

## Government Web Sites Honored for e-Citizen Services



By Daniel Keegan, 07/18/2000

A local, a state and a federal World Wide Web site were each honored last week when the eCitizen Service Awards for best practices in electronic government were announced.

"We really focused on e-gov ideas that truly transform the way government works," said Daniel Greenwood, one of four judges and a lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Architecture and Planning. MIT and Andersen Consulting partnered to present the awards.

The judges chose the winners based on a variety of criteria, but focused on sites' comprehensiveness, simplicity and ability to empower citizens to conduct services by themselves, Greenwood said.

Boston's Web site ([www.cityofboston.gov](http://www.cityofboston.gov)) won in the local category because "it is powerful in terms of the number of transactions it supports," Greenwood said. Despite the city's complexity and size, Greenwood said, the site offers services in a wide range of areas.

In contrast with Boston's site, the state winner focused its services on one area. Virginia's Department of Motor Vehicles electronic services site ([www.dmv.state.va.us/dmvnet/online.asp](http://www.dmv.state.va.us/dmvnet/online.asp)) "homed in on this services sliver of vehicle transactions," Greenwood said. "I can't think of a vehicle transaction that you can't do on this site."

Greenwood was also impressed with Virginia's administration of personal identification numbers: A person enters information and then the department mails the identification number to the address of the license holder on record. "Virginia just showed how simple and secure you can be," he said, adding that complex security measures are often unnecessary.

The judges also awarded the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue's Electronic Taxpayer Service Center a Government Prototype award because it showcases emerging thinking in e-government. The center is a state-of-the-art facility where taxpayers can use public terminals to request tax information or check on the status of their cases, with assistance provided by customer service representatives.

The winning federal Web site was Greenwood's favorite. He said he was "struck by how comprehensive" the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Homes and Communities ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)) site was. "They really knew why people are going to their site and designed it for them."

He said it was well organized, providing consistent headers to direct citizens and a variety of ways to find information ♦ such as by topic or demographic group. And it was pretty. "It has nice colors," he said. "A lot of these sites are just ugly."