



SLOVENSKÁ POŠTA, INC. AS A PROVIDER OF E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Katarína Gašová¹, Alexandra Rovňanová², Marek Valica³

Abstract: In a post-industrial information-based society the knowledge and information will represent the driving force for further development of the company instead of industrial technologies. Electronization of public administration brings a lot of benefits, but even though governments are experiencing the problems with the implementation of e-Government services. The paper deals with the e-Government services in Slovakia provided by national postal operator and services that are the most used by citizens.

Keywords: e-Government, e-Government services, Government to citizen,

Introduction

Informatization is a process primarily based on information and communication technologies such as World Wide Web and other communication technologies that have transformed the economic and social relations in the form in which cultural and economic barriers are minimized. Current society of the 21 century is considered as a society of knowledge and information. A lot of attention is paid to the topics that are related to rapid development of information technology such as Internet. These technologies are used as the faster communication means and allow the transmission of required data and information. Electronic communications are essential for economic growth and creation of conditions which are important for the formation of information society. Move towards a global information society is the rapid development of electronic communication in Europe and worldwide. Electronic communications interconnect the telecommunications, media and information technologies. The aim of electronic communication implementation into public administration is the creation of open and transparent public administration, provision of better public administration services, increase the efficiency of public administration and to enable citizens and businesses an easier and faster communication with the authorities of all levels (the state administration and local governments), because the exchange of information and data is available through the e-Government 24 hours a day 7 days a week from any location. [1]

Theoretical approaches

¹ Ing. Katarína Gašová, interný doktorand, FPEDAS, ŽU Žilina, email: katarina.gasova@fpedas.uniza.sk

² Ing. Alexandra Rovňanová, interný doktorand, FPEDAS, ŽU Žilina, email: alexandra.rovnanova@fpedas.uniza.sk

³ Mgr. Marek Valica, Ústav celoživotného vzdelávania, ŽU Žilina

In professional literature we can find different definitions of e-Government. According to UN's "e-Government is a permanent duty of public administration improving relations between the citizens and public sector by providing the cheap and efficient services, information and knowledge. Practical implementation of what the public administration can provide". Electronization of public Administration is called E-Government. It is an electronic public administration that represents one form of public executive. The Public Administration is the activity carried out by state authorities, local governments and public institutions to ensure public tasks. Its aim is the operation of public welfare through the strengthening of civil society and social justice. [1]

e-Government means the electronic handling of administration and democracy processes in the context of governmental activities by means of information and communication technologies to support public duties efficiently and effectively. e-Government through the use of information and communication technologies, together with organizational changes and new skills brings better, faster and more efficient services of public administration. It improves the formation and implementation of public policies and it helps the public sector to deal with conflicting requirements to provide several services of better quality using less resources. [2]

However, there are similarities that are in line with the majority of the definitions. First, a technology-enabled government is assumed. Second, information and services are provided online and unattended to government or public sector stakeholders. Third, accessibility, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and government-stakeholder interaction are positively influenced. Before exemplifying the use of the term e-government in this book, we first have to differentiate it from e-governance since these terms are sometimes used synonymously, even though they do not mean the same (Saxena 2005).

e-Government forms

The issue of e-Government applies to all levels of government. Based on the online communication of the various stakeholders it distinguishes six forms of e-Government.

G2C

The electronic commerce activities performed between the government and its citizens or consumers, including paying taxes, registering vehicles, and providing information and services

G2C (Government to Citizen) is a term that refers to the relationships between organizations (subjects) of public administration and a citizen. The designation can be used for any relationship between the subject of public administration and the citizen, most often it is used as one of the basic relationship within e-Government models. The initiative comes from a federal organization (public administration) and citizens are the target group.

Use of the G2C in practice: G2C concept is used for expressing the relationship between public administration and citizens. The relationship may refer the demand for information from the citizen in any life situation or a transfer of an official document to the citizen. The abbreviation is usually used to refer to the ICT solution that converts such communication to the electronic form or to describe a solution that simplifies the communication between public administration and citizens (e.g. office website or public service catalogue).

The goal of Government to Customer (G2C) e-Governance is to offer a variety of ICT services to citizens in an efficient and economical manner, and to strengthen the relationship between government and citizens using technology.

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G2B

Government-to-Business (G2B) is the online non-commercial interaction between local and central government and the commercial business sector with the purpose of providing businesses information and advice on e-business 'best practices'. G2B: Refers to the conduction through the Internet between government agencies and trading companies. B2G: Professional transactions between the company and the district, city, or federal regulatory agencies. B2G usually include recommendations to complete the measurement and evaluation of books and contracts.

G2G

The aim of G2G is to enable governments and organizations related to them to more easily work together and to better serve citizens within key lines of business.

Government to government (G2G) is the electronic sharing of data and/or information systems between government agencies, departments or organizations. The goal of G2G is to support e-government initiatives by improving communication, data access and data sharing.

G2E

The objective of G2E is agencies to be able to improve effectiveness and efficiency, eliminating delays in processing and improving employee satisfaction and retention. Internal efficiency and effectiveness adopting commercial best practices in government operation in areas such as supply chain management, financial management and knowledge management. The category of e-government that focuses on interactions between government and government employees to support transactions such as payroll and pension plans, obtaining training information, and accessing benefit eligibility information.

G2A

Government to Administration is online communication between Government and Administration. In Administration are the institutions of EU Member States and EU institutions. It streamlines the process of implementation of the newly established EU measures for Member States.

C2G

Citizen to Government is online communication between citizens towards public authorities. The citizens of this model are mainly used by the administration and property tax returns in electronic form or in the vehicle registration. In Slovakia, this model is less developed, mainly due to lower confidence of Slovak citizens in electronic systems, such as by traditional services. Modern technologies are beginning to intensively penetrate into this model, and that in the future we can expect its rapid development. [3]

The process of implementation of e-Government by national postal operator

The establishment of Slovenská pošta, inc. is connected with the establishment of Slovakia in 1.1.1993. Originally it raised from the single state company called the Administration of posts and telecommunications. Its creator was the Ministry of transport,

posts and telecommunications. In March 1993 Slovenská pošta, inc. began to actively engage in cooperation within the framework of intergovernmental organization the Universal Postal Union and in cooperation with foreign operators. Slovenská pošta, inc. changed into a public limited company in 1. 10. 2004. Slovenská pošta, inc. is independent business entity which exists without the subsidies from the state budget. In 2011 it launched the projects related to the development of state services, provided through Integrated Citizen Service Points. Slovenská pošta inc. has decided to provide these services for several reasons including its availability, the extensive branch network, proximity to residences of citizens and business residences, concentration of services of several offices in one place, efficient use of time, saving time and easier life for citizens. The creation of Integrated Citizen Service Points preceded the analysis of citizens` needs, the choice of the most demanded services and finally in 2012 made a deal with: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, the Office of Geodesy, Cartography and Cadaster, the Ministry of Interior and the Prosecutor General`s Office. Slovenská pošta, inc. was on 2.3.2012 registered as the first provider of Integrated Citizen Service Points and became a state strategic partner in e-Government. [4]

Integrated Citizen Service Point

Integrated Citizen Service Points are created as a result of the efforts to provide more convenient and better services for citizens. All services are provided to the customer “under the one roof”; they are saving time, costs and provide assisted services without form-filling. Integrated Citizen Service Points, condition in postal companies is the need to provide universal service, so Slovenská pošta, inc. is the only one which can provide it. The national project of Integrated Citizen Service Points lasted from July 2012 to December 2015. Building of the Integrated Citizen Service Points was financed through the Operational Program Information Society and the European regional development fund. Total expenditures were 18 539 600, 80 €. Citizens can visit the Integrated Citizen Service Point and obtain: Abstract of the Companies Register, Abstract of the Title deed, Abstract of the criminal record register and verification the originality of electronic chip called “small technical certificate”. [4,5]

Research of using e-Government services

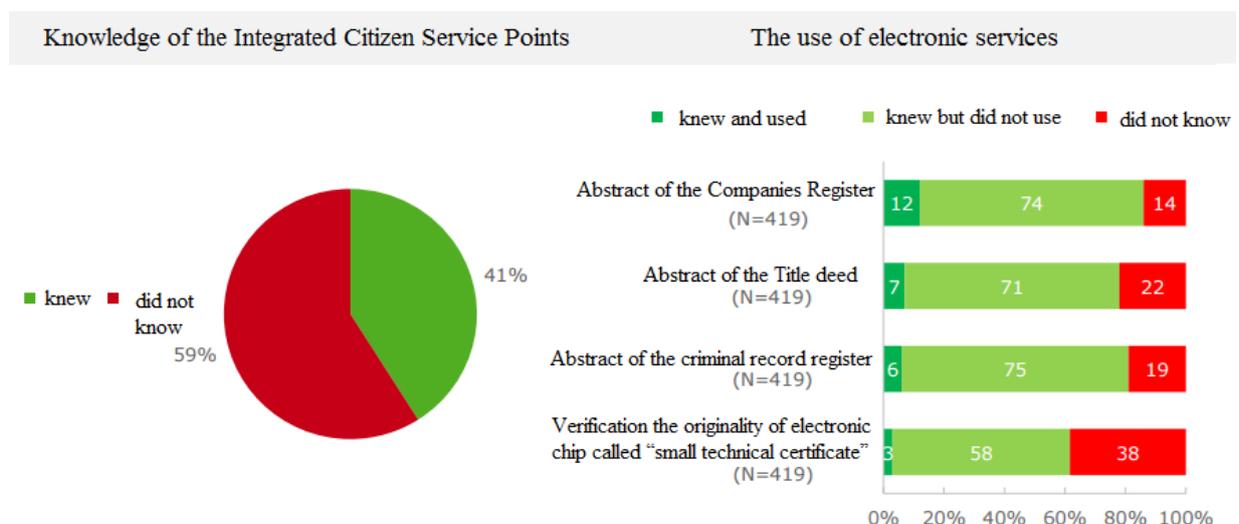


Figure 1. Integrated Citizen Service Points knowledge and use of electronic services in Slovakia in 2014 (Source: Informatizácia [online] [cit.15.06.2016] Available on internet: <http://www.informatizacia.sk/782-menu/20299s>. [6])

The Ministry of finance made an annual satisfaction survey of selected public administration services. In 2014 in the survey participated 1021 people aged 18-65 years. As you can see in figure1, 59% of respondents did not recognize the term Integrated Citizen Service Point, at the other side 41% of respondents knew this term. These 41% of respondents were questioned on their knowledge and use of services. The least known service was the verification the originality of electronic chip called “small technical certificate”. The most used service was Abstract of the Companies Register which was known and used at the same time by 12% of respondents. The results from figure1 show that the majority of respondents were familiar with the provided services but they have not used them. From the survey we can assume that in prevalent rate the knowledge of citizens about e-Government services provided by Integrated Citizen Service Points is at low level, despite the fact that the interest in these services is growing every day. [7]

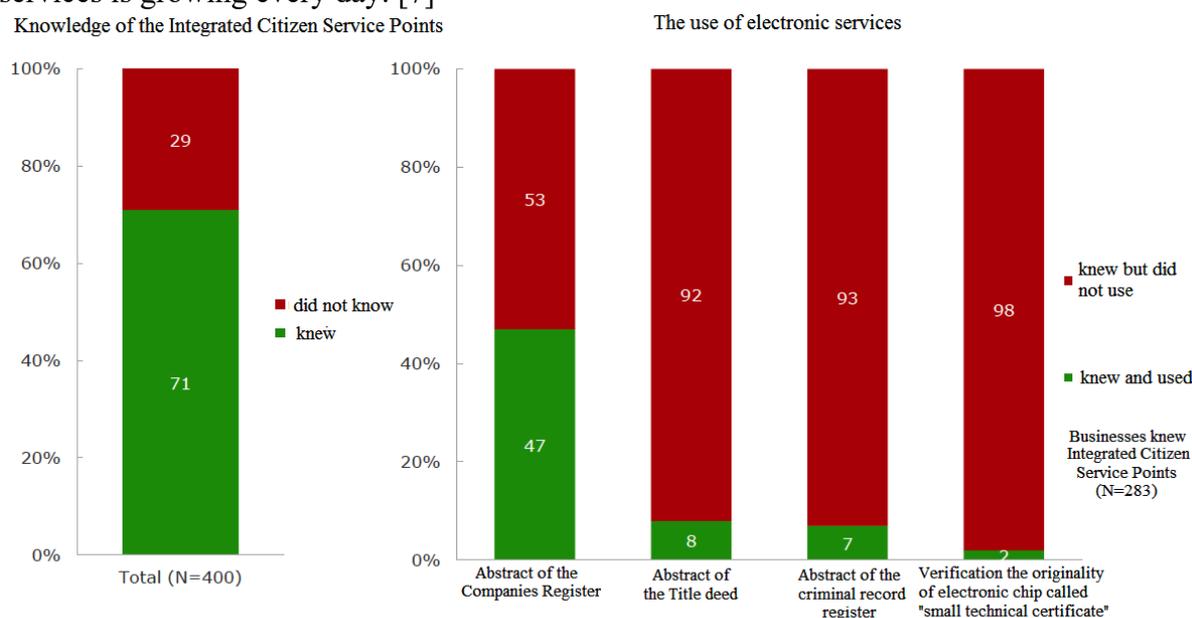


Figure 2. Integrated Citizen Service Points knowledge and use of electronic services by businesses in Slovakia in 2014. (Source: Informatizácia [online] [cit.15.06.2016] Available on internet: <http://www.informatizacia.sk/782-menu/20299s>. [6]

The annual satisfaction survey was oriented on businesses, too. 400 businesses from 1 to more than 250 employees participated in survey in 2014. As is shown in Figure 2, 71% of respondents knew Integrated Citizen Service Points and 29% of respondents did not know this term. These 71% were questioned on their knowledge and use of services. The least known service was the verification the originality of electronic chip called “small technical certificate”. The most used service was Abstract of the Companies Register which was known and used at the same time by 47% of respondents. The results from Figure 2 show that the majority of respondents were not familiar with the provided services and have not used them, yet. From the survey we can assume that businesses have great knowledge about e-Government services provided by Integrated Citizen Service Points but have low interest in using them. Slovenská pošta, inc. should raise awareness of provided e-Government services through targeted advertising, because e-Government is beneficial for all involved stakeholders.

Conclusion

Integrated Citizen Service Points provide assisted services where citizens are assisted by specially trained staff, which ensures the elimination of a variety of communications, technology and knowledge barriers. Based on experience Slovenská pošta, inc. knows that the interest of the state electronic services is growing, and that is why they continually expand these services. The citizens regard these services as meaningful and useful. Evidence of that is the award which Slovenská pošta, inc. acquired for the project of Integrated Citizen Service Points, in 2014. Slovenská pošta plans to expand the number of Integrated Citizen Service Points and create a single network that will provide combined services to address the most common life situations of a citizen along with the e-Government services. Nowadays they are communicating with insurance companies in order to introduce services such as: extract from the insurance card and certificates to sole traders and entrepreneurs of payment of health insurance. Slovenská pošta, inc. plans to expand services about the services aimed at solving of everyday life situations, such as moving. As a part of this service should be comprehensive equipment home address changes in health insurance, social insurance, with energy suppliers and with other institutions. [6]

The aim of introducing of e-Government is to provide the superior services, to seek a greater involvement of citizens, to establish the links with private companies to improve the efficiency of public administration and services and to make it available to the general public. Efficiency of public administration is caused by information and communication technologies because they allow you to create savings in data collection, their transmission, providing of information and in ensuring of communication with the citizens and businesses. The role of e-Government is to provide services (online and offline) that correspond to the requirements of contemporary society. Citizen and entrepreneur often face the problem of miscommunication caused by fragmented agendas of different agencies. Cooperation between the agencies must be more complex. e-Government services help to reduce corruption which leads to the greater openness and confidence of citizens and businesses, and subsequently to supporting of the objectives of economic policy making. An obstacle of development of effective e-Government is also imperfect legislation, lack of financial resources, technological barriers and lack of equipment of information and communication technologies.

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