

Industry's Commitment to Technical Standards

Interoperability and Open Standards for e-Governance

COVER STORY
EGOV INDIA 2007 CONFERENCE REPORT

M-CONNECT
EXPANDING TELE-REVOLUTION IN RURAL INDIA
KEY TO ACCESSIBILITY

STATE FOCUS: PUNJAB
PUNJAB E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES



eINDIA2007

India's Premier ICT Event



IT Leader's Forum

From Left to Right: R P Pal (Secretary IT, Goa), Sanjay Jaju (Vice Chairman & MD, Infrastructure Corporation of Andhra Pradesh Ltd.), Vivek Bharadwaj (Special Secretary IT, West Bengal), R Chandrasekhar (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Govt of India), Navin Kumar (Principal Secretary IT, Bihar), R S Sharma (Principal Secretary IT, Jharkhand), Kshatrapathi Shivaji (Secretary IT, Maharashtra), Satish Kaushal (Country Manager - Government and Education, IBM India) and Sanjeev Gupta (Secretary IT, Himachal Pradesh)



INDIA
2007

Conference Photo Gallery



Key Note Session: e-Governance in India -Challenges and Opportunities



Session: State Wide Area Network (SWAN) After SWAN what



Session: e-Governance in Urban Local Bodies



Session: Standards and Interoperability and e-Governance Architecture



Session: State Data Centres- Infrastructure for e-Governed India



Session: International Experiences of e-Government Strategy and Implementation

IT to Stimulate Democratic Participation

egov India 2007

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THIRU A. RAJA, HON'BLE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, INAUGURATING THE CONFERENCE

INAUGURATION

The inaugural session was graced by the luminaries such as Thiru A. Raja, Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, Maxine Olson, UNDP Resident Representative in India, Dato Halim Man, Secretary General Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications, Malaysia, Jainder Singh, Secretary, Department of IT, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, R. Chandrasekhar, Additional Secretary, Department of IT, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, Champak Chatterjee, Secretary, Department of Secondary Education and Literacy, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, Isabel Guerrero, Country Director – India, World Bank, Michael Clarke, Head ICT4D, IDRC, Canada and Astrid Dufborg, Executive Director, GeSCI, Dublin, Ireland. Through their keynote address, the speakers set the pace of the conference. MP Narayanan, President, CSDMS, gave the welcome address.

While inaugurating the conference by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, Thiru A. Raja, Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Government of India, said, "The potential of IT to stimulate the development of different sectors of the domestic economy in India is enormous. It can dramatically reduce the cost of communications, improve access to technology and marketing capabilities for the rural poor, eliminate intermediary exploitation in the production and distribution chains, increase government accountability, and stimulate democratic participation".

Delivering the guest country lecture at the inaugural session of eINDIA 2007 conference, Dato Halim Man, Secretary General, Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications, Malaysia, remarked that these events should not be just the platform to exchange ideas and experiences, but should go further to explore how we can assist the rural communities, who do not have access to technology.

OBJECTIVES

The egov India 2007 Conference aimed to assess the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) implementation, a plan launched by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

INTRODUCTION

The egov India 2007 conference was part of the eINDIA 2007 event. A four-day Indian ICT conference and exhibition, aimed at providing a unique platform for multistakeholder partnership from across the world to share a level playing ground through active conferencing, serious business networking and showcasing of innovations and solutions through a full scale exhibition.

Held from 31 July-3 August at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi, the conference, was organised by the Centre for Science Development and Media Studies (CSDMS) and co-organised by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India and UNDP. It received overwhelming support from four key ministries, namely the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

Along with the seven seminal tracks- egov India 2007, Digital Learning India 2007, Telecentre Forum India 2007, eHealth India 2007, mServe India 2007, Community Radio 2007, there was the first ever film festival showcasing grassroots initiatives and innovations in ICT usage for those who need it the most.

for leveraging the capabilities of ICT to promote good governance across the country. The conference also covered other important topics such as standards and interoperability, e-Police and cyber crimes, e-Governance impact on government to business transactions, e-Governance case studies from India and last but not the least, the international experiences of e-Government implementation.

PARTICIPATION

There was an enthusiastic participation both from the government and the private sector. There were more than 30 speakers from the government representing the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Urban Development, Central Information Commission, National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Directorate General of Supplies and Disposal, and Central Board of Direct Taxes. There were IT Secretaries from the states of West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Haryana and Delhi. The leading industry players in the domain of e-Governance like IBM, 3i-Infotech, HP, Nortel, Motorola, Sun Microsystems, SAP, NIIT Technologies, Alcatel-Lucent, Red Hat, Globus Infocom, Telelogic, Computer Associates, BEA Systems, and FINO, shared their experiences, opinions and concerns.

PROCEEDINGS

The conference comprised three days of key note and panel discussion sessions, as well as presentations by the speakers. With speakers from the right mix of government functionaries implementing the programme, industry providing the solutions and academia providing the right kind of research and insight, there were discussions on state data centres, state wide area networks, e-Governance in urban local bodies, standards and interoperability, e-Police and cyber crimes, e-Governance impact on government to business transactions,

e-Governance case studies from India and the international experiences of e-Government implementation.

The conference started with the key note session titled 'e-Governance in India: Challenges and Opportunities'. Chaired by Vikram Chand, Senior Public Sector Specialist, World Bank, India, the session discussed the key deliverables of NeGP, role of right to information (RTI), process re-engineering, key opportunities and challenges in implementation of NeGP, the role of public-private-partnership, and other integral issues.

WajahatHabibullah, Chief Information Commissioner, Government of India, emphasised that e-Governance is never going to be really effective unless it is also tied in very closely with the right to information. On the other hand, RTI is not going to be very successful and in fact it could be doomed to be a failure, if it is not tied with the concept of e-Governance. However, he expressed happiness that the government is already investing heavily on the concept of e-Governance.

R. Chandrasekhar, Additional Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and IT, Government of India, felt that it is the right time for implementing e-Governance effectively and a better way. For instance, explosion in IT and IT-enabled services, explosion of service providers and manpower, mobile telephony, ICT services in the economy and market, explosion of ICT4D and e-Government initiatives. The overall environment is now supportive with increasing focus on improving governance, Right to Information (RTI) Act, emergence of media as a powerful enabler, an enabling environment has been created for e-Governance in India. However there are some challenges that need to be overcome to realise the full potential of the factors conducive for e-Government. They are as follows: lack of domain understanding; lack of skills and capabilities to conceptualise and lead e-Governance initiatives; lack of institutional mechanisms for such projects to handle issues covering the entire project life-cycle; converting political will into service delivery projects is a challenge; instability of

Partners and Exhibitors



political/ administrative leaders; and lack of adequate training for leading e-Governance efforts.

On behalf of the industry, Satish Kaushal, Country Manager - Government and Education (GSMB), IBM India, thanked the DIT for bringing the e-Governance architecture. Endorsing the government's initiative of back-end being made ready, Anirudh Prabhakaran, Chief Operating Officer, South Asia, 3iInfotech, said that more

citizens are going to be benefitted if they can get what they want in a very simple and efficient manner. However, there are some areas of concern, which are: plethora of architectures, systems, legacies, different types of softwares, data in many different formats lying across many states and many central government areas.

Sanjeev Gupta, IT Secretary, Himachal Pradesh, was of the opinion that there is much hype created about interoperability and data sharing, across the platforms. According to him, data porting is a simple technology, and with XML coming into play, it is no longer a challenge. One can share data across platforms, across databases, using the same portal, without much difficulty.

B.K. Sinha, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, raised the important issue of ownership of data. For instance, regarding the land ownership data, both the ownership and creation of data, should rest with the villages.

Nabrun Bhattacharya, Program Manager, Economic Growth Office, USAID, elucidated the benefits of e-Governance projects for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) from the point of view of citizens, municipalities and decision-makers. From citizens side, the key expected benefit is the access to municipal services, hassle free payment of taxes and user charges, and quick redressal of grievances. From municipalities side, e-Governance would bring in improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of business processes and functions of ULBs.



EMINENT PANELISTS OF THE KEY NOTE SESSION

S.P. Singh, Senior Director, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and IT, Government of India, emphasised the importance of the state data centres, which is part of the three core infrastructure which are the pillars of NeGP, viz., State Data Centre (SDC), State Wide Area Network (SWAN) and the Common Service Centres (CSCs). According to him, design of the data centre is a complex task, it involves various stakeholders, its design objectives need to take care of all the parameters, which address the technological issues, security issues as well as the implementation issues.

The session on State Wide Area Network (SWAN) discussed the issues regarding awareness/sensitisation across all states/union territories government departments/entities about extensive usage of SWAN, challenges in the reform in policies to make SWAN as part and parcel of government functioning, using SWAN as a vehicle for perceptible improvement in the internal government processes, and technological issues

related to SWAN performance and usage. Chairperson, Ashis Sanyal, informed that the SWAN project was the first e-Government project approved by the government in the year 2005. Shekhar Agarwal, Director, Enterprise and Verticals, Alcatel South Asia suggested that government need to be flexible to the service providers in the sense that even if the solution does not comply on all the counts, government should look at whether the intent is being fully satisfied or not. Navin Kumar, IT Secretary, Bihar, told that the capacity building should take place in the regular way, there is no short cut to this. The theme of the session after SWAN was something that the state of Haryana is already grappling with, as per the Principal Secretary, IT, VS Kundu, since the SWAN is almost ready. However, he cautioned that in the enthusiasm towards making government information available in the public domain, great care needs to be taken in maintaining the confidentiality of certain data.

Srinivasan Ramani, Director, Science and Technology, HP, suggested that a matrix of success of SWAN could be prepared. The success of SWAN can be measured in terms of time reduction in transactions and the efficiency achieved in the economy.

The other highlight of the conference was the 'ICT leaders Forum', which saw nine leaders of the National e-Governance Programme, led by R Chandrasekhar, on one platform discussing and debating the way forward for e-Governance in India. The IT secretaries who participated in the forum included Vivek Bharadwaj, Special Secretary IT, West Bengal, Naveen Kumar, Principal Secretary IT, Bihar, R S Sharma, Principal Secretary IT, Jharkhand, Rajendra Kumar, Secretary IT, Delhi, Sanjeev Gupta, Secretary IT, Himachal Pradesh, Kshatrpathi Shivaji, Secretary IT, Maharashtra, R P Pal, Secretary IT, Goa and V S Kundu, Secretary IT, Haryana, apart from the participation of Satish Kaushal from IBM and Sanjay Jaju from Hyderabad government. There was consensus that the integration, technological compatibility, and comprehensive/integrated planning for e-Governance are some of the missing linkages at the state level which must be addressed. They also emphasised that e-Governance can be an important medium for addressing equity and discrimination issues, enabling all sections of society to access services.

The panelists of the session, on 'Standards and Interoperability', agreed that standards in e-Governance is a high priority activity, which will ensure sharing of information and seamless interoperability of data and e-Governance applications under NeGP. In this context, it was informed that the DIT had constituted a core group on standards to arrive at an institutional mechanism and processes to be put in place and recommend key areas for standardisation.

The international e-Governance perspective was provided by participants from Malaysia, Japan, Kingdom of Bahrain and Korea. The session on e-Governance experiences from India had case studies of e-Government implementation from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi, while there was also the presentation of case study on caring for retired colleagues through e-Enabled way. Prakash Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, informed the reasons for the failure of e-Governance projects, some of the reasons being concentration on technology centric

projects; lack of sufficient flow of information; improper information systems; management related organisational factors; organisational culture; lack of support from top bosses; and a lack of supporting environment – political, socio-cultural and legal. The session on impact of e-Governance in G2B Transactions discussed the status of projects such as e-Procurement, e-Biz, central excise, banking, commercial taxes, single-window services, issues of standardisation, learnings from Ministry of Corporate Affairs 21 (MCA21) Project and how to optimise Return on Investment. Some of the key learnings of the MCA21 project was listed by Y S Malik, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, as follows:

- Issue of ownership is basic and fundamental.
- Need for change management at all phases of the project.
- Start with a high quality request for proposal (RFP) and generously invest time and expert resources to effectively articulate RFP.

- Adequate attention should be given to infrastructure like data centre, disaster recovery center etc.

The concluding session of the conference discussed issues of e-Police and cyber crimes where speakers, Prof. Subramanian Krishnamurthy, Deputy Director General, National Informatics Centre, R P Pal, Secretary IT, Government of Goa, Pavan Duggal, President, Cyberlaws.net and Advocate, Supreme Court, and Barun Kumar Sahu, Director (Personnel), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, agreed that cyber crime is dynamic and there is a need for dynamic laws to tackle it. One of the key issue in cyber crime is fixing the responsibility and accountability.

EXHIBITION AND VALEDICTORY

Through the exhibition, the conference provided an opportunity for updating on new advancements, solutions and services in the field of e-Governance. The event had different exhibitors from

the government and industry, who showcased a wide range of products, services and initiatives in the domain of e-Government. These included IBM, HP, Nortel, Motorola, SAP, NIIT Technologies, Alcatel-Lucent, Telelogic Globus Infocom, Department of IT, Government of Delhi and Centre for Advanced Computing.

eINDIA 2007 conference concluded with the i4d Awards ceremony, during the valedictory session on 2nd August 2007. ■

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- e-Governance projects need to bring in the citizen centricity. They should not concentrate just on impact efficiency but also address transparency and accountability issues. Affordability is another criteria that e-Governance projects should fulfill.
- For Public-private partnership, that there is a need for change in the methodology of the bureaucratic functioning. It was suggested that the bureaucracy should work as a corporate entity.
- Replicability and sustainability issues are also critical element in e-Governance. Most of the projects are driven by champions, especially in the Indian context. And since re-engineering is a norm for officers working within the government, so the officers/leaders being on transferable job, their championship is not carried through.
- Assessment of success of e-Governance projects should take into account the feedback obtained from the common people. For assessing the e-Readiness Index, the assessee must not just rely on IT department records, but must also incorporate the field data regarding the e-Readiness of the people.
- The criticality of the data center as an important infrastructure requirement was emphasised. The speakers attention need to address the major power and cooling issues in the data centre servers.
- It was also agreed that for planning and good decision making, good quality data is required.
- The data could be complemented with the use of the GIS tool for planning and decision making. It was recommended that e-Governance applications should be interoperable. The eminent speakers agreed that the current scenario with entrenched usage of a proprietary standard cannot be totally ignored. But we need to phase it out slowly. In the interim period, we can work towards interoperability with open standards installations and/or use file format conversion tools.

FEEDBACK FROM DELEGATES

"It was wonderful experience. The entire conference was well organised and well co-ordinated" ..

Mizaji Lal

Defence Institute for Advanced Technology

"Congratulations to CSDMS for successfully organising such a wonderful event. We are happy that our people could fruitfully participate in the same" ..

R K Upadhyay

Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL)

"Our team certainly did enjoy the e-Gov conference and we look forward to attending similar sessions in the future" ..

Rubaiya, UNDP

"This was one event that truly went beyond our expectations!!! Thanks to the entire team in putting up a super show! We will surely look forward for eIndia 2008" ..

Chetan D'Souza, 3iInfotech

The conference was very well organised. The themes were comprehensive. Some more successful national and international experiments and innovations of ICT in learning may be included. Overall, the conference was successful in helping the participants gain insight into various implications of ICT.

Priya Khanna, Delhi

e-INDIA2007 is one of the few event of this size which in 3 years of its organisation has reached this level of participation and management which is comparable to any international standards. The service and hospitality provided to exhibitors and presence of your team on the spot was unique to this event.

Amit Gupta, S. Chand & Company Ltd.



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Conference Photo Gallery



Session: e-Governance Case Studies from India



ICT Leaders Forum



Session: Impact of e-Governance on G2B Services



Delegates Attending the Session



Session: e-Police and Cyber Crimes



CSDMS Team