



Information technology in the City Hall of Madrid

Within our information-based Society new terms have been coined which require definition. We are referring to e-administration, e-democracy and e-government.

The term, **e-administration** (electronic administration) encompasses the electronic mechanisms that permit the administration to provide public services to citizens and companies.

The term, **e-democracy** (electronic democracy) refers to citizens' participation in political life through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Finally, **e-government** (electronic government) is the most wide-ranging concept, and encompasses placing documents on the Net to reach a state of complete integration between citizens and the Administration, and citizens' participation in political decision-making, in other words, e-democracy.

However, the Information-based Society and the establishment of this type of Society requires the input of all quarters: the Administration, companies and, above all, individuals. The Administration, apart from its role of promoting in all areas, must also continue with the task of providing citizens with new services and assuming the necessary leadership to define the technological standards that should be used and ensure accessibility.

The information base that is managed by a local administration stems from the activity carried out by a population within a given territory, at a specific time.

The different attitude of the new administration involves its tendency to carry out its work with an attitude that embraces technologies that can seamlessly combine the efforts of the population and management and ensure that, aside from possessing their own systems for storing information, each person and each organisation has an almost unlimited capacity to gain access to the information generated by the other parties.

Equipped for e-administration through computer systems that have evolved in this direction, the civil servant has discovered a new attitude within technology that is closer to the work he or she



performs and encourages the use of mediums that go far beyond simply typing on a computer keyboard. AYRE is the City Hall of Madrid's Intranet Project that brings together the usual methods of working and citizens' participation. Not only does it represent the unification of different media, but rather the creation of a method of working which citizens experience on-line.

Thus, having been provided with identity cards that incorporate the certification and electronic signatures, the civil servant's work takes on this nuance of network activity that is capable of transferring information without the need for the printed page.

This, converted in a service aimed at citizens, supposes that the information that is handled is of a transparent nature from the point of origin. The population, through its activities, creates this entire content, which is structured in such a way that it can easily be returned to its point of origin.

Thus, we began by integrating the computer systems and then unified the data, which is of vital importance to the legal control of this information via the regulations of the Data Protection Agency. We have 306 declared files in our organisation (55 of which are high security), in other words, files that are controlled and stored in accordance with the stipulations of the Law. Their sole aim is to be used for internal purposes and then returned to the public via the personalised method that is possible in today's society.

Subsequently, the promotion of telematic media forms a part of municipal activity, illustrating the advantages of using these methods in a world where their employ has become inevitable. Therefore, the population has evolved in such a way that it has reached the necessary level within this world in which everything is regulated via the information that is communicated.

The aim of this is to increase accessibility with regards to current services provided to citizens within the area that is governed by the City Hall of Madrid: these involve contact via telephone, in person or through the Internet.

The City Hall has a clear commitment to provide the population with access to information, to new technologies and to the Internet. This will include the creation of public access points and encouraging improvements in Internet access for citizens and companies.

In short, this means facilitating the incorporation of citizens into the society of knowledge, and bridging the so called "digital breach". When considering this point, we must not forget that local government and cities are at the "heart" of the Information-based Society.



The use of Internet has meant the incorporation of each and every individual in the municipal network, and has formed links between administrations to complete the picture of a society wherein information has become an asset.

The citizen enters the virtual environment of e-administration by using his or her on-line identification and electronic signature, which provide them with the key that unlocks the administration in the computer age. The central administration's effort in this respect has had a rapid impact on the municipal telematic media, creating, time after time and in each and every administrative process, participation that is more direct and which is continuous, wherein the citizen can take an active role via his or her identity and express their volition via the electronic signature.

The municipal web site has focused particular attention on encouraging the use of the electronic signature as a method that provides security while using the Internet, and constantly promotes and circulates information in this regard.

At the time of writing, The City Hall of Madrid, through the "Madrid Participa" [Madrid Participates] initiative, has instigated a pilot study for citizen participation via the use of new technologies. This involves presenting a proposal to citizens wherein they can express their opinion through new technologies: Internet and cell phones. Over the 28th, 29th and 30th of June, citizens within a district will express their opinions on a series of proposals via Internet and cell phones, and the City Hall has undertaken to proceed in accordance with the results that are obtained.

Anonymity with regards to identity and the vote are guaranteed, and the experience will serve to boast the use of new technologies and analyse citizens' responses, and at the same time will serve as a testing ground and a new technologies observatory, and the initiative will include the participation of important companies within the sector.

Within this context, new technologies assume an especially useful role with regards to increasing the efficiency of administrative processes. The implementation of e-administration implies improvements in the following areas:

- Speed, as a result of on-line transfer.
- The simplification and streamlining of bureaucratic processes and greater efficiency.
- Closer contact with citizens and higher levels of participation. More interaction with citizens.
- Monitoring of processes. Citizens' possibility of directly consulting the status of their request at any given time.



On a global level, the aim is to bring the Administration closer to citizens and permit quick and efficient management. In this regard it is worth pointing out that Internet is not the only contact or means of communicating with citizens. It must be borne in mind that many citizens still do not have access to Internet, and this situation is unlikely to change in the near future. As a result, several channels that permit intercommunication must be used: in person, telephone and telematic contact.

The City Hall of Madrid has initiated the “Línea Madrid” project which is aimed at integrating the channels via which public services are provided to citizens: in person, telephone and telematic contact.

Regardless of the channel that is used, citizens will receive a similar service with the same quality of response.

“Línea Madrid” has certain characteristics that are shared by all three channels:

- The provision of corporative identity in public services to citizens.
- There is a single Citizen Information Database.
- Integration of corporate applications.
- Continuous training for civil servants who attend the public.
- Citizens are attended by versatile staff who are capable of responding to each and every demand. Responses are final and citizens are not referred to other services.
- Waiting time is controlled and managed and citizens are attended more quickly.

To be able to offer these services, “Línea Madrid” is equipped with a series of infrastructures which integrate the new technologies that are used when attending citizens. Fundamentally, these infrastructures are as follows:

- A single Citizen Information Database.
- A Municipal Corporate Network with sufficient capacity, speed and security to guarantee access and information transfer between municipal services and Internet connection.
-

All information that may be of interest to citizens is stored in the Citizen Information Database. This Database includes institutional information on the City Hall, information on other Administrations, on cultural activities, on leisure activities, etc; in other words, all information that may be of interest to citizens.



The information contained in the Database is constantly updated and is periodically checked to ensure that it is valid.

As all the information is contained in a single Database, the same information is available through any of the “Línea Madrid” channels, thereby avoiding contradictions and guaranteeing better coordination of the information.

The Municipal Corporate Network refers to an information network composed exclusively of fibre optics via a set-up that involves seven linked rings. Six of these rings have a 2 Gigabyte Ethernet capacity and the seventh has a 4 Gigabyte Ethernet capacity.

These rings connect 58 municipal buildings that are responsible for more than 80 percent of the City Hall’s total communication output.

The telephone channel, also referred to as 010, was established in 1992 and is set up as a service for attending citizens via telephone.

The service is provided through a call centre with 60 telephone operators, and the centre is run by a private company.

To increase the efficiency of the service, and apart from the continual and conscientious effort to train the operators, technological investment has been made, and the integration of new technologies into the call centre has meant that more calls can be attended, and above all, more administrative matters can be dealt with over the telephone.

Whilst in the beginning the service was limited to the provision of city information, over time it gradually evolved to include dealing with administrative matters via the 010 telephone number, to the extent that, in 2003, calls dealing with administrative matters represented 49.3 percent of the 2,043,931 calls that were attended.

When it comes to providing information, the most requested areas relate to city installations, services, cultural activities, sports and leisure and transport.



The 010 number can be used to deal with administrative matters relating to taxes; electricity, water and heating consumption; environmental issues, incidents on public highways, etc.

It also bears pointing out that the call centre provides support in cases of emergency, call transfers to the ER, police, etc. In this regard its efficiency was proven in the last terrorist attack on Madrid on the 11th of March. On this occasion, the 010 call centre not only provided information to affected citizens, but also attended those calls that resulted from the saturation of the telephone lines in other emergency services.

Providing this service implies constant evaluation. To this end, external user satisfaction polls are employed that allow us to quickly correct any problem or gear our services to new demands. Thanks to the continual investment in training and the use of new technologies to improve call management, the last poll in 2003 produced the following results:

Satisfaction with the information provided 96%

Satisfaction with the manner in which you were attended 99%

Usefulness of the information provided 94%

The immediate plans for the 010 call centre involve increasing the capacity to attend calls and the incorporation of internet call centre posts to support and help users of the Municipal Web site to carry out administrative processes and consultations.

To increase the amount of information provided and provide services and support to Internet users, the operators in the call centre will be increased from 60 to 90.

The second "Línea Madrid" channel involves in person contact. The service for attending the public is carried out through the Citizen Services Offices.

The Offices were first set up in 2001 and there are currently 13 in operation. The offices can be found in the Municipal District Councils, and the establishment of all offices of this type is planned to reach completion in two years time. Moreover, there are plans to include these offices in non-municipal centres such as the airport, train stations, bus stations, etc.



The offices can be easily identified and are managed by versatile personnel, with comprehensive and constant training, who are capable of resolving any issues that citizens present.

Their activity has more to do with administration than information, and, thanks to the training of the personnel, the use of computer applications in these offices and the use of specific technologies, the waiting time for citizens is considerably reduced and they are attended much more quickly.

Citizens receive a final resolution when attended and are not referred to other services, but rather leave the office with their requests resolved.

In the 13 offices that were opened in 2003, 681,597 people were attended, mainly in matters relating to the Municipal Register, Information, Urban Development, Taxes and the electronic signature.

They have been well received and citizens have rated their overall satisfaction with these offices as 7.9 out of 10.

The third "Línea Madrid" channel involves attending the public via the munimadrid web site.

The City Hall first went on-line in 1996. As is the case with the majority of this type of services, the web site began as a municipal information page which gradually evolved to take in administrative processes.

As with the other "Línea Madrid" channels, the information content comes directly from the Citizen Information Database, which is a constant in all the channels.

Moreover, new utilities for citizens have been gradually added, such as the possibility of including features in the municipal guide (information that is received directly from the Citizen Information Database), the possibility of consulting the traffic situation in the city and watching the traffic live via traffic cameras, the possibility of submitting urban development consultations with



access to the current urban development plan, property files, satellite views and other material that has been incorporated to enrich the contact between the Administration and citizens via munimadrid.

The introduction of administrative processes in the municipal web sites was one of the main objectives. This activity involves the review and simplification of administrative procedures, wherein different stages are merged and forms are unified in order to streamline the process.

Currently, the municipal web page, in addition to permitting printouts to be downloaded, allows citizens to carry out 9 administrative procedures with a digital signature, and 39 where the digital signature is not required. There is a commitment to increase the number of administrative procedures that can be carried out via the web site.

Including administrative procedures on the web site has produced a very favourable reaction from citizens. This can be clearly seen by the increase in the number of administrative procedures that are completed in 2003, which represents a 242 percent increase on those completed in 2001.

The administrative procedures that can be carried out via Internet focus on areas relating to Taxes, the Municipal Register and the Environment.

In 2001 the possibility of paying municipal taxes via munimadrid was introduced for users of on-line banking services.

Tax payment via munimadrid has been very well received by citizens, and the payments of 1,203,603 euros collected in 2001 rose to 4,119,865 euros in 2003, bearing in mind that the number of users who have access to this method of payment is limited. (The vast majority of citizens pay their taxes via direct debit, and electronic banking still has relatively few users).

We are also looking into the possibility of subscriptions in a personalised information service for interested citizens, wherein they can choose the method of notification, providing information from the City Hall on data that is held or incidents that occur.



This means that this citizen will be constantly informed of all municipal activity that involves him or her and can intervene when he or she sees fit, or when their intervention is a prerequisite of the activity. All of this will be carried out using the most personal and means of communication that is available.

Naturally, the volition to subscribe to the service is a prerequisite of subscription to the personalised information service. On a technical level, all this means is that certain responses from the computer system will have an additional option, but with regards the Administration this represents the embracing of the synergy that provides growth and scope to the system.

The increasing number of visitors to the munimadrid web site is important. 8,467,899 people visited the site in 2000, and this figure increased to 55,493,956 in 2003. These figures clearly show an increase in Internet users within society.

Amongst the immediate objectives of munimadrid, the following should be highlighted:

- Achieving the standardisation and complete accessibility of the web site so that it meets the W3C WAI standards, thereby complying with European objectives in this area.
- Increasing the number of administrative procedures that are carried out via munimadrid, thereby improving e-administration, and the relationship between citizens and the Administration.
- Promoting the spread of the electronic signature amongst citizens as a method that guarantees security and immediate identification.
- The incorporation of a forum that permits citizens to actively participate in topics of interest. Making advances in e-democracy.
- The incorporation of new services such as the aforementioned Internet Call Centre or help with navigation, connecting to the 010 centre, and the possibility of seeing the location of the Citizen Services Offices directly on-line, checking their average waiting time and of viewing them on web cam.
- Increasing the formats used by the web page to spread information, incorporating special formats for Handheld Computers and other information receptors.

This means moving towards the concepts of e-administration, e-democracy and e-government.

To create a knowledge-based economy, eEurope 2002 concentrated on increasing Internet connections in Europe. However, to generate growth it is necessary to translate connectivity into economic activity. These are the priorities for eEurope 2005: stimulate services, applications and contents that create new markets, reduce costs, and finally, increase productivity in the economy as a whole. Developing contents, services and applications and setting up the underlying infrastructure



is primarily the responsibility of the market. For this reason, the plan of action will concentrate on those area wherein public policy can provide additional input and contribute to the creation of a favourable framework for private investment.