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New Site Proposes Big Spending Cuts

A new site launched in recent days merits a look, regardless of your opinions on the size and scope of the federal government.

The [Cato Institute](#) -- never a fan of big government -- has launched [DownsizingGovernment.org](#), billed as a one stop shop for anyone concerned or curious about federal budgetary issues. Though the site's name might signal its ultimate goal, don't dismiss it out of hand: Cato's **Chris Edwards** and **Tad DeHaven** did their homework by compiling budget and spending information for each of the 15 Cabinet-level departments and then writing detailed proposals on how to trim the federal fat. The site lays out their proposals in a series of quick summaries, charts, graphs and videos. It is a well-designed, thorough production that will likely educate and provoke strong reactions -- arguably two key ingredients to a successful Web site.

"While you may think there's not a large appetite for spending cuts, my purpose is long-term public education," Edwards said in an interview. "It seems we've got trillion dollar deficits as far as the eye can see and something's going have to give in the long run." All of the site's projections are based on budget and spending data from the [Office of Management and Budget](#) and [Congressional Budget Office](#) and will update when the government releases new figures each year, Edwards said.

The project has already earned criticism: **Max Stier**, president of the [Partnership for Public Service](#), said discussions about the size of government have grown "tired" and experts should instead focus on government performance.

"It's absolutely legitimate to be concerned about government results at a time when we need so much from our government. But simply shrinking government for the sake of shrinking it is not where we need to go," Stier said. "This is a tired debate about big or small. The real focus ought to be on making government work better."

Incidentally, Federal employees still have two weeks to submit their cost-savings ideas to President Obama for consideration in the first annual [Save Award](#). The winner gets a face-to-face meeting with the president and their idea included in next year's proposed budget.

Leave your thoughts in the comments section below.

By Ed O'Keefe | October 5, 2009; 2:53 PM ET

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