OPTIMIZING YOUR WEBSITE TO SERVE AND ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

An Analysis of Top Tasks Performed on County Websites

GRANICUS

INTRODUCTION

The public's digital expectations are growing at a rapid rate, pushed forward by the private sector. Today, citizens not only expect a government website to be beautiful, but also easy to navigate and intuitive to use – after all, people visit government websites to complete tasks.

To keep pace with your community's needs, it's imperative to take a task-oriented approach to website design. To help you get started, we analyzed 29 county websites to identify the most common tasks and how they differ by device. The following report provides insights into how you can optimize tasks on your county website to improve users' digital experiences and drive greater engagement.

A TASK DEFINED

For the purposes of this study, a task is defined as any digital interaction a user has with a county website. This may include completing transactions like making online payments, or simply finding information like the trash schedule.

About the Data

The metrics in this report are based on annual data of 29 counties that use Granicus' website solutions. The data was obtained by looking at the top 40 pages visited per county using Google Analytics. The top pages visited were segmented by device, and a manual content analysis was conducted to group terms and extract top tasks.

TOP TASKS DIFFER BY DEVICE

Our data reveals that top tasks differ by device, especially when comparing desktop and smartphone. Additionally, more than 40% of county website traffic comes from a mobile device – a percentage that is only expected to grow as populations become increasingly mobile.

To optimize mobile users' experience, it's important to identify pages with high mobile traffic and ensure tasks are quick and easy to accomplish.
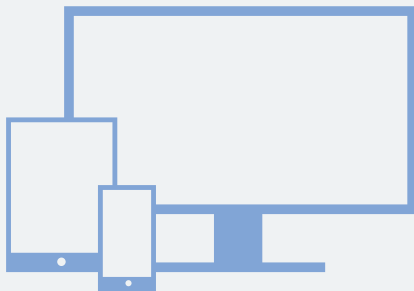
DEVICE USAGE DEFINED

For the purposes of this study, device usage refers to the percentage of visitors who access a website from their desktop, smartphone or tablet.

41% of county website traffic comes from a mobile device.

Key Takeaways

✓ Tasks that require more time like paying property taxes, requesting vital records or looking for a job are most frequently completed on a desktop.

✓ Quick tasks like looking up county jail information or finding a local park are most common on a mobile device.

✓ Several tasks are unique to specific devices, such as: marriage licenses and emergency information (smartphone), library (tablet), and building permits (desktop).

✓ Paying property taxes is the top task on all devices, but is most common on a desktop.

> Time intensive tasks are typically performed on a desktop, while quick tasks are most common on a mobile device.

TOP TASKS DIFFER BY DEVICE

Tasks	Desktop	Smartphone	Tablet
Find information on or pay property taxes	19%	12%	15%
Access GIS information	13%	6%	12%
Perform tasks with the courts (circuit, superior, district)	12%	12%	11%
Contact the sheriff's office	11%	10%	10%
Look for a job	9%	8%	7%
Request vital records	8%	3%	6%
Look up county clerk information	6%	8%	5%
Access information about health and human services	5%	%	3%
Look up jail information	5%	9%	5%
Make an online payment	4%	3%	5%
Find information about parks and rec programs	4%	8%	7%
Look up county board information	3%	2%	3%
Apply for building permits	2%	---	---
Look up information about waste and recycling	---	6%	5%
Apply for / request certified copy of marriage license	---	4%	---
Look up election information	---	3%	4%
Contact animal services or adopt a pet	---	2%	2%
Look up emergency information	---	2%	---
Find information about the library	---	---	2%
	100%	100%	100%

*Percentages in **green** represent tasks that are significantly most common by device, while those in **red** represent tasks that are significantly least common by device.*

TOP 10 DESKTOP TASKS

Tasks that are more time-intensive, easier to complete with a large screen or require uploading or downloading documents are more frequently completed on a desktop. Such tasks include finding information on or paying property taxes, accessing GIS information, looking for a job, and requesting vital records.

1 Find information on or pay property taxes

2 Access GIS information

3 Perform tasks with the courts (circuit, superior, district)

4 Contact the sheriff's office

5 Look for a job

6 Request vital records

7 Look up county clerk information

8 Access information about health and human services

9 Look up jail information

10 Make an online payment

Paying property taxes is significantly most common on a desktop.

SETTING THE STANDARD

MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA
www.mendocinocounty.org

Mendocino County features prominent homepage buttons linking to the most common tasks, along with a service finder tool to make it easier for citizens to find what they need in just a few clicks.

TOP 10 TABLET TASKS

While a tablet is considered a mobile device, its user experience may be more comparable to that of a desktop for more time intensive tasks. For example, tasks related to property taxes, GIS information, courts, and the sheriff's office top the list for both tablet and desktop.

However, tablet also shares several top tasks with smartphones that are absent on desktop, such as looking up information about waste and recycling. Also, parks and recreation tasks rank significantly higher on tablet and smartphone than desktop.

1 Find information on or pay property taxes

2 Access GIS information

3 Perform tasks with the courts (circuit, superior, district)

4 Contact the sheriff's office

5 Find information about parks and recreation programs

6 Look for a job

7 Request vital records

8 Make an online payment

9 Look up jail information

**10** Look up information about waste and recycling

Tablet shares top tasks with both desktop (property taxes, GIS) and smartphone (parks and rec, waste and recycling).

SETTING THE STANDARD

COLUMBIA COUNTY, GA

www.columbiacountyga.gov

With a focus on the customer journey, Columbia County groups resources to make it easier for citizens to find and complete more complex tasks like starting a business or moving to the county.
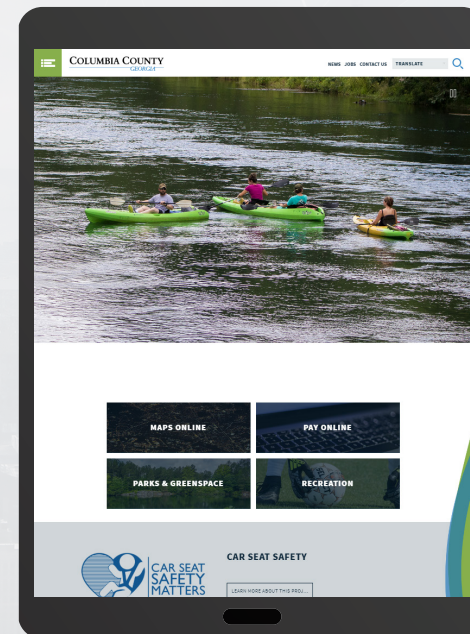
TOP 10 SMARTPHONE TASKS

Tasks that are more likely to be performed on-the-go, such as finding county jail information (i.e.: address, visiting hours, inmate information), looking up parks and recreation programs, or contacting the county clerk are most common on a smartphone.

1. Find information on or pay property taxes

2. Perform tasks with the courts (circuit, superior, district)

3. Contact the sheriff's office

4. Look up jail information

5. Find information about parks and recreation programs

6. Look for a job

7. Look up county clerk information

8. Look up information about waste and recycling

9. Access GIS information

10. Apply for / request certified copy of marriage license

Looking up county jail information is significantly most common on a smartphone.

SETTING THE STANDARD

CARVER COUNTY, MN
www.co.carver.mn.us

Carver County features an app-like mobile homepage view to enhance user experience and make navigation more intuitive. This unique mobile view also features top tasks from a mobile device.
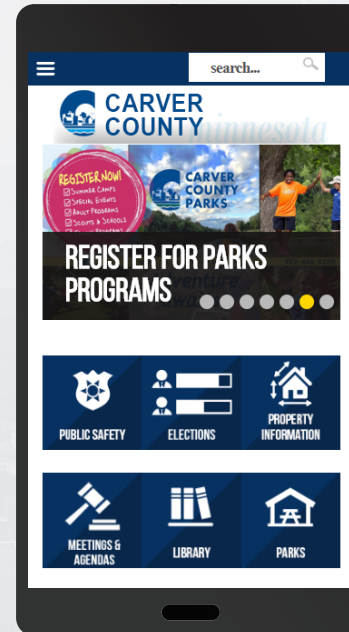
SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

Thanks to website analytics, you no longer have to guess how your county is using your website. While this report provides a great benchmark for top county tasks, we recommend that you analyze your community's unique digital needs and optimize your website accordingly.

Here are a few tips to get you started:

Consider the Customer Journey

As you look to optimize your website, consider the full customer journey to understand how people find information and complete tasks, and how this experience may differ by device. For example, if someone is looking up court information from a mobile device, they are likely searching for on-the-go details like address or phone number, so make sure contact information is prominently featured toward the top of the page.

Get Inspired by the Private Sector

Citizens have come to expect the same seamless experience on every website and from every device – so take a cue from our counterparts in the private sector. Use Amazon-inspired navigation to make it quick and easy for users to find information and complete tasks.

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

Use Analytics to Optimize Performance

While there are a number of website analytics tools available, the most common is Google Analytics. Not only is it powerful, but it's free and fairly easy to setup. Simply register an account with Google and insert the Google Analytics code on your website – then watch the data pour in. Look at the top pages visited by device and optimize the experience for your users.

Create a Unique Mobile Experience

To keep pace with mobile growth trends, invest in mobile-responsive website design. To make navigation more intuitive from a mobile device, build an app-like interface for your mobile website with large icons and quick links to the top mobile tasks.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Granicus has partnered with more than 800 leading government agencies to design, develop and host their websites. Through these partnerships we continuously evolve our processes to help YOU create a superior digital customer experiences. With Granicus you can expect:

A citizen-focused project approach that starts with research into how your website visitors want to engage with you and what services and information is most important to them.

Progressive mobile web design and a CMS solution that ensures an ongoing focus on creating a mobile-first experience.

A seamlessly integrated suite of citizen-facing solutions for communicating and engaging with your citizens digitally.

Ongoing support and continuous improvement to ensure your website evolves with customer expectations.

A CMS solution that helps you maintain superior customer experience long after the launch of your website.

READY TO TAKE YOUR WEBSITE TO THE NEXT LEVEL?

Transform your website into a digital service portal. Contact us today for a free consultation at info@granicus.com.

ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology and services that empower government organizations to create seamless digital experiences for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, content management, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to over 4,000 public sector organizations, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. Granicus products connect more than 185 million people, creating a powerful network to enhance citizen engagement. By optimizing decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government see better outcomes and a greater impact for the citizens they serve.

For more information, visit granicus.com.