

# alabama.gov

## Executive Summary

This year, alabama.gov has received a complete redesign that includes a number of innovative features that provide Alabama's citizens with self-service tools to help in accessing important government information quickly and efficiently. Previous visitors of the site may notice significant changes to the design elements and may be compelled to spend time exploring the new technologies and tools implemented to enhance the visitor's experience.

With alabama.gov serving as one of the State's largest publications and 24/7 communication tool, the site remains focused on creating efficiencies through the use of technology. The site maintains its established alabama.gov icon, but has introduced a new layout and a suite of new interactive tools. Included in this year's enhancements is a new interactive picture-in-picture window providing technology enhancements for images, calendar listings, and featured services. This feature eliminates the necessity to click through numerous screens to find information, but instead displays the information immediately to the visitor. Additional services such as RSS feeds and Podcasting (syndication feeds), enhanced mapping tools, wireless live help, and language translations have also been added.

The alabama.gov state web portal represents incalculable operational benefits for the State of Alabama. The partnership between Alabama and Alabama Interactive utilizes the self-funded model whereby no costs are incurred by the State to operate, manage, and market the portal and portal services. As a result, the State receives the full benefit of increased constituent communication and satisfaction as well as the efficiencies created via online government, at immense value. The State does not pay for operating, hosting, maintenance costs, or services such as web design and hosting, dedicated customer service, marketing and consulting, and a library of cutting-edge Internet technologies

The State of Alabama's official Website, alabama.gov, is committed to providing constituents with information that is secure and accessible to all. While making major modifications to alabama.gov this year, Alabama was very careful to build on the successes of its past and in doing so increase its usability. alabama.gov's redesign has streamlined and organized data in a manner that helps citizens, businesses, and government entities find exactly what they are seeking quickly and efficiently.

alabama.gov has revolutionized where and how visitors can access information they are looking for and also introduced them to new and innovative tools and information. Through this new design, Alabama hopes that users will continue to associate Alabama's official website with convenience and efficiency.

A. Concise description of the business problem and solution, including length of time in operation.

The State of Alabama's official website, alabama.gov has been available to citizens for almost ten years. In those ten years the website has evolved and grown as new technology and practices have become available. This year, alabama.gov has received a complete redesign that includes a number of innovative features that provide Alabama's citizens with self-service tools to help in accessing important government information quickly and efficiently.

Like all state governments, Alabama faces the problem of making sure that valuable information gets to citizens quickly and through as many avenues as possible. The Internet is one of the most valuable communication tools for the state because all citizens can access it, whether it is at work, home, or at a public institution like a library or school. With this in mind, the State of Alabama partnered with Alabama Interactive in 2002 to build and maintain alabama.gov. In 2007, alabama.gov received its most significant update since the first portal launch in 2003.

Innovation was Alabama's motivation behind alabama.gov's redesign. Building on successful tools used by a number of cutting-edge websites, alabama.gov incorporated services to help constituents find what they are looking for quickly and efficiently. Because alabama.gov has taken on a new look and feel, the Website includes a walkthrough tour at <http://www.alabama.gov/portal/tour/portalsitetour.html> . Below are several examples of achievements in innovation this year:

#### Picture-in-Picture Window

The picture window found in the middle of alabama.gov serves a number of purposes. It provides colorful and interesting scenes found throughout Alabama. More importantly the window changes over to calendar information or featured service information when the cursor is placed over the calendar or any of the featured service icons. This removes the necessity to click through numerous screens to find information, but instead displays the information immediately to the visitor.

#### RSS and Podcasts

RSS and Podcasts have been added to the portal page to provide constituents with information in two new formats: RSS feeds that can be viewed or listened to through media applications and Podcasts that can be uploaded to iPods.

#### CSS Menus

More information has been added to a smaller space thanks to the addition of CSS menus throughout alabama.gov.

### Enhanced Mapping

The portal leveraged Google Services to give users the ability to select locations of interest which appear on an interactive map. This year, the map has added colleges and universities, tourist attractions, historic hurricane information, highway facility information, and Alabama park information.

### Announcement Space

When major events take place in Alabama, including but not limited to, Amber Alerts, Severe Weather, and closings, the blank space between the menus with "How Do I" and "Alabama and you" is filled with important information for site visitors.

### Translation

Alabama is fortunate to have a number of businesses from around the world located within its borders. Individuals from Korea, Germany, and those from Spanish speaking countries now have access to translations of alabama.gov in their respective languages.

### e11

The e11 title mimics the highly utilized 4-11 or 9-11 services by providing streamlined access to frequently sought information and to capture the audience who may desire some additional instruction or guidance with state government.

### Portal Headers

Each state agency in Alabama is responsible for its own web presence. Alabama has implemented portal headers on each link directly outside of the portal to ensure the visitor can return home, turn off the header, or use the search engine throughout the site.

### Wireless Services

alabama.gov wireless is designed to recognize most mobile browsers when accessing the main portal, meaning no additional URL is required. As an additional feature, some mobile browsers recognize the numbered selections allowing a visitor to use their numeric keys to navigate quickly.

### Hurricane Section

Information concerning storms, evacuations, volunteers, and donations can be vital to citizens of coastal regions during a hurricane. This section houses both current and time sensitive data as well as archived information from past storms.

## Webcams

A webcams page offers views of traffic cams, coastal regions, universities and other areas of interest.

## B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government.

The alabama.gov state web portal represents incalculable operational benefits for the State of Alabama. The partnership between Alabama and Alabama Interactive utilizes the self-funded model whereby no costs are incurred by the State to operate, manage, and market the portal and portal services. As a result, the State receives the full benefit of increased constituent communication and satisfaction as well as the efficiencies created via online government, at immense value. The State does not pay for operating, hosting, maintenance costs, or services such as web design and hosting, dedicated customer service, marketing and consulting, and a library of cutting-edge Internet technologies such as Live Help customer service, Google search technology, and a dedicated support team for issues relating to the State's electronic government applications and State web portal.

The main page of the portal is completely dynamic, receiving almost all of its content from a backend database. Through this design, the portal can be updated instantaneously. Any time a new online service is implemented, the backend database needs to be updated only once to reflect the addition both on the portal and the wireless portal. In addition, alabama.gov is cross-browser and cross-platform compatible giving citizens access to the information they require from almost anywhere on any system.

## C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state.

The State of Alabama's official Website, alabama.gov, is committed to providing the over 200,000 monthly visitors it receives with information that is secure and accessible to all. While making major modifications to alabama.gov this year, Alabama was very careful to build on the successes of its past and in doing so increase its usability. alabama.gov's redesign has streamlined and organized data in a manner that helps citizens, businesses, and government entities find exactly what they are looking quickly and efficiently.

Constituent privacy, security, and accessibility are extremely important to the success of alabama.gov. Links to Alabama's stance on privacy, security, and accessibility are available on every page of the portal at

[http://www.alabama.gov/portal/secondaryContent.jsp?page=Standard\\_Policies](http://www.alabama.gov/portal/secondaryContent.jsp?page=Standard_Policies) .

In addition, alabama.gov has made German, Korean, and Spanish versions of the site available because of the growing population of these three languages over the last few years in Alabama.

All online applications accessible through alabama.gov have been designed with security and privacy in mind. Each online service site is SSL encrypted, providing the end user with the familiarity and expectations of securely transacting business online.

Thanks to the self-funded model whereby no costs are incurred to operate, manage, and market the portal and portal services, taxpayers nor the state pay anything for alabama.gov. As a result, those utilizing alabama.gov receive the benefit of free information as well as the efficiencies created via online government.

The objective of alabama.gov is to deliver ease of use and navigation of government by providing multiple avenues to access important information and services. In addition, although the constituent may click between several different sites, portal headers maintain a consistent look and feel for the user and providing a means to return to alabama.gov easily during their search. alabama.gov also uses a “no wrong door” approach to assist constituents with locating information quickly from anywhere within the site. If a user does not find the information they need within a particular section, then Live Help, search features, e11, “How Do I?” and other navigation categories are readily accessible.

With a clean, fresh look, alabama.gov is sure to continue assisting businesses, government agencies and citizens navigate through many levels of information quickly and easily. Through this intuitive design, users have come to associate the portal with convenience and efficiency.

D. Realized return on investment, short-term/long-term payback (include summary calculations).

The alabama.gov state web portal represents incalculable operational benefits and savings for the State of Alabama. Calculating the return on investment is impossible because the partnership between Alabama and Alabama Interactive utilizes the self-funded model whereby no costs are incurred by the State to operate, manage, and market the portal and portal services. As a result, the State receives the full benefit of increased constituent communication and satisfaction as well as the efficiencies created via online government, at immense value. The State does not pay for operating, hosting, maintenance costs, or services such as web design and hosting, dedicated customer service, marketing and consulting, and a library of cutting-edge Internet technologies such as Live Help customer service, Google search technology, and a dedicated support team

for issues relating to the State's electronic government applications and State web portal.

Alabama Interactive attends many different conventions and conferences, setting up booths and giving presentations on the effectiveness and successes of alabama.gov. Press releases, award nominations and advertisements for Alabama's eGovernment initiative have been developed at no cost. In addition to grass roots efforts, marketing giveaways such as pens, golf balls, lens cleaner, and portfolios have been branded with the alabama.gov logo and shared with constituents at no expense to the State. As more and more citizens and businesses turn to alabama.gov, the State of Alabama will continue to realize increased return on its investment.