Digital government toolkit

Digital Government Strategies: Good Practices

Portugal: Digital Mobile Key

The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat has developed a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Portugal to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

Description of the practice:

Organisation: Agency for Administrative Modernization (AMA)

Name of the practice: Digital Mobile Key (2014)

Principles implemented: Principle 2 – Encourage engagement and participation of public, private and civil society stakeholders in policy making and public service design and delivery

                                Principle 3 – Create a data-driven culture in the public sector

Description:

The Digital Mobile Key (DMK) is the National mobile eID solution which allows citizens to electronically identify themselves in most public, and some private companies websites in order to perform digital services, through their smartphones, tablets or laptops. Besides, it also enables qualified electronic signatures.

By creating a safe and easy authentication instrument that only takes a mobile phone to operate, citizens now have a safe access to hundreds of online services that can be completely accessed in the comfort of their own homes 24/7, entirely free of charges. It is an accessible service that can be used everywhere.

Very easy to use, the DMK consists of a keyword (a 4 to 6 digit PIN) chosen by the user. When authenticating him/herself in a website, the citizen inserts this PIN and immediately receives a one-time temporary code number in his mobile phone (SMS text message), email or twitter account. The mobile app allows the citizen to receive the security code through a push notification in the smartphone. With this code, they can authenticate themselves and access the services of the

website they have chosen, which brings not only easiness, but also efficiency and quickness to the overall authentication process.

Before the DMK introduction, the citizens had to authenticate with either the username and password provided by each one of the service providers, or rely on the Citizen Card, which presupposed the use of a card reader that most of the Portuguese people did not have. With the DMK, the reader is no longer needed and instead of several usernames and passwords, the citizen only has to memorize a four digits pin to be able to perform hundreds of digital services.

It has a great focus on security and privacy, and it is essentially user-driven. In fact, instead of forcing the users to change their behavior to accommodate the service, which in this case was the citizen's card with the card reader, AMA created the DMK as a more user-driven instrument.

And besides allowing authentication, the citizen can now sign electronically with the DMK, which is an innovative new feature of this project, especially if you consider that citizens can also sign as certified professionals. The Electronic Signature has the added value of the Professional Attributes Certification System (SCAP), which means that lawyers, engineers, doctors, or public officials, among other professionals, can sign as such, being certified by their respective professional associations that they are indeed such professionals at the time they're signing the documents.

This new and alternative authentication and e-signature method can be used both by Portuguese citizens and foreigners. The Portuguese nationals can request their DMK with their Citizen's Card or an old ID card, while the non-Portuguese citizens can require it using their Passport. The DMK can be obtained online, with a Citizen Card and a smartcard reader, or face-to-face in a Citizen Shop or Citizen Spot. The registration for the DMK is simple and available to all citizens, regardless of their gender, age, location, economic context, etc.

The initiative was implemented and is coordinated by the Administrative Modernization Agency (AMA) of Portugal, which acts under the superintendence and tutelage of the Secretary of State Assistant and of Administrative Modernization by delegation of the Ministry of the Presidency and of Administrative Modernization.

Apart from AMA's leading role, the Agency has partnered with several important national entities such as the Social Security, the Shared Services of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice, among others, that eventually made the DMK available in their websites to facilitate interactions with citizens.

Even though the DMK is already implemented and in full use, there's still room to grow, so the objective is to extend the reach of this solution, namely to the private sector. At the moment, there are already protocols with EDP, the main energy supplier in Portugal, Millenium, one of the Portuguese major banks, and MEO, one of the three main telecommunication companies in the country, which have adopted the DMK as their default authentication mechanism. The goal is that in the near future, most private companies enable their clients authentication with the DMK, and fully adopt it as an e-signature instrument as well.

Governance: Responsible: AMA

Results

By using the DMK, citizens can now access and perform hundreds of online public services in an easy and secure way, using a solution that brings greater convenience for citizens when interacting with the public administration, as well as the private sector.

Besides, the authentication can now be performed without a card reader and Portuguese citizens in other countries may also have access to the Portuguese online services, anytime, anywhere.

Since the DMK was implemented in 2014, there were more than 215.000 people adopting it as their authentication instrument and, since April 2018, as a way of electronically sign documents. Social security and the tax authority are the entities registering more authentications through the DMK.

DMK performance is made available at www.autenticacao.gov.pt, providing performance measure regarding Digital take-up and Digital Service Completion Rate, among others.

Development

Diffusion and scaling: Present

The registration for the DMK is simple and available to all citizens, regardless of their gender, age, location, economic context. And by using it, citizens can now access and perform hundreds of online public services in a free, easy and secure way.

Moreover, this alternative authentication method can be used either by Portuguese citizens or by non-Portuguese citizens living in Portugal, which can now start using Portuguese-based online public services.

The DMK has already been implemented, and is completely operational and being used by more than 215.000 citizens. At this point, one of the main goals is to continue to disseminate the DMK, increasing the number of citizens and private companies adopting this solution in their daily lives and businesses.

With that in mind, AMA developed a communication strategy which included: promotional products; the development of a single concept and image; the participation in public events to target multiple audiences; videos explaining how it works were published on YouTube and on social media; and there were several publications on social media and an extensive media coverage.

The upscaling of the connection with the private companies and the creation of new synergies, are also a priority at this stage. Whether regarding the use of the DMK as an authentication mechanism in their online platforms, or its expansion as a certified electronic signature instrument

Partnerships:

There are several entities endorsing the DMK, including central government bodies, municipalities and the National Post.

Also, MUDA, a national movement committed to the promotion of digital services, has been actively promoting the adoption of the DMK in Portugal.

The goal is also to increase the number of private companies adopting the DMK. Nevertheless, at the moment, there're already protocols with EDP, Millenium, and MEO.

Lessons learned

One of the lessons learned is that it should never be forgotten that the solution is being built for the citizen, and if he/she doesn't believe that the innovation is something needed and that can easily be used, the solution won't be adopted.

Besides the emphasis on usability, an instrument such as the DMK also has to have a huge focus on security. In fact, the balance between mobility, user friendliness and security has to be kept in mind, since all of these aspects are essential for the success of the initiative. Only by doing so, will the citizens, and the private companies, trust and adopt the solution.

This being said, not only does the initiative has to be technologically consistent, secure, user friendly and useful, it also has to be properly communicated to its users, who need to understand it and trust it. This means that it helps to have a sound communication strategy supporting the launch of initiatives such as the DMK.

Another important aspect is the engagement of all the relevant stakeholders from the beginning. It's important that they feel they're part of the solution, and that their points of views are considered. The entities using the DMK, for instance, are renouncing a part of the control they had in terms of security of their online platforms, so it's important that they trust the DMK, and that they feel comfortable using it.

The use of open standards also brings benefits, such as interoperability and data exchange, minimizes the risk of an application to become obsolete and enables the solution's reuse. Its reuse being a very important feature of this innovation.

Challenges and Failures:

To become a viable authentication instrument, the DMK needed to be disseminated and adopted by several public entities. Since some of these entities feared to lose some control of their online platforms and security protocols, that was not always easy to do. It took a lot of negotiation to make them realize that this was an initiative that would benefit all.

Another challenge was its adoption by the citizens themselves. To make the initiative known to everyone, and to make citizens realize that this is an easy and secure way to authenticate took some effort and it is still a work in progress through communication strategies.

The fact that the DMK consists in a qualified electronic signature also needed to be addressed in terms of legislation, which presented a political challenge. At the beginning, for legal constraints, the qualified electronic signature was only possible using a smart card, but with the eIDAS Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 910/2014), that is no longer a problem.

Conditions required:

The top level political support is always paramount for the success of any transversal initiative to all the governmental areas. Only with that kind of support, can we really implement an initiative which needed to change legislation and coordinate with different entities, breaking silos and harmonizing procedures throughout the public administration.

The fact that the DMK massification was one of the 255 measures of SIMPLEX+, a collaborative and nationwide simplification program launched by the Portuguese government in 2016 to co-create new online public services, optimize existing ones and de-bureaucratize the relationship between public institutions and civil society, was also an element to success.

Finally, a flexible and hardworking team, prone to out-of-the-box thinking and committed to the citizen's needs and the creation of an efficient, user friendly and secure authentication instrument are also key features to the success of the DMK.

Additional information:

https://www.autenticacao.gov.pt/a-chave-movel-digital;jsessionid=63404F3F811BEA4BB967ECBE249093A4

https://www.autenticacao.gov.pt/a-chave-movel-digital

Since its reuse is an important feature, it's also worth mentioning that there are several services being reused by the DMK, namely:

- National SMS Gateway (http://www.iap.gov.pt/services/SMSPlatform.aspx),

- National Interoperability Platform (http://www.iap.gov.pt/services/IntegrationPlatform.aspx),and
- National Identification Provider (https://autenticacao.gov.pt/).

The DMK solution is implemented over the National Identity Provider (Autenticacao.gov), available in a website, and receives SAML requests from external Portal and Systems.