

Editorial

E-Government in Europe Advances

Perhaps the most important applications of ICT today by countries around the world are being introduced in E-Government. Although some studies indicate that Asian countries rank ahead of the US and Europe in establishing online government, quantitative measures do not necessarily reflect the depth or quality of e-services provided to government authorities, business and the public. One measure, for example, is not whether websites have been established by various government bodies and related institutions (hospitals, schools, etc), but if they are interactive, allowing users an opportunity to raise queries and seek online responses to specialized questions.

This issue presents E-Government statistics in 2005 as well as provides an interesting overview of "E-Governance in Commonwealth countries." A new dimension to E-Government is the M-Government Pilot Project, sponsored by the European Commission. The objectives of this EU R&D program are to "to support and encourage the access to new E-Government services at anytime and anywhere through the use of mobile communications and Internet technologies.

Two practical examples of the project are described: Bologna (Italy) City Information Broadcasting to provide up-to-date information to a mobile citizenry; and FORMATEX (Badajoz, Spain) to enable mobile students with access to a variety of news about classes, faculty activities and school event.

The In-Focus section presents national factsheets demonstrating how E-Government has advanced in 6 of the 25 members of the European Union. These national profiles for Austria, Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom present the main strategic objectives and principles of E-Government, the legal framework, infrastructure, and services provided to citizens and business. These in-depth examples of how leading E-Governments in Europe are progressing with the full implementation of public services, are very instructive. These are signposts of how Europe intends to fully exploit the benefits for their economies and societies from E-Government.

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