

ELECTRONIC SERVICE AND INTER-ADMINISTRATIVE COOPERATION

2005 COMPUTERWORLD HONORS CASE STUDY

GOVERNMENT & NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION CHANNEL WAS PROPOSED FOR THE 169 TOWN HALLS AND 478,000 TAXPAYERS IN BADAJOZ, THEREBY IMPROVING THE BADAJOZ PROVINCIAL COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION DEPARTMENT'S (OAR) OWN WEBSITE SERVICE AND RE-USING THE EXISTING DATABASES. [20055286]

SUMMARY

The department has adopted the Information Builders WebFOCUS suite. Establishment of an alternative communication channel was proposed for the 169 town halls and 478,000 taxpayers in Badajoz, thereby improving the Badajoz Provincial Council Tax Collection Department's (OAR) own Website service and re-using the existing Databases.

APPLICATION

Main purpose of the project in general is:

- To increase the Autonomous Tax Collection Department's (OAR) Services, opening a new communication channel bringing the Administration to the citizen; likewise intensifying greater cover to become a 24 x 7 service. Also to boost a service for the Administrations with which it co-operates by delegation.

And specifically:

- Creating a new service bringing the citizen into contact with the Public Administration and aiding his/her relationship with the same.

- Offers a series of management, information and advisory tools for the 169 local Administrations, to provide technologies reinforcing their "back-office" and improving data and process integration.

The method used was to take advantage of the OAR's business analysis and experience; and incorporate in this new platform in collaboration with the Information Builders Ibérica Consultancy Service for its development. Furthermore, a schedule has been fixed establishing a joint preliminary analysis and design phase.

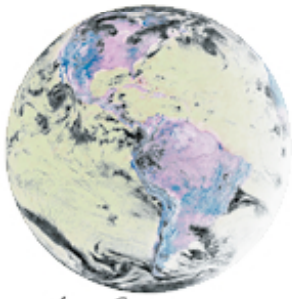
Success consists of taking advantage of existing technology and experience, enabling the final project phase to be completed in a mere 5 months; at a low hardware, software and human resources cost.

Via delegation the Badajoz Provincial Council Tax Collection Department's (OAR) performs: management, liquidation, tax and duty collection and inspection tasks coming from other Administrations (State, Autonomic and Local).

Likewise, it performs legal and economic – technical advisory tasks within a transparent framework which increases the confidence placed in our work day by day.

In addition to these functions, our personnel undergo permanent training on matters of both organisation benefit and the employee's, who is constantly motivated making him/her a participant and principal protect of the organization he/she belongs to.

Worthy of mention are training questions related to legal topics (both proceedings and specific questions, mainly collection and accounting), New Technologies (TIC), not to mention language teaching and perfecting. Also noteworthy is our Organization's participation in different debate forums on a national level, where together with speakers of renowned prestige, shares experiences, working on Ministerial Commissions for decision taking.



A Search for New Services



Robert Carrigan,
Chairmen of the Chairmen's Committee

Ron Milton,
Vice-Chairman of the Chairmen's
Committee

Dan Morrow,
Chief Historian

To carry out these tasks we have Central Services in the city of Badajoz and a network of 16 offices distributed throughout the Province of Badajoz, where 163 employees perform their duties daily.

BENEFITS

It has enabled us to attain one of our organization's most important targets, bring the Administration to the 478,000 citizens obliged to comply with their tax obligations and the 169 local Administrations 365 days a year with a service of (24x7).

Thanks to the system implemented, the taxpayer data on the Badajoz OAR's information systems becomes useful available information easily on any format, platform and architecture.

This means citizens access data in real time using a simple browser with maximum security and confidentiality guarantees.

The system developed aims to project an efficient approachable image with town halls and taxpayers, via a communication medium where information is dynamic. Furthermore, it provides citizens with tools to perform specific consultations and transactions.

The Public Administration also benefits, since it can provide access to public services without timetables or travelling. Our targets were:

- Simplifies information exchange with citizens, internal departments and other public organizations.
- Improves public administration efficiency and efficacy.
- Improves public service and citizen satisfaction.
- Modernizes Public Administration services.

A procedure integration tool is created enabling to large blocks of interests, other Public Administrations for whom we work by delegation and citizens, for whom we provide better service, access to our software applications and their own data.

Considerable reduction of waiting time for citizens, volume of paper used, reduction of public costs, etc. It facilitates re-use of both human and technical resources, whereby our organization gains in profitability.

Another great advantage incorporated in this project: citizens feel they form part of the Administration. It becomes theirs so they collaborate with opinions and suggestions to improve the service provided. They demand new services encouraging us to continue working for an Administration without timetables.

As already mentioned, the website has three differentiated areas: Town Halls, Taxpayers and Common Information allowing taxpayers to perform "on-line" tasks like:

- Modifying their bank standing order data and their tax data.
- Obtain information on invoices issued indicating collection status.
- Printing their invoices in PDF format so they can pay them at the associated bank entities.
- Request standing order for new invoices.
- On-line connection with associated banks.
- E-mail receipt of invoices pending payment in PDF format.
- Obtain duplicates of invoices already paid for digital storage or print out.

Although start-up of our project has not brought changes in ways of working and our daily tasks, it has considerably "saved" working time, due to incorporation of new actors in our Organization (other Administrations and citizens), execution of tasks previously unthinkable as existing resources were required for tasks now amply covered with the project presented.

IMPORTANCE

The technology developed leaders new communication channels, because it aids access to information models and services, offering via a more open and approachable medium for different organizations and particularly citizens.

This technology and its benefits are exportable to other regional and local administrations in Spain and

other countries with a similar public administration. This is why our application has aroused great interest in the European Forum of European Electronic Administrations, i.e. an example to follow.

These changes are observed simply by seeing administrative procedures previously requiring presence before a specific Public Administration, may now be performed more easily from one's own home without the need to move even.

Different Administrations share the same Management tool, with the cost saving implied in the implementation, maintenance and training.

Increase in productivity and reduction in waiting times. Improvement of this Administration's public service has also been valued externally, with the national award (Tecnimap), OAR Award Electronic Tecnimap-Service Inter-administrative Eco-operation, furthermore, it has been chosen as an example to be followed of Local i-Administration on the European Forum of European Electronic Administration, and nominated for the T-SYSTEM.

Information Builders has contributed to this project in three ways:

- Their Business Intelligence technology
- Their application Integration technology.
- Their Know-how

This new application and technology represented, contributes an important asset to society, improving the citizen's life since it puts a basic value into practice:

- Controlling Public Powers, bringing near and facilitating management in relation to Public Administration.

We have used Information Builders' technology to re-use that extant and integrate technology of other public bodies, innovating internal processes and creating new services for the citizen.

End users for whom this application was implemented rapidly adopted this innovation. This is evidenced with the number of consultations and pages visited (logs) showing a clear success and obliging us to continue working on new projects to satisfy the daily demands received.

The 685 civil servants using this application from year one and citizens registered has increased on average annually by 30%.

ORIGINALITY

This project's success is two fold with the most exceptional aspects of the project:

TOWN HALLS

Our non-profit making organization acts as a bridge in tax and duty management, liquidation, collection and inspection within a municipal scope circumscribed to the Province of Badajoz.

The different Town Halls of the Province entrust the aforementioned tasks to our Organizations, for us to act as interlocutors before the citizens

We provide them with an application integrator tool, enabling them to:

- Manage their taxes and duties: Carry out registrations, discharges and amendments. Consult and issue lists in different formats
- Consult collection results: Visualize individualised or grouped invoices as per different consultation criteria. Issue payment confirmation and collection documents. Make, modify or eliminate bank standing orders.

CITIZENS

Via their validation as application users, they have access to the same data as our Administration has on them. Services available in this first stage of the application are:

- Consult and modify their tax data.
- Consult, register, modify or eliminate bank standing orders for their tax invoices.
- Consult tax invoices due for collection and those already paid.
- Issue documents for payment and confirmation of payment for the same.
- Visualize invoice data.
- Send any request via e-mail.
- Pay taxes or duties via electronic banking

This project was developed from the top of a pyramid whose base was laid in 1998 when the OAR started a modernization project and implementation of new computerised media, to design and develop a series of Management Tools, linked to a single Database (inherited from an old application it was to replace), taking advantage of the Analysis and Experience of previous years (from 1990).

Culminated the initial phase in 2001, and these applications adapted to the new monetary reality of the European Economic Community (implementation of the single currency - Euro) in 2002; the OAR put forward as priority target for 2003 its incorporation in the Information Builders' New Technologies, via creation of an Internet Website, which would enable provision of these Back-Office tools developed in 1998 to both Administrations collaborating with the OAR, and citizens.

This final Project started its Analysis and Design phases in May 2003; concluding Implementation and testing in September of the same year. The Project was initially presented to the Information Builders' Users' Forum in November 2003 of Information Builders Ibérica. Its definitive presentation to the public was through the Right Honourable Chairman of the Badajoz Provincial Council, Mr. Juan María Vázquez, on 25th November 2003.

Project implementation deadline was 5 months distributed as follows:

- Hardware and Software Supply: 2 weeks
- Project implementation and development
- Analysis and design: 2 months
- Development, documentation and testing: 3 months

Main resources used:

By OAR:

- Project co-ordinator: responsible for co-ordinating organization resources and project supervision.
- Analyst: functional expert of affected areas
- Technical analyst: technical expert of affected areas, providing technical knowledge of product and data model extant.

By Information Builders:

- Senior Consultant: Information Builders' project technical manager carrying out analysis, design, development, testing and documentation activities.
- Web Designer: Specialist in Web page design. Took part in application design, particularly initial access page.
- Programmer: Carried out development and testing functions.

In 2005 we will developer Phase II: New functions and services for Town Halls, and electronic integration with services. And in 2006 Phase III: Provide telematic registration and "Ventanilla Única" for Badajoz citizens.

SUCCESS

To date we consider our project as amply achieved the target it was designed for:

Not only have we satisfied a demand of society by granting them access means to information demanded by citizens and which is theirs, but also we have broken a great taboo hanging over Administration:

We consider a software application is much more than what the words might mean. Behind these terms are people concerned about achieving an ever more integrated society, where inequalities of any kind will disappear.

To this effect, the tool presented and which we hand over to society free of charge, has been accepted, acknowledged and received prizes for its easy access and its clear message of universality.

The Information System implemented helps the OAR to obtain maximum value from its data. This is achieved via integration of critical data from the organization, transformed into useful information making it available to any user who so requires in the format that best adapts to his/her needs.

The achievements of this new web may be summarised on a two-fold perspective:

- Within the Badajoz Provincial Council's general policy, the target is to boost use of new information technologies among its citizens.
- Achieve uniformity of the Provincial Council's web contents to achieve integration of that extant and by way of priority create a double communication channel between the OAR and the Town Halls on the one hand and the taxpayers on the other.

To achieve both objectives it was a priority to set very strict technical criteria as:

- Creation of a web with highly dynamic easily modified contents by OAR's personnel without holding a strictly technical or computer manager profile.
- Achieve maximum web efficacy with minimum response time
- Graphic design compatible with web design of the Badajoz Provincial Council dominion. (www.dip-badajoz.es)
- It was essential clients accessing information (both internal civil servants and taxpayers) did not require installation of any specific software.

Project aim is to achieve benefit for:

- Badajoz Province's 478,000 taxpayers
- Badajoz Province's 169 Town Halls.

Citizens residing outside Badajoz or Spain need not travel to their place of residence once or several times a year thanks to this system.

For example:

A Badajoz citizen working in Barcelona need not lose two days' work to visit his/her local administration over a thousand kilometres away to handle and pay his/her taxes, having to do so several times a year. Thanks to this application, this person can pay his/her taxes from his/her computer at any time of the day outside his/her work timetable.

For example:

Town Hall with OAR. A citizen had to provide his/her personal and tax details at the town hall and for regional taxes had to go to Badajoz to provide the same data and every time he/she made a change, the process had to be repeated twice. The local administration was not synchronized with the different administrations, which might induce error since it could generate conflict on an administration level among organizations.

DIFFICULTY

The OAR's intention with this project start-up is to establish a new more efficient communication channel with Town Halls and taxpayers in the province of Badajoz.

The most important obstacles faced to make our work successful were two kinds:

- Population:

The universe – citizens for whom we provide our services belong to a group where at the time of its implementation were wary of the Administration's interests with this offer. They considered it more of a control than a service.

Population diversity, immersed in the Province of Badajoz, the most extense in Spain, rooted in

profoundly rural areas and at an age where access to New Technologies is complicated, by the rejection these produce.

- Technical:

Communication lines accessing the world of communication were deficient.

Both situations are settled thanks to collaboration with other Administrations (TOWN HALLS, BADAJOZ PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, and JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA) who worked and work to prevent Extremadura being excluded from technological development.

The best way for an innovative project to reach the largest number of users lies in putting it forward simply and humble work.

Achievement of the final target, requires preliminary analysis which must lead us to executing a project which meets our clients' needs in a minimum time space and at no expense to them.

Any project, however ambitious must be structured previously studied phases, and developed pursuant to existence of real demand. However, the project must be attractive to make it reach end users.

Innovation is not always synonymous of success. And if in our case today, there is total acceptance of our project, it is because we have had to make numerous Town Halls see that integration of our applications would not rob them of their precious protagonism, but convert them into greater protagonists in the final project.

All our Town Halls seek as their common main target: Endow the taxpayers of our Province with a more efficient and reliable information access system, which is why they understood their localisms had to be left to one side and work all together with single tool.