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How Login.gov uses roadmapping to build trust with its partners and the public

Login.gov created a first-of-its-kind, publicly-visible program roadmap and shares tips on how other programs can build their own roadmaps to improve transparency.



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About Login.gov

Login.gov enables members of the public to create a single digital account that provides access to their benefits and services at 50 federal and state agencies. This “one account for government” saves users time, saves taxpayers money, reduces complexity for agencies, and ensures consistent security and anti-fraud practices across government. As a digital identity provider, Login.gov offers digital identity management as a shared service to government agencies, including:

- An authentication service: Securely and seamlessly log into numerous government services with a single account using an email, password, and multi-factor authentication option.
- An identity verification service: Easily prove your identity from the convenience of your own home or on-the-go from your smartphone.

The problem: providing meaningful transparency

Public [trust](#) is valuable, hard-earned currency for government agencies, and it's becoming harder to earn. Over the last two years, trust in the federal government dropped 12 percentage points — from 35% in 2022 down to 23% in 2024. ^[1] Trust is especially important when it comes to online services because people are being asked to supply sensitive information digitally to receive benefits and assistance.

At Login.gov, we serve the public by giving them a way to securely and seamlessly access government websites. By working with agency partners that choose to use Login.gov as the “front door” into their systems, we help them reduce the overhead costs of managing an identity solution while they focus on their core mission.

As such, we are responsible for building trust in three ways:

- Directly with the public,
- Directly with agency partners that use Login.gov, and
- Indirectly with the public as part of each agency's service delivery channels.

Given the complex environment for building trust with these various audiences, the question became how best to navigate it while applying our foundational value of transparency.

A popular approach in software development is to build and share a product roadmap that articulates the direction of the service. However, these roadmaps can often become just lists of features and dates. This outcome can be counterintuitive and undermines trust by boxing an organization into a plan that isn't adaptable to an agile development process. Furthermore, these roadmaps often leave out the “why” — what the organization is doing, why the work is valuable, what tradeoffs the team makes, and more.

The Login.gov team set out to create its own version of a roadmap — and publish it publicly — to build trust while avoiding these common pitfalls.

The solution: a public roadmap

As we began developing what would become the first-of-its-kind [Login.gov Program Roadmap](#), we started actively seeking feedback from agency partners. The goal was to understand the value they were getting from Login.gov, the types of problems we were solving or could solve, and what types of capabilities they would like to see us explore. We gathered this feedback via a mix of surveys, “[voice of the customer](#)” working sessions, and ad hoc conversations.

We aggregated this feedback and provided it to our internal delivery teams, who incorporated it into their planning process by answering questions such as: How might we address agency needs? What tradeoffs need to be considered? How does all of this map to our program goals?

In theory, this sounds like one smooth, linear process, but in reality, it involves a number of small feedback loops. These loops include seeking customer feedback, analyzing that information, creating plans, and then returning as gaps or questions are uncovered during alignment-building.



We published the first Login.gov Program Roadmap in May 2023, with subsequent updates in November 2023 and May 2024. Not only is it iterative, but it is also publicly available to encourage transparency and feedback from agencies and the public.

In the roadmap, we lay out the impact of the program, as well as learnings that will inform future initiatives and strategic development. As a living document that is regularly updated, the roadmap is able to incorporate ongoing user research as well as feedback from agency partners to adapt these plans over time. In the interest of transparency, the roadmap also addresses challenges and potential barriers that Login.gov faces in achieving its mission and goals.

What we learned: how to build a roadmap that builds trust

Creating the Login.gov Program Roadmap invites an ongoing conversation with Login.gov partners. It allows the program to declare a destination and set a course based on agencies' needs. And like a “map”, it allows for alternative routes and detours to accommodate shifts and overcome barriers to reach the destination together. Based on our experience, here are a few takeaways for other programs interested in building their own roadmaps:


- **Start with “why.”** Ground your document in your organization's values and goals, and help your audience understand why certain decisions are being made or why certain initiatives are challenging.
- **Build it with your stakeholders and include user input.** This includes anyone who has a vested interest or influence in your program's success. Without their perspectives, your roadmap is incomplete, and you may lack the support you need to carry it out.
- **Make it iterative.** Once it's built, it will likely need to evolve over time. Continue to work with your stakeholders to gather user feedback to be agile and make changes when necessary.
- **Think about your audience.** Consider what level of information is needed to engage your audience and help them understand your program's rationale. Don't overwhelm them with information — more information does not necessarily mean more transparency as it could confuse your audience. Give them a way to connect with you if they have additional questions. For example, email address or other forum.
- **Refer to it as often as possible.** Using it — internally and externally — will improve alignment and help reinforce your program's ability to convey what you are doing and why it matters.

Looking ahead

With each iteration, the Login.gov Program Roadmap becomes an increasingly useful resource that Login.gov partners have come to rely on for updates and information. It informs how we talk about our program with stakeholders and motivates the team to work together toward common goals.

If you're interested in learning more about what we did or about Login.gov, let us know how we can help. Connect with us at partners@login.gov.

Footnotes

1. "Trust in Government Dashboard" (Partnership for Public Service). 2024. <https://ourpublicservice.org/our-solutions/rebuilding-trust-in-government/dashboard/>. 

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



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