Chapter XI

Electronic Delivery of Public Services to Citizens:
The eGOIA Project

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Abstract

The main goal of the EU @LIS demonstration project Electronic Government Innovation and Access (eGOIA) is the provisioning of demonstrators that show future-oriented public-administration services to a broad public in Latin America. The vision of the eGOIA project is the provision of a single virtual space supporting the interaction of citizens (independent of social status, gender, race, abilities, and age) and the public administration in a simple, future-oriented, and cost-effective way. A software infrastructure is developed in order to allow the access of citizens through the Internet to integrated public services at several levels: local government (municipalities), regional government (state), and federal government. The trial of the demonstrator will be performed in São Paulo state and in municipalities in Peru.

Introduction

E-government is being implemented in most countries in the world, not only the most developed, but also in countries under development like those from Latin America. E-government is the use of information and communication technologies in public administrations combined with organizational change and the development of new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes.

To serve citizens and enterprises with a variety of services in the social, educational, and security sectors is a main goal of public administrations. One important category considered in this chapter deals with the delivery of life-event services (birth, employment, etc.) to citizens (Vintar, Kunstelj, & Leben, 2002), as are already in place for Austrian citizens (HELP, n.d.). These services include the delivery of personal documents and the payment of taxes, constituting a large class of situations in Latin America.

The development of ICT and very specifically of the Internet gives new opportunities to enhance the delivery of such services to the citizens. Other channels are not excluded, but in eGOIA (Electronic Government Innovation and Access), the main access channel will be the Internet, as a complementation (not replacement) of already existing physical delivery options.

The growing availability of public services introduced by public agencies on the Internet requires that the government take initiative to convert the present, physical-presence relationship with citizens into a future-oriented electronic community. The interaction of citizens with the public administration has to be encouraged to choose new ways of access for the benefit of all participating parties.

E-government services hide the level of complexity lying behind the services offered to the citizen and enterprises. Each life event is associated with the relevant actions and interactions with and between the public administrations. The services may imply either a single business process or several business processes to be performed in a given sequence between different administrations and sectors.

As happens in other countries, increasingly in Latin America, services are already being delivered in front offices (Prisma, 2003) with citizens' physical attendance and the intervention of public servants. "One-stop" places (e.g., Poupatempos or Save Time in Sao Paulo, Brazil) are created enabling citizens

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