AUSTRALIANS’ USE OF AND SATISFACTION WITH E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES
The Internet is now a mainstream choice for people to make contact with government. Thirty nine per cent of Australians have had contact with government via the Internet over the last 12 months. And that number is growing as is the sophistication of the transactions undertaken.

With this growth it is vital that governments at all levels ensure they continue to provide the degree of citizen founded service delivery which their citizens want. That is why this survey is so important. It provides governments with information on what forms of service delivery are currently preferred by their citizens. It also indicates the types of services citizens want provided in the future.

E-government channels are convenient to citizens. By using the Internet to contact government, citizens can overcome geographic isolation. They can access government services at any time from any place with a connection. This provides obvious advantages over other channels – saving time and cost and offering convenience. The survey also reveals that people like using the telephone to contact government as it too offers convenience. This supports the Government’s multi-channel strategy.

This survey reveals that the lack of awareness of government services available on the Internet is one of the main barriers to increasing the use of the Internet as a channel to contact government. Results from the study indicate people will use the Internet to access government services if the services are available; and if people know the service exists.

This gives governments clear directions as to how the Internet can be used to improve government service delivery.

This report has been developed with the cooperation of all Australian governments. It provides valuable data for governments so that services can continue to meet the needs of individuals, business and the community. Governments at all levels have responsibility for service delivery and can learn from this survey’s findings to help identify priorities and deliver more responsive services for all citizens.

SENATOR THE HON ERIC ABETZ
Special Minister of State
June 2005
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1.1 Introduction

When people contact government they can use a variety of channels. That is, they go in person to an office, use a telephone service, access information via the Internet, send a letter, or use a third party. When people contact government they may be contacting the Australian, state/territory or local government services.

This report outlines how people are using these different channels to contact the three levels of government in Australia. It also examines the level of satisfaction they have with those services and their preferences and expectations. By better understanding what’s happening across the three levels of government agencies will be better placed to design services to meet future demands and expectations.

1.2 Major conclusions

1.2.1 E-government usage

People accessing government via the Internet are no longer a small minority

The Internet is now a mainstream channel for contacting government. Nearly four in 10 Australian adults – and more than half of all adults who use the Internet - contacted an Australian government via the Internet in the past 12 months.

Service complexity and ambiguity appear to be greater determinants of channel use than service sophistication

The sophistication level of a service - that is, whether it involved one way or two way information transfer - appeared to be less of an influence of channel use than its complexity or perceived ambiguity. This was particularly true of standard transactions, such as registration payments. As a general rule, the more ambiguous a task, the less likely it is to be performed online.

The fact that people choose specific channels for particular tasks has implications for resource allocation and planning

Complex and ambiguous issues are increasingly being directed to staff operating in face-to-face and telephone environments. This has implications for recruitment and staff training decisions, including the need to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with complex and ambiguous issues. While the Internet is likely to undertake high volume procedures, significant effort will be required to support the high demands on other functions.

1.2.2 E-government users

There is no single e-government user

The study has revealed that while there are significant differences in the profile of e-government users, they cannot be easily typified. This fact creates challenges for governments wanting to encourage use of Internet and telephone services. As Internet usage increases, the profile of people using the Internet for government contacts is likely to become even more diverse.

Citizens’ preferences change over time

Citizens’ attitudes and behaviours change significantly over time. The monitoring of behavioural changes and attitudes of e-government users will be necessary to ensure citizen-centric service delivery.

1.2.3 Reasons why people choose e-government

Citizens’ first question is: What’s in it for me?’

The Internet has obvious advantages over other channels. It can be accessed at any time, from any place with a connection. However, the Internet’s inherent advantages are unlikely to be sufficient to lure a new generation of e-government users.
Governments will need to develop increasingly sophisticated and compelling arguments to encourage Internet use.

**Overcoming geographic barriers is a significant motivator for people to contact government via Internet**

The greater incidence of rural/remote citizens than those in regional centres contacting government via the Internet supports anecdotal evidence that a key feature of the Internet is its ability to overcome geographic isolation. This suggests that people living in rural and remote locations will continue to be important users of e-government services.

1.2.4 **Barriers to greater e-government uptake**

**Citizens would use a service if only they knew about it**

Lack of awareness about services available over the Internet is a significant barrier to greater e-government uptake. This barrier is inherent for the Internet due to the sheer volume of information available. The challenge for governments is to raise awareness, while bearing in mind that expensive advertising strategies will rarely be justified in terms of financial payback.

The fact that the Internet is not seen as an anonymous or accountable channel has implications for the types of services selected to go online

The Internet is most often used by people for simple interactions that are highly predictable. The perceived lack of accountability offered by the Internet (particularly its ability to handle non-standard questions, complaints or comments) provides clear guidance for what services should, and should not be, migrated to the Internet. It also indicates a need to address the perception that the Internet lacks accountability, which may not necessarily be true.

**Privacy concerns are real, but should not be overstated**

Privacy issues have been an area of intense focus in e-government planning. Governments have approached this area sensitively to ensure that citizens retain trust in the Internet as a communication channel and for delivery of government services. However, the survey revealed that concerns about personal privacy were a minor barrier to e-government use.

1.2.5 **Satisfaction with e-government services**

A potential barrier to greater Internet contacts is high satisfaction with telephone services

There are high levels of satisfaction with telephone services. This may make the task of migrating people from telephone to Internet based services more challenging.

While Internet satisfaction is high, expectations of what can be achieved online are low

While the high levels of satisfaction with the Internet are encouraging, citizens’ expectations of the Internet appear to be lower than for other channels.

Significant challenges remain to improve Internet and telephone service usability

Despite high levels of satisfaction overall, Internet and telephone service usability remain a challenging area. As new and less experienced users migrate to Internet services in particular, continuous improvement will be needed to search functions and the management and presentation of content. For the telephone channel it should be remembered that a significant proportion of telephone users select that channel to speak to a ‘real person’.
1.2.6 Encouraging greater use of e-government services

The Internet has inherent advantages
The Internet offers citizens time, cost savings and convenience in their interaction with government. However, perceived complexity and/or ambiguity of tasks can result in citizens choosing another channel. The criteria applied to channel selection vary widely from person to person (and it appears from transaction to transaction).

It appears that existing Internet users can do significantly more online
A potential source of new e-government demand can be tapped by getting existing users to do more sophisticated transactions over the Internet. Only 3% of citizens surveyed said all their dealings with government had been via the Internet, and a further 11% said most of their dealings had been with government.

Repeat and related transactions offer an opportunity for governments to increase usage
The barriers facing non-Internet users are significant, including issues of infrastructure and skill. Therefore a significant opportunity exists to encourage e-government users to use the Internet more often, and for more sophisticated contacts. Targeting repeat and related transactions may prove more convenient to users by pointing them to faster, easier channels for subsequent contacts. This enables governments to cost-effectively reach people that will fuel future demand for e-government services.

Encouraging future use will require a focus on getting the right person, to the right channel, at the right time
Attempts to migrate all users to the Internet for all government services are too simplistic, and have the potential to reduce uptake over the longer term.

This is based on evidence that suggests the Internet is not always the best channel to access government services. People will do so only when:
+ they are aware the service is available online;
+ the process is clear to them and unambiguous; and
+ there is a clear advantage for them.

1.3 Major findings

1.3.1 E-government usage

Thirty-nine per cent of adults contacted government via the Internet over the past 12 months. This represents a substantial increase on the most recent figures published (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), collected in 2002), which found that 21% of Australians had accessed government services via the Internet.

In terms of individual behaviour the most common channel is in person (52%) followed by the telephone (26%) and Internet (15%). The mail is the least popular channel used to contact government.

More people use the Internet to contact the Australian Government than state/territory or local governments. Services that were most often accessed via the Internet include income or personal tax (16% of all services reported), land rates or tax (10%), and car, boat, vehicle registration and licences (8%).

The most sophisticated contacts1 - those involving an ‘exchange’ of information and/or payment - are more likely to be conducted with state/territory and local governments than with the Australian Government. The most sophisticated contacts are also likely to be made in person.
A strong motivator for people using the telephone was the perception that the process was easy (17% of respondents), along with the desire to speak to a ‘real person’ (12% of respondents). Speaking to a ‘real person’ provides them with the ability to seek clarification if they need it.

1.3.4 Barriers to e-government use

Lack of awareness is a barrier to e-government use. Almost a quarter (23%) of all non-Internet contacts made by Internet users were made by those who perceived that a contact could not be made online. This is supported by the finding that the motivating factor for people to contact government in person is that the contact could only be made in person (35%).

Over half of all contacts involving an ‘exchange’ of information were made in person (52%), followed by telephone (26%), and the Internet (15%). The remaining contacts were either by mail or other channels (such as fax and third parties).

1.3.2 Profile of e-government users

People using the Internet to access government services are much more likely to be male (57%), live in metropolitan areas, be under 50 years old, university educated and work as professionals. Those using the telephone to access government services are more likely to be female living in households with dependent children at home (43% compared with 45% average).

Internet users living in metropolitan areas are more likely to use the Internet to contact government (57%) than those living outside capital cities. Internet users living in rural/remote areas are more likely to use the Internet to access government (48%).

1.3.3 Motivations for using the Internet to contact government

People who use the Internet and telephone to contact government or access services are motivated by the same things in selecting their channel. The key motivations cited were that they could make contact at a time that suited them (not limited to business hours), required a shorter time and the process was easy and uncomplicated.

By comparison, Internet contacts with state/territory governments were more likely to be motivated by not having to wait in a queue. People accessing primary industry, natural resources and energy services are more likely to state ‘cheaper’ as a reason for using the Internet.

A strong motivator for people using the telephone was the perception that the process was easy (17% of respondents), along with the desire to speak to a ‘real person’ (12% of respondents). Speaking to a ‘real person’ provides them with the ability to seek clarification if they need it.

1  For the purposes of this study, sophistication of a government service is relative to the level of interaction it involves. A low level of sophistication occurs when government provides published or static information. A high level of sophistication involves an exchange of information such as when a person pays a bill and receives a receipt.

2 Only key findings are represented, therefore percentages will not always total 100%.
Approximately 12% of non-Internet users that did not use the telephone for a contact said the main reason was that a relevant government office was close by, making it easier to do transactions over the counter.

Approximately 7% of people in this group thought it was too time consuming to wait in a telephone queue, and that other methods (that is, in person, mail and other non e-government channels) were faster. Another 7% said they selected a channel other than the telephone out of habit.

1.3.5 Satisfaction with government services accessed via all channels

Overall, satisfaction levels were high for both Internet and telephone contacts. Satisfaction levels for higher mail government services accessed via the Internet than for the telephone on all key indicators. Focus group participants suggested that one of the reasons satisfaction was higher was that their expectations of what could be done via the Internet were generally lower.

People using online government services were more likely to be satisfied when they were providing or exchanging information with government, rather than simply seeking it.

Among contacts made via the Internet, satisfaction was highest for services in the environment, climate and conservation category. Services where respondents were significantly more satisfied, were weather or climate services, land rates or tax services, libraries and government jobs services.

The main reasons for Internet dissatisfaction were usability issues (including website navigation) and content issues (such as incomplete information).

The service category being accessed had little bearing on satisfaction levels for people accessing government services via the telephone. Despite this, some differences existed for specific services.

People accessing vehicle registrations or licence services via the telephone were more likely to be satisfied with the extent to which they achieved what they intended (95% compared with a 82% average satisfaction level overall).

Issues related to a lack of convenience, including time spent waiting in a telephone queue, were cited most often as the reason for dissatisfaction with services accessed via the telephone. A third of all unsatisfactory contacts by telephone were attributed to ‘content’ issues, including the provision of incomplete information. Customer service issues, such as ‘the person did not understand the issue’ or ‘incorrect advice given’ were mentioned for 17% of contacts as the reason for dissatisfaction.

1.3.6 Future use of the Internet to access government services

Improvement to usability of government websites was cited as a factor that would encourage use of the Internet to contact government. Improvements in content, increased levels of awareness and access to Internet infrastructure were also mentioned as factors that would encourage use.

Existing e-government users cite ‘easier to find government services’ as the most effective mechanism to encourage greater interaction with government. Almost half of all people who do not use the Internet felt there was nothing that could be done to motivate them to use it which represents almost 15% of the total Australian adult population.
INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Governments around the world are grappling with the challenges presented by the planning and implementation of e-government. What was conceived as a seemingly simple process of replicating key government activities on new channels has developed into a step change in the way that people access government services. The benefits for governments that have been able to get e-government right are considerable. They include reducing the cost of government service delivery and providing businesses and consumers with easier, cheaper and more effective ways to access governments.

Australia has been at the forefront of e-government policy and implementation, consistently ranked among the top five countries in terms of e-government maturity.3

2.2 Definition of e-government

E-government is defined4 as the process of transforming government, so that the use of the Internet and electronic processes are central to the way government operates. E-government is about managing the issues around access to services by individual citizens and businesses. For the purposes of this study, e-government services refer to services provided via both the Internet and telephone.

2.3 Need for a study of this type

Despite Australia’s strong record in e-government, the bar is being continuously raised as jurisdictions globally become convinced about the benefits. The pressure for better e-government performance, however, is being exerted only in part by ‘competing’ governments. Community and business expectations are exerting the greatest influence on governments.

Until recently, e-government performance was judged against a range of internal indicators. These included the percentage of services and transactions migrated to online channels and simple project management performance, such as progress against timelines and budgets.

In the next phase of e-government’s maturation, performance of systems, channels and strategies will increasingly focus on indicators external to government. In essence, the one that will really matter is what the user thinks.

As a first step in this process, governments need to develop a more granular understanding of who is using e-government services and why, to what extent the services are delivering on the promise of ‘simplified’ interaction with government, what users feel about the services offered, what they are looking for in future and what they see as the ‘appropriate’ role of government.

2.4 Terms of reference for this study

This project is a study of Australians’ use of government services provided via the Internet and telephone. It demonstrates and measures the uptake of, and satisfaction with, e-government across all tiers of governments; enabling Australian governments to plan for the future, identify priority areas and deliver more responsive, citizen-centric services.

3 These rankings are from the yearly Accenture Report on eGovernment Leadership.

4 In a report prepared for the Australian Government Information Management Office (Demand and Value Assessment Methodology for better government services, p. 111)
The project’s objectives were to provide a snapshot of the uptake of, and satisfaction with, e-government services. The study was also designed to investigate the behaviour of e-government users, and identify what motivates people to use these services and what prevents them from accessing government services electronically.

The project focuses on citizens rather than businesses.

2.5 Approach to the study

The approach to the study consisted of two stages.

Stage 1 focused on collecting quantitative data and providing further insight into the findings through qualitative focus groups and interviews. The collection of quantitative data was undertaken through the following surveys:

+ A national random survey of 3800 people (primarily to collect usage data). This survey is referred to throughout the report as the random survey.

+ A survey of 2000 known e-government Internet users (primarily to collect Internet satisfaction data). This is referred to as the re-contact survey in this report.

Stage 2 focused on identifying people’s motivations for using e-government services, and to develop an understanding of the decision-making processes that people use when choosing which channel to use. This phase consisted of four focus groups in Melbourne, Shepparton, Adelaide and Bunbury. Selected interviews supplemented this process. A more detailed description of the methodology is included in the Appendices.

2.6 Authors of the Study

A consortium consisting of three companies conducted this project. dandolopartners, a specialist firm providing advice on government policy, strategy and marketing for private and public sector clients, led the project. dandolopartners was supported by Roy Morgan Research, a market research company with over 60 years of public sector research and polling experience and BDO Consulting, specialising in research, program reviews, business strategy, risk/performance management.
Central to this study was the need to determine levels of e-government usage, including what specific services people were and were not accessing via the Internet and telephone. The study also sought to identify whether Internet and telephone contacts with government tended to be for basic or more sophisticated tasks, such as transactions involving credit cards.

The following section covers:

+ levels of general Internet use;
+ which government services are being accessed, particularly those being accessed via the Internet and telephone;
+ the level of government that people are more likely to access via the Internet and telephone; and
+ the sophistication level of services accessed via the Internet and telephone.

3.1 Internet use

3.1.1 Levels of general Internet use

The random survey found that more than 7 in 10 Australian adults used the Internet in the past year. Specifically, it found that:

+ 71% of respondents had used the Internet at home, work, school, library, or other locations;
+ 27% had never used the Internet; and
+ 2% were not sure whether or not they had used the Internet.

In terms of frequency of use, 42% of people who had used the Internet in the past year used it daily, 22% used it weekly, 5% used it monthly and only 2% used it less than once a month.

More than 7 in 10 Australian adults used the Internet in the past year and 42% of those people used it daily.

39% of adult Australians accessed a government service via the Internet in the past 12 months.

People who participated in focus groups indicated that their Internet use had increased over time. Not only were they using the Internet more often, people also said that they were spending more time on it when they did access it. Participants in the groups said the types of tasks they were using the Internet for had also changed and they were now more likely to use Internet services for functional purposes such as banking and paying bills rather than entertainment. Overall, Internet users are doing more and surfing less.

3.2 Levels of Internet use to access government services

Results for the general population

Figure 3.1 shows that 39% of adult Australians had accessed a government service via the Internet in the past 12 months (from the random survey of the general adult Australian population). This figure is based on the fact that 39% of all respondents to the random survey said that ‘all’, ‘most’, ‘some’, ‘a few’ or ‘just one’ of their contacts with government agencies and services took place over the Internet.

Significantly, 14% of people who reported contacting government via the Internet reported using the Internet in the majority (all or most) of their contacts with government agencies and services.

Of the remaining 61% who had not accessed a government service in the past 12 months via the Internet, almost half of these did not use the Internet at all, for any purpose.

Perhaps a more revealing – and certainly more positive – measure is to exclude people that do not use the Internet at all. This reveals that more than half of all Australian adult Internet users (55%) used the Internet to access a government service in the past 12 months.
E-government use has grown significantly since 2002.

How these findings compare with previous e-government results

E-government use (currently 39% of Australians) has grown. The most recent data based on a sample size comparable to this study was by the ABS. Data collected in 2002 indicated that one in five (21%) adults accessed government services via the Internet for private purposes (that is, not business purposes). The significant increase in use of the Internet to access government services confirms the steady increase in use that the ABS had found. For example, the ABS reported that use of the Internet to access government had increased by 5% from 2001-2002.

It should also be noted that another study – conducted by consulting firm Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) – reported that 47% of Australian adults use online government services. There are some clear differences in the terms of reference for the TNS study, not least of which is the fact that it was global. It is likely that the size of the samples used to calculate Australian data were significantly lower – and therefore less reliable – than the sample used for this study. The TNS survey also contained prompts about types of government services that people may have accessed, which this study did not.

3.2 Telephone use

Governments around Australia have invested heavily in providing access to services via the telephone. The study found that people are more likely to use the telephone than the Internet to access government. As part of the random survey, people were asked to nominate up to three contacts with government, including those made in person, via mail, via Internet and via telephone. The study found that of all contacts with government in the past 12 months, 28% were by telephone and 19%

5. In response to the survey question: ‘Thinking of all the contacts that you have had with government agencies and services over the past 12 months, about what proportion of these took place over the Internet?’. Note that the figures in this chart, where at least one contact has been made, appear to add to 38% - this is a rounding issue, where figures have been rounded down to avoid decimal places in the chart. The total of all responses indicating government usage is 39%.


7 Government Online: An International Perspective 2003. TNS

8 While a country by country breakdown is not available for the TNS data, and so there is not absolute clarity on the TNS Australia numbers, it can be anticipated that Australia did not have three times more respondents than other countries (or, in other words, take up 12% of the sample, which would be what was required to reach 3,838 respondents).
of contacts were via the Internet. Both Internet and telephone are more popular than mail (13% of all contacts) as channels for accessing government services. As would be expected, given that a number of services are only available in person, nearly half (46%) of all contacts with government occurred face-to-face.

3.3 Types of services being accessed

3.3.1 Most popular services and service categories

When asked whether they had contacted government for any reason in the past 12 months, 86% of respondents answered positively. For the purposes of this study, specific services were grouped into larger ‘service categories’ to allow detailed analysis. As shown in Figure 3.2, the category with the highest proportion of contacts was community and social services (20%), followed by transport (18%), and land, property, planning, and construction (15%).

To provide further detail about people’s interaction with government through all channels, respondents were also asked about the specific services they had accessed. Examples of these types of services include various registrations, payments and benefits.

![Figure 3.2 - Government service categories used in the past 12 months](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Category</th>
<th>% Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and social services</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, property, planning and construction</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business services, economics, finance and taxation</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and health services</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary industry, natural resources and energy</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political system, election and representatives</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment, climate and conservation</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International, travel and immigration</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services, defence and national security</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, justice and consumer protection</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture, heritage, sport, entertainment and local tourism</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, science and technology</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The total percentage for all service categories exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
Services most frequently accessed over the telephone were family, child allowance or childcare benefits (13%); land rates or tax (9%) and income or personal tax (7%).

Figure 3.3 shows the specific services used (through any channel, not only e-government), where the most frequently reported were:

- car, boat, vehicle registration and licences (13% of all services reported);
- land tax or rates (10%);
- income or personal tax (8%); and
- family benefit, child allowance, or childcare benefits (7%).

Other commonly reported contacts with government services included building permits or planning applications, health benefits, and non-health related services for the aged (4% of contacts were reported for each service).

Most popular services accessed via the Internet

There were significant variations in the types of services accessed by people via the Internet. Specifically, income or personal tax services displaced vehicle registrations and land rates as the most often accessed service. Of all contacts with government that were made via the Internet, the services most frequently accessed were:

- income or personal tax (16%);
- land rates or tax (10%); and
- car, boat, vehicle registration and licences (8%);
- family benefit, child allowance or childcare benefits (3%); and
- parking permits or fines (3%).

Figure 3.3 – Top 10 services used (by any channel) in the past 12 months

% Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>% Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car, boat, vehicle registrations, or licences</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land rates or tax</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income or personal tax</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family benefit, child allowance, or childcare benefits</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building permit or planning application</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health benefits for Australian residents</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-health related services for the aged</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services or care incl. mental, respite &amp; public hospital</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities services or accounts</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Total contacts - Random survey (6,280)

9 This graph indicates the top 10 responses, therefore total percentages may not equal 100%.

10 Based on findings of the re-contact survey.
Of all contacts made with government over the telephone, the services most frequently accessed were:

+ family benefit, child allowance or childcare benefits (13%);
+ land rates or tax (9%);
+ income or personal tax (7%);
+ car, boat, vehicle registration and licences (5%); and
+ building permit or planning applications (4%).

3.3.2 Level of government contacted

Respondents were asked to specify the level of government for each service they accessed (Australian Government, state/territory governments, or local government). For those who knew the name of the government agency accessed rather than the level of government, the agency name was recorded and later assigned to the appropriate level of government.11

As shown in Figure 3.4, contact with the three levels of government was fairly evenly distributed – 35% of contacts were with the Australian Government, 31% with state/territory governments and 33% with local governments.

Of the contacts made with the **Australian Government**, contacts with community and social services were the most common (28%), followed by business services, economics, finance and taxation (25%), and health and health services (11%). Contacts relating to transport are most common (49%) for **state/territory governments**, followed by community and social services (9%), and health and health services (7%). Contacts relating to land, property planning and construction are most common (42%) for **local government**, followed by community and social services business services (20%), and transport (8%).

**Level of government accessed via the Internet and telephone**

The channel used to access government did not vary significantly by level of government. In person was the most commonly used channel with all three levels of government, followed by telephone, and to a lesser extent, Internet.

Despite this, there are some notable differences in channel use across the various tiers of government. The Internet accounted for 23% of contacts with the Australian Government, 19% of contacts

11 1% of contacts were unable to be allocated to a level of government as the respondent was unsure of the level of government and the nature of the service (for example, particular health services can be provided by all levels of government in Australia) meant that it was difficult for the interviewer to determine.
The Internet accounted for a higher proportion of contacts with the Australian Government than state/territory governments and local government.

Similarly, while in person is the most popular channel across all tiers of government, it is less often used for contacts with the Australian Government (38% of contacts with which were in person) than for state/territory governments (50% of contacts with which were in person) or local government (49% of contacts with which were in person).

3.3.3 Type of information exchange
The study examined what types of services, in terms of sophistication, were being accessed via specific channels. To capture this information, people interviewed for the random survey were asked to specify exactly what was involved in a specific contact. The responses fell into one of the three types of contacts where:

- the person sought information (least sophisticated) only;
- the person provided information about themselves (with no exchange of information); or
- information was exchanged (most sophisticated) between the person and the government.

Overall, over half (58%) of the total contacts with government services involved information exchange, the most ‘sophisticated’ type of contact. The next highest response (21%) was for seeking information, followed by providing information (20%).

As shown in Figure 3.5, contacts with local or state/territory governments tended to involve more sophisticated interactions (35% each involved an exchange of information), than contacts with the Australian Government (29% of which involved an exchange of information). Contact involving simple seeking or obtaining of information was significantly more likely to occur when dealing with the Australian Government (48% provided information to government, 41% sought information from government).

![Figure 3.5 – Level of sophistication analysed by level of government](image-url)

*Figure 3.5 – Level of sophistication analysed by level of government*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sought or obtained information only</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information but no exchange</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>14,188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base for figure is total contacts (6,280), but data is weighted to total estimated number of contacts in thousands.
Over half of the contacts with government involved information exchange, the most ‘sophisticated’ type of contact. Contacts with local or state/territory governments tended to involve more sophisticated interactions.

Other significant differences in the sophistication level of contacts by tier of government were:

+ Only 24% of contacts involving provision of information occurred with state/territory governments, and 26% with local governments (compared with 48% for Australian Government contacts).

+ Only 25% of contacts involving only seeking information occurred with state/territory governments and 32% with local governments (compared with 41% for Australian Government contacts).

Conversely, when conducting a transaction that only involved seeking or obtaining information, people favoured the telephone or the Internet over face-to-face contact. Other significant findings from analysis of sophistication level of the contact by channels are summarised below:

+ the channel used for basic contacts (that is, seeking or obtaining information) were roughly evenly distributed with telephone rating as most popular (36%), followed by the Internet (33%) and in person (30%);

+ the channel used for contacts involving providing information (with no exchange) were more likely to be made in person (41%) than by telephone (28%), mail (20%), and the Internet (16%); and

+ over half of all contacts involving an exchange of information were made in person (52%), followed by telephone (26%), and the Internet (15%).

### Channels favoured for contacts of different levels of sophistication

Figure 3.6 shows there are significant variations in the channels that are preferred by people for contacts involving different levels of sophistication. Perhaps the most significant finding is that the people favoured face-to-face (in person) dealings for the most sophisticated contacts.

Conversely, when conducting a transaction that only involved seeking or obtaining information, people favoured the telephone or the Internet over face-to-face contact. Other significant findings from analysis of sophistication level of the contact by channels are summarised below:

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+ the channel used for contacts involving providing information (with no exchange) were more likely to be made in person (41%) than by telephone (28%), mail (20%), and the Internet (16%); and

+ over half of all contacts involving an exchange of information were made in person (52%), followed by telephone (26%), and the Internet (15%).

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+ the channel used for contacts involving providing information (with no exchange) were more likely to be made in person (41%) than by telephone (28%), mail (20%), and the Internet (16%); and

+ over half of all contacts involving an exchange of information were made in person (52%), followed by telephone (26%), and the Internet (15%).
Participants in the focus groups provided additional insight into the types of contacts best suited to the Internet and telephone. A number of participants suggested that the sophistication level of the transaction was not the key factor in deciding how suitable a contact was for the Internet. Rather, it was the perceived ambiguity or complexity of a particular task that was more critical. Ambiguous tasks were those that involved clarification and were open to interpretation, including qualification for benefits. Examples of complex tasks were those that required multiple forms, including applications for passports.

As a general rule, the study found that the more ambiguous a task the less likely it is to be performed online. Simple tasks like changing address details, or paying registration were often performed online, however more complex tasks were not. "It depends on how specific your issue is. If it’s something straight-forward, like paying my rego [registration], I’ll do it on the Internet, but if it’s ‘hang on, why have I used more water when I haven’t been at home than my mother who waters her garden everyday’ – that’s a phone job”.

The Internet was used far more often for tasks that are unambiguous. This is true for both searching for information, as well as transactions. One participant stated they were “more comfortable with the written word [than a spoken word], it’s there in black and white in front of you” and therefore not subject to interpretation by the person giving you the information.

Participants indicated that they shy away from online transactions for certain types of interactions. One person stated if it’s an easy answer [I’d feel comfortable using] email … but if it gets complicated face-to-face, because it’s all open to interpretation when you’re reading it”. This was further enhanced by the inability of the Internet to adequately transmit non-verbal communications such as body language. Table 3.1 depicts channel preferences expressed by focus group participants in particular circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of complexity</th>
<th>Low Ambiguity</th>
<th>High Ambiguity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low complexity</td>
<td>Prefer Internet - usage already high</td>
<td>Prefer phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate complexity</td>
<td>Use Internet if confident, increasing use over time</td>
<td>Prefer face to face or phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High complexity</td>
<td>Lower usage of Internet, however there is willingness if shown how. Internet use increasing over time</td>
<td>Prefer face to face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO IS – AND IS NOT – USING E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

04
People living in metropolitan areas are more likely to use the Internet to contact government than those living outside capital cities. However, Internet users living in rural/remote areas are more likely to access government via Internet than people living in regional centres.

This study identified key characteristics of people who contact government via any channel, and sought specifically to understand the significant differences that exist between those who use e-government services and those who do not.

Differences were found across many demographic areas, specifically between those who access government services via the Internet, and those who do not.

4.1 Geographic location of e-government users

4.1.1 Location of people accessing government services via the Internet

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the key benefits of e-government service delivery is the ability to overcome geographic barriers. The study examined the types of channels favoured for people living in metropolitan, regional and rural/remote areas. Figure 4.1 identifies the use of government services via the Internet by location. Key findings were:

+ Internet users living in metropolitan areas are more likely to use the Internet to contact government (57%) than those living outside capital cities; and

+ Internet users living in rural/remote areas are more likely (50%) than people living in regional centres to use the Internet to access government (48%).

These figures are likely to reflect the fact that time taken to access a government office in person are higher in metropolitan and rural/remote areas than in regional centres – a finding confirmed in focus groups.

4.2 Demographic profile of people using e-government services

In addition to understanding geographic differences in the profile of the people contacting government by various channels, the study also identified the key demographic characteristics of people using particular channels. Of particular interest was the profile of people that used the Internet and telephone to contact government.

12 The definition of metropolitan (metro), regional and rural/remote is based on Section of State. Metro includes all capital cities in each state/territory. Regional includes secondary towns. The balance is classified as rural/remote.
4.2.1 Demographic differences for people contacting government by Internet

A number of demographic details were captured as part of the surveys. This provided a basis for analysing the demographic characteristics of people that use specific channels. People who used the Internet to contact government were more likely than the average person to be:

+ male (57%);
+ aged 25-34 (25% compared with 19% average) or 35-49 (41% compared with 31% average);
+ living in households with dependent children at home (51% compared with 43% average);
+ educated to university level or higher (65% compared with 45% average);
+ working full-time (63% compared with 46% average);
+ professional workers (19% compared with 10% average);
+ reporting a personal income of more than $50,000 per annum (38% compared with 23% average), and a household income of more than $50,000 per annum (67% compared with 48% average); and
+ living in metropolitan areas (72% compared with 63% average).

4.2.2 Demographic differences for people contacting government by telephone

The demographic profile of telephone users tended to more closely resemble the profile of the average respondent. While the differences in profile were not as stark as they were for Internet users, telephone users were more likely to be:

+ female (57%);
+ aged 35-49 (36% compared with 31% average); and
+ living in households with dependent children at home (49% compared with 43% average).

4.3 Demographic profile of people that are not using e-government services

A key area of interest in this study was the need to better understand any significant demographic differences in people that used channels other than the Internet and telephone to contact government. The following section describes significant variations in the profile of people accessing services in person, via mail and via other channels (including through intermediaries such as tax agents).

4.3.1 Demographic differences for people contacting government in person

Given that people accessing government in person represented nearly half of all contacts, it is expected that their demographic profile will align closely with the average for all respondents. Despite this, people contacting government in person were more likely to be:

+ aged 50+ (41% compared to 38% average);
+ educated to secondary school level (56% compared to 53% average); and
+ living in regional or rural areas.

13 Average is based on the figure for all people who had accessed a government service in the past 12 months.
People favouring in person contact with government tend to be less likely than the average for all respondents to be:

+ aged 35-49 (28% compared with 31% average);
+ working full-time (42% compared with 46% average);
+ educated to university level or higher (42% compared with 45% average); and
+ living in a metropolitan area (60% compared with 63% average).

4.3.2 Demographic differences for people contacting government by mail and ‘other’ channels

People who contacted government by mail were close to the average, with no significant demographic differences. In contrast, significant differences were found for people who contacted government via other channels (including direct debit, through accountant/tax agent and facsimile). People in this group were more likely than the average to be:

+ aged 50+ (52% compared with 38% average);
+ living as a couple with no dependent children at home (54% compared with 29% average); and
+ working in the manufacturing industry (14% compared with 4% average).

People accessing government through channels other than the Internet, telephone, mail and in person were less likely than the average to be aged 18-24 (6% compared with 12% average) and educated to university level or higher (34% compared with 45% average).
A key area of exploration in this study was what motivated people to use e-government services. Identifying people’s motivations is a more difficult task than finding out what services they accessed, as it is open to greater interpretation.

Recognising this limitation, the surveys used in this study were designed to ensure that people’s motivations for using particular channels were not prompted. Rather, people were encouraged to articulate their motivations in their own words. This provided up to 30 categories of responses, which were condensed into a smaller number of categories for analysis.

### 5.1 Reasons for using the Internet to contact government or access services

People who used the Internet to contact government generally did so because they believed it was the most convenient method. That is, the most significant motivator was the Internet allowed them to make contact at a time that suited them. Figure 5.1 shows the key motivators for Internet use. Of those who made contact with government by the Internet:

- 42% said because they could do it at a time that suited them and was not limited to business hours;
- 37% said it was faster;
- 21% said the process was easy and uncomplicated; and
- 14% said they were able to control information they wanted and that they did not need to rely on the service person.

Participants in focus groups clarified their motivation to use the Internet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Of respondents</th>
<th>Base: Respondents who made contact in last 12 months (Internet) - Random survey (n=846)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Can do it at a time that suits me (not limited to business hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Requires shorter time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Process is easy, uncomplicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Control information I want/don’t need to rely on service person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Don’t have to go into a government office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Don’t have to queue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Don’t have to wait for someone to send out information/forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Can’t do it in other ways this is the only option available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Cheaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Don’t need to make phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Refused/Can’t say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People were more likely to use the Internet if the contact was routine or standard, extensive dialogue was not required and there was little potential for error.

While most acknowledged that time savings and convenience were the most significant factors in encouraging them to use the Internet to contact government, other factors also ranked highly.

The first group of motivating factors were agency related. Participants suggested that they were more motivated to use the Internet over another channel if the agency they were dealing with was trusted, and well known to them. The Australian Tax Office was offered as an example of trusted, respected and well-known organisation.

The second group of motivating factors were task related. Participants said they were more motivated to use the Internet if the contact with government was routine or standard, extensive dialogue was not required and there was little potential for error. Payment of vehicle registration was offered as an example of a task in this category. Participants regularly visited familiar websites which provided good information. One respondent stated "I find the [Bureau of Meteorology website] useful and I know I can rely on it".

The third group of motivating factors centred around the requirements on the individual undertaking the task. People were more motivated to use the Internet if there is no need for credit card details to be provided, and if follow-up was not likely to be required.

Familiarity with a task is a clear determinant of Internet use. Tasks such as vehicle registration or personal tax, were considered by participants to be examples of 'highly familiar' tasks.

5.1.1 Demographic variations in what motivates people to use the Internet to contact government

To determine whether particular groups of people were more or less motivated to use the Internet by particular factors, analysis was undertaken to look for significant demographic differences. Interestingly, people tended to be motivated to use the Internet by the same thing, regardless of age group, geography and other demographic indicators. The only significant difference reported was that people with annual household incomes of more than $50,000 are more likely to be motivated by convenience (87%, compared with 84% of the overall population).

5.2 Reasons for using the telephone to contact government services

People who used the telephone to contact government were asked what motivated them to use the telephone over other channels. Interestingly, many of the top responses were similar to those provided by people who had used the Internet to contact government.

Figure 5.2 shows the key reasons identified by telephone users for their preferred form of interaction with government. The most significant motivator for telephone users was the fact that they could do it at a time that suited them (28%) and because they believed that the telephone would require less time than other available channels (23%).

A strong motivator for people to use the telephone was a perception that the process was easy (17% of respondents), along with the desire to speak to a ‘real person’ (12% of respondents). Focus group participants also said that having a real person at the end of the phone line or over the counter provided them with the ability to seek clarification if they need it.
The most significant motivator for telephone use was that they could contact government at a time that suited them and the telephone required less time than other available channels.

Participants suggested that having a real person to talk to provided an additional level of accountability.

This is particularly important for people undertaking complex or ambiguous tasks. Participants also suggested that having a real person to talk to provided an additional level of accountability, a motivating factor when undertaking tasks where follow-up might be required.

5.2.1 Demographic variations in what motivates people to use the telephone to contact government

Analysis was undertaken to determine whether people who were motivated by particular factors to use the telephone had significantly different demographic profiles. Interesting variations include that people motivated by convenience were more likely to have completed secondary school as their highest education level (81% compared with 70% of the general adult population).

People motivated by the desire to ask questions and get answers immediately were more likely to report an annual household income of more than $50,000 (34% compared with 29% of the population).

5.3 Comparing Internet and telephone users

People who use the Internet and telephone to contact government services tend to be motivated by the same things in selecting their channel. The top three motivating factors were the same for people who had contacted government by Internet and telephone, and ranked in the same order.

People who used the Internet to contact government nominated convenience as a key reason to a much higher degree than telephone users. For example:

- 42% of people who had used the Internet to contact government were motivated by the opportunity to do it at a time that suited them, compared with 28% of telephone users;

Note: the total percentage for all reasons for using the telephone to contact government exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 5.2 - Reasons for using the telephone to contact government

% Of respondents

Can do it at a time that suits me
Requires shorter time
Process is easy, uncomplicated
Prefers to speak to a real person
Can ask and get the answers immediately/don’t have to wait
Can clarify/explain to get the result that I want
Can’t do it online/this is the only option available
Don’t have to go to into a government office
It was required/no other way
Refused/Can’t say

Base: Respondents who made contact in last 12 months (phone) - Random survey (n=1351)
People motivated by the desire to ask questions and get answers immediately were more likely to report an annual household income of more than $50,000.

+ 37% of people who used the Internet to contact government did so because it takes less time, compared with 23% of telephone users; and

+ 21% of people who used the Internet to contact government did so because the process is easy and uncomplicated, compared with 17% of telephone users.

Focus groups supported the survey findings for Internet users, with time benefits acting as a significant motivator, specifically time to perform the task. All participants, particularly those in regional centres, were highly motivated by time savings to use the Internet in preference to the telephone and in person contact. This was particularly apparent for tasks performed regularly.

The top three motivating factors were the same for people who had contacted government by Internet and telephone, and ranked in the same order.

5.3.1 Unique motivators for Internet use

The speed at which a response was provided was also a significant motivation for respondents to use the Internet. In regards to completing an income tax return online, participants found the two-week turnaround for e-tax extremely appealing. Several participants who had previously not completed their tax returns online seriously considered doing so once they became aware of the faster speed of response. Although not a government service, an example of the type of transaction that can be completed more quickly via the Internet is share trading. One participant raved about the benefits of online trading (of shares) “I can do it for $20 ... and by the time I checked to see if the order had been received, it had been executed ... it was done in the same moment ... it was quite brilliant”
WHY PEOPLE DID NOT USE E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES
Central to the study was the need to clarify the factors that prevented greater uptake of e-government services. The study captured these views by:

1. examining reasons that motivated people to use channels other than the Internet and telephone; and

2. capturing specific reasons why people did not use the Internet or telephone for a particular contact.

6.1 Reasons for choosing channels other than the Internet and telephone to contact government

In the past 12 months, more than half of all people who made contact with government did so through a channel other than the Internet and telephone. Excluding e-government channels, in person was the most popular channel to access government, followed by mail and ‘other’ channels.

The following section examines specific reasons that motivated the selection of non e-government channels.

6.1.1 Reasons for contacting government in person

The greatest motivating factor for people to contact government in person is that the contact could only be made in person (35%). This is a significant finding for governments planning e-government strategies, as it suggests that people may consider alternative channels as they become available. It is also likely that a proportion of those people nominating this reason may simply be unaware of the fact that some services can be performed over the Internet or by telephone.

As was the case for people who used the Internet and telephone to contact government, more than half of all people who made contact with government did so through a channel other than the Internet and telephone. Excluding e-government channels, in person was the most popular channel to access government, followed by mail and ‘other’ channels.

Figure 6.1 – Reasons for contacting government in person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% Of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can’t do it in other ways/this is the only option available/contact possible in person only</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can do it at a time that suits me</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to speak to a real person</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to clarify/explain to get the result that I want</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions and get answers immediately/don’t have to wait</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process is easy, uncomplicated</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government office is close by</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was in the area/had other things to do there as well</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not possible by other methods - had to show/sign supporting documents</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused/Can’t say</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the total percentage for all reasons that people contacted the government in person exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
The primary reason people gave for contacting government in person was that the contact could only be made in person. The ability to make contact at a time that was convenient ranked highly (22%). Approximately 18% of people contacting in person said their preference for speaking to a ‘real person’ was a reason to contact government in person. Approximately half as many (in percentage terms) indicated the same reason for using the telephone.

Figure 6.1 shows the reasons for contacting government in person. Another significant finding was that 10% of people contacting in person said they were motivated to do so to have the opportunity to clarify or explain an issue to get the result they wanted. Focus group participants also indicated they were more likely to contact government in person in cases where they:

+ desire high levels of accountability;
+ require written confirmation or formal lodging of a request; and
+ seek clarification of ambiguous issues.

Highly personal contacts, including examples such as seeking information about a gambling or addiction problem, were more suited to in-person contact than Internet or telephone.

A high number of focus group participants, particularly those in regional areas, said in-person contacts made sense to them in situations where it was possible to tie the visit in with other events (including banking). This was supported by the random survey results, which found that people accessing government in person that cited convenience as a major motivator were more likely to be:

+ living in regional areas (48% compared with 44% of the general adult population); and
+ aged 50 and over (51% compared with 44% of the overall population).

6.1.2 Reasons for using mail to contact government services

A significant motivator for people to contact government via mail was the ability to do it at a time that suits them (18%). Approximately 11% of people contacting government by mail did so because they had a paper form, or a prepaid envelope had been provided. A further 11% of people said they selected mail because the process was easy and uncomplicated.

6.2 Reasons why people did not use an e-government channel for a particular contact

While the reasons for not using e-government identified so far have related to active preferences for other channels, the study also asked people specifically why they did not choose the Internet or telephone to make contact. Analysis in this section focuses on two groups:

+ why Internet users did not use the Internet to make contact. This excludes people who did not use the Internet because they have not used the Internet at all in the past 12 months; and
+ why non-Internet users did not use the telephone to make contact (that is, why they chose a method other than telephone).

14 Only key findings are represented, therefore percentages will not always total 100%.
6.2.1 Why Internet users did not use the Internet to make contact

The study sought to investigate why those who had used the Internet in the past 12 months had not used it to contact government. As shown in Figure 6.2, the most significant deterrent was the fact that people thought (rightly or wrongly) that the contact could not be done online. This reason was cited by almost a quarter (23%) of all people in this category. Other reasons provided by this group include that they:

+ preferred to speak to or meet a ‘real person’ (11%);
+ had concerns about security of information including credit card information (8%); and
+ did not feel sufficiently familiar with using computers or the Internet in general (6%).

Only 3% of people in this group indicated concerns about personal privacy as a deterrent to using the Internet for a particular contact.

Focus group participants, who were all Internet users, provided further insight into this issue. The key issues identified are discussed below.

Lack of awareness
Participants indicated that awareness of what could be performed via the Internet was a significant barrier to e-government uptake. At all focus groups several participants stated “I didn’t know you could do that” when told by others in the group of particular services available online. This was more common among the older participants.

Figure 6.2 – Reasons provided by Internet users as to why they did not contact government via the Internet for a particular contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was not aware can be done</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred to speak to/meet a ‘real person’</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about security of information (incl. credit card information)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with using computer/Internet in general</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have a computer/Internet connection/access to Internet</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming to find the right information/other methods are quicker</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to navigate website</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about personal privacy</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government office is close by/easy to do it over the counter</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to find government services</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused/Can’t say</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Contacts

Base: Non-Internet contacts made by Internet users in last 12 months - Random survey (n=3808)

Note: the total percentage for all reasons that people did not contact the government via the Internet exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
Awareness of what could be performed via the Internet was a significant barrier to e-government uptake.

Linked to this awareness issue was the perceived difficulty of finding out what could be done online. “There are so many things in there which are useful, they’re just hard to find”. A number of participants suggested that the sheer volume of contacts that could be made with government online made it hard for people to find those services quickly and easily.

Perceived lack of accountability
Participants suggested that the Internet was not seen as a particularly ‘accountable’ channel, which made it less attractive for a range of contacts. The type of contacts where this barrier was most significant were those requiring a ruling or acknowledgment of receipt/lodgement. The telephone was generally viewed as more accountable than the Internet, except where a printed receipt was required.

Three factors determined how ‘accountable’ a channel was perceived to be, which had implications for government service delivery options. These factors were:

1. Speaking to the same person every time created a sense that the organisation’s representative had knowledge of the participant’s problem and circumstances, and provided reassurance that they were being looked after. Merely being able to offer a name – generally of a telephone operator or counter staff member that had previously been encountered – contributed significantly to people’s view of that channel as accountable.

2. Being able to produce proof of the transaction. Participants felt it was important to get things in writing. Receipt numbers or similar were accepted as better than nothing, however having a receipt, or something that participants could print out was seen as important to establishing accountability.

3. It was important that participants received a prompt response. Participants noted that once a request was sent via the Internet, there was little comfort provided that the request had reached its destination (except in cases where a receipt of delivery was provided immediately). A number of people said the delay in response times to Internet requests, particularly email sent from websites, was particularly frustrating, as there was an expectation that the medium was immediate.

Difficulties navigating Internet-based services
A number of participants suggested poorly designed online services had prevented them using the Internet for other government contacts. Most frustrating were occasions where people’s queries were non-standard, and did not correspond to any of the options provided. Similar complaints were made about automated telephone routing machines for people using the telephone to contact government (and private sector organisations and utilities). Sometimes participants felt they “fell into a gap in the system”. When this occurred, they felt they needed to communicate with a human to help them navigate the ambiguity.

Concerns about the risk of financial loss when providing credit card or banking details
The perception of the potential for personal loss “raises the stakes” of Internet use for some people, and causes Internet contact to sometimes be seen as unnecessarily risky. Internet services where credit card or banking details are required immediately raised anxiety levels among participants, as there is the potential for financial loss. This was less of an issue for trusted organisations, such as “big reputable companies” or government departments.

Despite the fact that the provision of banking or credit card details over the
7% of non-Internet users thought it was too time consuming to wait in a telephone queue.

Internet raised alarm bells with some participants, the majority performed financial transactions online. This tended to occur with organisations that participants already had a relationship with, such as their bank, or government agencies. Participants were most comfortable with transactions not requiring credit card payments, such as BPAY, as they were considered to carry less risk.

6.2.2 Why non-Internet users do not use the telephone to make contact

Barriers to greater uptake of telephone services tended to correlate strongly with the reasons why people did things in person. As indicated in Figure 6.3, the main reason why non-Internet users did not use the telephone to contact government services was because they thought (rightly or wrongly) that the contact could not be made by telephone (14%). Almost as many people in this group (12%) said they did not use the telephone for a contact as the relevant government office was close by and that it was easy to do transactions over the counter.

Interestingly, 7% of people in this group thought it was too time consuming to wait in a telephone queue, and that other methods (that is, in person, mail and other non-e-government channels) were faster. Another 7% said they selected a channel other than the telephone out of habit.

Not having a credit card, and security concerns associated with providing credit card details over the telephone, were both barriers to greater telephone use for contacting government. This was confirmed in focus groups, where a number of participants indicated that in person was the only method that they trusted for transactions involving credit cards.

Figure 6.3 - Reasons non-Internet users did not contact government by telephone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% of Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone is not available/cannot do it by telephone</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government office is close by/easy to do it over the counter</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habit/usually do it by other methods</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming to wait in queue/other methods are quicker</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have a credit card</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about security of information (incl. credit card information)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to navigate phone menu</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not possible by phone - had to show/sign supporting documents</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about personal privacy</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused/Can’t say</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Of contacts                                                                

Base: Non-telephone contacts made by non-Internet users in last 12 months - Random survey (n=946)

Note: the total percentage for all reasons that non-Internet users did not contact the government by telephone exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES 07
The surveys used in this study were designed so that satisfaction could be measured for specific contacts with government. This was done to ensure that respondents had to assess the elements of a specific interaction with government, rather making a judgment about all of their contacts. This approach enabled the study to examine satisfaction against a number of indicators. It also allows for satisfaction to be broken down according to the service category accessed and the channel used (Internet and telephone).

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the government service they had accessed through the Internet or telephone against a range of indicators. Three of those indicators were common to both Internet and telephone contacts:

- the extent that respondents achieved what they intended;
- the ease of using the service; and
- the ease of finding the specific information or service they were after.

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction on a 5 point scale where 5 was extremely satisfied, and 1 was not satisfied at all.

7.1 Levels of satisfaction by channel

Overall, the satisfaction levels for both Internet and telephone access to government services were high. Satisfaction was slightly higher for Internet than telephone using all common indicators. Figure 7.1 shows the proportion of contacts that were rated as satisfactory on all three indicators.

Contacts made via the Internet had a greater proportion of respondents reporting a high level satisfaction than contacts by phone (55% Internet compared with 49% phone).

16 Where ‘satisfaction’ was summed as responses of ‘extremely satisfied’, ‘very satisfied’, and ‘somewhat satisfied’ (leaving out ‘not very satisfied’ and ‘not satisfied at all’).
Similarly, contacts made via the telephone had a greater proportion of respondents reporting lower levels of satisfaction than for the Internet (21% phone compared with 14% Internet).

### 7.2 Variations in satisfaction levels by service category

Satisfaction was higher for the Internet than telephone across all service categories. Among contacts made via the Internet, satisfaction was highest for services in the environment, climate and conservation category (98%) than the 93% average across all service categories. There were no statistically significant differences by service category in relation to satisfaction with phone contacts.

When analysing satisfaction at the level below service category - that is at the specific service level - the picture is quite different. The following section identifies key findings against the three indicators used to compare Internet and telephone satisfaction.

#### 7.2.1 The extent that the respondent achieved what they intended

**Internet users**

Overall, 90% of all Internet contacts achieved what they had intended to do. Satisfaction was lower than the average for Internet contacts involving a job seeker’s allowance, unemployment benefit, and working for the dole services (77%, compared with 90% for Internet contacts overall) and family benefit, child allowance, or childcare benefit services (81% compared with 90% average).

**Telephone users**

The only significant variation for telephone users achieving what they intended was for contacts involving car, boat, vehicle registrations, or licence services. For these services, only 82% of contacts were deemed satisfactory on this indicator (compared to the 90% average).

#### 7.2.2 The ease of finding specific information or service respondents

**Internet users**

Approximately 90% of Internet contacts rated this indicator satisfactory. Satisfaction levels for Internet contacts was higher than the average for weather or climate services (100%), utilities services or accounts (98%), tourism, holidays or travel within Australia services (98%), libraries (98%), land rates or tax services (97%), car, boat, vehicle registrations, or licence services (95%) and income or personal tax services (94%).

**Telephone users**

Approximately 83% of telephone contacts rated this indicator satisfactory. Telephone users were more likely to be satisfied with the ease of finding the specific information needed for contacts involving family benefit, child allowance, or childcare benefit services (89% compared with 83% average for all telephone contacts).

#### 7.2.3 The ease of using the service

**Internet users**

Approximately 93% of Internet contacts rated this indicator satisfactory. Higher levels of satisfaction were reported for
Dissatisfaction with the Internet was primarily due to difficulties navigating websites, followed by websites containing incomplete information.

People accessing family benefit, child allowance, or childcare benefit services were less likely than average to be satisfied on this indicator (85% compared with 93% average of all respondents to random survey).

Telephone users
No significant differences were reported for telephone users on this indicator.

7.3 Causes of dissatisfaction

The following section examines services where respondents expressed greater levels of dissatisfaction. A large number of reasons were given for dissatisfaction. They have been classified into the following broad categories:

+ usability issues (including difficulties navigating Internet services);
+ content issues (including Internet services containing incomplete or out-of-date information);
+ access issues (including government services difficult to find, don’t have the software to do it);
+ infrastructure issues (including Internet service is slow or network unreliable);
+ customer service issues (including no or late reply to query);
+ security issues (concerns about security of information); and
+ privacy issues (concerns about personal privacy).

7.3.1 Dissatisfaction with Internet contact

Part of the study’s objectives was identifying the specific reasons why the Internet caused dissatisfaction for people who used it to contact government. The reasons were classified into categories, including usability (which related to the service’s navigation), content (including the type of information available), access issues (such as difficulties finding services and not having the password or software required to access a service) and infrastructure issues (such as websites crashing or being slow).

Figure 7.2 – Top grouped reasons for dissatisfaction with Internet contacts

Note: Bar lengths use un-rounded percentages, while bar labels are rounded to the nearest whole per cent. In the figure above, more people cited dissatisfaction with usability than content even though the label suggests both were 7%.
The main reason for dissatisfaction with telephone contacts was waiting too long to be served. Being unable to complete an enquiry by phone and being given the incorrect advice over the telephone were also significant issues.

Figure 7.2 indicates that the main reasons for Internet dissatisfaction relate to usability and content issues. Approximately 14% of contacts by Internet were reported as being unsatisfactory. Problems with usability and content were each mentioned in relation to 7% of Internet contacts. The percentages expressed below represent the proportion of all re-contact survey respondents that indicated dissatisfaction on any of these fronts.

The study also sought to identify reasons for Internet dissatisfaction below the level of the broad category. The specific reasons for Internet dissatisfaction underpinning these general causes of dissatisfaction in contacting government via the Internet are shown in Figure 7.3. Only looking at those people who expressed dissatisfaction with the Internet, difficulties navigating websites was the primary reason (43%), followed by the websites containing incomplete information (28%).

7.3.2 Dissatisfaction with telephone contacts

Approximately 27% of all telephone contacts were reported as being unsatisfactory on at least one indicator. Figure 7.4 indicates convenience issues were most often cited as dissatisfactory in contacts made via telephone. The next most significant cause of dissatisfaction for telephone contacts was content issues.

As indicated in Figure 7.5, waiting too long to be served was the main reason for dissatisfaction with contacts made via the telephone. Being unable to complete an enquiry by phone and being given the incorrect advice over the telephone was also cited.

Note: the total percentage for specific reasons that people were dissatisfied with Internet contacts exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
Figure 7.4 - Top grouped reasons for dissatisfaction with telephone contacts

Note: the total percentage for all reasons that people were dissatisfied with telephone contacts exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 7.5 - Specific reasons for dissatisfaction with telephone contacts

Note: the total percentage for specific reasons that people were dissatisfied with telephone contacts exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.
ENCOURAGING THE USE OF THE INTERNET TO CONTACT GOVERNMENT 08
The most important factor that would encourage Internet use is improved usability of online services. However, 37% of all respondents felt there was nothing that could be done to motivate them to have more contact using the Internet.

Governments globally are keen to understand what they can do to improve e-government service delivery. It is important to also understand how people not using the Internet to contact government could be encouraged to do so.

All random survey respondents were asked ‘what, if anything, would encourage you to use the Internet more often for accessing or communicating with government services?’

As shown in Figure 8.1, the most important factors that would encourage Internet use are improved usability of online services (15%), followed by improved access to the Internet generally (13%) and improved content (7%). Other areas that were reported as significant potential motivators include improved skills to access Internet services and greater awareness of what is available via the Internet.

Approximately 37% of all respondents felt there was nothing that could be done to motivate them to have more contact using the Internet. This figure is inflated by the high number of people who do not currently use the Internet that expressed this view.

Approximately 58% of this group are retired, while 75% are aged over 50.

Figure 8.1 - Summary motivators to encourage more contacts via the Internet (all respondents)
8.1 Encouraging Internet contact among existing Internet users

Internet users were asked what factor would encourage them to make more contact with government via the Internet. Figure 8.2 identifies the key factors.

Among those who use the Internet at home, school, library or at work, making it easier to find government services encourage more contacts via the Internet (12%). Better website layout or navigating tools (9%), better informed of what I can do online (9%) and better security when transferring personal information via the Internet (8%) are also strong motivators.

Figure 8.2 - Factors that would encourage more Internet contacts by Internet users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Respondents</th>
<th>Base: Respondents who are Internet users - Random survey (n=2821)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: the total percentage for all factors that would encourage Internet users to contact government via the Internet more often exceeds 100% as multiple responses were allowed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.2 Encouraging Internet contact among non-Internet users

Non-Internet users were asked what would motivate them to contact government via the Internet. Figure 8.3 shows responses to this question.

Access to the Internet played a key role, with 27% of non-Internet users stating that they may be motivated if they had a computer or Internet access at home, work, school or a library. This is followed by ‘being more familiar with using the Internet/computer in general’ (12%), ‘lower costs for Internet connection’ (9%) among others.
Figure 8.3 – Motivators to encourage more Internet contacts by people who are non-Internet users

% Of respondents

- Having computer/Internet access at home/work/school/library: 27%
- Being more familiar with using the Internet/computer in general: 12%
- Lower costs for Internet connection: 6%
- Better informed of what I can do online: 2%
- Better security when transferring personal information via the Internet: 2%
- Having time available to use computer: 1%
- Easier to find government services: 1%
- Better protection on personal privacy: 1%
- Unlimited Internet access in school/library etc: 1%
- Better website layout/navigating tools: 3%
- None: 49%

Base: Respondents who are Non-Internet users - Random survey (n=1018)

Note: the total percentage for motivating Non-Internet users to use the Internet more to contact government does not necessarily have to be 100% or less, as multiple responses were allowed.

17 This figure indicates key findings only, therefore total of percentages may not equal 100%.
E-government usage

People accessing government via the Internet are no longer a small minority

The Internet is now a mainstream channel of choice for contacting government. The notion that provision of Internet based services is servicing a small segment of the population – for example the 21% of the population identified as Internet users for government contacts by the ABS – is no longer valid. Nearly four in 10 Australian adults – and more than half of all adults who use the Internet – contacted an Australian government department or accessed a service via the Internet in the past 12 months. Investments in Internet service delivery are justified to ensure citizens’ expectations, about what should be available to them via the Internet, are met.

Service complexity and ambiguity appear to be greater determinants of channel use than the service’s sophistication

The sophistication level of a service appeared to be less of a determinant of channel use than the service’s complexity. As a general rule, the more ambiguous a task, the less likely it is to be performed online. Simple tasks like changing address details, or paying registration were often performed online, however more complex tasks were not. When navigating websites, participants claimed that at some stages they had had a query that did not fit any option. This was a similar complaint to the automated telephone routing machines. Sometimes participants felt they “fell into a gap in the system”.

The fact that people choose specific channels for particular tasks has implications for resource allocation and planning

It is clear from the study that complex and ambiguous issues are increasingly being directed to staff operating in face-to-face and telephone environments. This has implications for recruitment and staff training decisions, including the need to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with more and more complex and ambiguous issues. While the Internet is likely to undertake high volume procedures, significant effort will be required to support the high demands on other functions. Information given in all channels must be consistent, supported by the same infrastructure and knowledge base.

E-government users

There is no single e-government user

The study has revealed that while there are significant differences in the profile of e-government users, they cannot be easily typified. This fact creates significant challenges for governments wanting to encourage use of Internet and telephone services. As Internet usage increases, the profile of people using the Internet for government contacts is likely to become even more diverse.

Citizens’ preferences have changed, and will continue to change, over time

Governments spend considerable effort and resources understanding citizens’ attitudes and behaviours. This study has contributed a significant body of knowledge to assist governments to move towards truly citizen-focused service delivery. However, it needs to be recognised that citizens’ preferences
Citizens’ preferences will change over time. Monitoring these changes will need to be borne out in continuing to develop citizen-centric service delivery.

Reasons why people choose e-government

Citizens’ first question is: ‘what’s in it for me?’ The Internet has obvious advantages over other channels, particularly the fact that it can be accessed at any time, from any place with an Internet connection. A high number of respondents nominated cost and time savings and convenience, as significant motivating factors in using the Internet. In future, the Internet’s inherent advantages are unlikely to be sufficient to lure a new generation of e-government users. Once a channel choice has been made, if the transaction has been successful, consumers are likely to show some loyalty to this channel. Governments will need to develop increasingly sophisticated, and compelling arguments to encourage greater Internet use. These include time and cost savings for the citizen in completing the service, faster processing times and added convenience.

Overcoming geographic barriers is a significant motivator for people contacting government via the Internet

The fact that citizens in rural/remote areas were more likely than those in regional centres to contact government via the Internet supports anecdotal evidence that a key feature of the Internet is its ability to overcome geographic isolation. This suggests that people living in rural and remote locations will continue to be important users of e-government services.

Despite this, metropolitan residents remain the highest per capita users of Internet-based services to contact government.

Barriers to greater e-government uptake

Lack of awareness about services available over the Internet is a key limitation on e-government uptake. A significant number of respondents suggested that the reason they did not complete a service online was because they did not realise it could be completed using the Internet. This is linked to the fact that citizens in rural/remote areas were more likely than those in regional centres to contact government via the Internet. The study found, through qualitative investigation, that the Internet was not considered anonymous. Focus group participants were asked which channel was most appropriate for completing ‘anonymous’ tasks, including providing information about problem gambling. Their responses were that the Internet was the channel of last resort. The telephone was widely considered more anonymous than the Internet, with suggestions that reporting in person made the person less likely to be tracked down than if they used the Internet.

The Internet is not seen as an anonymous channel

The study found, through qualitative investigation, that the Internet was not considered anonymous. Focus group participants were asked which channel was most appropriate for completing ‘anonymous’ tasks, including providing information about problem gambling. Their responses were that the Internet was the channel of last resort. The telephone was widely considered more anonymous than the Internet, with suggestions that reporting in person made the person less likely to be tracked down than if they used the Internet.
The Internet is not seen as an accountable channel

The Internet is most often used by people for simple interactions that are highly predictable. One of the reasons for this is the perceived lack of accountability offered by the channel in handling non-standard questions, complaints or comments. A number of focus group participants expressed the view that information submitted via the Internet – excluding payments and transactions – left them feeling that the information had ‘gone into the ether’. While the technology exists for queries and requests to be acknowledged and monitored, it appears that the processes are not currently in place to handle this effectively.

Privacy concerns are real, but should not be overstated

Privacy issues have been an area of intense focus in e-government planning to date. Governments have approached this area sensitively to ensure that citizens retain a high degree of trust in the Internet as a communication channel, and for delivery of government services specifically. To others in the community, privacy concerns are strongly held. However, this study suggests that concerns over privacy are a minor barrier to e-government use.

Satisfaction with e-government services

A significant number of respondents suggested that the reason they did not complete a service online was because they did not realise it could be completed using the Internet.

The telephone was widely considered more anonymous than the Internet, with suggestions that reporting in person made the person less likely to be tracked down than if they used the Internet.

Concerns over privacy are a minor barrier to e-government use.

While the high levels of satisfaction with telephone services are encouraging, it is also likely that this makes the task of migrating people from telephone to Internet based services more challenging. Migration strategies should therefore focus on contacts where satisfaction is lower, including for less sophisticated contacts such as information searches.

While Internet satisfaction is high, expectations of what can be achieved online are lower than for the telephone.

Satisfaction with the Internet was higher than satisfaction for telephone users, although both levels of satisfaction were high. The most common complaint about the Internet’s performance as a government service channel related to the difficulty encountered in finding information, including navigation issues, once users had found the right site. Qualitative evidence suggests that while the high levels of satisfaction with the Internet are encouraging, citizens’ expectations of the Internet are far lower than for other channels. People generally saw the Internet as suitable for simple interactions with government, and attempts to encourage greater use of the Internet for more complex transactions are likely to be difficult.

Significant challenges remain to improve web and telephone service usability

Despite high levels of satisfaction overall, Internet and telephone service usability remains a challenging area. As new and less experienced users migrate to Internet-based services in particular, continuous improvement to search functions and the management and presentation of content will be needed. Governments will also be required to recognise that while Interactive Voice Response technology has its place in customer service centres, a high number of people choose the telephone to speak to a real person and delays in doing so have potential to cause dissatisfaction.
Attempts to migrate all users to the Internet for all government services are too simplistic, and have the potential to reduce uptake over the longer term.

While the high levels of satisfaction with the Internet are encouraging, citizens’ expectations of the Internet are far lower than for other channels.

Existing users are likely to represent a significant source of additional Internet volume.

Targeting repeat and related transactions enables governments to cost-effectively reach people.

Encouraging greater use of e-government services

Citizens will use the Internet because of its inherent advantages

The criteria applied to channel selection vary widely from person to person. The Internet has inherent advantages of time and cost savings. However, citizens find contacts with a high degree of complexity and/or ambiguity difficult to complete over the Internet. This also includes contacts requiring escalation, involving credit cards and requiring anonymity. Citizens indicated that no single avenue to search for information or services would satisfy the broad community.

It appears that existing Internet users can do significantly more via the Internet

A potential source of new e-government demand can be tapped by getting existing users to do more, and more sophisticated transactions with government over the Internet. Only 3% of all people surveyed said all their dealings with government had been via the Internet, and a further 11% perceived that most of their dealings had been with government. In contrast, 24% said that either ‘some’, ‘a few’ or ‘just one contact’ with government had been via the Internet. This group of users is likely to represent a significant source of additional Internet service volume.

Repeat and related transactions offer an opportunity for governments to increase usage

Given that the barriers facing non-Internet users are significant, including issues of infrastructure and skill, there is a significant opportunity to encourage existing e-government users to use the Internet more often, and for more sophisticated contacts.

Targeting repeat and related transactions may prove more convenient to users by pointing them to faster, easier channels for subsequent contacts, and enables governments to cost-effectively reach people that will fuel future demand for e-government services.

Encouraging future use will require a focus on getting the right person, to the right channel, at the right time.

Attempts to migrate all users to the Internet for all government services are too simplistic, and have the potential to reduce uptake over the longer term. Sustainable use recognises that people will use the Internet only when it makes sense to them. Successful long-term efforts will need to focus on providing online services that offer the biggest potential for return on investment to citizens.
10.1 Overview of methodology

The approach to the study measuring Australians’ use of and satisfaction with e-government services consisted of three stages.

The first stage focused on undertaking background research to inform the collection of data in stage two. Specifically this stage included:

- a literature review including overseas and Australian research; and
- a desktop review of over 70 e-government services.

The second stage of the study was data collection. It focused on collecting quantitative data through two telephone surveys and providing further insight into the findings through qualitative focus groups and interviews.

The market research stage consisted of three components:

1. a telephone survey\(^{18}\) of a nationally representative sample of the Australian population to determine usage of e-government services (including Internet and telephone) for each level of government within Australia (referred to as the random survey); and

2. a telephone survey of people who have indicated accessing Government services via the Internet in the past two years\(^{19}\) to explore motivations for using online government services, levels of satisfaction and identify future service delivery expectations (referred to as the re-contact survey); and

3. conducting focus groups to explore the motivations and attitudes related to key findings.

Further information on the surveys and focus groups is provided below.

The third stage of the project involved synthesising and analysing the data collected in stage two to identify key findings, draw out conclusions and form recommendations. Key findings and draft recommendations were tested in workshops with stakeholders as well as through selected interviews. A draft report capturing the analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations was circulated to stakeholders.

Detailed information on data collection, including samples

The national random survey

For this survey a random sample was drawn from the electronic White Pages listings across Australia in order to interview a nationally representative sample, stratified by area with quotas controlled by gender and age. Respondents under 18 years of age were excluded from the survey due to methodological reasons. The sample distribution was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other QLD</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Other SA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>NT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The questionnaire used for the random survey comprised of questions designed to explore the incidence of access to various e-government services. Key issues investigated by the questionnaire related to e-government channels used, current satisfaction levels, and impediments and barriers to continued or increased use of services.

Demographic questions were included as part of the survey to provide information on age, gender, education, respondents' income, household income, occupation, work status, and household composition. The survey questionnaire was drafted with input from stakeholders and piloted twice to ensure its validity, alignment with project objectives, ease of use, and that it was a manageable length.

The random survey was used to provide data informing relative incidences of users and non-users of e-government services. For those respondents not accessing e-government services, impediments and barriers to use of these services were explored.

Survey results are weighted to ABS population data to provide incidence levels representative of the Australian population.

E-government re-contact survey

The second survey focused on respondents who have indicated using online government services in the past year. This survey explored motivations for using online government services, levels of satisfaction levels, and identified future service delivery expectations.

All respondents for this component of the research were recruited from the Roy Morgan Single Source database of individuals who had already completed the Roy Morgan Single Source syndicated survey.

The survey questionnaire was drafted with input from stakeholders and piloted to ensure its validity, alignment with project objectives, ease of use, and that it was a manageable length.

Sample

A sample of known e-government users was drawn from the Roy Morgan Single Source respondent database for the re-contact survey. The sample was stratified by area and controlled through gender and age quotas to ensure it was nationally representative. The sample distribution was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No. of Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW Sydney</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other NSW</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC Melbourne</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other VIC</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD Brisbane</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other QLD</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Perth</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other WA</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA Adelaide</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other SA</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS Hobart</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TAS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT ACT</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT NT</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 Both telephone surveys were conducted using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology and methods.

19 Although the catchment was drawn from people who had accessed a government service by Internet in the past two years, respondents were asked a screening question when re-contacted ‘have you accessed a government service by Internet in the past year?’ In cases where the answer was no, the interview was terminated.
The study conducted interviews with over 2000 users of online government services. This phase of the research drew on a representative sample of the Australian population that had previously accessed a government service by Internet. Usage of government online resources identified via this approach was representative of actual use in the population. This provided confidence that the sample was reflective of the wider Australian population.

Survey results are weighted to ABS population data in order to provide nationally representative information regarding satisfaction with and motivations for using and satisfaction with e-government services.

Focus groups
Four focus groups were conducted to explore further issues of interest arising from the quantitative data collection. The focus groups were conducted across two age groups and regional and metropolitan areas to test the attitudes and opinions of two age segments, as well as to ensure that potential differences between regional and metropolitan citizens are accounted for.

Focus groups were conducted in the following locations:

+ Focus Group 1 (Melbourne) 18-40 year old metropolitan Internet users that rarely or never use the Internet for e-government services

+ Focus Group 2 (Adelaide) 50+ year old metropolitan Internet users that rarely or never use the Internet for e-government services

+ Focus Group 3 (Bunbury, Western Australia) 18-40 year old regional Internet users that rarely or never use the Internet for e-government services

+ Focus Group 4 (Shepparton, Victoria) 50+ year old regional Internet users that rarely or never use the Internet for e-government services

10.2 Terms of reference and project objectives

This project is a study of Australians using government services provided through the Internet and alternate communication technologies (that is, e-government services). It demonstrates and measures the uptake of, and satisfaction with, e-government across all tiers of governments; enabling Australian governments to plan for the future, identify priority areas and deliver more responsive, citizen-centric services.

Project objectives

The project's objectives were to:

1. provide a snapshot of the range of e-government services;

2. provide a snapshot of the uptake of e-government services;

3. profile users and non-users of e-government;

4. study the behaviour of e-government users to understand the way in which users interact with government through the Internet and telephone channels;

5. identify e-government user and non-user segments;

6. identify impediments and barriers to e-government use; and

7. measure user satisfaction with e-government services and identify possible future service delivery expectations.
The project focused on citizens’ e-government use and satisfaction, rather than business use and satisfaction.

10.3 A guide to definitions and terms used in this report

The following definitions have been used throughout this report:

**Total Australian adult population**

Represents all Australians over the age of 18 (from which the random and re-contact samples were drawn). To derive this figure the sample used for this study is weighted against ABS data. The sample was based on three sampling parameters: age, gender, and geography.

**Total Australian adult Internet population**

Represents all Australians over the age of 18 who identified themselves as having used the Internet at least once in the past year.

**Respondents versus contacts**

Citizens surveyed as part of the study are referred to in the report as ‘respondents’ (that is, people who responded to one of the two surveys). As part of the study, people were asked to nominate up to three specific contacts they had with government in the past 12 months. Where the report refers to percentages of total ‘contacts’ with government, the corresponding figures relate to a percentage of all contacts nominated as part of the study rather than a percentage of all people interviewed as part of the study.

**E-government users**

Refers to people who have accessed a government service via the Internet or the telephone.

**Sophistication of services**

Services were classified into three levels of sophistication: an exchange of information is considered the most sophisticated and those where people are seeking information only is considered the least sophisticated. Falling between these two points are services where people provide information (but do not receive information). Where the report refers to the most sophisticated services, it refers to dealings that involve an exchange of information.