



Iowa Department of
Administrative Services

Information Technology Enterprise

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To: IOWAccess Advisory Council
From: Malcolm Huston, IOWAccess Manager
Subject: 2006 Brown University Study of State and Federal E-Government
Date: September 8, 2006

MEMORANDUM

Attached are two documents related to the 2006 study of State and Federal E-Government in the United States, which is conducted through the Taubman Center for Public Policy of Brown University. This study reviews and ranks the E-Government offerings of state and federal agencies using a standard set of criteria.

The first document is a summary of the report's findings, especially as they relate to the State of Iowa. The second document contains a set of recommendations that would allow the state to continue to improve its ranking in the survey and provide additional services and usability to our citizens. The complete report can be accessed on the Web at <http://www.insidepolitics.org/egovt06us.pdf>.

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2006 Brown University Study of State and Federal E-Government

The Taubman Center for Public Policy of Brown University performs an annual assessment of services available online through more than 1,500 state and federal websites. Publishing their findings in what is known as the Brown Study¹, they evaluate the web sites based on the availability of a variety of different features, such as:

- Online publications
- Databases
- Audio/video clips
- Foreign language translation
- Fees
- Disability access
- Privacy policy
- Security policy
- Online services
- Digital signatures/credit card payments
- Readability

In this year's report Iowa's portal, www.iowa.gov, improved its ranking from 32nd last year to 24th this year. Among the innovative features cited was Iowa's payment of traffic tickets online. Iowa received particularly low scores on foreign language services, audio and video clips, and access for those with disabilities.

The state is in the process of redesigning our portal, with a targeted release date in November. With this redesign, we are looking to address a number of the weaknesses cited in the study while incorporating additional innovations. Our goal is to advance to the next level, becoming one of the top 15 state websites and with our eye on the top spot. IOWAccess has been instrumental in enabling this improvement and should be proud of the advancements made to date.

¹ State and Federal E-Government in the United States, 2006 Darrell M. West, Taubman Center for Public Policy, Brown University, aka "The Brown Study"

Recommendations Resulting from the 2006 Brown Study

In reviewing the 2006 Brown study it is apparent that, while Iowa has moved up significantly in the ranking of state web sites, there is still much room for improvement. Listed below are suggested improvements that are based upon the criteria and successes identified in the report as well as features that could provide additional functionality to the citizens of Iowa.

Additional features

- Wireless access to more of the state's services, either through WAP or Wireless LAN protocols. Initially we would target services that will provide important information to subscribers. Services such as School's Out, Food Inspections and Winter Road conditions would be excellent candidates.
- Digital signatures were cited as desirable by the report, but previous research by the state revealed that they would be costly to implement and there was no clear business driver.
- Single sign-on allows citizens to establish one ID that would grant them to access any of the state's online services. We currently offer this ability through ITE's Enterprise A&A service, which is gaining adoption through a number of state agencies.
- Do Not Call list signup.
- Report a pothole. While a recommendation of the report, this capability is typically offered at the city or county level. Availability of this service throughout Iowa is sporadic. We may want to consider a service that is graphically based and would accept all reports, forwarding them to the responsible entity. This would be a good first attempt at integration between the State and county or local entities.
- Pay child support online.
- Take sample driver's license test.
- Universal address change. Provide citizens with a single site to submit a change of address notice to the state. Individual agencies would receive these notices and apply them to their respective database. This would allow agencies to maintain their own records, while receiving changes through one central service.
- A State storefront. Provide agencies with a single location to offer goods for sale. Currently agencies maintain their own store fronts, but those are offered in isolated locations that are often difficult for citizens to locate. A centralized store would allow each agency to have their own "aisle", but users could also browse to see what else the state is offering for sale.

Navigational Improvement

Improvements must be made in how we "advertise" the services available through the state's web site. At present it is difficult for citizens to locate services and information such as:

- Motor vehicle
- Hunting/fishing licenses
- Lobbyist/candidates finance filings
- Voting locations
- Search state laws/pending legislation
- Search judicial decisions
- Prison Industries

Additional Issues

- Develop a template that would be shared among all state-related web sites. This would promote a more consistent look and feel across all state pages. This was a feature noted about the highly ranked sites.
- Survey all agencies in order to compile a more comprehensive roster of sites and services available through the portal.
- Develop a better way to provide to citizens a comprehensive list of electronic services available through the state's web sites, and in a way that makes it easy for them to navigate.
- Simplify the presentation of the home page and portal. A critique offered in the report is that "Some states try to put too much information and too many links on the portal or agency homepage. This creates a cluttered look that is overwhelming to the visitor. Simplified, streamlined homepage designs are best. Sites that lead user to services by clicking on simple, intuitive menus are better than sites that list every link on the homepage."