

B211 Internet Computing

E-Government

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Lecture Outline

- What is e-Government?
- Internet and e-Government.
- Australian government on-line initiatives.

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E-Government

- E-Government refers to
 - making government services available online,
 - conducting government operations online, and
 - Transforming government processes using new technologies.
- e-Government links the government departments and agencies with:
 - Other government departments and agencies;
 - Individual citizens; and
 - Businesses and organizations.

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The Internet for e-Government

- The opportunities for using the Internet for e-Government:
 - On-line information and services
 - » Available around the clock.
 - » Accessible by rural and regional citizens
 - On-line government payments
 - » eg. e-tax
 - More efficient and effective Business-to-Government (B2G) activities
 - » Linking to government tenders and outsourcing
 - » Business access to government assistance

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The Internet for e-Government

- Inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation
- Offer services by function rather than by departments responsible
 - » In the past, citizens and organizations have to understand the complex structure of local, state and federal governments to know which department or agency to go to get certain information.
 - » On-line information can be arranged by what they do, rather than who offers them.
 - » Eg. All information and services relating to doing business in WA is offered and linked from www.business.wa.gov.au.

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The Internet for e-Government

- Potential threats of e-Government
 - Less attention paid to traditional government service delivery channels
 - Inappropriate technologies block accessibility.
 - Inadequate security and privacy measures.

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Issues of e-Government

- Some issues arising out of :
 - Impact of migrating information production and publications to the private sector
 - » issues of privacy and ownership
 - Agencies starting to operate on a cost recovery basis - eg. charges for statistics.
 - Publications are no longer being published in print, but are available only electronically
 - » issues of accessibility.
 - Specialized software, for files such as PDF (portable document format) or TIFF files - assistance for users?

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Issues of e-Government (cont'd)

- Verifying documents on web - which ones are official and accurate?
- The shift from paper to electronic environment:
 - » Public service - how do you provide public service in an electronic environment?
 - » Collection development - how do you keep track of publications coming from agencies solely in electronic format?
 - » Space planning - for archives.
 - » Bibliographic access - for public libraries.
- Reference: article (<http://gort.ucsd.edu/pcruse/universe/intro.html>) by Cruse and DeDecker on changes to US government services.

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Citizen Engagement

- E-Government can increase engagement by citizens by
 - Increasing government transparency and accountability
 - Easier access to services
 - Involving them in decision making
 - » feedback
 - » referendums
 - » elections
- However, it is questionable whether these are true for citizens with weak socio-economic backgrounds, which is the biggest community with indifferent attitudes towards involvement with government.

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Government Agencies' Web Site Information

- What should be on it?
 - Contact details
 - Available services and citizen entitlements
 - Citizen obligations and responsibilities
 - Reports, policies, manuals, plans
 - Media releases and speeches
 - Forms - applications, licensing, etc.

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Web Site Conformance

- It is important for government service (especially essential service) web-sites to conform to accessibility guidelines.
- Standards which must be adopted for government service web sites:
 - W3C's Web Accessibility Guidelines
 - Web site testing, eg using
 - » the Bobby Web site Accessibility Checker (www.cast.org/bobby)
 - » W3C's HTML validator (validator.w3.org)
 - Rural/regional users
 - » Eg. Web Sites for Rural Australia: Designing for Accessibility <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/HCC/00-13.pdf>

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An Example: Australian Government Online

- The Australian Federal Government's online initiative
 - Description: www.govonline.gov.au
 - Coordinated by National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE)
 - Based on strategic priorities outlined in the *GovernmentOnline: the Commonwealth Government's Strategy* document.

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Minimum Standards for All Aust Government Web Sites

- Information Provision Online
 - All information stated in Online Information Service Obligations (OISO's) must be provided.
- Electronic Publishing
 - Follows guidelines for commonwealth information published in electronic forms
- Metadata
 - Follows Australian Government Locator Service (AGLS) Metadata Standard
- Electronic Record Keeping And Archiving
 - Follows e-Permanence Standard

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Minimum Standards for All Aust Government Web Sites

- Accessibility
 - Follows W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- Security
 - Follows Australian Communications Security Instructions –33 (ACSI-33)
- Privacy
 - Follows guidelines for Federal and ACT Government World Wide Websites
- Authentication
 - Uses Gatekeeper: a government public key infrastructure (more on public keys next week)

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Minimum Standards for All Aust Government Web Sites

- For references to all the standards above, see
 - http://www.noie.gov.au/projects/egovernment/Better_Practice/MWSGuide/Introduction.htm

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Online Information Service Obligations (OISO's)

- List of items under OISO's that must be supplied on all web sites:
 - 1 Directory information covering contact details and services;
 - 2 Annual reports, agency strategic plans and other public accountability-type publications;
 - 3 Reports submitted to Parliament;
 - 4 Press or Media releases;
 - 5 Official speeches and other public information released by Ministers, holders of statutory offices or senior agency officers;
 - 6 Information that will enable the public and organisations understand their entitlements for government assistance;

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Online Information Service Obligations (OISO's)

- 7 Information that will enable the public and organisations to understand their own obligations and responsibilities to government;
- 8 Legislation that the agency administers;
- 9 Information about agency powers affecting the public;
- 10 Agency manuals or other publications used in decision-making that affects the public;
- 11 Forms for public use; and
- 12 All new non-commercial agency publications released in printed or other formats.

- Reference:
 - <http://www.noie.gov.au/projects/eGovt/oiso.html>

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AGLS Metadata

- Based on the Dublin Core standard.
- A set of 19 descriptive elements to improve the visibility and accessibility of government online information and services.
- Metadata enables web-based search engines to index better, therefore ensure that people searching sites have faster and more efficient access to descriptions of government resources.

"There is little point investing money and effort in publishing information or delivering a service over the web if the intended audience cannot locate it."

- http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/gov_online/agls/cim/cim_introduction.html

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OnlineWA

- WA Government's on-line initiative.
 - Web site <http://www.onlinewa.wa.gov.au>
 - Once operated by Contracts and Management Services (CAMS) agency, now merged into Department of Industry and Technology (www.indtech.wa.gov.au).
- Major components
 - General WA community information
 - » news, weather, street directories, traffic cam, movies, TV guide, etc.
 - Portal to, and search for, other WA government agencies
 - WAFastP@y: on-line bill paying
 - Notification of events

OnlineWA

- Department of Industry and Technology B2G services
 - Online and Ecommerce Solutions
 - Government Electronic Market (GEM) portal
 - The Government Contracting Information Bulletin Board
 - Common Use Contracts
 - Tendering Information
 - Supplier Training

Further Readings

- NOIE's GovernmentOnline Project:
 - <http://www.noie.gov.au/projects/egovernment/index.htm>
- WA Government's on-line initiative.
 - <http://www.onlinewa.wa.gov.au>