Success at E-Governing: A Case Study of ESDLife in Hong Kong

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, governments, although not exclusively in the Western world, have used the Internet as a communication and service delivery mechanism with their citizens. The initiatives range from making information available online for viewing and downloading to full-fledged e-commerce initiatives. The simplest form of e-government is information dissemination using the Web. For example, a government department can post, on its website, information about the department, such as the mission statement, services available and contact details, and allow forms and brochures to be downloaded. A more complex set up may involve actual financial transaction activities, information exchange, data sharing and systems integration between departments – with full interoperability. The ideal is to provide government services 24 hours a day and seven days a week in an on-demand manner through the Web and Information Technology in general.

Governments, such as the UK, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Italy, Ireland and Greece, have set aside significant funding to develop e-government initiatives. The UK Government has earmarked EUR 1.7 billion to fund electronic service delivery, the Netherlands EUR 14 million, Germany EUR 2.5 billion or more in the next 3–4 years, Italy EUR 700 million and Greece about EUR 800 million (NOIE 2001). These figures suggest that e-government will be a significant investment in Europe. Similar trends are also observed in the US, Australia and Asia.

Despite of a huge investment in e-government, most of studies on e-government so far have been prescriptive or normative (Atkinson and Ulevich 2000; Leigh and Atkinson 2001; Mower 2001; Okot-Uma 2001; West 2000). E-government, like e-commerce, will not be automatically successful by investing resources without clear strategic understanding of the critical success factors. This paper attempts to identify success factors through conducting a case study of the implementation of e-government in Hong Kong – ESDLife.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is e-government?

Compared with e-commerce, e-government is a relatively recent phenomenon. There is still a lack of consensus among researchers and government officials as to a precise definition of the term ‘e-government’. For example, Gisler and Spahni (cited in Greunz et al. 2000) defined e-government as the sum of all electronic communication between government, citizens and businesses and the sum of...
product and services provided electronically by government because of mandatory government regulation. Functionally, they further categorized e-government into three groups: e-assistance, e-administration, and e-democracy.

Quirk (cited in Mower 2001) provided a more broad definition of e-government. He considered that e-government has five dimensions: e-services, e-commerce, e-democracy, e-management, and e-decision-making. The two groups of functions are similar to e-assistance and e-administration suggested by Gisler and Spahni (in Greunz et al. 2000).

From a government official’s perspective, e-government is part of e-governance (Okot-Uma 2001), which includes: e-democracy (the processes and structures that encompass all forms of electronic communication between government and the citizens), e-government (the processes and structures pertinent to the electronic delivery of government services to the public), and e-business (including transaction-based activities such as collaborating with business partners, conducting electronic transaction within an organization, and buying and selling). In his definition, Okot-Uma (2001) replaced the terms of e-government with e-governance and provided a narrow definition of e-government, which is referred to as e-service in Quick’s definition (cited in Mower 2001).

Summarizing the preceding definitions of e-government, it seems that e-government has three broad groups of functions: e-service, e-democracy, and e-business. E-services refers to the electronic delivery of government services to the public; E-democracy provides electronic communications between government and citizens; and e-business involved transaction-based activities between government and commercial sector.

The relationship between e-government and e-business

According to Turban et al. (2000), e-business has three broad categories of applications:

1. providing customer services;
2. facilitating inter- and intra-organization flow of information, communication and collaboration; and
3. buying and selling goods and services.

Indeed, if governments are considered service-oriented entities, and e-government initiatives involve dialoguing, servicing and transacting with citizen and businesses, e-government includes e-business conceptually and functionally. Therefore, it should share many characteristics of e-business not only in its transaction activities, but also in other first two groups of functions. For example, Greunz et al. (2000) point out the striking similarities between e-business and e-government from a legal, contractual, stakeholders and fulfilment perspective. They suggest that due to ‘structural’ similarities between the two types of e-government and e-business, the two forms of activities are not so different.

Internet-based activities it is essential, when implementing e-government strategies and solutions, to make reference to examples of the former to avoid wasted efforts and missed targets. In fact, at the technology architecture level, Greunz, et al. (2000) also propose one should adopt proven models in e-business implementation to an e-government set-up. The similarities between e-business and e-government suggest that one should learn from experiences gained from e-business solutions’ implementation and customize for e-government initiatives.

Although governments are not profit-driven organizations like the commercial sector, a customer-focus, enhancing service levels, and adopting best practice are key features in government mission statements. One would argue perhaps that e-government differs from e-business applications only in the ‘purpose’ and ‘scope’ of online services and activities, but not at ‘implementation’ and ‘operation’ levels.

Success factors of e-government

Many governments have identified electronic services delivery (ESD) as a key priority in their e-government strategic plans (Cabinet Office 2000; Govt. of the HKSAR 1998). Essentially, ESD uses the Web and related technologies (e.g., information kiosk, mobile devices) to deliver, or provide support in delivering government services to citizens. This is a generic description but it does illustrate the scope and complexity of ESD if it is fully implemented. ESD has been targeted as a priority application also because it is a key to the realization of online Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Government-to-Business (G2B) services.

As a service-oriented operation, ESD should be drawing parallels from what make Business-to-Consumer (B2C) e-commerce successful, essentially to address the needs of customers by creating value from the customer’s perspective. Atkinson and Ulevich (2000) have suggested a number of factors critical to the successful implementation of e-government initiatives, five have been observed in many government reports while discussing ESD. They are:

1. Think customer, not government agencies. One of the commonly acknowledged e-government strategies is to be citizen-focused (Cabinet Office 2000; Govt. of the HKSAR 1998). Traditionally government is ‘branches and level’ (Okot-Uma 2001), often being organized around agencies or bureaucracies that operate as hierarchies, with little to no information flow between them. They were set up to support the functioning of bureaucracies, not citizens. E-government initiatives should be set up based around the needs of citizens (Atkinson and Ulevich 2000). A similar strategic focus is also found in the UK report on e-government suggesting ESD should be driven by citizens’ needs (Cabinet Office 2000).
2. **Re-invent government, don’t simply automate it.** Often one of the temptations is to automate existing organizational processes when implementing ESD. While this would work and sometimes is the best solution, this decision should be reached after due consideration has been given to how to re-invent government processes. Given that the original set up of government processes often targeted hierarchical integration and government bureaus, automating such processes might create future integration problems and lack flexibility. Many of the requests by citizens nowadays require multiple departments to communicate and share information and having these requirements in mind when developing e-government systems will help to achieve expected results.

3. **Focus on digital transactions between citizens and government.** Although the potential of e-government in its broadest definition is all-inclusive (Gisler and Spahn cited in Greunz et al. 2000; Quirk cited in Mower 2001; Okot-Uma 2001), the more promising applications are likely to be those contributing to efficiency and productivity gains – transaction-based activities. Transaction-based activities do not limit to financial transactions, but exchange of data, information and digital resources between citizens/businesses and governments. Examples include secure exchanges of personal and financial information, downloading and uploading of legal documents (e.g., contracts) and accessing transaction-processing systems for data query purposes.

4. **Make government applications interoperable with commercial ones.** Many governments focus their e-government efforts on G2C applications. While this might generate observable results quickly, the main efficiency gain often occurs at the G2B front such as e-procurement and e-supply chain management. Similar to how B2B activities were predicted to generate bigger economic impact than B2C ones, G2B is in a similar situation. Examples such as e-procurement, e-tendering and other high volume transaction activities between government departments and with businesses have been the prime targets for e-government initiatives (Cabinet Office 2000; Govt. of the HKSAR 2001a). However, this can only be achieved if e-government systems are interoperable with existing and future B2B systems (Cabinet Office 2000; Govt. of the HKSAR 2001b). To achieve this, it is necessarily to involve industry during the standard formulation process of e-government systems.

5. **Government efforts should complement, not duplicate, private sector efforts.** Many of the e-government services have similarities with B2B and B2C e-business activities at the business process level. Therefore, e-government initiatives are likely to share similar business processes (Greunz et al. 2000). The past decade saw the development and consolidation of B2C and B2B infrastructures. e-government initiatives should be complementary and not duplicate existing infrastructures and solutions. This would help to ensure e-government initiatives, both G2C and G2B, interoperate with commercial ones. In addition, duplicating private sector efforts means investing government resources in competition with the private sector. This would contradict the intention of efficient use of resources through e-government initiatives as outlined by governments who vow to be good managers of taxpayers’ money.

**ESDlife in Hong Kong – A Case Study**

Like many Western governments that have embraced the concept of e-government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government targeted ESD as a key e-government initiative. In the 1998 Digital 21 Strategy report (Govt. of the HKSAR 1998), the development of an ESD infrastructure (a.k.a. single-window access to government services) was one of the priority projects identified by the HKSAR Government. The ESD project started as a joint venture between the Government and private sector to build an infrastructure that included the Government as a content provider using the services of an ESD commercial service provider. Other service providers such as financial institutions and e-certification authorities were also connected to the ESD infrastructure (Govt. of the HKSAR 1998). It was hoped that the ESD infrastructure would provide a consolidated platform to deliver G2C and G2B services.

Such a heavy reliance on the commercial sector was a significant deviation from strategies adopted by other governments (e.g., Australia and the UK) when developing ESD operations. Generally, governments are cautious about involving the private sector to deliver e-government services in relation to issues such as security, privacy, neutrality and control. Therefore, most ESD operations are totally owned and operated by the government – with security policies defining how the G2B and G2C interfaces should be implemented.

To drive forward e-government policies and initiative in Hong Kong, a new office – The E-government Co-ordination Office – has been established and the ESD project is under its coordination. Based on the vision of the HKSAR Government, the ESD infrastructure would:

1. enable the public to obtain services through various channels, including, but not limited to, personal computers, interactive public phones or television;
2. be an interoperable, secure and reliable way to obtain services from different government agencies;
3. use market-based interface standards to ensure the adoption of new technology; and,
4. be bilingual (English and Chinese).

Subsequent to the public tendering process in early 1999, ESD Services Limited (ESDSL) was awarded a five-year
contract by the HKSAR Government in November 1999 to operate the ESD services. ESDSL was contracted to build, develop and operate the ESD platform and the application services. At the time of the award of contract, ESDSL was a joint venture between Hutchison Global Crossing Limited (85%) and Compaq Computer Limited (15%).

After one year of development, the platform and infrastructure were launched in October 2000. The bilingual portal www.esdlife.com became the de facto ESD centre — delivering G2C and G2B services anytime, anywhere to the people of Hong Kong. Figure 1 illustrates the basic architecture of the ESD system.

Briefly, the ESDLife Website is a one-stop shop for government services in Hong Kong. By May 2002, there were 39 government departments or related organizations with services available via ESDLife website (www.esdlife.com). As of May 2002, there were 128 government services available from the ESDLife portal. Among them, 18 services involve transactions or payments, 20 require digital certificates, and one needs passwords or digital certificates. These service include:

1. filing of tax returns, payment of tax bills and purchase of tax reserve certificates;
2. searching for job vacancies by employees and searching by employers for suitable candidates to fill job vacancies;
3. voter registration;
4. renewal of driving and vehicle licences;
5. changing of personal information stored in various Government departments, e.g. address;
6. payment of Government bills;
7. appointment booking for registration of identity card;
8. application for senior citizen card; and
9. investment and tourist information (ITBB 2002b).

A sample of the services available on ESDLife is listed in the Appendix.

As of the end of 2001, almost a year after ESDLife was implemented, its development has been on target according to the original plan in terms of adoption rate, bringing key stakeholders on board and raising awareness. It has so far maintained the steady uptake of the ESDLife services and by the end of July 2001, had attracted 13 million visits to its site. ESDLife is a recent winner of the Stockholm Challenge Award (ITBB 2001a) and with a claim being ‘one of the world’s first web sites that integrates both public and private sector services in a citizen-centric approach . . .’

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section analyses and discusses the factors that make ESDLife successful by closely examining the planning and implementation of ESDLife. Its primary goal is to identify the factors that have made ESDLife successful so far. The following sections present and discuss the major success factors identified.

**A customer- not services- focused vision**

Probably the most important success factor in implementing e-government in Hong Kong is the vision of
the HKSAR Government. The e-Government Coordination Office was established to plan and oversee the e-government policies and initiatives, including ESDLife project. As stated by Hong Kong e-government Coordinator, all projects must be firmly focused on the citizens and businesses it serves and its priority is to join up the Government departments and functions (ITBB 2002a). Such a customer-focused vision, coupled with the establishment of the government office for planning and supervision, has ensured that ESDLife was customer-oriented not only in its strategic planning and design, but also at operational level. The establishment of ‘one-stop’ e-government services and partnership with private sector are example of customer-orientation at a strategic level. At an operational level, when customers visit the ESDLife site, instead of asking them ‘What services or which department you want?’ ESDLife asks ‘What do you want to accomplish?’ The latter approach is important to ESDLife’s success so far because users no longer need to know which government department offers what services. Instead, they only need to select their ‘intentions’ and be led to services of one or more government departments, sometimes transparently.

This approach of implicit structure, one that does not require the user to have the understanding of government structure, makes ESDLife enjoyable to use. The ability of e-government initiatives to address the ‘lost in bureaucracy’ situation, which often is difficult to overcome in the physical world, is crucial.

**Strategic outsourcing for e-process**

Having a customer-focused vision is very important to the success of e-government. Like e-business, however, how to design and implement e-process is another important and strategic issue facing many governments in delivering e-services to their customers. Although outsourcing and partnering with private portals are not that new, the way of the HKSAR Government forms partnership with ESDSL is unique. It is only a user of the ESD platform rather than the owner or joint-owner of it. Such an approach has several advantages:

1. There is a relatively low outlay for the development from the Government’s perspective because the private sector is bearing most of the development and equipment costs. In addition, the sharing of risks by the private sector such as project management during the development stage helps to alleviate the burden of the HKSAR Government.

2. Government applications can be co-hosted with commercial application on a third-party server. This provides the opportunity for users to access both public and private services on one platform, hereby providing more convenience to the users. For example, getting married in Hong Kong (possibly anywhere in the world) would involve complex organization of many activities, among them, making an appointment with the Marriage Registry. Not only the booking and payment can be done online via ESDLife, but also activities related to organizing the wedding. Other themes available on ESDLife are: Citizenship; Education and Employment just to name a few.

3. The involvement of the private sector to build the ESD platform means it was built based on commercial market interoperability standards – which encourages G2B developments without worrying about many of the interoperability issues. This is also consistent with the principle of ‘making government applications interoperable with commercial ones’.

4. A variety of value propositions for users to visit the site, either for government or private services or both.

While the government–private sector collaboration model offers many benefits and opportunities for governments to deliver and improve e-government services, it also entails several significant challenges and risks that need to be carefully handled:

1. The issues of liabilities and obligations regarding any violation of privacy or losses resulting due to the use of the ESD platform.

2. Although there are disclaimers stating that the HKSAR Government neither owns nor endorses any commercial offerings hosted on the ESDLife site, the Government at least does not object to offering its services jointly with them. This might give an impression to the unaware that the commercial services hosted are endorsed by the Government (e.g., the wedding gifts and professional services listed on the same page as the Wedding Registry site).

**Strategic marketing of ESDLife**

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of ESDLife is its marketing strategy that is highly customer-focused. Often when marketing e-government and ESD services, governments try to gain credit for taking government services online. This is understandable because the adoption of e-commerce is an important way to convince voters how progressive a government is, despite governments in general have the lowest score of any sector in using e-commerce for sales and marketing or even procurement purposes (Accenture 2001).

*Marketing benefits, rather than services, to users. When launching e-government services, governments often market the availability of online service, rather than the benefits of going online, to its users. The marketing message used by the HKSAR Government is ‘ESDLife is here to improve your lifestyle.’ This instantly provides the user with a strong value proposition for using ESDLife’s services.*
Saving user’s time for accessing government services is very important in Hong Kong. As one of Asia’s busiest cities, the daily challenge is to get the time from a 10–12 hour workday for work-unrelated or mundane activities. Despite being a hi-tech city, many of the ‘daily chores’ such as paying bills, banking and other transaction-based activities are accomplished by physically presenting them at the counter. It is ironic to observe long queues at banks’ and government offices’ counters during lunch hour – often the only time people have to pay bills or lodge forms. Many of these activities can either be accomplished through accessing government databases online or using a web-form system. Although face-to-face contact has its strengths, especially, what can be accomplished in a 30 minute time slot during the lunch hour is quite limited.

The promotional slogan was ‘Spend more time for yourself’ when ESDLife was launched recognizing that Hong Kong people frequently experience such rushes every day. The advertisement on TV and other media depicted a family with young children enjoying family life in a relaxing manner – suggesting this was due to saving time through ESDLife’s services. It instantly triggered people to try out the services. Being able to spend more time with loved ones is almost everyone’s prayer when working longer hours is expected. More importantly, no one enjoys having lunch in half the amount of time for the sake of queuing to submit a form to a government department.

Assuring security and privacy protection as a guarantee of confidence. Security and privacy have been two major barriers to further adoption of e-commerce for many online applications and they were two areas the HKSAR Government addressed upfront while planning the ESD initiative. To safeguard and facilitate the security of transaction, the Electronic Transactions Ordinance was enacted in 2000 and Hong Kong Post (i.e., Hong Kong’s Postal Service) was charged with the responsibility to set up the local Public Key Infrastructure as well as being the Certification Authority (ITBB 2001b). All transactions with the ESDLife site are secured using two technologies – Secure Socket Layers (SSL) and Secure Electronic Transaction (SET). Recently, ESDLife adopted the VISA 3-D Secure Interoperability Standard that also has been deployed by VISA International in Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and Australia (Luk 2001). Currently, ESDLife accepts mobile digital certificates and by 2003, smart ID card will be used as well.

Realizing that the involvement of the commercial sector in providing e-government services may increase users’ concern about privacy, a detailed privacy policy statement has been published on the ESDLife website. It not only pledges that its data collection, retention, transfer and access comply with the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance under the laws of Hong Kong. More importantly, it also explains that it, as a private entity, only stores temporarily the personal information provided by public for the purpose of accessing e-government services on its website, and all the information will be transferred to the relevant government departments. This is a unique privacy statement and could alleviate the users’ concerns about their privacy.

Companion programmes to market ESDLife. Apart from using traditional media to market and advertise the functions and benefits of ESDLife, there are a number of companion programmes which help citizens to either brush up their IT skills or raise their awareness of ESDLife through hands-on experiences. For example, IT awareness courses are organized for special needs groups such as the elderly, the disabled and women (ITBB 2001b). These programmes together with exhibitions and on-site demonstration at more than 2,000 public ESDLife information kiosks provided the ‘deep-impact’ marketing effect.

Staged development, continuous renewal and expansion of services and delivery mechanisms. Managing customer expectations could be difficult when offering e-commerce services. One reason is that e-commerce service level, as compared to traditional consumer services, is less predictable. Network problems, unexpected increase of access demands and third-party technical faults (e.g., other linked sites) can be a source of user frustration. The Government has adopted a staged development strategy that makes sure users have time to understand the way ESDLife works while ESDL has the opportunity to gauge usage patterns.

ESDLife so far has demonstrated that it has been renewing and expanding its services continuously (ITBB 2001b; Luk 2001). Regarding its delivery mechanism, so far access to ESDLife services can be made via the Internet and information kiosks in Mass Transit Railway (Hong Kong’s underground railways) and Kowloon-Canton Railway (Hong Kong–China railway connection) stations as well as major shopping malls and exhibition centres (Hutchison Global Crossing 2000). In addition, there are plans to implement multiple accessibilities such as through mobile devices. Given that Hong Kong has one of the world’s highest penetration rates of mobile devices (phones and pocket-PC) plus many people are not always next to an Internet-connected computer, making ESDLife services available over ‘secure’ mobile connections will facilitate further adoption.

One of the factors contributing to the failure of many B2C portals was that they spent vast amount of money on advertising and marketing, but eventually failed to keep up with renewing their services and delivery mechanisms – including the delivery of information and goods. Users could not gain further benefit from the dated information and services and they ceased to use the services.

Finally, something arcane that always works. Many successful businesses simply achieve their success by monitoring customer needs and providing what customers want. In the case of ESDLife, it has been carrying out annual and continuing surveys on customers’ experiences. Campaigns and prizes are offered as incentives. By collecting customers’ feedback and integrating them into further
enhancements, ESDLife has been able to maintain its relevance to its users. Time will tell if this has worked, but, if the traditional marketing wisdom of ‘listening to your customers’ is accurate, it should.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The mega-trend of e-government is likely to be a focus of governments worldwide in the near future. Economic, political and competitive reasons will continue to drive such developments. This paper has explored the success factors in implementing e-government in Hong Kong.

The findings in this case study of ESDLife in Hong Kong indicate that having a customer-focused vision is an important contributor to ESDLife success so far. Such a customer-focused vision can have impact on the planning, sourcing and operation of e-government activities. Another success factor, as we have found in this study, is the importance of marketing. Like e-business, marketing e-government should address the public concerns about security and privacy and, at the same time, promote the benefits of e-government, rather than availability of services, to its users. In addition, a staged development and continuous renewal and expansion of e-government services and delivery mechanism can help a steady take-up of customers in using e-government services.

The implication from the preceding findings is to build critical mass through a cause to use. Building a critical mass, the holy grail of e-commerce success, applies here. Choosing applications to be offered via ESD that would attract a high volume of traffic is critical to ESDLife’s success so far. Some are transaction-based services (e.g., payment for government bills), some are data entry related (e.g., lodging application forms) and some are information search by nature (e.g., looking up business registration numbers). More importantly, these applications should have a ‘strong’ value proposition to the users, such as saving time, removing inconvenience and providing flexibility. It is not how accomplished the e-government system is from the provider’s perspective that attracts users, but, rather, how much users can benefit from using it based on their own evaluation criteria that matters. Subsequently, a user-centric portal, from user-interface to the reinforcement of continuing usage, is of paramount importance.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this paper is the importance of involving private sectors in delivering e-government services. This can provide governments with many benefits. However, there are two major challenges in doing so. The first challenge is how to establish a win-win scenario with the commercial sector involved. Often due to political and other reasons, e-government initiatives are government-centric operations. This means the commercial sector has little or no part to play when actually operating such initiatives. Governments have to bear all the promotion and establishment costs for their e-government initiatives. In a climate favouring less governments and leaner infrastructure, resources are likely to be sparse for such activities. The ESDLife initiative has taken a different approach. Rather than resisting the in-depth involvement of the commercial sector, the commercial sector was welcomed and was charged to develop, advertise and maintain the ESDLife portal as its own property. The HKSAR Government is only a user of the portal, no different from other advertisers and businesses on it. The portal was designed as a commercial operation and revenues are generated through advertising and marketing.

In the case of Hong Kong, the commercial sector has the strength in and resources for marketing and advertising ESDLife. Therefore, the Government has been gaining leverage when commercial activities lead to indirect advertising of its ESD operations. Since, there is no competitor to offer government services on ESDLife, this means the Government has been gaining exposure with lower ‘out-of-pocket’ expenses.

The second challenge is how to integrate government and the commercial sector on the portal to provide both public and commercial services that can benefit the users. For ESDLife, the approach of co-hosting government and commercial services has gone well beyond just putting hotlinks together. Themes (e.g., getting married and planning for the wedding) are set up such that government and commercial services can be put together in a ‘logical flow’ manner. For example, one’s marriage plan starts with making an appointment with the Marriage Registry, followed by exploring dresses and gowns services, visiting the jewellers website linked to ESDLife, making arrangements with caterers and photography services. All these can be achieved on ESDLife as a one-stop-shop portal. Such tight integration of services requires the trust and willingness of both the government and the commercial sector—believing that they can work together for the benefit of the end-users.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings in this paper must be interpreted as tentative given the paucity of empirical research on the issues investigated and the limitations of the study. The first limitation pertains to the context of this study. The ‘Go-and-get-it’ business culture and the close-ties between the Government and the commercial sector in Hong Kong are quite unique and might not be replicable elsewhere. This puts some constraints on the generalizability of the findings to other governments. The second limitation concerns the validity of the success factors identified. Although all the indicators so far are pointing to a positive future for ESDLife, it has been operating for about two years and can still be regarded as the early days of the system.

This study also identifies an avenue for future research. We have found that the involvement of the commercial
sector in delivering e-government has contributed significantly to the success of ESDLife, yet many questions require further research effort. For example, what is the business model for forming government–private sector partnership? And how do governments manage the e-government service level provided by the commercial sector?

As of July 2001, seven months after its launch, almost 13 million visitors had visited the ESDLife site, generating 184 million hits and conducting over 610,000 transactions (ITBB 2001b). This compares favourably with government ESD portals worldwide. Overall, we strongly believe that ESDLife’s future will lie in providing a convincing answer to its user when asked: How can it value-add to my daily life? If this ceases to happen, so will the success of the portal site.

Note
1. Hutchison Global Crossing Limited was a joint venture between Hutchison Whampoa Limited and Asia Global Crossing. It was a 50/50 joint venture which combined Hutchison Whampoa’s fixed-line and Internet networks in Hong Kong with Asia Global Crossing’s international fibre-optic broadband network, Internet applications and data services.

References

APPENDIX

Sample services available on ESDLife [Source: http://www.info.gov.hk/itbb/english/IT>/ onlineservice.htm]

- Buildings Department
  - Buildings Department Forms
Census and Statistics Department
- Obtaining Frequently Used Statistics
- Ordering Statistical Publications
- Statistical Bookstore, Hong Kong

Civil Engineering Department
- Search for Slope Information

Civil Service Bureau
- Government Vacancies

Economic Services Bureau
- Travel Agents Registry
- Search for Licensed Travel Agent

Education and Manpower Bureau
- Continuing Education

Education Department
- Hong Kong Education City Net
- Digital Age Cultural Campaign
- Secondary Six Vacancies

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
- Registered Electrical Contractors
- Approved Competent Persons for Locating Underground Electricity Cables
- Registered Electrical Workers

Government Supplies Department
- Electronic Tendering System

Highways Department
- Online Reporting of Road Damage or Defect

Hong Kong Examinations Authority
- Enquiry of Examination Results

Hong Kong Observatory
- Weather Forecast
- Hong Kong Weather
- Regional Weather in Hong Kong
- World Weather Forecast
- 5-day Weather Forecast
- Observatory Warning(s) in Force
- Synchronization of Computer Clock

How to Obtain the Observatory Publications
- Fun Activities on Radiation Basics
- Virtual Tour of Airport Meteorological Office

Hong Kong Police Force
- Making Complaint Reports Against Police
- Making Complaint of Excessive Noise Level
- Making Complaint of Telephone Nuisance
- Making Complaint of Unjustified Issue of Fixed Penalty Ticket
- Making Complaint of Vehicle Obstruction
- Reporting Found Property
- Reporting Lost Property
- Reporting Lost Property by Visitors

Hongkong Post
- Postage Rates and Services
- SpeedPost
- Local Courierpost
- Mail Tracing
- Hongkong Post Shopping Mall
- Hongkong Post e-Cert

Hong Kong Tourism Board
- Tourist Information Lookup
- ‘Hong Kong – City of Life’

Immigration Department
- Application for Search and Copy of Birth Certificate
- Application for Search and Copy of Death Certificate
- Application for Search and Copy of Marriage Certificate
- Appointment Booking for Registration of Identity Card
- Immigration Information Lookup
- Notification of Premature Termination of Employment Contracts of Imported Workers
- Notification of Premature Termination of Employment Contracts of Foreign Domestic Helpers
- Appointment Booking for Giving of Marriage Notice

Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau
- Interactive Government Services Directory
- Electronic Submission of Forms
- Application for Cyberport Office Tenancy

Information Services Department
- Government Publication Order Form
- Government Information Centre
- Hong Kong – Asia’s World City
- Government Bookstore

Inland Revenue Department
• Change of Address Y
• Filing of Tax Return
• Purchase of Tax Reserve Certificates
• Interactive Tax Enquiry
• Business Registration Number Enquiry and Application for Supply of Information on the Business Register
• Salaries Tax Computation
• Application for Business or Branch Registration
• Change of Business Particulars

Innovation and Technology Commission
• Information on Technology Funding Schemes
• Invest Hong Kong
• Interactive Investment Guide

Department of Justice
• Bilingual Laws Information System

Labour Department
• Job Search
• Register Job Vacancies
• Search for Job Applicants
• Frequently Asked Questions on Employment Ordinance and Employees’ Compensation Ordinance
• Cyber Resource Centre for Business
• Employment and Recruitment Information

Lands Department
• Survey and Mapping Office
• Sales of Maps and Air Photographs
• Slope Maintenance Responsibility Information System

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
• Hong Kong Public Libraries e-Book Collection
• Hong Kong Film Archive
• Museums of Hong Kong LCSD Ticketing Services

Marine Department
• Arrival and Departures of Ocean-going and River Trade Cargo Vessels
• Dangerous Goods Information System

Office of the Telecommunications Authority
• Online Licensing for Satellite Master Antenna Television Licence
• Mobile Radio System Licence and Amateur Station Licence and Authority to Operate

Printing Department

• E-Gazette
• Radio Television Hong Kong
• RTHK on Internet
• RTHK on Internet Express News

Rating and Valuation Department
• General Enquiries (Rates and Government Rent)
• Change of Rates and/or Government Rent
• Payer’s Particulars

Registration and Electoral Office
• Application for Voter Registration
• Change of Address of Registered Voters
• General Enquiry on Electoral Affairs

Social Welfare Department
• Application for Volunteer Schemes Registration
• Application for Senior Citizen Card
• Application for Senior Citizen Card Scheme Participation
• Enquiry on Approved Charitable Fund-raising Activities
• Social Welfare Department Information Lookup

Television and Entertainment and Licensing Authority
• Hong Kong In Kaleidoscope (Filming Location Library)

Trade and Industry Department
• Business Licence Information Service
• Small and Medium Enterprises Information Centre
• Quota Transfer Applications Status Enquiry
• Search for Import and Export Licensing Requirements
• HKSAR Strategy Commodities Control System

Transport Department
• Application for Renewal of Driving Licence
• Application for Renewal of Vehicle Licence
• Application for Reservation of Non-special Registration Mark for Auction
• Road Test Appointment Booking for Repeaters
• Application for Certificate of Particulars of Vehicle
• Vehicle Annual Examination Appointment Booking and Re-scheduling
• Change of Address of Driving Licence and Vehicle Licence Holders
• Interactive Road Traffic Information Service

Treasury
• Payment of Government Bills
University Grants Committee (UGC) Secretariat

- Hong Kong Higher Education Discussion Forum

Water Supplies Department

- WSD On-line Services