

## ICA Country Report 2004

### AUSTRIA

#### **Delivery in e-Government**

Delivery of documents is an elementary process in public administrations. For e-Government, the electronic delivery is a central process, complementary to the electronic input process of form data. In the following the Austrian model is introduced. Its characteristics are openness, security and simplicity. The delivery takes place in the form of a deposit and is accompanied by a notification. Due to using electronic signatures we can solve the problems of receivers authentication and also the confirmation of delivery.

#### **1 Introduction and basics**

For public administration the delivery of documents is a central and resource intensive interface to its customers. For example, the ministry of finance and ministry of justice in Austria invest annually over 50 million Euros for postages of the delivery products (exclusive paper and for press costs). Electronic delivery is therefore an essential component of a future oriented electronic administration. The model described in the following offers on the one hand service and comfort on the customers (citizens) side, on the other hand essential simplification, synergies, and savings potentials on part of the public administration.

##### 1.1 What is needed?

A qualitative identification and authentication of the receiver is required throughout the delivery process. This need can be fulfilled through using electronic signatures. The signature law forms at the same time a solid basis-rule for e-Government. The law offers additionally also the possibility, to use the identification, which must be carried out in the frame of the registration of the qualified certificates, in the procedures further on because the identity of a person does not change.

Absolutely necessary for a successful delivery is the confirmation of the reception of the document. Also in this case the electronic signature can be used. In the sense of the law, documents are not delivered directly (e.g. e-mail), but it will be put in an electronic deposit of the person. In e-Government, the 'duty place' is a server in the internet which informs the person of the deposit on suitable manner.

##### 1.2 Demands on the delivery process

At the focus of data protection and also security a few points of interests have to be kept in mind:

- Delivery through open networks (Internet) has to take place generally encoded. Moreover documents should get transmitted to the delivery service already in a receiver-related encoded form.
- Documents to be delivered are supposed to be electronically signed on behalf of the issuing authority. With this additional security it is getting possible to check the authentication of the document.
- In case of no possible electronic delivery, there must either the delivery initiated in paper form and/or a feedback to the authority has to be done.

## **2 Model of the Delivery process itself**

The model is based upon the following principles: the authority delivers the document at a suitable delivery service and after that neither the document must be held nor Meta information of the document has to be kept within the government applications.

The person registers itself in the delivery service and leaves there the necessary data for an identification and encryption. Especially, the keys for document encoding and signing have to be deposited. Because persons have explicitly to agree to electronic delivery according to Austrian law, the registration process can also include this approval.

The described model is based upon the fact, that the delivery service or any other third party never can perform insight into the document. This offers also the possibility to outsource the delivery service to business because they can't take insight into the documents, but can perform the delivery regular!

## **3 Interfaces and formats**

The model contains three interfaces: authority – delivery service, the notification and person – delivery service. As already mentioned, the notification can use different techniques and is therefore not described in this paper.

### **3.1 Person – delivery service**

In the frame of the Austrian e-Government model the person is requested only following tools: a capable computer and the possibility of the creation of certain electronic signature

- The communication has to take place over web-interfaces.
- The signature takes place via the Security-Layer interface of the Austrian citizen cards concept.

After the person has authenticated itself at the delivery service server by using of certain signatures, he gets indicated a list of all possible documents to be delivered. The person selects one or several of these documents and signs a confirmation of delivery. Upon that step the documents are ready for downloading. Cleared documents can either be decoded and downloaded directly or downloaded as and when necessary at a later time.

### **3.2 Authority – delivery service**

The interface between authority and delivery service is carried out as an online service (that means XML and SOAP). The functions being performed on this interface are:

- Querying of an encoding key of a certain person
- Transmission (depositing) of a document for a person
- Transmission of a confirmation of delivery
- Feedback transmission of a corresponding negative message of electronic delivery

### **3.3 Formats**

The central document format in the Austrian e-Government strategy is XML. XML offers a wide application basis (also Open source), is easy being structured, offers standards for using signatures and encoding and can be represented by use of Stylesheets. The XML is constructed as an onion structure. As external part of the generic XML structure you will find

a container containing the data of the issuer and the receiver. For each document type, like the reply there are increasingly more special structures. It is the sense of this onion structure to reach a homogenous structure of data, which leads to desirable synergy effects, like the use of generic application modules. Moreover attention is put on that that these documents can serve as entrance data of other administration processes. A reconstruction of the electronic document (including also authority signatures) out of a hard copy is also an important design criterion.

#### **4 Current status and future aspects**

The specification of the described Interfaces is already completed. Different companies have shown their interest in development and service-providing of a delivery service and/or began with the implementation. Some legal external factors have to be discussed. The described model offers advantages for all participants: for the authority, synergy effect and savings effects arise. Not only through the electronic delivery itself, but rather because the total delivery process can be separated from the application itself. e-Government procedure are now possible without media losing and therefore reply can become again entrance data for other processes – that means for e-Government a new dimension and new qualities. For the citizens: because they can accept simply and uncomplicated a personal delivery without going to the post office. For the operators of the delivery services: because through the open draft the possibility of the business of the delivery is possible to include also other parts of the economy and market with large volume. Moreover the delivery services can be used also by the private economy for invoices and other documents. Whether at this time the confirmation of delivery has to be in the same quality as in the official delivery, it depends on the application itself.

A prototype of the delivery service is currently under testing. In order to estimate the economic relevance in terms of a future call for tender the delivery service in the first phase is now led as a 'governmental delivery service', which is intended to go at the end of 2005. Thus the volume should become assessable it should be possible for partners of the economy to offer appropriate services in this field.