



E-Business Metrics: How Are We Doing?

By Matthew Burks - Senior Product Manager for E Source Customer Experience Services | [0 comments](#)

Earlier this year, senior research associate [Sarah Fiebiger](#) and associate research director Florence Connally conducted the 2012 E-Business Metrics Survey. For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, it's an annual survey for the utility industry that provides definitions for common online activities and gathers critical benchmarking data. It's a detailed endeavor with loads of questions, but the invested time always proves to be a valuable exercise. This year, we received data from 52 North American utilities and uncovered some fascinating findings. I highly recommend checking out the archive of last month's [web conference](#) for members of the *E Source E-Channel Service*, where Sarah and Flo summarized the findings. Stay tuned for their written analysis, which is on its way soon.

This year's survey featured new questions on payment arrangements, online activity (including mobile), and online transactions, in addition to existing questions about paperless billing, payments, and moving. I want to share a few of the findings because the data are insightful and should help you gauge where you are with aspects of your current web efforts.

The good news is that paperless billing adoption continues to grow. We calculated a national average of 13.4 percent across all utility accounts, representing a steady growth trend since 2007. The region with the highest percentage of customers participating in paperless billing is the western U.S.; however, the U.S. South was a surprising second at around 15 percent. On the payments side, almost half of payments are now electronic, though it's fascinating to see the extreme separation between Canadian customers, who almost exclusively pay through online banking, and U.S. customers, who tend to have a more balanced split (though this varies widely by region) between direct and third-party billing.

Disappointingly, payment arrangements are still largely manually processed. Across all channels, only 14 percent are fully automated and the number is closer to 3 percent when looking at the web by itself. Similar numbers are seen with start- and stop-service orders, which makes me think, "Huh?" I know I should be more erudite in my choice of words, but the bottom line is that we can and should do better as an industry, especially as web and mobile are taking up an increasingly large portion of our customer traffic and transactions. One utility in this year's survey confirmed that more than one-fifth of its logins now come from mobile devices! That should make us all stop and think. Fully automated transactions of significant complexity are increasingly commonplace. We need to continue pushing our organizations forward to simply keep pace with the standards set by the companies around us.

Finally, I know I speak for Sarah and Flo (which is okay because this is *my* blog post) when I say thank you to all who participated in this year's survey. You did yeoman's service tracking down the many different pieces of data spread across your departments; however, we hope you found value in the process as well as in the aggregated findings.

Please let me know if you have any questions, or, better yet, leave a comment below.

