

Build Trust by Taking a Human-Centered Approach to Services

The importance of human-centered design (HCD) to the development of digital services is something that we are all aware of, even if we're not familiar with the concept. As end-users ourselves, we all know that if a service is not designed to meet our needs and to work the way we like to work, we end up frustrated — not just with the service but with the agency providing the service. That's why HCD plays a particularly crucial role in federal health communications and services, where trust is paramount.

As health agencies make a renewed effort to improve the customer experience (CX) of the people they serve, they need to make HCD a priority. Here is a look at HCD and how it works.



By the Numbers

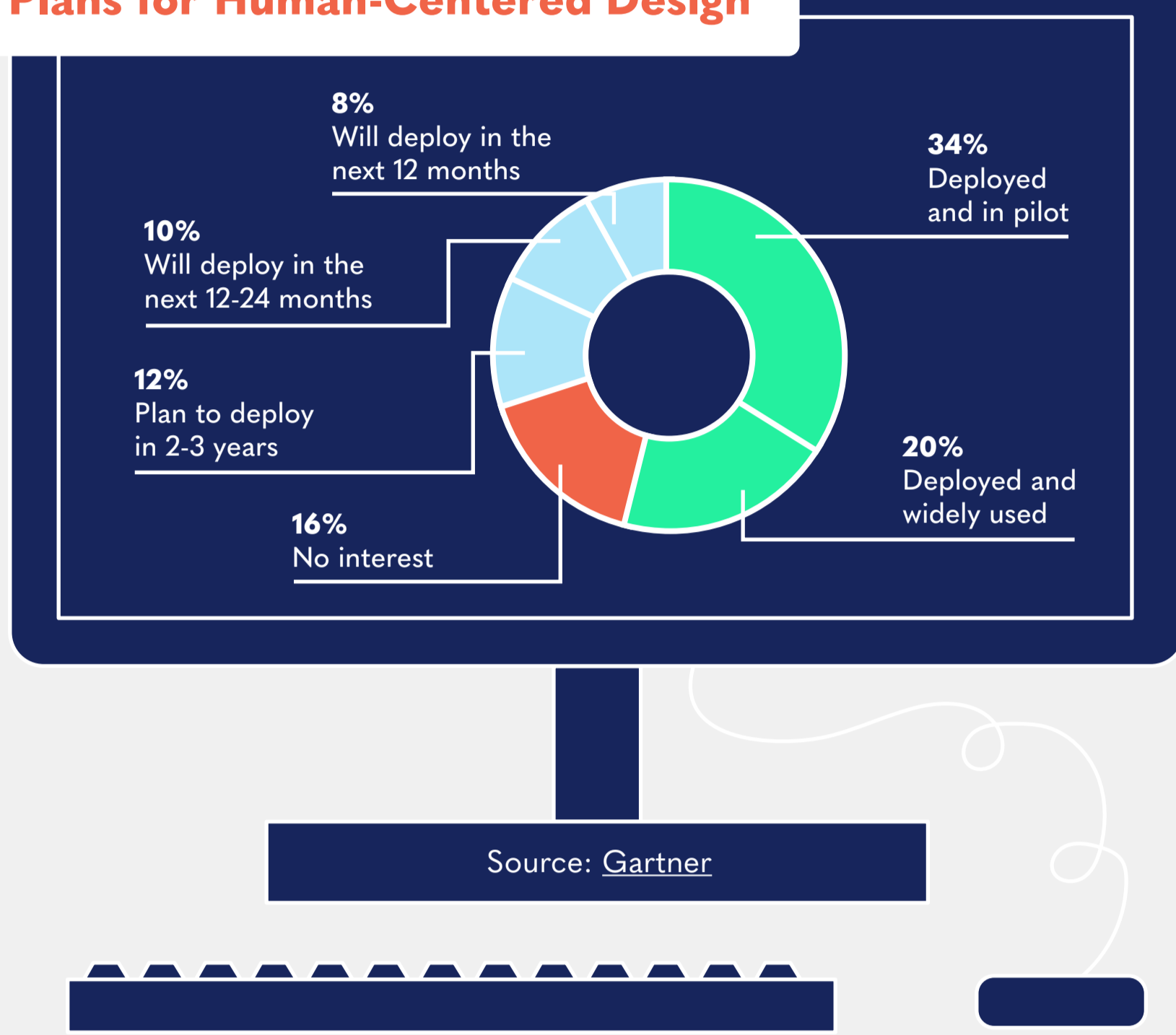
60%

60% of governments will integrate HCD techniques into their digital service design process by 2023. (Source: [Gartner](#))

40%

The amount by which one state improved the readability and comprehension of policy changes through an HCD-based video conference solution (Source: [Deloitte](#))

Government CIOs Adoption Plans for Human-Centered Design



The Six Principles of HCD

In practice, HCD entails getting user input throughout the development process, not just as a final step. Although HCD requires more work early in the process, it helps build better products that will require less troubleshooting and support in the long term. In developing HCD guidelines, the National Institute of Standards and Technology [highlights six basic principles](#):

1

Base the design upon a clear understanding of users, tasks, and environments. Whatever you're building should solve a specific user problem or help the user accomplish a specific task. It also needs to be tailored to how it's accessed, whether from a PC, mobile device or kiosk.

2

Involve potential end-users throughout design and development. Yes, working with end-users involves a lot more work upfront, which developers might resist. But that work will reduce the time spent fielding user calls and fixing problems later.

3

Drive and refine the design based on user-centered evaluation. Interviews with users and surveys help you determine exactly what users need and their pain points. Usability testing lets you pinpoint how they interact, and how they need to interact, with the solution.

4

Remember that the process is iterative. Every time you change or add functionality to an application, you need to conduct end-user testing all over again. Because even the smallest changes can create new difficulties for end-users.

5

Think in terms of the total user experience, or TX. Consider the user's holistic experience with a given service, not just the point of transaction. How easy is it to navigate?

6

Create a design team that includes multi-disciplinary skills and perspectives. The team of designers, developers, managers and test end-users should include people with diverse skills and backgrounds, each bringing a different point of view.

How to Center the Human Experience During Technical Design

HCD is not just about process. It's about a mindset that brings a human-centered lens to all the work you do. Here are five ways to keep HCD front and center.

Empathize: Be attuned to the perspective, needs and limitations of end users. Incorporate that understanding into any platform redesign. View all decisions through a human lens.

Communicate: Listen to the voices and opinions of the user base. Develop solutions collaboratively.

Design for accessibility: Account for cognitive impairment, limited dexterity, elevated anxiety, poor vision and any other impediments an end user may have to ensure that designs are equitable and accessible to all.

Ensure usability and simplicity: Prioritize functionality and intuitive designs. Clear instructions and straightforward navigation create a less confusing experience.

Leverage feedback: Maintain feedback loops to consistently improve and refine services once they are publicly available.

Every service you design and develop represents an opportunity to build trust with your constituents — or to undermine it. That is why improving CX has become a top priority across government organizations, and why HCD must be part of every CX initiative.

How National Government Services Helps



National Government Services has been a reliable and trusted partner to the federal government for more than 50 years, particularly supporting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services through every significant milestone in Medicare since the program's inception.

By emphasizing and prioritizing HCD across the enterprise, National Government Services is more agile in stronger delivery and improved user experiences that yield stronger insights and better outcomes for the millions of Americans served by federal health programs.

Learn more about National Government Services [here](#).