
STATE OF INDIANA

Nominations for NASCIO's 2007 Recognition Awards for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Information Technology, Business Continuity, & Disaster Recovery

IN.gov Redesign & CMS Implementation

Information Communications Technology (ICT) Innovations

The State of Indiana is currently migrating all IN.gov sites to a new design and content management system (CMS). In conjunction with the migration, IN.gov is also implementing new web analytics and customer service software that will provide more insight to Indiana state employees about their site visitors; and, thereby enhance the user experience on IN.gov.

The redesign and new software implementation is necessary for a number of reasons, but the key purpose is simple: to make it easier for citizens, businesses and others to find what they need on IN.gov more quickly and efficiently. Prior to the new look and feel, more than 50% of IN.gov visitors were finding information and services when state offices were closed. A cleaner designer, revamped navigation and consistent look only further encourages Indiana's citizens, businesses and visitors to be the first in line online.

Indiana also felt it was time to make things *easier* for state government employees. The former cumbersome processes for content changes and website redesigns are eliminated with a CMS that allows for quick, immediate content updates and enforces cascading style sheets. The addition of a robust web analytics tool allows state employees to better analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their site's content; while the introduction to the new frequently asked questions software provides agencies the ability to quickly post meaningful and relevant information on to their homepages.

The redesign is a win-win for both state employees and Indiana's constituents, and as the migration process continues, the State will further realize the benefits brought to both groups.

Business Problem and Solution

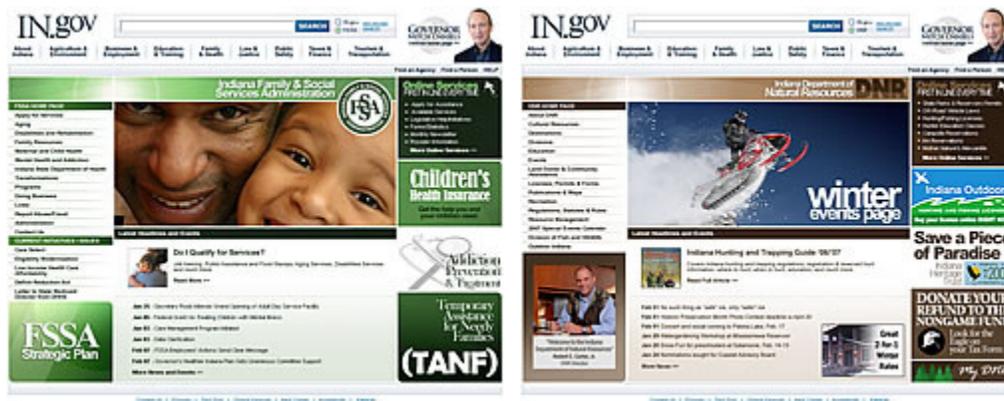
[IN.gov](http://www.IN.gov/) (<http://www.IN.gov/>), Indiana's official website, has been redesigned to provide its users the ability to more easily find the information and services they need. The redesign makes Indiana the first state to standardize design, navigation, and information architecture across all state agencies. This is not merely a standards initiative, where state agencies can participate if they please; it is a wholesale break with the way state government websites are run today.

Since the 1990s, Indiana, like all other states, inundated users with a different looking website (<http://www.in.gov/features/images/screenshot.jpg>) for each state agency. With more than 75 agencies and widely varying effort among them to keep their sites up-to-date, users who visited more than one agency were easily confused by the inconsistencies. With the new design, however, state agency websites are required to share the same look and feel. Pictures really do say a thousand words. IN.gov will transition from this:



A Look at the Many Different Agency Designs Today

To this:



Mockups of New Agency Websites



The new IN.gov Homepage

Significance of the Project to the Improvement of the Operation of Government

The IN.gov redesign makes it easier for users in state government to update content within their agencies. This is primarily achieved through the implementation of the CMS. On average, five to six dedicated IN.gov resources field 1,200 content changes monthly, and the current process is cumbersome. First agencies submit a ticket; IN.gov staff then clarifies any miscommunication.

Once the change is made, IN.gov staff puts the changes in test and sends it on to the agency for review. After additional comments, more changes are made, if necessary, and then it returns to the agency for approval. The majority of the change process is spent on communication and coordination of multiple parties; the CMS completely eliminates the need for agencies to submit changes to a centralized authority. (The downside that comes with decentralization, *i.e.*, users making changes that do not meet the requirements, is eliminated via the CMS's administrative controls.)

Public Value of the Project

The [new IN.gov design](http://www.IN.gov/) (<http://www.IN.gov/>) welcomes visitors with a clean, user-friendly site that provides a multitude of navigation options so that users can find what they are looking for in the way they think to look for it. Visitors can use IN.gov's traditional (but upgraded) subject-matter navigation for "deep" links into IN.gov, "Information For" pages that have links categorized specifically for predominant types of users, a set of links to agencies that are the "most visited," search, online services links, frequently asked questions (FAQs) that are dynamically driven based on popularity, and Flash "billboards" that advertise major initiatives and best online services. The outstanding photography used on the billboards mirrors popular eCommerce sites. Now, Indiana is *selling* the State and nothing does that more effectively than great imagery. And these appear in the same formats and same locations.

Underneath the hood, the new IN.gov employs the technologies necessary to deliver to the demands of today's web users. An enterprise web content management system (CMS) implemented across all agencies allows for ease of maintenance, multi-purposing of information, compliance with accessibility and design requirements, and delivery to desktop and mobile browsers. This, with WebTrends for web analytics, has put IN.gov among the best technically supported state websites.

IN.gov then takes convenience and customer service to the next level by leveraging [RightNow's](http://www.rightnow.com/) (<http://www.rightnow.com/>) frequently asked questions (FAQ) system in a way that no other state has: relevant FAQs are included on all major pages. Truly the most *frequently* asked question rises to the top of the list, allowing for up-to-the-minute delivery of information that IN.gov's users most desire. Moreover, IN.gov leverages [ChaCha](http://www.chacha.com/) (<http://www.chacha.com/>) for search, which is like Google with human intelligence built into every search; if users need assistance, they can chat with a search expert anytime. Additionally, every webpage includes useful page options: Suggest a Link, and Rate, Print, and E-mail this Page. IN.gov reviews the Suggest a Link and Rate this Page submissions to constantly improve.

Usability. Users do not find information the same way; thus, the redesigned IN.gov integrates the best practices of public *and* private sector:

- **Customer-focused:** The site is more user-friendly, and all content is now presented in a clear, accessible format (and using multiple variations of common-sense language instead of typical government-speak) so the general public can easily interact with Indiana's state government.

- **Consistent:** Navigation, search, online services, and other features are in the same location on all new pages. Users no longer have to re-learn how each agency website or IN.gov page works. (Where Indiana and other states previously “accomplished” this through “sliver” headers, Indiana is pursuing full page consistency for all agencies by 6/30/2008.)
- **No Wrong Door:** Users can more easily find what they are looking for with IN.gov’s powerful search engine, streamlined subject matter navigation, “Information For” section with links for specific types of IN.gov users, and graphic “billboards” highlighting major initiatives.
- **Great Design:** The new IN.gov sports a modern design with central “billboard” graphics for an updated look at available services and major initiatives that are currently underway. The billboards represent the best practices and design elements from sites in other industries because, quite obviously, citizens and businesses interact with a variety of websites, and Indiana has created a design that matches and enhances what constituents are experiencing elsewhere.

Where too many other web redesigns try to pack in every “neat” function (many of which most users will never use), the IN.gov design is an ideal balance between form and function.

Additionally, the redesign and new software implementations have not compromised the accessibility, security and privacy standards IN.gov has abided by since its inception. Conversely, these three key aspects of web design and site development are enhanced by recent upgrades.

Accessibility. IN.gov has long been committed to accessible web design, and the implementation of the CMS across all state ensures that pages are developed in accord with Section 508 and W3C guidelines. Additionally, the new design is architected to separate content from design, which allows for screen readers to more easily consume data, not to mention the delivery of the same content across different devices. Moreover, IN.gov staff have met with the visually impaired to test the new IN.gov and made modifications to improve.

Security. The CMS is connected to the State’s Active Directory (AD) thereby leveraging (at no cost) the investments and processes in that system. For example, when a user leaves state government she will be automatically removed from the CMS (because she has been removed from AD). Though simple, this ensures that only authorized users have access to the areas they are permitted to change. Additionally, to increase security, the State’s public web servers have been moved to an external datacenter so that they are physically separated from the CMS, which sits behind the State’s firewall and other security systems.