

e-Government



Managing for

Excellence





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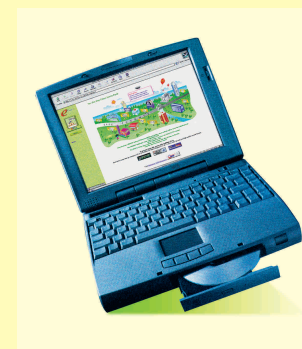
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Foreword by Head, Civil Service

Globalisation and the rapid progress of infocomm technologies are bringing about fundamental changes in all aspects of our society. We have seen the remarkable changes that have taken place in the business sector with the advent of e-commerce. Today, businesses need to become e-businesses, if they are to stand a fighting chance of survival. Similar changes are taking place in governments, egged on by the rising expectations of citizens and global competition.

To survive the fundamental transformations taking place today, all governments need to become e-Governments. But e-Government is not simply about adding an “e” to government. It covers more than investments in infocomm equipment or setting up a website to publish information. E-Government requires that we fundamentally re-think all aspects of governance to see how we can take advantage of technology and new business models to improve efficiency of internal processes as well as change the nature and quality of government interactions with both individuals and businesses.

Let me share with you a few examples of the changes that are taking place. First, our work environment of the future will be vastly different as we become liberated from the physical restrictions of the office. With advances in technology, we can have discussions with colleagues, share documents or access all our files and databases from remote locations. Training courses need no longer be restricted to classrooms. With e-learning, each officer can learn at a time and place which is convenient to him and at a pace he is comfortable with.



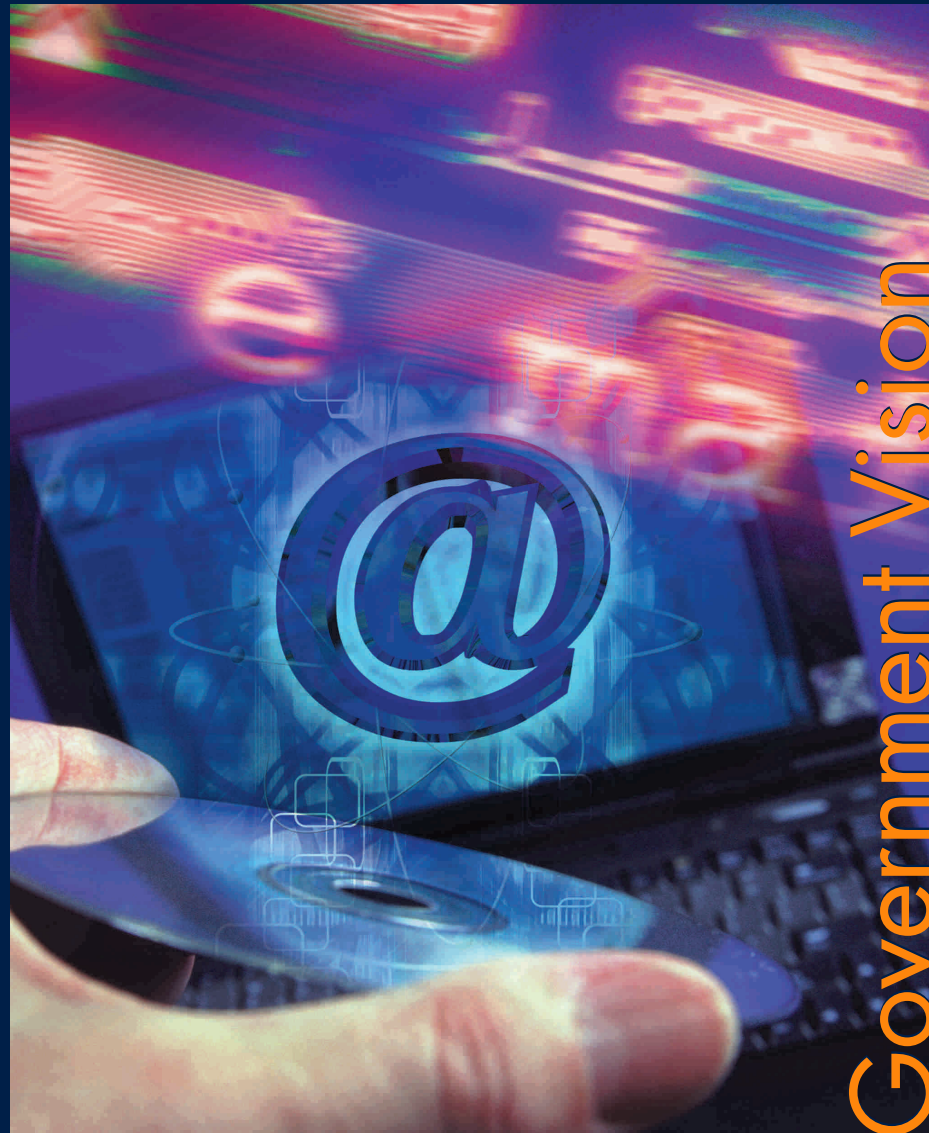
Second, new technologies coupled with changes in our internal processes will enable us to cut through bureaucracy to tap the collective knowledge and skills of each and every one of our officers. We have already seen how the sequential processing of paper files has been replaced by the use of e-mails and electronic submissions. This has led to the delayering of the traditional civil service hierarchy. The establishment of knowledge management processes will allow us to even better capture, categorise and share information not only within agencies but also across agencies more efficiently.

Third, we will be able to serve our customers, both individuals and businesses, far more efficiently and in a customer-centric manner by cutting across agency distinctions. E-services will increasingly be the main channel for provision of government services, as the public comes to appreciate the greater convenience and value proposition that they represent. On a case-by-case basis, it could even be the only channel of public service delivery.

These are but a few of the many possibilities open to us in the e-Government that we are building. However, all these changes can only come about if we as a Public Service are prepared to challenge our traditional frameworks and assumptions and re-think our policies and work processes. This requires active leadership in appreciating and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by infocomm technologies. In other words, it requires leadership in e-Government.

Let us rise to the challenge of developing our Public Service as a leading e-Government in the world.

Lim Siong Guan
Head, Civil Service



*To be a leading e-Government
to better serve the nation
in the Digital Economy*

e-Government Vision

e-Government Vision

Globalisation and the rapid pace of developments in infocomm technologies have brought about fundamental transformations in business processes and relationships. These technological changes will also redefine the nature of government and its relationship with citizens.

The Singapore Public Service faces the challenge of re-inventing government in the Digital Economy. This transformation of government and governance cuts across all aspects of the public sector from leadership, delivery of electronic public services, internal government operations, and ultimately economic competitiveness. It requires the establishment of an e-Government, one which recognises the impact of infocomm technologies on governance in the Digital Economy and exploits these technologies in the workplace and in internal processes for the delivery of citizen-centric public services.



“Governments all over the world have a major role to play in realising the socio-economic potential and benefits of the Internet economy for their industries and their citizens. We have begun the process of transforming ourselves into an e-Government, one which members of the public and businesses can reach, communicate and interact with virtually. We believe that the public sector can provide the catalyst to create an e-based society in the Digital Economy.”

DPM Tony Tan
at COMMUNICASIA 2000



To realise Singapore's e-Government vision, an e-Government Action Plan was drawn up after wide consultation with all levels of public sector officers. It charts the strategic thrusts and programmes that guide the Public Service in realising the e-Government vision, while retaining the flexibility to adapt to changing needs.

Re-inventing Government in the Digital Economy

Governance in the Digital Economy requires a clear understanding of the impact of infocomm technologies on internal processes in the public sector and transactions with citizens and businesses. The Digital Economy demands reviews of policies, regulations and processes to align them with the rapid developments in the economy and to meet rising expectations from the public. Public officers must therefore be prepared to change their tried and tested ways in transforming government.

“The Singapore Government was ranked top, together with the United States, Australia, Canada and France, in the status of maturity in implementing electronic government.”

Andersen Consulting, June 2000

A recent survey by Andersen Consulting, along with other reports, confirmed Singapore to be ahead of many countries in government-to-citizen services and Singapore’s e-Government concept to be among the most citizen-centric. Singapore is therefore moving in the right direction. However, the report also stated that even the leading e-Governments still have a significant distance to go to reach e-Government maturity.

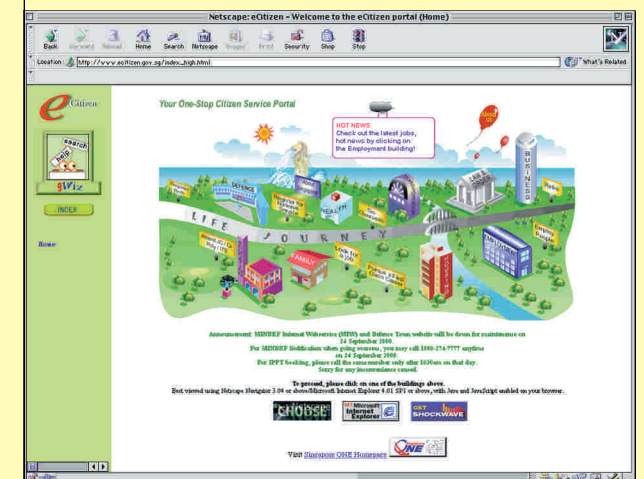
Delivering Integrated Electronic Services

Increasingly, citizens will want public services to be delivered online, anytime and anywhere, at their convenience. The Singapore Government has set an ambitious goal for its Public Service.

“Key public services will be delivered electronically by year 2001. Government agencies will streamline their processes to be more customer-oriented, delivering services with the citizens’ needs in mind rather than the convenience of the agencies.”

DPM Lee Hsien Loong
at COMDEX/Asia, Singapore Informatics 98

Greater value will be created for the public if electronic services are integrated and centred around customers’ needs. The end objective is to provide a convenient one-stop, non-stop service for the public. The government’s eCitizen Centre initiative embodies this concept. It requires government agencies to work across boundaries to integrate information, processes and systems so as to provide a seamless online experience.



The eCitizen Webpage



The e-Government Action Plan presents five strategic thrusts for our e-Government activities over the next three years.

e-Government Strategic Thrusts



e-Government Strategic Thrusts

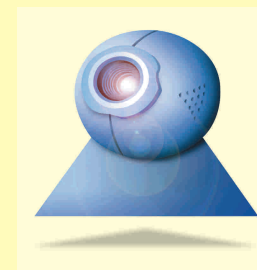
e-Government Strategic Thrusts

Being Proactive and Responsive

Government agencies do not have the luxury of time to develop new policies, systems and services, as “time to market” for new services becomes an important consideration. Increasingly, government agencies will have to adopt the same “sense and respond” approach as the private sector in anticipating citizens’ needs and delivering responsive systems and services with speed. Existing services and processes also need to be fine-tuned to meet customers’ changing needs and in line with new technological possibilities.

Using Infocomm Technologies to Build New Capabilities and Capacities

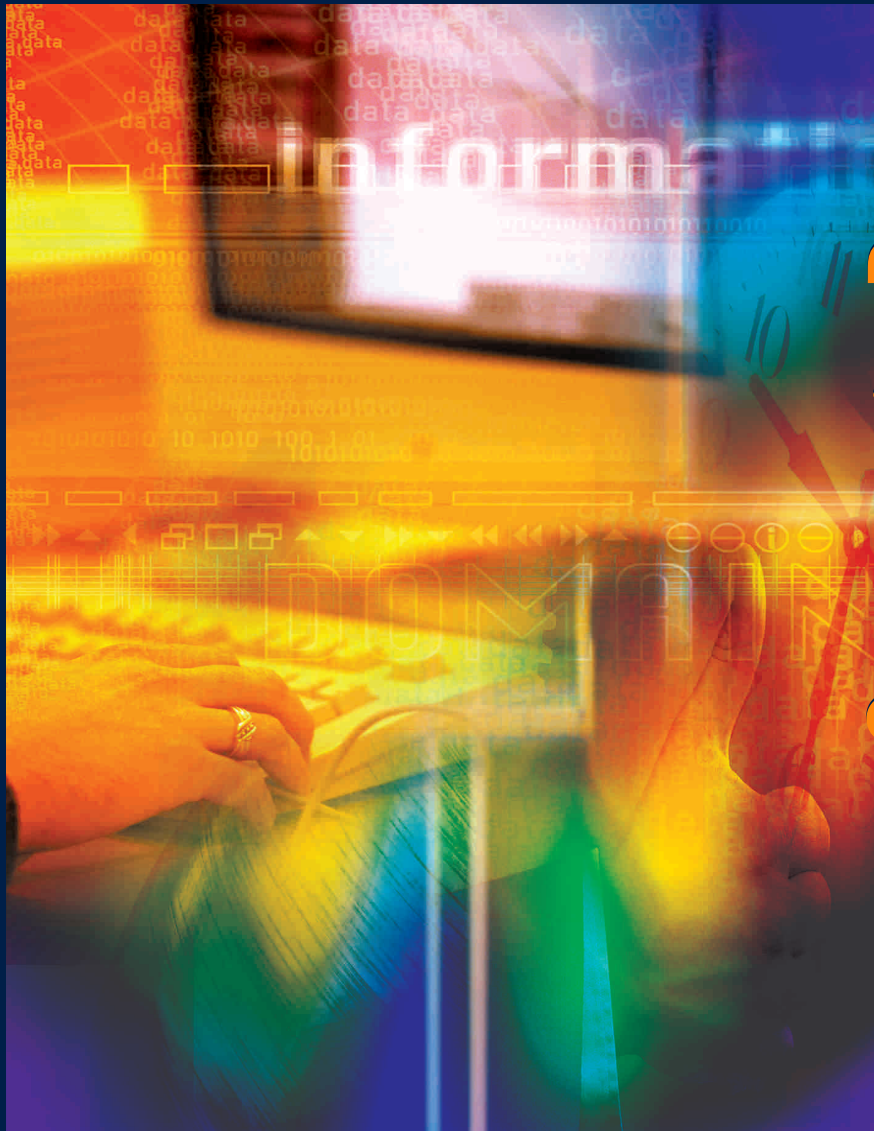
Government agencies must learn to re-engineer government processes to benefit from the new business models of the Internet era. This will help to enhance internal processes and build new capabilities and capacities. Appropriate systems and infrastructure will be needed to support the change. Public officers need to acquire necessary skills and tools to make them effective knowledge workers. They must be able to access systems and information anytime and anywhere, as tele-commuting becomes more prevalent.



Innovating with Infocomm Technologies

To be a leading e-Government, innovation and experimentation are primordial. Public officers must therefore be prepared to experiment with, innovate and exploit new technologies to deliver government services more effectively. They must be prepared to learn by benchmarking against private sector e-commerce practices and other leading e-Governments.

In initiating new projects, public officers need to think radically; implement projects with speed by starting small to deliver value quickly; and scale up fast once the pilot is proven successful.



e-Government Strategic Programmes

Six programmes have been identified to drive the strategic thrusts in the e-Government Action Plan.

Knowledge-Based Workplace

Public officers will be empowered to be knowledge workers who engage in active and collaborative learning and knowledge-sharing as part of a culture of continuous learning. Learning itself will increasingly be performed online, i.e. e-learning.

Electronic Services Delivery

The current eCitizen Centre focuses on providing a one-stop interface with the public through integration of services offered by public sector agencies. The PS Online project will put in place a common infrastructure to enable :

- (a) seamless integration of eCitizen front-end applications with back-end systems of agencies so that more services can be deployed expediently; and
- (b) tighter business process integration between agencies, their suppliers and business partners to present the citizen with a single point of contact.

Technology Experimentation

Public sector agencies will be encouraged to experiment with new technologies that could potentially revamp the way they work. Agencies can pioneer initiatives, which are "first-of-its-kind" or "first-in-its-series" in the public sector, on a trial or pilot basis to better understand what new capabilities these technologies can offer and how they can benefit their organisations and customers.



Operational Efficiency Improvement

The public sector will continue to identify and invest in new systems that improve operational efficiency. In doing so, public officers should however actively ask radical and fundamental questions to review the relevance and usefulness of functions and processes, and whether these could be streamlined to take advantage of the new capabilities offered by the Internet age.

Adaptive and Robust Infocomm Infrastructure

Infocomm infrastructure investment in the public sector will be channelled to enable the advent of a knowledge-based workplace and the delivery of integrated electronic services, in addition to improving operational efficiency. These include both agency-specific projects as well as service-wide infrastructure projects where the emphasis is on scalability, robustness and cost-efficiency.

Infocomm Education

The infocomm education programme will target all levels of the public sector. It extends beyond traditional IT literacy, skills and application systems training to focus on managers' capacity to take advantage of growth in infocomm capability to revamp internal processes and external service delivery. This will facilitate the participation of public officers in the process of "re-inventing government" by making meaningful policy decisions in all aspects of governance in the Digital Economy.

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