



NASCIO Category: Government to Citizen

Gale Given, Chief Technology Officer

West Virginia Office of Technology



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Executive Summary

Prior to 2014, West Virginians who needed to complete tasks such as renewing their vehicle registration or requesting a driving record were required to travel to a DMV regional office to fill out a paper form. That all changed in February of 2014 when motorists were able to “Skip the Trip” and take advantage of online services offered by the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

A legislative audit showed that West Virginia was lagging behind other states when it came to online services offered by the DMV. At the time, West Virginia was only one of three states not offering vehicle registration renewals online. In order to increase their online presence and provide convenience to their customers, the DMV introduced a series of online services that gives citizens, motor carriers, and dealers a way to conduct business without leaving the comfort of their homes and businesses.

Since the launch of the self-service application, adoption rates have steadily increased each year. In 2014, the number of transactions handled through the application totaled 27,389. In 2015, that number jumped to 59,584. As a result, DMV regional offices are seeing shorter lines and increased customer satisfaction.

Many of the customers using the self-service option are seeing their online requests processed within minutes, with automated emails keeping the customer up-to-date every step of the way. The DMV is able to process large volumes of online requests with minimal staff. An online service request averages two minutes to process, versus the ten plus minutes it takes to complete an in-office transaction. The following services are currently available through the DMV Self-Service Application which can be found by visiting <https://go.wv.gov/selfservice>:

Services

- Vehicle Registration Renewals
- Request Duplicate Registration Card, Decal, or Plate and Change of Address
- Request Duplicate Parking Application for a Mobility Impaired Person
- Pay Personal Property Taxes
- Personalized Plate Search / Request Personalized Plate
- Check Driver’s License Status / Request Driving Record
- Pay Driver’s License Reinstatement Fee for Suspended Driver’s License
- Organ and Tissue Donor Registry
- Combined 10 Day Trip Permits Online (Motor Carriers)
- Temporary Additional Location Request (Dealers)
- West Virginia Vehicle Registration System (Dealers)

Concept

Process (Genesis, Design and Implementation)

Even prior to being addressed by the legislative audit, the need for West Virginia's DMV services to be available online was obvious. Other states DMV's had been providing services online for years, and it was becoming the preferred way to do business. In addition, the audit estimated the cost for processing an online renewal would be approximately \$2.37 instead of the estimated \$4.96 for in-person transactions. Offering registration renewals online alone would generate substantial cost savings for the DMV.

Design was completed in phases. The first group of services offered were duplicate registration cards, decals, and plates along with change of address requests. Additional services soon followed. Paper forms were reviewed and opportunities identified to improve the online version. Prototypes were developed along with the initial DMV Online Services dashboard. The dashboard has since been updated to correspond with changes made to the West Virginia DMV's main website.

Implementation was also completed in phases with personalized plate requests being the latest service offered in October of 2015. In addition to the customer aspect of the application, an administrative site was developed to allow the DMV to process the service requests. Special attention was given to ensure administrative users had the functionality to fully process an online transaction. That meant administrators would need to have the ability to complete such tasks as view files uploaded by the customer and verify insurance and property tax information for vehicle renewals.

Background and Context

Motorists visiting a West Virginia DMV regional office were normally met with long lines and confusion regarding the documentation required to complete their transaction. With business transactions increasingly being conducted over the Internet, the obvious solution was to enable many of their services to be accessible online. Doing this would ensure the correct information is collected and documentation uploaded without the customer having to make multiple trips to the DMV.

The DMV's push to create a self-service application was met with resistance and challenges. A previous audit showed that sheriffs in the state resisted having registration renewals online due to the potential loss of revenue. In addition, the DMV faced challenges verifying property tax and insurance information prior to processing requests. At the time, many WV counties still did not offer property tax information to be viewed online.

Evolution and Elements

How was the initiative selected?

Having an online self-service application was the obvious solution for the DMV's dilemma. Providing convenience, security, and cost savings for both the customer and the DMV were top priorities when designing the application.

Part of a larger project

Even though the number of online services has increased substantially since 2014, the application would not be complete without giving motorists the ability to renew their driver's licenses online. Always one of the main goals of the self-service initiative, this service is scheduled to be released sometime in 2017. Requirements are also being gathered for additional Motor Carriers Services.

Project management approach taken

Project management for this initiative leaned more towards an agile approach. Each service was broken out into separate "mini" projects with requirements, development, and testing happening independently of one another.

Costs

All services provided within the DMV Self-Service Application are developed using a self-funded model resulting in \$0 cost to the state. Users are charged a minimal fee to complete a transaction online which is comparable to the cost of a stamp, envelope, and check. This fee is then applied to further enhance the DMV and state-wide eGovernment services.

Efforts to ensure accessibility and security

Every effort has been made to ensure the pages of the Application are accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. In instances where innovation outpaces accessibility, the application is designed to degrade gracefully and provide a standard user interface control accessible to all users.

The minimum amount of information was collected to meet the purposes for which the application was created. All information collected is subject to the confidentiality and public disclosure provisions of West Virginia Code Chapter 29B.

Communications Plan

The self-service application has been marketed to customers through multiple channels. Renewal forms mailed two months prior to renewal deadline were modified to include a

notice regarding the new system, along with a Quick Response (QR) code for mobile users. This approach was extremely successful and resulted in transactions significantly increasing within days after the letters were delivered. Additionally, the system was announced in a joint press conference with the West Virginia Governor and DMV commissioner, which resulted in significant media coverage of the new online services. The new services have been prominently promoted on the DMV and state websites (dmv.wv.gov and wv.gov respectfully). Billboards placed throughout the state also remind motorists to “Skip the Trip”.

Significance

Scope

- Provide West Virginia citizens, motor carriers and dealers an online self-service application enabling them to complete transactions which previously would have been processed at a Regional DMV office or courthouse.
- Ability to process service requests with minimal customer interaction.
- Beneficiaries are: WV motorist, Motor Carriers and Dealers.
- The stakeholder is: The West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Innovative and Distinct

The approach taken for this initiative was to allow additional services or “modules” to be added without disrupting service. As new services become available, it is imperative that the DMV is able to direct those service requests to the proper administrators for processing. As a result, only employees who are trained to handle specific service requests are able to access those sections of the application.

In addition, this application uses an innovative approach to utilizing publically available data to solve real world requirements. By creating a process for users to provide information electronically, the DMV can match the data against multiple data sources. The DMV has converted a legally forced paper based process to a paperless process without comprising the intent of the law. The application was developed without requiring individual counties to invest or modify their existing tax systems in any way. Additionally, the application was setup to be configurable for each of West Virginia’s 55 counties. This way, they can provide a guided user experience for their given county and the way tax tickets are issued in that county. Through this configurability, the 43 counties offering online tax information were set up in a matter of minutes, and the remaining counties will have the ability to come online as soon as the county publishes property tax information online.

Successful Implementation and Change

Successful implementation was extremely important due to the fact the DMV interacts with most, if not all citizens, businesses, and agencies across the state. It was also important that services were introduced prior to peak usage. For example, online vehicle renewals were announced to customers in April for the May renewal cycle. In addition, marketing played a major role in notifying customers new online services were available. Finally, training was a crucial part of implementation. Properly training DMV employees ensured service requests were handled promptly and service levels met.

As mentioned previously, the DMV touches almost every entity in West Virginia. With that said, the self-service application has had a huge impact on the DMV, the state, and its citizens. Previously, anyone living in the rural counties of West Virginia were required to travel great distances in order to complete a transaction with the DMV. If a document was forgotten, that meant an extra trip, which in return meant extra expenses. Now, those same people can “Skip the Trip” and complete the transaction from the comforts of their homes.

Strategy and Goal Alignment

The DMV Self-Service application has addressed most, if not all, of the concerns raised by the legislative audit. The goals and strategy of the West Virginia DMV have always been to improve customer service and allow customers to conduct business at their convenience.

Expanding the ability to service the citizens of West Virginia through the use of advanced technology was also an initiative put in place by West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. The DMV Self-Service application goes a long way in realizing that initiative.

Impact

Environment

With an estimated 700,000 out of 1.8 million (USDA-ERS) people living in rural parts of the state, making the trip to a DMV regional office could literally take hours. That does not include time spent waiting to be serviced. Forgotten documents often resulted in an additional trip. Now, the same task that took hours can be completed in minutes.

Immediate and Long Term Impact

For the DMV, the application has not only reduced lines at regional offices, but it has also reduced the amount paper forms processed in the office. Also, it has decreased the

number of transactions that must be sent back due to incorrect or incomplete information. In addition, services within the application have also been identified as a data collection point for the state's insurance verification program. Since this information is being collected electronically, it is already in the format needed to be utilized by the DMV for this program.

Benefits

West Virginia Citizens

West Virginians benefit from both time and cost savings. With many people living in rural areas, not only are they saving hours of driving time, they are also saving \$10 - \$20 in fuel costs per trip. That is a significant amount of saving when you consider West Virginia's median household income is approximately \$41,000 (census.gov) per year.

West Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles

With each online transaction taking an average of two minutes to complete versus the 10 plus minutes on average for in-house, the benefits to the DMV are overwhelming. By looking at data for just services offered to the general population, excluding motor carriers and dealers, a total of 59,584 online transactions were completed in 2015. The difference is then calculated between hours to process online requests versus in-house requests, the total is approximately 8,000 hours respectfully. As a result of processing those requests online through the self-service application, the DMV has saved the equivalent time of four (4) fulltime employees. This time savings allows employees to help provide customer service in other areas. As adoption rates continue to increase, so will the benefits. This means shorter lines and happier customers.

State of West Virginia

The application was developed using a self-funded model resulting in \$0 cost to the state. Users are charged a fee to use the online application. This fee is then applied to further enhance DMV and state-wide eGovernment services.