# Community facilities

Sociology, Community

Online public services such as FS Direct (Fire Safety) and FireEducationare well designed and accessible to all. This includes providing services for minority language groups and those with disability or limited mobility. New services must be developed so that they are available to all and easy to use. Digital TV and mobile phones will become increasingly important as a means of accessing the Internet. The government is committed to making it easier for all people to get access, whether individually or through community facilities.

The telephone will remain a preferred means of contact for many. Call centres must be improved by giving their staff access to information networks that will enable them to provide better service. Better information systems will support the work of those who have face-to-face contact with the public. The services can be accessed by multiple technologies, including web sites accessible from PCs, kiosks, mobile phone and digital TV, and call and contact centres. Those on web sites, call centres and digital TV have already been published atwww.

The underlying principle is to promote collaborative approaches to the use of these media across the public sector in the interests of accessibility, quality, familiarity and ease of use and establishment of coherent branding. A portal access to services and information on the Internet for employees and the communities we serve. The portal site will not only be for service delivery and internal functions, it will not necessarily preclude the delivery of services through commercial portal sites.

Departments within Humberside Fire & Rescue Service may use the portal for tasks such as the bulk transfer of data between the businesses or government as a method for electronic data interchange. Electroniccommunicationis becoming more the norm therefore Humberside Fire & Rescue Service will continue to develop electronic communication tools via the Internet via www. humberfire. gov. uk and other such sites deemed appropriate. The development of a seamless interface between the Intranet and the Internet will be via an extranet service.

Trusted users are able to dial into the Intranet and access work applications and data and employees can send information, place orders and carry out their duties electronically, which has enhanced the quality of service and administration within Humberside Fire & Rescue Service. Community Fire Stations are able to have private areas on the Intranet together with access to the Internet opening up another line of communication with their communities.

They can keep their web page up-to-date and customise it to reflect the community they serve. CITU is establishing common standards and infrastructure to enable inter-operability across government departments and the wider public sector. The policies and standards will also ensure that government organisations can communicate electronically with citizens and businesses. This has been achieved through wide adoption of Internet and World Wide Web technologies for all government information systems.

Humberside Fire & Rescue Service has to ensure that all development will meet inter-operability standards. This will require migration of systems to

support Internet Protocol (IP) standards and interface to the GSI and the Government Gateway. The network systems is therefore based on IP communications and IP communications standards throughout the organisations, starting with new systems, and browser enabled desk-top workstations, with e-mail and Web access for most if not all employees.

The inter-operability framework also requires the adoption by public sector bodies of common standards so that e-mail and electronic documents can be exchanged within the public sector and with citizens and businesses. E-fire will elevate Humberside Fire Brigade into the 'techno-century' and will enable it to compete for external funding, increase its profile within the public sector and it will make the organisation transparent to those within and outside the organisation.

4a Discuss the statement that 'e-commerce is no longer about business-to-consumer communications but about business-to-business between an organisation and its partners Electronic commerce (e-commerce) is an extension of traditional commerce, which is concerned with the activities of business, industry and trade, including nominally, the exchange of goods, services, information andmoney. E-commerce is the projection of one's business into cyberspace. E-commerce has now become common use throughout the world; it involves making it easier for individuals and businesses to exchange goods and services on-line.

E-commerce arose from the internet, which can be used to communicate and collaborate, search, access and retrieve information, participate in on-line discussion, provide information, share information, find entertainment, and

carry out business transactions and financial transactions. E-commerce also includes all company functions like marketing, financemanufacturing, selling and negotiation. E-commerce is carried out by the use of e-mail, EDI, file transfers, fax and videoconference. Business-to-business (B2b). This is the transaction between two businesses.

The B2b group includes all applications intended to enable or improve relationships within firms and between two or more companies. In the past this has largely been based on the use of private networks and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Examples from the B2b category are the use of the Internet for searching product catalogues, ordering from suppliers, receiving invoices and making electronic payments. This category also includes collaborative design and engineering, and managing the logistics of supply and delivery

The business-to-consumer (B2c) group is a much newer area and largely equates to electronic retailing over the Internet. This category has expanded greatly in the late 1990s with the growth of public access to the internet. The B2c category includes electronic shopping, information searching (e. g. railway timetables) but also interactive games delivered over the Internet. Popular items purchased via electronic retailing are airline tickets, books, computers, videotapes, andmusicCDs.

These transactions are the same as the traditional method of retailing, except there is an electronic medium use. An example of this is www. amazon. com (online book retailers) who sell directly to consumers in order to achieve very low prices. The Economist 26 February 2000 issue that in

1999, global e-commerce was worth a little over $150 billion with around 80 per cent of these transactions being between one business and another. It was also noted by Forrester, a respected research organisation in the field, the value of E-Commerce market is to reach nearly $1.

5 trillion in the USA alone by 2003. Another respected market researcher, Gartner, has forecast that by one year later, 2004, the global B2B ecommerce market will have continued growing and will be worth 4. 8 trillion. (11) With figures like these it is easy to see why businesses have started to invest heavily in IT systems which will interface more readily with world-wide-web resources. For many years the B2b market was slow and companies did not have the correct software to integrate with point of sales software.

B2b e-commerce can be seen as a kind of third wave of e-commerce, following the first wave that consisted only in a web site where the company offered a catalogue of its products, and a second wave where the consumer could buy those products by a link established between the web site and the company's back-end. In this third wave the company is so focused on the internet that not only does it offer its services to its clients online but also it does business with its providers online too. A simple analogy of these waves could be internet, intranet, extranet.

The Internet came first and linked users around the globe via phone lines, dedicated lines or through other networks. Intranets, which link users in one organisation, followed. Firewalls separate intranets from the Internet and prevent outside users from accessing the internal networks unless they are

authorised. Then along came extranets, as a means to link intranets of various companies with their business partners. Extranets were developed as a response to the needs of partnerships in the business sector. Such relationships between business partners are called B2b.

They need a network, which will enable them to exchange sensitive information via setting levels of network accessibility. There are different types of extranet. Based on the business sector, extranets are classified as: Supplier extranets. A supplier extranet links store branches to their central store, in order to facilitate workflow and maintain the required level of stocks in the inventory. It reduces the possibility of rejecting orders due to shortage of stocks, in addition to providing many services related to inventory control. Distributor extranet.

A distributor extranet gives different levels of authorization to various individuals, depending on the size of the dealings. It also provides services such as electronic order and automated settlements, as well as lists of new products and specifications. Peer extranet. A peer extranet promotes equal competition between the different companies in the business sector, as it links small and large companies and enables them to share product prices and specifications. This helps improve the products and services of a company, and curbs monopoly.

Many companies have gained numerous benefits from extranets. It is possible to build extranets that link distributors with main suppliers. This accelerates operations in the processing and shipping of orders. It is also possible to develop an application based on the concept of request point, to

automate distribution and payments. In this case, when the distributor's stocks of a certain product fall below a preset quantity (called request point) a message will be sent to the supplier to request more of that product. Extranets are now one of the most popular technologies in the information age.

Analysts and researchers expect extranets to replace special purpose networks that are currently used in the fields of e-businesses and e-commerce, as extranets are cheaper to build than special purpose networks, in addition to their capability in facilitating management operations and improving communications with the clients. The benefits of e-commerce to B2b partnerships are many. The first obvious benefit is reduced costs, which occur from no paper and postage costs, time between receipt and implementation of an order being reduced and scheduling information being transmitted with the ordering data.

Manufacturing companies can plan the production more accurately, hence, cost saving. The cash flow is greatly improved under EDI with EFT (Electronic Fund Transfer) which is a electronic transfer value tool, EFT also compliments EDI allowing partners to improve financial management and with EFT payments arrive on the date agreed and not 2-4 days following postage EDI brings with it reduced errors as information never has to be received or copied. Also EDI can be integrated with the companies current system avoiding re-input data, eliminating possible error and reducing time.

One of The greatest things about EDI is when a message is received a message is sent back to the sender confirming its arrival. This is the

equivalent to a postal registered mail. When looking at e-commerce globally B2b is growing at an unprecedented rate and is far surpassing B2c but I don't believe e-commerce is just about B2b communications. There are success stories within other areas of e-commerce, such as person-to-person communications, the best example being E-bay with a turn over in excess of $100 million.

There was also Napster, which had one of the biggest 'share-ware' communities with millions of members. The growth of business-banking and Tesco-online are excellent examples of B2c. E-commerce is about communication, buying and selling, the fact is that the B2b sector has finally got its act together, after realising the potential of e-commerce and investing intechnologyit is now reaping the rewards.