

SESSION ONE

Questions & Answers

Chair: Martha Dorris

USA

Martha Dorris, USA. Thank you to all of our speakers. I think we have seen how both national and local Government serve citizens through various delivery channels from the web to the phone, cable TV, mobile communication and kiosks. We have seen a large local jurisdiction creating a Government without walls, the walls are clocks. Mr Navot reinforced the delicate balance between the cost of providing services to citizens and treating them as customers and his bacon and egg story certainly reinforced the idea behind involvement and commitment.

We also saw how Korea is demonstrating that the high penetration of mobile technology and devices are creating a perfect opportunity to move from 'E' Government to 'M' Government with a caution about security, cost and the integration between the wired and wireless.

We have some time for questions, I would like to open it up.

Martin Wagner, USA. This is less a question than an observation. While David Molchany was talking about the Fairfax County website. Will next to me using a wireless connection from his laptop went in and tied in and looked at the video presentations that you mentioned, your conferences. So it really shows that you have e-Estonia being able to tie in to a local government in the United States just using a laptop here. I thought it was interesting.

Martha Dorris. Thank you for that observation. Will you please state your name and country for the recording. Mr Grant?

John Grant, Australia. David Molchany, my question is to you. I was interested in your IT pack. I was just wondering whether get to the stage ever where this committee of business and individuals might actually get excited and have a difference of view to the board of supervisors and how you deal with those, perhaps mismatches of expectations.

David Molchany, USA. They are very careful not to disagree with the board because that is who appoints them. But they do have different ideas than we do, and one of the challenges to myself and my CTO, the Director of Technology, is to literally explain to them why their idea fits, because sometimes they come from an idea that we like and we just deduct into the whole strategy. Sometimes they come with ideas that just won't work, and it really, sometimes meetings, and tie meetings, just explaining why that certain idea won't work. One of the big things they have championed is infrastructure and architecture, and we have adopted both of these, and in fact re-developed their entire data centre and creating architecture team spread out from the rest of the organisation. So they come up with good ideas. They rarely ever disagree at the supervisors, although sometimes they disagree with the funding level the supervisors have allocated to IT but sometimes the meeting is taken up by us trying to work with them to stop them from pushing ideas that just will not work.

Kieran Coyle, Ireland. We heard this morning in the keynote address how e changes the relationship within the citizen and the state, and in the course of the morning we have had a number of presentations where we have had the state providing extra facilities, etc, to the citizens. We heard about the citizen being king. I was just wondering, one of the issues that seem to be facing a lot of people at the moment is not what the state is doing for the citizen

but what the citizen should be doing for the state. And one of the things I certainly feel very strongly about is apathy. When it comes to elections or referenda. And Referenda is certainly something that is a lot in the limelight in Europe at the moment. And I was just wondering, does e-Government, when it changes the relationship with the citizen and the state, neither the state is less inclined to interact with government in terms of elections of one type and another. And I was just wondering that Fairfax, in particular, would seem to be very much ahead, do more people vote and do they vote more often? Thank you.

David Molchany, USA. I don't know if it is impact of people voting, although we are trying to make that more convenient with them but I do know that it has impacted their ability to give their opinion, and we get enormous amount of email traffic, especially direct with the supervisors. It is the supervisors, on their pages, have a form for people to fill out, literally to identify themselves and basically to give their comments which feeds directly into their COM for them to actually deal with. As we have added those types of allocations for departments as well as the board, we have got a lot of traffic in.

Once of our board members specifically used technology to actually reach his constituents, and I talked about this with some people last night, where there was an initiative, there was a group of people in his district that basically wanted something to happen, they wanted to pay more taxes, believe it or not! To stop development in their area from the newspaper and everything else, it sounded like that was a huge push by the citizens that their titles or newspapers articles would groundswell from the citizens: pay more taxes to stop development. It was picked up by the Washington Post. When he actually used fax, email, his web form and many other channels to reach all of his citizens, he overall found out that was a very small group of people, and in fact the base did not want to pay more taxes, and didn't really care what was developed. That was a good example of actually getting a lot more participation from citizens. As we are getting them to the polls, I don't think we've helped. I think that some of the e-voting initiatives, especially in the U.K., could help. The question of taking that to a mobile level, to a phone level, that is a question of whether you want to do that as a country. But I think some of that make it more convenient voting, where its convenient for you to vote might get people to the polls. Riverside County also put polling stations in shopping malls, and that actually helped. You did not have to go to your poll, you could go there and vote and that seemed to help get people there. It is a matter of convenience, I think.

Helen McDonald, Canada. I have a question related to the one we just heard, and its for David again. How do you encourage government departments, government staff to actually embrace consultation, to open up for inter-activity with citizens? We find within our government, there is a great fear that pointing people towards another channel for consultation will actually prevent people from expressing how they feel other than on narrowly defined topics. You seem to have found a way around it. How did you encourage people to embrace that way?

David Molchany, USA. The departments are literally trying to keep their headcount down and use their staff as efficiently as possible and we work with them to try to create applications that help them rather than inundate them. Before we put web addresses or direct emails out we ensure that there is someone who is actually going to read them and can process them. In the departments that I named that have the CRM type system already installed, the idea is that to go directly into the system and have workflow help pass that out across their departments. We are now working on probably the biggest CRM segment we have done so far on public works which is enormous – five thousand people work on public works. In what they do covers a huge spectrum and touches other departments. For their system, as the data comes in from the CRM and goes out through workflow to other people, the tracking of that is something that is quite important, to make sure things actually get fixed.

So I think the emphasis has been on not just throwing technology at them, or solutions at them and saying, here, now you are going to accept emails but in fact working with the departments on any of the technologies we use to create something that fits them based on our channels we don't want to add brand new channels but what we have done so far to create things that actually fit them, as well as their customers, so that we don't overwhelm them. Because we could certainly overwhelm them with a lot more volume than they have every experienced but really what we try to do is to make it easier for them, and in most cases this actually has happened.

Martha Dorris. Okay, we have a question from Luis Vidigal.

Luis Vidigal, Portugal. Yes, thank you. I want to make a question to all three speakers. You have presented in general different channels the writer to choose what channel to choose. And I wanted to know if all three have some sort of real time update of taxonomy, if you have the taxonomy for web, for contact centres, for PGA's, for model phones, for kiosks or whatever. If you have the general team of this conference's real time conformance, if you have already something that is the same taxonomy, if you have ergonomic problems with different channels on that?

David Molchany, USA. We have done a lot of that manually, and through our architecture up to this point. That is one reason why we have just bought our new content document management system that actually automates all that, and we have basically use the same data for all the platforms, making that automated thing that just happens, is something that we are going to work with, document them to do. We also have really embraced XML, something that will also cross channels, and make it easier for if you are going to change taxonomy it happened everywhere immediately in more automatic fashion. It has been very labour intensive to do it up to this point, but I think the new software products will make it much much easier. And also an emphasis on architecture and on how things are put together, and to build to begin with, so that is shares across common databases, it makes it easier for data to flow between channels, and makes it a real time enterprise, is something that we want to do.

When we first put in our three basic channels, i.e. our kiosk in the web, we did it as a pilot in 1995-96, not knowing if we were going to keep any of them or if they were going to be popular. They became widely popular, and then we just started supporting. What we have tried to do since 1996 is make it more efficient so that our in-staff that supports this system, do not get overwhelmed, and we have done that in stages. I think that document management, content management system will be of huge benefit to them. So that is how we are going to try to solve what you have just brought up.

Jacob Navot, Israel. I think reaching the real time government interaction with the citizen when Israel are waiting for the, and I am speaking of the taxation systems, we are waiting for the digital ID card that would be provided for every citizen. We have got a lot of applications waiting for it, like filing returns and receiving the balance of payment balance of every taxpayer. We are just waiting for this infrastructure to be introduced, I hope, next year it is going to be here.

Martha Dorris. We have some translation going on.

Heon-Jun Kim, Korea. Sorry about that. I cannot give you an answer straight away as I have to think it over. I will give you an answer after the session. Sorry about that.

Martha Dorris. Do we have any other questions? John Riddle.

John Riddle, Canada. This question is for Jacob Navot but it could be answered by any of the panellists. It is around service standards. You actually use the word in many of your questions you used service level agreements. So my question is does your government have

minimum service level agreements. Use something as tangible as for emails. We get millions of emails. Individual departments make assessments as to what emails get answered and how quickly they get answered, and that's only one example of a service level standard. So, do you have minimum service standard?

Jacob Navot. I see that Benny is raising his hand, he is eager to answer you. So Benny go ahead.

B Raab, Israel. I think that part of the plans are already implemented, by which we are trying to give the best service to the citizen Those who do not have the internet will be able to go to a kiosk. We are even going to those post office branches that are not computerised but will be computerised very soon and every citizen in every village where there is a post office will be able to and will be able to get all the information even if he does not have the internet, for what we call 'mothgov' which is like the portal of the government and it will give all the information. The other thing is that we have five hundred forms already on the internet and if one does not have the internet they can go to the post office and not only will they get the form needed, there will be somebody there who will help to fill in all the details. Very soon with the introduction of the ID which Jacob has said, which is being electronic signature ID, anyone will be able to sign it on the spot and will not even have to sign it by hand.

The other thing is that we are trying to, what somebody has said is re-education. In our community centres all over the country, and we have in almost every village or every town we have centres with computers where for free people will be able to get basic education on using either the internet or how to get all the information needed. The last thing is that we call it a "computer for every child" and last year, ten thousand computers were given to children who are in the areas which cannot afford to buy computers so the government has given them for nothing. Some communities will just charge the equivalent of a few dollars for the sake of the citizen to avoid that feeling that he gets everything for nothing, not to get the money but to get the idea that this belongs to him and he pays something.

Martha Dorris. Thank you Benny. I think we do also have a Fairfax County response to this but I think the question was that at the federal level through USA services, we have publicised the two day/forty eight hour turnaround on email response to all citizens. So that is what we are doing at least at the US and federal level in terms of that specific service.

David Molchany, USA. In terms of Fairfax, if you look at each department performance measures, that's where you find out what they have agreed to do. So we don't actually force them to do anything in particular, but they have to come up with what they are going to do in the way of performance in any of the channels, including what they do just face to face. The other thing is that the department heads are actually paid based on how they meet the performance measures for their department. It actually enforces, performance measures are actually good and they actually do what they are supposed to do.

Martha Dorris. Nachman?

Nachman Oron, Israel. Since John was very specific about service level agreement, I'll try to answer this directly. In general, the answer is not yet. We are not well organised for the right service level agreement, but in any new project that is coming in, we are trying to define together with the usual results what is the service level agreement for this? So for instance if you are talking about emails there is no specific order on how soon you have to answer emails but emails are considered as any other letter coming into the government. It has to be answered within fifteen days which is ridiculous but at least it is not more than fifteen days! But we are going now to a new project of a safe where each citizen will have a safe where he can find all his documents and within this project, if you send something to the safe then within twenty four hours you will have to get the answer.

Martha Dorris. We have time for one more question. Will?

Will Berios, USA. I think this question pertains more to Korea in terms of what you talked about mobile e-government. I was kind of curious about the security aspects, how you were addressing those within their particular strategy?

Heon-Jun Kim, Korea. You mean in terms of the security measure of a mobile government?

Will Berios, USA. Yes, that's correct.

Heon-Jun Kim, Korea. Well the mobile government in Korea is on the way. Actually at local government level only a few are doing mobile services to the citizens but at the central government level, actually the security problem is quite severe in Korea at the moment, especially the NGO. NGO always insist on monitoring the government, how they are using the information or on how they are dealing with their own information but I am sorry I can't answer in a technical way but in terms of the administration level all the contents will be protected by the law and also we provide the government employee with privacy in the education programme, and also they monitor the local files in the system, and they check out on a daily basis once or two days but I am sorry I can't answer how to protect the registered information in the system.

Martha Dorris. I guess at this point I would like to thank your speakers, so please join me in thanking them.

I want to remind everybody that your evaluation forms are in your notebooks so don't forget while its fresh in your mind to actually fill out those evaluation forms. You also have an Affinity Group list so if you haven't signed up for an Affinity Group or your name is not on the lists shown in the conference areas please sign up at once. The rooms where those sessions will be held tomorrow are also shown so you will know where to go depending upon the subject you are interested in.