

Chapter 4.47

Requirements Analysis and General Functional Model of Seamless, Citizen–Oriented Service Delivery

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ABSTRACT

Seamless services provide citizens with what they need to know in a particular topic without having to know which government level or agencies they must contact to get it. Seamless services meet efficiency targets, reduce costs, and respond to citizen demands for improved services; they help governments to be more citizen-centered, outcome-oriented, efficient, and accountable. This chapter outlines main requirements for the delivery of seamless services and presents a general functional model (e-government service marketplace) for the delivery of shared services to citizens at the transaction level (i.e., support-

ing a complete online handling of a service). The main functionalities of the e-government service marketplace are analyzed in detail. Advantages, disadvantages, and the impact of this concept on the three fundamental axes (social, economic, and technical) are discussed as well. The chapter ends with some insights on future trends and open issues about seamless services delivery and enabling systems.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid emergence and growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in

everyday life of citizens has pushed government to transform itself into an electronic government (e-government) to serve citizens. The main limits in traditional public administration practices are mainly due to the bureaucracy complexity among the departments, excessive and time consuming duplication/multiplication of paperwork which lead to long waiting time both for citizens and for public administration officers.

Due to the complexity of administrative procedures (which is somehow necessary in order to protect and guarantee citizens' rights) the interaction with public administration can be perceived by citizens as a complex and time consuming experience. As a consequence, traditional services and service delivery processes would benefit from a redesign and reorganization according to a more *citizen-oriented approach*. Government needs to take advantage of information and communication technologies and new business models to improve efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes as well as change the nature and quality of government interaction with both citizens and businesses allowing *seamless service delivery*. Government could take advantage of ICTs not just putting existing paper-based processes into digital form but rather starting a profound transformation of the way it provides services as well as interacts with citizens. Thanks to seamless service e-government practices, government could become more efficient, transparent, and responsive by allowing citizens to have 24-hour, 7-day interactive access to all governmental services as well as perform online transactions with governmental agencies at a distance.

This chapter outlines the main requirements for the provision of such shared services and presents a general functional model (e-government service marketplace) for seamless service delivery. It discusses the advantages and disadvantages as well as the impact of e-government service marketplace concept according to the three fundamental e-government perspectives: social, economic, and technical. It provides a case study

of e-government service marketplace concept application and eventually it provides some insights on future issues and emerging needs of seamless service delivery.

It is worth noting that privacy and security issues are beyond the scope of this chapter; as a consequence, they will not be analyzed in-depth.

BACKGROUND

E-government refers to the use by government agencies of ICT to improve the way public administration interacts with citizens and businesses, and to improve the efficiency of the administrative process. Enhanced quality of service has been a major component of public administration reform over the past two decades, and the use of ICT in order to generate improvements in services has been a primary driver for e-government activity. In particular the use of the Internet has given a major boost to citizen-oriented, seamless services, and online services are increasingly seen as part of a broader strategy which aims to improve citizen satisfaction and interest in e-government. Online service targets have also been effective in motivating public administrations to examine the potential of the Internet and related technologies by applying them to existing services. One-stop offices, advice bureaus, information kiosks, and call centers have attempted to bring together information and services from different governmental agencies.

In order to evaluate e-government progress in some countries several stage models describing the evolution of public services have been developed (AOEMA, 2004; Persson & Goldkuhl, 2005; Suh, 2003). These models divide the development of e-government into several stages from simple information provision to more complex services (Table 1). All these models divide the development of e-government into several stages from simple information provision to more complex services.

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