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2024 WEBSITE TRENDS BENCHMARK REPORT

A Focus on Improving Access and Ease of Use
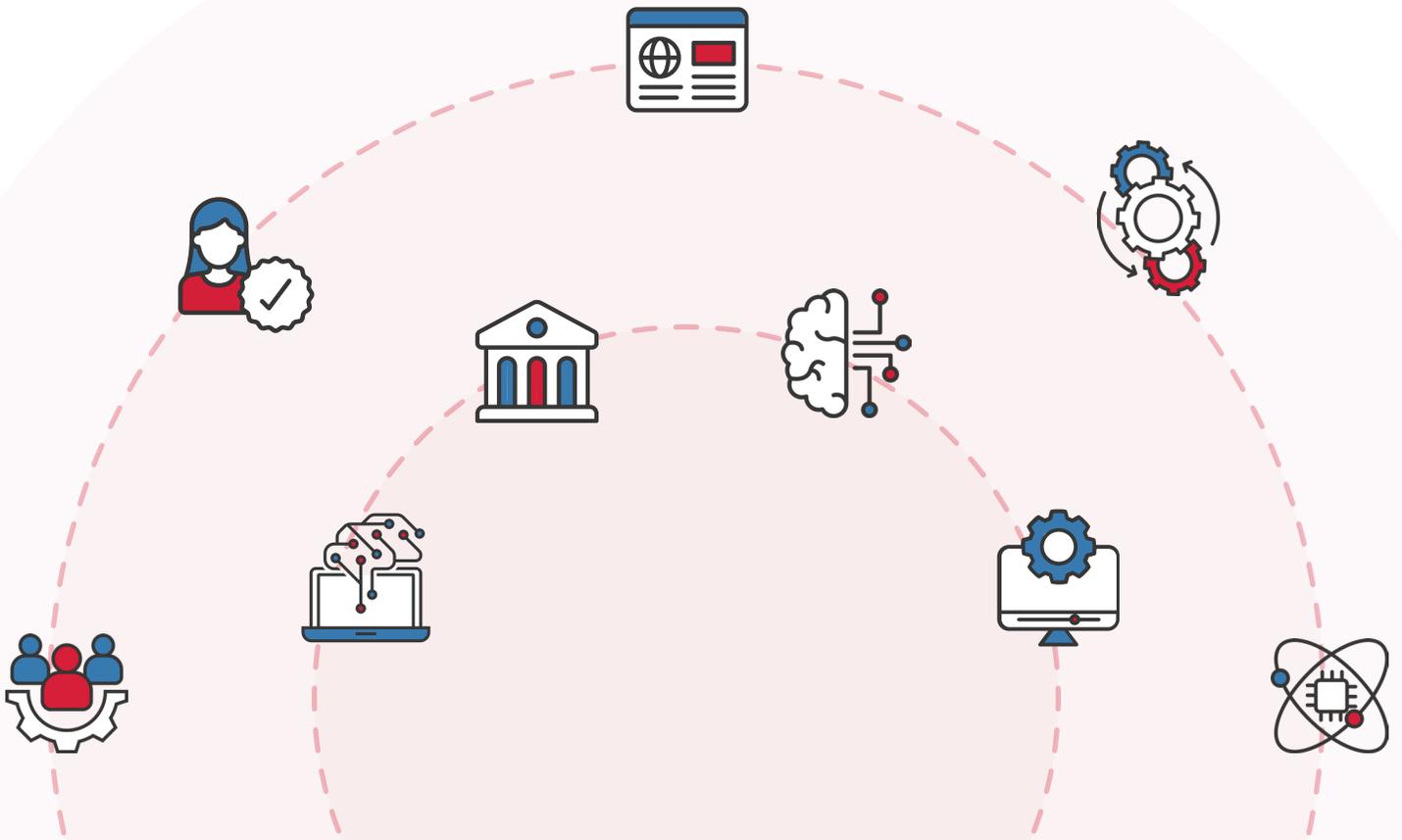
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Overview

Websites continued to play a critical role in digital government in 2024 as the front door of any organization's digital presence. Government websites provide important information, connect communities to vital services and programs, and create the public-facing image of an organization's mission and goals. In the last year, Granicus' website solutions powered information hubs that:

- Served nearly **950 agency departments.**

- Reached more than **350 million citizens.**

- Received a combined **131 million visits per day, 3.2 billion visits per month, and 48 billion visits for the year.**

These numbers reflect the enduring importance of websites as the central information hub for many communities and the foundation for service delivery, communications, and engagement efforts. Granicus surveyed governmental website staff to gain a better understanding about issues they face and the impact of those website experiences. The results show the ways that digital technology is changing interaction with government and the opportunities to build even more dynamic experiences for all communities.
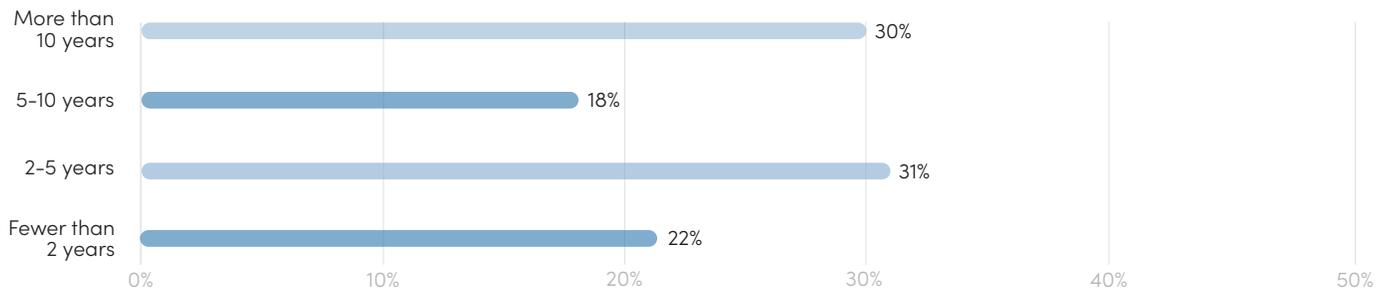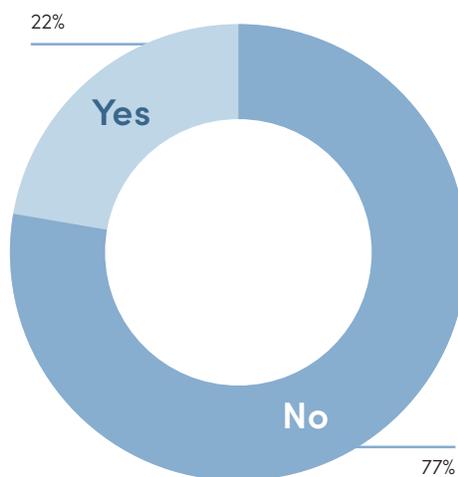
Staffing Resources

How many employees are on the team?

22%	32%	24%	23%
1	2–3	4–10	More than 10

How long have you served in your role?

More than 10 years	30%
5–10 years	18%
2–5 years	31%
Fewer than 2 years	22%

Do you have dedicated staff for customer experience or customer journey?

- Yes — 22%
- No — 77%

> Staff dedicated to building the public digital experience through their organization's websites continue to be compact groups, **with more than 50% of respondents stating that their staff comprises fewer than four employees.**

An interesting dichotomy presents itself when looking at the longevity of staff. While 30% of respondents have worked in their role for more than a decade, more than half have been in their role for fewer than five years. This suggests that for many organizations, the opportunity exists to combine institutional knowledge gained over years of experience with new and innovative approaches to achieving goals.

Nonetheless, despite both the larger sized staffs and balance of experiences, more than three-quarters of those surveyed reported that they do not have staff dedicated to customer experience (CX), a field that has been proven in recent years to be an important consideration to creating digital experiences that drive positive organizational outcomes.
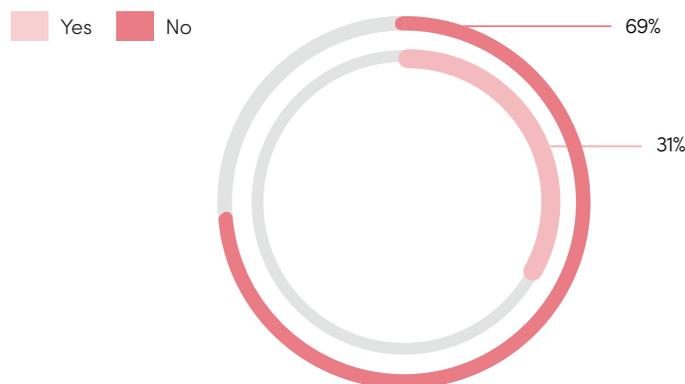
Audience Behavior

What topic pages are most frequently visited on the website?

- Public events — 64%
- Contact info — 62%
- Public development projects — 34%
- Service awareness — 32%
- Crime — 15%

What subject areas are most popular with users during account sign-up?

- Public events — 54%
- Programs and services — 44%
- Contact info — 42%
- Council meetings — 42%
- Permitting and licensing — 31%

Does your website include features aimed at user personalization?

Yes   No

69%

31%

For most government websites, serving the needs of community users is the most important purpose. Therefore, understanding what topics users seek information on the most becomes critical to achieving that goal. Based on responses from Granicus' survey, many website teams have a strong understanding of those issues.

However, with more than two-thirds of respondents stating that their website has no features aimed at user personalization, **many websites can be improved to make a more positive experience for users.**

Coupled with the previous responses showing a lack of CX focus, this suggests that websites that struggle to achieve their informational and engagement goals should consider looking into ways to create better experiences for their users.
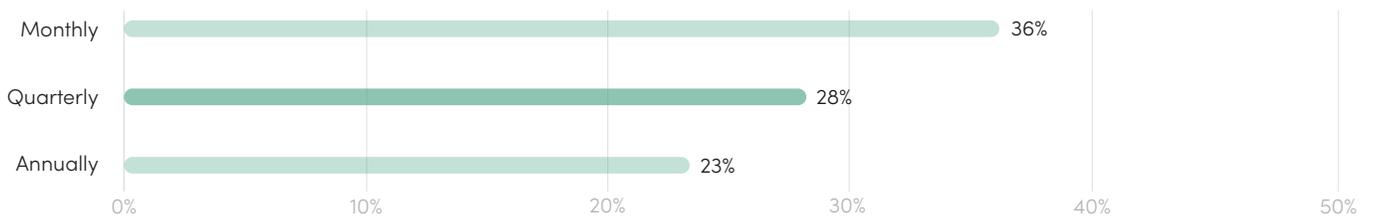
Reporting and Accessibility

**Does your organization have a policy in place for ongoing website testing?**

31%

Yes

69%

No

If yes, how frequently does this group report testing results?

Monthly	36%
Quarterly	28%
Annually	23%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

How frequently do you implement recommendations from review?

53%
Immediately

8%
The next month

18%
The next dev cycle

8%
Annually

Do you or a team have a set schedule for website usability review?

25%

Yes

No

75%
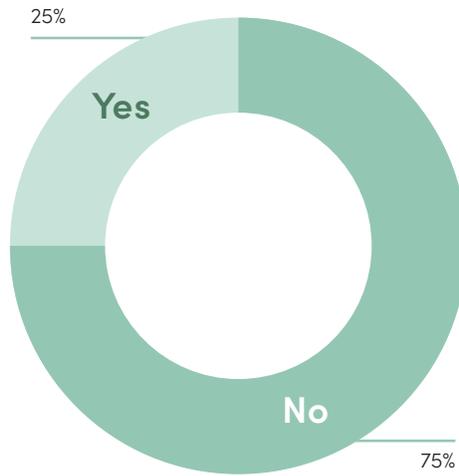
If yes, how frequently do you review website usability?

	44%		31%		15%
	Monthly		Quarterly		Annually
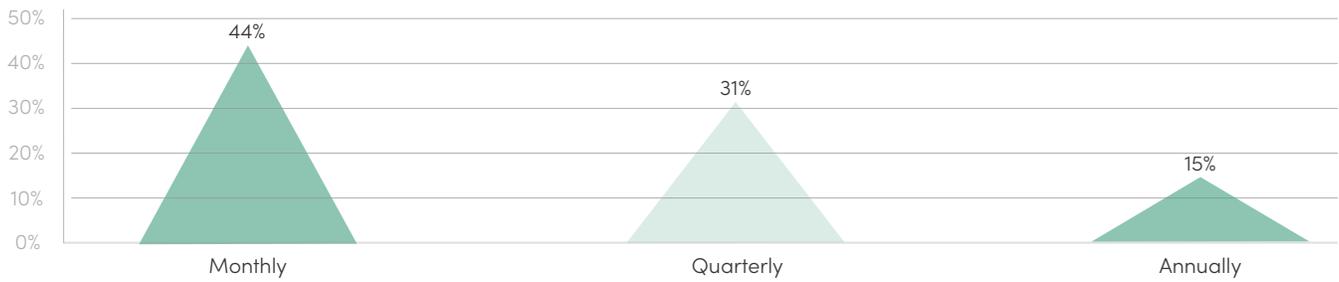
How do you maintain accessibility on your government website?

35%	34%	19%	12%
As found by staff	Automated review reports	When notified by users	Other
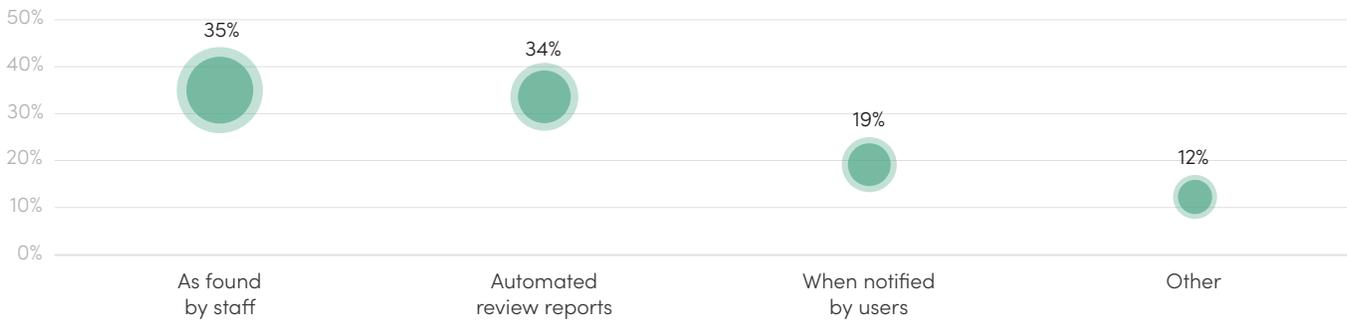
Understanding how a website is performing is important to determining how best to achieve organizational goals and providing immediate awareness of issues with accessibility. With an increased emphasis on making websites at all levels of government ADA-compliant, accessibility and usability require greater attention than ever before. However, the results of the Granicus survey suggest that many organizations have not systematized these crucial reviews into their workflow, with 69% stating that their organization does not have a policy for ongoing website testing and 75% having no scheduled usability reviews.

Those who have systems in place clearly recognize the need to take swift action on feedback from this reporting, as more than half of respondents stated that they immediately implement changes from review. However, when it comes to accessibility issues, nearly half of respondents require notifications of maintenance issues to come from users or internal staff discovery.
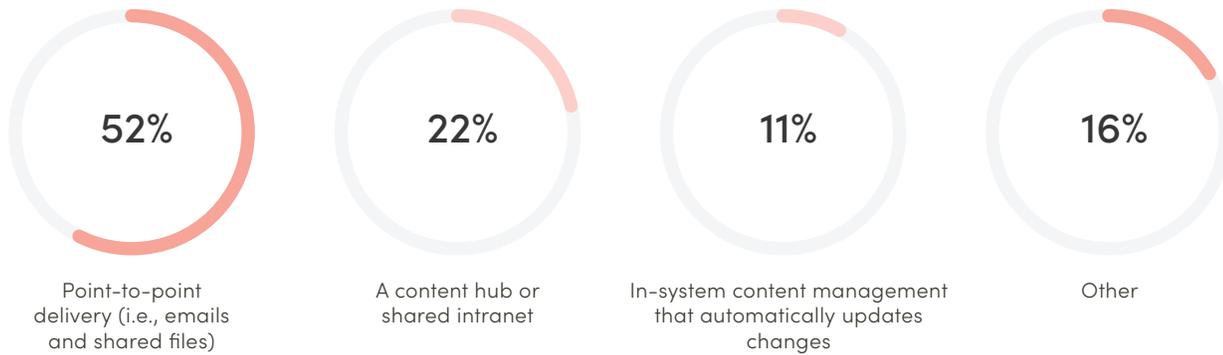
Automated review systems — **embraced by 34% of the respondents** — can help more easily catch accessibility issues on webpages before they can become issues with potential legal or financial jeopardy attached.

Content sharing is still strongly point-to-point (53%) versus hub or intranet (21%). Relying on point-to-point file sharing — such as sending individual files for editing or review by email — can create issues with accurate versioning and lead to unforeseen errors showing up on final webpages. Using a content file hub or an internal intranet system alleviates many of these problems, but only if proper check-in/out procedures or other versioning considerations are part of the process.
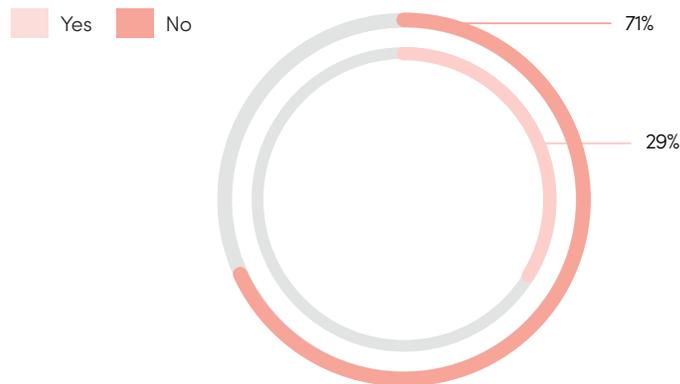
The most effective way for diverse groups and teams to efficiently share files for websites is in a local or cloud-based content management system (CMS). However, only 9% of survey respondents stated that they use such a system. Among the 17% who selected "other" as their form of file sharing, almost all responded that they don't have cross-departmental sharing as part of their production process. This could suggest that expertise and collaboration between departments are not being leveraged during website content creation.

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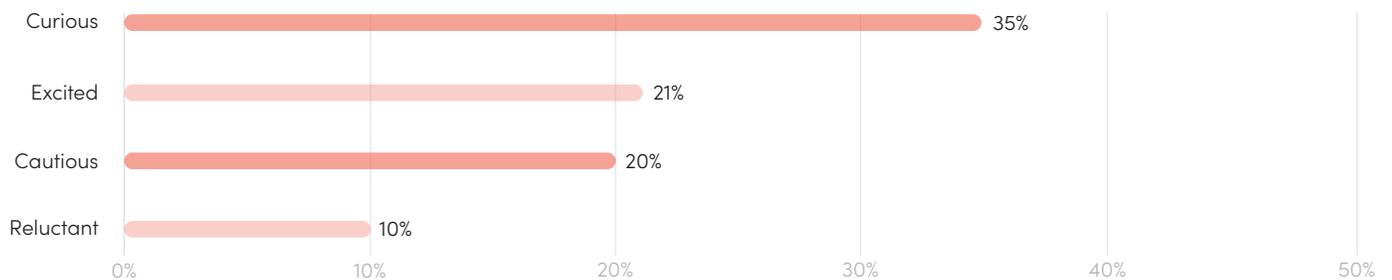# Technological Growth

**What process do you have for cross-departmental content management?**

52%	22%	11%	16%
Point-to-point delivery (i.e., emails and shared files)	A content hub or shared intranet	In-system content management that automatically updates changes	Other

Are you currently using AI in your organization?

Yes   No

71%

29%

How do you feel about using AI? (Top selections)

Curious	35%
Excited	21%
Cautious	20%
Reluctant	10%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

Do you think AI will have a big impact on government operations?
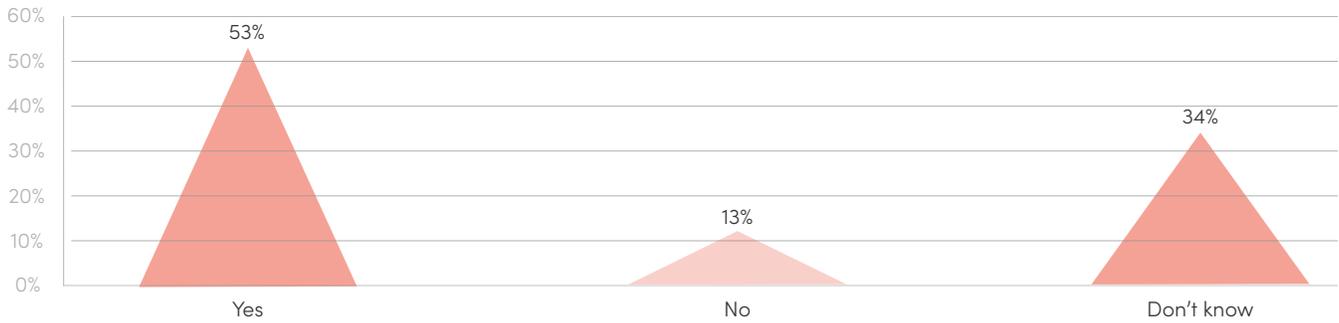
Which organizational tasks do you think AI would benefit? (Top selections)
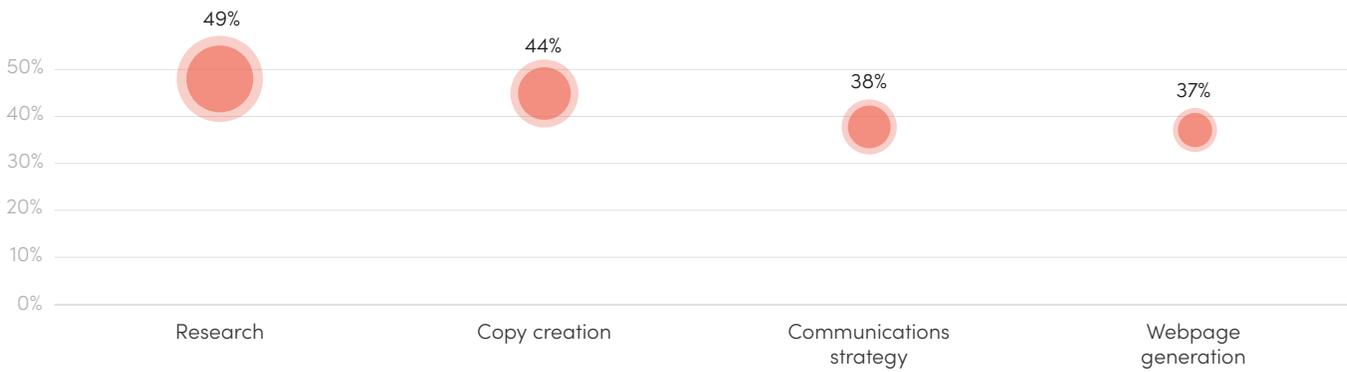
Automation provides some of the most potentially impactful technologies for government website teams both now and in the future, especially in areas like content management. Yet, according to respondents, only 11% of teams are using in-system content management that automatically updates changes to webpages. More than half of respondents are still using point-to-point delivery (such as sending files by email), which can lead to versioning and other types of issues. Meanwhile, 22% use an intranet or shared content hub to help alleviate some of the problems faced with point-to-point file delivery.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is another area where automation can impact government websites. However, government organizations are slow to integrate AI into their website processes, with only 29% of respondents stating they use AI tools, mostly in research and copywriting tasks.

Nonetheless, more than half of respondents believe AI will impact government and potentially benefit areas beyond research, including service delivery and even webpage generation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the uncertain future of AI's influence in government websites has created diverse feelings among respondents who were as likely to feel "curious" or "excited" about AI as they were to feel "cautious" or "reluctant."

Some comments on AI's future in government included:

Why AI will not impact government

- AI will streamline processes so employees can focus on more important tasks.

- AI will reduce customer service times by delivering information directly to the customer rather than the customer having to call an office to get the desired information.

- AI will streamline multi-step processes and reduce staff time to more refined quality assurance/quality control roles, freeing time for service and interaction with residents.

Why AI will impact government

- Having a trustworthy and friendly interface that assists with asking the right questions will be key. But ongoing access to human support will continue to be necessary.

- It may be something that government contractors use to benefit government, but government itself will most likely wait and see how things are managed.

- Protecting data is vital in government and AIs need access to everything to be useful, which makes administrators nervous.

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Conclusion

Websites will continue to be a critical hub for digital information and engagement, even as new channels and technologies become available to IT departments and webmasters. Website teams in organizations at all government levels must stay focused on how new technology is integrated into their workflows and maintaining proper accessibility to quickly and easily connect all users to the information they seek. As results from the Granicus Website Survey show, there are major opportunities that teams can address now to create efficient and impactful websites, including:

Focusing on user-centered CX, including personalization options to improve user self-service.

Creating and systemizing policies focused on regular, scheduled reviews of usability feedback and accessibility concerns.

Embracing automation tools to not only improve workflows and accuracy, but also better address website issues quickly and accurately.

Discover how Granicus's website solutions provide the resources to create information hubs that expand the digital experience for users while improving workflows for agency staff.

Learn more