



Open Citizen

How to give citizens a personalised digital experience

Introduction

On average, Australians aged 15+ transact with government at least once a week: paying a bill or a fine, or claiming a rebate or a benefit. For many people, these transactional touchpoints have been the primary way they interact with government.

But since the COVID-19 pandemic started, Australian government information websites have received more than 1.7 billion visits as the demand for trusted public information and support services increased significantly.

As citizens' appetite for government information and trust in government grows, agencies have an important opportunity to capitalise on this changed relationship and deliver a more engaging, helpful and personalised experience.

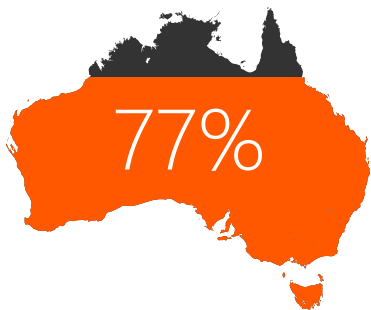
The next step in the public sector's digital transformation is to provide each citizen with a tailored experience, asking citizens for permission to use their data to make interactions easier. The technology is now well established to enable government interactions to direct people to the information they need based on the signals and information that citizens choose to share online.

From building 'tell me once' capabilities to tailoring services that meet a citizen's needs, personalisation is a critical aspect of service delivery government agencies must get right. But where should agencies start?

In this paper, digital experience experts from Sitecore and Avanade share the latest thinking on the key pieces of the personalisation puzzle for government.

"As government agencies look to transform their culture and mindset to be more citizen-centric, they need to drive personalisation by converting the wealth of data they possess into actionable insights."

Behzad Bhot, Director – Intelligent Enterprise Leader, Avanade



of Australians say they are more or equally likely to use a government service if it used their location to provide information specific to their needs.¹

Why is **personalisation** so important in government services?

Expectation

Citizens are demanding government services to the same standard, if not better, than private sector organisations. A 2020 survey conducted by Boston Consulting Group found two-thirds of Australians expect government services to be as good as those from global digital leaders, like Apple or Google, or the best private sectors companies, like banks and airlines.

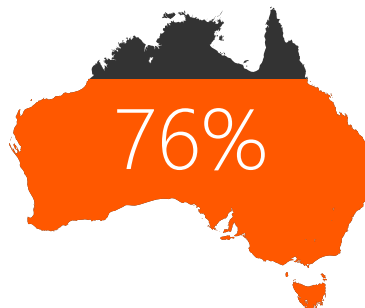
In every-day private sector interactions, Australians are used to organisations knowing all about them: their personal contact details, previous interactions, service preferences – even their credit card numbers. With private sector organisations rapidly evolving and innovating the customer experience, government agencies must keep up.

Efficiency

Understanding citizens' behaviours, attitudes and frustrations, will help government to deliver better, more efficient services. Whether a citizen is filling out a web form, messaging with a virtual agent or talking to a contact centre representative, government can use previously provided information to make each interaction faster, easier and more convenient. Every time a government interaction turns out to be a quality experience, trust grows.

Equity

Personalisation improves accessibility for all, with the flexibility of digital services helping to accommodate people with more complex needs. For vulnerable Australians, those in rural and remote regions, those speaking different languages or with various forms of disability, personalisation may be the difference between these 'hard-to-serve' cohorts using the service or not.



of Australians are more or equally likely to use government websites if they are personalised and tailored to their digital profile.²

Where are the personalisation **priorities** for government?

In the private sector, personalisation has some pretty 'edgy' use cases. Marketers dream about tracking consumers as they walk past a store and pushing out a special offer tailored to their previous purchases into their phone.

Typically, government use cases are less flashy, but their effect can be just as profound. In our experience, the top personalisation use cases being rolled out across the world are around smart services that adapt to the data citizens choose to share. This includes:

1. **Pre-populating forms** – While this sounds comparatively 'dull', it is deeply appreciated by citizens – and essential if government is to keep up with the private sector. Pre-populated forms have become a staple of the digital consumer experience, used in everything from ecommerce payments to loan application forms, which are automatically populated using data already held by the lender. Where citizens opt-in to personalised services, pre-populating forms across all levels of government would save millions of hours of time and dramatically improve the quality of the interaction. Eventually, agencies can not just pre-populate, but adapt forms to meet a citizen's situation, perhaps proactively asking essential workers whether they'd like to add the cost of dry cleaning their uniform as a tax deduction.



2. **Seamless services at life's events** – Governments can pre-empt the moments that matter in life – marriages, divorces, births, retirements, deaths – and automatically tell citizens about any new services they are eligible for. This is an area where government has major advantages over the private sector. From the data they hold on buying patterns, supermarket chains know when customers are about to have a baby – but companies don't bombard parents-to-be with nappy adverts for fear of being seen as 'creepy'. (They settle for more nuanced approaches, perhaps adding a coeliac-friendly recipe to a web site if a customer has bought a gluten-free product.)

In contrast, new parents are likely to positively welcome useful information from government agencies on local immunisation clinics or post-natal depression support groups. As long as proactive services are appropriate and helpful, pre-empting moments that matter is an area where government has a huge opportunity to build trust. Ultimately, this is about government organisations at all levels having a deeper and more connected relationship with their constituents.

3. **Personalised government services** – Personalisation isn't just about convenience, but also about better helping those in need of support. Personalised support packages for those in need are more effective than cookie cutter approaches. When services can be provided based on regular assessments of a citizen's changing needs, resources can be targeted more strategically and with greater confidence of better outcomes.



The **principles** of personalisation

Harness slow and fast moving data sources

Personalisation depends on government having a full picture of the customer journey so interactions can be adjusted to fit a citizen's situation and preferences. This requires bringing together multiple data points:

- **Government service record** – What benefits does this person already receive?
- **Site behaviour** – What have they previously clicked on, read or consumed?
- **Environmental** – Where do they live? Where are they right now?
- **Demographic** – What do we know about their age, employment, marital status, family members?
- **Referrer** – Have they come from another government site, or an advert?
- **Temporal** – How often do they visit this site?

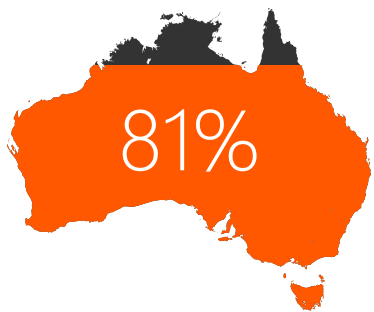
All this data combines to paint an increasingly rich picture of why a citizen is here interacting with government, what information they are looking for – and what additional information they didn't know was available but might be interested to know about.



Create a single source of truth at all levels of government

This is not just about building 'tell me once' capabilities. It's about joining the dots to understand what's going on in a citizen's life based on other government interactions. Every agency can improve the citizen experience by allowing people to opt-in to sharing their information from previous interactions across government – something more than 80% of Australians are interested in.

The power of remembered information is why Argentina has integrated 1,000 government websites into a single website domain to service more than 123 million users as a 'front door' to government services. As well as supporting personalised interactions when citizens reach out to government, the system can also reach out to citizens with proactive messages like, "Your driving licence is about to expire, here's how to renew it."



of Australians say they are more or equally likely to use a government service if it remembered previous interactions on all government websites.³

"People are used to their health information following them when they change doctors. Why can't people similarly ask their council to forward their information when they move to another Local Government Area (LGA)? Will we eventually have a blockchain solution like open banking enabling a single digital citizen stamp that can be ported from LGA to LGA?"

Behzad Bhot, Director – Intelligent Enterprise Leader, Avanade



Build tailored, contextual experiences in the right channel

Commercial brands use customer order histories to make 'contextual promotions', such as offering discounted shipping to visitors within 24 hours after they abandon a shopping cart. In the government setting, a contextual experience comes from understanding the journey the citizen has gone through to get to this point, and their previous government interactions. Then, systems can use digital nudges, prompts and guidance to help people not only find what they are looking for, but uncover new resources or services they didn't know were there. At the same time, call centre agents can delight callers by asking informed questions: "Before you go, let me just check, have you had any more issues with your Centrelink payments?"



Focus on trust

Privacy concerns rightly abound when it comes to sharing citizen data between departments, but these can be overcome by using best practice:

- Tell citizens about the value they will receive in return for data sharing while respecting their choices, boundaries and preferences
- Use an opt-in process to gain consent, outlining how information will be used, stored and protected – and a time limit on its storage
- Make it easy for citizens to opt out or retract their information

Harnessed appropriately and with consent, data sharing can make the overall citizen experience better. And people are increasingly willing to make this trade.

The pandemic has created an environment where citizens habitually share all sorts of information in return for freedom from lockdown. Many times a day, people are handing over the personal contact details of themselves and their dependents, the names and locations of the places where they shop and how long they spend in a restaurant.

These same consumers happily store their credit card details with online retailers and allow their devices to save card details to auto-populate payment details from new vendors. They're also confident that institutions will protect them if data goes astray; for example, banks refunding fraudulent credit card charges.

In this environment, privacy concerns are fading away. In fact, citizens are likely to complain when government departments don't share data to improve service speed, quality and convenience.



How to **build** personalisation capabilities

Enabling personalisation is a journey and not something that is achieved overnight. We have worked extensively with government departments and private sector organisations to successfully establish the foundations and drive rapid value for citizens. This starts with getting the basics right and then maturing from there, our proven framework includes four key steps:

Understand what citizen data you have

What do you already collect? What other data sources do you have or could you get access to? The Census? Tax returns?

Focus on data hygiene

Many agencies don't trust their data. Data governance is a must. Without fixing data quality and consistency, personalisation is a non-starter.

Design, measure and optimise

How will you use data to design a better citizen centric experience? What do your citizens want and need?

Segment and personalise

Rather than having too many narrowly defined segments, look for groups with similar wants and needs. These tend to be more strongly defined by age than geography; for example, offering senior citizens or carers information about aged care packages and relevant services. That said, regional versus metropolitan can be another lens.

Know your citizens and enhance your service

With the right combination of automation, data, AI, analytics tools and applications, government departments can get to know their citizens at the level needed.

Contact us to discover how to create and deliver personalised experiences that match private sector organisations and ultimately provide the kind of experience citizens demand today.

Next steps

Find out more about how to make your customer experience stand out from the crowd.

[Customer Experience Strategy and Design | Avanade](#)

About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud services, business solutions and design-led experiences on the Microsoft ecosystem. Our professionals bring bold, fresh thinking combined with technology, business and industry expertise to help make a human impact on our clients, their customers and their employees. We are the power behind the Accenture Microsoft Business Group, helping companies to engage customers, empower employees, optimize operations and transform products, leveraging the Microsoft platform. Avanade has 50,000 professionals in 26 countries, bringing clients our best thinking through a collaborative culture that honors diversity and reflects the communities in which we operate. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at www.avanade.com.

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