THE JOURNEY TO JOINED UP GOVERNMENT

Why a Citizen Centric Approach is Required

Key findings and commentary from the Unisys Joined Up Government Survey - a study that provides insights into the attitudes of citizens in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Singapore toward digital government service.

A Digital Government Series by Unisys Corporation
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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Governments the world over are seeking ways to improve the delivery of services to citizens as well as increase the efficiency of their internal organisations via digital technologies. However true digital transformation is more than simply taking current processes and putting them online. It involves totally fresh thinking about how to translate the charter of a government department or agency into the services that are delivered to citizens. This may involve offering services in new ways, working with other agencies to streamline services and remove red tape, or being able to deliver new services that were previously not possible.

Fundamental to this is the concept of joined up government: where departments and agencies communicate efficiently with each other and act together for a common purpose. Success requires a supporting organisational culture, aligned policies and enabling technology. The reality is that while the digital technology is already available, the bigger challenge is a cultural change to focus on the customer experience – not just transactions.

This is not to say that governments don’t currently care about their citizens – of course they do. Rather it is about shifting the view to focus on the life events and milestones that drive people to engage with governments, such as births, loss of job, buying a house, earning an income, illness, retirement and so on. It is about becoming a service provider.

It also involves building connections between related events to find opportunities for agencies to work directly with each other to streamline services such as automatic electoral enrolment when you reach voting age.

And it is understanding that there are different types of interactions with government. Compliance transactions (where people have to meet a government requirement – such as car registration) can be translated to an online channel relatively easily; however beneficiary transactions (where people are seeking for something of value to them – such as child support) require new thinking to ensure that they are addressed from the citizen’s point of view which may require the ability ask questions and test different scenarios.

The Unisys Joined Up Government Survey is a study run nationally in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Singapore to provide insights into the attitudes of citizens toward digital government services and joined up government. The survey was aimed at examining how citizens currently prefer to engage with government and the benefits or challenges that drive this behaviour. The survey also explored public endorsement, for government to share citizen data between agencies.

The good news is that a lot of the challenges identified in the study can be addressed. But they do require a more citizen-centric approach focused on the customer experience. And this needs a real cultural change within the public sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The online survey was fielded during February 2016 in Australia and New Zealand and during June 2016 in Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore to nationally representative samples aged 18+ years. Sample sizes were:

Australia : 1,222
Malaysia : 1,000
New Zealand : 1,000
The Philippines : 1,000
Singapore : 1,000

The study was conducted in Australia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore by OmniPoll, and in New Zealand by ConsumerLink.
In all five countries the majority of citizens were confident they could easily find the right government agency to address their needs.

24x7 availability is seen as the top benefit for interacting with government online – whereas speed is not seen as major benefit.

Only a quarter to a third of citizens in each country prefer to engage with government online - indicating that current eGovernment services still have a long way to go.

The Philippines and New Zealand recorded the highest level of support for common citizen data, such as address, birthdate or tax number, being shared between government agencies. Malaysia is the only country where the majority of citizens do not support it.

Face-to-face is still the most popular way to engage with government agencies and departments – with the ability to answer questions and queries as they talk a key factor, highlighting the need to understand the customer experience when developing ways to interact with government.
BACKGROUND: DIGITAL GOVERNMENT IN ASIA PACIFIC

The maturity of eGovernment in Asia Pacific is as varied as the cultures within the region. Some governments have already put many services online, while others are still at planning stages. Countries such as Singapore and Malaysia have established centralised identity programs, while others such as Australia faced public push-back when such programs were considered. In addition, Internet penetration across a population impacts the ability to access online services even if they want to. The five countries covered by the Unisys Joined Up Government Survey represent that spread:

Singapore

Singapore was recently ranked the most digital savvy country in the world¹ and the UN ranked it in the top three eGovernment leaders behind Korea and Australia.² In 1999 Singapore launched the eCitizen portal to provide cross-agency, citizen-centric information and services in one spot. The Singapore Personal Access (or SingPass), was introduced in 2003 as a gateway to hundreds of e-services offered by more than 60 government agencies, enabling users to only have to remember one password when connecting and transacting with the Government. In 2016 MyInfo was introduced with the aim of making it easier to fill in online government forms by allowing fields to be automatically filled with data - such as name, NRIC number, registered address and property owned - pulled from various government agencies such as the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The Singapore government offers a number of mobile apps that are mostly information services such as healthcare facilities locations, housing availability and air quality as well as a channel for citizens to give feedback on municipal services - mobile apps do not appear to be used to conduct transactions.

New Zealand

Of the five countries surveyed, New Zealand has highest Internet penetration with 86 percent of New Zealanders with access to the Internet.³ To make it easier to access government services RealMe was introduced as a single online ID using one account to access services from different departments as well as some run by private companies such as banks. Since then, the government has implemented the ‘Better Public Services’ initiative which includes the objective for New Zealanders being able to complete their transactions with government easily in a digital environment. The goal is for an average of 70 percent of New Zealanders’ most common transactions with government to be completed in a digital environment by 2017. Gov.nz is an example of organising information about government services by life events, rather than by a government’s departmental structure. A small number of services are made available via mobile apps.

Australia

Australian citizens have the challenge of dealing with multiple layers of government at the federal, state and local level. With 8.6 million registered users and 200,000 logins per day⁴ Australia’s MyGov system shows that Australians are willing to use digital government service channels. The MyGov site was launched in 2013 and is a portal for citizens to access their Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support, Department of Veteran Affairs, e-health, and DisabilityCare accounts. Meanwhile, at a state level, New South Wales has set a target to get 70 percent of government transactions conducted via digital channels by 2019 (up from 44 percent in 2014).⁵ Australia offers a wide variety of mobile apps and makes federal and state apps accessible in one spot.

Malaysia

While ranked behind Singapore, New Zealand and Australia in digital sawiness, Malaysia is seen as the leader in a group of emerging Asian economies that are steadily embracing digital technologies.³ The Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) is responsible for modernising and reforming the public sector via administrative reforms including technology. Malaysia established its eGovernment project in 1996 and today offers a range of online services. In 2001 the MyKad national identity card was introduced as a compulsory identity document for Malaysian citizens aged 12 and above, as part of the Malaysian Super Corridor program designed to support the government’s Vision 2020 objectives to transform Malaysia into a modern state by the year 2020. It was a world first as it incorporates a host of government and private sector applications in a single card that uses chip and biometrics smart card technology.

Philippines

Of the group of countries surveyed, the Philippines is the least mature in its approach to digital government as while it offers various online services, they were developed as individual programs by separate agencies, rather than part of a national approach. However, there are plans for this to change: in 2013, change to the Information and Communications Technology Office (ICTO) launched an E-Government Master Plan (EGMP) for 2013-2016 and in 2015 it was agreed that this should be managed by a distinct and separate government entity. GovNet was established to interconnect government agencies in the country to enable faster communication, better coordination, easier access to online services, and simplified processes. Low Internet penetration of just 40 percent⁵ is an added challenge for getting citizens to use online government services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NETWORKED READINESS INDEX¹</th>
<th>INTERNET PENETRATION³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGAPORE</td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>#17</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>#18</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALAYSIA</td>
<td>#31</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINES</td>
<td>#77</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
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4. ITNews “Australian national auditor to comb over myGov” – March 2016
HOW DO CITIZENS CURRENTLY PREFER TO ENGAGE WITH GOVERNMENT?

The majority of citizens (58 percent to 76 percent) are confident they can easily find the right government agency to deal with when they experience significant life events such as having a baby, losing a job, getting married, buying a house, or a death in the family. New Zealanders and Filipinos are the most confident yet the two countries are at very different stages of e-government maturity.

Despite the focus on e-government initiatives over the last 10-20 years, the majority of citizens still prefer to interact with a person either in person or by phone.

In particular, face-to-face interaction is the most popular method in all countries, except New Zealand where online is preferred. Filipinos and Malaysians have the highest preference for engaging with government in person, which is a reflection of the maturity of their digital government programs as well as the lower levels of Internet penetration in those countries. New Zealand and Singapore have the highest preference for online channels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Very Confident</th>
<th>Somewhat Confident</th>
<th>Not Very Confident</th>
<th>Not at all Confident</th>
<th>Can’t Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most citizens prefer to interact with government agencies in person or on the phone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>In Person</th>
<th>By Phone</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Can’t Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What drives this behavior?
The main reasons cited for preferring to engage with government in person or by phone is that questions can be asked and answered during the process and people say they feel more comfortable talking to a “real” person – particularly for Australians and New Zealanders. At least one in three people also felt it would be quicker in the end.

Filipinos are the most concerned about the security of data online while Malaysians have the highest fear that online services will fail part-way through.

Of those who prefer online channels, at least one in three people cite 24x7 availability as the main benefit. Interestingly, only Filipinos rank faster transactions as a significant benefit.
The vast majority (at least 81 percent) prefer to use websites rather than mobile apps to engage with government.
The attitude toward government agencies sharing data between each other varied across the region.

New Zealand and the Philippines have the highest level of support (63 percent).

Malaysia (35 percent) has the lowest level of support despite the fact that the MyKad national identity card is already used to verify identity and provide common information to access government services.

Given Singapore has the next lowest support (50 percent) it will be interesting to see the response to the recently introduced MyInfo initiative to automatically fill in data on government online forms.

Interestingly it is younger people, aged 18-24 years, who have the lowest level of support for sharing information, while in many counties those aged 50+ years have the highest support – perhaps because older people have had to engage with government over a lifetime and want it to be more convenient, or perhaps they believe the government already shares information about them.
Understand what is important to the customer experience:

You might think that speed and convenience would make online government services attractive. However, faster transactions is not cited as a benefit of engaging with government online, and at least one in three people say they believe in person or phone interactions will be quicker. Online channels are clearly not yet seen as a convenient way of dealing with government agencies and departments. So we need to better understand what would make citizens use online services.

To drive citizens to use online channels, government agencies need to focus on the customer experience and what the citizen expects to get out of the interaction, understanding that they may have questions or various scenarios during the process. Then agencies can apply digital technologies such as interactive online help, online chat, analytics and social platforms, available across a range of devices, to enable truly workable self-service interactions.

Recognise that a successful experience varies with the type of interaction:

Not all interactions with government are the same. While convenience, control and responsiveness are major drivers for citizens going online, the balance varies by transaction type.

Compliance transactions (where people have to meet a government requirement – such as car registration) can be translated to an online channel relatively easily as there is very little variance involved.

However the approach to putting beneficiary transactions (where people are seeking to maximise the value returned to them – such as child support) online may require a complete rethink to ensure that they are addressed from the citizen's point of view which is likely to require the ability ask questions and test different scenarios.

Citizens generally support agencies sharing data to improve the delivery of services:

Public support for sharing certain data between government agencies signals permission to transform business processes in a ‘joined up government’ approach to not only improve internal operational efficiencies, but also enhance the customer experience. Of course such information sharing needs to be secure – with data protected when in transit and stored, tightly managed access controls, and compliant with an individual’s right to privacy.

Security and privacy of citizen data is paramount:

Government agencies recognise this. In discussions with government agencies and industry roundtables we have received a consistent response from C-level officials. On the one hand, they recognise that public support signals permission to transform their business processes in a ‘joined up government’ approach. On the other, they know that information sharing needs to be secure – with data protected when in transit and stored, with tightly managed access controls and that access and use needs to be compliant with an individual’s right to privacy. They also recognise that it’s not all about the data: they need to continue to improve internal operational efficiencies and enhance the customer experience. In particular, work needs to be done in Malaysia and Singapore to build stronger public support and endorsement.

Where to start?

Governments do recognise they need to focus on the citizen experience. The challenges for many governments wanting to embrace joined up government are working out how to actually implement the strategy, how to manage identification and authorisation, how to increase the levels of digital literacy within their own organisations and how to better use social media to engage with younger citizens. The need for cultural change is as big within the government organization as it is in the citizens they serve.
5 Requirements for Successful Digital Government

**Take a citizen centric approach** – design services from the citizen’s point of view, differentiate between straight compliance transactions and those where citizens seek advice or are likely to have questions.

**Understand user preferences, and what drives them** – when is speed and convenience important vs the ability to test different scenarios or ask questions. Design services so that citizens can access services when and how best suits their needs. Assess using social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as well as advanced analytics to predict what services are most relevant at what time.

**Create an environment for organisational change** – audit the skills, expertise and appetite for change within your organisation, at all levels, and implement strategies to build the right skillset, attitude and cultural environment.

**Map the life event journey for citizens** – understand what drives citizens to interact with government, look for linkages between services (likely to span multiple agencies), consider if services can be delivered in new ways – can they be automated? Can the agency proactively contact the citizens? Categorise different types of transactions and relevant delivery models – which ones are straight forward compliance transactions and which ones need to be more interactive?

**Identify data duplication across agencies** – look for relevant opportunities to share data between agencies that will streamline processes both internally and for citizens engaging with government.

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