of personal interaction: a plurality of respondents (39 per cent) say they prefer to handle such transactions in-person, and an almost equal number of respondents (37 per cent) say they would use the telephone. Only one in five (20 per cent) say they would use the Internet or email.

Turning to the preferred method of contact with the provincial government to obtain an answer to a question, results reveal a continued preference for the telephone contact, however, online communications are gaining ground. Almost half of respondents (49 per cent) say they prefer the telephone to obtain an answer to a question (down from 57 per cent in 2006), while almost four in ten (37 per cent) cite the Internet or email as their contact method of choice (up from 26 per cent in 2006).

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Respondents were also asked a number of attitudinal questions about online activities with governments.

Results reveal that the Internet is gaining more acceptance as an effective government intermediary among Ontarians. When asked whether they agreed that the Internet is an effective way for governments to communicate with Ontarians about the programs and services they offer, almost three-quarters (73 per cent) agree with the statement (and this is up 11 points since 2007, and 14 points since 2006).

Results also reveal a steady increase in support for online transactions over the past couple of years. The majority of Ontarians (60 per cent) say they would conduct most of their interactions with governments online if they could (up seven points since 2007 and 15 points since 2006). Only about one in three Ontarians (28 per cent) disagrees with this idea (down three points from 2006).

Ontario Internet users were presented with a list of activities and asked if they had ever conducted any of them with governments over the Internet. Results suggest that Ontarians conduct a wide range of online activities with governments. The vast majority (90 per cent) say they have visited a government website, 69 per cent have downloaded a government form, and six in ten (60 per cent) say they

have communicated with a government employee (34 per cent) or politician (26 per cent) via email. Almost half (48 per cent) have filed income tax returns online, and four in ten (40 per cent) say they have made a payment to the government over the Internet.

When presented with a list of incentives and asked whether each would increase their use of online services, results suggest that there are a number of factors that would encourage Ontarians to use online services more often. Almost eight in ten say that lower costs, faster processing time, and more information about the types of government transactions available online would increase their use of online services (78 per cent each). A further three-quarters mention shorter wait times (77 per cent), the ability to update information for multiple government departments in a single transaction (75 per cent), and making more programs/service available online (73 per cent) as incentives for increased use of online services. Seven in ten say automatic notification of renewals or other important dates (71 per cent), and the ability to review all of their information in a single secure site (70 per cent) would increase their use of online services. Two-thirds of Ontarians (67 per cent) say they would be more likely to use online services if the government provided clear information about how and when their personal information could be used.

These results are discussed in more detail in the remainder of this report.

