

Government On-Line Research Panel – Results from the Sixth Online Survey (April 2005)

Executive Summary

Background

In support of the Government of Canada's service vision, which is to have its most frequently used services online and realize a 10% increase in citizen satisfaction with government service delivery by 2005, the federal government engaged Phase 5 to refresh and maintain the Government Online Research Panel over the next 2 years.

This report presents findings from the sixth survey conducted with Government Online Research Panel members. A total of 4,439 panelists completed the sixth survey. The margin of error for overall results is estimated to be +/-1.13%, somewhat higher for most audience sub-groups.

Key Findings

The sixth online survey of the GOL Panel revealed the following:

Attitudes towards GOL Services:

- Panelists' reactions to the Government of Canada's online service delivery are fairly positive and slightly more positive when compared to Survey 4 results. Agreement was relatively strong that when dealing with the Government of Canada you can choose how to access information or services, that online delivery of Government of Canada services means better service and more choice for Canadians, and that the Government of Canada is committed to privacy and protection of personal information. Slightly less strong agreement was found that the GoC's online services are fast, convenient, easy to access and always available and that the most commonly-used Government of Canada services are online.

Service Canada:

- Just over half of respondents indicated that they had never heard of the organization Service Canada. Many (29%) stated they had heard the name but did not know anything about the organization, 14% were somewhat familiar with the organization, and only 3% were very familiar with Service Canada.
- Some 40% of respondents believe that the role of Service Canada is to provide government services or to provide services in general, not specific to government.
- The vast majority of respondents thought that Service Canada represents the Federal government.
- While just over half of respondents believed that Service Canada would be different than how the Government of Canada currently delivers service to individuals, close to two thirds of panelists believed that Service Canada will improve service delivery to individual Canadians.
- There was no clear preference for the URL to be used for Service Canada. Some 57% preferred servicecanada.ca and tended to be Household Internet panel members while 43% preferred servicecanada.gc.ca and tended to be GOL panel members.

- When respondents were asked to identify from a list the what they considered to be a Government “on-line service”, it was found that panelists believed that most of the categories presented were “on-line service”, particularly to complete a transaction online, apply for a program online, complete a form online, access a form online than can be printed, and to determine eligibility for a government program.

Service Canada Prototypes:

- It seems fairly clear to panelists where to go on the revised version of the Canada Site home page to access services for Canadians and residents. Just over three-quarters would click on Service Canada to access services for Canadians and citizens. Half of respondents would click on On-Line Forms and Services and just under one-third would click on Service Canada to complete a passport application.
- Regarding the descriptive text under the ‘Service Canada’ section on the Canada Site home page, three-quarter of panelists indicated that the descriptive text is clear and easy to understand and just under two-thirds indicated that it is comprehensive.
- Respondents marginally preferred the Service Canada button with the red background over the blue background.
- Respondent’s perceptions of what would be included in a ‘Services Where You Live’ section were mixed. Just over one-quarter believed they would find a listing of all government offices organized by both topic as well as by Province / Territory, another quarter believed they would find a listing of all Service Canada Access Centres organized by Province / Territory, and another quarter believed they would find a listing of all Government of Canada offices organized by both topics as well as Province / Territory.
- In terms of what they would prefer to see when they clicked on the ‘Provinces and Territories’ button, panelists preferred to see a series of links that would connect them to the main “services” page for each Province and Territory where they could complete on-line transactions and not the main Web page.
- A considerably larger proportion of respondents preferred the “complete your passport form on-line” feature to be placed on the bottom right of the Service Canada home page.
- Panelists marginally preferred the label “Choose a Topic” for the bar that appears above the links in the middle of the page on the Service Canada prototype.
- Panelists marginally preferred the red wavy flag image on the left side of the page with the blue sky bar in the background on the Service Canada prototype.
- The majority of respondents preferred the Service Canada home page design Option A overall. Participants indicated that Option A appears easiest to use and easiest to find the online service sought.
- A larger proportion of respondents believed that Option A looks like a Government of Canada “services” web site as opposed to just another page on the Government of Canada’s Web site.
- The large majority of respondents indicated that the labels and wording on the Service Canada prototypes were clear. Option A was believed to lack some detail as it excluded the descriptive text under each label in the centre page menu.

Privacy / Security:

- Some 41% of panelists had some concern with conducting online transactions that would require them to exchange personal or confidential information with the Government of Canada over the Internet, an increase of 10% since Survey 4.

- The majority of panelists indicated that they deal with the Federal Government frequently enough to make it worth the trouble to obtain a username and password that would allow them to conduct transactions with them over the Internet. Although, many (35%) did not feel that they dealt with the Federal Government frequently enough, particularly Household Internet panel members.

Authentication:

- The majority of respondents indicated that they would like to use the same identification record across all of the service delivery channels offered by the Government of Canada. They also agreed that it was a good idea if their personal data used to authenticate them is used to automatically trigger other Government of Canada services and that they should be able to access other federal departments without having to provide the same personal identity information again. Panelists were less likely to agree that the Government of Canada keep a record of their identity.

Consent:

- The majority of panelists indicated that they should be asked each and every time for their consent before their personal identification record is shared between any different programs or services offered by the Government of Canada.

Security Breaches:

- The vast majority of respondents thought that the Government of Canada should provide an annual report to Parliament that is accessible to all Canadians and the media on the number of security breaches it has experienced in relation to personal information of Canadians.
- The majority of panelists believed that allowing the media to report statistics on Government security breaches to the Canadian public would increase their confidence in the security of the Government of Canada's system.

Multiple Services / Processes:

- Approximately one-third of respondents had experienced a situation where they wanted to access more than one related federal government service at the same time when dealing with the Government of Canada, primarily related to birth / death notifications and taxes. Some issues were encountered while accessing multiple federal services at the same time with 41% indicating that it was a difficult experience and only 26% indicating it was an easy experience. The majority of panelists believed that this experience could have been made easier for them if they had easier access to information, if navigation were improved on Government of Canada Web sites, and if there were better communication among different government departments and / or levels.
- Few panelists (23%) had experienced a situation with the Government of Canada where they had to approach more than one federal department or agency in order to complete an interaction with the federal government. Those who had were approaching the Government of Canada with tax issues and birth / death notification issues. Some issues were encountered while accessing multiple federal services at the same time with 52% indicating that it was a difficult experience and only 16% indicating it was an easy experience. The majority of panelists believed that this experience could have been made easier for them if

they had easier access to information, some had experienced issues with staff and others suggested improving navigation on Government of Canada Web sites.

- Few panelists (28%) had experienced a situation where they had to contact more than one level of government in order to complete a transaction. These transactions were primarily related to taxes, birth / death notification, and a change of address or personal information. The majority of respondents (55%) indicated that it was a difficult experience. Panelists indicated that this experience could have been made easier for them by having easier access to information and if there were better communication between levels / departments.

Take-Up of E-Services:

- Guaranteed faster processing times, a clear and easy way to get in touch with a government employee, receiving a discount or incentives, and safety of personal information would encourage the majority of respondents to do more transactions online with the government.

Canada International:

- There was not much interest among panelists for accessing information content on Government of Canada Web sites in a language other than English or French. Only 11% showed some interest and suggested Spanish / Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese.

Cookies:

- Just over half of panelists normally browse the Internet with the cookies notification feature in their browser turned on, primarily expert and advanced Internet users.

Canadian Forces:

- Panelists have a positive impression of the people who serve in the Canadian Forces and rated the Canadian's current contribution to the safety and security of Canadian's strongly.
- The most critical issue facing the Canadian Forces, as perceived by panelists, was a lack of funding / budget and old / obsolete equipment.
- While the Canadian Forces was seen as a vital national institution by the majority of panelists, agreement was lower that it is critical that Canada and the United States cooperate actively for the defence of North America, that a significantly stronger military is crucial to achieving our foreign policy goals and advancing our place in the world, that it's important for Canada's military to play a leadership role abroad and be first on the ground when responding to international situations.
- The marginal majority (52%) of respondents believed that the Canadian Forces should have a peacemaking role, which might involve fighting alongside other UN troops to force peace in a disputed area.
- Overall, the majority of respondents support the Canadian Forces missions in Afghanistan.

The One-Tonne Challenge:

- Awareness among panelists of the The One-Tonne Challenge advertisements was quite high. Just over two-thirds recalled seeing, hearing or reading something related to the topic.
- Most recalled the spokesperson for the ads (Rick Mercer / Pierre LeBeau) while others recalled the messaging.

- The vast majority of panelists recalled seeing the advertisements on television (85%).
- When provided with a description of what the ad was about, recall was slightly lower (63%) than when asked about the One-Tonne Challenge.
- The vast majority of panelists thought that the ad was paid for by the Government of Canada (84%).
- The main point(s) of the ad were understood by most panelists – to reduce pollution / emissions, to actively participate in the Challenge, and to conserve energy.
- Few panelists did anything as a result of the ad. Still, some 16% visited the Climate Change Web site, another 10% changed their habits or made changes at home, and another 5% ordered a copy of the brochure.
- Respondents indicated that the Government of Canada was doing somewhat of a good job on the issue of climate change (37% indicated they are doing a good job). Taken with the results from the online focus groups these findings suggest that Canadians feel that the Government of Canada could be doing more related to the issue of climate change.

Service Delivery:

- A small majority (53%) of respondents indicated that the Government of Canada was doing an good job of delivering information to the public about government serviced that are available to Canadians.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the Government of Canada delivers its services and information in a respectful way and is using new and innovative ways to provide information and services to citizens. However, agreement was lower on statements related to being able to count on the Government of Canada for reliable service and information and the Government of Canada being easy to contact.

National Capital Commissions Web Site:

- The majority of respondents, when shown the New NCC home page, believed that it was the National Capital Commission Web site.
- Based on the home page, respondents believed that the site was about Canada's Capital Region, about Canada's Capital Region, presented to you by the National Capital Commission, and about the National Capital Commission.
- Panelists agreed that the home page is welcoming, the distinction between the main navigation bar and quick links is clear, they could see where to find the information that is important to them, and it conveys a sense of place. Agreement was lower on statements related to the Capital symbols being easily recognizable and the home page being informative about Canada's Capital.
- Based on the home page design, panelists agreed that, based on the home page, the National Capital Commission is visitor-oriented, event-oriented, professional, and a government organization. Panelists were less likely to agree that the NCC is development-oriented vibrant and energetic, in the service industry, progressive, and an environmental organization.

Asian Tsunami:

- Few (16%) panelists had accessed a Government of Canada Web sites to find information related to the Asian Tsunami. Those who had, indicated that the Government of Canada Web sites they had accessed were a useful source of information.

Opportunities / Future Directions

Based on these results, and Phase 5's experience gained through numerous other projects conducted with users of Government of Canada Web sites, the following items are put forward as opportunities / future directions for GOL:

- Continue to communicate which Government of Canada services are currently available online and how they will be delivered with the new Service Canada organization. Panelists have encountered difficulties in the past when trying to access multiple levels and services and suggested providing them with easier access to information about these services and an improved communication between different levels government departments.
- Consider the use of the same identification record across all service delivery channel offered by the government of Canada without keeping a record of individual Canadians' identities. Panelists were not concerned at having their personal information used to automatically trigger other Government of Canada services and to be able to use the same information to access other federal departments.
- The Government should ask Canadians each and every time for their consent before sharing any personal identification information with different departments and levels.
- Concerns continue to exist with conducting online transactions with the Government of Canada, consider providing an annual report to Parliament on the number of security breaches it has experienced in relation to personal information of Canadians.
- Consider guaranteed faster processing times, a clear and easy way to get in touch with a government employee, receiving a discount or incentives, and safety of personal information to encourage the majority of respondents to do more transactions online with the government.
- Continue to communicate which Government of Canada services are currently available online. Results suggest (in this and the previous survey) that there are opportunities to improve reliability and contact with the Government of Canada.