Nine Ways To Master Two–Click Website Navigation for Local Governments

Explore different ways to give your residents their most sought–after information in just two clicks or less.

The expectation that website users can find everything they want in just two clicks is based on ease of use and efficient navigation. It is often associated with the concept of "findability" in web design and user experience. Residents want to be able to do business and conduct transactions with their local government quickly and with ease, making it critical that municipalities focus on enhancing their website navigation.

Important note: It's good to point out that the "two-click rule" is not a strict requirement or a universally agreed-upon standard. Think of it more as a guideline to encourage website designers and developers to prioritize simplicity and accessibility in their building. The actual number of clicks required may vary depending on the website's complexity and the user's specific goals.

Our fact sheet offers tips and best practices for making the top searched-for content in your community available with two (maybe even one) clicks.

Why You Should Care About Findability

Attention span and impatience: People generally have a limited attention span and tend to be impatient when browsing websites. They prefer to find information quickly without navigating multiple pages or menus.

User experience standards: Over the years, web design best practices have evolved to (rightly) prioritize intuitive and fluid user experiences. These standards encourage designers to minimize the number of clicks required to access information, aiming to make it effortless for users to find what they need.

Familiarity with search engines: Search engines like Google have conditioned users to expect instant access to relevant information with just a few clicks. When did you last look at more than the first three or four search results? People have become accustomed to the convenience of typing a query and receiving immediate results, leading to higher expectations for website navigation.

Competition and high standards: With the seemingly unlimited number of websites available on the internet, community members have come to expect a high level of navigability and convenience. Failing to meet these expectations, government websites run the risk of reducing resident satisfaction and trust, due to a subpar user experience.

Nine Ways To Reach the Golden Standard of
Two–Clicks or Fewer Navigation

Utilize Website Search Data

To streamline navigation and make it easier for your residents to find what they're looking for, it's essential to pinpoint the most frequently sought-after information within your community. This will be niche and specific to your area and can include anything from local events and amenities to important contact information for city services. By identifying these critical pieces of information, you know what to highlight on your website interface to save your residents time and hassle.

Optimize Search Bar Placement

If you sell cookies, you wouldn't want to hide them away, so they're difficult for customers to find. This applies to your website's search bar placement as well. Some municipalities put it right in the middle of the page, some in one of the upper corners. The idea is that residents are coming to your website looking for something specific. Please don't force them to navigate the main menu. Make it easy, and place the search box in a prominent area so users can navigate directly to the information they need.

Add Quick Links

Adding highly visible quick links to highly searched information and phrases on your website is invaluable. This immediate access can greatly improve the user experience on your website. To ensure easy navigation, it's critical to prominently display these quick links above the fold, where they are accessible to visitors. Doing so fosters positive civic interactions between residents and your municipal digital content.

Add a Chatbot

Chatbots and other resident self-service functionalities are quickly becoming more widely used tools by local governments. Residents can find AI-powered chatbots helpful in obtaining local information, news, and municipal forms. You can also use the information gathered by a chatbot to create quick links and understand what your residents are commonly searching for. The rapid pace at which technology is developing will not slow; if anything, you can expect it to continue accelerating and for more significant leaps to occur. Ensure you stay current with advancements to optimize and allow more opportunities for your users to have a two-click navigation experience.

Clear and Intuitive Navigation

Your website needs a well-organized and easily accessible navigation menu. Use clear labels and logical categories that align with residents' expectations.

Consolidation and Simplification

Avoid unnecessary layers of submenus or excessive content levels. Simplify the website structure by consolidating related information and eliminating redundant pages. The fewer web page layers individuals need to navigate to find the information they need, the happier and more positive the civic interaction will be.

Smart Linking and Cross–Referencing

Utilize contextual linking within the website content to direct users to related information or relevant sections. Make sure to provide clear and concise descriptions for each link, allowing users to make informed decisions on whether to click or not. Smart and accurate context linking helps build resident trust in their local government.

Mobile–Friendly Design

With an increasing number of users accessing websites through mobile devices, your website must be responsive and optimized for mobile viewing. A mobile-friendly design allows for hassle-free navigation and reduces the need for excessive clicking on smaller screens.

User Feedback and Testing

Continuously gather user feedback through surveys, focus groups, or user testing sessions to identify pain points and areas where residents struggle to find information. Use this feedback to refine the website's design and navigation, making it more user-friendly.
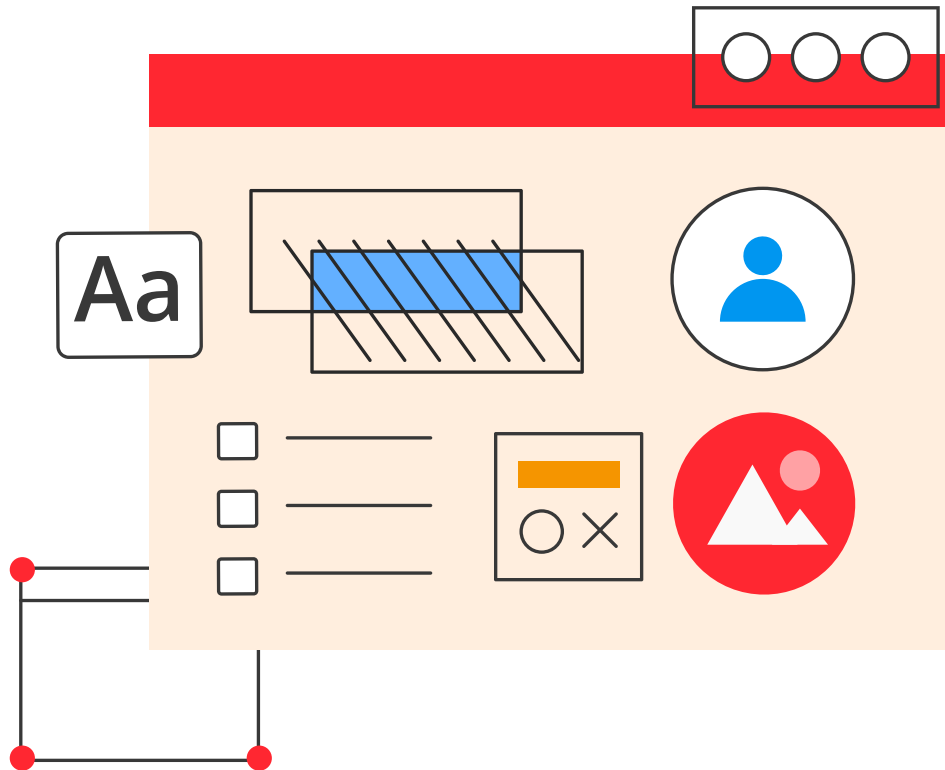
To elevate your community's website experience, make it effortless for residents to find the most in-demand information by considering the following:

- Analyzing search data to know where best to place quick links and a query bar
- Utilizing a chatbot functionality of some kind
- Creating your navigation menu to be well-organized
- Employing contextual linking
- Simplifying your overall website structure
- Optimizing your municipal website for mobile viewing

If you commit to continuously gathering resident feedback to refine your website's design and user experience, you'll reach the golden two-click website navigation status.