

Chapter 3.44

Level-Based Development of E-Government Services

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INTRODUCTION

As the Web is growing exponentially, the way of provision governmental information and services has been changed by the newly supplied technological capacities and digital channels. More and more governments all over the world are trying to acquire an electronic profile, in order to offer advanced services to their users (citizens and businesses). Two basic factors have significant contribution to this direction. The first considers the continuous increase of the users' daily needs (e.g., information searching, certificate requesting). Traditionally, the completion of these tasks implies a lot of valuable time to be lost in the tracking of responsible actor and in the waiting in queues. The second one refers to the ongoing access of the users with the Internet. This new

way of communication facilitates the transactions and helps in providing better public services.

It is clear that e-government's successful development and operation demands proper design, which will comprise the basis for its application. Information and communication technologies (ICT) may contribute essentially to this direction, as long as government and users adopt them under the framework of a broader reorganization of the public sector. This adaptation can be implemented gradually in levels, which will enable the unobstructed data flow from/to government and will give the opportunity to citizens and businesses to obtain the highest access to the provided governmental services. Only under these circumstances, this transition will lead to a series of strategic, administrative and operational benefits (NOIE, 2003; OGC, 2003), for example, best coverage

Table 1. Pioneer countries in e-government

| Country | Description |
|-----------|---|
| CANADA | Canada's e-government portal offers information and services organized by the target-group in which are attended e.g. Canadians, non Canadians, businesses, etc. Departments and agencies, structure of the government of Canada, provinces and territories, municipalities, new initiatives for Canadians, government contacts, justice and law, public safety, etc. are only some of the supported services. http://www.canada.gc.ca |
| SINGAPORE | Singapore's government web site supports three portals for a) citizens and residents b) businesses and c) non-residents. eCitizen is positioned as the first-stop for government services on the web and enables users to search for and access a diversity of information, as well as to conduct a wide range of online transactions with government agencies (including culture, recreation and sports, defense and security, education, learning and employment, family and community development, health and environment, housing, transport and travel). eBusiness is a gateway to a host of government services ranging from accessing information that is pertinent to businesses, exploring governmental assistance, to filling in important forms needed to start or grow a business. Finally, the portal for non-residents provides information about visiting, relocating, working, studying or doing business in Singapore. http://www.gov.sg , http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg , http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/nonresidents , http://www.business.gov.sg |
| UK | UK's portal constitutes a trial of British government to provide services via Internet. Today, the portal offers: guidance to government, judicial system, submission of applications for VAT, taxes return, registration to vote, finding local childcare, application to universities, agricultural subsidies from Commission, etc. http://www.ukonline.gov.uk |
| USA | USA also has early demonstrated a steady advance in e-government, which is close, related to the fact that they are one of the main providers of software and hardware solutions. The high penetration factor of American citizens in Internet has significantly contributed to reach this fact. Their first portal created for this purpose is an effort to gather all governmental web sites in one place (one-stop shop). http://www.firstgov.gov |

ware/software infrastructure for office applications, as well as the necessary network interconnection. This level constitutes prerequisite for the implementation of the remainder levels in order to fully support e-government services.

Level 1: Electronic Protocol

This level refers to the computerization of authority's documents with the passage from the conventional protocol (manuscript) to the electronic one (file). Specifically, the book of incoming/outgoing documents is suppressed and document distribution henceforth is kept electronically for timesaving and facilitation in document searching and recovering. Each service has its own protocol numbering, which is usually granted by the secretary of the specific authority manually.

Level 2: Business Process Reengineering

This level includes (a) a feasibility study of documents' flow replanning, internal processes interrelation, and authority's flow chart processes preparation for the next level; and (b) specifications, planning and implementation of the applications that need modifications and improvements (legacy systems). The differentiation of each public authority, depending on the type and the breadth of their applications, is considered. For each authority, new levels of applications should be created after a feasibility study. For the passage to the following levels, all processes from the organizational side should be registered in order to achieve their unification and communication in the whole public authority. At the same time, it should be defined how the applications that are already used by authority's services are suitable to

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