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A life-event oriented framework and platform for one-stop government
(OneStopGov)

Report on the workshop on Customer-centric service provision, 22 April 2008, Prague

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Abstract: The document reports on the main findings of the workshop on customer-centric service provision organised by the OneStopGov, SemanticGov and LD-Cast projects in the context of the 6th Eastern European eGov days, 23-25 April in Prague.

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1 Introduction

The “Customer-centric Service Provision” workshop took place in Prague on April 22. It was organized by three FP6 IST projects, namely OneStopGov, SemanticGov and LD-CAST, in conjunction with the 6th Eastern European eGovernment Days. The workshop was chaired by Professor Konstantinos Tarabanis and Dr. Efthimios Tambouris from the University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Currently, a large number of research projects are trying to propose solutions and address the challenges of eGovernment with regards to improved service provision. Many of these projects follow a customer-centric approach. As such, they are driven by the customers’ (citizens, businesses, public authorities) needs. Through their work, they try to translate these needs in formal requirements that are taken into account and are implemented through the models and architectures that they propose and through the tools and systems that they develop. As a result such projects bridge the gap between public administration and its customers.

The primary objective of this workshop was to bring people working on the customer-centric service provision field together so that they can exchange their knowledge and experiences and cross-fertilize their views.

1.1 Project Presentations

Six projects, which research focus is related to customer-centric service provision presented their findings in the workshop. These are:

- *OneStopGov*, presented by Efthimios Tambouris from the Research Institute of the University of Macedonia
- *LD-CAST*, presented by Alessandra Catapano from ELSAG DATAMAT
- *SemanticGov*, presented by Nikos Loutas from the Center for Research and Technology Hellas
- *Pledge*, presented by Luis Sabucedo from the University of Vigo
- *BRITE*, presented by Piero Milani from the University of Koblenz
- *R4eGov*, presented by Maria Wimmer from the University of Koblenz

Apart from the presenters and the organizers, more than 30 people from various governmental organisations, universities, research institutes and software vendors across Europe participated in the event.

1.2 Results

A fruitful, vibrant discussion followed the presentations of the projects. The discussion was structured according to the following four topics:

- Technological Aspects of customer-centric provision
- Organisational Models used for customer-centric service provision
- General Organisational Aspects of customer-centric public service provision
- Best Practices and lessons learnt.

Interesting conclusions were drawn for each of the aforementioned topics. For example, the participants pointed out the need for a set of upper level of guidelines, with respect to

technologies and implementation issues, which should be taken into account when implementing eGovernment systems. According to the participants, this would both leverage the quality of new eGovernment application and facilitate the interoperability among them. Moreover, this would allow utilizing the knowledge and the experience that has been produced so far by the various eGovernment projects.

It was also discussed, that a significant degree of re-engineering of public administration would be essential, in order to benefit from the existing models, and technologies. For example, the differentiation between front-office and back-office was thought to be insufficient and most of the participants agreed on the need for a so called “middle-office”. Another suggestion that was made is that in some cases public administration should compromise and overcome legal and organizational barriers for the sake of efficiency. Moreover, the trade-off between efficiency and data protection and the need for trusted third parties was identified as one of the very interesting and important organizational issues that still remain open.

The role and importance of interoperability mainly at the semantic and organizational levels and how does this affect customer-centric service provision, especially at the pan-European level, was another issue on which a lot of interesting opinions were expressed.

The need for having a (trans-) national framework/infrastructure that will support customer-centric service provision was stressed. Moreover, this would ensure that customers from all regions in a country, or even within Europe, would have equal access to eGovernment services. Thus, bridging the digital divide between richer and poorer regions.

Concluding, it was discussed how researchers could identify, formalize and organize customers’ needs and try to address them either by mapping them to existing public services or by developing new ones. At this point, a common agreement was reached, that a lot of issues still remain open and a lot of challenges are still there for future researchers to address.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.onestopgov-project.org/EEeGovDays/>