NASCIO 2017 State IT Recognition Awards

Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services
My Mississippi (myMS) Platform

Category: Emerging and Innovative Technologies
State: Mississippi
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Project Completion Date: May 2015

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Executive Summary

My Mississippi (myMS) is an intelligent personalized platform developed for citizen use to help keep track of important reminders, receive alerts, save frequently accessed content online, and interact with the "Ask Mississippi" digital voice assistant.

Introduced in May 2015, myMS, is a companion platform to the award-winning State of Mississippi's official website, ms.gov. myMS features custom alerts and reminders, social sign-in, and hands free voice-controlled technology integration.

- **myTacks** - to insure relevant content remains accessible in a click, myTacks allows visitors to drag links important to their government experience to a vault to save for quick future reference.
- **myAlerts** – quickly set alerts for weather events, Amber and Silver alerts, and high-profile statewide alerts by accessing your myMS profile and choosing your targeted alerts.
- **myReminders** – subscribe to top government agency reminders, or customize your own using the myMS widget.
- **Ask Mississippi** – voice interaction is only a few words away. Use your Amazon Alexa product to access you myMS alerts and reminders, as well as receive a wealth of Mississippi government information. All you have to do is ask.

By utilizing the public-private partnership between the State of Mississippi and Mississippi Interactive (MSI), the entire myMS platform is developed, hosted and maintained by MSI at no cost to the State of Mississippi. Since 2015, the creation of myMS and subsequent updates have resulted in a $200,000 cost savings and avoidance.
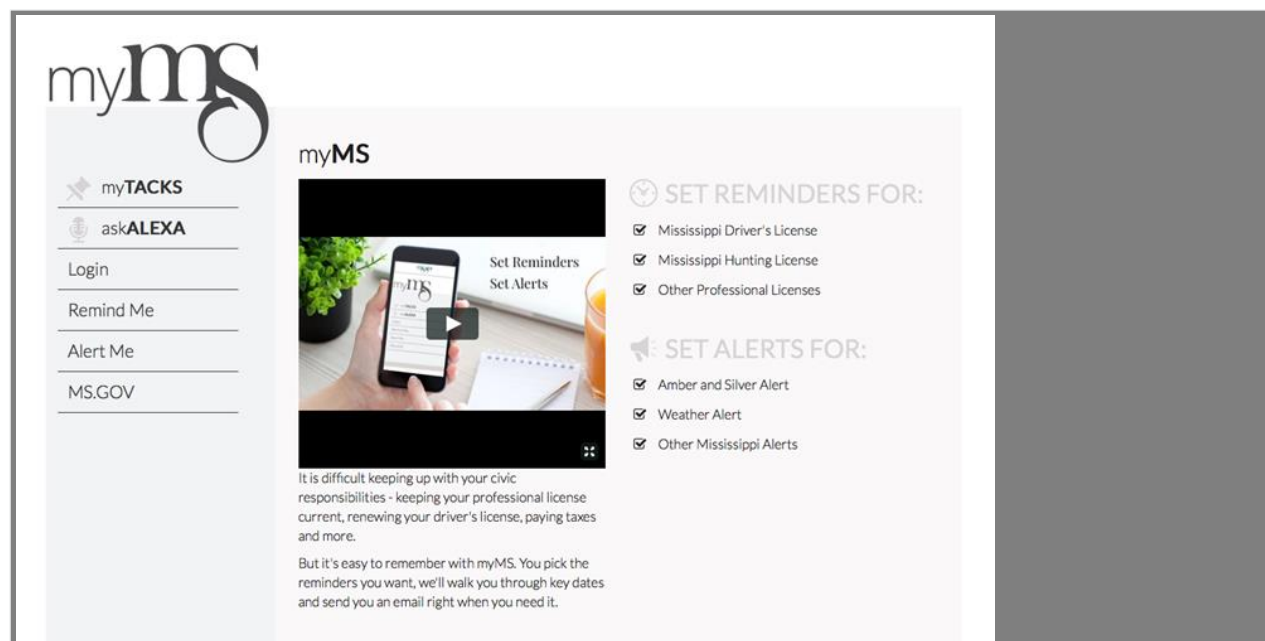
Concept

The State of Mississippi partnered with Mississippi Interactive (MSI) to redesign the state's official website to further how citizens interact with government online. While ms.gov provided citizens with a wide variety of important content, users expressed the need for an enhanced government experience. During the 2015 redesign, myMS was created to make government interaction as effortless as possible by furthering engagement and customization on ms.gov for citizens. Need a reminder when your driver's license or hunting permit is due for renewal? myMS has you covered! myMS encourages users to set and receive reminders and alerts for services important to them, opening communication channels between state and citizen. Along with important personalized reminders, myMS gives users the ability to elect to receive alerts, including: Amber, Silver, and important weather alerts. Joining myMS is a simple and secure two-step process, designed to require only essential information from the user in order to personalize and automate reminders.

In 2016, user convenience prompted MSI to reinvent myMS, taking it from a standalone service to an interactive widget within the ms.gov site. The addition of social sign-in has streamlined account creation and the log in process. myMS took a major step forward in

2016 with the introduction of the "Ask Mississippi" Amazon Alexa skill. The myMS Ask Alexa integration is the very beginning of an enhanced citizen to government relationship that will transform how we receive and send our government information. We live in a world today where technology has been embraced across generations. People expect technology to respond and deliver at the touch of a button or at the sound of a command. This is exactly what Mississippi achieved with "Ask Mississippi" Amazon Alexa skill for ms.gov. Amazon Echo users and myMS subscribers can take advantage of the voice command technology to connect, hands free, with Mississippi government. Alexa users have asked over 1,000 questions using the "Ask Mississippi" skill. All you have to do is ask.

- **Stay on top of important dates** – "Alexa, Ask Mississippi when my driver's license expires?"
- **Contact the state** – "Hey Alexa, Ask Mississippi, what is the phone number to the Department of Revenue?"
- **Verify elected officials and facts** – "Alexa, Ask Mississippi who the current Lieutenant Governor is?"
- **Learn more about our state** – "Alexa, Ask Mississippi to tell me story."
- **Receive traffic alerts** – "Alexa, Ask Mississippi if there are any traffic alerts in my area."
- **Catch up on local MS news** – "Alexa, Ask Mississippi to give me the news of the day."

See myMS voice commands in action: https://vimeo.com/channels/1066529.
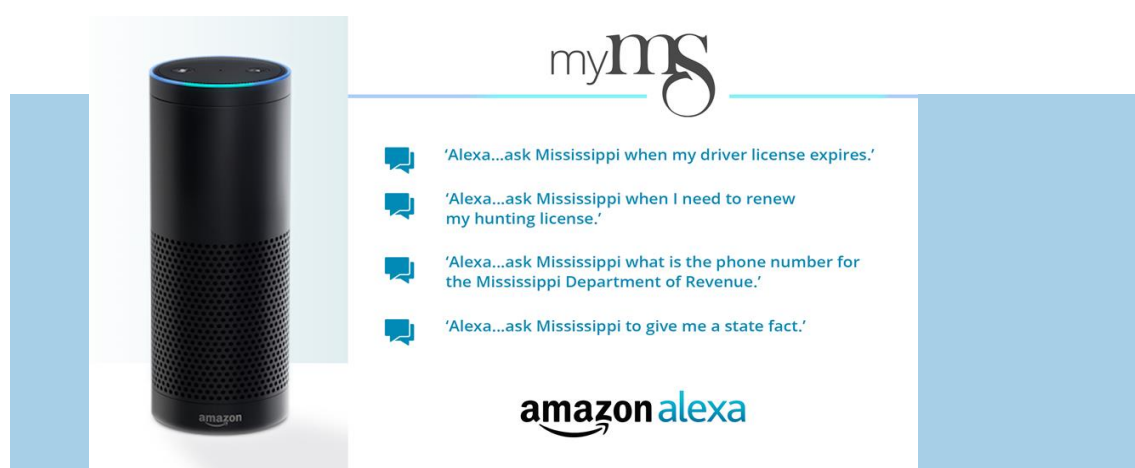
Like "Ask Mississippi," the myTacks functionality was introduced in 2016 to enhance the ms.gov website and user experience. This convenient content feature allows visitors to drag links important to their government experience to a vault to save for quick future reference. myTacks is a way for both power users and low frequency users alike to save, store, access and edit frequently visited links and pages on ms.gov. Customizing your government experience is now easier than ever.

By utilizing the State eGovernment program and MSI's self-funded model, the State of Mississippi realized an initial cost avoidance of $200,000. This cost savings represents around 2,000 hours MSI spent brainstorming, researching, developing and integrating the myMS platform with ms.gov as well as Amazon's Alexa skill. Significant time was spent marketing the myMS platform to increase adoption through media relations, digital and print outreach through government agencies, targeted Facebook, Twitter and Instagram advertising, and promotion through the state's ms.gov portal.

Significance

By leveraging new technologies, Mississippi is now well prepared to provide opportunities for citizens to simplify the interaction with state government. Whether it's the convenience of in-site bookmark vault, important civic reminders, or voice command technology integration, myMS is purposed around one priority, the user. The evolution of the myMS platform as an emerging and innovative technology enhances the citizen to government relationship in Mississippi, allowing residents to connect, hands-free, with state government.

Impact

Since the introduction of the myMS platform, the benefits have made the interaction between citizen and state government better, while at the same time promoting the state as a forward-thinking government body. Mississippi has responded to the needs of its citizens by offering government services at users' fingertips and voices. The 900 unique myMS account holders now have an avenue that provides a more effective tool to do business with the state. Amazon Alexa users have employed the "Ask Mississippi" skill to answer over 1,000 questions involving the State of Mississippi.

The no-cost benefit of this project, supported by the State of Mississippi's eGovernment Program partner's self-funded model, has allowed MSI to research, develop and support the entire myMS platform without the need for government funding. The significant return to citizens and Mississippi in cost and time savings is an incredible value to state government.

More information on all the user-interactive myMS services is viewable below:

myMS
https://vimeo.com/126677973

myMS – Tacks
https://vimeo.com/164747818

myMS – "Ask Mississippi"
https://vimeo.com/165044051

myMS – Alerts
https://vimeo.com/164761982