

A world class e-government: singapore

[Government](#)



E-government refers to the transformation of the business of the government such as processes, operations and transactions that is driven by the information technology. This can happen both internally (streamlined government administration procedures for greater efficiency and effectiveness) and externally (simplified, enhanced government-client interaction via online connections) (Tan, Pan & Lim, 2007). Singapore is a small country with a population of about four million with a small market and limited natural resources.

Although Singapore's position as an information gateway in the region has lead it to become a global hub which is attractive to many Multinational National Companies (MNC) (Chan & Al-Hawamdeh, 2002). Singapore is a leader in the electronic governance that has invited worldwide recognition. Singapore's e-government offers 98% of all government services are provided online for businesses and the community. It is one of the first countries to have the Civil Service Computerization Program (CSCP). The above mechanism was followed by the e-Government Action Plans.

These involved implementing as many public services online as possible, adding value to the e-services and providing a one stop service via the internet. Singapore has launched a iGov2010 plan in the aim of bringing the government a greater efficiency by integrating the back end processes of the government ministries and organisations. As per Tan, Pan & Lim (2007) it improves efficiency in terms of utilizing less time, effort and material resources while maintaining a constant level of output. There are two portals offered by the government of Singapore which are namely for the citizens and the businesses.

The portal offered for the citizens is known as the eCitizen Portal which is the single entry point for the community to access the services provided by the government and private corporations. The portal is to be accessed by the SingPass which is given to the citizens and permanent residents of Singapore. It is the single online user identification called the Singapore Personal Access. Through this system they can access their own confidential information. Also through the e-portal the community can post any thoughts on issues they are currently facing.

For example the extensions of the smoking ban or the country's national climate change strategy. The portal offered for businesses involves the Online Business Licensing Service (OBLIS). This is an one stop portal for government registrations and licenses required to conduct business in Singapore. Through this portal the applicant needs to complete only one integrated form for multiple licenses. The system provides consolidated online payment mechanisms for one-time payments for multiple license fees.

This system has led the processing time a business license to reduce from 21 days to 8 days saving businesses more than \$2. million annually.

Therefore the implementation of IT in the government has led to an increase in effectiveness and efficiency in providing services to businesses.

Another example of such is provided by Tan, Pan & Lim (2007) where the unprocessed tax returns accumulated in the Singapore income tax department resulted in administrative backlogs and dissatisfaction among taxpayers. The e-filing system in the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) has led to greater efficiency in the department and the use of back-

end infrastructure to incorporate taxation calculations and regulations has improved its effectiveness.

Question 1: Explore the two portals. What are the benefits to both the community and businesses? In Singapore, citizens have quickly warmed up to the e-Government services. Activities such as renewing road taxes and e-filing of income tax returns over the internet are now common among the community (n. a. , 2006). The main benefit for the community is the lessened administrative burdens they have to go through for payments, renewals and other services. The e-Government would lead to an improved quality of information with a reduction in the process time.

It would also result in cost reduction for both the community and the ministries. These improved service levels would lead to efficiency where the community operating with the e-Government would be satisfied (Corsi, Gumina & Ciriaci, 2006). Another benefit that is enjoyed is the ability for the citizens to use their mobile phones to interact with the government services. There are many services offered by the e-Government in Singapore that is compatible with the hand held device. For example Housing Development Board and IRAS.

Another benefit provided is the use of SingPass to access the individuals own MyeCitizen account. Having this unique SingPass would enable the privacy and confidentiality of the citizens. The users can personalise the portal and they have a variety of channels to choose from such as MyTravel, MyKids and MyCareer. Lastly the ability of the citizens to voice out their opinions is a great benefit for both the government and the citizens. Businesses have also

benefited by the services provided by the e-Government. It is an increased efficiency and convenience to deal through the online platform.

The offering of the Online Business Licensing Service (OBLs) allows the applicant to complete one integrated form for multiple licenses. The website provides the applicants with step by step guide which makes it trouble-free for the business to apply for licenses. By the OBLs the processing time of applications were reduced from 21days to 8days. This would be an efficient approach for the business where they can concentrate on other parts of starting up the business without a delay from the government authorities.

Question 2: According to the chapter, there are six stages in the transformation to e-government. Which do you think Singapore is in? Why? In order for a transformation of a traditional government to an fully functional online government, there are six stages that are to be completed. These factors are explained in Wong (2000). Stage one is information publishing/dissemination which involves providing information on individual governmental departments by setting up their own website. It allows the community and businesses to choose from a range of services and contact for further assistance.

By this activity the, the government departments would be able to reduce the number of phone calls customers need to make in order to clarify requests. Stage two is the " official" two-way transactions where the customers are able to submit personal information and conduct monetary transactions with individual departments through secure websites. At this stage customers should be convinced about the departments ability to keep

the information private. Stage three is the multi-purpose portals. It involves integrating different departments.

A portal allows the customers use a single point of entry to send and receive information and to process monetary transactions across many departments. Stage four is the portal personalisation where the customers can customise portals with their desired features. The government needs a much more sophisticated web programming that allows the interfaces to be user-manipulated. By the personalisation activity, the government can have a clearer read on the customer preference for electronic versus non-electronic service options.

Stage five involves the clustering of common services where the customers now view the once-diparate services as a unified package through the portal. They tend to recognise group of transactions rather than than the group of agencies. Therefore the government will cluster the services along common lines to accelerate the delivery of shared services. Stage six involves the full integration and enterprise transformation. This is the stage where all departments across the government is integrated with technology. It would bridge a shortened gap between the front and back offices.

Singapore's e-government is in stage six in the Deloitte's transformation model. E-government in Singapore has carried out Action plans since year 2000 regarding the accessibility, integration and providing value added services with one-stop service via the internet. There iGov2010 plan was launched in 2006 which involves bringing the e-government to a greater

level of efficiency. This is to accomplished by back end processes across the entire government's ministries.

Question 3: What could other governments learn from the example of Singapore? Despite the differences in Singapore and other styles of governments, there are things a country can learn from Singapore's e-government experiences. Singapore has enjoyed political stability since independence in 1965 and the People's Action Party (PAP) has been in government throughout that period. Due to the one party government system, there has been little or no disruption of policy implementation, which has enhanced the effectiveness of the delivery mechanism of public services. This stability has created well-organized institutions that help all stakeholders to adopt e-Services.

Investments and master plans have leaded the success story of Singapore. For an instance in 2005,, the Singaporean government introduced a master plan to tackle security issues. S\$38m (? 12. 3 million) will be invested in this plan to ensure a secure onlineenvironment. Incentives for tax-payers who submit tax declarations electronically, extensions of deadlines for those who are willing to declare their incomes electronically and lower fees for people who apply for their passports online are some incentives given by the government to promote e services and thereby an e governance.

The social strengths of Singapore have been demonstrated by an educational system that produces a well-educated workforce to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). Not only developing its own pool of local talents, Singapore also recruits foreign talents to work in both the public and

private sectors. Time saving, convenience and actual monetary savings are the main drives to pull e-Users to e-Services. In conclusion, one country cannot be a model of another country. But any country can be inspired by another. Singapore is a good example for other countries to open doors toward the success.