



# Digital Government

*Ohio's Government to Citizen Journey*

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# Executive Summary

As consumer interaction with brands, companies, and each other grows increasingly digital—and at a time when digital expectations are higher than ever—the State of Ohio is using Portal Builder, a website and portal accelerator, to improve and increase engagement with Ohio citizens.

**Portal Builder** comes at a time when today’s private sector consumer expects most interactions, transactions, and information to be available digitally. And their expectations of government are even higher, especially given that websites and portals are the primary tools for state agencies, boards, and commissions to communicate with and provide services for citizens. One study shows that 85% of citizens expect government to provide a similar, if not better, digital experience than the private sector. The State of Ohio recognized this as an opportunity to better serve Ohioans by releasing a new capability called Portal Builder, an accelerator that allows the State to easily create modern, responsive and ADA-compliant websites and portals.

Portal Builder both **elevates and protects the user experience**, at the same time enabling a **consistent journey across Ohio’s digital landscape**. Through state-of-the-art security practices, Portal Builder ensures that websites adhere to NIST and federal/state privacy and security regulations to safeguard constituent information. It also builds in accessibility guidelines, per Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, to better meet the needs of disabled citizens.

Through the **automated efficiency** of a centrally managed platform, Portal Builder **reduces administrative redundancy across the enterprise**, allowing agencies to focus resources on their critical mission and the citizens they serve. But Portal Builder is more than a powerful content management system. The “content first” approach ensures that the consumer need for accuracy, consistency, and timeliness is at the forefront when content is built.

Portal Builder gives communications departments and other non-technical roles direct access to make real-time content updates, which enables state agencies, boards, and commissions to quickly communicate time-sensitive information to citizens when they need it and frees up IT resources to focus on activities more complex and strategic than updating websites.

**Driven by templates and reusable components**, Portal Builder is designed to easily integrate with state systems and has flexibility and customization for agency security needs, including single sign-on, two factor authentication and even the ability to use identity proofing.

The most immediate benefit of Portal Builder is speed-to-market. This scalable enterprise solution quickly brings state websites and portals live without the typical lengthy procurement and implementation process, accelerating benefits to agencies and their citizens. And its cloud-based infrastructure enables rapid deployment of additional capacity. In fact, adoption by state agencies has far exceeded preliminary estimates, more than doubling initial targets.



*Portal Builder unifies how the State of Ohio appears to constituents and opens the door for government to **interact directly with its citizens in real-time through a modern, accessible platform** that is ready for the digital future.*

# Concept

Releasing a capability like Portal Builder with wide-sweeping opportunities to reduce administrative redundancy and to raise the bar for how the State interacts with citizens was a win-win both for state government and the people of Ohio. Portal Builder allows the State to engage with its citizens through a modern, secure, and responsive digital channel, making state services and resources available to all Ohioans – on any device, at any time. By streamlining customer services and improving the way Ohioans interact with government, Ohio positions itself as an attractive place for people to live and work.

## Portal Builder Capabilities:

 **Single Sign-On**  
Sign in once to get to everything

 **Governance & Access Control**  
Manage users, content and audit history

 **Mobile Ready**  
Responsive templates and components

 **Centralized Compliance**  
Adherence to federal/state security & privacy standards

 **ADA-Compliant**  
Built-in accessibility compliance

 **Site Analytics**  
Analytics for site owners and authors

 **2-Factor Authentication (2FA)**  
Secure assets with second factor

 **Real-Time Analytics**  
Monitoring and analysis

 **Automated Workflows**  
Content workflows and user journeys

 **Multi-Factor Authentication**  
Increased identity security when needed

 **Self-Service Portal**  
For integrations and users

 **Optimized Content Search**  
Search across content and meta data

 **Privileged Access Management**  
Greater controls for sensitive accounts

 **Content Management**  
Self-service content

 **Aggregate Applications**  
Integration of application content

 **Identity Proofing**  
NIST-compliant proofing

**Centralizing compliance to secure data, enabling agencies to specialize their focus area**, Portal Builder's framework and pre-integration with enterprise identity provides a cost-efficient way for agencies and programs to comply with federal and state information security standards, policies, and regulations. These standards are centrally managed, freeing up agency funding and resources to support agency missions that directly benefit Ohioans.

When it comes to the customer, security comes first. With the rise of data breaches, it has never been more important for state government to ensure best in breed security and privacy for citizen data. A 2018 Ponemon Cost of Data Breach Study found that the average per capita cost of a data breach in the U.S. is \$233, an estimate that does not account for the cost of reputation damage and trust erosion with citizens. With the financial and reputational stakes high, the best solution is prevention, which is why the State of Ohio has made security and privacy a top priority with Portal Builder.

**Automating accessibility for every Ohioan.** Accessibility is at the heart of the State's Portal Builder accelerator – both in the ease of navigating state resources and services and in making state websites and portals available to all Ohioans. Portal Builder's built-in templates and patterns not only embrace best practices and cutting-edge UI components, but also automate ADA compliance so that Ohioans using site readers such as JAWS or other visual aids have access to the same valuable state and agency resources and services as every other citizen.

# Concept Con't

**Fueling collaboration across agency lines through shared content.** State governments are organized as departments and divisions, but customers – the people and businesses within the state – don't see it that way. The State of Ohio is **transforming customer digital experience through services like Portal Builder.** Through Portal Builder, specific agency content can be elevated to other agency sites or comprehensive state websites like ohio.gov to highlight a relevant policy, press release, or resource. The agency retains ownership of their content while the system has one single source of truth, proliferating any updates throughout the state ecosystem and **ensuring that content always reflects updated information.** This technology fuels collaboration across state agencies, encouraging agencies to operate outside of their silos and reach out across organizational boundaries to provide a better, more cohesive customer experience within the State of Ohio digital landscape.

A recent example of collaboration on food recalls, fueled by Portal Builder functionality, demonstrates how sharing content can enhance the customer experience and improve operational efficiencies for the State. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) publish food recall news and information on their respective websites, which are extremely time-sensitive and must be clear as citizen safety is at stake. "Traditionally, both ODH and ODA maintained separate databases and would manually coordinate with the other agency as needed," according to Russell Satori, Data Administration Manager for ODH's Office of Communications. "Each agency would produce recall notices on their respective websites that often contained duplicate information but organized differently."

Since onboarding their websites to Portal Builder, the agencies are now able to streamline their collaboration efforts to produce these recalls from one source using the content-sharing feature. Andrew Thomas from ODH's Food Recall program stated, "Our recalls have a much more consistent look and feel now." He continued, **"This consistency and Single Source Of Truth (SSOT) approach is helpful in reducing duplicative information. Ensuring food recalls are accessible to the general public is a priority for us."**

The ability to enable this type of collaboration is a win for customers and the State. "Having a shared platform that ODH can collaborate with other state agencies where data and information intersect, is extremely helpful," Satori stated. He continued, "Structuring data into shared models and SSOT methodologies can only make important health-related content like food recalls, more accessible to the public."

**Enabling real-time citizen engagement.** Behind Portal Builder is a content management tool that enables real-time interaction with citizens through a "content first" mindset, decentralized authoring capability, and personalized content delivery. Rather than traditionally backed legacy engines that require IT staff with HTML or programming backgrounds located on-site to update content, Portal Builder's content authoring tool makes updating content easy and accessible, since the platform can be updated anytime, anywhere (provided there is internet access) by anyone – technical or HTML knowledge not required.

The content management system behind Portal Builder allows for built-in workflows and governance so agency communications teams are able to create and publish their own content with the appropriate review processes automated through the system. Content authors are trained to use a "content first" methodology so that there is only one page per idea, aligned to how a citizen would look for resources. Once content reaches publication, the personalization capabilities of Portal Builder provide the ability to match services and content to a specific user based on their user profile so that users see information that is relevant to who they are and what they need.

# Concept Con't

Without relying on an IT department to publish content, state agencies can flex and adjust content as needed based on what information is relevant to citizens at any given time. For example, while Tax Season only occurs for a finite time period, its impact to citizens is great and therefore information, updates, and resources surrounding taxes and online tax filing services become increasingly more relevant to the public during this particular time of the year. Ohio.gov is able to highlight and target content to align with this time-sensitive topic so that Ohioans can easily locate the information they need to file their taxes on time.

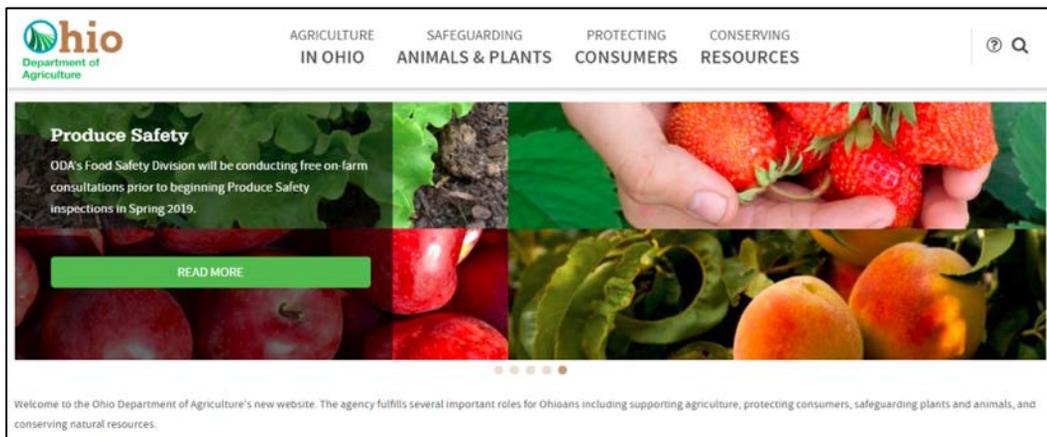
Through the tools fueled by Portal Builder, agencies can have direct engagement with the citizens who consume their services and can tailor content based on agency priorities and current events. Updated, relevant site content builds trust between government and the citizens it serves.

## Significance

Portal Builder capabilities and benefits are leveraged differently across state agencies based on agency priorities and pain points with current website and platform technology and capabilities.

### Use Case 1: Department of Agriculture

The Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) updated citizen-facing website, [agri.ohio.gov](http://agri.ohio.gov), launched with Portal Builder in early June 2018 as the agency entered one of its busiest times of year. Constituents visiting the modernized site encounter an updated look and feel as well as streamlined, intuitive navigation to regulatory, compliance, health, and other critical agency information. In the past, information was presented according to the agency's organizational structure, making it difficult for those outside the agency to find the information they needed. The new site is built with a customer focus, understanding the constituents' points of view.



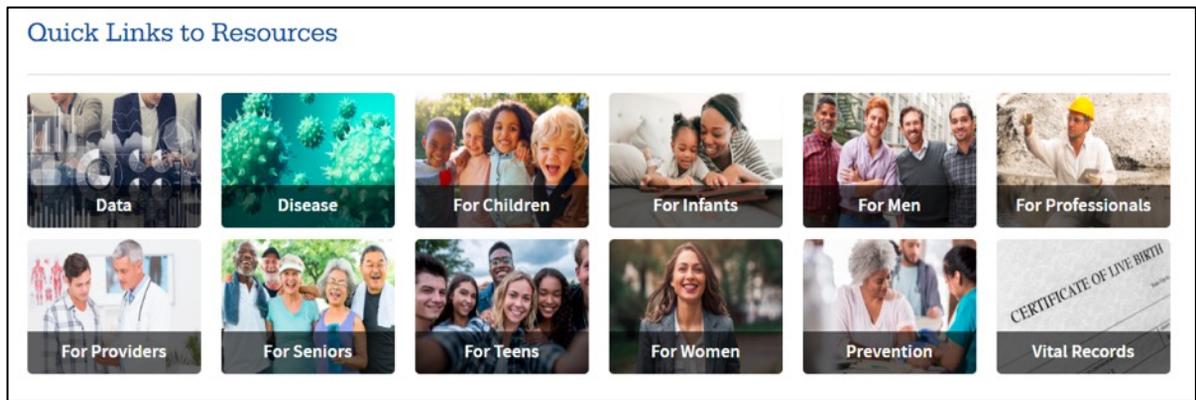
The Department of Agriculture wanted to put the ability to publish content in the hands of the Communications Team. Portal Builder's simple-to-use Content Authoring Tool allows content authors to push content directly to the website in near real-time, from a computer or mobile device. ODA was able to leverage these **new mobile-friendly tools to post content live from the State Fair**, the biggest event of their year, allowing them greater flexibility to produce more relevant content without waiting for IT to work the ticket and publish. The ability to post on location, in near real-time, provides tremendous value, especially during the busy summer season as event news is plentiful and schedule changes can happen at any time.

# Significance con't

Since going live with the site, the communications team's reliance on its IT counterparts for website updates has been almost completely eliminated, freeing up developer resources to focus on technology projects and to drive forward the agency's strategic technology initiatives.

## Use Case 2: Department of Health

In Spring 2018, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) embarked on an effort to re-imagine their external-facing website utilizing Portal Builder. With over 150 individual programs requiring access to and representation within the new site, more than 250 individuals were responsible for creating and migrating over 3,000 pieces of content to the new site. However, this project wasn't just a re-design – ODH wanted to reimagine their website in a way that put “content first,” meaning it is curated and organized in a way that makes it intuitive for customers to find the information they are looking for and need.



With such a large team to train on the “content first” methodology, revised business processes and Portal Builder functionality, ODH enacted a “Change Champion” initiative in partnership with the Portal Builder project team. The project team identified individuals from ODH who would learn the new methodology, business processes and functionality at a deep level, and then help spread the information and skills to others across the ODH program teams. The benefit of this approach is that it prevented “bottlenecks” created when only a few individuals have the ability to create website content. Additionally, the initiative strengthened relationships and trust between the ODH programs and Change Champions.

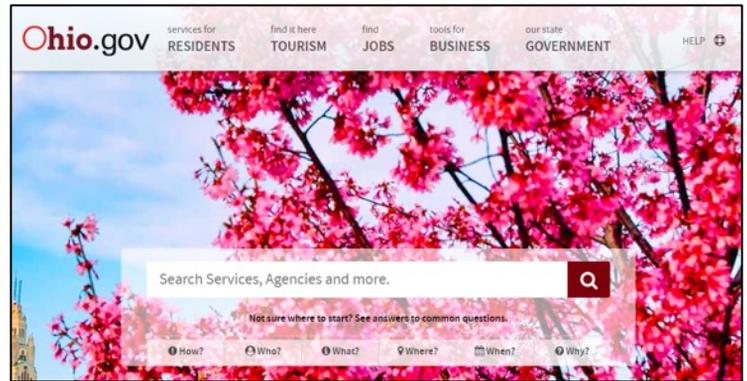
Now live, [odh.ohio.gov](http://odh.ohio.gov) is designed to put content that ODH's constituents want and need at the forefront. With Portal Builder, “we could completely recreate our website with a fresh, modernized look,” said Jaime Erickson, ODH's HR Director. “The templates and branding used are consistent across other State agencies' sites and offers interactive content that really appeals to users.”

## Use Case 3: Ohio.gov

Ohio.gov used the State of Ohio's Portal Builder to redesign their new website, seeking to better guide constituents to valuable state resources and provide the website with a fresh, modernized look and feel. The previous website, although full of great information, proved difficult for users to navigate the numerous links and to return search results that would guide them to the information they needed quickly and efficiently. The new [ohio.gov](http://ohio.gov) website was designed with Ohio's constituents in mind to create a website with relevant, valuable and easily accessible content and an overall improved user experience.

# Significance con't

Within the first month of its launch on August 31, 2018, over 70,000 constituents visited the newly designed website. The new ohio.gov site serves as a centralized hub for state resources and provides constituents with the information they need through pre-loaded commonly asked questions organized by topic. This feature allows simple, intuitive navigation tailored specifically for those topics that people most frequently look for on the site in their proper context.



Ohio.gov often is a landing page for users who aren't exactly sure what they are looking for, so the new ohio.gov site optimized search to better assist these constituents. The new search feature is a focal point of the website, guiding users to what they are looking for and providing quick answers to create an all-around better searching experience.

The ohio.gov website will continue to improve users' experience on the website with the addition of a new, universal navigation functionality that not only brands all Portal Builder sites as official government websites but also makes state government sites more interconnected, enabling users to easily navigate to and from each site. This feature establishes these sites as the authoritative source of truth for information, building trust with constituents. Portal Builder provides the ability to tie in an alert feature, enabling time sensitive food recalls and emergency alerts to reach constituents quicker. Some of the most frequently viewed content on the site relates to jobs, unclaimed funds, unemployment, child support, voter registration, and education. Ohio.gov gathers resources for these topics that matter most to Ohioans in one place, making it easier to navigate state government.

## Impact

As success stories throughout the state like Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio.gov become the norm, more and more Ohio agencies, boards, and commissions are choosing Portal Builder to accelerate their website/portal development and elevate citizen engagement. Since 2018, 20 websites and portals have launched through Portal Builder with another 16 in the pipeline for 2019. With DIY toolkits and an upcoming developer portal, the State of Ohio is making it easy for its nearly 140 state agencies, boards, and commissions to on-board their websites and portals to Portal Builder. Once launched with Portal Builder, the State will have tighter control on consistent state branding and intuitive user experience across the enterprise, with the ability to streamline business processes so that Ohioans can interact seamlessly with the State as a single entity.

Portal Builder streamlines the customer experience and citizen interaction with the State of Ohio so that engagement with state government is both positive and productive for the citizen. This technology is transforming the way that the State of Ohio engages its constituents, improving service delivery and making it easier for Ohioans to access the resources they need from their government.