eCITIZEN PORTAL
TOWARDS THE VISION OF MANY AGENCIES, ONE GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. e-Government is about harnessing Info-Communications Technology (ICT) in the public sector to better serve our customers. The benefits of e-Government may come in the form of greater convenience and access to services, shorter transaction times, and seamless delivery of integrated services.

2. The greatest barrier to cross-agency integration of services is the current silo structure of government agencies, where each agency is responsible for its own area of work. It is therefore important to create a conducive environment in which agencies can easily collaborate with one another to deliver integrated services.

3. The setting up of the eCitizen Portal aims to create a platform on which integrated information and services from different government agencies can be delivered to our citizens. With the eCitizen Portal, members of the public no longer need to interact with multiple agencies in order to complete one transaction with the Government. To provide such seamless services to the customer, cross-agency integration of services is essential.

4. The setting up of the eCitizen Governance Structure aims to create an environment conducive to working together across government jurisdictions. It brings agencies together to achieve a common set of goals and ultimately, our vision of ‘Many Agencies, One Government’.

HISTORY OF eCITIZEN PORTAL

5. The eCitizen portal, first launched in 1999 as the Citizen eService Centre, is an initiative owned by the Ministry of Finance and managed by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA).

6. The portal is positioned as the first-stop for government services on the web and organised with the needs of the citizens and customers in mind. In line with the e-Government Action Plan, the short-term objective of this Citizen eService Centre then, is to make available as many public services online as possible. The end goal is to build a leading e-Government, which delivers more convenience and benefits to all individuals who live, work and play in Singapore.
7. In the initial eCitizen portal, information and services were organised based on the major milestones of a citizen’s life journey, such as “Birth”, “Going to School”, or “Getting Married”.

![Figure 1: eCitizen Portal – Organized by Life Journey (1999 – 2002)](image)

8. In 2003, the e-Government Action Plan II was introduced with the aim to achieve three distinct outcomes: Delighted Customers, Connected Citizens and a Networked Government. Specifically, the focus was to deliver accessible, integrated and value-added public services to our customers; and help bring citizens closer together.

9. The Citizen eService Centre underwent a revamp and was re-branded as the eCitizen Portal. The eCitizen portal continues to provide a single access point to all government information and services on the internet. The revamp also addressed the feedback from some members of the public (through focus group discussions) that accessing relevant content intuitively and quickly was a key concern.

**eCitizen Today**

10. As part of the 2003 revamp, the current structure of having 8 eTowns within the eCitizen Portal was established. Information and e-services are logically mapped under these 8 eTowns, which are sufficiently comprehensive to cover all government content that can be made available on-line.

11. The objectives of eTown are:
   - To cluster information and e-services across organisational boundaries into logical groupings that are most relevant to our clients, so as to surface and exploit opportunities for integration.
- To promote active partnership among agencies to organise, integrate and provide user-friendly on-line information and services. Agencies shall work together to minimise overlaps and close gaps in information content and services which cut across agencies’ boundaries.

12. The 8 eTowns are:

a) **Business** eTown - caters to the needs of the business community, by providing information and services ranging from work permits services to the various licenses applications, applying for tax breaks and purchasing of business profiles, government publications and statistics.

b) **Culture, Recreation & Sports** eTown - caters to cultural and recreational needs of our citizens, providing services ranging from booking of tickets to events, booking of sports and recreational facilities, information of arts and cultural events and registration of recreational courses etc.

c) **Defence & Security** eTown - provides information and services to our National Service Personnel. Additionally, it provides information and services on engaging the public to play a part in volunteerism in disaster aids and reforms of ex-offenders to help them reintegrate into the societies. Immigration, Emergencies and Safety information and services are also available.

d) **Education, Learning & Employment** eTown - caters to the Education & Training needs of our citizens, as well as provides information on employment and labour markets. Especially important during the economic downturn, services are also rendered to help the unemployed retrain, upgrade and look for a job.

e) **Family & Community Development** eTown - aims to provide comprehensive information and services relevant to major and diverse life stages that one may experience. These include children and parenting topics, youth matters, courtship & marriage, elderly care and care for the disabled.

f) **Health & Environment** eTown - provides a host of government services ranging from healthcare information to online transactions that will help the user in healthy living, such as shopping at online pharmacies and requesting for online medical reports.

g) **Housing** eTown - caters to the needs of home seekers, home buyers and developers. It provides information and services that range from buying & renting a property, renovation of homes to building a good environment for living.

h) **Transport & Travel** eTown - provides government information and services relating to local transportation and overseas travel for the general public. Services available include information about bus arrival time schedule, buying & selling of cars, overseas travel advisory, etc.
13. The organisation of eCitizen into these various eTowns brought about various benefits. First, to the citizens, information is organised in logical groupings that enable them to find the information and services they need easily. Second, this organisation ensures that the information and services provided on this platform are directly delivered by the agencies with the deepest domain knowledge. Third, the logical grouping of agencies into eTown facilitates the sharing of information across these eTowns, as well as the identification and implementation of cross-agency integrated eServices.

14. To date, 1,600 eServices are already available via eCitizen Portal. That represents 98% of all feasible eServices. Some 66 integrated eServices have also been identified and many of them are implemented.

**Online Reporting Centre (ORC)**

15. An example of a cross-agency integrated service is the Online Reporting Centre (ORC), which is a project under the Health & Environment eTown. The ORC is a new concept that aspires to connect agencies, providing a one-stop portal for reporting incidents. This aligns with the whole of government approach. The vision of ORC is to provide “an integrated electronic reporting service that provides great convenience to the public for reporting occurrences, infringements, nuisances and other civic matters and asking for service or enforcement actions.”

16. This initiative of providing a convenient reporting platform, led by the National Environment Agency and 10 other government agencies, was made possible with the agencies’ commitment to working closely together to streamline their existing reporting processes.

17. ORC is well received by agencies and public. It is useful as a means of helping the public to report an incident without the need to know the most appropriate agency to turn to. It is also a useful system to track the referral of reports from one agency to another. With this system, public users are able to check the status of his incident report from a status check point using a transaction ID reference number provided by the online reporting system.

18. ORC also resulted in cost savings for the Government from sharing of data, processes and systems improvement in work efficiency.

**Intelligent FAQ (iFAQ)**

19. Another example of an integrated service is the Intelligent FAQ. This project integrates the FAQ systems of 86 government agencies, such that a member of public can go to any government agency website to raise a question and get his answer. This means he no longer needs to know which agency to turn to with his query.
20. This multi-agency integrated project started from a feedback from the public, highlighting the long and cumbersome multi-agency application process for works on public areas.

21. The Land Transport Authority (LTA) led this project to implement a one-stop online submission portal for permit to carry out works affecting public streets/areas. Partnering LTA in this initiative were the other land-managing agencies such as Housing Development Board, Jurong Town Corporation, National Parks, Public Utilities Board, Singapore Land Authority and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

![Diagram of PROMPT](image)

**Figure 2: Overview of PROMPT**

22. With PROMPT, Utility Service Providers and the Professional Engineers have a simpler and low-cost process of submitting applications, as they no longer need to interact separately with the various land-managing agencies. The number of forms that they need to submit has reduced from 6 to a single integrated form, with approximately 50% reduction in data items they need to provide. Processing time for such applications has reduced from 21 days to within 14 days. Information delivery has also improved with the ability to check on application status (24 hours a day), contractors’ track records, upcoming works and land-managing agencies’ requirements.

23. To the public, PROMPT also brings several benefits. They are now able to access the lists of approved road works and scheduled road works in the next 6 months. With this information, the public can more effectively plan their travel routes, minimising public inconvenience. Information on contractor’s track records also encourages good road works performance.
Online Business Licensing Service (OBLS)

24. The Online Business Licensing System is one of the pioneering initiatives in cross-agency integration, providing a one-stop website for new businesses to register and apply for licences. The interactive system uses a shopping cart concept, allowing customers to choose the type of business operations, from setting up a restaurant to venturing into a pet shop.

25. Applicants need only complete one integrated form and make a single payment for application of many licences, instead of a series of forms and separate payments. It also comes with immediate, automated status update via SMS/email.

26. Rigorous business reviews, streamlining and redesign of workflow were conducted so that the integration of the various business licensing processes can be more seamless and the turnaround time reduced. To date, OBLS supports the integrated business licensing application for more than 80 licences from 17 government agencies. Benefits of OBLS include up to 90% reduction in processing time, up to 50% reduction in data entry and a 10% reduction in number of licenses required.

27. OBLS has won numerous awards, including the United Nations Public Service Awards 2005, Computerworld Honors Program 2007, MIS Asia IT Excellence Award 2007 and the ZDNet Asia Smart50 Award 2006.

Integrated Electronic Public Transport Journey Planner

28. The Electronic Public Transport Journey Planner is an online travel advisory tool for commuters to access pre-trip information conveniently. It allows commuters to plan their journeys by public transport services in advance from point A to point B in Singapore. The Journey Planner is integrated in that it covers all basic bus services and all rail services, provided by various public transport operators, to enable commuters to travel seamlessly on the public transport system.

29. For every travel route solution generated by the Journey Planner, the commuter is able to view various kinds of street-level maps, as follows:
   a) A travel route map that enables the commuter to trace his entire journey from origin to destination, including his boarding point, alighting point and transfer point(s), if any;
   b) Locality maps that display the vicinities of the commuter’s origin, destination, and if applicable, the area(s) where the commuter is required to transfer between services; and
   c) Service route maps that trace out the routes of bus services that are relevant to the travel route.
30. Leadership support and an effective Governance structure are critical to the success of the eCitizen Portal. They provide long-term vision, strategies, goals and policies to guide the effective and efficient deployment of ICT initiatives.

31. Two main governance structures are in place to ensure the success of the eCitizen / eTown Programmes:
   - The iGov Committees, which drive the overall direction of our eGovernment efforts.
   - The eCitizen/eTown Committees, which focus on driving more integration across agencies.
32. The iGov Committees, comprising the iGov Council and iGov Steering Committee, are formed by Permanent Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of our ministries. Such senior leadership involvement highlights the importance placed on the vision of an “Integrated Government”.

33. The eCitizen/eTown Committees, which report to the iGov Council, are each helmed by eTown mayors who are the Permanent Secretaries of key ministries. This governance structure aims to create an environment conducive to working together across government jurisdictions. It brings agencies together to achieve a common set of goals and ultimately, our vision of ‘Many Agencies, One Government’.

34. eTown committees for each of the 8 proposed eTowns are set up to manage and deliver information content and e-services in each eTown. Each eTown committee is headed by an eTown Mayor who owns that eTown. eTown Managers are appointed by eTown Mayors to support them in delivery of information content and e-services of their respective eTowns.

35. It is also recognised that the eTown Manager cannot deliver the eTown alone but will need the support of partnering agencies, which are involved in supplying the information and e-services for this eTown. The active participation and collaboration of these partner agencies are critical for the eTown to collate and organize cross-organisation information and to deliver cross-organisation eServices. The eTown Steering Committee Meeting, chaired by the eTown Mayor, is set up to provide an important platform for the eTown Manager to engage the representatives from these partnering agencies.

36. A central planning team from Ministry of Finance and IDA/GCIO plays the role of the eTown Planner, and is responsible for the overall planning and architecture of the eCitizen portal.
37. To ensure that there is synchronisation and consistency of efforts across eTowns, an eTown Managers’ forum is held on a quarterly basis for eTown Managers and Town Planners to share their plans and new initiatives.

38. To monitor eTowns’ performance and to drive the eTowns’ e-service transformation more effectively, eTown Mayors will submit an annual achievement report to the iGov Council on the achievements and developments of their respective eTowns at the end of each Financial Year. The measurement of the eTowns performance includes both qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators for operational efficiency, customers’ satisfaction, usage level of the eServices and positive impact to the citizens/businesses.

**CONCLUSION**

39. The eCitizen Portal, with its corresponding eTowns, is an important platform for the Singapore Government to fulfil the objectives of our eGovernment Masterplans. It is as much a technology platform as it is an organisational platform for government agencies to come together and deliver integrated services that surmounts the boundaries of every individual agency’s jurisdiction.

40. As the eCitizen portal evolves to exploit the technological advances and to meet the ever increasing demands of our customers, the mission of the eCitizen portal will continue to steer its development, and that is to have all our agencies coming together to deliver customer-centric services to our citizens and businesses, as “One Government”.

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