

Cost Saving in an Uncertain World

To meet spiralling demand for public services, limited public funds must be carefully measured. Delivering more with less is imperative.

Whilst the political landscape from the second half of 2010 onwards is unclear, one thing is certain: the public sector must look to ever more innovative ways to make the most out of scarce public funds.

Within its aspirations for a Digital Britain, government intends to switch to 'digital only' services from 2012. Indeed, only by switching to low cost online transactional services wherever possible will limited budgets be eked out to provide additional support to those who need it most.

Key, however, to the successful take-up of online services will be citizen engagement. If the process of finding, and then applying for, a required service is not easy, quick and simple then citizens and business - by default - will fall back on more expensive telephone and face to face enquiries and service channels.

The potential for the 'next generation' of eForm technology to help smooth this process is clear: engaging, interactive, with built in error checking and efficient transfer of data to back office systems, these technologies can streamline existing inefficient and unfriendly processes.

Meeting need at first contact

Southwark Council has developed a 'One Touch' service with Vangent which enables residents to access up to 10 services in just one contact - including council tax, electoral and GP registration, application for housing and council tax benefits, school meals, children's clothing allowances, parking permits and library cards.

Based on Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite and the Adobe Flash Platform, One Touch has transformed customer service. Automating the process of registering citizens enables staff to deliver more efficient, joined up, proactive and, most importantly, more personal services.

"Our aim is to look holistically at citizen needs and address all service opportunities in one interaction, not many interactions," explains Dominic Cain, head of client services in Southwark. "It's exciting when an application like One Touch so clearly delivers on its promise... Service representatives have more efficient interactions with constituents and are delivering higher quality services."

Staff also gain a more intuitive experience that guides them through service calls and reduces training requirements. As a result, the borough has seen a three-fold increase

in the number of services that many citizens access per contact, while managing to save over one million pounds in efficiency savings. For example, accelerated processing of housing benefits has cut the process from 36 days to just one and cut staff training from two years to two days. Overall, staff are achieving a 99% accuracy rate on all One Touch forms.

From complexity to efficiency

But it is not just in relation to the external customer, the citizen and business, that eForms bring the potential for transformation. Processes both within and between public sector organisations are benefiting too.

The Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) housing benefit team is using Adobe forms to underpin the complex process of reimbursing local authorities for council tax rebates, housing benefits, rent allowances and rebate payments. This involves 408 local authorities, £16bn in transfers, and approximately 1,200 claim forms each year.

DWP now uses a bulk email to send councils a dynamic form that can be completed and filed back to DWP electronically. Once returned the data is automatically entered into the payment database, the housing benefit team notified of any further checking and approval requirements, and a file then generated for bank payment via DWP's mainframe.

"The new process means that the manual elements have been removed, saving time and money. Equally important, we have a system that will take us into the future," says Steve Forshaw, project manager, Information Systems Directorate, DWP.

Simplifying to save money

Australia's Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is using LiveCycle Forms and Reader Extensions to help improve services to schools nationwide and eliminate the need to ever manually create custom forms.

DEEWR estimates the combined savings for both the agency and the applicants at approximately \$276,000 over three years in forms development, applicant rekeying time, and back-end data processing costs.

Apart from significantly improving services DEEWR gained a return on its investment of 38% over the following three years, reduced the time it had previously taken to manually design and develop forms in HTML or ASP by 90% and completely



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eliminated all time previously spent re-entering data on forms it received.

Rapid ROI

Meanwhile, LiveCycle is helping the Australian Department of Health and Ageing to provide electronic reporting facilities for health professionals working with the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program. The department recouped its investment in LiveCycle in only one month - and estimates a return on investment (ROI) of 923% over the next three years.

More importantly to those connected to the programme, however, the deployment has slashed time to catch and correct errors on forms, significantly reduced the time it takes to complete a form and enabled the team to provide assurance to health professionals that forms have been submitted and acted on.

Saving paper and money

The US Government Printing Office (GPO) provides a centralised resource for gathering, cataloguing, producing, providing, and preserving published US government information in all forms - at the same time guaranteeing its authenticity.

By implementing Adobe LiveCycle Digital Signatures ES and Adobe Acrobat Pro the GPO saved over 20 tons of paper and \$1m over five years - as well as being able to protect the documents that travel inside and outside the GPO firewall.

Harnessing the power of platform independent and easily integrated eForm technology to simplify and automate business processes offers huge potential efficiency and quality gains for the public sector globally.

Replacing paper processes with electronic ones can improve accuracy, speed of service delivery and dramatically improve quality. Replacing paper with electronic processes enables governments to significantly impact carbon footprint and help meet carbon reduction commitments.

The focus for 2010 should be delivering savings through making business processes more effective and making people more efficient as they deliver engaging citizen and business services.

For a copy of a 'Benefits Overview of Adobe Customer References', call 0208 606 1167 or email: Adobe@lgitu.co.uk

