

The rise of digital government services

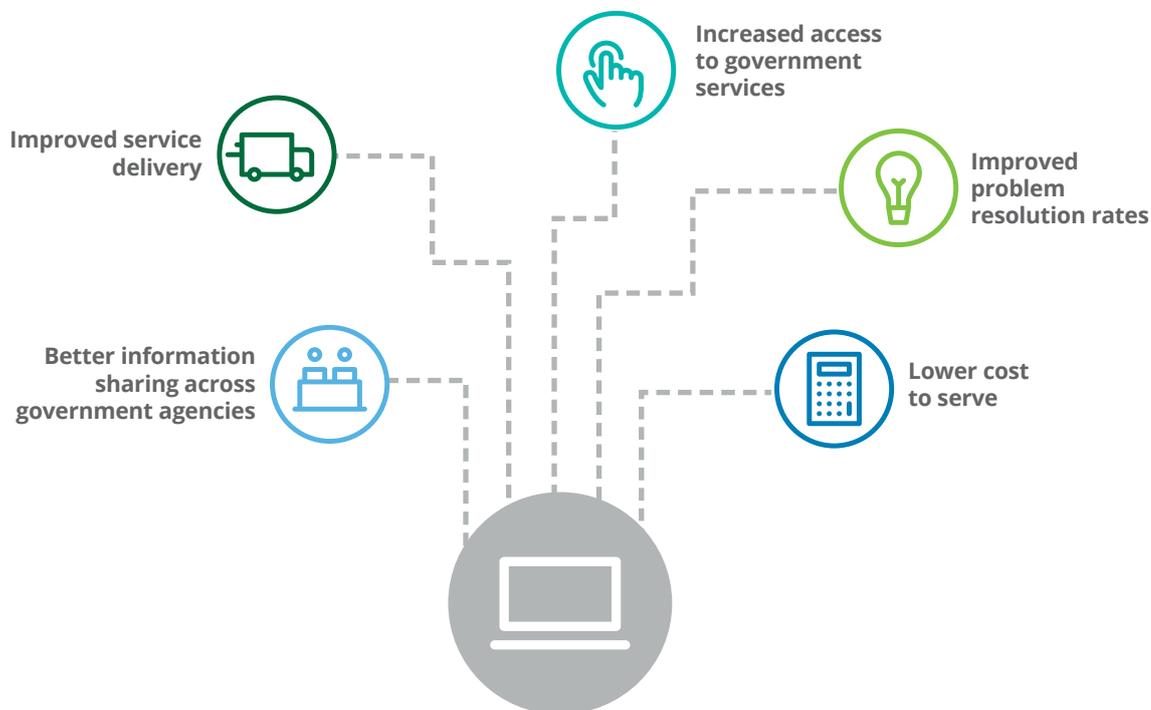
Advances in digital technology have opened up new possibilities to enhance our standard of living. Enabled by innovations in data analytics, robotics, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things, the next era of public service delivery should be citizen-centric, anticipatory and seamless.

Singapore, in its journey towards becoming the world's first Smart Nation, is embarking on an initiative to digitise its public services in the areas of transportation, business productivity, and health care, amongst others.

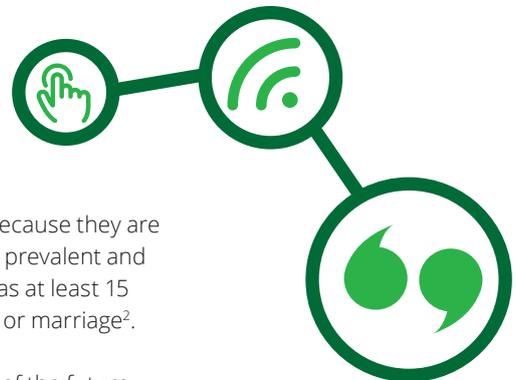
Although its public sector was an early adopter of the electronic delivery of government services, also known as e-services, recent technological advances have opened up new opportunities for digitisation. This would entail moving beyond the mere electronic delivery of services, to the deployment of info-communications solutions for public sector transformation in a whole-of-government approach.

Singapore's commitment to this endeavour is underscored by the launch of its new Government Technology Agency (GovTech), an agency that will oversee all aspects of government technology and digital public services¹, support a citizen-centre user experience, and encourage the participation of citizens in the digitisation of public services. Nevertheless, there remain room for improvement and many untapped opportunities that the republic can explore.

Figure 1: Five key opportunities for digital transformation of government services



¹ "Singapore launching Government Technology Organisation". GovInsider. 18 Jan 2016. <https://govinsider.asia/smart-gov/singapore-splits-ida-creates-government-technology-organisation>



Digital transformation for contact centres

Contact centres present a unique opportunity for digitisation in the public sector because they are especially labour-intensive, and as an established communication channel, are also prevalent and widespread. Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development, for instance, has at least 15 different hotlines each dedicated to enquiries on different topics, such as adoption or marriage².

Looking towards the future of digital government services, the ideal contact centre of the future should be one that is completely unmanned, with the seamless integration of processes across all the relevant departments and citizen touchpoints. This might sound a bit too futuristic at this point in time, but some of the enabling technologies for this vision already exist in our midst today.

The digital transformation of a contact centre would require the concerted effort and collaboration of various government agencies, the commitment of senior management, as well as an alignment of key performance indicators for contact centre advisors. For a start, there needs to be an internal culture change so that all the agencies are aligned and focused on the user and his or her journey across the various channels. At the same time, users will need to be encouraged to employ digital, self-help solutions through education and incentives, for example, by guiding them through online alternatives or informing them of the availability of such solutions during the time of the call.

In contrast to the current primary function of present-day call centres – which largely focuses on performing processes for users – the contact centre of tomorrow is likely to perform the role of a central knowledge management centre within an organisation.

To enable this shift, a new breed of contact centre advisors will be required. Traditionally, these advisors focused on performing processes for users but, with the advent of the digital age, they will need to become knowledge workers. They have to evolve their skillsets to manage the new digital user and provide them with the relevant insight and assistance that they need, and become omni-channel advisors who are trained to serve seamlessly across both traditional and digital channels.

We hope that this report will provide you with a framework to consider when implementing digital initiatives within your organisation and that it – at least in some ways – provides you with a glimpse into the future of government services.

Contact us

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