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European  
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September 2017

OPEN  
JOURNAL  
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# 2

**DIGITAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

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Generalitat de Catalunya  
**Escola d'Administració Pública  
de Catalunya**

# Digital transformation in the United Kingdom

**Eddie Copeland,**  
Director of Government  
Innovation, Nesta  
(United Kingdom)



**“For too long, many felt, government and the wider public sector had been beholden to a small number of giant technology companies and consultancy firms”**

The UK’s journey in using technology to improve the functioning of government has been through many different cycles.

The most recent swathe of activity can be traced back to 2011, when the Government Digital Service (GDS) was established. GDS was set up as a body within the Cabinet Office - the government department responsible for coordinating activity between other departments and exploring efficiency and reform measures - injecting a core group of digital specialists into the very heart of the civil service.

In many ways, GDS was seen as an antidote to much that had gone wrong with government IT. For too long, many felt, government and the wider public sector had been beholden to a small number of giant technology companies and consultancy firms. IT contracts frequently ran into tens if not hundreds of millions of pounds, entailing the creation of huge, bespoke IT systems that took years to build, and were often out of date by the time they were finished. Those giant systems tended to be siloed, making any integration or exchange of data complex and costly, hindering the creation of better processes.

GDS’s approach was different. They would relentlessly focus on the user. They would

adopt agile approaches, building in-house, showing by doing, producing results in days and weeks rather than in months and years. They would focus on interoperability and reuse. The journey began by fixing government's publishing of information. They created **GOV.UK**, a single website to replace a quagmire of hundreds of different web domains run by separate government departments. Next came transactions. They worked on updating high volume and important online services, from making it easier to do things like **applying for Carer's Allowance, booking a visit to see someone in prison, or making a lasting power of attorney.**

More recently, their work has shifted to developing Government as a Platform (GaaP). Instead of government having hundreds of different ways of citizens paying for services, being notified of important updates, or proving their identity, GDS has been building one tool for each of these (GOV.UK Pay, GOV.UK Notify, and GOV.UK Verify, respectively) that can be reassembled and reused across many different services.

These developments have broadly been welcomed. Yet there are two caveats. The first is that much of GDS's work has focused on the front-end of government: the digital transactions that citizens use. This is not a criticism. It was their remit, and put much needed emphasis on putting citizens first. But much of the complexity of government operations lies behind the scenes. There is only so far that any government can deliver true reform until it wrestles with the labyrinthine complexity of back-end

**“The Government Digital Service has been building one tool that can be reassembled and reused across many different services”**



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systems. The UK government has started to address this by reducing the size of IT contracts and ensuring that more small businesses are involved in their supply chain. It's a good start, but there is a long way to go.

The second caveat is that the 'government as a platform' label is a little misleading. Think of how we use the word 'platform' elsewhere, and it normally refers to something on which others can build and innovate. Google's Play store, for example, is a platform on which app developers can build and sell apps and games. By contrast, the UK's approach might be better described as "Government as Lego"; creating common building blocks that can be used in many different combinations to create different services. This is still a valuable approach, but it would be good to see a move towards a true platform model that was able to attract innovation from the most creative and talented specialists outside of government.

## 1 Smarter services, smarter use of data

It's not just technology that can enable reform. Many of the tried and tested ways of delivering more and better with less require making smarter use of data. A number of UK cities and regions have been exploring what's possible.

In London, Nesta has been working with 12 boroughs and the Greater London Authority to pilot a London Office of Data Analytics (LODA). London has 33 boroughs. The aim of LODA has been to see if it is possible to reform public services more effectively

if those boroughs can join up, analyse and act upon their data at a city scale. The first pilot has focused on identifying unlicensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) - properties that are rented out to multiple tenants on separate contracts. Such properties require the landlord to obtain and pay for a specific licence. Using machine learning tools, data on past unlicensed properties has been analysed to understand the characteristics of buildings most likely to be HMOs so that inspections can be targeted more effectively.

Meanwhile, in Manchester, a project called GM-Connect has been helping the region's public sector organisations harness their joint data. With a long list of projects in the pipeline, an initial pilot has focused on creating a "child passport": federating intelligence so that all agencies have a single view of what is known about vulnerable children.

These data initiatives need not be complex in design. A specific part of Manchester's work has involved sharing data on school absences between the region's ten local authorities. 58% of Greater Manchester's population lives less than two miles from a local authority boundary. Consequently, many children are educated in a neighbouring council area. Given that school absence is a key factor in identifying families in need of support, GM-Connect is helping ensure that the arbitrary silos of local government boundaries don't stand in the way of protecting some of the region's most vulnerable families.

**“The UK government has started to reduce the size of IT contracts and ensuring that more small businesses are involved in their supply chain”**



**“A key challenge for public sector bodies is knowing how to use data ethically, securely and legally. It’s also vital that citizens have trust in how their records are used”**

A key challenge for public sector bodies is knowing how to use data ethically, securely and legally. The upcoming General Data Protection Regulation will present further requirements on organisations that hold or wish to use personal data. Yet above adhering to the strict letter of the law, it’s also vital that citizens have trust in how their records are used. The UK has several case studies of well meaning, but poorly designed or communicated, data initiatives that resulted in a public outcry. Care.data, for example, aimed to upload patients’ records in England to a central database, to be used for medical research by both the National Health Service (NHS) and potentially private companies, such as pharmaceutical firms. The lack of clarity over who exactly would be able to see and use that data led to a media storm. Too many negative stories like this risk setting back important data initiatives that really could deliver positive value for citizens.

## **2 Digital Democracy**

Digital tools and data aren’t only useful for reforming public services; they can help address declining citizen trust in political institutions, too. Nesta has conducted considerable research on the theme of digital democracy. Our report **“Digital Democracy: The Tools Transforming Political Engagement”**, studied global examples of best practice. We were also involved in **D-Cent**, a European Commission-funded programme that developed practical digital tools to improve civic engagement.

Regrettably, the UK has lagged behind implementing these ideas. To date, the

UK's most recognisable digital democracy initiative has been the government's **e-petitions website**. The idea is that citizens can write and solicit support for a motion. Those achieving 100,000 signatures are considered for debate in Parliament. Its utility is limited. Simply asking the public to state that they feel strongly about one matter in isolation of all the other issues that it impacts is not especially helpful. Yes, people may wish to have more money spent on the NHS. But then where do they want that money be taken from? Whose taxes should be raised? Petitions are too crude a mechanism to engage citizens in the compromises that all politics entail.

As the national government devolves more powers to the UK's major cities and regions, it is to be hoped that the UK will embrace more effective initiatives, as practiced in other countries. For example, **'Madame La Maire, J'ai une idée'**, enables parisiens to suggest and then vote on how a percentage of the city's annual budget is allocated each year. In Iceland, **'Better Reykjavik'** was launched in 2010 as a collaboration between the local government and a civic tech charity so that citizens could suggest, debate, and rank ideas for improving their city. Far from being of narrow interest just to the digitally savvy, more than 70,000 people have visited the website out of a population of 120,000. These examples show that, when done well, digital democracy can give citizens a meaningful role in shaping the decisions and environments that affect them.

**“When done well, digital democracy can give citizens a meaningful role in shaping the decisions and environments that affect them”**





**“There is a tendency when we talk about ‘digital government’ to focus attention on the technology rather than the problem to be solved”**

### **3 Technology is not always the answer**

There is one further lesson worth sharing from the UK experience, that’s important for all government reformers to note. There is a tendency when we talk about ‘digital government’ to focus attention on the technology rather than the problem to be solved. Far too often this leads to initiatives that are essentially bolting on new technology to old ways of working. Spending money on digitising an inefficient process just leads to a more expensive, digitised, inefficient process. Technology should be the enabler, not the driver of reform. Without operational excellence, no amount of data or technology will help extract the public sector from its current financial hole.

Given the scale of the challenges many countries face, it’s important to first ask



if there are fundamentally better ways of working; and that requires some experimentation. A great example of how to make this happen comes from the Welsh Government, which has provided £5m for an **“Innovate to Save”** programme. The programme provides financial and non-financial support for government staff and third sector organisations wishing to test new ideas that they believe can address complex social challenges and save money. Those that are successful can then be issued with a loan to scale up their work, which can be repaid over time as the public sector reaps cashable savings from the new way of working.

**“In every country, innovations have to take place while paying regard to the local context”**

## **4 Learning from each other**

In every country, innovations have to take place while paying regard to the local context. The UK is not able to create an entire government IT ecosystem from scratch like Estonia; we have a huge network of legacy systems. The UK is culturally opposed to having ID cards that might make online transactions simpler. We have a highly fragmented system of local government that makes it challenging to scale the best ideas. Yet we still have many excellent examples of digital and data usage to share, and we are keen to learn best practice from others.

As all countries face a growing need to deliver more efficient public services, and respond to citizens who feel disconnected from political life, it's in all our interests to work together to develop and share the best solutions to address these great challenges of our era. ■



# Modernising the state through State Startups

**Matti Schneider,**  
Transdisciplinary  
Engineer, Digital  
Services Incubator,  
Secretariat-general  
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Modernisation (France)



**“Digital transformation, in the context of public administration, can also be seen as an immense opportunity to regain the trust and involvement of citizens”**

## 1 The journey is the destination

Digital transformation is the term for a very profound change in how we design and deliver public services. It does not seek to compare pen and paper to keyboard and screen, but rather to contrast *computerisation* (automating what is already normalised) with *digitalisation* (making new practices emerge). Computerisation plans take power away from users, while digitalisation has the power to emancipate them (Schneider, 2017).

In itself, this is nothing specific to the public sector. However, in the context of public administration, it can also be seen as an immense opportunity to regain the trust and involvement of citizens by creating and maintaining shared services. It is important to realise that this kind of ‘transformation’ can never be fully achieved, for there is always a better way to collaborate and adapt to a changing world.

## 2 Finding the right path

There are many different paths to follow to start this never-ending transformation. Each one can fit a specific organisational context. In some cases, it is better to help an organisation evolve by focusing the attention of its members on its organisational structure. In others,

providing agents with a safe space to experiment and share can spark a change in the way of working that will be felt by the public. In yet other cases – perhaps those in which the agency’s goal is to produce data – the shift will start with a push to open some of its precious datasets, thereby enabling the discovery that more value is created with external users of that data than with yearly statistics on the produced data.

The French government’s **Secretariat-general for Government Modernisation** strives to effect this change by experimenting and providing support on all of these different directions simultaneously.

It co-created 12 local labs for 13 regions in France, akin to the Laboratorio de Gobierno (Chile) and the Policy Lab (UK). Coupled with the 100% *contacts efficaces* initiative, which introduces agencies to user-centred design, these spaces bring together designers, public agents, coaches, and makers to experiment and open minds to what public services could be. Finally, *Étalab* is the task force responsible for open data, and it accompanies all agencies in opening up through advice, tooling and regulation.

A more recent mission is **beta.gouv.fr**, the Digital Services Incubator. It builds simple and transparent tools collaboratively and iteratively, which fix real daily problems and offers them on a free choice basis to agents and citizens. Its aim is to spread the culture of digital innovation throughout the administration. This is done through *State Startups*.

“The French government bring together designers, public agents, coaches, and makers to experiment and open minds to what public services could be”

“Beta.gouv.fr builds simple and transparent tools collaboratively and iteratively to spread the culture of digital innovation throughout the administration”





**“We hire developers, data scientists, designers, product managers an all necessary talent to solve real-world issues for real-world users”**

### **3 Matching individuals with a vision**

A State Startup is not just an oxymoron; it is the match between a team and a mission. There is no capital investment and no separate legal entity, only the usage of the tools and practices of the digital start-ups to resolve friction in an interaction between an administration and citizens. We help it identify an ‘intrapreneur’, one of its civil servants ready to hustle their way into delivering a digital public service, and create a team of experts around them. We hire developers, data scientists, designers, product managers and all necessary talent, either under short-term contracts or as independent contractors, and coach that team so it stays laser-focused on solving real-world issues for real-world users. This team of two to four people will have six months to prove a digital product can improve the situation.

## 4 Demonstrating the viability of modern practices in the public sector

The new version of the French Open Data Portal ([data.gouv.fr](http://data.gouv.fr)) was the first State Startup to come into existence back in June 2013. Made publicly available in December that same year, it brought social features to a tool that used to be a catalogue of spreadsheets, like every other country at the time. The new interface created feedback loops from civil society, that could now publish reuses, towards the institutions producing data, thus allowing them to increase the quality of their datasets by leveraging the crowd. Being open-source, this tool is now used in other countries such as Luxembourg, and is transferring capabilities EU-wide.

Another example is *Mes Aides*, a web application that helps citizens know which benefits they are entitled to. The problem addressed is citizens not claiming benefits they are eligible to due to the complexity of the law. As a matter of fact, in 2012, up to 80% of French citizens eligible for financial help for health insurance did not request it (Guthmuller et al, 2011). A State Startup was incubated in February 2014 and made a service publicly available at [mesaides.gouv.fr](http://mesaides.gouv.fr) in September. Two years later, over 1,200 individuals now assess their eligibility for 25 social benefits daily, **in under 7 minutes** for the majority. A large-scale evaluation of this service led by independent researchers with controlled cohorts is currently underway. We were able to scale this





product thanks to strong collaboration between different government agencies and the wider public. We started with seven target benefits and only 70 tests provided by partner agencies. We now compute 25 benefits and have over 600 tests on baseline and edge **cases** provided by new partner agencies and overseas territories, NGOs who use the tool on a daily basis, and even individuals in specific situations.

Once again, by opening the code powering this service, powerful opportunities were enabled. New governmental services use the same computation engine independently from the Incubator to target specific sectors of the **population**. During the **Open Government Partnership Global Summit hackathon**, teams of four made tax law computable

computable for countries such as **Tunisia** and **Senegal** in under 48 hours. We have recently been contacted by the City of Barcelona, which also wants to offer a social benefits estimator and intends to base it on OpenFisca.

Such open tools can evolve beyond their original scope. Another service incubated at beta.gouv.fr uses that same engine to provide an embeddable widget that computes the cost of hiring an **employee**, with all taxes and refunds included, with a single line of code. The first public version of that tool was once again delivered in under six months with just one full-time employee. It is now used in over eight different partner websites: administrations, start-ups and SMEs alike.

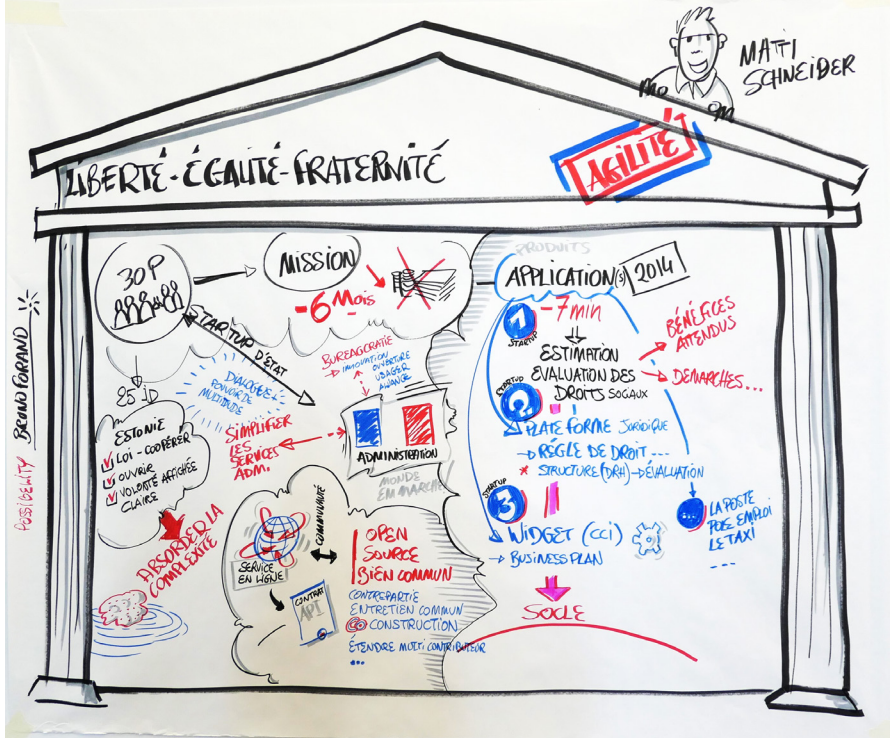
## 5 Implementing a strategy

Our continued growth, 36 products at the time of writing, and our increasing number of partner ministries all prove that building digital services for and with the public, ensuring collaboration across government agencies and beyond, and ignoring usual committee-based, siloed decision-making yields greatly improved services at a fraction of the cost and fosters interest and support from civil society.

We have learnt that the most effective strategy in digital transformation is delivery. Rather than trying to convince other stakeholders – be they fellow administrations, the private sector, or individuals – to work towards a specific goal, it is more efficient to simply *start working* on it while simultaneously

**“We have learnt that the most effective strategy in digital transformation is delivery. It is more efficient to *start working on it* rather than trying to convince other stakeholders”**





opening up as many opportunities for contribution as possible. As feedback is truly listened to and acted upon, a community starts shaping itself and the power of the crowd is leveraged. That support can then be shifted into resources, but also into political power to support larger transformation efforts by convincing more reluctant actors to consider digital transformation as an opportunity rather than a challenge. Efficiency, collaboration and openness become both tools and goals when one focuses on delivery, reinforcing themselves and each other at every step and leading ever more towards a continuously renewed 'digital transformation'. ■



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# Flanders Radically Digital: the digital transformation of a regional government 2015–2020, a case study

**Frank Geets,**  
Chief Administrator  
General ICT & Facility  
Management, Flemish  
Government (Flanders,  
Belgium)



**“Flanders Radically Digital aims to achieve more than just the digitalisation of service, it wishes to think and act digitally in every respect”**

Flanders is a Dutch-speaking region in the northern half of Belgium with six million inhabitants. The region boasts full governmental responsibility over education, the environment, public works, agriculture, fisheries, culture, sport and tourism, among others.

## 1 Introduction

By 2020, Flanders Radically Digital, a Flemish Government programme, aims to achieve the following:

- As many digitally performed government transactions as possible.
- A far-reaching simplification and digitalisation of government processes.
- Interaction with target groups via a single virtual front office.

If the Government of Flanders wishes to make a positive difference for its region in the future, it must make the transition to an information-based government. Thus, Flanders Radically Digital aims to achieve more than just the digitalisation of services; the Government of Flanders wishes to think and act digitally in every respect.

## 2 Governance

Two agencies, the Facilitair Bedrijf and the newly established Flanders Information Agency, will help to achieve these objectives.

In the new Flanders Information Agency, existing services have been grouped together into the key areas of e-government (CORVE): legal support, a central helpdesk, geographic information, and information-supporting services of the Flemish Government.

For most government services, citizens and businesses can turn to a local authority. The local authorities are considered the first port of call for public services. Thus, local authorities not only develop their own services for citizens and businesses, but are often also the provider of services set up by other bodies, including the Flemish Government. Local authorities are therefore also involved in the Flemish Government's digitalisation project.

A suitable governance structure is essential in order to optimise the intergovernmental data flow between local authorities as partners, to achieve synergy and scale advantages, and to ensure the necessary security aspects.

Existing consultation structures were therefore simplified and one steering committee was established for information and ICT policy. This steering committee works within the parameters of a strategic plan approved by the government in advance, and may submit proposals to the Flemish Government that are both binding

**“Studies show that pitfalls in computerisation are due to more than just technical and financial resources”**





**Basiskaart Vlaanderen (GRB)**

Dit geografisch informatiesysteem is de topografische referentie voor Vlaanderen.



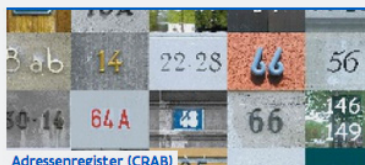
**Geografisch portaal (Geopunt)**

Geopunt is de centrale toegangspoort tot geografische overheidsinformatie



**Gegevensdelingsplatform (MAGDA)**

Het MAGDA-platform zorgt voor een veilige uitwisseling van gegevens uit authentieke bronnen.



**Adresregister (CRAB)**

Het Adresregister (CRAB) is de authentieke bron voor adressen in Vlaanderen



**Centimeter Nauwkeurige positiebepaling (FLEPOS)**

Dienstverlening waarbij correctiesignalen van navigatiesatellieten via mobiel internet worden verspreid



**Kabel- en Leidinginformatieportaal (KLIP)**

Webtoepassing om schade aan kabels en leidingen bij grondwerken te voorkomen



within the Flemish administration itself and between the Flemish administration and the local authorities.

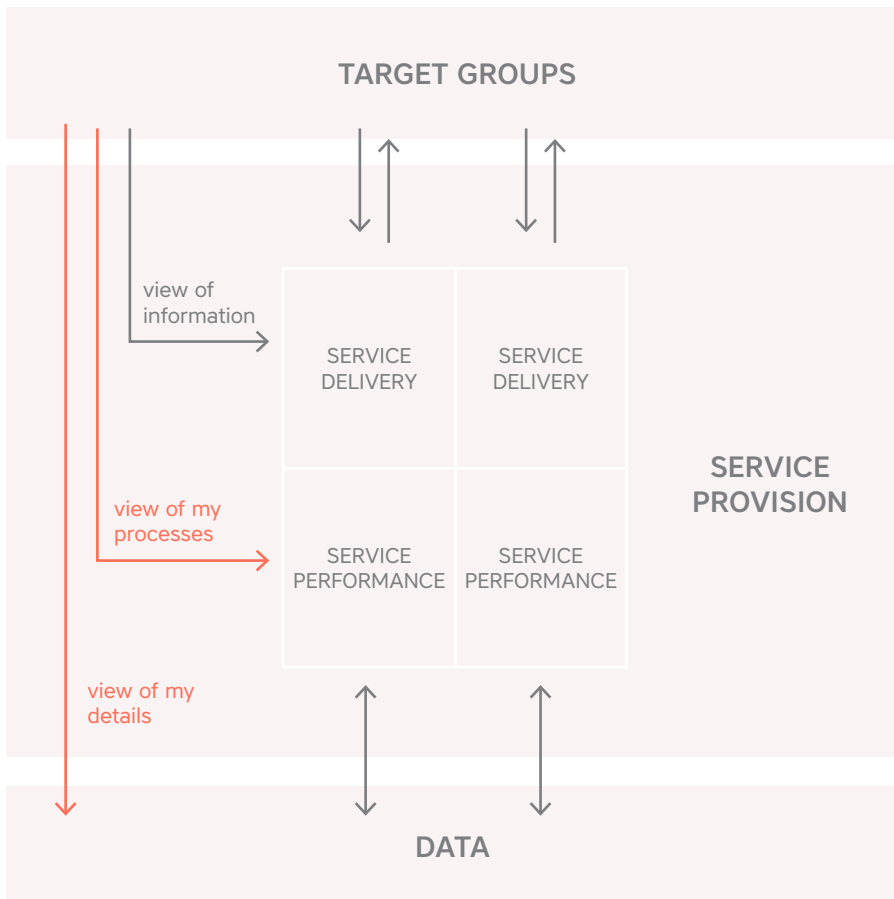
The range of central ICT and information products is being extended and support is being improved to enable the Flemish authorities to implement this policy. A programme was started with a budget of 30 million euros, which was used as leverage over a period of three years.

To facilitate the successful rollout of ICT projects, research was carried out to determine which policy measures might contribute to this. Studies show that pitfalls in computerisation are due to more than just technical and financial resources. The pitfalls are mainly a result of the interlinking of legislation and technology, a frequently changing and unrealistic level of ambition whereby the project becomes too complex, a lack of knowledge on and low level of involvement with the (end) users, and a focus on technology instead of the process of change.

### 3 A government that understands you better

The term 'information-driven government', which is central to the Flanders Radically Digital programme, was redefined into the motto 'a government that understands you better'. An information-driven government is therefore not an aim in itself, but a means of achieving something. This can be summarised in a single sentence: **'a government that understands you better'**. This sentence can be loosely interpreted in two ways:

1. From the perspective of the target groups (citizens, business and organisations) regarding the government as **'a government that you understand better'**, i.e. a government that gives you clearer insight into what it knows about you and what it does for you.
2. From the perspective of the government regarding target groups, namely as **'a government that understands you better'**, i.e. a government that coordinates its



services and its functioning more efficiently to meet your actual needs and oriented towards you as a 'customer' of that government.

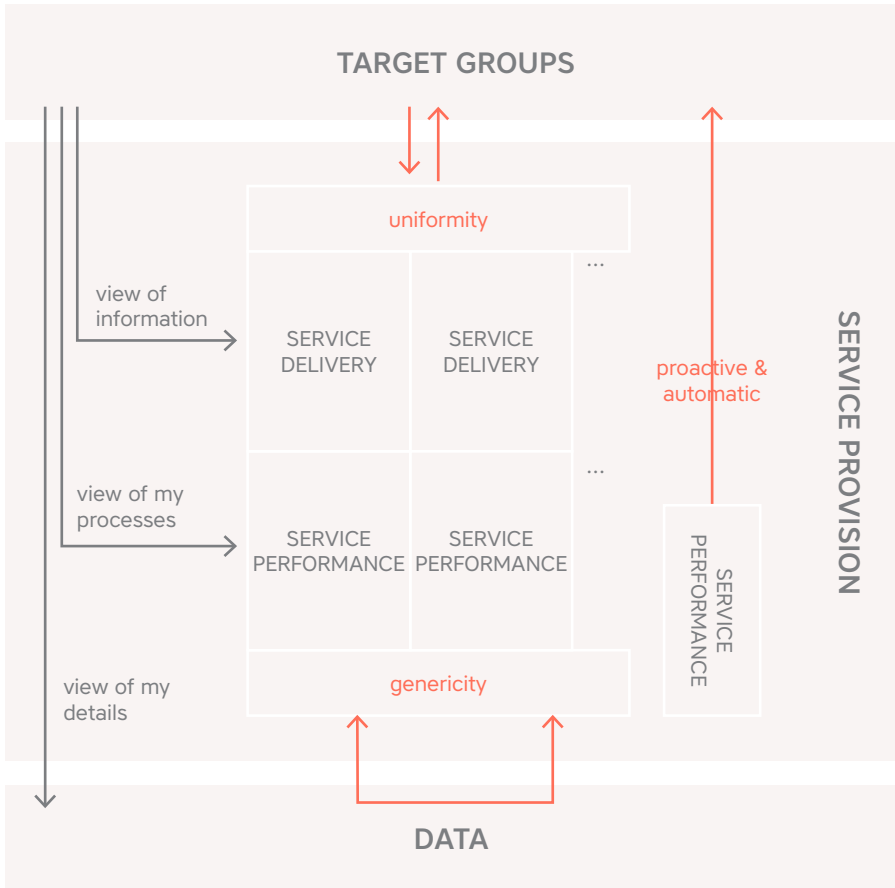
Currently, government bodies are often in disarray when it comes to extending their digital services. While many government organisations have indeed already come a long way with their range of digital services, these services are offered in a compartmentalised manner. Thus, among other things, target groups are confronted with various digital front offices, are often repeatedly asked for the same details, and are required to carry out their transactions in different ways.

### **The future situation: a government that you understand better**

In the future, we hope to have a government that offers a better and broader overview of what it knows about you and what it does for you. Citizens and businesses should have better control of their details. Thus, they can view these details, have them changed if necessary, use them and provide them as open data (excluding personal details).

Citizens and businesses should also have a better view of the processes affecting them that are currently underway and the status of these processes. With a clearer view of the processes, customers can better understand exactly what the government is doing for them and make valuable suggestions as to how the process could be improved or be more efficiently adapted to their actual needs.

**“With a clearer view of the processes, customers can better understand exactly what the government is doing for them and make valuable suggestions”**



## The future situation: a government that understands you better

In the future, we also want a government that more efficiently adapts its services and operations to the needs and requirements of its target groups. Preferably, these services will be provided by digital and mobile means. New digital services are being developed for this through co-design and co-creation with citizens, businesses, and organisations while taking into account those who



# Informatie Vlaanderen

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## Vlaanderen Radicaal Digitaal

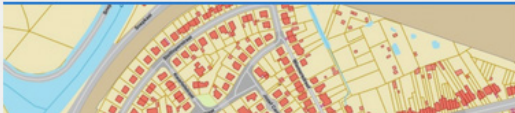
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## Nieuws



cannot easily digitally interact with the government. We are therefore aiming for more uniformity regarding the training and behaviour of the various digital front offices so that customers will experience these as a single virtual front office.

This requires the establishment and approval of the right digital-friendly rules. The most exhaustive use possible must be made of authentic information sources and detail sharing between government services across government boundaries ('once only'). Such streamlining, simplification and end-to-end digitalisation of processes will ensure both shorter lead times for the customer and lower operating costs for the government.



It must be possible to indicate rights proactively as a result of a much better understanding of the citizen (with regards to family circumstances, employment situation, etc.) and businesses (with regards to investment plans, financial situation, etc.) and to allocate those rights automatically (premiums, subsidies, school study allowances, etc.) where possible. We can also proactively remind citizens and businesses of obligations that they must fulfil (vaccinations, or the renewal of certificates and permits, etc.). The services can therefore be radically rethought from the relationship of trust between the government and its target groups.

#### **4 Selection of projects for the Flanders Radically Digital programme**

In 2015, 2016 and 2017, 10 million euros were allocated to projects within the Flanders Radically Digital programme for which a leverage function was expected.

An open call was organised in 2015 whereby entities of the Flemish Government and umbrella organisations of local authorities were invited to submit a proposal project. Thirty-nine entities submitted projects. An official group of experts provided a descriptive and comparative overview of the projects that met the following criteria:

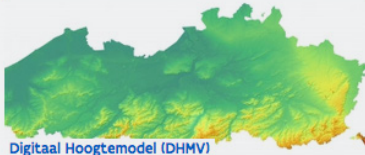
- Exceed the limits of policy areas, entities and administrative levels.





#### Luchtopnamen

Fotorealistische weergave van het reële landgebruik voor relatief uitgestrekte gebieden



#### Digitaal Hoogtemodel (DHMV)

Verzamelnaam voor alle gebiedsdekkende hoogtegegevens van Vlaanderen



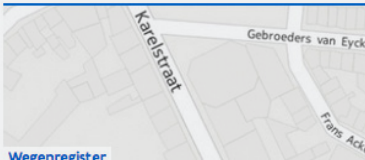
#### Recht van Voorkoop (RVV)

Recht om perceel met voorrang op de kandidaat-koper aan te kopen.



#### Data aanvragen en downloaden

Bestel datasets van Informatie Vlaanderen. Een groot deel van deze datasets zijn Open Data



#### Wegenregister

Middenschallig referentiebestand van de wegen in Vlaanderen.



#### Beeldverwerkingsketen (BVK)

Het BVK systeem is de centrale toegangspoort tot de brondata achter de geografische overheidsinformatie



#### 360°-beeldendatabank Vlaanderen

Programatische beelden van Vlaanderen waarin je ook kan

- Possess clear added value for a considerable group of users.
- Contribute to the streamlining of processes based on a cost-efficiency calculation.
- Contribute to the development of new generically usable building blocks.
- Adhere to the principles of the FRD (Flanders Radically Digital) and the Flemish Enterprise Architecture.
- Contribute to the achievement of the Flanders Radically Digital objectives.

The main setbacks were as follows:

- Scope: not all of the projects submitted were fully prepared, and were essentially managed after the budget had been allocated.
- Innovative ambition: not all of the authorities were sufficiently aware of the possibilities of innovative digitalisation and the central services offered. In the future, there should be better coordination between joint opportunities.
- Cooperation: in the future, cooperation in the development of usable strategic building blocks should be strengthened (e.g. regarding finance).
- Impact: the total impact of the programme and the leverage budget should be increased by selecting more connected projects.

## 2016

A suitable approach for distributing the 2016 leverage budget was worked out based on the 2015 evaluation. The criteria included remained in effect and the concept of 'a government that understands you better' was introduced. A project inventory of 400 e-government projects was created. Sixty-eight priority projects from the project inventory were discussed with representatives from Flemish Government entities and sector organisations from local authorities and tested against the Flemish Government principles.

In order to increase impact, the focus was on a limited number of projects that were feasible within a short period via a target group approach with three tracks: a citizen track, a business track, and an organisation track, all with an aim to co-create with the local authorities. The goal of these three tracks was to make maximum use of opportunities for synergy, to use generic building blocks, and to operate both in the preparation and the implementation based on co-creation and co-financing. Thanks to co-financing, each project had resources from the leverage budget and resources from the Flemish Government entities. The leverage budget was mainly used for financing the reusable and generic building blocks. Ten per cent of the 2016 leverage budget was used for cross-disciplinary themes such as process simplification, project management, architecture, communication and information security.



**“The ‘citizens’ front office project’ is focused on realising an integrated online citizen service platform”**

## 2017

The approach was maintained in 2017. On the supply side, the project inventory was updated (276 projects); on the demand side, the needs of the users (citizens, businesses and organisations) were mapped out in various user surveys and life-event scans. Sixty projects were selected and discussed based on this analysis. Fifteen projects were allocated budgets within the three tracks.

### 1. Citizen track

The ‘citizens’ front office project’ is focused on realising an integrated online citizen service platform. This unlocks citizens’ personal details across the various entities. The citizens’ front office also bundles a citizen’s questions or pending affairs with the government and enables these to be followed up on. If citizens notice incorrect entries or have any questions, they can report these to the front office, thus improving the quality of the authentic information sources.

### 2. Business track

The ‘e-counter for business’ project seeks to allow entrepreneurs to view – among other things – a centralised and up-to-date status overview of their files in one location via a self-service counter of the (Flemish) government and to submit applications for certificates and permits via one location.

An entrepreneur only has to report once. Thus, the Flemish Government will be seen as a transparent organisation while reducing the administrative burden.

### 3. Subsidy track

Subsidy processes should be user-friendly for the applicant, while the Flemish Government aims for maximum transparency and clear communication. This means that subsidy applicants can request and follow up on their subsidies via the citizens' front office and e-counter for business, and need only provide the information once, in a user-friendly manner.

The subsidy processes will be coordinated from within the Flemish Government using common terminology and a common integrated architecture. ■



The screenshot displays the Vlaanderen website with a search bar at the top right. Below the header, there are several content blocks:

- Kadastrale perceelplannen**: Aerial map view with text: "Eigendommen op kaart zoals gekend bij het kadaster. Deze plannen zijn sinds 2000 ook beschikbaar bij het agentschap."
- Gebouwenregister**: Aerial view of a city with text: "De bron voor alle gebouwen in Vlaanderen."
- Webdiensten**: A globe with arrows and text: "De geografische webdiensten van Informatie Vlaanderen"
- Ondersteuning rond vereenvoudiging en klantvriendelijke dienstverlening**: A grid of diverse people's faces with text: "Hoe kun je je dienstverlening zo efficiënt en klantvriendelijk mogelijk organiseren"
- Advies en ondersteuning kwaliteitsvolle formulieren**: A person at a computer with text: "Ondersteuning in de kwaliteitsverbetering van formulieren"
- ViaAGIV**: A globe on a table with chairs around it, with text: "Dienstverlening aan databeheerders"
- Advies over alle aspecten van digitaal documentbeheer**: Two people at a computer with text: "Gerichte adviesverlening over digitaal documentbeheer"
- Advies over alle aspecten van informatiebeheer**: Hands using a tablet with text: "Gericht advies over archiefbeheer, documentbeheer, kennismanagement en digitalisering"



# Digital transformation in the Catalan public administrations

**Joan Ramon Marsal,**  
Coordinator of the  
National Agreement  
for the Digital Society  
eGovernment Working  
Group. Government of  
Catalonia

**Josep Lluís Rodríguez,**  
Expert in modernisation  
policies. Office of  
Process and Electronic  
Administration.  
Secretariat of Public  
Administration and  
Service. Ministry of  
Governance, Public  
Administrations and  
Housing. Government  
of Catalonia



Since the end of the twentieth century, the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the work of public administrations in any country has been considered the most important factor in changing their working methods.

After more than 20 years of experience, the effect does not appear to be the one that was anticipated. It is, nevertheless, true that all administrations have undertaken quite significant initiatives aimed at improvement:

1. They have opened electronic channels for communication with their citizens (portals, mobiles, tablets, etc.) that eliminate the limitations of opening hours of face-to-face offices, or improve the information provided.
2. They have introduced solutions for beginning administrative procedures online (and above all, to avoid the data load of forms in paper format in the relevant databases).
3. They have replaced the presentation of certificates from other government bodies with direct queries to those bodies (meaning that the institutions issuing certificates do not have to deal with the applicant face to face or

issue certificates, and the recipients avoid having to obtain the documents required).

This has improved some of the interactions between government bodies and the public, but other interactions have encountered difficulties, because the replacement of traditional channels with digital channels has led to greater complexity. For example, access for applying for certain services or for carrying out certain procedures has been subject to numerous difficulties, due to the need for an electronic signature with a digital certificate. This is a complex technology which has simply been a barrier for the public, and which has had a high cost for public administrations.

In most cases, digitalisation has been defined as a simple change in the format of channels and records management, with no effect on either how the procedures take place or on the quality and flexibility of decision-making.

As a result, it is now apparent that the public has no clear perception of the advantages of digitalisation, and that the working methods of public administrations have changed very little. The anticipated disruptive innovation has not taken place, and therefore neither have the improvements associated with this innovation.

The eGovernment Action Plan 2016–2020 calls on European governments to make a qualitative leap forward, consisting of working internally with electronic and paperless media, and rethinking

**“The need for an electronic signature with a digital certificate is a complex technology which has simply been a barrier for the public and a high cost for public administrations”**





their relationship with citizens in order to increase public participation and involvement. The big question is: will the public administrations be able to make the qualitative leap required, and really change their working systems, or will they continue as they have done so far?

This disruption is necessary in order to meet the challenges faced by the public administration, posed by the increasingly rapid pace of the digital revolution, and the response it generates among stakeholders:

1. First, physical goods are being transformed into digital goods, in which the raw material consists of the data needed in production processes or to make decisions. The processes adapt to data collection requirements and the availability of data in real time.

Public administrations do not own the data. Ownership lies with the citizens,



since it is they who provide the primary information. Citizens must therefore be aware at all times of the data held by the administrations and what they do with them, and above all, as the owners, they must collaborate in the management and updating of the data, and in generating a new asset for society.

2. Public regulation will have to adapt to the new phenomenon of 'the collaborative economy'. This will make it necessary to distinguish between measures to promote and monitor the private management of 'communal property', and measures for the oversight and inspection of platforms of private services that are 'extractive of public value'.
3. The necessary connections between the public administrations to be able to meet complex demands or those based on vital events. At present, in these cases each administrative unit only meets some of the citizens' needs.
4. The public administrations' information systems must adapt to the new situation. It is necessary to share data, and therefore to update the mechanisms and infrastructures that facilitate the exchange of data. The logical approach is shared mechanisms for data entry management (direct and indirect) and for the management of outgoing data and documents, which facilitates the proactive work by any administration involved in events concerning a person, a company, etc.

**“It is necessary to share data, and therefore to update the mechanisms and infrastructures that facilitate the exchange of data”**



Furthermore, the open data that can be associated with these services will enable public and private initiatives for the evaluation and improvement of the services to flourish.

5. The automation of data processing in order to streamline and objectify decision-making, which leads to the creation of mathematical algorithms in data processing.

It will be necessary to define a type of governance that preserves and guarantees the quality of data, and to stipulate ethical conduct in the establishment of algorithms to support decision-making and a transparent system when using them, so that oversight groups can access them and examine their suitability for purpose.

### **The response of the Catalan public administrations: the National Agreement for the Digital Society (PNSD)**

The Catalan public administrations have worked together to meet these challenges and other changes, in order to adapt to the requirements of a digital society, based on five areas of action: infrastructure, cybersecurity, smart territory, eGovernment and the industrial Internet (or industry 4.0). Representatives of municipal councils, provincial councils and the Government of Catalonia have worked together in each of these areas.

The eGovernment working group has been coordinated by the Open Administration

**“The Catalan public administrations have worked together to adapt the requirements of a digital society on five areas: infrastructure, cybersecurity, smart territory, eGovernment and the industrial Internet”**

Consortium of Catalonia (Consorti AOC), and thirty people from various Catalan government bodies participated in the definition tasks. As a starting point, a basic document was written by 52 experts in the field, from both the private and public spheres, from universities and government bodies.

The strategic objectives defined in a roadmap were classified according to three fundamental aspects, and categorised in strategic areas and lines. As a result, the vision of digital transformation in Catalonia is focused on empowering citizens, prioritising the quality of decisions rather than prioritising procedures, and the need to establish a Catalan eGovernment system.

1. Citizens' empowerment (natural persons, civil institutions and companies are always included in this concept of citizens) consists of something more than simply considering users as a service centre. It also does not aim to be a philosophical concept that appeals to 'political marketing'. This vision of citizens as agents of eGovernment means that they participate actively:

- In the design and provision of services (through organisations or social platforms for the provision of services).
- By being able to customise digital spaces for contact with public administrations, so that they can self-configure their areas of interest, without any loss of image or

**“Empowering citizens, prioritising the quality of decisions rather than prioritising procedures and the need to establish an eGovernment system is the vision of digital transformation in Catalonia”**



representation by the administrations providing these services.

- By having governance of their data, so that they are aware of the personal information the administrations have and how they use it.
- By obtaining trust and guaranteeing the protection of their personal data, so that they can easily exercise their rights related to consent and privacy of their personal information.
- By having easy access to the services, with simple authentication systems, without having to provide the information that the administrations already have – and when they have to provide it, they only need to do so once.

In short, the aim is to enable citizens to establish 'normal', 'logical' and 'proportionate' relationships with the public administrations (these three concepts are used according to their most well-known and popular definition, included in any dictionary).

2. The digital transformation will reach the public administrations when they change their working methodology. To achieve this, it is necessary to change the perspective, and focus primarily on the quality of decisions and to limit the effects of procedures strictly to guaranteeing the rights of the individuals (citizens, users, interested parties or beneficiaries) affected by the provision of services by the public administrations. This involves a number of initiatives with the following objectives:



- Changing how the requirements of management systems are defined, starting with the dashboard and not with processes. Dealing with notifications must begin by determining what decisions need to be taken, what data are required, the processes required to obtain this information, how to guarantee the rights of the people involved, how to evaluate decision-making, and ascertaining the appropriate digital platforms for the construction of the systems.
- Establishing a data governance system that ensures the capture, debugging, preservation and updating of data, and access to them. It also implies the definition of an organisational structure based on specialised command and management profiles.
- Developments in electronic records management, which uses semantic interoperability to construct management documents and files in formats that enable the data they contain to be structured and processed automatically.

- An evaluation system that enables decision-making based on scientific evidence when establishing public policies and defining services, to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.
  - A technological change in the use and interconnection of data and how they are shared between government bodies, and between government bodies and the public.
3. In order to achieve an effective digital transformation of the public administrations, it is necessary to construct a system of public administrations, in the simplest sense of the concept of a system: items that interact with each other for a common purpose. In other words, public administrations that interact with each other in order to facilitate the life of citizens. This would be a similar (but not identical) system to those that are already in place in Catalonia: a health system, a social services system, a public transport system, etc. Priority measures in this area are as follows:
- A co-governance body formed by representatives of the Catalan public administrations, leading the digital transformation contained in the roadmap of the Agreement.
  - Shared support services for the deployment of the digital transformation in the Catalan public administrations.
  - Networked infrastructures, devices and technology services shared in the cloud.

# Administració pública

Actualitat

Tràmits

Equipaments

- Projects and services related to the organisational, semantic and technological interoperability of data, electronic documents, solutions and applications, and oversight of the changes that are taking place, within the European Union's European Interoperability Framework.
- Shared applications and digital solutions services for the management of administrative services.
- A legislative framework that regulates and consolidates this Catalan public eGovernment system.

The roadmap of the National Agreement for the Digital Society (PNSD) identifies a range of measures and projects over a five-year period (2018–2022), grouped into strategic areas and lines that will enable all the public administrations to cope with the disruptive changes which they have to face, in order to fulfil the requirements of society and take advantage of the digital revolution that has begun ■

**“The roadmap of the National Agreement for the Digital Society (PNSD) identifies a range of measures and projects over a five-year period (2018–2022)”**



# We can't go on like this: let's transform public services! Witnessing the end of the dinosaurs

**Jordi Graells i Costa,**  
Director-General  
for Citizen Services.  
Government of  
Catalonia



**“Within the context of public management, a new paradigm named ‘open government’ has burst upon the scene, placing the focus upon individual citizens”**

In today's world, where the governance and management of public affairs and the issues of contemporary society are ever more complex, there is now, more than ever, a need for a digital transformation of governments and administrations so that they can provide a more simple, up-to-date and efficient response to the real needs of the citizens of the 21st century.

This is why recent years have seen a wide variety of initiatives designed to incorporate into democratic systems the substantial changes arising from enhanced access to information resources, due in the main to the mass use of the Internet and social media. Within the context of public management, a new paradigm named ‘open government’ has burst upon the scene, placing the focus upon individual citizens, giving them a more active, co-responsible role in public affairs, beyond the ability to cast the occasional vote or enjoy representation on the democratic bodies of government. For this type of governance, new channels for communication and partnership between government and the public have arisen to make it easier for both parties to get to know and acknowledge one another and thus help to improve relations between the public powers and citizens.



This is a new way of managing public issues based, on the one hand, on more public control over the authorities by means of open data, transparency and accountability and, on the other, on the necessary public participation and collaboration in guiding this new style of governance.

Government is not the only player in the provision of services and information of value to the public. A good part of society's needs is met with the contribution of the knowledge of different persons and organisations. That is why, today, government must promote and encourage, to an even greater extent, the conditions for these processes to occur more frequently.

Given this, there is need for the intensive use of information and communication technologies to be able to count on the participation of all public actors (citizens, institutions, businesses). Digital channels need to become everyday tools for relationships and communication with the public and, more particularly, the key to public access to more collaborative government procedures, whether they involve contributions, inclusion, knowledge management, decision-making, co-creation or co-production. In other words, they can become, above all, a vital tool at the service of public participation and partnership that helps resolve the problems arising from governance of contemporary societies with, as we have said, increasingly complicated and diversified needs. In this regard, they will help government to design, manage





and implement public policies that are effective, efficient and more legitimate, in that they are a better fit with what the public is actually calling for.

Although we are progressing towards this future scenario, now is a time of transition. As of today, structures typical of government still based in an analogical world—a paper world—coexist with emerging manifestations of units boasting a new culture based on digital action. These parts of government are changing the way that they—and we—communicate and relate to one another and, little by little, are causing changes to the organisational structure of government, which, in the not too distant future, will become deep-seated organisational and cultural shifts. Now, it is essential to understand how the connection between this new communication and relationship with government is taking place. It is a change of era: the ‘dinosaurs’ (the absolute power of governments, bureaucracy, paper, etc.) are dying out and people can make use of all their potential.

## **1 Making Catalonia’s public services digital**

In the field of public services, this digital transformation represents a unique opportunity for the Government of Catalonia to position itself at the cutting edge of innovation and become a vehicle for expressing the knowledge and value contributed by all public actors.

The Government of Catalonia’s Ministry of the Presidency is working to improve

policies and public services to assist citizens, defining strategies worthy of the 21st century and implementing a raft of more useful services for the public.

In June 2010, it issued the **Social Networks Guide of the Generalitat of Catalonia**. This guide has, for some years now, been the leading manual for institutions both public and private. In March 2009, the Government of Catalonia launched its profiles on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and SlideShare to link with its website's service contents.

In May 2010, the Government launched a specific website for its Executive Council, **govern.cat**, together with the associated social network accounts. In the first quarter of 2012, with the Eleccions 2012 **mobile app**, it opened up its services to public participation with the aim of enhancing their functionality. In mid-2015, it began publishing its **cloud-based corporate blogs** using the WordPress platform. And, over the course of 2014 and 2015, all its websites were migrated into a responsive format, to manage their content using a freeware application.

## 2 Migrating the conversation from social networks to instant messaging

As far as mobile services are concerned, we can safely say they have transformed our citizens. Today, they are mobile users with expectations very different to those of not so long ago. They want to receive information and services of value from government on their mobile device



at any time. They are not interested in opening hours, service limitations and other obstacles typical of the physical, non-mobile world. These are, therefore, citizens who feel freer to make choices and demands.

If government wants to reach out to these 'digital user citizens', it must do so taking into account their idiosyncrasies. This is why, over the course of recent years, contact forms, which allow people to deal with government more reactively via the Internet, have been complemented with other, more dynamic forms of communication such as social network accounts and profiles.

Social networks bring the public and government closer together, as they offer services and content in an empathetic way. However, these social networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) are becoming more and more a kind of showcase for the online reputation of a person or institution. They help provide an understanding of the activities of these organisations, but it is not always possible to find conversations and interactions between user and institution there.

**“Conversations between users and institutions are increasingly migrating to instant messaging and chat applications”**

Today, such conversations between users and institutions are increasingly migrating to instant messaging and chat applications (such as Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, SnapChat, and WeChat, each with different or specific functionalities). Here, the purpose is to have a conversation and find new personal communication experiences. Messaging and chat applications make it



easy to have conversations using mobile phones, with round-the-clock availability, whilst powerful functionalities like georeferencing promote closer relations and contacts.

This has been a disruptive change: citizens are the focus and government has to go out and find them, because it is the latter that wish to proactively contact the former. This migration towards more ephemeral conversations, in a 'chat' format, has transformed the Catalan authorities' public service communications channels.

### 3 Instant messaging in the Government of Catalonia

The Catalan government has swiftly adapted into line with society by using mobile communications: instant messaging means it can offer the public



**“The Catalan government was the first in Europe to have an organised and effective instant messaging presence”**

information on services and other information of interest immediately and directly. It was the first government in Europe to have an organised and effective instant messaging presence.

More than a year ago, it published its Instant Messaging Guide, which provides the criteria and guidelines for the use of the **Telegram app**, it has been present on Telegram since September 2014, with the 012 advice service, to which, in May 2016, its Telegram channel was added. Meanwhile, in July 2016, a bot was launched on the same platform, providing information on nearby healthcare facilities, pharmacies and police stations.

All this forms part of its strategy of being a pioneering government that puts into practice the principles of transparency, collaboration and participation.

#### **4 012 instant messaging advice service**

Our advice service stands out because it is instant, free and very simple to use. Its contact number is (+34) 681 012 012, or you can introduce the alias gencat012 into the app’s search bar. If you use a browser, you have to enter the URL **<http://telegram.me/gencat012>**. The service features an automatic response system that detects four languages (Catalan, Spanish, English and French). The general criteria for this messaging service is that it provides an equivalent to the 012 telephone advice hotline, with the intention that it be equally decisive, provided that the information requested can be delivered via this

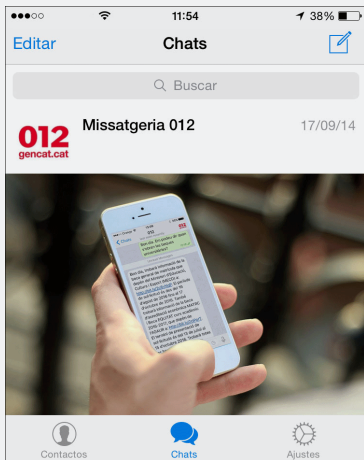
channel, based on the complexity of the response and personal data security. The responses provided are very functional, simple, to the point and tailored to the request. Nevertheless, when deemed appropriate, complementary information can be added. This channel does not require either salutations or closing formulas.

## 5 The Government's one-way messaging channel

As noted above, in May 2016, the Catalan government opened a Telegram channel, <http://telegram.me/gencat>, as some other media outlets, political parties and businesses had already done. The strategic decision was taken to have one single channel for the entire government, to bolster its brand image so that the public would identify the Government as a single administration, rather than the sum of its ministries and bodies. That is why the information sent on it comes from the different sources providing the information from all the bodies making up the public sector.

The uniqueness of this channel follows a strategy parallel to that of the gencat web portal: in other words, it brings together the information from the entire institution, regarded globally as a public service. At the same time, this strategy complements the gencat brand. To promote the channel and foster exponential growth in its followers, advantage is being taken of the good positioning and brand recognition of other *gencat* networks.





The @gencat Telegram channel publishes general service information, i.e. information that is of public interest and multidisciplinary in nature. Content from all government ministries is chosen, on the basis of its value to the public. Some examples of this content are: the start-up of new services and facilities, grants and aid, important news from the gencat website, tenders, notification of key deadlines and dates, etc.

## 6 Bots to offer public services

In July of the same year, the Government decided to implement a bot on Telegram (<http://telegram.me/gencatbot>), to show users their closest health centres, police stations and pharmacies.

When the information to be provided is repetitive in nature and can be coded, providing assistance by means of bots can be a good solution. If the wish is to complement the information provided by a face-to-face service (or one using a social network or a messaging profile staffed by people), such as a request for information or a complaint, with other complementary information (such as the weather forecast or the location of a pharmacy, for example), then the public is more than capable of understanding its usefulness. However, the opposite (such as dealing with a complaint by means of a bot) would deliver a very poor user experience and would therefore be a failure for the institution. For such conversations, which are more associated with people's more personal needs, the public will continue to prefer human, personalised attention.



Currently, the @gencatbot offers the public information on facilities. Users can find the closest health centre, pharmacy or police station to their current position or another they expressly indicate, based on an automatic query of the Government of Catalonia's official database of facilities.

## 7 Which public services will we be transforming the most?

We at the Government of Catalonia are well aware of this paradigm shift and wish to waste no more time theorising about something that simply needs to be put into practice. We are working hard to provide a value proposition in the services we manage. That is why we would like to:

1. Give civil servants the power and confidence to foster continuous improvement and innovation. For our part, to organise these digitally based services, we have promoted communities of practice and professionals to manage them, because we believe that this is the best way for them to access the knowledge surrounding them.
2. Be present in conversations with the public. This is one of the cornerstones of our public services. In addition to social networks and instant messaging, we will attempt to add this more social know-how to our procedures and other channels, too. For example, by adding a field to forms where people can explain and evaluate their experience after completing a procedure and prevent

**“We have promoted communities of practice and professionals to manage digitally based services. We believe that this is the best way to access the knowledge surrounding them”**



others from having to suffer from the same issues.

3. Generalise the use of the progressive web, as an extension of the gencat.cat responsive website. This technology leverages the capabilities of new browsers, particularly on mobile devices, and especially georeferencing, push notifications and offline storage.
4. Data-based governing. Better use of data will change the worlds of business, government and the public. Governments and public authorities must be bold in making good use of the data they hold on the public (advanced analytics, data science, so-called 'big data') to ensure that it results in improvements in their services.

Some months ago, we started a pilot scheme for the advanced analysis of all telephone calls to the 012 citizens' advice hotline, to assess possible inefficiencies. Those detected have brought about improvements saving around eighteen thousand euros a year in the service (see more [here](#)).

5. Publish the gencatGRAM app, almost certainly the most disruptive open data initiative in the field of citizens' advice, which we shall be rolling out in the next few weeks. It is a database for publishing all the data from the Government of Catalonia's different channels, actually putting into practice the principle that it should be the public that monitors the activities of government, which should limit itself to providing maximum accountability.

There is no known precedent in this field, and we will surely have occasion to comment on our experiences further down the line. gencatGRAM will feed different products (digital services activity website, directories, web modules, etc.).

## 8 The new era has only just begun!

All these new digital services represent the first stage of the new era of people, of citizens.

What reforms and changes will be brought about in our organisation due to the effect of this digital transformation on new decision-making and value-creation services? What is the real scope of this model for governments? For the time being, the new digital relationship channels of the Government of Catalonia will allow us to better understand the improvements to the ‘public conversation’ and the relationship between government and civil society, not to mention also how this impacts our internal organisation. That’s quite a start!

We are convinced that promotion of these practices will help to improve the way governments across Europe provide their citizens. ■

**“The new digital relationship channels will allow us to better understand the improvements to the ‘public conversation’ and the relationship between government and civil society”**



# Interview with Prof. Ismael Peña- López

Open University  
of Catalonia  
(Barcelona,  
Catalonia)

Professor at the School of Law and Political Science of the **Open University of Catalonia** and researcher at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute and the eLearn Center of that university. He is also director of the Open Innovation project at **Fundació Jaume Bofill**. His main research interests are the impact of ICTs in society, especially in development, educational and political institutions. Find more about his profile on <http://ictlogy.net>



“The great challenge is how to enable citizens to redesign or to codesign institutions and how to make this more or less in real time. How to make people contribute more to institutions and how to make the institutions contribute more to people’s needs”



“Open Data is a prerequisite for transparency and computability, now it’s difficult to say that there will be transparency and democracy without Open Data”

“The digital revolution is much more like the neolithic revolution or the scientific revolution, it’s already affecting just about everything”

“Digital revolution in the sense of a human revolution is about how we can have more governance in our affairs, who sets the public agenda, how you monitor things, how you create new critical masses, and this is nothing about digital industry revolution, it’s about social revolutions”

“The more challenging thing to face is who is to decide what we change and how”



# Good practices

## **La loi pour une République numérique / The French Digital Republic Act (France)**

On 8 October 2016, the Official Journal of the French Republic published the law for a Digital Republic – a pioneering regulation that promotes innovation, trust and the development of the digital economy. Between September and October 2015, the French Government organised an open and participatory online consultation to draw up the draft bill, before its approval by the Council of Ministers. Over three weeks, it registered 21,000 taxpayers and 147,000 votes by Internet users, with the participation of various groups including associations of disabled people and video game enthusiasts. Among other objectives, the law promotes an open and reliable digital society that protects citizens' rights relating to personal data, digital wills and the fight against pornographic blackmail. It also extends the opportunities of the digital era to all territories, enables the consultation and use of public and private data of general interest, their portability, and free access to scientific publications funded through public research.

## **Vlaanderen Radicaal Digitaal Program / Flanders Radically Digital Programme (Flanders)**

The Government of Flanders (Belgium) is implementing a digital strategy that aims to transform all levels of the Administration by 2020, including local governments, in response to the growing expectations of citizens. Mobile applications play an important role, with simpler and safer systems. The aim is to end all paper flows by the end of the decade. After the end of the period in which digitalisation consists of transforming paper forms into digital media, a new paradigm takes shape, which those behind the **Radically Digital Programme** describe as a 're-engineering process'. It is also a question of saving public funds: the Flemish Government is standardising processes and reducing data centres to increase modernity and security, and to reduce energy consumption. The strategy also includes new applications adapted to mobile devices, and an increasingly firm commitment to the Internet of Things, with more sustainable and more integrated buildings. This is a comprehensive transformation, geared towards the needs of citizens, which will end the need to have to fill in personal details every time members of the public have to submit a form to the public administration.



## The 2017 Ministerial Declaration on Digital Government (European Union)

The **Lisbon Council**, on behalf of the **Estonian presidency of the EU**, is preparing a document that will be approved by the member states on 6 October, in the form of a ministerial declaration on the future European policy in the area of digital government. The Malmö Declaration (2009) on eGovernment has proved insufficient for reducing the distance between citizens and their governors, in terms of trust and participation. Overall progress has been made in eGovernment: with the digitalisation of procedures, interoperability, open data (**Directive 2013/37/EU**), digital signature and identity (**Regulation 910/2014**), privacy and protection of personal data (**Regulation 2016/679**), electronic invoicing, etc. However, the radical change anticipated by the aforementioned Malmö Declaration has not taken place. For example, the proportion of European citizens making purchases online has increased from 36% to 55%, but the Europeans who access public services online have only increased from 18% to 28%. The proposals for the new EU ministerial declaration are in broad terms: 1) The one-click principle, 2) Open government, 3) Identity and security, and 4) Other measures, such as requiring those holding executive positions to have digital skills in order to make the most appropriate decisions. The drafting of the new declaration involved a participatory process that was open to the public until 21 June.

### Your ideas for the next Ministerial Declaration on digital government

The consultation is now closed. The comments are being analysed and will be submitted to the Estonian government. Many thanks to all who contributed. Check the space.

On behalf of the Estonian Presidency of the EU, the Lisbon Council has prepared a set of policy proposals for the next ministerial declaration on digital government, which will shape the future EU policy in this domain. These proposals are now shared here for you to comment and to provide input on. The summary of your comments will be presented to the Member States as an input in the preparation of the declaration.

**Do you agree with the proposals? What is missing?**

We welcome innovative ideas, as much as possible backed up by evidence. The stronger the argument, the higher the possibility to be heard. If final summary has already been provided to the Member States, our final deadline for submission of your feedback is 14 JULY 2017.

To provide your input, click on the speech balloon next to the proposal you want to comment. If you prefer, you can send us your ideas via email.

**Background:**  
On 6 October 2017, 28 EU member states will approve a Ministerial Declaration on digital government, under the Estonian Presidency of the EU, in the Member States Presidency of the EU. The declaration will be a key document in the preparation of the next ministerial declaration on digital government. The declaration will provide guidance and input to the next ministerial declaration on digital government.

**Acknowledgement:**  
A committee of 10 member states and 10 member states to the Member States by decision and delivery. A report will be produced and the summary will be shared with the member states and the Commission.



European Union  
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2'  
In two  
minutes

# Cybers in Cata



The Executive Council app  
Ministry of the Presidency,

By establishing a **public c**  
the appropriate protection



## The Digital Soc

The Digital Society is a **global platform** organisations, businesses and public adm exchange high levels of information throu compatible technology

The **Catalan Government** has equipped **efficient digital administration** that is a covers a high volume of services provided

The many benefits from this digital transf come with new challenges that affect our as the issue of cybersecurity



## Cybersecurity

Drafted by the Executive Council a  
the Law on the Creation of the Cy

- ✓ Plan, manage, coordinat
- ✓ Take on the functions of
- ✓ Support the competent
- ✓ Investigate and analyse
- ✓ Cooperate with private a  
and other strategic area
- ✓ Improve internet safety  
campaigns in Catalonia

## L'Agència de Ciberseguretat de Catalunya / The Cybersecurity Agency of Catalonia (Catalonia)

Through legislation drafted by the Executive Council and passed last July in Parliament, the Catalan Government approved the creation of the Cybersecurity Agency of Catalonia, which will be attached to the Ministry of the Presidency and replace the old Centre for Information Security of Catalonia. By establishing a public cybersecurity system, the Catalan Government intends to guarantee the appropriate protection of the citizens of Catalonia.

In 2015, the Catalan Government received around 216 million cyberattacks and registered over 11,700 cybersecurity incidents. Every 60 seconds, an average of 20 million WhatsApp messages are sent around the world, 150 million emails are exchanged online, and close to €200,000 are spent on products purchased on Amazon.


In order to address this increasing flow of data, the Law on the Creation of the Cybersecurity Agency of Catalonia aims to: 1) plan, manage, coordinate and supervise cybersecurity in Catalonia; 2) take on the functions of the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT); 3) support the competent authorities in matters of cybersecurity; 4) investigate and analyse incidents and cyberattacks; 5) cooperate with private and public entities to improve cybersecurity in infrastructures and other strategic areas; and 6) improve Internet safety among citizens through better education and awareness campaigns in Catalonia.



## Government Digital Service (United Kingdom)

The UK Government is one of the most digitally advanced in the world and is located at the top of the **2016 United Nations E-Government and E-Participation surveys**. It has developed the award-winning and internationally renowned GOV.UK and has opened its code, which has been reused by governments around the world. The **Government Digital Service** has led the digital transformation of government and is a model for many countries. Recently, the UK has launched the **Government Transformation Strategy** covering the background, vision, scope and objectives beyond 2020. Much has been done since the 2012 Government Digital Strategy, which demonstrated the potential of public service transformation by rebuilding some of the most high-volume services to make them 'digital by default'.

The next stage of digitally-enabled transformation has three broad objectives: 1) transforming entire citizen-facing services to continue to improve the experience for citizens, businesses and users within the public sector; 2) full department transformation; and 3) internal government transformation. Among other objectives, it seeks to build better workplace tools and processes to make it easier for civil servants to work effectively, including sourcing, governance, workplace IT, business cases, human resources processes, common technology across the public sector, and better digital tools for civil servants.



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website header with a search bar and a menu. Below the header, the 'Government Digital Service' section is displayed, including the text 'Part of Cabinet Office'. The main content area features a 'Service Toolkit' with links to 'Digital Marketplace', 'Introducing Verify', and 'Common Technology Services'. There are three blog post thumbnails: 'Building capability and community through the Government Data Science Partnership' (dated 20 July 2017), 'Building digital, data and technology capability for government' (dated 13 July 2017), and 'Working in the open: why being inclusive matters' (dated 3 July 2017). A 'Latest' section at the bottom highlights 'Set up GovWifi on your infrastructure' (updated 1 September).

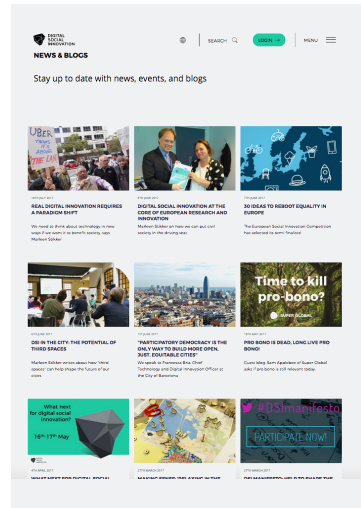
# New trends



## Digital Social Innovation

Across Europe, there is a growing movement of people developing inspiring digital solutions to social challenges. We call this digital social innovation (DSI). These digital solutions have developed thanks to big advances in technology, such as the open source and open data movements, low-cost open hardware, crowdsourcing and the Internet of Things. By empowering citizens and engaging them in civic action, these digital solutions provide new methods for building social movements, delivering public services and creating social impact in fields as diverse as healthcare, education, democracy, environment, transport and housing. DSI has the potential to dramatically improve the way our public services, communities and businesses work.

The Digital Social Innovation for Europe (DSI4EU) project – led by **Nesta** (UK) – seeks to make this potential a reality. At the heart of the project is **digitalsocial.eu**, where an interactive data visualisation to explore Europe's DSI network can be found, among other resources. Meanwhile, the Catalan Government hosts the **CatLabs** program, which aims to promote new means of digital, social and collaborative innovation in response to the challenges facing Catalan society. Through the quadruple helix model (R&D system, companies, public administrations and innovation users), the CatLabs network is structured to involve all economic and social stakeholders in the innovation process.





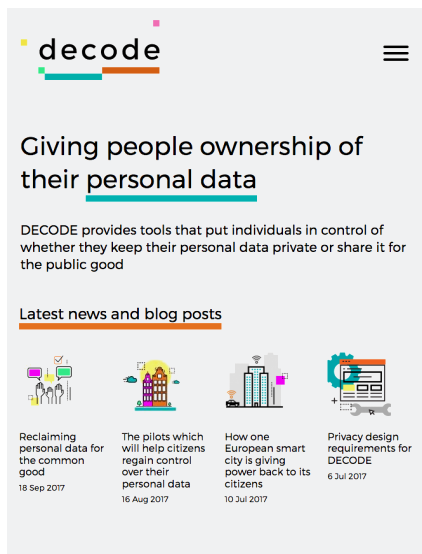
## Personal data

'Personal data' refers to any piece of personal information that can be used to directly or indirectly identify an individual, such as a person's name, telephone number, email address, place and date of birth, etc. Individuals' personal information and data are processed in many aspects of everyday life, whether it be for opening a bank account or booking a flight.

More and more individuals are concerned about a loss of control over their personal information on the Internet. This implies an erosion of privacy and autonomy, but is also harmful to the security of an individual's online identity. Since data is controlled by a handful of monopolies, this data is inaccessible to individuals and organisations who wish to create solutions and services for the public benefit. Indeed, the monopolisation of data creates economic inefficiency and inequality. This threatens to undermine the trust between citizens, public institutions and companies, which is essential for a stable, sustainable and collaborative economy.

To improve this situation, the **DECODE** European project is developing practical alternatives for how we use the Internet today: pilot projects

will demonstrate the wider social value that arises when individuals are given the power to take control of their personal data and are given the means to share their data differently. All residents of **Amsterdam** and **Barcelona** are eligible to take part in the pilot trials that will take place in 2018. Furthermore, the **EU General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) was approved by the EU Parliament in April 2016 and will be directly applied in all Member States in May 2018. The GDPR was designed to harmonise data privacy laws across Europe, to protect and empower all EU citizens' data






**decode**

### Giving people ownership of their personal data

DECODE provides tools that put individuals in control of whether they keep their personal data private or share it for the public good

#### Latest news and blog posts

 Reclaiming personal data for the common good 18 Sep 2017	 The pilots which will help citizens regain control over their personal data 16 Aug 2017	 How one European smart city is giving power back to its citizens 10 Jul 2017	 Privacy design requirements for DECODE 6 Jul 2017
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## Blockchain technology

A blockchain is an encoded digital ledger that is stored on multiple computers in a public or private network. It is comprised of data records, or 'blocks'. Once these blocks are collected in a chain, they cannot be changed or deleted by a single actor; instead, they are verified and managed using automation and shared governance protocols. Blockchain technology is a transparent and decentralised way of validating, sharing and accessing information or values by means of more democratic mechanisms. It is a neutral and digital infrastructure that enables the safe exchange of information and values between actors with varying or diverse interests. Blockchain technology represents a new generation of digital services and could have a substantial impact on many areas of our lives. It could simplify the management of trusted information, making it easier for government agencies to access and use critical public sector data while maintaining the security of this information.

Thus far, banks, payment service providers and insurance companies have shown the highest level of interest and investment in blockchain technology. However, government agencies have just as much to

gain from experimenting with this technology and strategically deploying it through pilot projects. Over time, blockchain technology can help agencies digitise existing records and manage them within a secure infrastructure, allowing agencies to make some of these 'smart' records. For instance, IT departments in government agencies may be able to create rules and algorithms that allow data in a blockchain to be automatically shared with third parties once predefined conditions are met. In the longer term, the technology may even allow individuals and organisations to gain direct control over all of the information the government keeps on them. This level of transparency could, in turn, make it easier for agencies to achieve the creation of networked public services.



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**How blockchain  
technology  
could change  
our lives**

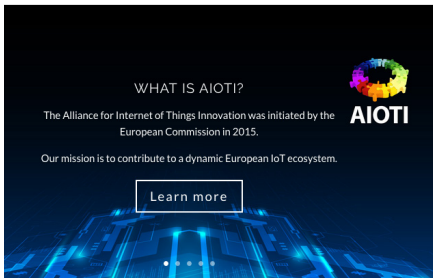
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## The Internet of Things (IoT)

The Internet of Things (IoT) is the network of physical objects embedded with electronics, software, sensors and network connectivity, which enables these objects to send and receive data. Since its introduction, the IoT has been used in many aspects of our daily lives, from home security to remote health follow-up and remote computer access, among others. However, most of its benefits are still to be revealed.



The IoT is considered part of the global infrastructure for an information society, as it makes full use of objects to offer services for all kinds of applications. At the same time, however, it is important to ensure that security and privacy are safeguarded. The IoT is expected to change and enhance a number of important areas in

our lives, such as how education is delivered, environmental monitoring, infrastructure management, health monitoring and energy management. It can save time, resources, and even lives. The IoT helps to promote more targeted and specialised public services and effective policy processes, allows for better coordination between different service providers and users, and provides more efficiency and public satisfaction. The use of geographic information system data and the IoT has the potential to transform the way public policy is formulated, implemented, and monitored. Together with big data, they are powerful tools for anticipatory governance, a means of dealing with complex changes by providing applications to anticipate various possible future scenarios. Their early adoption has even demonstrated increased levels of civic participation and enhanced efficiency, transparency and accountability of public institutions. However, improvements in legal and regulatory frameworks and enhanced cooperation are required on all levels. ICT infrastructure, improved access to knowledge and technology, and building capacities within the public sector and civil society are also crucial to the effective delivery of public e-services.

# Newsflash

## **European Social Services Conference**

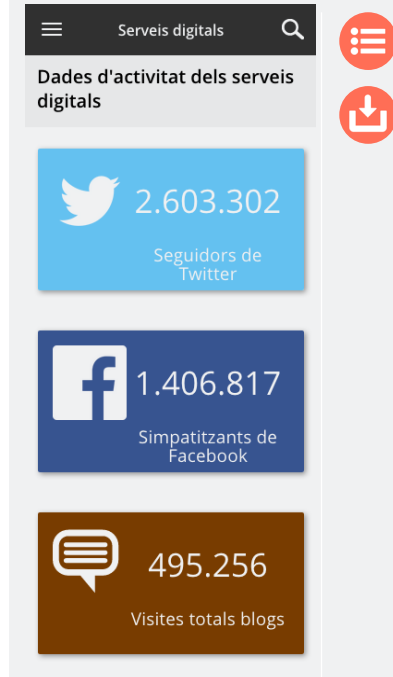
Organised by the **European Social Network**, the **25th European Social Services Conference** held in Malta in June explored how new practices and technologies can contribute to the fight against social exclusion through better social services. Entitled 'Transforming lives through innovation and technology', it brought together more than 400 professionals from the public sphere, third sector organisations and private companies. The Government of Catalonia, through the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Families, participated in the conference to outline some of the new tools it is implementing to improve support and care in the family environment, to identify the households at the greatest risk of energy poverty on a preventive basis, and to discuss **Instamaps**, a digital portal that has enabled maps of the social services' resources to be created in order to identify priority needs and territories. Some of the highlights of this 25th edition are available at the event's **website**.

## **The Catalan law on digital wills**

Last June, the Parliament of Catalonia unanimously passed the law on digital wills. This is a pioneering initiative in Spain and in Europe, with comparable albeit not identical benchmarks in French legislation (see good practice no. 1). It is an example of the dynamism of Catalan civil law, which is attentive and sensitive to the needs of society. The regulations enacted by the Catalan Government address the social problems that have arisen due to the extensive and intensive use of social networks, so that people's wishes regarding their accounts on social networks and the associated files can be taken into account in the event of their death, a change in their capacity or minority. The law states that wills may contain digital wills, and designate a person responsible for executing them with digital service providers. It also creates an electronic register of digital wills in which documents with the wills will be registered. Furthermore, it stipulates that parents or guardians must ensure that the presence of minors in digital environments is appropriate for their age and personality, and states that they may suspend their access to them if there is a risk to their physical or mental health.

## gencatGRAM - monitoring the digital channels of the Catalan Government

In 2017, the Government of Catalonia has launched the **gencatGRAM** application to record all the data and activity from the various active digital channels linked to the Government of Catalonia within one environment. All the data will be open, so that citizens will be able to consult the information distributed in the official channels on the various platforms, so that they can monitor them and decide whether they meet the initial objectives. The first module of this new infrastructure allows the public to check the activity data of the official Catalan Government channels on Twitter, Facebook and its corporate blogs. With gencatGRAM, data from social networks, mobile applications and in the future, from procedures, websites and any digital channel will be included in a single environment and made transparent. To date, they have only been accessible to those responsible for these services in the ministries and agencies concerned. The new tool enhances transparency and critical evaluation by citizens and other governments. At the same time, it also shows that the primary consumer of a government's open data is the government itself, since other accounts can use this information to enhance their presence and learn from other more successful profiles, as well as to find interesting content to share with their audience. gencatGRAM is a decisive step towards attention to the public based on the principles of open governance. Because of these principles, society must monitor the work of governments and administrations, and determine the effectiveness and validity of the resources and instruments created.



**HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY**  
**DIGITAL SOCIETY FOR HEALTH**

16-18 OCTOBER 2017  
TALLINN, ESTONIA

Organized by: Estonia, Ministry of Social Affairs, HIMSS Europe

TALLINN 2017 REGISTRATION PROGRAMME INFORMATION NEWS NETWORKING SPONSORS

**eHealth Tallinn 2017**  
16-18 OCTOBER 2017

"Health in the Digital Society: Digital Society for Health" is organized by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs as part of Estonia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, ECHAlliance and HIMSS Europe.

Register now

See programme overview

The high-level conference will address how digital technologies and the wider use of health data are changing our lives and the ways of healthcare. Through a combination of educational sessions, interactive workshops and valuable networking opportunities, the conference will not only showcase already existing digital health solutions, but also use-cases and technologies to demonstrate that

**KEY SPEAKERS:** JOSEPH KVEDAR, MD, Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA

eHealth Tallinn 2017 - Join us on 16-18 October

The programme the biggest eHealth

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## eHealth Tallinn 2017

From 16 to 18 October 2017, the high-level conference **eHealth Tallinn 2017 'Health in the Digital Society. Digital Society for Health'** will take place in Tallinn. The event is organised by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs as part of Estonia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, ECHAlliance and HIMSS Europe. The event will address how digital technologies and the wider use of health data are changing our lives and healthcare. Through a combination of educational sessions, interactive workshops and valuable networking opportunities, the conference will not only showcase already existing digital healthcare solutions, but also use-cases and technologies to demonstrate that citizen-centred health services and systems are genuinely valuable. The conference will focus on three main topics: 1) building citizen-driven demand in eHealth, 2) eHealth supporting value-driven and sustainable health and social services, and 3) eHealth as a driver of innovation and economic development.



## Smart City Expo World Congress

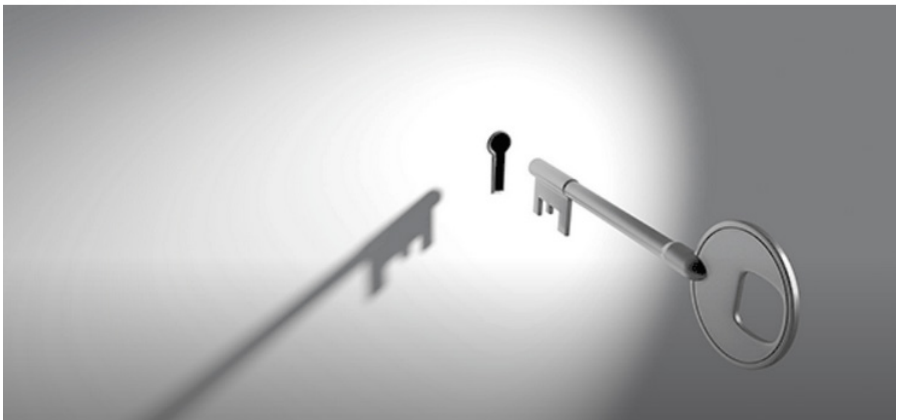
From 14 to 16 November 2017, the leading event for the **Smart City Expo World Congress** will take place in Barcelona. The congress promotes the sharing of research, best practices and potential common solutions achieved through effective collaboration. The event will be the meeting point for governments, companies, entrepreneurs and research centres, where cities can meet other cities, showcase their projects and discover new solutions. The Smart City Expo World Congress has turned out to be a useful networking platform to connect people working in and with cities around the world with similar challenges. Cities are where social innovation happens, which allows everyone equally to seize the opportunities offered by digital transformation and technological advances knowing that digital technology can enable public participation, transparency and citizen proximity. This year, the topics of the congress are: Governance, Mobility, Safe Cities, Economy, Sustainability, Circular Economy, Society, and Data & Technology.



## **The 2017–2018 Open Government Plan. Government of Catalonia**

Catalonia is committed to encouraging and consolidating an open government as well as to constantly improving the quality of the country's democracy. Open government habits and tools – such as transparency and open data portals – are spread throughout the territory of Catalonia. However, our open government can still be improved upon and strengthened in many ways.

**The 2017–2018 Open Government Plan** gathers all of the Government of Catalonia's public policies that aim to consolidate, improve and strengthen the open government in Catalonia during the next two years. It is made up of five areas of action – transparency, open data, good government, citizen participation, and cultural change – and includes more than 100 actions in order to put these areas into practice. The Plan will be monitored through several tools in order to check that its objectives are achieved in due time: monitoring reports and indicators periodically published in the Government of Catalonia's **Portal of Transparency**, an annual evaluation and regular information on the level of execution of the Plan.



## EPSA 2017 Best Practices

The 2017 **European Public Sector Award (EPSA)** presented by the **European Institute of Public Administration** is assessing the highest ranked projects presented this year, and the prize winners will be presented during an award ceremony in Maastricht from 20 to 22 November 2017. All applications first underwent an online evaluation by external and independent evaluators. After a meeting in June, the evaluators reached a consensus regarding which of the submitted projects will be identified as a best practice. Overall, the competition featured 34 projects from 18 different European countries ([click here for the full list of Best Practices](#)). The EPSA received 150 innovative solutions to current and complex challenges our societies are facing from public administrations across 30 different European countries and from several EU institutions and agencies. This year's edition, which is taking place under the overarching theme 'An Innovative Public Sector in 2017: New Solutions to Complex Challenges', received a wide range of contributions from areas such as migration and integration, social welfare and employment policies, eHealth, entrepreneurship and social innovation, security, open government and transparency, as well as environmental policy and climate change. The top submitters were Austria, Portugal, Spain and Poland, respectively.



## Estonia to open the world's first data embassy

**Estonia** is the 'closest to a digital society' according to the World Bank. However, being digital also creates challenges. One of them is the question regarding how to secure all data that could become vulnerable in the case of a cyberattack, or indeed a real military attack. When information is no longer stored on paper, the issue of continuity or digital continuity is raised. The Baltic state had its first experience with cyber conflict back in 2007, when attacks originating from Russia managed to take 58 Estonian websites offline at once, including those of the government, most newspapers and many banks. To ensure service functionality and data continuity, capabilities needed to be developed outside of the country's borders. In this way, even if a crisis

# Estonia to open the world's first data embassy in Luxembourg

Estonia's pilot project — the world's first data embassy — could set an example for the rest of the world.

develops, digital authentication and authorisation services would remain operational.

The Estonian government started to develop and enhance the data embassy concept, just like their embassies abroad. The **first data embassy** will be based in a high-security data centre in Betzdorf, a commune in eastern Luxembourg. It should become operational by the end of this year or, at the latest, at the beginning of 2018. The two countries will sign a mutual agreement, but it is already clear that the Estonian data embassy will have the same protection and immunity as a traditional embassy. Estonia's pilot project, the world's first data embassy, could set an example for other technologically advanced countries.



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**European Public Mosaic (EPuM).  
Open Journal on Public Service**

No. 2 / September 2017

ISSN 2565-0378

DOI: 10.2436/20.8030.08.2

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