

The 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act (21st Century IDEA)

Section 1 – Short Title

The Act may be cited as the 21st Century IDEA

Section 2 – Findings

American citizens deserve and expect a modern, cost effective digital experience when interacting with the federal government – an experience that mirrors that which they have in their everyday lives. Recent data from the IRS shows that in-person or live assistance calls to the agency cost taxpayers between \$40 and \$60 on average, while digital transactions cost only \$0.22 on average¹. A recent 2017 Forrester Research study on Federal Customer Experience Index also found that, “federal websites and mobile apps still offer experiences that are worse than those provided by nondigital channels like physical locations and call centers.”² The need for enhanced citizen-facing digital service delivery is clear and will dramatically drive down the cost of government operations and improve customer experience.

Restoring the United States Government’s global leadership in technology and digital government requires a new approach. To that end, legislation is needed to modernize federal agency websites, support the increase use of mobile devices, transition away paper-based forms and in-person transactions and modernize to a 21st Century digital government experience.

Section 3 – Federal Agency Website Modernization

This section requires that all executive agencies to meet minimum requirements for publicly facing websites and digital services:

- Improve effective and efficient delivery of digital services,
- Consolidate and personalize web content,
- Make information searchable and discoverable,
- Ensure secure connection,
- Ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and
- Increase use of web and data analytics to improve website operation and address user needs
- Compliance with GSA's U.S. Web Design System

Existing agency websites have 1-year from the date of enactment of the legislation to meet the requirements of this section. New agency websites must meet the requirements upon go-live. The head of each executive agency shall ensure to the greatest extent practicable that all new Intranets conform to the requirements in this section.

¹ IRS – The Electronic Tax Administration Advisory Committee’s June 2015 Annual Report to Congress

² Forrester Research – The US Federal Customer Experience Index, 2017

Section 4 - Digitize Government Processes and Eliminate Paper

Section 4 requires that each executive agency promote the digitization of all public-facing services and transition from paper-based forms to digital.

It gives agencies:

- 2 years from the date of enactment to provide a “digital option” for any in-person government service.
- 1-year from the date of enactment to ensure that any public-facing paper-based form, application or service is made available in a digital (intuitive and adaptive) form.

Section 5 - Promote the Use of Electronic Signatures

This section gives agencies 180 days from the date of enactment to submit a plan to increase the use of electronic signatures on contracts and related documents. Under the legislation the head of each executive agency must certify compliance with the ESIGN Act of 2000 and OMB Circular A-130 – Managing Information as a Strategic Resource. The increased use of electronic signatures speeds government approval processes.

Section 6 – Customer Experience and Digital Service Delivery

Without a responsible agency official, the requirements of the above sections won’t get carried out effectively. To that end, this section gives responsibility to the Chief Information Officer of each executive agency to ensure the funding and implementation of these requirements. The Chief Information Officer is charged with:

- Coordinate with executive agency management leaders (Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, Digital Service Program Leads) to ensure proper funding and management alignment to support implementation of this bill.
- Continually monitoring the agency’s digital service delivery and recommending changes to the agency head when necessary
- Providing advice and assistance to agency leaders (customer experience officers, public affairs managers, web content and forms managers, and all other relevant parties) on digital service delivery and customer experience improvements
- Using qualitative and quantitative data relating to the agency customers’ experience and satisfaction, and to identify areas where improvement is needed.
- Coordinate and ensure executive agency compliance with Public Law 115-114 “Connected Government Act” – Federal Websites Required to be Mobile Friendly.