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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. States E-Governance Survey assessed the practice of digital governance in states across the United States by evaluating their websites and ranking them on a national scale. Simply stated, digital governance includes both digital government (delivery of public service) and digital democracy (citizen participation in governance). Specifically, we analyzed security, usability, and content of websites; the type of online services currently being offered; and citizen response and participation through websites established by state governments (Holzer & Kim, 2007).

The methodology of the U.S. survey of state websites mirrors our previous research on digital governance worldwide in 2003, 2005 and 2007. Our instrument for evaluating state websites consisted of five components: (1) Privacy/Security; (2) Usability; (3) Content; (4) Services; and (5) Citizen Participation. For each of those five components, our research applied 18-20 measures, and each measure was coded on a scale of four-points (0, 1, 2, 3) or a dichotomy of two-points (0, 3 or 0, 1). Furthermore, in developing an overall score for each state we have equally weighted each of the five categories so as not to skew the research in favor of a particular category (regardless of the number of questions in each category). This reflects the same methods utilized in the worldwide surveys. To ensure reliability, each state website was assessed by two evaluators, and in cases where a significant variation (+ or – 10%) existed on the adjusted score between evaluators, websites were analyzed a third time.

Based on the 2008 evaluation of the 50 states, Maine,

Oregon, Utah, South Carolina and Indiana represent the states with the highest evaluation scores. Table 1 lists the top 20 states in digital governance in 2008 along with their scores in individual categories. Tables 2 to Table 6 represent the top-ranked ten states in each of the five categories.

[Table 1] Top 20 States in Digital Governance (2008)

Rank	State	Score	Privacy	Usability	Content	Service	Participation
1	Maine	69.17	14.00	16.25	12.80	13.39	12.73
2	Oregon	66.46	14.00	15.32	15.40	11.02	10.73
3	Utah	63.17	14.40	18.75	15.40	11.53	3.10
4	South Carolina	63.11	13.60	16.25	17.40	9.49	6.37
5	Indiana	61.29	14.80	16.88	14.40	10.85	4.37
6	Missouri	60.41	12.00	16.25	16.40	10.85	4.91
7	New Hampshire	58.61	14.00	16.26	11.40	9.32	7.64
8	Massachusetts	56.99	15.60	15.32	11.00	10.17	4.91
9	Arkansas	55.96	11.60	14.38	12.60	11.02	6.37
10	Arizona	55.91	12.00	14.69	12.80	11.70	4.73
11	California	55.75	9.20	15.01	13.20	10.17	8.19
12	Michigan	55.51	6.80	15.94	11.60	11.36	9.80
13	Minnesota	55.26	11.20	15.63	10.40	12.04	6.00
14	New Jersey	55.14	10.00	12.50	13.00	12.54	7.09
15	Georgia	54.73	11.60	17.82	12.40	7.46	5.46
16	Mississippi	54.21	13.20	11.25	15.20	9.83	4.73
17	Pennsylvania	53.82	13.60	13.44	13.00	7.97	5.82
18	Rhode Island	53.74	7.60	14.07	14.20	11.70	6.18
19	Tennessee	53.62	13.60	17.19	11.80	8.31	2.73
20	Kentucky	53.30	13.20	15.32	12.40	7.12	5.27

[Table 2] Top 10 States in Privacy/Security (2008)

Ranking	State	Privacy
1	Massachusetts	15.60
2	Indiana	14.80
3	Utah	14.40
4	Maine	14.00
4	Oregon	14.00
4	New Hampshire	14.00
4	Maryland	14.00
8	South Carolina	13.60
8	Pennsylvania	13.60
8	Tennessee	13.60

[Table 3] Top 10 States in Usability (2008)

Ranking	State	Usability
1	Utah	18.75
2	Georgia	17.82
3	Tennessee	17.19
4	Delaware	16.88
4	Indiana	16.88
6	New Hampshire	16.26
7	Maine	16.25
7	South Carolina	16.25
7	Missouri	16.25
10	Michigan	15.94

[Table 4] Top 10 States in Content (2008)

Ranking	State	Content
1	South Carolina	17.40
2	Missouri	16.40
3	Oregon	15.40
3	Utah	15.40
5	Mississippi	15.20
6	Oklahoma	14.60
7	Indiana	14.40
8	Rhode Island	14.20
9	Virginia	13.40
10	California	13.20

[Table 5] Top 10 States in Service Delivery (2008)

Ranking	State	Service
1	Maine	13.39
2	New Jersey	12.54
3	Minnesota	12.04
4	Texas	11.87
5	Arizona	11.70
5	Rhode Island	11.70
7	Utah	11.53
8	Michigan	11.36
9	Oregon	11.02
9	Hawaii	11.02
9	Arkansas	11.02

[Table 6] Top 10 States in Citizen Participation (2008)

Ranking	State	Participation
1	Maine	12.73
2	Oregon	10.73
3	Michigan	9.80
4	California	8.19
5	New Hampshire	7.64
6	New Jersey	7.09
7	South Carolina	6.37
7	Arkansas	6.37
9	Rhode Island	6.18
10	Minnesota	6.00

Our survey results indicate that all the 50 states selected for the survey have developed official websites, and the average score for digital governance in states is 50.12. Maine received a score of 69.17, the highest ranked state website for 2008. Oregon had the second highest ranked state website with a score of 66.46, while Utah ranked third with a score of 63.17. South Carolina and Indiana complete the top five ranked state websites with scores of 63.11 and 61.29, respectively.

This research represents a longitudinal effort to evaluate digital governance in the 50 states in the United States. The continued study of states, with the next U.S. Survey planned in 2010, will further provide insight into the direction and the performance of e-governance in the United States.