

3 Key Takeaways About Usability

Government leaders are always looking for ways to better serve their communities, but sometimes their municipal websites can create unnecessary barriers. These 3 things will help you understand what usability is, and leverage its principles to communicate more effectively.

1 Make Things Easy

At it's core, usability describes how easy it is to use a given product, tool, website or system.

Ask yourself these questions to evaluate if your site is usable:

- **Ease of learning** - can users to accomplish basic tasks when they first arrive?
- **Efficiency** - how quickly can users perform tasks once they are familiar with the site?
- **Memorability** - how easily do users remember how to do something when they return to the site?
- **Errors** - how many errors do users make and how easily can they recover from them?
- **Satisfaction** - how pleasant it is to use the design?



The City of Wenatchee, WA uses clear navigation to guide visitors and a pleasant design to engage them

2 Understand How People Think and Feel

Usability is also about understanding the general likes and dislikes of your users. As you develop a website with usability in mind, it's good to remember that:

- Users scan and don't read in detail
- Users are typically drawn to images more than text
- Users have limited patience
- Users don't always make great decisions
- Users get frustrated easily



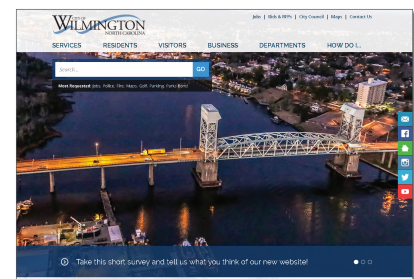
Racine County, WI uses a big search box to help users find what they need, so they don't need to dig through menus

3 Build Trust and Engagement

Usability helps build trust by providing easy transparent paths to information.

By embracing usability, local governments can:

- Produce information that is easily understood
- Encourage participation by making it easy to connect
- Demonstrate commitment to serving resident needs
- Increase productivity of internal operations
- Create confidence and improve satisfaction with leadership



The City of Wilmington, NC makes it easy for users to share their thoughts and connect with social media.