



Ignoring Red Flags

In A Rush To Launch The ObamaCare Exchange Websites, The Obama Administration Ignored The Experts

In The Lead-Up To ObamaCare's Website Launch, Programmers "Were Growing Increasingly Stressed." "Crammed into conference rooms with pizza for dinner, some programmers building the Obama administration's showcase health insurance website were growing increasingly stressed. Some worked past 10 p.m., energy drinks in hand. Others rewrote computer code over and over to meet what they considered last-minute requests for changes from the government or other contractors." (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, "Builders Of Obama's Health Website Saw Red Flags," [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

- **"Website Builders Saw Red Flags For Months."** "Project developers who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity — because they feared they would otherwise be fired — said they raised doubts among themselves whether the website could be ready in time. They complained openly to each other about what they considered tight and unrealistic deadlines. One was nearly brought to tears over the stress of finishing on time, one developer said. Website builders saw red flags for months." (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, "Builders Of Obama's Health Website Saw Red Flags," [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)
- **"There Were Ample Warning Signs That The System Was Not Working Properly, According To People Familiar With The Project."** (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

The Launch "Was So Rushed ... The Exchange's Computer Code Contained Placeholder Language That Programmers Typically Used In Preliminary Drafts." "The introduction was so rushed that, as recently as last week, the exchange's computer code contained placeholder language that programmers typically use in preliminary drafts, said Clay Johnson, a former White House presidential innovation fellow during 2012-2013." (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, "ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired," [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

The Obama Administration Failed To Do A Thorough Testing Of The ObamaCare Website

"The Associated Press Found A Mind-Numbingly Complex System Put Together By Harried Programmers" That Had Not Been Tested By "Private Developers With More Expertise." "As questions mount over the website's failure, insider interviews and a review of technical specifications by The Associated Press found a mind-numbingly complex system put together by harried programmers who pushed out a final product that congressional investigators said was tested by the government and not private developers with more expertise." (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, "Builders Of Obama's Health Website Saw Red Flags," [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

- **"Officials Failed To Complete Exhaustive Testing ..."** "The frantic weeks before the start of

ObamaCare were marked by a chaotic effort in which officials failed to complete exhaustive testing of the program's website in a push to begin signups by Oct. 1, according to people involved in the rollout." (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, "ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired," [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

- **The ObamaCare Exchange Was Not Beta-Tested Before The October 1 Launch.**

"Congressional investigators have concluded that the government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, not private software developers, tested the exchange's computer systems during the final weeks. That task, known as integration testing, is usually handled by software companies because it ferrets out problems before the public sees the final product." (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, "Builders Of Obama's Health Website Saw Red Flags," [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

The ObamaCare Site "Went Live Without Attempts To Replicate A Customer's Complete Experience."

"The federal Healthcare.gov site -- which has been plagued by software bugs -- went live without attempts to replicate a customer's complete experience, said a person familiar with the project who asked not to be identified to discuss what happened." (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, "ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired," [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

- **Account Creation, Subsidy Eligibility, And Health Plan Signups Were Not Tested Until Less Than A Week Before Launch.** "Some key testing of the system did not take place until the week before launch, according to this person. As late as Sept. 26, there had been no tests to determine whether a consumer could complete the process from beginning to end: create an account, determine eligibility for federal subsidies and sign up for a health insurance plan, according to two sources familiar with the project." (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

An Internal Simulation Test Went Remarkably Bad But The Administration Forged Ahead With The October 1 Launch

An Internal Test Of The ObamaCare Website "Crashed After A Simulation In Which Just A Few Hundred People Tried To Log On Simultaneously." "Days before the launch of President Obama's online health insurance marketplace, government officials and contractors tested a key part of the Web site to see whether it could handle tens of thousands of consumers at the same time. It crashed after a simulation in which just a few hundred people tried to log on simultaneously." (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

- **The ObamaCare Site "Locked Up Shortly After Midnight."** "When the Web site went live Oct. 1, it locked up shortly after midnight as about 2,000 users attempted to complete the first step, according to two people familiar with the project." (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

"Despite The Failed Test, Federal Health Officials Plowed Ahead." (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

- **According To A Person Working On The Exchange, "We Named It The Tyranny Of The October 1 Date."** "People working on the project knew that Oct. 1 was set in stone as a launch date. 'We named it the tyranny of the October 1 date,' said a person close to the project." (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, "Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems," [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

The Launch "Was So Rushed ... The Exchange's Computer Code Contained Placeholder Language That Programmers Typically Used In Preliminary Drafts." "The introduction was so rushed that, as recently as last week, the exchange's computer code contained placeholder language that programmers typically use in preliminary drafts, said Clay Johnson, a former White House presidential innovation

fellow during 2012-2013.” (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, “ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired,” [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

- **“It Was A Perfect Storm For An IT Meltdown.”** “‘It was a perfect storm for an IT meltdown,’ said John Gorman, a former assistant to the director of the Health Care Financing Administration’s Office of Managed Care, the predecessor to the agency responsible, now known as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS.” (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, “ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired,” [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

The Failures Call Into Question Whether The Obama Administration Can Implement ObamaCare

“The Flood Of Computer Problems Since The Website Went Online Has Been Deeply Embarrassing For The White House.” (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, “Builders Of Obama’s Health Website Saw Red Flags,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

- **Obama Has “Offered No Explanation For The Failure” Of The ObamaCare Launch.** “But in remarks at a Rose Garden event, Obama offered no explanation for the failure except to note that high traffic to the website caused some of the slowdowns.” (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, “Builders Of Obama’s Health Website Saw Red Flags,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

“The President’s Remarks Reflected Rising Anxiety Within His Administration Over The Widening Problems With The Online Enrollment Process.” (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, “Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

- **56 Percent Of Americans “Believe That The Web Site’s Flaws Reflect Larger Problems” With ObamaCare.** “A Washington Post-ABC News poll released Monday shows that a majority of Americans, 56 percent, believe that the Web site’s flaws reflect larger problems with the health-care law, an alarming figure for the administration.” (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, “Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)

The Launch Failures “Have Called Into Question Whether The Administration Is Capable Of Implementing” ObamaCare. “The snags have called into question whether the administration is capable of implementing the complex policy and why senior administration officials — including the president — appear to have been unaware of the scope of the problems when the exchange sites opened.” (Jack Gillum and Julie Pace, “Builders Of Obama’s Health Website Saw Red Flags,” [The Associated Press](#), 10/22/13)

- **Having Three Years To Build The ObamaCare Website, “CMS Didn’t Give CGI Final Technical Requirements For Healthcare.gov Until May,” Leading CGI To Scrap A Third Of Previously Completed Work.** “The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services didn’t give CGI final technical requirements for healthcare.gov until May, according to one person familiar with the project. About a third of the work the contractor had previously performed had to be thrown out and started over as a result, the person said.” (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, “ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired,” [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)
- **“HHS Was Making Changes To Exchanges Hours Before They Were Scheduled To Go Live,” Resulting In No Time To Test The Site.** “HHS was making changes to the exchanges hours before they were scheduled to go live, Sanjay Singh, chief executive officer at software contractor hCentive Inc., said in a Sept. 30 phone interview. Singh, whose company did exchange work for an insurer working with the federal site, said at the time that his employees were rushing to accommodate “a late-night patch” that the department had just added. “There was not enough time to do end-to-end testing,” he said. “The system keeps changing, so how do you run the tests?” (Mike Dorning, Alex Wayne, And Kathleen Miller, “ObamaCare Crashes Months In Coming Not Easily Repaired,” [Bloomberg](#), 10/22/13)

More Problems On The ObamaCare Exchange Website Are Coming To Light. “Additional problems are now showing up in the shopping and enrollment parts of the process, applications that are largely the responsibility of CGI, the person said. Those issues would have shown up earlier if testing had been done sooner, the person said.” (Lena H. Sun and Scott Wilson, “Health Insurance Exchange Launched Despite Signs Of Serious Problems,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/22/13)