

Departments and Bureaus of Motor Vehicles (DMVs/BMVs), Driver Services Departments, and agencies across the United States and Canada are seeking to modernize their business models for continued customer service improvements. A key challenge is understanding how citizens currently perceive these services and how their expectations are evolving.

Increasing customer engagement and improving the user experience is a common thread for government agencies and businesses alike. Many are rapidly evolving their models to take advantage of new digital and self-service capabilities to do so, and Driver/Vehicle Services Departments want to do the same. However, gaining the necessary insights into citizen behaviors and desires for such new capabilities can tie up already limited staff and budgetary resources.

To support this effort, Thales recently surveyed more than 3,000 citizens in the U.S. and Canada to better understand their experiences with Driver/Vehicle Services Departments – and their expectations for the future. The findings from this research offer valuable insights for agencies across North America, whether they are launching new programs or seeking to boost engagement with existing services offered. A few of the most notable insights include:



Convenient, value-added services can drive transformation – if trust and security are assured.

Citizens overall are concerned about data security and privacy, and some may be uncertain about the security and usability of newer technologies. Understanding and addressing these concerns up front provides stronger success and customer satisfaction.



Citizens are very interested in accessing more services, through self-service options.

There is widespread enthusiasm for doing things more conveniently, including using online service portals and self-service kiosks, allowing routine procedures to be done more quickly and easily.



Adoption of mobile Driver's Licenses (mDL), or Digital IDs, is helping lead the way for jurisdictions across North America in redesigning their services and operations.

According to ABI Research, the number of Americans with an mDL on their smartphone will grow from 22 million in 2025 to 143 million in 2030. This Thales survey shows that convenience, remote services, and time savings are regarded as the top benefits of an mDL/Digital ID.

1 https://www.abiresearch.com/press/domestic-air-travel-and-digital-wallet-trends-drive-u.s.-mobile-drivers-license-install-base-to-143-million-by-2030

The survey covered multiple topics regarding Driver License services including the use of online portals or websites, self-service kiosks, and mDL or Digital IDs. The results also challenged some generational assumptions around technology use and adoption.

Some additional findings include:

Overall satisfaction with services provided by Driver/Vehicle Services Departments is strongest with older age groups. While respondents in the 65+ age group reported more than 80% satisfaction, the 18-24 age group reported only 56% satisfaction. Because today's 18-24 year-olds will become the 65+ year-olds of tomorrow, agencies should be ready as overall expectations evolve. Most frequently reported "other services" desired from a Driver/Vehicle Services Department include passport/travel services, vehicle registration/title services, services for other licenses/documents, online/remote services, and voter registration services (U.S. only). While services vary among jurisdictions, ensuring the awareness and convenience of services available can enhance the overall citizen experience.

2 out of 3 respondents indicated they would use, or have already used, a self-service kiosk to access services related to their Driver License or State ID. There is strong overall agreement amongst different demographics for the benefits of using a self-service kiosk (time savings, convenience, and availability) and a strong desire to use kiosks for transactions related to both Driver License/ID cards (DL/ID) and vehicle services (renewing and paying for a DL/ID, renewing vehicle registration, changing a DL/ID address, and more). Placing kiosks in secure locations, providing assistance for questions, ensuring strong data privacy, and clearly indicating accessibility (including for persons with a wheelchair), can address citizen concerns and ensure optimum use and satisfaction.

Respondents show a significant preference (near 70%) to obtain an mDL/Digital ID through official government channels, like a State ID Wallet, versus through a commercial channel like a smartphone provider. While 65% of citizens indicated they would adopt, or have already used, an mDL/Digital ID, demographic trends show some variation in adoption likelihood. Among Canadian respondents aged 18-24, 75% indicated interest in mDLs compared to 65% of the same age group in the U.S. Conversely, only 47% of citizens 65 and older reported being likely to adopt or use an mDL. Security and privacy with this technology are key areas of focus for respondents.

A strong interest is shown in adopting/using an online portal to access Driver License services.

Notably, the Baby Boomer generation (ages 65+) emerged with the highest likelihood, at 80%, for using an online portal for these services, versus the Generation Z age group (ages 18-24, commonly defined as most interested in technology and online services) which responded as 56% likely to use. Addressing concerns about security and data privacy remains important among all age groups. Providing transparency about how data and personal information is used can build trust and increase digital service adoption.

Overall, these survey findings provide useful guidance to jurisdictions in understanding their citizens' perceptions and expectations as future modernization efforts are planned. For example, while strong interest and public support for new technology (like mDL/Digital ID and self-service kiosks) is clear, and can create huge opportunities to transform jurisdiction services, rapid adoption may not be guaranteed. To drive transformation, agencies must proactively address perceived barriers by prioritizing trust, data security, and transparency in their digital initiatives.

Empowering citizens with these technologies can unlock countless new public sector and enterprise use cases, many of which depend on trusted proof of identity.



For more information about this Thales survey, including an upcoming more detailed report and an opportunity to discuss findings specific to your jurisdiction, please contact our North America Civil ID Sales (spencer.moore@thalesgroup.com) or Marketing (hanne.adamsen@thalesgroup.com) Leaders.



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