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## **Chapter XXXIII**

# **Virtual Government: Online-Services within the Public Sector**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this chapter, an overview of electronic government is given. Online electronic services, like inquiry possibilities that are made available to its interaction partners (citizens and businesses) by administration authorities, are one proof of changes in the public sector because of modern information and communication technologies. Electronic government includes all governmental measures at the levels (union, states, and local governments) for qualitative improvements in citizen's different spheres of life and for optimization of business processes within the administration. It can cause an improvement of the relationship between administration, citizens, and businesses. The author gives an overview about selected current international electronic government incentives, introduces analysis methods for these governmental strategies, and shows developed guidelines for implementing electronic government.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since the 1990s, economies experience changes because of information and communication technologies. These changes take place in the public sector too. The use of information and communication technologies enables the development of electronic government and causes an improvement in the relationship between administration, citizens, and business. E-government includes all administrative measures at all levels (union, states, and local governments) to improve the requirement satisfaction for citizens (qualitative improvements in many spheres of life) and businesses and to optimize the business processes within the

administration (structural changes). In reaching these targets, there are used information and communication technologies (Aichholzer, 1999). Possible interaction partners in the area of Electronic Government are Government, Citizens/Customers, and Business (Muralt-Müller, 2000). In this chapter, we show current electronic government strategies of Australia, Switzerland, and the European Union (EU), especially Austria, a country that is one of the leading members within the EU in doing e-government. After stating governmental strategies, an interesting aspect would be to evaluate the different national strategies and draw up a ranking — European Union wide or worldwide. But, all members of the European Union (and all other countries) deal in different ways with information technologies and electronic government. It will not be wise to compare the national strategies and to rate them with points. Therefore, there will be drawn up critical conditions for electronic government, like demand orientation and other general conditions, followed by a short comparative view of the mentioned strategies and portals in the field of electronic government according to the relevant criterions. In the following section, guidelines for implementing electronic government incentives will be provided. An implementation concept was developed, addressed to all responsible for e-government issues within administration, including organizational, technical, and legal aspects. The guide can be seen as a metamodel for implementing e-government that has to be adjusted to specific circumstances. All general necessary phases within the implementation process will be shown. Attention is turned on the consideration of administrative targets, the evaluation of critical criteria for online services, and a classification scheme for evaluating online services.

## STATE OF THE ART

### Australia — A Pioneer in Electronic Government

Australia can be seen as a pioneer in electronic government. In the early 1990s, Australia already had a clear electronic government vision and began to develop its own strategies for doing e-government. Today, the administrative authorities of Australia — both at government top level and at the level of states and territories — can be seen as leading in the area of e-government. In the following, governmental initiatives for implementing e-government and e-government initiatives of selected states or territories will be shown. The Australian activities of e-government can be found in all possible areas: information, interaction, and transaction. In 1994, different strategies were published for doing e-government, followed by the formation of several governmental councils and departments. The purpose of forming several national institutions was to create conditions and to be able to take steps in enabling the administration and its customers (citizens and business) to participate in the worldwide development of information technology. In 1998, the Business Entry Point (BEP) was implemented as a portal for simplification of information procurement at the federal and national levels. The Web appearance of authorities and departments were completed with the Commonwealth Government Entry Point (FedGov), which contains all administrative services.

The states and territories made efforts as well to be able to use the information and communication technologies effectively. In this section, some national strategies in the area of electronic government will be shown. Most strategies will not be comparable, because most states set up different priorities.

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