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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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IMPACT REPORT: Transforming Government Services through Technology and Innovation

President Obama has led a transformational era of change through technology and innovation that is producing a smarter, savvier, and more effective government for the American people. On August 11, 2014, the President directed his Administration to accelerate efforts to improve and simplify the digital experience between individuals, businesses, and the government through the creation of the U.S. Digital Service.

Over the last two years, these actions have significantly improved the Federal Government's ability to provide better citizen-centered services and helped Americans engage with their government in new and meaningful ways. From modernizing our country's immigration system to helping students and families make more informed decisions about college selection to developing a unified digital experience for our Veterans, this work has reimagined how government services should be provided to the public. In addition to building these important services, the Administration has created a pipeline for top technology talent from the private sector to participate in tours of duty with the Federal Government and partner with top civil servants to ensure a lasting culture of innovation that will serve the American people for years to come.

"In this democracy, we the people recognize that this government belongs to us, and it's up to each of us and every one of us to make it work better... We all have a stake in government success—because the government is us."

—President Obama

To mark the second anniversary of the U.S. Digital Service's founding, today the Administration is releasing a list of examples of the progress the U.S. Digital Service and its partners across government are making in building a more effective, citizen-centered government through technology.

TRANSFORMING CRITICAL SERVICES

- **Making it easier for Veterans to access health care.** The Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Digital Service [introduced a new digital application](#) for health care built with Veterans, not for them. Previously, less than 10 percent of applicants used the Veteran Online Application for a simple reason: the form would not open for most users. The application was a fillable PDF that required Veterans to use Adobe 8 or 9 via Internet Explorer. More than 70 percent of U.S. Government traffic comes from Chrome, Safari, or Firefox, meaning that more than 70 percent of visitors would have trouble accessing the healthcare application. In the 30 days following the launch of the digital application, more than 11,600 Veterans have used it to apply for health care, with many receiving coverage in less than 10 minutes.
- **Helping students, parents, and families make more informed decisions about college selection through the College Scorecard.** The Department of Education, 18F, and U.S. Digital Service launched the new College Scorecard tool to give students, parents, and their advisors the clearest, most accessible, and most reliable national data on college cost, graduation, debt,

and post-college earnings. This new College Scorecard empowers Americans to search for colleges based on what matters most to them and allows them to compare the value offered by different colleges to help improve their decision. Within the first year, the College Scorecard had nearly 1.5 million users, more than 10 times the users its predecessor had in a year. By giving developers access to an application program interface (API), dozens of other organizations have used the Scorecard data to launch new tools to support students in their college search and application processes.

- **Modernizing our immigration system.** The U.S. Digital Service is supporting the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) in digitizing the external application and internal review process for over seven million annual immigration applications and requests. Through the new my.USCIS.gov platform and Electronic Immigration System, an increasing percentage of the immigration system is now online, including the green card renewal application (I-90), which has a 93 percent user satisfaction rate. Improvements to software development practices, system architecture, and design will save millions of dollars per year in ongoing operations, maintenance, and licensing costs and make it easier for users to interact with the immigration system.
- **Helping to ensure access to affordable health care for millions of Americans.** Since the 2013 Open Enrollment, the U.S. Digital Service has partnered with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to support the day-to-day operations and infrastructure of HealthCare.gov, helping millions of Americans gain access to affordable health coverage.
- **Developing a unified, one-stop shop digital experience for Veterans.** [Vets.gov](#) is a simple, easy-to-use site that consolidates important resources for Veterans into **one website—not thousands**. Built in partnership with leaders at Veterans Affairs, Vets.gov launched in November 2015 in beta to provide tools and resources that are easy to find and use. Veterans are actively testing the site so the team can learn, as they build, what is working for Veterans and what is not.
- **Providing secure access to taxpayer information.** Working with the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Digital Service introduced Secure Access, a user verification process that relies on strong identity proofing and two-factor authentication to protect users' sensitive tax records. Secure Access ensures that users have convenient, real-time access to their transcripts while protecting taxpayer information from automated fraudulent attacks.
- **Helping student borrowers more easily navigate the complexity of student loan repayment plans with [StudentLoans.gov/Repay](#).** To help borrowers easily navigate the complexity of student loan repayment plans, the U.S. Digital Service and the Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid launched StudentLoans.gov/Repay. Built mobile-first and using human-centered design, the site helps borrowers find their best repayment options in five steps or fewer.
- **Streamlining Veterans Affairs disability compensation processing with [Caseflow Certification](#).** Hundreds of thousands of Veterans have waited more than three years for a final disability compensation appeal decision, relying on a complex and cumbersome process. Working in collaboration with the VA's Board of Veterans Appeals, the U.S. Digital Service launched Caseflow Certification, a straightforward web-app to improve paperless appeals

processing by detecting if required documentation has been added before an appeal can move forward. This simple check helps reduce preventable errors and avoidable delays caused by disjointed, manual processing.

- **Modernizing the Department of Defense (DoD) travel system.** The Defense Travel System (DTS) is currently used by DoD's civilians and service members around the world, accounting for \$3.5 billion in travel spending every year. The U.S. Digital Service is assisting in the transition of DTS over to a cloud-based Software as a Service (SaaS) solution. The new system—which is currently being piloted—has greatly improved usability, simplified travel policies, and has the potential for large cost saving potential.
- **Helping implement Medicare payment reform at the Department of Health and Human Services.** The U.S. Digital Service is assisting CMS in the implementation of the new Quality Payment Program for Medicare under the bipartisan Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA), legislation with a [new approach](#) that pays clinicians for the value and quality of care they provide.
- **Enabling the [Precision Medicine Initiative](#) to gain new insights for the development of individualized care.** Announced by the President during the 2015 State of the Union, the Precision Medicine Initiative is a new effort to revolutionize how we improve health and treat disease by taking each unique person's genes, environment, and lifestyle into account. The U.S. Digital Service is working with the Department of Health & Human Services to enable this medical transformation, and partnering with the National Institutes of Health and Department of Veterans Affairs to build their volunteer research platforms and the supporting technology.
- **Helping to strengthen information security at the Department of Defense (DoD).** The Defense Digital Service launched a program called [Hack the Pentagon](#), the first bug bounty program in the history of the Federal Government, to strengthen the security of the DoD's digital assets. More than 1,400 outside researchers (commonly known across the technology industry as "white hat hackers") participated, and more than 250 submitted at least one vulnerability report. Of all the submissions received, 138 were determined to be legitimate, unique, and eligible for a bounty. These vulnerability reports were remediated in near-real time.
- **Collaborating with the Air Force to reduce project cost and schedule slip for the next generation of the U.S. Global Positioning System, or "GPS."** Working alongside DoD contractors, the U.S. Digital Service is automating configuration, testing, integration and deployment, as well as introducing DevOps methods. The next iteration of GPS will provide dramatic improvements to location accuracy and signal acquisition and support GPS capabilities for billions of people across the globe.
- **Improving the import and export system.** The U.S. Digital Service is working with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and partner agencies across the government to improve the stability and performance of a new system that will collect and process data on all imports and exports coming in to or leaving our country. The Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) is a modern electronic filing system that serves as a "single-window" through which all import and export documentation would be filed, vastly improving efficiency and the user experience.

- **Digitizing the refugee approval process for Federal agencies.** The U.S. Digital Service worked with the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security to launch a digital stamp approval process for Federal agencies processing refugees who have already been interviewed in-person and who have cleared all security and background checks. More than 57 percent of cases require this action, so having the flexibility to conduct it from any location at any time is a significant benefit. The digital stamp approval process is the team's first step towards modernizing the refugee admissions process by increasing officer efficiency and reducing wait time for applicants, while upholding rigorous security standards.

RETHINKING HOW OUR GOVERNMENT BUYS & BUILDS DIGITAL SERVICES

- **Helping to transform Federal IT procurement.** Working alongside teams at the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and the General Services Administration, the U.S. Digital Service has built a dedicated acquisition team to improve the Federal Government's technology marketplace and help the government make better buying decisions. A few examples:
 - **The Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Digital Service partnered to establish an agile procurement to modernize technology and streamline the certification process for small business owners.** The resulting [certify.SBA.gov](https://certify.sba.gov) saves small businesses time and money, and increases the SBA's capacity to provide small businesses access to the Federal contracting space. This acquisition was awarded in three months and serves as a baseline for the agile software development model.
 - **Developing resources such as [TechFAR](#) and the [TechFAR Hub](#) to help Federal agencies implement procurement best practices.** The U.S. Digital Service launched an agile acquisition toolkit to provide agencies with a suite of tools for rapid procurement of agile software development. This helps the government more consistently procure high quality products for users, and maps a path between industry best practices and government regulation.
 - **Developing a digital IT acquisition professionals' community with the [Digital Service Contracting Officer Training Challenge](#).** Working with OFPP, the U.S. Digital Service posted on Challenge.gov asking for training program ideas to make contracting officers more successful in the era of digital government. The challenge winner created a training pilot to test with 30 contracting officers, who will complete the program empowered to act as business advisers to their agencies on digital service procurement.

INITIATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON PLATFORMS AND STANDARDS

- **Launched the [Digital Services Playbook](#).** This resource scales best practices from the private sector and government by highlighting 13 key "plays" for building more effective digital services.

- **Brought consistency and good user experience to government websites with the launch of the [U.S. Web Design Standards](#).** Built in partnership with 18F, this new User Interface (UI) system provides guidance for creating easy-to-use digital interfaces by unifying visual language and interaction patterns that meet high standards of web accessibility.
- **Developing a common identity management platform to provide a secure and user-friendly login process for the government's digital services.** The U.S. Digital Service is working with 18F and a team of technologists across government to build Login.gov, a modern, user-friendly shared login service that has strong authentication and effective identity proofing technology.
- **Creating a window into the way people access the government online with the [Digital Analytics Dashboard](#).** The dashboard, developed in partnership with 18F, draws on data from across the government collected by the [Digital Analytics Program](#). The U.S. Digital Service uses it to focus teams on the services that matter most to the American people.

BRINGING TOP TECHNOLOGY TALENT INTO PUBLIC SERVICE

- **Recruited 170 (and growing) engineers, designers, product managers, and more to serve tours of duty with the Federal Government.** More than 170 engineers, designers, data scientists, and product managers have answered the President's call and signed on for a tour of duty with the U.S. Digital Service. Because of the Administration's efforts in recruiting top technical talent, teams across the government are able to develop better digital services for the American people. Prospective candidates can apply at usds.gov/join.



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