Four pillars are required for transition to smart government

The evolution from eGovernment to smart government is expected to pick up pace worldwide in the upcoming months. It should be noted, however, that four of the most important pillars for transition to smart government anywhere in the world must be combined together to ensure a smooth, efficient and rapid transition to this type of modern government.

The first and definitely most important pillar of smart government is leadership that believes in the inevitability of this transition. The initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, which necessitates transition to smart government and also his decision to rename Dubai eGovernment to Dubai Smart Government; coupled with the Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum’s launch of the Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart Government Programme: which will transform the higher leadership’s vision into a tangible reality and provide training in smart government, all represent a unique example of that leadership and its method of change management.

The second pillar is the readiness of government entities and their response to the higher leadership’s call for action as necessary for successfully putting these entities on track for smart government and providing the infrastructure and criteria for the exchange and integration of data in a secure environment. We are delighted with the great response we received from our partners in government entities during our interaction and meetings with them in order not only to formulate a unified strategy for transformation to smart government but to start implementing it as well. The entities unanimously agreed on the importance of creating the necessary policies, criteria and guidelines in this connection and consequently our dedicated teams have been working on this and by the time of launch of this issue, the first draft of the Smart Service Definition Document and the Smart Services Implementation Planning Guidelines will have been sent to the government entities. Within the next three months, our teams will have prepared the Smart Services Implementation Policy, the Smart Services Mobile Secure Development Guidelines and the Smart Services Mobile User Interface and Experience Guidelines. We are hopeful that our partners in government will use these criteria and guidelines to customize their smartphone applications to ensure a unified strategy to meet our customers’ needs and expectations.

The third pillar of a successful smart government is smartphone usage among customers. The good news is that smartphone prices have been dropping all around the world. According to estimates by the International Data Corporation (IDC), the leading provider of market intelligence on ICT and telecommunications, smartphones are now being used by more than one billion people around the world, with consumers in emerging markets such as China and India gravitating towards cheaper smartphones, resulting in the average price of a smartphone plunging from $450 (AED 1651) to $375 (AED 1376) since the beginning of 2012.

A February 2013 Ericsson Mobility Report shows that mobile subscriptions around the world were around 6.3 billion, which means that smartphones account for about 16% of the world’s mobile subscription. Moreover, trends indicate a further fall in smartphone prices which is positive from a smart government perspective as more customers will be able to afford smartphones and get used to an app ecosystem, where government innovation is heading.

The final pillar of smart government is the availability of mobile broadband or wireless internet access for smartphones. In 1991, most of the world had slower second generation (2G) wireless internet access. In 2001, some telecom providers transitioned to higher speeds with third generation (3G) access. In the UAE, the TRA is working with Etisalat and Du on the fourth generation (4G), also known as long-term evolution (LTE) to ensure faster mobile broadband speeds, even as they currently operate on a 3.5G mobile broadband network. We are hopeful that the two telecom providers are driving down the cost of mobile broadband by providing the appropriate data packages at competitive prices, thereby helping raise usability. It is anticipated that mobile data package rates will come down even further to appeal to customers keen on making full use of their smartphones.

Once all four pillars are working in tandem to push the transition to smart government forward, we will inevitably see the rise of smart governments. In any case, we must be in the lead in the transition to smart government, particularly since our leadership is providing us with all the needed support to do so.

Director-General,
Dubai Smart Government Department
The vision of Dubai Smart Government is to ease the lives of people and businesses interacting with the government and contribute to establishing Dubai as a leading economic hub.

Dubai Smart Government’s mission is to achieve a virtual government through the provision of high-quality customer-focused eServices for individuals, businesses and government departments and to promote eServices adoption through customer management.

Dubai Smart Government promotes eServices through www.dubai.ae - the unified official portal for Dubai Government that provides all residents and businesses of the emirate with more than 2000 electronic services.

*e4all* is the official magazine of Dubai Smart Government, and helps in creating awareness of eServices to all segments of society and spreading an electronic culture for the well-being of all.
Dubai Smart Government wins UN Public Service Award

Dubai Smart Government (DSG) Department won an international award at the United Nations Public Service Awards 2013 in the category of ‘Promoting Whole-of-Government Approaches in the Information Age’ for the Western Asia region. This international recognition of excellence in public service was presented to Dubai Smart Government by Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary General for Economic & Social Affairs at the United Nations (UN).

The award was received by a team from the Communication and Business Development Department at a special ceremony in Bahrain on 23 June 2013, also known as United Nations Public Service Day. Previously, the team made a presentation to the visitors of the exhibition held on the sidelines of the ceremony which focused on the electronic shared services (ESS) and smart phone applications provided by DSG to government entities in addition to the official portal of the Government of Dubai (dubai.ae), which offers eServices to Dubai government entities in one place.

Commenting on the award for DSG, Ahmad Bin Humaidan, Director-General at Dubai Smart Government, said: “This award is the fruit of our co-operation with our partners of government entities in the eTransformation process since its start in 2000. We were also delighted to note that the UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon in his welcome message on the occasion of United Nations Public Service Day said that the winners of the UN Public Service Award have set an example in improving delivery, promoting accountability and that our innovative approach to public governance was building a better future for all.”

Bin Humaidan added: “During our nomination process to the UN, we showed how our ESS were adopted and used across 56 government entities in Dubai to achieve back-office operational efficiencies and significant cost savings for the government, which translated into streamlined and automated customer services that entitled us to gain satisfaction and trust of customers. In addition, we get regular delegations from brotherly Arab countries wishing to make benefit from how to create centrally managed ESS and redirect cost savings towards other public welfare schemes. These ESS have also helped us reduce our carbon emissions due to a single highly utilized infrastructure for multiple government entities resulting in a smart government that is also environmentally sustainable in line with the criteria that are taken by the UN into account while recognizing the efforts of the winners.”

Omani delegation visits Dubai Smart Government to capitalize on its GRP experience

Dubai Smart Government (DSG) has hosted a delegation from Oman’s Ministry of Civil Service who came to learn more from DSG’s government resources planning (GRP) system. The delegation, which consisted of a number of directors and heads of sections, was received by H.E. Ahmad Bin Humaidan, Director General of Dubai Smart Government, together with Huda Al Hashimi, Director of GRP, Sumaia Bin Hammad, Director of Communication and Business Development, and a number of section managers at DSG.

During the visit, the working team supervising the GRP systems at the Department made a presentation, which started with an overview of GRP systems used by the 42 Dubai Government-affiliated entities for managing their human and financial resources. The systems are composed of 25 streams that cover financial management, human resources, payroll, purchasing, inventory, enterprise management and assets management in addition to eJob and iProcurement. The systems integrate with more than 50 major government systems to help government entities run their internal operations efficiently and allow them to concentrate on their basic job of serving customers.

The presentation explained in detail the human resources management systems as a GRP component consisting of 4 streams that cover an automated work cycle for all HR procedures, starting with submitting the job application and finishing with the end of the employee’s service including the feature of tracking procedures. These streams include the HR performance management, self-service system, eJob and eLearning system.

The delegation members hailed the achievements that Dubai Smart Government was able to accomplish over the past few years, stressing the importance of the visit as an opportunity to be closely familiarized with a pioneering experience for providing GRP systems and capitalizing on the methods followed by Dubai Smart Government for handling technical problems, particularly in the HR system. The members underscored the necessity of continuing to organize bilateral meetings, these being ideal platforms for exchanging best practices and examining the high potentials and expertise available at Dubai Smart Government, which is known for its leading role in achieving government integration and pushing the wheel of digital transformation forward in the UAE in general and Dubai in particular.
DSG announces website quality evaluation results of Dubai government entities for 2012-2013

Average overall score is 78% while DEWA leads with 93%

Dubai Smart Government Department (DSG) has announced the quality evaluation results of Dubai government entities’ websites for 2012-2013 which averaged 78 per cent. Dubai Electricity and Water Authority’s (DEWA) website came first among all government websites with 93 per cent, followed by Dubai Customs’ website with 91 per cent, while the websites of Dubai Roads & Transport (RTA), Awqaf and Minors Affairs Foundation (AMAF) and Dubai Police came third, fourth and fifth with around 89 per cent each.

Overall evaluation
As many as 24 government websites were evaluated for the period between October 2012 and January 2013. It is the first evaluation based on the latest version of the Government
Websites Guidelines, which were issued by DSG in 2011 under the title Government Websites Excellence Model.

The details of the results showed that the average overall score of the 24 websites evaluated stood at 78 per cent. While two websites achieved 90 per cent, nine websites achieved 80 per cent to 89 per cent, nine others between 70 per cent and 79 per cent and four less than 70 per cent.

Average overall score

Accessibility evaluation

As for the evaluation results of each website separately in terms of accessibility, two out of 24 government websites achieved very good results of over 90 per cent. Dubai Police came first in this component at 94 per cent, while 14 other websites achieved between 80 per cent and 89 per cent and eight others between 70 per cent and 79 per cent.

Usability evaluation

In terms of usability and design, three websites achieved very good results at over 90 per cent. RTA came first with 92 per cent, while eight websites scored between 80 per cent and 89 per cent, six websites between 70 per cent and 79 per cent. The remaining seven websites scored less than 70 per cent.

Content evaluation

As far as content is concerned, three websites achieved very good results at over 90 per cent. DEWA came first with 97 per cent, while 11 websites scored between 80 per cent and 89 per cent, four others between 70 per cent and 79 per cent and the remaining 6 websites less than 70 per cent.

We review the reasons why DEWA topped quality evaluation results of Dubai government entities’ websites for 2012-2013 with 93 per cent.

1) The website focuses on the content that is primarily service-oriented, and not on the content of DEWA.

2) The website uses a variety of information to explain the services for visitors, including videos, multimedia, and graphics, which motivates one to become a customer instead of a mere visitor.

3) The language used by the site is simple, easy to read, and concise.

4) The content balances between the use of text and images in an exquisite design and attractive format, which helps the eye to grasp the information and enhances the visitor’s ability to read and understand.

5) The content is updated constantly with information on services, as well as news related to DEWA, which enhances the user’s confidence that the site is active and not neglected, and increases the interaction with the audience.

6) The language used on the website is grammatically correct and free of spelling errors.

7) The images used on the site are expressive and proportionate to the spaces used in the design of the page.

8) DEWA uses a unified design and colors that attain distinct visual identity in all pages of the website, whether pages for news and information or those of the services and transactions, which enhances the user’s feeling that he/ she deals with the same entity.

9) The website gives particular importance for the content of eServices, and uses the method of stepwise guide to implement the services step by step, which enables users to perform transactions by themselves.

10) The website designers have used the homepage to highlight the most important and most common services to relieve users of searching in the links and menus, which indicates that the website team conducts website behaviour analysis on a regular basis.

Policies evaluation

As regards the policies component, five websites achieved excellent results in terms of abiding by the guidelines. Dubai Airport Free Zone Authority, Dubai Customs, Dubai Smart Government, DEWA and Dubai Public Prosecution scored 100 per cent, while 10 websites scored over 90 per cent, five websites between 60 and 89 per cent and four less than 60 per cent.

Standards results

In terms of the components of Government Websites Excellence Model, “accessibility” achieved the highest result at 82 per cent, followed by “policies” at 80 per cent, “content” at 77 per cent and finally “usability and design” at 76 per cent.
Empowering web presence

Commenting on these results, H.E. Ahmad Bin Humaidan, Director General of Dubai Smart Government said: “This evaluation is part of the ongoing efforts exerted by Dubai Smart Government to improve the quality of the government electronic presence on the worldwide web. We are pleased that the overall rate of the evaluation results of 24 Dubai government websites touched 78 per cent. Actually, the positive response of government entities to the latest version of the website guidelines is extremely encouraging and reflect the efforts exerted by the entities to keep upgrading the quality of their websites.”

Bin Humaidan added: “These guidelines issued by Dubai Smart Government have set a new target and a benchmark for government entities in their ongoing journey towards excellence. We sincerely believe that the compliance of these entities with the new guidelines has rendered Dubai Government’s electronic presence on the worldwide web effective and not a procedural step and will enhance the customer experience in our governmental websites leading to increased customer satisfaction and higher usage”.

Smart services

Bin Humaidan urged the government entities to provide easy to use designs to enhance browsers’ experience and ensure that the content of their websites is vital, modern, accurate, pertinent and easy to read, considering that content is a decisive element for ensuring the success of a website to meet the needs and expectations of its users. He expressed his appreciations of all the Dubai Government entities that took the initiative of following the excellence model guidelines, wishing them not to take these results as a criticism of their websites but rather as a guideline for continuous quality improvements. He affirmed that Dubai Smart Government was currently expanding the evaluation and quality guidelines given in the Government Websites Excellence Model to include smart services in line with the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council, for transformation into smart government.

The Government Websites Excellence Model features a comprehensive array of guidelines aimed at building customer-focused websites. The model consists of 46 guidelines distributed for four components; namely, accessibility, usability and design, content and policies. Based on these components, Dubai Smart Government conducts its evaluations of Dubai Government’s websites once every two years with the aim of ensuring their compliance with the criteria related to the guidelines.
Dubai Smart Government prepares criteria for government entities to transform to smart government

H.E. Ahmad Bin Humaidan, Director General of Dubai Smart Government Department (DSG), has stated that a dedicated team from DSG is developing a set of unified guidelines and policies for transformation into a smart government to ensure the provision of easy to use smart services that meet customers’ needs and expectations.

Earlier, DSG met with senior representatives of government entities to discuss the formulation of a unified strategy for transformation into smart government. The attendees unanimously agreed that it was necessary to devise criteria and guidelines for smart services, provided that this task would be discharged by DSG.

Bin Humaidan said: “In completion of our steps to implement the initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and based on our commitment to the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince and Chairman of the Executive Council, for transformation into a smart government, a dedicated team started to conduct research and study global experiences as required to develop five policies, guidelines and criteria for circulation to Dubai government entities with the aim of formulating a unified strategy for transformation into smart government, to achieve the objective set by HH Sheikh Mohammed for enabling all government services whose nature allows them to be provided and used via smart phones within 24 months.”

He clarified that DSG would ensure that these documents will be aligned with the policies and guidelines issued by the UAE Federal Government. These documents are important because they contain guidelines that enhance the smart government’s readiness, ensure the high-quality of the government services provided through smart platforms and use a unified reference for the smart phone services of the local entities. They are:

**Smart Service Definition Document**

A dedicated team will revise the existing Service Definition document to incorporate new definitions and terminology of mobile government services that allow mobile end-to-end service maturity and adoption to be tracked. This document will be used as the basis for defining and monitoring the progress of mobile services in Dubai Government. (1st draft readied end July 2013).

**Smart Services Implementation Planning Guidelines**

This document will define a framework for government entities to utilize in prioritizing their mobile services and adapting and modifying services based on their own needs. DSG will include a simple high-level planning tool which will aid in deciding which aspects of the service will be mobilized and through what mechanism. (1st draft readied end July 2013)

**Smart Services Implementation Policy**

This policy will define mobile reference architecture to be used by government entities while developing their mobile services such as mobile authentication, mobile payment and mobile data exchange. (1st draft readied soon).

**Smart Services Mobile Secure Development Guidelines**

These guidelines will allow Dubai government entities to incorporate certain security practices while developing their mobile services in order to ensure customers’ trust in, satisfaction and adoption of these services. This guideline will complement and supplement the formerly issued Dubai Government Information Security Regulation by addressing mobile services development security specific issues. (1st draft planned for September 30th, 2013).

**Smart Services Mobile User Interface and Experience Guidelines**

This document will provide certain guidelines to enhance the quality of mobile services provided by Dubai Government. It intends to address various issues regarding usability, content, user experience, etc. for mobile services. DSG is planning to use these guidelines to conduct mobile services quality evaluations in due course. (1st draft planned for October 31st, 2013).
aeCERT hosts first Government Information Security as part of mGovernment initiative

The United Arab Emirates’ Computer Emergency Response Team (aeCERT), a division of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), recently hosted the UAE’s first Government Information Security Roundtable at the TRA Conference and Training centre at its office in Dubai.

The event is part of the ‘Mobile Government’ (m-Government) initiative, launched on May 22nd by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The m-Government initiative marked a significant breakthrough in the delivery of Government services to the public through their mobile phones, anywhere and at any time. It aims to consolidate the UAE’s position in electronic services delivery to be on par with international best practices.

Organized in partnership with Microsoft and with the support of Dubai Customs and Dubai Holding, the aeCERT roundtable gathered local security experts from the Government to discuss the latest security threats that face mGovernment and mobility while highlighting the role that aeCERT plays in protecting national ICT infrastructure. In addition, the event served as a platform for industry and government leaders to come together to share best practices and exchange insights and knowledge that lead to the development of solid policies in the area of cyber security.

High smartphone penetration brings risk

With one of the highest mobile penetration levels in the world with an average of 2 mobile phones per individual, the UAE is particularly exposed to smartphone security threats. Smartphones accompany a growing number of users from work and to home, giving them (mostly unprotected) access to an exponential amount of web pages and mobile applications. While spam SMS and SMS-phishing staying high on the list of potential threats, cloud computing and virtualization opened the door to new ways of storing sensitive information, thereby instigating more sophisticated attempts to steal personal information through mobile devices.

Eng. Meshal Bin Hussain, operations manager, aeCERT said: “By inviting local Government security experts to exchange their views on mobile security, we are enhancing the national expertise on cyber-security incidents in the mobile sphere. User awareness, with cyber-attacks prevention and detection, and the development of a fast, targeted, efficient response when an attack happens are directly in line with the objectives of the m-Government initiative and ultimately aim to protect UAE mobile users against those new, imminent security threats.”

Ensuring your mobile safety

Mobile phones are exposed to a range of significant security risks, including:
1. Theft or loss: as portable devices are carried from one place to another, and are of high importance because they contain personal or private financial information. Some people might think that the PIN code can protect the mobile phone, nevertheless they still can be penetrated.
2. Viruses: viruses that attack portable devices are very similar to the computer viruses in that they spread quickly and strike vulnerabilities in operating systems. They also infiltrate while downloading apps and files from the Internet to control the device remotely via SMS messages or while making calls, or help in the theft of private information.
3. Trojan Horses are programs that appear to have useful purposes, but when loaded can damage system and files. This program can penetrate devices through Bluetooth and multimedia messaging.
4. Spyware: it collects information such as users’ logins or passwords without their permission. Statistics indicate that two out of three attacks on BlackBerry devices and four out of five on Windows laptops are spyware programs.
5. Spam: they are unwanted messages that are intended to be commercials, ads, or notifications, which sometimes contain inappropriate content.
6. Eavesdropping: tricksters can listen in and see messages by data packets detectors.
7. Bluetooth: a technology available in most portable devices because it provides wireless communication, but at the same time, can be the cause of penetration. For example, Bluetooth might be used in “social engineering”, which is an attempt to deceive people in order to make them disclose information (passwords, for example) to use it in the attack on the systems or networks.

The challenges of the next phase

Teams working in the field of Smart Government are invited to pay great attention to the security of electronic transactions via smart-phones, because any breach or infiltration that can occur in these devices will be fast-spreading, and could cause enormous material and personal damage, something that must be avoided before working on the launch of services to the public.
Dubai Smart Government and DED sign agreement to provide support for DED’s electronic shared services

Dubai Smart Government (DSG) and Dubai Department of Economic Development (DED) have signed an agreement on July 8, under which DSG will provide support services for DED’s electronic shared services. The agreement was signed by H.E. Ahmed Bin Humaidan, Director General of Dubai Smart Government, and H.E. Sami Dhaen Al Qamzi, DED Director General.

The agreement is aimed at upgrading Dubai government services and ensuring optimal use of DSG’s government resources for the electronic services used by DED. According to the agreement, DSG is committed upon the provision of support services to attain the basic performance indicators and achieve the operating objectives as agreed on by both parties. This will be done through the supervision of the Customer Service Section at the Communication and Business Development Department and its follow-up of DSG’s commitment to the agreement. It is also aimed at identifying the levels of such support and the time of response as per the degree of priority through DSG, which provides shared electronic services (ESS) for government and semi-government entities, including training, maintaining data, adding new requirements, improving existing ones and many other support services.

Sustainable government services

This agreement is considered an additional step in DSG’s strategies aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the high performance of the shared services provided to Dubai government entities and some of the services provided specifically by the government entity to allow its work to continue as per the best practices in line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktourn, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, which call for the services of Dubai government entities to be available round the clock.

DSG’s keenness on continuing to provide its various electronic shared services to Dubai government entities include:

- Government Resources Planning (GRP) Systems
- Government Information Network (GIN)
- Government Service Bus (GSB)
- ePay
- SMS Dubai
- AskDubai
- eComplain
- eSuggest
- eSurvey
- Government eServices Statistics (GeSS)

DSG’s commitment to provide advanced channels for supporting these services with the aim of consolidating the transformation to an integrated and knowledge-based digital community where DED plays a key role in ensuring continuous provision of eServices to the business community in Dubai.

Advantages of the system:

The system has many advantages for users from government entities, including:

- Being designed according to the best international standards in the field of “Information Technology Service Management – ITSM.”
- Following the third version of the methodology “Information Technology Infrastructure Library - ITIL” in the provision of support operations.
- Offering an interface in both Arabic and English, that is easy to use with dynamic menus.
- Activating the role of Power Users by enabling them to use the database of knowledge management.
- Giving users the opportunity to track the status of requests via e-mail notifications they receive progressively, which explain the current status of the submitted requests and the steps that have been taken to resolve the issues they face.
- Enabling quick and easy access to previous requests.
- Providing numerous real-time and analytical reports to pursue the accomplishment of objectives and the defined operational performance indicators, interpreting the behavior of users, and identifying future trends in order to support best decisions to improve the performance of shared services, systems and solutions offered by DeG, in addition to the related support services, to enable the e-transformation in government entities.
- Providing the system as a “Shared Service” by DeG to government entities.
- Integrating with a set of other implemented services, systems and applications in the DeG.
DED unveils app for business registration and licensing

Meanwhile DED has unveiled a first-of-its-kind smart phone application for business registration and licensing.

The smartphone App, which will be available on iPhones in the first phase, will enable businesses and investors to conduct a range of business registration and licensing transactions, already available online, through iPhones anytime, anywhere. Services currently available on the new App includes trade name reservation, renewal of trade names, initial approval of licenses, renewal of licenses, enquiry about fines, as well as company lookup (search for existing companies operating in Dubai and gain information on their business activities).

The App is a strategic addition to business in Dubai. Unrestrained access to government services in Dubai will be another major advantage for businessmen and investors for whom the emirate is a destination of choice.

“Salley” portal and mobile app to facilitate shopping launched

Moreover, DED has launched a website and smart phone application to make daily shopping easier for consumers. The website www.salley.ae will enable consumers to browse through shelves of leading hypermarkets and stores in Dubai, compare brands and prices and make their purchase decisions from anywhere round the clock.

The first of its kind in the region, Salley.ae is part of integrating advanced technology to enhance customer convenience and build on Dubai’s reputation as a shopping destination. The smart phone applications, available on iPhones and Android platforms, will further expand ease of access and utility of the new facility.

Consumers can search by their preferred brand, price or outlet to find all options available and add items to their shopping carts online to find the net price of goods purchased. The website and App lists all major hypermarkets and their merchandise thus helping customers to plan their shopping even before visiting a store or mall.

Updates on mall-wide as well as store-wise promotions and offers will appear on the new website. Another notable feature of Salley.ae is the option to submit consumer complaints online.

Consumer protection

“Our objective is to make Salley.ae a one-stop shop and virtual mall that fully respect and protect consumer rights, including their right to information and freedom of choice. Consumers now have the privilege of having all required information related to their daily shopping on their fingertips,” remarked Omar Bushahab, Chief Executive Officer, Commercial Compliance and Consumer Protection (CCCP) sector in DED. “Salley.ae brings fast-growing Internet and mobile technology closer to our daily lives. Since the UAE has a high broadband and smart phone penetration rate Salley.ae will be a handy shopping option for a significant section of the resident population,” added Bushahab.

“The website and app helps cut down on the time people spent for shopping for grocery and other essential stuff. More important is the convenient and transparent way of shopping it offers to the price-conscious consumer. Both retailers and consumers will benefit from the new website and App,” said Bushahab.

CCCP will work closely with the retail outlets listed on Salley.ae to update all information available on the website, including the prices of items, every week and provide accurate information to consumers. More outlets and items will also be added in due course to make the website as comprehensive as possible.

Steps to use “Salley” app

1. The main screen
2. Chose the category
3. Chose the detailed item
4. Select the outlet
5. Build your cart
The beginning of the smart government era in the UAE is very similar to the time when eGovernment began over a decade ago. At that time, countries all over the world were getting to grips with a new form of government and had no clear model or vision to base their frameworks on.

Similarly, the smart government experience leads us to look at other leading smart governments to review and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in order to disseminate best practices for Dubai.

In this article, we review the smartphone apps portal of the US Government as seen on http://apps.usa.gov

The structure of the apps portal
Before reviewing the apps, we studied the portal which lists all the apps in various classifications. The portal promotes the app of the day and at one glance we get an idea of the state of maturity of government apps and the momentum building up in the USA.

The site consists of a simple structure that displays selected apps in the main space of the page, followed by a table of apps classified according to operating systems:
- Android
- iPhone
- Mobile phone websites
- BlackBerry

It seems strange initially to see mobile phone websites also listed as apps, but this can be justified on the grounds that the first step for government agencies would be to ensure that their websites are mobile compatible.

Operating systems for apps
It seems that the number of iPhone apps are more than that of Android, while there are very few Blackberry compatible apps. This is quite possible since iPhone made the app eco-system popular and therefore many government agencies would have started creating apps first for an iOS operating system to be compatible with iPhones.

For websites compatible with mobile phones, it is noted that their number has declined despite the ease in which they can be created. There are a number of reasons, though the most important one is that a mobile website loses out on interactive features which an advanced app might be able to offer including integration of smartphone features such as the camera, GPS etc.

Conclusion
It seems evident that the US government experience in the smart government world is also in its initial stages. In addition, most agencies have opted out of making their websites compatible with mobile phones opting to go in for developing an app instead.

It can be concluded that the transformation from the previous model of eGovernment to smart government still needs more time for maturity with even the US government being no exception to this rule.
Since the launch of the Smart Government initiative, the process of evaluating websites has changed, since this initiative imposes different criteria in the evaluation process and review of the advantages, most notably the ability of the government website to cope flexibly with the different sizes of screens of the varied devices used to access the site.

To keep pace with this smart change, we review the site of Dubai Customs www.dubaicustoms.gov.ae, the runner-up after DEWA for Dubai Government quality evaluation for government websites 2012-2013.

Flexible design
The first feature that should be commended in this site is creating the interface by using smart tools able to analyze the quality of the device used in the access, and then choose a design appropriate to the screen size. The complete version of the site appears when accessed via PC, while the mobile phone version appears when accessed via the phone automatically without the need to ask the user about the version that he/she prefers to access.

The smart system hosting the Customs’ website has dealt with tablet devices as personal devices, where the screen size is appropriate to view the full site. But the option of full access to the site remains available even through mobile phone devices via the link at the bottom of the main page.

Smart identification of the preferred language
Another important feature is the ability of the site to identify directly the default language of the user’s device, whether a PC or a portable device. This feature is extremely valuable in facilitating the visitors’ use of the site as it relieves them from the trouble of searching for the appropriate language, and gives them a sense of respect for their culture and language preferences.

Brief and adequate
The full site of Dubai Customs contains all the information and eServices provided by the Dubai Customs, through which customers can complete transactions without having to visit the Customs’ headquarters. However, the real challenge lies in the mobile phone version, which does not allow for website designers to accumulate information or provide some online services that require certain specifications in terms of safety, memory capacity, and other technical requirements not available on the mobile phone.

Here we can say that the site team has acted intelligently through understanding the necessities needed by the user of the site via mobile phone, which consist of the following services:

- My Smart Reports
- Inquiry about the status of the customs declaration
- Search for HS Code
- Advanced Search for HS codes

Thus the primary purpose to enter the department’s website any time from any place is achieved, while the other services must be performed by the administrative staff during their working hours in their offices, as the majority of dealers with the Customs are companies not individuals.

Overall rating
The Dubai Customs website represents a distinct model for the flexible government ePresence by being compatible with all types of devices used for access. It is possible that Dubai Customs will enhance its rank even further when smart government criteria is added to government websites in the next evaluation.
Dubai Courts launch ‘Smart Court’ Campaign

The Dubai Courts has launched a new campaign entitled ‘Smart Court’, which aims to provide the best ideas possible to develop and improve services and procedures for smart-phone applications. The campaign will be conducted under the slogan ‘Your Suggestions Make the Future,’ and is intended to assist in Dubai Courts’ aim of supporting the nomination of the Emirate of Dubai to host the Expo 2020.

Supporting Expo 2020

The campaign focuses on several objectives, namely: raising the readiness of Dubai to host the World Expo 2020, strengthening co-operation with Dubai Courts’ strategic partners by engaging them in the suggestion of creative ideas, developing an action plan through which responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of the team’s work implementation and procedures relating to the process of studying the suggestions will be assigned, and finally, designing and leading a campaign to invite all workers in the judicial sector in Dubai to generate as many creative ideas as possible which may contribute to the upgrading of work and performance in Dubai Courts.

Evaluation and categories

The Dubai Courts has allocated valuable awards to the best creative ideas. The awards are divided into several categories: Gold Idea, including the best imaginative idea to develop and improve services and procedures through smart-phones applications, Imaginative Ideas, Ideas for Developing and Improving Services and Procedures, Ideas of Smart-phone Applications, and Student Ideas.

Dubai Courts’ Nibras app

Dubai Courts’ smart phone app “Nibras” contains the following services:
• submitting suggestions for the campaign of the Expo Court 2020 - Smart Court
• search for cases
• inquiry about the status of cases
• sessions agenda
• inquiry by case number, year of issue or type for all cases
• a manual of procedures for Dubai Courts’ services
• view of the daily sessions of the judicial circuits
• a guide for direct contact with the branches of Dubai Courts
• a map to see the distance between the user’s current location and any branch of Dubai Courts, in addition to getting directions to the branch.
• a search engine for federal legislation of the United Arab Emirates and the Emirate of Dubai’s legislation.
In line with its commitment to provide high-level financial services, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) recently organized a workshop for ministries and federal authorities.

The workshop, which took place at the Ministry in its Abu Dhabi premises, reviewed the latest advantages and developments of the eDirham system which specializes in ePayment and collection of fees for public services.

The workshop began with an opening statement delivered by Saeed Rashid Al Yateem, Assistant Under-Secretary of Resources and Budget Sector at MoF, where he welcomed participants and stressed the important role played by ministries and federal authorities in further developing public eServices. He encouraged MoF, ministries and federal authorities to join their efforts in order to improve digital services used for ePayments and collections and to maximize the benefits offered by the eDirham system to pay for services by mobile phones.

Al Jalila Foundation joins ePay

Dubai Smart Government has announced that it has recently signed an agreement with Al Jalila Foundation for Medical Education and Research under which the Foundation will join Dubai Smart Government’s ePay gateway. ePay is used for settling fees of government services in partnership with a number of major banks in the UAE, thereby allowing donors to the foundation to benefit from donation services via the Internet and the other channels provided by the gateway.

Local and overseas businessmen, philanthropists and community organizations interested in donating to the Al Jalila Foundation’s projects can do so online to support health care and medical education and research, benefiting from ePay gateway’s multi-channels: credit cards, eDirham cards or direct debit from the customer’s account with the 5 participating banks: Commercial Bank of Dubai, Dubai Islamic Bank, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank and Union National Bank.

The ePay gateway allows individual and corporate customers to pay online for over 250 eServices provided by the participating entities including DEWA bill payment, DED license renewal fee payment, RTA Salik and Nol recharging, Dubai Police traffic fine settlements and Dubai Cares donations in addition to paying for medical fitness certificates and healthcare facility license renewals from Dubai Health Authority.

Al Jalila Foundation has joined the ePay gateway in preparation for inclusion in the near future among the departments and entities participating in Dubai Smart Government’s mPay gateway, which allows customers to inquire about and pay the fees of the participating entities, and also in the mPay application, which combines all services in one place for implementation in line with the call of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, for switching to smart government, enabling individuals to complete their government transactions from one place and via mobile devices.
RTA wins Excellence in GIS Implementation

The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has won the Excellence in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Implementation Award, presented by GISTEC.

The Award culminates RTA’s endeavours in implementing the latest GIS technologies and its relentless efforts to revamp the GIS corporate platform providing a number of tools to assist users in reviewing geographical information, researching & querying information, and analyzing & printing various GIS data reports & maps.

The Award shows that RTA is seeking to complement its internal systems with the existing systems of government agencies and other public entities; which in turn will help upgrade various RTA systems, and improve the planning as well as the decision-taking process.

RTA is continuously seeking to upgrade its technological systems and its endeavours have been rewarded with the ISO 27001 Certification in Information Security Management; which is considered one the highest certificates in the field of Information Security worldwide. It has also bagged the ISO 20000 Certificate relating to quality standards of IT services conforming to the specifications set in ITIL standards, thus has become the second government department in Dubai to scoop this Certificate and the fifth nationwide.

The RTA has also won a host of regional awards to honour its efforts in the IT field. In this regard it has won the second position in the GCC e-Government Award 2009 in the category of the Most Electronically Developed Organizations in GCC countries. It has also clinched the IT Governance Award, which is presented annually by the Information Technology Governance Assurance Forum (ITGAF), Network Middle East Innovation Award, and the Arab Technology Award for the payment of parking fees through the mobile phone project (mParking).

Contractors urged to apply for Dubai’s e-building control system

All consultancy offices and contracting companies are being urged to register for the new e-building training to learn how to apply for the new online services provided by the Building Control System.

The Building Department of the Dubai Municipality will no longer receive requests for structural applications, completion certificates, temporary supply services, change of contractor/consultant, or deposit refund through the old system, and contractors and consultants will have to apply through the new Building Control System.

After this date the system will be enabled only for the trained companies. This move is aimed at implementing the new Buildings Control System effectively and providing all supervising services for the construction work without the need for visiting any of the municipality centres.

It also aims to strengthen the viability of this system through training and qualifying technical engineering cadres of consultants’ offices and contracting companies with joint building permit working on projects for interrelated tasks and responsibilities in the business processes.

All technical engineering cadres licensed to operate in Dubai should be registered with the municipality. The registration does not require any test for the engineer or fees.

“Smart Clinic” for the poor in the world

The Care Campaign for the treatment of a million children and elderly people has launched the “Smart Clinic” as an initiative by Emirati doctors. The initiative aims at providing free consulting services for the poor in the world to set an example and a distinct experience that benefits all in the region and based on the vision of the leadership in the UAE to adopt smart initiatives.

The launch of the clinic comes as a continuation of the humanitarian initiatives of the global “Care Campaign” that has been able to reach millions of people worldwide and provide its curative and preventive services for more than a million children and elderly people in various parts of the world, inspired by the humane spirit of the late His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.
Register for the green electricity bill from DEWA

This service is available through the website of DEWA www.dewa.gov.ae

In the main page, from eServices select the option “Register for the Green Bill.”

The service page appears containing instructions that should be read carefully.

The login screen of DEWA eServices appears. This service requires pre-registration with the DEWA portal. Registered users can sign in and proceed with the activation of the green bill.

For more information please call: 04 601 9999