



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

MODERNIZING SERVICE DELIVERY

- An Overview of Citizens' Views on Service Clustering -

Background paper for an
intergovernmental learning event

Improving Government Service through Service Clustering

December 2000

An event sponsored by the federal/provincial/territorial committee
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two significant influences are changing the way governments and businesses deliver services; technology and citizens' expectations. And whether, as citizens, we are communicating through e-mail, purchasing items on-line, or paying bills at an ATM, electronic innovation is dramatically altering how we participate in those service transactions.

This report summarises research that has been conducted to identify the needs, views and suggestions of citizens on how to make government programs and services more accessible, convenient and timely. The information for this report was gleaned from a variety of sources including surveys and reports that explore citizens' expectations for organizing and improving service delivery. It is intended to provide a reference point for discussion and further research.

A fully referenced analysis paper follows the Executive Summary.

Evolution of Service Delivery Paradigms

Government organization and structure has typically been created around sectoral, policy or regional themes. In 1996, a federal Deputy Minister Task Force on Service Delivery Models noted that "organizing service around policy issues works only as long as citizens related to government according to policy divisions: farmers to the Department of Agriculture, fishers to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans." This approach has led to fragmented service and an impression from citizens that departments and government were working in isolation from one another.

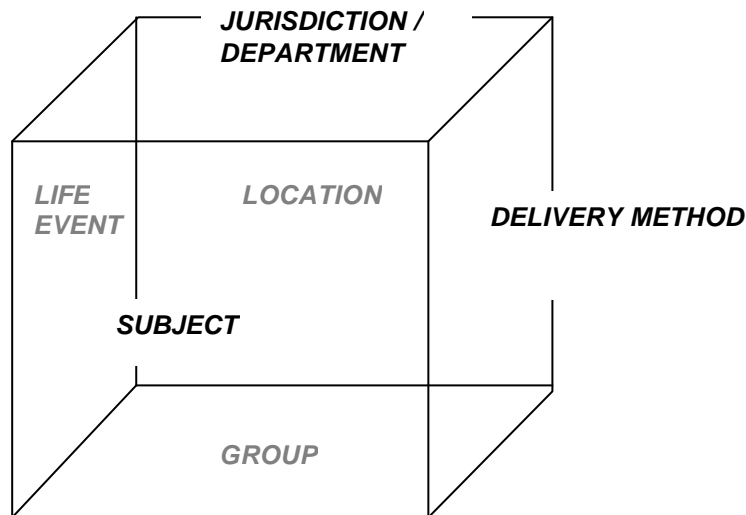
Over the last decade governments have sought out, assessed and responded to citizens' views on the role government should play and on how government should deliver programs and services. Citizens now expect more from government service delivery. Governments, in embracing the technological revolution, are therefore focussing their service delivery practices on the needs of the citizen. In doing so, they are working to identify the expectations and needs of citizens and to determine how to organize information, programs and services so that they are citizen-centred.

In the 1990s, governments became better at providing specific one-stop services to their client groups - single windows where, for example, small business owners could access both federal and provincial resources at Canada Business Service Centres across the country.

Evolving from the needs of citizens and the potential of new technology, service clustering builds upon the single window. Using an integrated approach, it joins up services from inside a government department, across departments, between governments and between sectors. It organizes them at the front end and leads to re-organization behind the scenes with the citizens' needs in mind. It delivers them, using a no-wrong door approach, through a network of integrated service delivery channels that can include the Internet, call centres, kiosks, mail, and walk-in centres.

Service clustering is simple in concept, but complex in application. It involves deciding how the range of government services can be "packaged" or "bundled" for the convenience of citizens. There is no "best" way to cluster services.

Imagine a three-dimensional cube in which the sides of the cube represent different ways in which services may be clustered. A program or service can be reached by drilling down from any side; no side takes priority, because there is no top or bottom, front or back - just six equal sides.



Service Clustering Organizing Principles

The main finding from the research is that programs and services must be organized from an "outside-in" or citizen perspective. Citizens want improved access to programs and services. They are often not aware, and in any event do not care, which level of government delivers the service, or how governments are organized administratively to do so.

By organizing program and service delivery from a citizen perspective, governments will make it easier for citizens to access and complete their service experience. Governments can work toward meeting citizens' expectations by "service clustering", or joining-up programs and services using an outside-in perspective. The following principles for doing so emerge from the research.

1. **Accessibility:** Citizens want to receive services in a timely, convenient manner that responds to their needs. This means having the flexibility to access services at the time and place of their choosing. They want to receive service from staff who are knowledgeable, competent and "go the extra mile. Citizens think it would be advantageous to deal with just one person to help them navigate through the maze of programs and services, if necessary.

2. Choice of Channel: Citizens want a choice of access channel depending on the type of service they are seeking. They do not want to be forced to use one channel in order to obtain information and services. They recognize that the Internet will provide new opportunities to do business with government, but they are concerned that the development of Internet-based applications might be at the expense of other traditional channels and they object to being forced to perform all transactions electronically. Citizens are concerned about the security and confidentiality of sending information on-line.
3. Reduce Red Tape: Citizens are frustrated with busy phone lines, difficulties with voice mail, and unhelpful directories. They are particularly annoyed when navigating an IVR system that does not have access to an attendant. Complex forms and waiting times, both on the phone and in-person, were also mentioned as sources of frustration.
4. No Wrong Door: Citizens want governments to work together, especially when certain services require multiple contacts with different levels of government. The "stovepipe" approach to delivering services to citizens is time-consuming and inefficient. They want similar services joined-up.
5. One-stop Access: Citizens support the concept of one-stop access or single-window walk-in centres if it reduces duplication and is cost-effective. Several options have been suggested by citizens on how to organize one-stop centres. Some citizens suggest that they should be aligned around the specific needs of communities, while others suggest the focus should be on common triggers such as applying for certificates and permits. Still others suggest that all one-stop centres should deliver the same services.
6. Personal Service: Citizens value the "personal touch" afforded by in-person service (walk-in and telephone) and they want to be able to deal directly with a government representative to explain their personal situation.
7. Awareness of Government Programs and Services: Citizens are unaware of the range and the number of government services available. For example, Internet users have stated that they would like the government to provide job search functions on-line, while unaware that the service is already available.
8. Citizen Engagement: Citizens want to be part of the process of designing new models and methods of delivering government programs and services. They support an approach that is incremental and research based.
9. Organizing structures: Citizens have diverse needs, leading to an extensive range of possible service cluster arrangements and possibilities. The following organizational groupings appear to be the most intuitive for citizens:
 - Subjects: e.g. training, employment, financial assistance, tax issues, health;
 - Groups: e.g. Aboriginal Peoples, Seniors Youth, Business;
 - Life Events: e.g. multiple contact situations such as change of address, birth, death, marriage, retirement;
 - Key Word Index based on intuitive, citizen-friendly terms.

The Service Agenda

Governments are responding to the needs of citizens by pursuing a service agenda that focuses on:

1. One-stop access points and single-window operations;
2. Electronic service delivery through the development of the Internet as a fourth channel;
3. Re-engineering processes to ensure integrated service delivery across all channels;
4. Partnerships among all levels of government.

Challenges for Governments

The delivery of services, organized in clusters from a citizen's perspective, is based upon the notion of integrating service delivery across governments, channels and sectors. This is a challenge for governments which involves re-thinking, re-organizing and re-engineering our service delivery.

For example: management issues include leadership, governance, accountability and reporting for results; inter-channel issues include harmonization, privacy and security; inter-sectoral issues include user fees.

These are challenges that governments need to discuss together, based on their joint objective: to improve service delivery from a citizen's perspective.

A Work-in-Progress

Governments need to learn more about the preferences of single-window and other service channel users. Specifically, an intergovernmental survey of users is underway to deepen our understanding in the following areas:

- **Citizens' Channels**: For what kind of transactions do citizens use specific service delivery channels, and why? To what degree do users' needs for service clusters vary according to the access channel they are using?
- **Channel Linkages**: From a user's perspective, how do the various service delivery channels complement each other?
- **Citizens' Priorities for Improvement**: What improvements do users want to see in integrated service delivery that includes walk-in centres and other service channels?
- **Demographic Influences on the Use of Service Channels**: What influence do demographic factors have on users' preferences for the use of various service delivery channels?

- Citizens' Views on Use of Other Sectors: Do users have views on the use of other sectors (not-for-profit, private) to deliver government services?

MODERNIZING SERVICE DELIVERY

The following sections summarise research that has been conducted to identify the needs, views and suggestions of citizens on how to make government programs and services more accessible, convenient and timely. The information was gleaned from a variety of sources, including surveys and reports that explore citizens' expectations for organizing and improving service delivery. It is intended to provide a reference point for discussion and further research.

1. Improving the service experience

Even though citizens acknowledge that government has a more difficult role than the private sector, they expect the quality of government services to be as high or higher than service provided by the private sector.¹ They assess service quality based on five drivers:

1. Timeliness
2. Knowledge and competence
3. Courtesy / comfort ("going the extra mile")
4. Fair treatment
5. Outcome

When all those factors are present, citizens give maximum ratings to government services. When performance falls below threshold value on any one of these drivers, overall service quality scores drop markedly.²

Barriers to good service:

Different studies indicate different obstacles to service delivery. One study emphasized telephone problems, including busy phone lines, difficulties with voice mail and unhelpful phone directory listings.³ Another focus group examined "red tape", and found that access problems, including multiple contacts for the same request account for 50% to 65% of problems encountered.⁴ Consistency of information was also an issue where participants dealt with more

¹ Erin Research for the Citizen-Centred Service Network and the Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Citizens First*, October 1998, p. 10.

² Erin, *Citizens First*, p. 27.

³ Erin, *Citizens First*, p. 15.

⁴ Ekos Research Associates Inc. for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, *Red Tape Focus Groups Findings*, July 1999, p. 2

than one person. Participants had the impression that staff, and government departments in general, worked in relative isolation from one another.⁵

Citizens' suggestions for improving service delivery:

When Canadians were asked to list the top five improvements that government should make in terms of improving service delivery, all five related to accessibility:

- Reduce red tape;
- Reduce waiting in lines and on phone;
- Simplify forms and documents;
- Make information easier to get; and
- Create a "one-stop" centre.⁶

These findings are also supported by the results of the 1997 focus group tests for business clients of the Government of Manitoba.⁷

Wants and Needs Identified by Manitoba's Better Systems Initiative	
Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to service when and where they want;• Information that is accessible, complete and accurate;• Convenient access to government service in rural and remote areas.	Timeliness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quick, efficient service from government.
Convenience: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One-stop, integrated service;• No duplicate information capture;• Multiple options for accessing government services; and• Simplified interactions with the government.	Consistency: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certainty in response and processing time; and• Simple and consistently applied legislation and policy. Responsiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service that is geared to the client's needs. Effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Straightforward processes; and• Access to helpful, knowledgeable staff or material

Summary:

- Timely and convenient access to government programs and services is a priority for citizens.

⁵ Ekos, Red Tape, p. 6.

⁶ Erin, Citizens First, p. 49.

⁷ Manitoba, Finance, Office of Information Technology, *Better Systems Initiative: Summary of Client Needs and Wants*, Winnipeg: 1999.

2. Bringing together government services

Little research has been done on service clustering *per se* as opposed to the more general topic of improving service delivery. However, some of the research indicates that clustering is a means of obtaining the kind of service citizens want.

No wrong door:

Canadian research identifies the creation of one-stop access centres as one of the five main factors that would improve government service delivery.⁸ In European studies, "one building" is cited as an important improvement.⁹

When asked to evaluate options for improving multiple contact service, participants in the Erin study, *Citizens First*, supported the following three choices:

- a "one-stop" centre that offers all the services you need in one locations (e.g., clustering of services around common triggers);
- the ability to do all or most tasks by mail, phone, Internet, etc. without visiting government offices (e.g., choice of channels); and
- one person to guide citizens through the system and to help with problems (e.g., navigation assistance).¹⁰

Similarly, demands among European citizens include:

- avoiding interaction with governments as much as possible;
- full and comprehensive service;
- no shopping around;
- ability to resolve matters instantly; and
- easy accessibility in terms of time and location.¹¹

In 1991, New Brunswick taxpayers indicated that they wanted a smaller, more accessible and user-friendly government. As a result, service New Brunswick opened two "one-stop shopping" centres, providing 50 services, representative of 16 government departments, under one roof and

⁸ Erin, *Citizens First*, p. 49.

⁹ "One-Stop Government Workshop" presentation: *The Status of One-Stop Government in Europe: Results and Conclusions from National Surveys*, conference in Bremen, Germany: October 1999.

¹⁰ Erin, *Citizens First*, p. 25.

¹¹ Bremen Conference, *Status of One-Stop Government*.

behind a single counter.¹² This has expanded into a province-wide network of integrated service delivery across channels.

Participants in a federal government focus group on red tape felt that people should only have to deal with one government official, someone who was familiar with their file/situation or someone who would "take ownership of the issue" and do the necessary leg work to track down the appropriate information for them. Respondents recommended a central telephone number to reach the federal government from where calls could be redirected to the appropriate office.¹³

In the United Kingdom, citizens have also shown strong support for one-stop shops delivering both central and local government services (81%). In a survey, 92% of respondents thought it important that all locations offer exactly the same key one-stop shop services.¹⁴

In Prince Edward Island, a citizens' focus group on "co-delivery" examined several issues that also affect clustering.¹⁵ In general, the respondents supported the concept of co-delivery because it would include:

- more convenient and more accessible services;
- different levels of government working together;
- one access point rather than several; and
- a positive partnership with the public.

Most respondents in this P.E.I. study thought that co-delivery could work best for the provision of quick administrative types of services, such as providing general information, forms, permits and licences, and payments. Respondents also made suggestions regarding clustering possibilities for services related to:

- primary industries such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry;
- certain demographic groups - seniors, youth and people with literacy issues;
- adult upgrading, training and employment;
- obtaining mandatory permits, licences, and other administrative requirements;

¹² Canadian Centre for Management Development for the Deputy Minister Task Force on Service Delivery Models, *Delivering Clusters of Services to Clients: Innovations From Outside the Government of Canada*, August 1995.

¹³ Ekos, *Red Tape*, p. 9.

¹⁴ United Kingdom People's Panel, Wave 3, internet: www.servicefirst.gov.uk/1999/panel/3rdwave/Topline_pocl.htm) Dec. 23, 1999.

¹⁵ Wendy MacDonald & Associates Inc. for Client-Centred Co-Delivery Project Steering Committee, *Summary Report of the Client-Centred Co-Delivery Project: Knowledge Economy Partnership*, Prince Edward Island: September 1999, pp. 7-8.

- taxation questions and payment of taxes; and
- a volunteer inquiry service.

Respondents suggested that business development support and service be found in all areas of the province, not just in the city, and that there be only one point of contact for government information.

Concerns about service clustering:

Citizens are cautious about government intentions and want no part of any initiative that might mean the loss of services and staff (particularly in areas of agriculture, fisheries and tourism). In the short term the public fears confusion and disruption in obtaining services (more voice mail, more referrals, etc.). In the long term, the public is worried about less personal contact and more technology (equated with less service).¹⁶

Citizen participation in developing a clustering strategy:

People feel that the public needs to be brought into discussions about co-delivery at an early stage, and that co-ordinators should continue to involve them at crucial stages of planning. Future decision affecting implementation should be guided by research and data gathered on the experience to date, and not by assumptions made by governments.¹⁷

Views on language and design:

In general, citizens find titles of clusters to be clearest when they spell out in detail the content of the category - e.g., "Jobs, Workers, Education, Training and Careers".¹⁸

In a Prince Edward Island study, citizens emphasize the need for clear, simple language to identify clusters or groups, and for information links to be intuitive.¹⁹

Similarly, when focus groups were asked for their comments on the language used in a proposed blueprint for a Government of Canada single window, participants indicated that:

- repetition of categories or labels was undesirable and confusing. Links must be clearly distinguishable (e.g., "Tax" vs. "Filing your personal income tax").
- Sub-categories within broad headings should be internally consistent and inclusive.
- "Cute" languages (e.g., "Who We Are" vs. "Government") was not appropriate.
- Headings should not be too wordy or unclear.²⁰

¹⁶ MacDonald, *Client-Centred Co-Delivery Project*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷ MacDonald, *Client-Centred Co-Delivery Project*, p. 19.

¹⁸ Patterson, Langlois Consultants for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, Chief Information Officer Branch, *The Research Process: Portal Information Organization*, Ottawa: March 2000.

¹⁹ MacDonald, *Client-Centred Co-Delivery Project*, p. 13.

The Blue Pages Redesign focus groups organized by the federal government expressed the general opinion that any design for the new directory should not take up too much room with logos.²¹

Summary:

- Citizens support the concept of service clustering if it means that services will be easier to access and that the number of multiple transactions will be reduced.
- Citizens want simple, clear language.
- Citizens want to be engaged in the process of identifying, organizing and labelling the clusters of services.

3. Arranging clusters

Some surveys and focus groups asked citizens about specific examples from their own recent personal experience or specific clustering arrangements presented to them. This section summarizes the main themes of respondents' comments relating to these "specific clusters".

Need for and use of service clusters:

Citizens First provides important data regarding the views of citizens who needed to get in touch with more than one individual, department or government in order to complete a transaction. The triggers and services identified in the two boxes below can indicate clustering possibilities:

²⁰ Ekos Research Associates Inc. for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, Service and Innovation Sector, *Citizen-Centred Website Testing Focus Groups Report*, Ottawa: November 1999, p. 12.

²¹ Marketexplorers for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, Service and Innovation Sector, *Blue Pages Redesign Project: Assessment of Keywords and Service Clusters Report on Focus Groups*, Ottawa: 1999, p. 16.

Triggers for Multiple Contact Experience

The need to contact government more than once to complete a single transaction is most often triggered by a life event, such as getting a new job, going to university, getting married, death in the family or moving. Specific triggers for multiple contact experiences noted by citizens were:

- Acquiring certificates, personal records
- Changing of address
- Changing a name
- Death
- Lost or stolen identification
- Seeking information
- Seeking financial assistance
- Seeking tax issues
- Seeking information on health issues.

(Source: Citizens First page 21)

Services & Departments Leading to Multiple Contacts

Government services or departments that lead to multiple-contact experiences were identified as:

- Birth, marriage and death certificates (13%)
- Passports (10%)
- Revenue Canada (8%)
- Canada Pension Plan (6%)
- Customs and Immigration (6%)
- Employment Insurance (4%)
- Federal government registration (e.g. Social Insurance Number (4%)
- Health Card application (3%)
- Motor vehicle registration (3%)
- Provincial health care (2%)
- Small business start-up (2%)
- Provincial courts (2%)
- Student loans (2%)

(Source: Citizens First page 22)

Many of the above triggers were echoed in the UK People's Panel identification of seven life episodes, that formed the basis for joining-up services across organizations:

- Leaving school
- Having a baby
- Retiring
- Needing long term care
- Changing address
- Becoming unemployed
- Bereavement²²

Participants in the 1997 Ekos survey, "Rethinking Government: The First Wave", liked the idea of changing their address with their provincial government just once, and then having that information transmitted to all relevant government agencies.²³

²² United Kingdom People's Panel, Wave 3, internet: www.servicefirst.gov.uk/1999/panel/3rdwave/Topline_pocl.htm) Dec. 23, 1999.

²³ Ekos Research Associates Inc., *Rethinking Government 1997: First Wave*

In response to another question in this survey, citizens indicated that the highest government priority for the creation of single window service should be given to programs for:

- Unemployed (37%)
- Children and youth (27%)
- Elderly (18%) and
- Business (12%).²⁴

In other focus groups tested by Treasury Board Secretariat, citizens evaluated the viability of service clusters centred on life events. Participants were not interested in knowing what level of government was responsible for providing the service - they just wanted the service. This view was evident when discussing service clusters that crossed levels of government such as lost identification.²⁵ Governments have reacted to citizen concerns over losing identification with the creation of the Lost Wallet site, which provides information on replacing federal and provincial identification (http://www.canada.gc.ca/programs/wallet/wallet_e.html).

The UK tested the reactions of citizens to a proposed government portal that would identify various government departments of a change of address using on-line technology. Citizens were positive about the prototype change of address function. However, they felt that the range of services and information available needed to be broadened to include partners outside of government.²⁶ This site is at <http://www.changeofaddress.gov.uk/>.

Clustering for Telephone Services

In focus group testing for the Blue Pages Redesign Project, respondents liked the notion of collapsing federal, provincial and municipal sections into one directory that included web site references.²⁷

Also in connection with the Blue Pages Redesign Project, the most favourably judged arrangement was the "Four Cluster System", which helped participants locate services, and made the overall directory appear accessible.

The Blue Pages Redesign Project focus group testing found that clusters centred primarily on demographic groups, (Seniors and Veterans, Children and Families, People with Disabilities, Youth, Rural and Northern Residents) was the least favoured because the groupings were too vague. For example, the "Adults" section became a catch-all. Some of the categories were considered politically incorrect and, in general, there was concern that this approach would

²⁴ Ekos, *Rethinking Government* 1997.

²⁵ Ekos Research Associates Inc. for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, Service and Innovation Sector, *Lost Government Identity Documents Website Testing Report*, Ottawa: March 2000, p. 10.

²⁶ PA Consulting Group, *Modernizing Government: CITU Portal Feasibility Study*, London: June 1999.

²⁷ Marketexplorers, *Blue Pages Redesign*.

pigeonhole individuals into specific categories. However, respondents did find a need to have a category that would address the needs of Aboriginal people.²⁸

In the Blue Pages Redesign Project, respondents who were already familiar with available services preferred a keyword system, but wanted some means of locating specific telephone numbers since the names of departments frequently changes. They were amenable to alternate versions, provided a keyword index would be included.²⁹

<u>Blue Pages Redesign Project</u> <u>Proposed Four Clusters</u>	
<p><u>Contacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected Representatives • Government Directories <p><u>Individuals, Families, Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social & Health • Housing, Land and Utilities • Education & Training • Employment, Labour and Careers • Arts, Culture & Heritage • Community Development • Transportation • Travel, Recreation & Sports • Public Safety 	<p><u>Business, Industry & Trade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Services • Research, Technology & Innovation • Trade & Investment • Consumer Information • Industries, Tourism <p><u>Government</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship & Immigration • Information & Communication • Resources & Environment • Taxes • Armed Forces • International Relations • Justice & Courts

Clustering on the Electronic Channel

As noted earlier, in focus group testing of possible topical arrangements for the Government of Canada website, citizens were presented with a "blueprint". The blueprint grouped information and services into the following categories:

- Government Information
- Subject
- Life Events
- Personal Interests
- Business Topics
- Capability to customize website.³⁰

²⁸ Marketexplorers, *Blue Pages Redesign*, p. 17.

²⁹ Marketexplorers, *Blue Pages Redesign*, p. 3.

³⁰ Ekos, *Lost Government Identity Documents*, pp. 9-12.

Participants pointed to the need for clear links to other levels of government, as citizens often do not know which jurisdiction is responsible for a certain activity or service. They wanted a list of specific activities that could be undertaken on the Internet (e.g. transactions and forms sections). Citizens expect a federal government website to be simple, easy to use, include a civic component and information about Canada (particularly a fund or interactive feature, such as a quiz). They also felt that the website should be so intuitive that someone with no knowledge of government could find information easily.³¹

A further series of focus group sessions with citizens and businesses were held in March and April 2000. Participants' views were solicited to determine the most appropriate clustering of government information, programs and services on the electronic channel and the organizing principles that were most intuitive to citizens.

The first round of focus testing identified the organizing principle "by subject" as the most intuitive. Two subject streams were suggested: one stream of subject categories for citizens and the other for businesses.³²

Citizen Subjects	Business Subjects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Peoples • About Canada and Canadians • Consumer Information • Culture, Heritage & Recreation • Economy • Environment, Resources, Agriculture & Fisheries • Health, Medicine & Lifestyle • Jobs, Workers, Education, Training & Careers • Justice & Law • Newcomers to Canada • Persons with Disabilities • Public Safety • Rural and Remote Services • Science & Technology • Seniors • Taxes • Financial • Travel at Home and Abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Intelligence/Statistics • Business Regulations • Business Start-up • Financing • Human Resources/Employers • Innovation • International Trade • Investment • Mergers, Acquisitions, Restructuring and Dissolutions • Selling to Government • Taxation

The second round of focus testing evaluated the specific subject categories under the streams of citizen Subjects and Business Subjects. Participants in the citizen groups identified their topic priorities as:

³¹ Ekos, *Lost Government Identity Documents*, p. 13.

³² Patterson, Langloi, *The Research Process*, March 2000.

- Taxes
- Jobs, Workers, Education, Training and Careers
- Health, Medicine and Lifestyle

Business participants named their top priorities as:

- Human Resources and Employers
- Taxation
- Business Regulations
- Financing³³

The results of this focus testing became the foundation for the Government of Canada website cluster blueprint. The Government of Canada portal will organize programs and services by subject for three groups: Canadian Business, Canadians and Non-Canadians. Life Events and Demographic Groups will be part of the subject index for each of the predominate groups. For example under the category of "Canadians" information will be accessible on such topics as Jobs, Health and Seniors.

Summary

- Service clusters should reflect triggers that lead citizens to contact government
- The challenge is to create clusters that are intuitive and easy to use.
- Cluster arrangements may vary depending on the channel.

4. Using Different Service Delivery Channels

Throughout the surveys and reports examined, choice of channels for service clustering was a recurring theme.

Channel preferences

Channel preferences are influenced by the nature of the transaction. In a 1999 survey, respondents said they preferred contacting the government by telephone (42%) or mail (38%) when applying for a program. By contrast, when respondents were only seeking information from the government their preferred choice of channel was the mail (41%) and then the telephone (28%).³⁴

Even though in this survey, the mail and telephone were the preferred channels across all age groups for obtaining information or applying for a program, age did influence the receptivity to other channels. For example, in the age category less than 25 years, 22% of the respondents

³³ Patterson, Langlois Consultants for Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, Chief Information Officer Branch, *The Research Process: Portal Information Organization*, Ottawa: April 2000.

³⁴ Ekos Research Associates Inc., *Rethinking the Information Highway*, Ottawa: March 2000, p. 57.

indicated that they would access information via the Internet. However, only 5% of the respondents in the age category over 65 years indicated that they would use the Internet.³⁵

Citizens have indicated that governments should place the highest priority over the next ten years on developing access to programs and services through the Internet.³⁶ However, they do not expect a predominately electronic service delivery network as they believe that other channels must be available. There will continue to be a demand for different ways to interact with governments depending on the type and depth of information being sought.³⁷

In the UK, the strategic framework for service delivery acknowledges that electronic service delivery does not do away with the need for personal contact. In instances where in-person services are provided, technology should be used to improve access to information for service providers who would then be able to provide better services to the client.³⁸

In-person channels

If a multiple-service provincial government centre was located within a 30 minute drive of home, respondents indicated that they would most likely seek service in-person at this centre (40%), or seek service by telephone (35%).³⁹

In the UK, two-thirds of respondents indicated that the post office would be the place they would like to go to for in-person co-delivered services. The main concern was the possible lack of private space for confidential matters. People were also concerned that supermarkets and banks would try to sell them other products or services if government services were offered at these locations.⁴⁰

Internet Channel

Discussion of the Internet as a channel has dominated much of the recent work on service clusters.

Channel preferences are influenced by demographic factors. A higher percentage of Canadian males are on-line than females, although this gap is closing quite quickly. Younger age groups are getting on-line faster than older age groups. A majority of Canadians over 45 years of age

³⁵ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 59.

³⁶ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 67.

³⁷ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 67.

³⁸ United Kingdom People's Panel, Wave 3.

³⁹ Ekos, *Rethinking Government 1997*.

⁴⁰ United Kingdom People's Panel, Wave 3.

are not using the Internet. It is interesting to note, however, that in recent months the lowest income group appears to be getting on-line at a faster rate than the other income categories.⁴¹

Literacy levels are also an important factor in determining Internet usage. Eight-five percent of less educated Canadians have not used the Internet at home or elsewhere in the previous three months. Only 5% of less literate Canadians see the Internet as their channel of choice for interacting with the Government of Canada.⁴²

Respondents to a technology study cited the Internet for its convenience. In a recent technology survey, 66% said it took less time; 22% found the government office too far away/inconvenient; 16% needed information outside of office house; and 21% found better quality and detail on the government website.⁴³

However, citizens are also concerned about privacy and security when using the Internet. Some 56% of Canadians feel that the information highway is reducing the level of privacy in Canada today; 87% are reluctant to provide basic information (in the form of a credit card number) over the Internet in order to purchase a product or service.⁴⁴

In the UK, although people support the idea of electronic government, they are concerned that problems with equipment might cause errors (42%) and that personal details might not be kept confidential (39%). Some 65% of the support for electronic government comes from the 18 - 35 age group.⁴⁵

Nearly one half (44%) of Canadian Internet users said that accessing governments services is one of the reasons for using the Internet; however, most are looking for information, rather than using the Internet to undertake a transaction. Of those using government web sites:

- 83% access information on government programs and services;
- 36% look for phone numbers or addresses;
- 32% search for work or career opportunities;
- only 10% apply for a service or payment on-line; and
- only 17% file income tax returns on-line.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, March 2000.

⁴² Canada Information Office Report, September 2000.

⁴³ PriceWaterhouseCoopers, *Canadian Consumer Technology Study*, September 2000.

⁴⁴ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 89.

⁴⁵ U.K. People's Panel, First Wave, 1998.

⁴⁶ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*.

Regardless of what they were currently using the Internet for, when survey respondents were asked whether they would like to be able to access 11 specific governments services via the Internet, the response was overwhelmingly positive:

- Search for work or career opportunities - 83%
- Information on government programs/employees and services - 79%
- Renew driver's licence - 79%
- Complete government forms when applying for programs or services - 76%
- Apply for various licences (e.g. fishing, hunting, pet) - 74%
- Birth certificate and health card applications - 73%
- Income tax submissions - 69%
- Passport applications - 69%
- Weather information - 68%
- Pay parking tickets/fines - 60%
- Submit EI cards or check status of EI claim - 52%.⁴⁷

Although a large number of users are familiar with government websites, they grossly underestimated both the number of existing federal websites, as well as the range and diversity of their programs and services.⁴⁸

An overwhelming majority of Internet users (86%) favour a single web site that allows them to access a broad range of government services. Virtually all participants in a Treasury Board Secretariat focus group saw the concept of a portal or single window starting point to enter the federal government website as an obvious approach with no downside. In fact, many participants saw a Government of Canada website as more than simple a service delivery channel for governments, and thought a civic component to be very important (e.g. contacting MPs and registering views).⁴⁹

Expectations regarding response time are more demanding for on-line transactions than by mail. However, expectations for response time on the electronic channel are similar to doing the same transaction by telephone.⁵⁰

In terms of improving government service on the Internet, the following issues were listed in order of priority:

- Ensuring security of personal information (88%);
- Making government e-mail addresses easier to locate (60%);

⁴⁷ PriceWaterhouseCoopers, *Canadian Consumer Technology*, September 2000.

⁴⁸ Ekos, *Lost Government Identity Documents*.

⁴⁹ Ekos, *Citizen-Centred Website Testing*, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 68.

- Being able to follow-up in-person or by telephone after sending on-line information (56%);
- Providing one-stop service to access a wide range of programs through a central website (53%);
- Enabling access to services 24/7 (45%).⁵¹

Telephone Channel

Results from the UK's People Panel show strong support for being able to contact one-stop shop call centres by telephone 24 hours a day (77%). Also, 9 out of 10 respondents consider it important that calls be answered by a person rather than a recorded menu of options.

Kiosks

In 1997, the majority of respondents surveyed agreed that they would use the service if the government were to put into place automatic wickets allowing citizens to complete certain types of transactions (e.g. paying for licences, registrations, etc.).⁵²

Surveys of users of the Ontario Ministry of Transport Self Service Kiosks indicate that users find the experience extremely positive (e.g. would use again, saved time, would like service to continue, found location convenient, and easy to use).⁵³

Summary

- Citizens expect to be able to choose the access channel.
- Citizens are concerned that the electronic channel will become the mandatory access point for government programs and services.
- Choice of channel is affected by the nature of the transaction.

5. Challenges for Governments

The delivery of services, organized in clusters from a citizen perspective, is based upon the notion of integrating service delivery across governments, channels and sectors. This is a challenge for governments which involves rethinking, re-organizing and re-engineering our service delivery.

In addition to citizen expectations, other factors affecting the modernization of service delivery include globalization, ongoing technological innovation, demographic challenges, shifting public priorities and the drive for cost-effectiveness.

⁵¹ Ekos, *Rethinking the Information Highway*, p. 69.

⁵² Ekos, *Rethinking Government 1997*.

⁵³ Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Delivering Clusters of Services*.

There are challenges raised by service clustering as governments rethink their service delivery paradigm to deal with an interdependent world that operates across governments, sectors and service delivery channels.

Governance and accountability:

The development of single windows with other governments creates partnerships that challenge traditional governance and accountability arrangements. At one level, there are issues to be resolved around the three dimensions of accountability: vertically to Ministers and legislatures; horizontally among partners; and to the citizen.

A federal interdepartmental group identified specific challenges faced in co-location arrangements between governments that include:

- human resources and training of staff;
- differences in pay, benefits and administrative policies across jurisdictions;
- management of capital assets which cannot be jointly owned and related liability issues;
- different access to information and privacy legislation across jurisdictions;
- official language considerations: language of work, language of service, translation requirements, etc.
- federal identity versus provincial identity on signage and products;
- incompatible administrative and support systems; and
- difficulties in administering budgets across jurisdictions.

Inter-channel issues:

Providing citizens with consistent service across a choice of access channels will bring inter-channel issues to the fore.

Different channels appear to lend themselves to different clustering arrangements. In developing service clusters, the level of clustering consistency across all channels (including service quality and service standards) needs to be considered. Also, it will be necessary to consider the impact of the electronic service channel as an enabler.

There is also the need for service clustering strategies to harmonize with existing government or departmental initiatives. For example, given the dependence of other channels on electronic support, any approach to service clustering should build on or be compatible with ESD priorities. While some connections are clear, others may require further research and investigation.

Privacy and security:

Development of the electronic channel, and the increased use of third party arrangements in government service delivery, poses concerns about the privacy and security of personal information.

User fees:

As governments increasingly use non-governmental partners to implement their service delivery strategies, user fees will become an issue.

6. Next steps

This document is a work in progress, and demonstrates our research-based approach to improving service delivery.

More research is underway regarding the service preferences of users of single window and other service delivery channels. An intergovernmental research project, headed by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) is being undertaken to explore this issue.

At the learning event of December 6th, 2000, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, lessons learned and good practices will be captured from jurisdictions across North America and shared with governments.

Our goal, as governments interested in improving service delivery from a citizens' perspective, must be to continue to enhance our understanding of the issues and challenges related to service clustering as we continue to build on the two pillars of citizen-centred service delivery - access and performance.

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