



# State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

*Office of the Secretary of State*

**A. Ralph Mollis**

Secretary of State

## **Office**

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## **Title of the Program**

Quick Start

## **Project Lead**

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## **Description of Program**

Quick Start makes it easier to start a business in Rhode Island by cutting red tape and paperwork. Entrepreneurs looking to start businesses ranging from an accounting firm to a wedding planner can find and complete every one of the more than 300 forms that state agencies can require in a single location.

## **General Subject Area**

Business Services



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## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

### History

Our role as the state's corporate record-keeper makes us the state agency that most entrepreneurs have their first contact with. Complaints about red tape and paperwork were common. The perception that Rhode Island was a hard place to start a business was perpetuated through national surveys such as this one reported by CNN -- <http://money.cnn.com/2012/05/08/smallbusiness/states-small-biz/>.

The process of starting a business did nothing to change the perception. Aspiring entrepreneurs would contact our First Stop Business Information Center. First Stop staff would identify the type of business the entrepreneur was seeking to start, photocopy all the possible forms state agencies require for that type of businesses, add pages of instruction and give the package to the constituent. The judgment call on whether or not a particular form was needed, the follow up method to decipher if the submitted form was accepted, the feedback if the form was denied and the reasons for the denial fell to the aspiring businessperson.

In response, we created "Quick Start," an on-line tool featuring a comprehensive form library, forms organized by business type and a business wizard that runs users through a series of questions and, based on their responses, "deletes" the forms unnecessary for the new business.

### Significance

The innovative solution, "Quick Start," helps along the ultimate goal of fostering an environment where it is easier for new businesses to grow thereby creating new jobs and bringing in revenue for all.

The public accesses "Quick Start" through our website at [sos.ri.gov](http://sos.ri.gov). The system guides users through the process of entering their contact and business information as well as identifying all the forms necessary for their specific business.

Once users have entered their contact and business information, they can use it to populate every form they are required to submit.

The on-line forms library contains all the required state forms for every one of the state's 270 business types on his website. Hundreds of documents are organized by business type ranging from accounting to yoga. Users can use a simple alpha search tool to find and download all the forms necessary to open their particular business.

Our "businesses wizard" capacity guides users through the process by asking them a series of questions that narrows the number of forms and deposits them in a "shopping cart." For example, if a user answers "A Domestic Company- based in Rhode Island" to the question, "What type of business will you be operating?" the business wizard will automatically negate all forms other than those that are for a Rhode Island based company. Users can save the forms in their shopping cart and return to "Quick Start" time and time again.



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Other functionalities include user authentication by Facebook, Google, or registration, the ability to save and manage forms grouped by organized task lists, and an agency administration form tool to create forms online with pre-fill options when the user is completing universal business data. Participating state agencies can create a form, set up payment, and manage follow up regarding form status. Our existing staff manages the system and is available by chat, email, phone and a ticket-tracking tool by email for all end users.

Quick Start also accommodates all the various computer systems in state government. The data is provided to state agencies in three common formats that are compatible with almost every operating system. A lot of thought has gone into designing a system that will work right out of the gate. State agencies did not have to re-tool in order to permit their customers to use "Quick Start."

## **Impact/Results**

Quick Start not only makes it easier for start-ups to do business in Rhode Island, it helps change the perception that our state is not business friendly

"Quick Start" launched in May 2011. The tool is popular. In its first full year of operation, "Quick Start" had more than 21,824 unique pageviews and 39,955 pageviews in a state where only 6,846 new corporate entities were created in calendar year 2011.

There is more anecdotal evidence of its impact. The steady decline in the annual number of new corporate business registrations over the past few years ended in 2011. For the first time Rhode Island is on track to have the first back-to-back years of growth since 2006 and 2007.

As part of the initiative, we are working with every state agency to shorten, consolidate or eliminate some forms.

The positive impacts that Rhode Island has experienced as a result of this program have increased the likelihood that other Secretary of State offices may eventually offer similar services. The project vendor will soon make the "business wizard" function available to other states and localities.



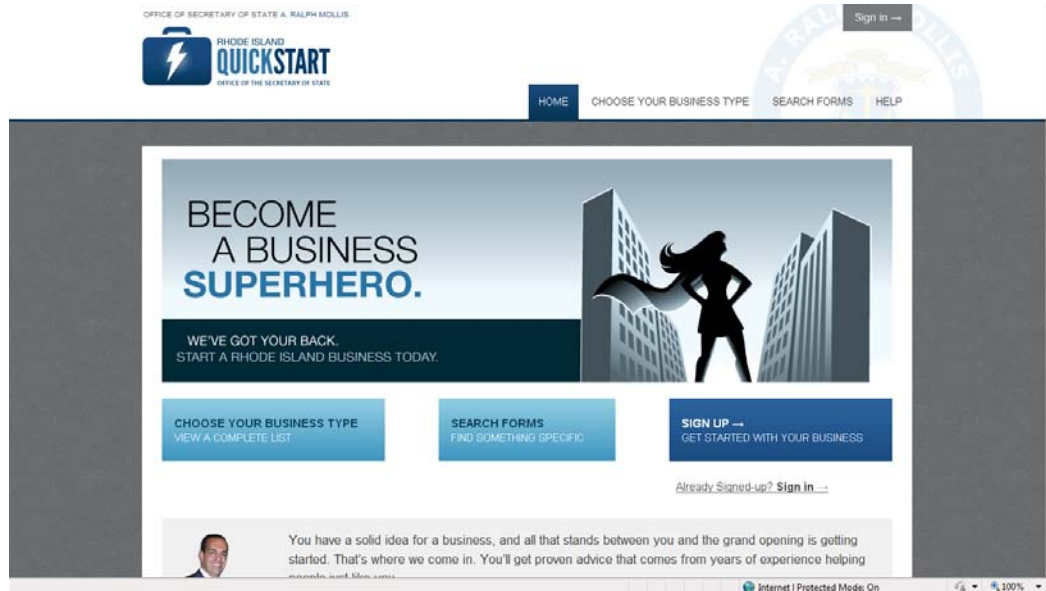
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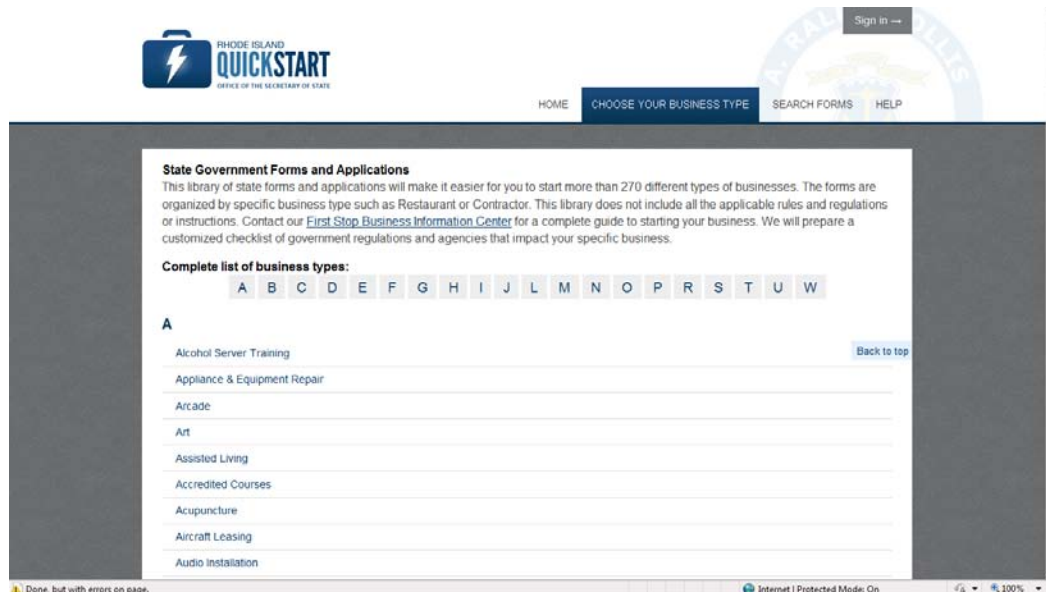
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## Supporting Materials

### HOME PAGE



### ALPHA SEARCH TOOL



See for yourself how easy “Quirk Start” is to use at  
<https://www.ri.gov/SOS/quickstart/>



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Google Analytics

http://www.ri.gov - http://www.ri.gov  
www.ri.gov - everything else [...]

## Content Drilldown

May 4, 2011 - May 4, 2012

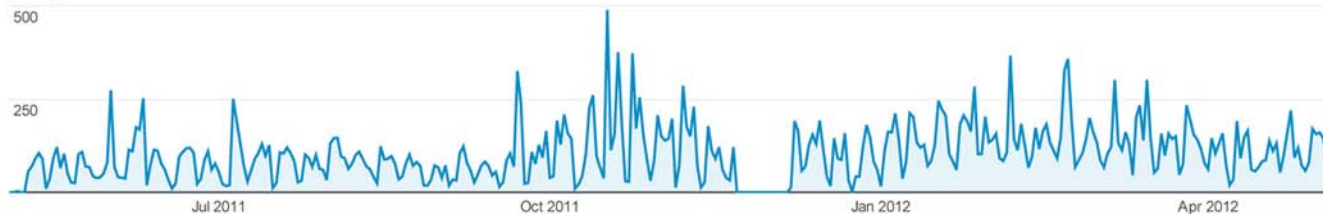
ALL » PAGE PATH LEVEL 1: /SOS/ » PAGE PATH LEVEL 2: /quickstart/

0.46% of total pageviews

Explorer

Site Usage

Pageviews



Pageviews

**37,944**

% of Total: 0.46% (8,230,892)

Unique Pageviews

**21,824**

% of Total: 0.44% (4,978,379)

Avg. Time on Page

**00:02:04**

Site Avg: 00:00:45 (176.86%)

Bounce Rate

**49.91%**

Site Avg: 20.96% (138.12%)

% Exit

**34.07%**

Site Avg: 10.35% (229.30%)

| Page path level 3           | Pageviews | Unique Pageviews | Avg. Time on Page | Bounce Rate | % Exit |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------|
| 1. /                        | 22,245    | 13,123           | 00:02:59          | 50.71%      | 47.36% |
| 2. /auth/                   | 10,284    | 5,470            | 00:01:08          | 36.02%      | 12.86% |
| 3. /wizard/                 | 2,512     | 1,716            | 00:01:36          | 31.25%      | 17.48% |
| 4. /help/                   | 1,346     | 662              | 00:01:45          | 63.58%      | 30.09% |
| 5. /tasks/                  | 756       | 498              | 00:01:05          | 72.22%      | 15.21% |
| 6. /wizard                  | 256       | 149              | 00:01:21          | 20.00%      | 16.41% |
| 7. /signin/                 | 207       | 7                | 00:00:30          | 0.00%       | 1.45%  |
| 8. /tasks                   | 193       | 97               | 00:01:09          | 23.08%      | 18.13% |
| 9. /auth                    | 136       | 97               | 00:01:48          | 0.00%       | 19.85% |
| 10. /tasks?check_login=true | 6         | 3                | 00:00:29          | 0.00%       | 16.67% |
| 11. /index.html             | 2         | 1                | 00:00:56          | 0.00%       | 50.00% |
| 12. /tasks?chech_login=true | 1         | 1                | 00:00:08          | 0.00%       | 0.00%  |

Rows 1 - 12 of 12

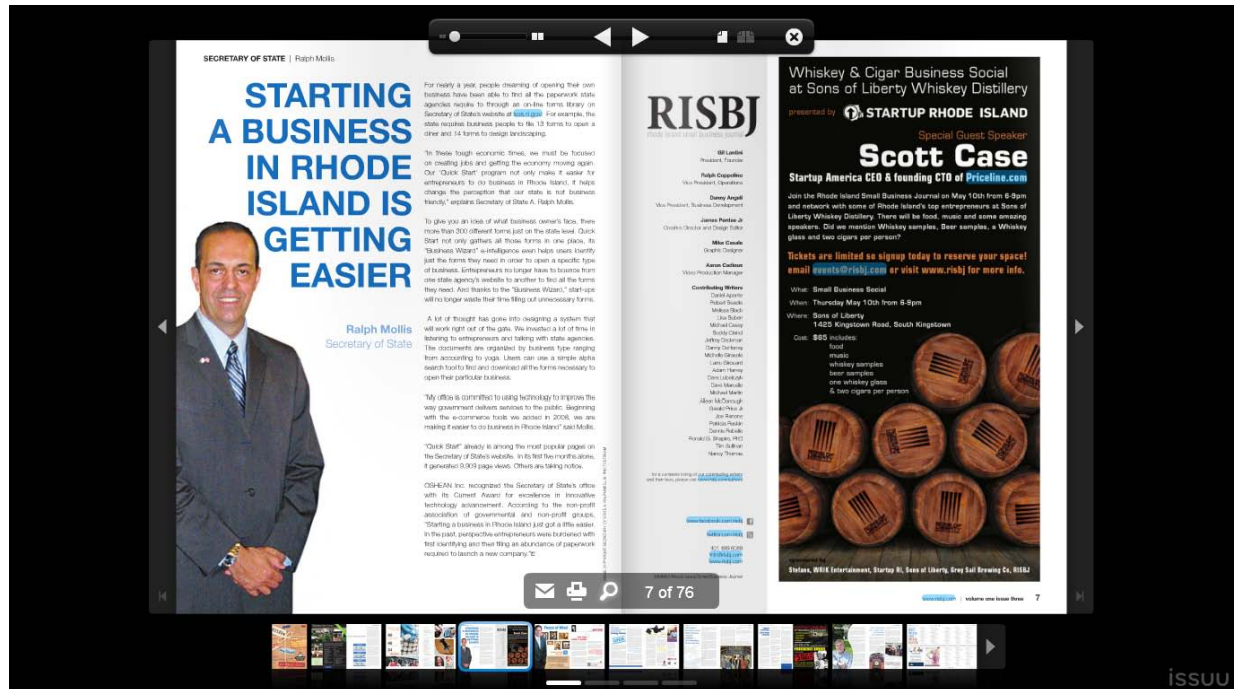


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## RHODE ISLAND SMALL BUSINESS JOURNAL



Link to article

<http://issuu.com/gillantini/docs/issue3/7>