

U.S. Government Accountability Office: Focused on Facts

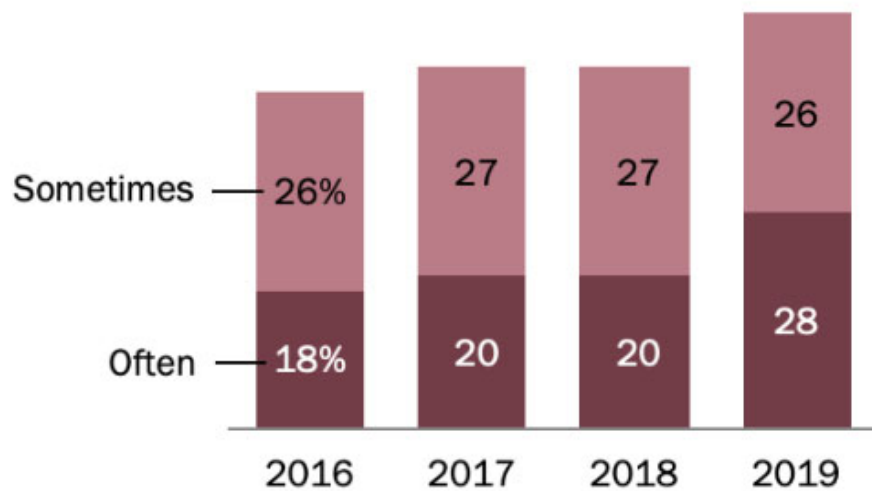


Chuck Young
Managing Director
Office of Public Affairs
US GAO

Communication landscape is changing...



% of U.S. adults who get news on social media sites ...



“more and more Americans get their news from social media”

Source: Survey conducted July 8-21, 2019.

“Americans Are Wary of the Role Social Media Sites Play in Delivering the News”

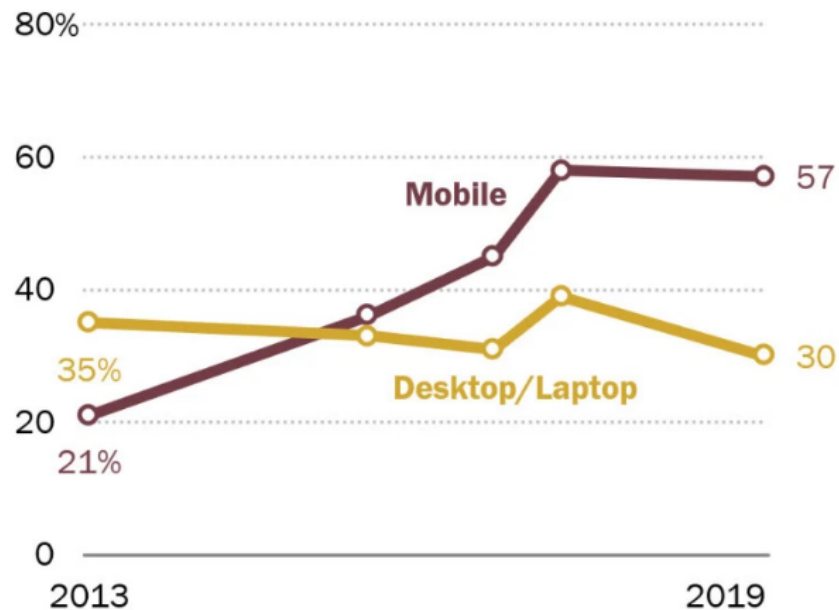
Source: Pew Research Center, [Americans Are Wary of the Role Social Media Sites Play in Delivering the News](#), October 2, 2019.

...with more information on smaller screens



About six-in-ten Americans often get news on a mobile device

% of U.S. adults who *often* get news from ...



“the share of Americans that own smartphones is now 81% — up from just 35% in 2011.”

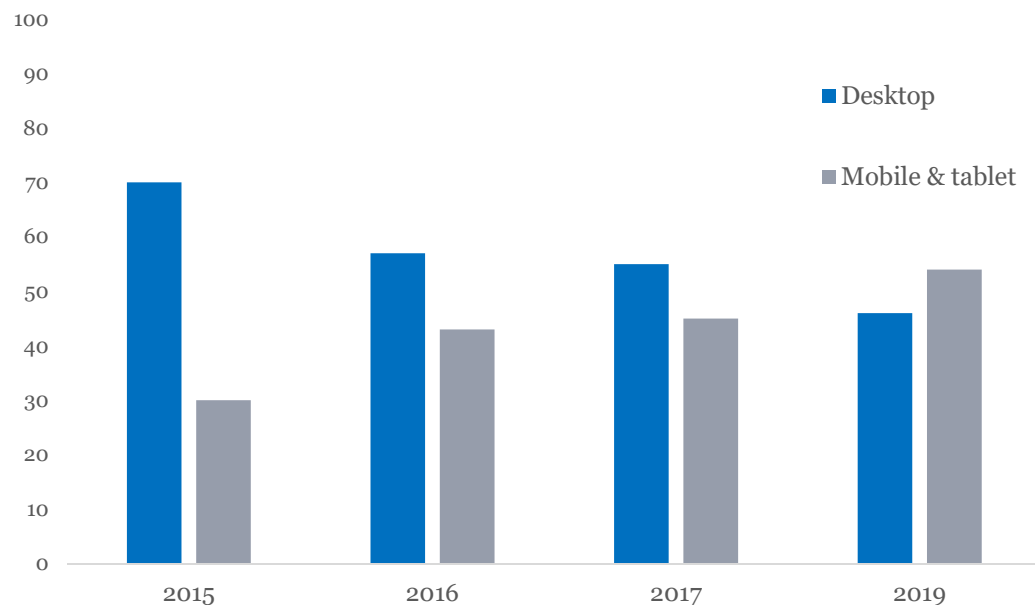
Source: Survey conducted July 8-21, 2019.

Source: Pew Research Center: [Americans favor mobile devices over desktops and laptops for getting news](#), Nov. 19, 2019 and [Mobile Fact Sheet](#), 2019.

U.S. government websites are no exception to this trend



Percent of traffic to federal sites by device



Mobile access to government websites outpaced desktops for the 1st time in 2019 — yet it was only 26% of traffic to GAO.gov last year

Note: 2018 data unavailable.

Source: Digital.gov [2016/2017 Mobile Analysis: Mobile Device Trends on Government Websites](#); post-2017 data from <https://analytics.usa.gov/>

S E C R E T.

W.P.(G)(40) 211.

COPY NO. 51

9TH AUGUST, 1940.

WAR CABINET.

BREVITY.

Memorandum by the Prime Minister.

To do our work, we all have to read a mass of papers. Nearly all of them are far too long. This wastes time, while energy has to be spent in looking for the essential points.

I ask my colleagues and their staffs to see to it that their Reports are shorter.

- (i) The aim should be Reports which set out the main points in a series of short, crisp paragraphs.
- (ii) If a Report relies on detailed analysis of some complicated factors, or on statistics, these should be set out in an Appendix.
- (iii) Often the occasion is best met by submitting not a full-dress Report, but an Aide-memoire consisting of headings only, which can be expanded orally if needed.
- (iv) Let us have an end of such phrases as these:
"It is also of importance to bear in mind the following considerations.....", or
"Consideration should be given to the possibility of carrying into effect.....".
Most of these woolly phrases are mere padding, which can be left out altogether, or replaced by a single word. Let us not shrink from using the short expressive phrase, even if it is conversational.

Reports drawn up on the lines I propose may at first seem rough as compared with the flat surface of officialese jargon. But the saving in time will be great, while the discipline of setting out the real points concisely will prove an aid to clearer thinking.

W.S.C.

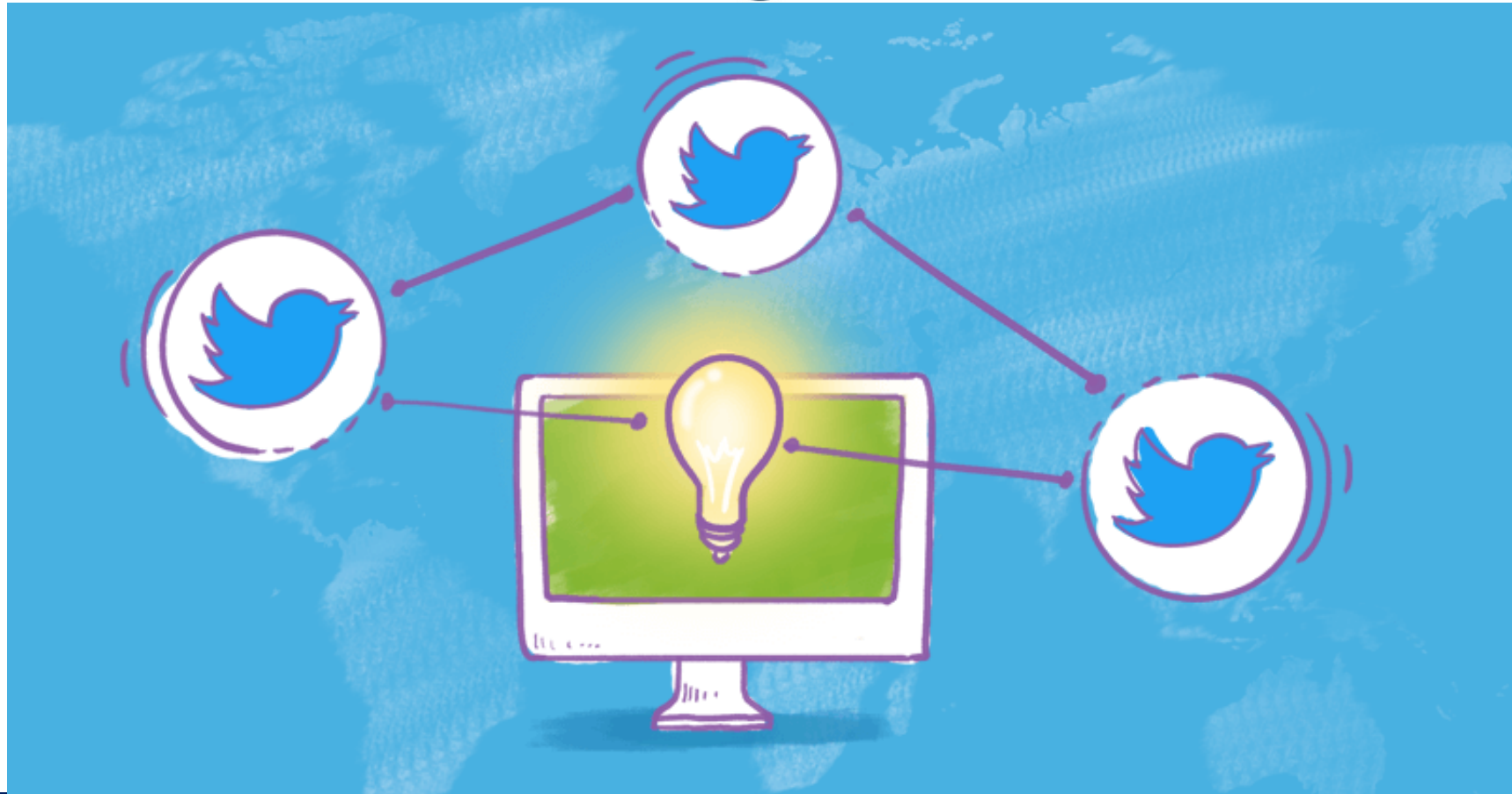


*Regardless
of platform or
device,
clarity is
critical*

So how do we ensure our facts get read?



Fast Facts and #JustFacts!

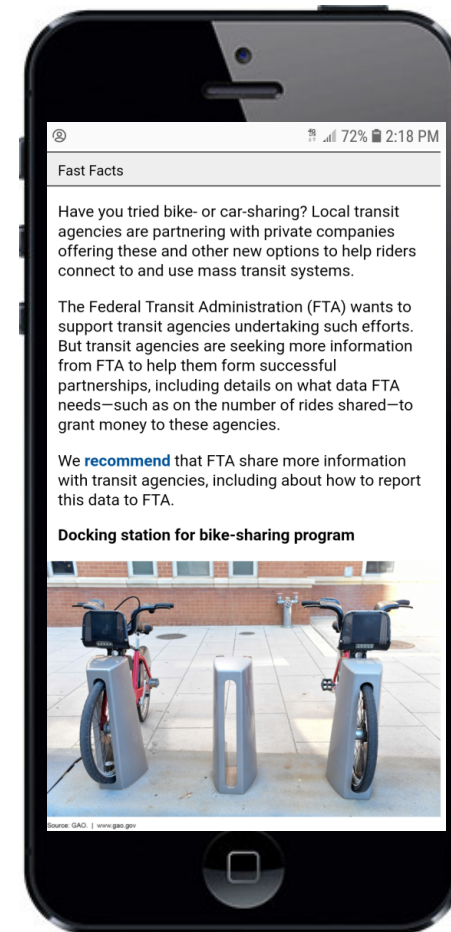


What is Fast Facts?

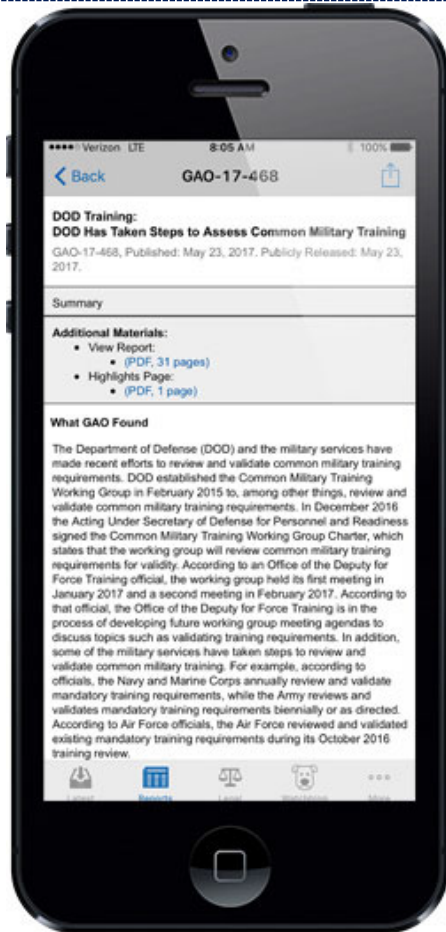


Brief (650 character) online introductions with a visual

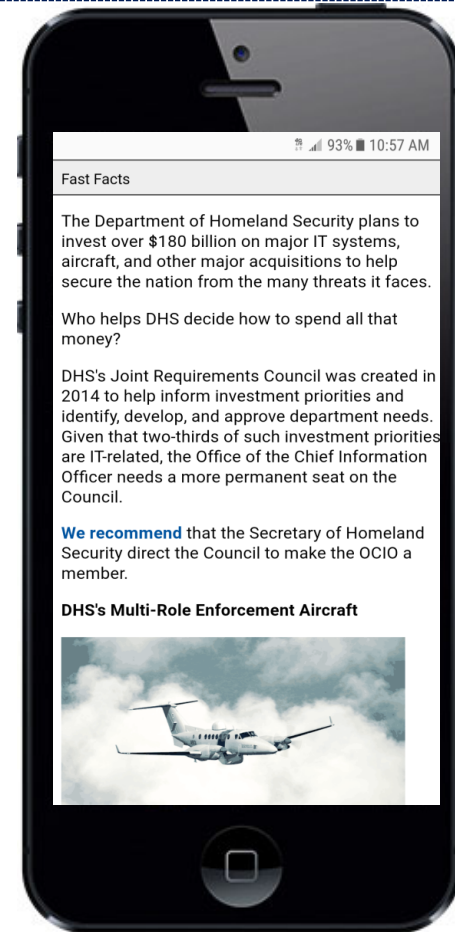
- Required for all publicly released products
- Not part of the audit product
- Designed with busy, mobile-readers in mind



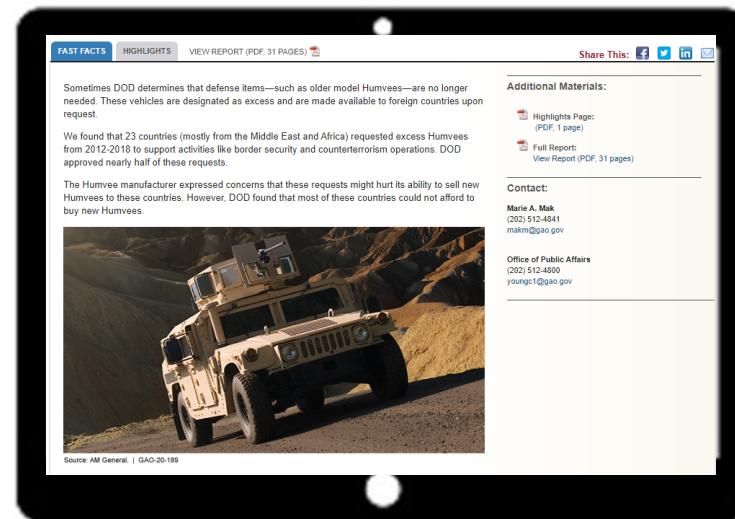
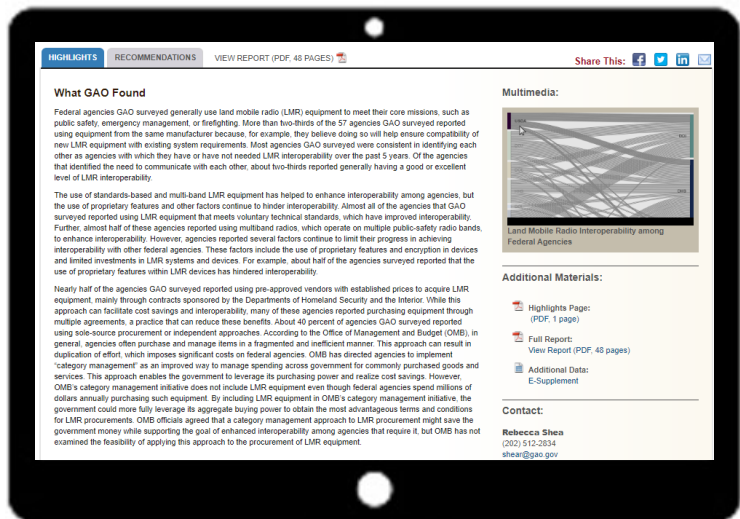
What is Fast Facts?



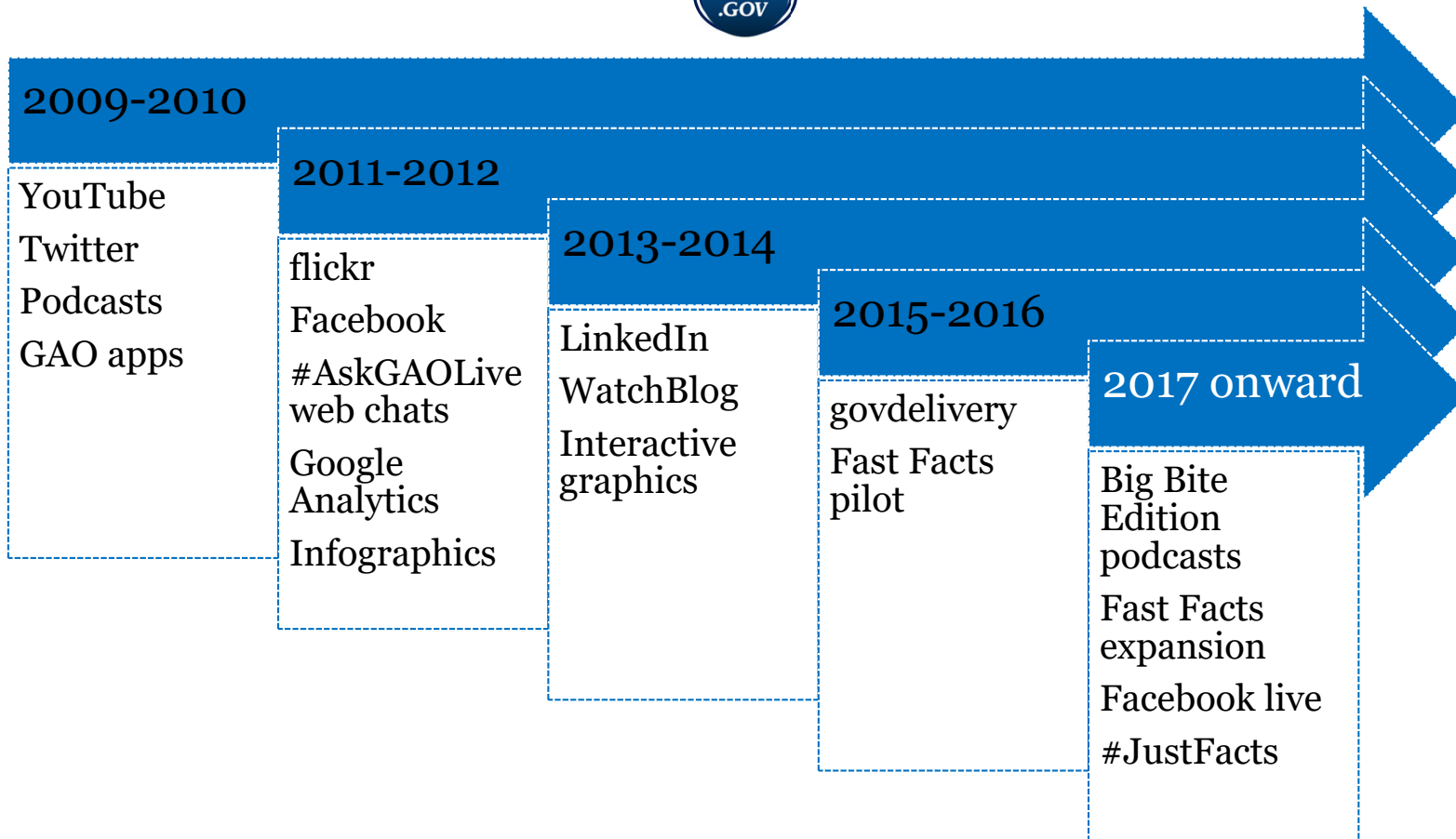
A better way to introduce readers to our work!



See for yourself!



Fast Facts evolved from ongoing efforts



Why Fast Facts? For our readers!



Reports with Fast Facts engaged readers

- Spent significantly more time on GAO.gov—especially on mobile devices
- Looked at more pages
- Downloaded more reports



Fast Facts immediately made GAO.gov more engaging...



Full Site Engagement Metrics for Fast Facts Visits Compared to GAO.gov Visits

| | Visits to gao.gov | Visits including Fast Facts | Percent change |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Bounce rate (percent of single-page visits) | <p>48.51%</p> | <p>33.21%</p> | 31.54% decrease |
| Average session duration | <p>2:55 minutes</p> | <p>4:54 minutes</p> | 68% increase |
| Average pages per session | <p>3.75 pages</p> | <p>5.3 pages</p> | 42.47% increase |

Note: The analysis compares how users interacted with GAO.gov when they viewed Fast Facts with how users interacted with GAO.gov from the same time period a year prior (without Fast Facts).

...with the greatest gains among readers on mobile devices



Mobile Site Engagement Metrics for Fast Facts Visits Compared to Site Visits

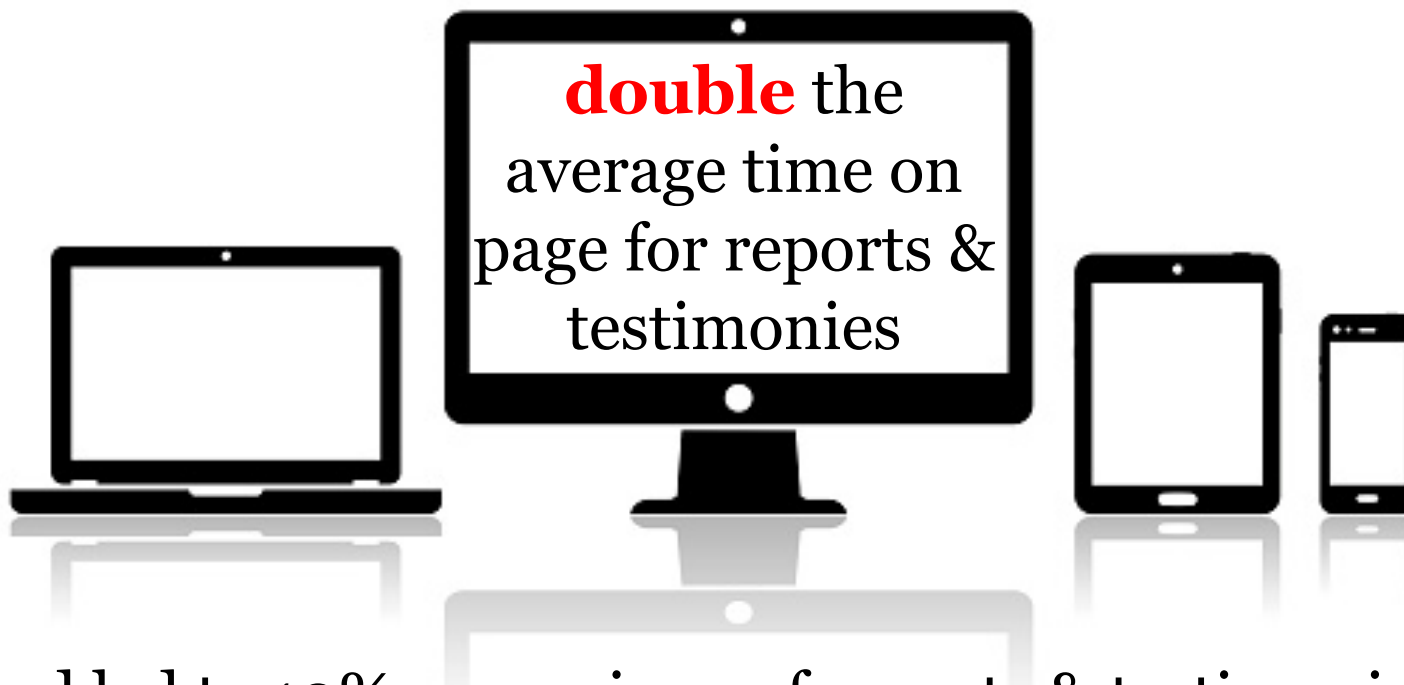
| | Visits to GAO's mobile website | Mobile visits including Fast Facts | Percent change |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Bounce rate | <p>71.65%</p> <p>0 100%</p> | <p>13.02%</p> <p>0 100%</p> | 81.83% decrease |
| Average session duration | <p>1:24 minutes</p> | <p>10:28 minutes</p> | 647.62% increase |
| Average screens per session | <p>2.19 pages</p> | <p>8.56 pages</p> | 290.87% increase |

Note: The analysis compares how users interacted with GAO's mobile website when they viewed Fast Facts with how users interacted with GAO's mobile website from the same time period a year prior (without Fast Facts).

Pre-Fast Facts (2015) vs Post-Fast Facts (2019)



Across devices, Fast Facts helped...



and led to 10% more views of reports & testimonies

Quotes from Users



“Fast Facts are **worth pursuing**. It gave enough information to decide a way to go [with my research.]” – Washington Post Reporter

Fast Facts is “**tremendously helpful**” and “**increases the usefulness** of products.” – Legislative Assistant

Fast Facts has “useful information and **the type of information that [elected officials] should know.**” – Legislative Assistant

Who online is trustworthy? #JustFacts



Freeing the Facts with #JustFacts



GAO's 700-1,000 annual reports & testimonies are chock-a-block with facts

Daily #JustFacts tweets help free the facts!



U.S. GAO
@USGAO

CHIP—the Children's Health Insurance Program—provides health insurance to low-income children who don't qualify for Medicaid.

gao.gov/products/GAO-20-12 #JustFacts #healthcare

Over 9 million children who don't qualify for Medicaid use CHIP.



GAO #JustFacts
Learn more: [GAO-20-12](https://gao.gov/products/GAO-20-12)

Freeing the Facts with #JustFacts



To serve [#veterans](#) in need of an organ transplant, [#VA](#) established the VA Organ Transplant Program in 1961. [gao.gov/products/GAO-2...](#) [#organdonation](#) [#JustFacts](#)

As of June 2019, over 113,000 people in the United States—including veterans—were waiting for an organ transplant.

GAO
Learn more: [GAO-19-595](#)



How many Historically Black Colleges and Universities are there in the U.S.? [gao.gov/products/GAO-1...](#) [#JustFacts](#) [#HBCU](#)

As of December 2018, there were 101 HBCUs in the United States.

GAO [#JustFacts](#)
Learn more: [GAO-19-328r](#)



In 2018, Congress temporarily expanded the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to include more [#studentloan](#) borrowers. But some borrowers may not know about the program because most loan servicers' websites don't have information on it. [gao.gov/products/GAO-1...](#) [#JustFacts](#)

1% of more than 50,000 Temporary Expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness requests were approved as of May 2019.

GAO [#JustFacts](#)
Learn more: [GAO-19-595](#)



Freeing the Facts with #JustFacts




“By sharing facts from GAO’s work...I’m hopeful that this initiative will help the public appreciate the knowledge GAO has developed in helping Congress oversee federal spending and performance”

~U.S. Comptroller General Gene Dodaro,
[The Washington Post](#)

Stats on #JustFacts



Our most engaging (**118** retweets, likes, replies) and farthest reaching #JustFacts tweet appeared in **109,481** feeds 

Yet average engagement on #JustFacts tweets is **3.2** — lower than for our other tweets



DYK that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (@ICEgov) is responsible for managing the Student and Exchange Visitor Program, which certifies schools to enroll foreign students? [gao.gov/products/GAO-1...](https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-297) #JustFacts



Foreign students interested in studying in the U.S. must be admitted to a Student and Exchange Visitor Program-certified school before applying for a visa. **GAO #JustFacts**
Learn more: [GAO-19-297](https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-297)

Stats on #JustFacts

Could more and better use of visuals make these more engaging?



#JustFacts from our report on options for safe disposal of unused #opioids: gao.gov/products/GAO-19-650

An estimated 11.1 million Americans misused a prescription pain reliever, including opioids, in 2017.

Learn more: [GAO-19-650](https://gao.gov/products/GAO-19-650)



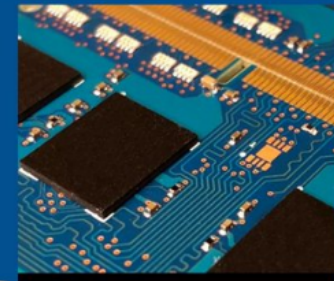
GAO #JustFacts



Printed circuit boards are used in both military and commercial systems, but U.S. production of printed circuit boards has declined over the last few decades. gao.gov/products/GAO-19-516 #JustFacts

90% of printed circuit boards are manufactured in Asia—with China accounting for half of the market.

Learn more: [GAO-19-516](https://gao.gov/products/GAO-19-516)



GAO #JustFacts

We're starting a deep dive on the data to find out!

Questions?



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