



Digital Government: Government to Citizen

KS WebFile: The easiest and most accurate way to file your income taxes!

Submitted by: [accessKansas](http://www.accessKansas.org), a service of the Information Network of Kansas
(www.accessKansas.org)

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Executive Summary

KS WebFile was developed for Kansas taxpayers to securely file their state income taxes via the Internet. This tool surpasses many state tax systems, due to its complex error handling, calculations, and an easy-to-use interface. The system has received rave reviews from Kansas taxpayers as well as the Kansas Department of Revenue staff.

The application can be found on the official Web site for the state of Kansas, <https://www.accesskansas.org/apps/WebFile.html> (online demo included). The site, launched as a pilot system in April 2002, experienced a dramatic increase in filings from 2002 to 2003. In the final two weeks of 2002, nearly 3,000 taxpayers filed online. During the 2003 season, nearly **18,000 taxpayers filed using KS WebFile.**

KS WebFile is a stellar addition to the suite of taxpayer services with the Kansas Department of Revenue, and the agency expects that it will become the preferred method for individual income tax filings for those Kansans who prepare their own taxes.

Gary Centlivre, manager of electronic tax administration for the Kansas Department of Revenue, was instrumental in the development and testing of KS WebFile. “KS WebFile has set Kansas ahead of many states in taxation. The application’s intelligence provides for virtually error-proof returns, saving my staff time and resources, and providing faster refunds for Kansans.”

Electronic filing of taxes has quickly become the preference for many taxpayers. This year, the Kansas Department of Revenue expects to save nearly \$90,000 overall with electronic tax filings, including KS WebFile. Electronic submissions provide more accurate returns, cleaner data, and fewer agency inquiries, thus reducing in-house processing time dramatically.

Project Description

accessKansas, a service of the Information Network of Kansas, Inc., (www.accessKansas.org) partnered with the Kansas Department of Revenue (KDOR) (<http://www.ksrevenue.org/>) to develop an Online Income Tax Filing System (KS WebFile). KS WebFile is free and available to all Kansas residents and non-residents who filed a a previous year's Kansas income tax return. It is the fastest and easiest way to file given that there are no special software packages to buy or download.

Individuals need only a personal computer, an Internet connection, W2s and other filing documents to file online. Individuals use their Social Security number and one of the following three numbers: a Personal Identification Number (PIN) provided on the mailing label of their Kansas tax booklet, last year's individual income tax original refund amount, or last year's balance due amount, to access the application.

If the filer is to receive a refund, they may choose to have it deposited directly into their bank account in **five to 10 business days, compared with two to eight weeks** for paper returns. If there is a balance due, filers can pay through a secure Internet connection by credit card or electronic check. The amount will immediately be billed to the card and is assessed a small convenience fee. Filing and paying by electronic check is **FREE** and allows taxpayers to electronically file anytime, but will not debit the corresponding bank account until the filing deadline of April 15th of that year.

The most spectacular feature with KS WebFile is the ability to perform all of the necessary calculations for the filer, making the returns virtually error-proof. The system has often been compared with many commercial-off-the-shelf products, and has also received positive reviews by professional tax preparers.

The new KS WebFile system was designed to meet the needs of Kansas taxpayers, allowing them to streamline their filing. At the same time, it assists in the internal processes for KDOR and makes filing your Kansas income tax safe, secure, fast, and completely paper free! The design of this application is to give users the ability to file from the convenience of their home or office, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Filers no longer need to mail their tax form. The filing is processed immediately, therefore saving time for both the taxpayer and the staff at KDOR.

User comment:

"It was a pleasant surprise! I usually hate the Kansas tax return form and booklet (takes me hours to wade through it and file). But, this was very clear and quick (an hour or so to prep and then ten - fifteen minutes to file using WebFile). And, best of all I did not have to go through a professional tax preparer to utilize. You should share this with the IRS folks! Keep up the good work!"

Significance to the Improvement of Government

The ease with which users can file their income tax return online has gained statewide and national attention from many agencies, who wish to emulate the process KDOR used. The following criteria were crucial to the service results:

- Citizen and business centric
- Prototyping
- Three stages of user testing
- Online demo
- Clean appearance
- Consistent layout
- Ongoing evaluation and maintenance
- The ability of the user to access a printable summary page

KS WebFile will let you navigate within different areas of the application, make any changes, and reapply any new calculations. You may also log out at any time and the application will save your information for you. When you log back in you will be taken to the point where you left off. Even if you forget to log out or your PC crashes, the system automatically saves information for you, so you will not lose any data.

The online filing system changes the way customers do business with the Kansas Department of Revenue. The KS WebFile system allows users to file instantaneously within a single transaction, while making the difficult calculations for the user. The system also allows the filer to file an amended return using KS WebFile. The system does not discriminate on how you file your original return - **you may file an amended return even if you filed your original return by paper.**

The site transforms the complicated Kansas K-40 tax return into one electronic form, thus allowing all Kansas residents and non-residents who filed a 2001 Kansas income tax return to file using KS WebFile, even if they itemize. There is a potential of servicing more than 2,000,000 Kansas citizens. This is the largest number of any potential service offered by the state.

The interactive system automatically:

- makes calculations when you enter financial data
- submits the return to the Kansas Department of Revenue
- provides a confirmation number to verify the return was filed and refund or payment made

Benefits

User Feedback

Kansas taxpayers have provided an overwhelming response to this new tool. Here are a few user testimonials:

--- *"Very, very nice site. It's good to see my tax dollar at work!"*

--- *"This was wonderful - the fact that I didn't have to go out and buy special software for my computer to file online made all the difference. THANK YOU SO MUCH!"*

---- *"This is the greatest idea any taxing body has ever implemented. I have filed my Kansas taxes using PC file for the last couple of years and found it extremely easy to use. I enjoy using WebFile even more. Nothing to download and I can access my return from any computer. Thank you and could you send this idea and how you have successfully implemented it on to the IRS? KDOR has got free filing down to an art. Keep up the good work!"*

--- *"I wish the federal government would copy it. Very easy to use."*

--- *"Absolutely brilliant. Over the years, I've had to file taxes in KS, OH, and MO. KS has always been by far the easiest. But this is UNBELIEVEABLE! This service is every bit as good as TurboTax State (which I've been using in prior years). You just saved me \$20! As always, I'm proud to be a Kansan."*

Survey Results

(Online survey on the WebFile application):

- 99% of respondents felt confident in filing their tax return online
- 97% of respondents plan to file their return using WebFile next year

Return on Investment

The Kansas Department of Revenue has realized many benefits from KS WebFile.

- Reduction of KDOR filing backlog – fewer paper returns received for processing.
- Reduction of taxpayer calculation errors – **error rate for paper = 15%, error rate for electronic = 1%**
- Fast, accurate and easy – enhanced customer service.
- Fewer paper filings to evaluate, disseminate, and inquire about; cleaner data
- Fewer paper payment checks to log and process = fewer insufficient funds on check payments with electronic payments
- KDOR Secretary Joan Wagnon & Governor Kathleen Sebelius endorse KS WebFile as the most efficient and accurate way to file taxes in Kansas.
- Online tax filing helps to keep KDOR within the cutting edge of technology. This conveys the message to our citizens that Kansas is a forward-thinking, proactive state government.
- Less follow up contact with customer for missing tax information - KDOR customer representatives have more time for other duties.
- Reduction of calls to the department requesting refunds.