

A hand holding a smartphone, with a blurred city background and red graphic elements (concentric circles and horizontal bars) in the upper right corner.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INTEGRATED DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

A Digital Moment, a Human Opportunity

The relationship between government and its constituents is always changing. As government strives to serve the greater good, it must stay relevant to the people it serves. With so many consumer experiences available online, so too do people expect government services to exist online.

Today, we can order a new pair of shoes online, know where they are every step of the way and have them show up on the front porch in two days. People expect that same level of speed and responsiveness from government services. They expect the same fast load times, the same seamless experiences across devices and the same useful tailored content they get elsewhere on the web. And along with all of that, they expect top-of-the-line privacy, security and accessibility from their government.

The passage of the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (IDEA) represents an important step in government's challenge to adopt new technologies and deliver citizens an omnichannel experience. The IDEA requires that public-facing agency websites, intranets and forms have a consistent look and are compliant with the web standards developed by the General Services Administration (GSA). The goal is to enhance citizens' overall online experience with government services and improve accessibility and consistency.

This marks a critical moment for the digital transformation of federal agencies — and a moment of great opportunity.

How many taxpayer dollars can we save by answering constituents' questions before they even have to ask based on data-driven

feedback loops? How many people can be better served if their tax filing is linked to notifications about the programs they are eligible for? How many citizens can we reach by sending an invitation to an event or meeting on a topic we know they're interested in based on their prior engagement?

It's in every government's best interest to meet the requirements of the 21st Century IDEA, and then quickly work to surpass those standards. But technology alone does not fuel progress. It's the human interaction with technology — how we use it and apply it — that fuels progress and rapid change.

Here at Granicus, we're eager to help. We craft human-centered, digital-first experiences to balance government priorities with people's needs and behaviors. Those strategies are what ultimately lead to audience growth, better engagement and more data to inform future plans and content.

A human-centered, strategy-first mindset will drive improved government services, today and into the future. This approach is achievable for governments at all levels. When agencies empathize with their audience to understand what they need and how they can best reach them, they can maximize that knowledge to form a cohesive strategy — and move from baseline services into a world of limitless digital potential, for government and its citizens.



– *Angy Peterson, Vice President,
Digital Engagement Services,
Granicus*

The New Standard

Before the 21st Century IDEA was signed into law, you may have been well on your way to ensuring you connected digitally to citizens. But it is important to know what the law requires.

The 21st Century IDEA requires that federal agencies maintain online and mobile-friendly versions of every in-person or paper-based government process — promoting digital forms, e-signatures, and online services. It also will require that public-facing agency websites have a “consistent look” and are compliant with the web standards developed by the Technology Transformation Service of the General Services Administration. Finally, it requires that the websites are easy to use and accessible to people with disabilities.

Within a year of the law’s enactment, the head of each executive agency must review their website or digital services and submit a report to Congress with estimated costs and a projected schedule to modernize their digital offerings. Many in government are using these mandates and this timeline as a powerful tool for change for better online services.

Here are other quotes, findings and statistics that further give context to the need for the 21st Century IDEA.

Meeting Citizens Where They Are

“I’m confident that federal agencies will meet the requirements that are in this bill. Success will be the American citizen feeling that there is no difference between interacting with the private sector and government.”

- Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif, who introduced the act in May 2018



48% of respondents to a Granicus survey said **a lack of digital tools** for reaching and engaging citizens was their top technology challenge.



There were 3.62 billion visits over the past 90 days to federal websites. **47% of them were on mobile.**



The federal government maintains around **23,000 forms** that are used to carry out its essential functions and provide critical services and benefits.

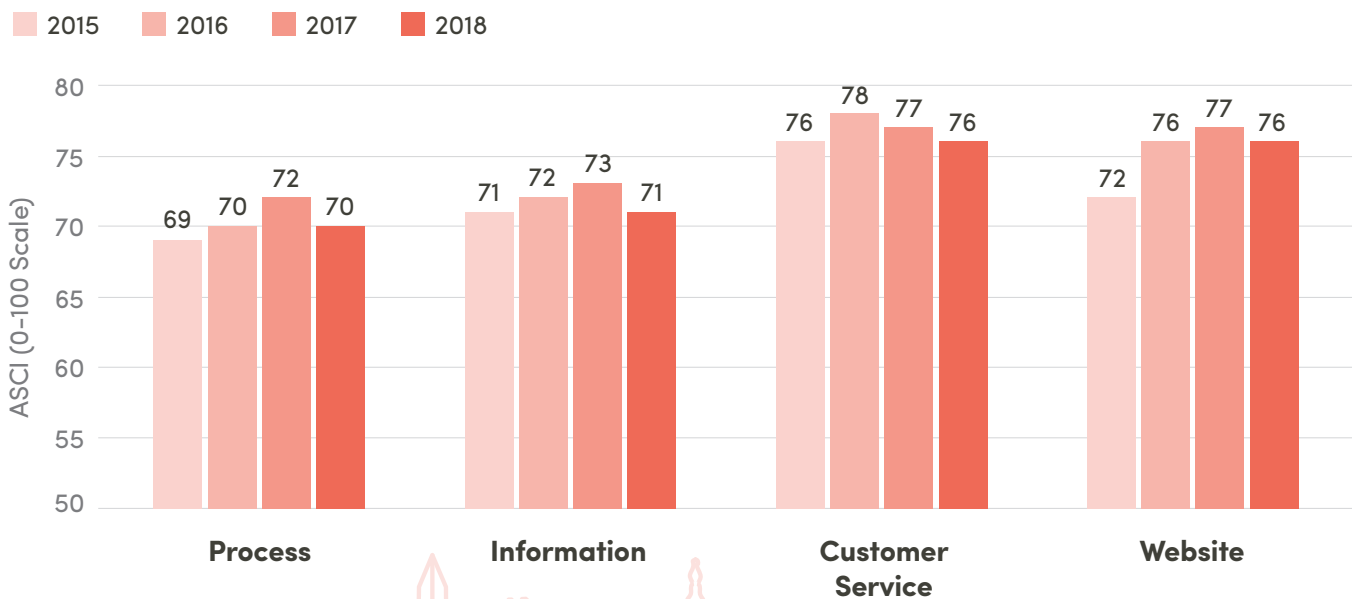
Are Citizens Satisfied?

The 2018 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Federal Government Report measures citizen satisfaction with government agencies across key indicators. The chart below measures the timeliness and efficiency of government processes, the clarity and accessibility of the information received from agencies, the quality of federal websites and the courtesy and professionalism of customer service personnel.

According to the 2018 ASCI Report, “Following two consecutive years of improvement, citizen satisfaction with U.S. federal government services retreats slightly in 2018, down 1.1% to 68.9 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index’s (ACSI®) 100-point scale. The drop is relatively small, however, and satisfaction remains at its second-highest level since 2008.”

They also cite that “The Departments of Defense (78) and the Interior (78) lead the way for citizen satisfaction, achieving scores that exceed the economy-wide ACSI national average (77.0 as of Q3 2018). The Departments of Commerce (74), Justice (73), and State (73) come in just slightly lower than that average, but still offer satisfaction well above the federal government-wide score of 68.9 and comparable to many private sector firms.”

Measuring Citizen Satisfaction With Government



The Need for Efficient Service Delivery

“Government in the 21st century is fundamentally a services business, and modern information technology should be at the heart of the U.S. government service delivery model.”

– An excerpt from *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations*



The need to manually process forms leads to more than **11.4 billion hours of paperwork annually**, as well as a negative user experience.



The average cost of serving a citizen in person is \$14, the average cost of serving a citizen through a call center is \$7 and **the average cost of serving a citizen online is 10 cents.**

21st Century IDEA Act Checklist

June 20, 2019



Electronic Signatures

Submit plan to Congress and OMB to accelerate electronic signatures, receive guidance from OMB on process to prioritize services to digitize.

- Increased efficiency
- Faster time to service
- Improved processes

December 20, 2019



Website Modernization

Ensure new and redesigned federal websites meet modern standards.

- Accessible to those with disabilities
- Consistent in appearance
- Industry standards for security
- Mobile-friendly
- User-centric

December 20, 2020



Digitize Government Services and Forms

Digitize new and existing forms and access non-digital processes.

- Web-based
- Mobile-friendly
- Personalized
- Non-duplicative

4 Steps to Delivering a Modern Digital Experience

Going digital is less about moving all your paper processes online and more about reimagining the way you do business, including streamlining your workflows and using a citizen-first mindset. Here are four critical ways you can improve your digital presence to better serve your constituents.

1. Make your website citizen-focused.
2. Transition from paper-based processes.
3. Concentrate on online service delivery.
4. Increase proactive communications.

1

Make your website citizen-focused.

Citizens have come to expect the same effortless experiences they do with private sector website design. Specifically, government websites must include navigation with search capability, prominently feature most-used services, offer personalized experiences based on geography and more.

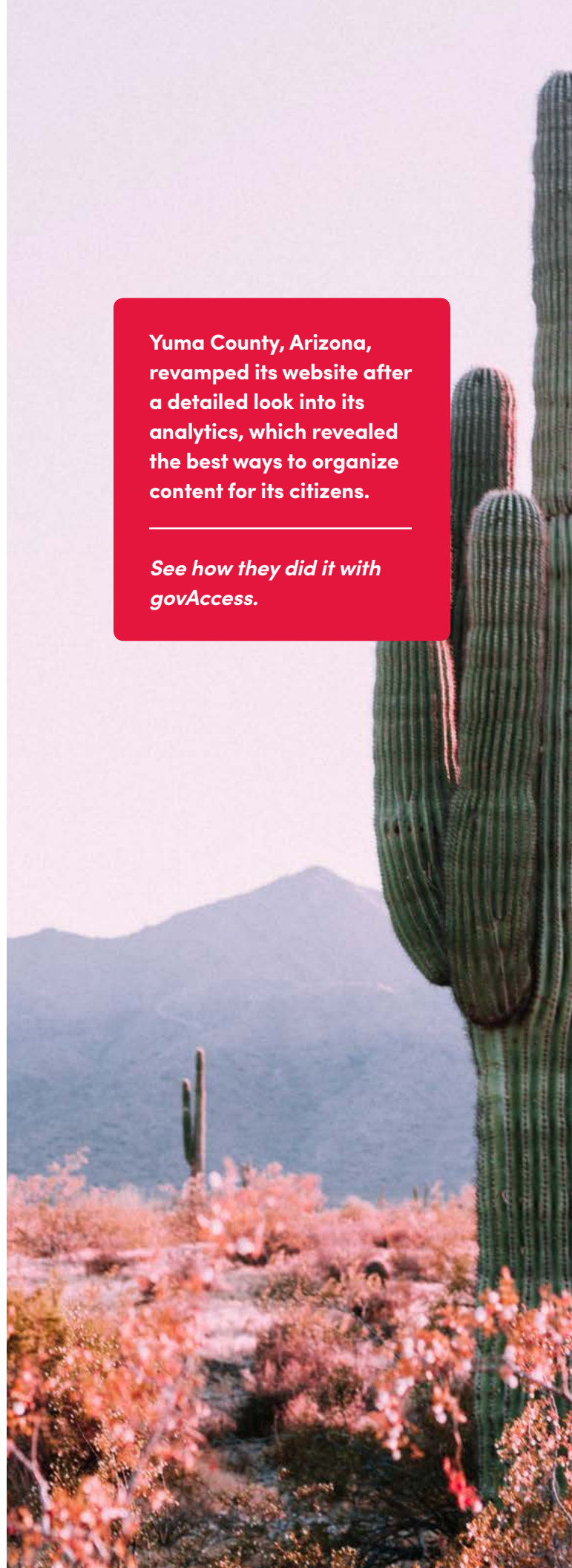
Unlike those in the private sector, government website design must be inclusive of all citizens, which includes people of every demographic. While private sector websites can afford to hyper focus on individuals, government website designers must consider how to serve all people, including those with disabilities. As a result, the most progressive government website designs include citizen-first information delivery, focusing on the most common tasks first, and full digital interaction replacing the need for in person visits, all while delivering mobile-friendly, responsive design, secure data and accessible information.

Additionally, half of all traffic to government websites is on mobile devices – and as more citizens demand on-the-go access to government services, this number is expected to rise sharply. Knowing this, public sector organizations are enhancing their websites to be mobile-friendly, which means that the site adapts to a mobile screen, is accessible and readable, and provides a simpler navigation.

Public sector websites that are informed by data and meet the criteria for citizen-driven design elements lead to higher citizen satisfaction and engagement.

Yuma County, Arizona, revamped its website after a detailed look into its analytics, which revealed the best ways to organize content for its citizens.

See how they did it with govAccess.



2

Transition from paper-based processes.

Every year, the federal government goes through 12.1 trillion sheets of paper – that’s billions of dollars spent on paper management alone.

In a digitally powered and experience-driven world, governments are feeling the mounting pressures of increased citizen demand for better online services. Seamless digital experiences must become the norm, and paper-based processes need to become a thing of the past.

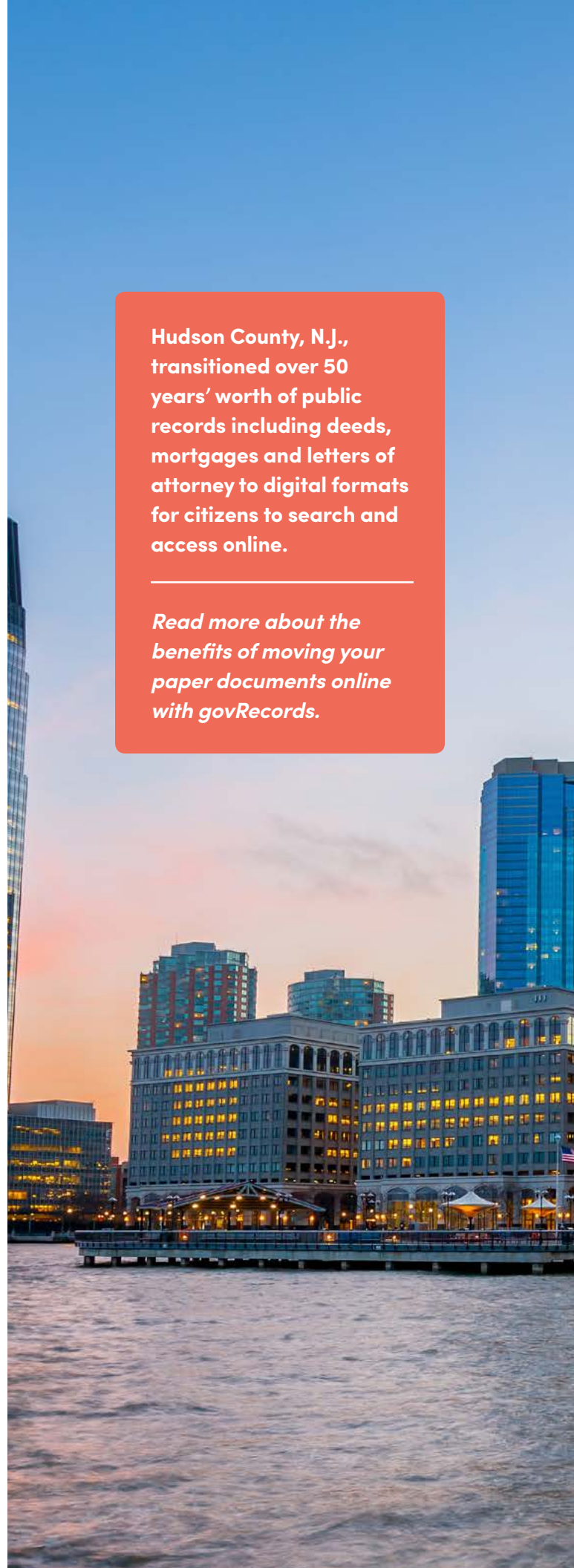
But how can you eliminate the need to manually complete, scan, mail in and process forms through the traditional paper shuffle? By going fully digital. In doing so, you not only save precious resources and employee time, you also restore your citizens’ confidence in government operations.

Many government forms are complex and involve multiple steps. Going paperless allows agencies the opportunity to improve operations within their departments and stay more organized and connected. Putting forms on a single workflow-enabled platform can create a more efficient and centralized management system, eliminating a multi-step and complex process that travels throughout different departments.

Focus on taking mission-critical forms and making sure they are optimized for mobile devices. This includes having options like pre-filling a form with user information, document attachment features and e-signatures. This ensures greater user experience that will make navigating the digital platform and online payments successful.

Hudson County, N.J., transitioned over 50 years’ worth of public records including deeds, mortgages and letters of attorney to digital formats for citizens to search and access online.

Read more about the benefits of moving your paper documents online with govRecords.



3

Concentrate on online service delivery.

Improving customer service is a priority for many government agencies, and for good reason. When agencies provide exceptional service, constituents are more likely to find information they need, access valuable public services and further engage with government. Plus, cohesive service strategies and delivery can help agencies cut time, money and labor costs.

And today, improving customer service means delivering excellent citizen services online. Building critical technology infrastructure along with the skill level of agency staff enables the delivery of solutions that demonstrate results and ensure public trust. And automation of these services ensures the staff have accurate task lists and follow-up procedures.

Government agencies are providing more services and information to users every day. The requirement for continued expansion of online services, accessibility requirements for multiple devices and innovative solutions is a constantly moving target. Utilizing best practices and developing a strong delivery plan creates a thriving development environment that provides great experiences to users, creates a strong agency brand and enables staff to be effective.



The London Borough of Bexley in the U.K. transformed its customer services by enabling the public to access over 100 services online. As a result, over 1,800 self-service requests are made per month and 30% of waste and recycling transactions are now completed via self-service.

Learn about Granicus' Civic Engagement Platform.

4

Increase proactive communications.

The private sector may take for granted that effective communication is a mission-critical function. It's a matter of survival. If a company has a good product or service, but doesn't proactively communicate about it to potential users, the company goes under. It's that simple.

In the public sector, the value of good communication is harder to measure, but effective communication is similarly mission-critical. If government digitizes everything but doesn't let citizens know there are new, improved ways to accomplish the task, then they have failed in their mission.

The only way to transition people to digital is to tell them again and again through a variety of channels, and be proactive and strategic in your communications. And government needs to do this now more than ever. Government communications must drive action – to get citizens involved, participate in the civic process, understand what support is available to them, pay for services, apply for permits and so much more.

Proactive communication strategies improve the citizen experience. Governments that actively respond to their constituents ultimately develop effective methods for successfully engaging with them long-term and achieving a strategic mission, like the VA in supporting veterans, or the IRS in collecting taxes.

Technology has made reaching the public with your message more effective and efficient than ever, but as you plan your communications strategy, you still need to make sure that your organization is leveraging the right channels to create true mission value.



By using cloud-based communications software enabling one-to-many messaging via email, text message and social, the Department of Veterans Affairs was able to reach more than 500,000 veterans and send them targeted information on employment, health care and support.

Discover how proactive communications can impact your mission.

What's Next?

"I wanted to make sure that when every American interacts with their government, they have a positive experience," said Rep. Ro Khanna, who introduced the IDEA legislation in May 2018.

"Too many folks felt their experiences with government were outdated and not user-friendly; websites felt clunky, forms needed to be printed out, signed and then faxed. This legislation will facilitate the processes that the federal workforce uses to serve citizens and streamline interactions that Americans have with their government."

Citizens today expect seamless digital experiences. They expect forms to be automated. They need submission to be digital. They want status to be retrievable. They need confirmation to be recorded and their payments to be reliable and secure.

All of this change requires much more than just a shift in tools (better government website design, digital communications and legislative management) and processes; it requires a shift in culture that puts citizen-customers first.

Every day, Granicus helps organizations at all levels of government in the U.S., Canada, U.K. and Europe become more transparent with their information, more efficient in their workflows and more engaging with the public. Granicus is the industry's leading cloud-based solution for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 4,200 public sector organizations.

With Granicus, governments can quickly enhance the citizen experience by offering an end-to-end platform where citizens can access information, gain meaningful insight into policymaking and engage in programs and service that enhance their lives.

As the ways, attitudes and technologies that government uses to best serve their citizens change and shift, Granicus is here to help you and your agency.

For more information, head to [granicus.com/see-it-live](https://www.granicus.com/see-it-live).



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