Chapter X

Web Portals in Government Service

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Abstract

Government portals are not dissimilar to business enterprise portals, although many of these are the entry point to the organisation’s intranet and thus internally facing. The purpose of a portal is to increase the volume of available information, and government portals are becoming gateways or central access points for many e-government initiatives around the globe. They perform this task well as they provide a consistent and easy-to-use interface that allows citizens access to a range of government services. This chapter presents the findings of a review of two Victorian government portals, each of which has implemented different operational models.

Introduction

Victoria is one of eight Australian states and territories. It is situated in southeastern Australia. While Victoria is the smallest of the mainland states with
an area of about 227,000 sq. km, it has a population of approximately 5 million. The population is widely dispersed, although the majority is located near major cities and towns. Victoria has strong agricultural, manufacturing and technology industries and continues to be the most industrialised of Australian states. Melbourne is the capital of Victoria.

This chapter presents the findings of a review of two Victorian government portals, each of which has implemented different operational models. Each implementation has its own distinct advantages as well as some important success factors that have been determined through careful analysis after their implementation.

There are many definitions of a Web portal. The term is often used in relation to business portals that “… integrate all the business environments of a company—process, applications, and data, to present them on the Web and thereby have a centralized location that can be accessed by customers, employees, suppliers, and trading partners alike” (Mendoza, Griman, Perez, & Rojas, 2002). Furthermore, “Early intranet projects … not to mention some that are ongoing … can be easily classified as content portals. Next in the evolutionary chain are transactional portals … tools that encourage self-service. These are generally one-off projects. Process portals … are designed to optimize business performance, process portals raise issues about technologies, products and vendors. … Process portals guide users through business scenarios” (Ojala, 2002). The concept is ubiquitous access via the Internet and the underlying technology is the Web server with browser-based access for display. The Web-based user interface is extremely important; as it is familiar to many work environments and readily available in schools and homes, there is a low requirement for training (Butler, 2003).

There are many business factors driving the implementation of portals, including the massive proliferation of Web sites and the difficulty this presents surfers in finding relevant information. Another is the large amount of information that is duplicated. The user and business need to ensure information is current; therefore, the more places or sites a business needs to update to keep information current, the greater the risk that this will not occur. Portals also position businesses for future integration of many sources of information from a single point. Finally, portals strengthen security as they provide a single entry point to the organisation’s information and services.

“A portal’s purpose is to increase the volume of information available” (Butler, 2003; Miller, 2003), and government portals are becoming the gateway or central access point for many e-government initiatives around the globe.
The Perceived Potential of Business Social Networking Sites
www.igi-global.com/article/perceived-potential-business-social-networking/72132?camid=4v1a