



Local e-government now: a worldwide view

Executive summary



June 2002

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Introduction and purpose of the report

Local e-government now: a worldwide view is a project led by Martin Ferguson on behalf of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Society of IT Management (Socitm). Sponsored by SAP, the project has involved the active collaboration of professional associations, local government training and development organisations, local authorities, municipal companies and academic institutions from 15 countries in five continents.

The report of the project builds on the findings of the *Local e-government now* series, the research conducted by IDeA and Socitm *Insight* that has evaluated UK progress up to 2002.

The first report of its kind

What makes the worldwide report unique is that it focuses on the experience of local authorities interacting with citizens, customers, other levels of government and service agencies using electronic means. Other international studies have addressed national e-government policy, strategy and implementation, largely ignoring the local dimension. Yet, we know that the overwhelming majority of citizen-government transactions take place at the local level.

Our report assesses evidence from around the world, and carries significant messages for all those interested in making progress with e-government locally.

Project objectives

The report is designed to inform:

1. national and local policy-makers about:
 - what is being achieved;
 - what needs to be done to transform local government and its interaction with citizens and customers in different country settings.

2. members of contributing professional associations, information and communications technology (ICT) suppliers and other stakeholders about:
 - emerging local e-government best practices;
 - key 'building blocks';
 - ways of addressing the cultural, structural, process and technology changes that need to be made.

Undertaking the project

The findings presented in this report are based on:

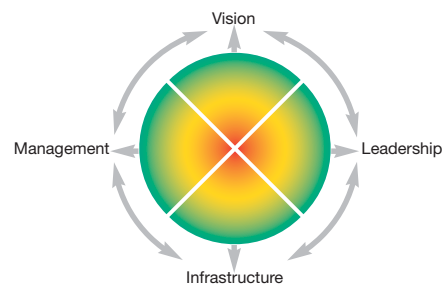
- an extensive range of case studies covering 14 countries;
- supplementary information taken from a variety of sources for Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan;
- an overview of the approach to local e-government being taken in each of the countries surveyed;
- analysis and interpretation of the case study and country overview material.

The case studies supplied by contributing organisations reflect the themes of customer service, internal efficiency and citizen engagement derived from Gartner's definition of e-government as follows:

'Transformation of internal and external public sector relationships through Internet-enabled operations, information and communication technology to optimise government service delivery, constituency participation and internal government processes.'

Source: John Mahoney
Vice President and Research Director
Gartner Research and Advisory Services
Europe, Socitm 2002 Spring Seminar

Our contributors collected relevant material for each case study using the following template as a guide.



Source: *Local e-government now: a baseline for measurement* (April 2001)

The UK editorial team collated the exemplar case studies from each country to produce an analysis that identifies:

- a spectrum of approaches being taken to individual, organisational and cultural change;
- types of innovation;
- the implications for the successful implementation of local e-government.

Key findings: the 'flavours' of local e-government

All the participating countries exhibit, to a greater or lesser degree, a range of approaches to delivering local e-government. These 'flavours' represent the ways e-government is being driven and the priority outcomes being sought, and they reflect the cultural, political and economic circumstances of the various countries.

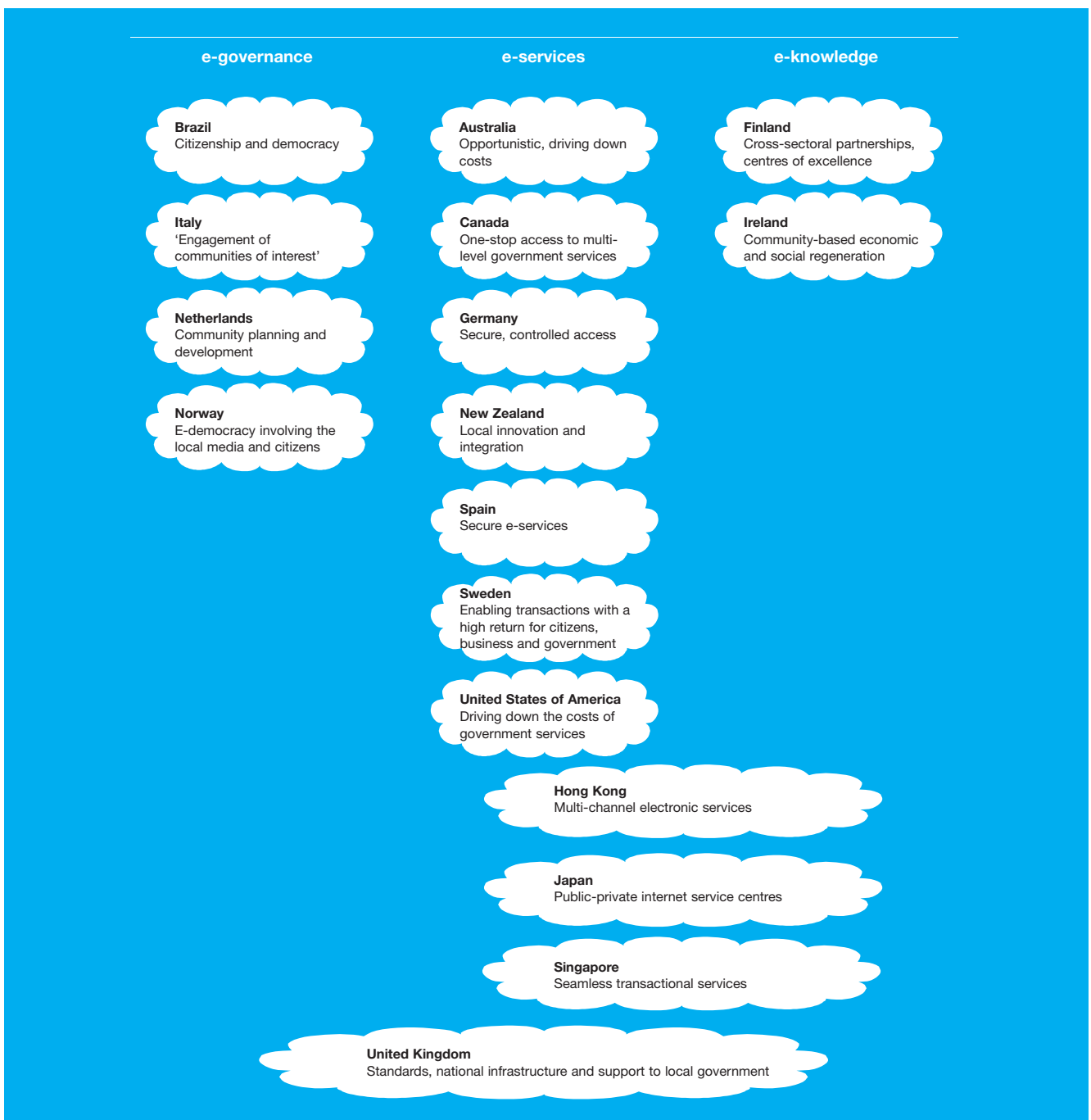
Broadly, they fall into three categories.

1. e-services: securing and providing government services by electronic means eg *USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Spain, Singapore, Hong Kong.*

2. e-governance: linking-up citizens, stakeholders and elected representatives to participate in the governance of communities by electronic means (including e-democracy) eg *Brazil, Netherlands, Finland, Italy.*

3. e-knowledge: developing the skills and the ICT infrastructure to exploit knowledge for competitive advantage eg *Brazil, Singapore, Hong Kong, Republic of Ireland.*





These flavours identify what is distinctive about the countries covered, as opposed to the many characteristics that the different countries share.

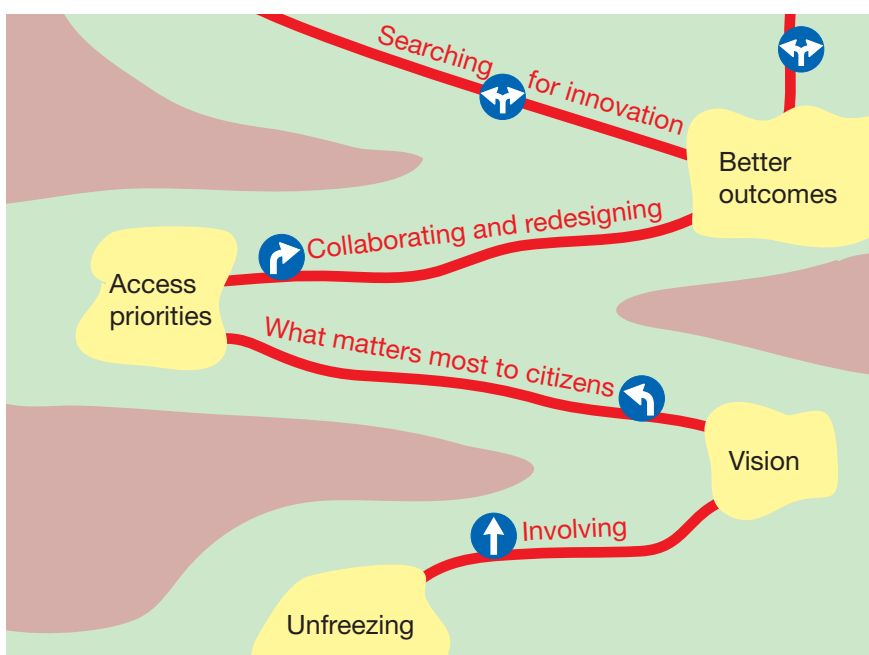


Key findings: the four 'via'

Analysis of the case studies reveals an encouraging picture of local government across the world rising to the challenge of e-government.

While the 'flavours' may vary from country to country, the case studies show that local authorities are approaching e-government through a number of complementary journeys, which we have called 'via':

- VIA  involving everyone to make it their vision
- VIA  focusing on what matters most to citizens in determining access priorities
- VIA  collaborating and redesigning to achieve better outcomes
- VIA  searching for innovation











National targets and prescriptions are playing their part, but these would have limited impact without the local innovation, creativity, application and resourcefulness seen in the case studies presented in this report. Around the world, many local authorities are moving out of the automation stage – simply applying ICT to the automation of existing processes – and are joining-up information and services. Ultimately,

the ambition witnessed in the studies is to transform the very nature and delivery of local government. The encouraging finding from our worldwide analysis is that local authorities are 'unfreezing' their organisations; 'movement' is happening and a wealth of successful examples are emerging from local authorities that are radically transforming their approach to service delivery and government.

The four VIA

We have broken down the four 'via' into concrete lessons for local authorities based on the good practice surveyed in the report.

VIA involving everyone to make it their vision

-  Acknowledge differences and address them from the outset.
-  Get on and do something, and actively learn.
-  Be sensitive to community development needs.
-  Encourage the development of local e-democracy by involving a wide variety of stakeholders and a range of imaginative solutions.
-  Exploit organisational and staff capacity, alongside community capacity, to create a vision for local e-government.
-  Consider the role that strategic partnerships with the private sector can play in making step changes in performance and cost reduction.
-  Be aware that there is no single model that works universally for every organisation.
-  Understand that change begets change – new people, new stakeholders and/or new organisations are conducive to creating the conditions for transforming services and relationships with customers.

VIA focusing on what matters most to citizens in determining access priorities



- Work to achieve the outcomes sought by citizens.
- Balance the role of process-based targets with an understanding of customer needs.
- Seek opportunities to develop meaningful consultative and deliberative on-line relationships with citizens.
- Learn with your communities and use every opportunity of interacting with them to explore the scope for local e-government.
- Champion and make use of electronic media to engage with citizens and to build their confidence and skills.
- Focus on what matters most to citizens first to build interest, trust and take-up.
- Link multiple-channel access, which is additive, to streamlined information and content management in the back office and you have the potential to improve quality and efficiency.

VIA collaborating and redesigning to achieve better outcomes



- Improve information management within and across organisations to transform the quality and efficiency of services accessed on-line.
- Ensure incremental approaches to introducing e-enabled services sit within an overall vision and strategy to avoid creating new 'electronic' silos.
- Harness the potential of a clean slate as an alternative approach to unlocking the potential for change and releasing resources to implement local e-government.
- Remember that an approach predicated on fundamental re-engineering of the back office is a challenging and long-term project.
- Consider developing front-line services using expertise from strategic, private sector partners to act as catalysts for radical change in service efficiency and response.
- Consider the value of information created and the opportunity to modify the value-chain to generate the investment required in new infrastructure.
- Be clear about the levels of security and authentication required for any particular transaction and implement accordingly.
- Seek practical working arrangements to enable data sharing while protecting personal privacy.
- Develop a systematic approach to identifying, selecting, planning and implementing shared services.

VIA searching for innovation



- Seek out the unexpected and look for new opportunities to make progress with local e-government solutions.
- Uncover incongruities between reality and perception to ensure that customers' real priorities drive the implementation of local e-government.
- Consider customers' needs in order to realise the promised shift of resources from back office, process administration to front-line service delivery.
- Consider facilitating an environment in which local e-government can flourish through changes in organisational structure.
- Consider demographic and social changes in approaching service design.
- Consider the role and capacity of citizens and customers to innovate in developing your approach to local e-government.
- Determine the trends in perception, mood and meaning in your situation, and consider the role local authorities and intermediaries can play in changing or accelerating them.
- Identify the disruptive technologies currently emerging that could radically transform services and relationships with citizens.
- Ensure your organisation keeps up-to-date with emerging knowledge of best practice and potential opportunities.

Case studies

The 36 case studies in this report demonstrate ambition for — and realisation of — transformational change. However, the projects and initiatives detailed in each of the studies largely focus on one of the three elements to Gartner's definition of e-government: customer service, internal efficiency, and citizen engagement.

Customer service



Sydney (Australia)

An award-winning transactional website which reflects the 21st Century aspirations of this major city.

Belo Horizonte (Brazil)

Understanding the requirements of achieving universal access to the Internet in an area with high social exclusion.

Service New Brunswick (Canada)

The development of a crown corporation with responsibility for creating a single customer-centred, multi-channel 'window' to e-government.

Kuusamo (Finland)

How e-government and ICT can play a pivotal role in the economic development of a geographically-disadvantaged city.

Bremen (Germany)

The development of secure access to government services grouped into 'life events'.

Nürnberg (Germany)

A secure, legally-binding regional communication platform to support transactions between citizens, government and businesses.

Modena (Italy)

The creation of networked one-stop shops for citizens and businesses delivering multi-agency advice, information and services.

Prato (Italy)

An on-line local tax declaration service developed in conjunction with citizens and tax professionals in the community.

Zoetermeer (Netherlands)

Active experimentation with a range of e-government projects in a fast-growing city.

Dunedin City (New Zealand)

Whole-scale transformation into a 24-hour, customer-driven organisation with a single, corporate 'knowledge centre'.

Møre og Romsdal (Norway)

Working with the local media to extend access to council information.

Catarroja (Spain)

Creating a 'virtual town hall' with 24-hour access to services, as well as providing citizens access to the personal data the authority holds on them.

Stockholm (Sweden)

A web-based service for applications to upper secondary schools which received 90% take-up in the first year of use.

Tameside (UK)

A whole-organisation programme to put the 'Customer First', which includes a network of one-stop shops, a transactional website and a multitude of free Internet access points in the authority.

Miami Dade (USA)

The implementation of a countywide e-government framework which builds on the success of e-enabling services in discrete areas of the authority.

Gwinnett (USA)

The implementation of customer relationship management — as a vision for service delivery in the authority underpinned by CRM software.

Mobile (USA)

The development of a large, comprehensive website delivering access to all authority services, without any dedicated e-government staff.

Internal efficiency



Santo Andre (Brazil)

Redesigning local planning services delivering real efficiency gains — as part of a change in the way the authority interacts with its community.

Nova Scotia (Canada)

Searching for efficiency gains through collaborative investment in a modern back-office infrastructure in a newly-amalgamated regional authority.

Lestijvari (Finland)

Delivering e-government in a very small authority through local and regional collaboration.

Mannheim (Germany)

Realising cost savings through modernising and automating internal business processes.

Auckland (New Zealand)

A rigorous methodology for the development of shared services between eight councils in the region.

Skövde (Sweden)

The realisation of concrete resource and financial savings through implementing e-procurement and e-business processes in a pilot for the rest of the country – thereby promoting the concept of a ‘single face to industry’.

Hampshire (UK)

The development of a robust business case to support investment in back-office infrastructure.

Mecklenberg (USA)

The development of a shared city-county website through a strong service-delivery partnership.

Citizen engagement



Alice Springs (Australia)

A community portal serving the diverse needs of citizens, businesses and tourists.

Porto Alegre (Brazil)

The long tradition of public participation in the budgetary process now being underpinned by the Internet and the fledgling attempts at e-democracy.

Tampere (Finland)

A programme to create a world-leading city of information society expertise through an all-encompassing local partnership.

Esslingen (Germany)

Encouraging citizen participation and trust through widespread use of digital signatures.

Jesi (Italy)

Promoting public debate by providing access to legislative and council information via the Internet.

Amersfoort (Netherlands)

Creating a ‘learning organisation’ which works with the community to gradually shape local e-government.

Hutt City (New Zealand)

The development of a community portal as part of a comprehensive e-government programme.

Grefsen-Kjelsås (Norway)

Experimentation with e-democracy which shows that take-up may be dependent on the interest to, and incentives for, citizens.

Ennis (Republic of Ireland)

A community-led, privately-funded programme to turn a small community into Ireland’s ‘Information Age Town’.

East Riding (UK)

A dedicated consultation website for young people in an authority which is pioneering initiatives to provide access to services in a sparsely-populated area.

Essex (UK)

An award-winning curriculum website where teachers, pupils, school governors and parents actively contribute to the site’s content and development.

This report would not have been possible without the collaboration of a number of organisations from around the world. The contribution of time and effort from these local authorities, professional and representative organisations, and businesses is greatly appreciated and acknowledged here.

Australia

School of Architecture and Planning, University of Sydney

Brazil

Prodabel — Empresa de Informática e Informação do Município de Belo Horizonte

Canada

Service New Brunswick and Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations

Finland

Suomen Kuntaliitto

Germany

Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik — Difu

Italy

Formez, Centro di Forazione Studi

Japan

Japan Local Government Centre, London

Netherlands

De Vereniging van Coördinatoren Informatievoorziening en Automatisering in Nederlandse Gemeenten — VIAG, de Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten — VNG and PinkRocade

New Zealand

Association of Local Government Information Management — ALGIM

Norway

Kommunenes Sentralforbund — KS

Republic of Ireland

Ennis Information Age Town

Spain

Ajuntament de Catarroja, Valencia

Sweden

Kommunal IT-Samverkan — KommITS

United States

Government Management Information Sciences — GMIS

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The IDeA was set up three years ago to support self-sustaining improvement from within local government. The Agency provides practical solutions to improve councils' performance, by offering tailored support packages to individual authorities and by developing innovative solutions to problems affecting the whole of local government.

The IDeA is helping local authorities to transform the way they lead their communities and to deliver services through ground-breaking initiatives such as the National Land Information Service, Marketplace, and the Local Authority Secure Electoral Register project.



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Founded in 1986, Socitm is the professional organisation representing over 1,000 local government and public service managers with responsibility for ICT policy. Its vision is to see public services transformed through the application of ICT. It encourages local authorities and public sector organisations to make effective use of ICT to deliver quality services and to enable citizens to engage actively in the democratic process. It seeks fulfilment of this vision through helping to set the agenda for local e-government and through sharing experiences, collaborating with other organisations and providing a wide range of support services, including *Events, Learning, Consulting and Insight* (formerly MAPIT), to its members.

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ISBN 1 899 330 89 5

This report is free to all Socitm members and local government e-champions.

The charge per copy to non-subscribers is £125 and the report can be obtained from www.idea.gov.uk or www.socitm.gov.uk

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