Portuguese Citizen’s Card
Federating identification services for the benefits of Portuguese citizens

The Context

In April 2005, the Prime Minister of Portugal José Sócrates announced that an e-ID card (Cartão do Cidadão) was to be launched with biometric data aimed at simplifying administration, modernizing the countries public services as well as providing a new highly secure identity document.

Portugal has been at the forefront of e-Government projects and an early adopter of new technologies with the delivery of the national electronic passport in July 2006 and the launch of a new integrated citizens portal “portal do cidadão” a joint effort amongst 20 public and private entities for improving citizens e-access. (www.cartaodecidadao.pt)

The Challenges

The goal of issuing an e-ID card was to revolutionize the way in which Portuguese citizens interact with the government. The card, which replaces five different physical ID documents including civil identification, taxation, voting, social security and healthcare cards, enables individuals to identify themselves both remotely and in front of officials.

The second goal was to use the card as a brand new tool for electronic signature and authentication fostering the development of electronic transactions and giving citizens peace of mind in the digital age.

For INCM (Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda SA), the Portuguese National Printing Office, it was another opportunity to further enhance their unique expertise after the electronic passport project.

The Solution

The Portuguese government selected a secure identification document, based on identification, authentication and signature (IAS) specifications – the first in Europe.

The e-ID document incorporating a smart card, the size of the credit card, will be the official ID document for Portuguese citizens and will enable them to communicate with their government administrations (Ministry of Interior, Finance, Health and Justice) in a secure, fast and simple manner.

The aim is to provide all Portuguese citizens with these high-end cards including built-in biometric feature (fingerprint) as their national ID document by the end of the decade.

To identify and authenticate themselves, cardholders enter a secret pin code and the card then generates a digital signature for secure declarations and e-administrative procedures. This application provides the required cryptographic means for secure access to e-government services portal. It will allow for multi-channel identity authentication, namely in presence, through the Internet, or by telephone (with a one time password generated with the card), permitting the citizen to identify himself electronically and dispose of an electronic signature. As the Portuguese constitution forbids a single central database for names, several identifiers can be found on the citizen card, at the front and back of the card (Civil ID number, social security number, tax number, healthcare user number).

In 2006, INCM selected Gemalto as prime contractor to provide the digital security solution for the national eID card (Sealyx eID), including the secure operating system, the personalization system (Coesys Issuance solution) as well as the applications, the middleware and associated helpdesk services with Zetes Burótica, the Portuguese subsidiary of Belgian Zetes Industries.

Due to the visual nature of identity cards, high security printing techniques were used on the card body itself augmenting the physical security of the document.

The Results

A first pilot phase started February 14, 2007 in the Azores region. Full roll-out started in 2008 and more than 7 million cards were in circulation in January 2012.

Numerous public services are now available online and procedures that would have taken hours (obtaining civil records/birth certificates, Social Security declaration, etc) now take a matter of seconds.

In 2007 Portugal ranked 3rd in terms of full online availability and 4th in terms of online sophistication. In 2009, Portugal shares the podium of the EC eGovernment benchmark with Malta on the two ‘traditional’ benchmark indicators. Both considered citizen and businesses services are fully online. The December 2010 report ‘Digitizing Public Services in Europe: Putting ambition into action - 9th Benchmark Measurement’ done for the EU commission showed that Portugal is now leading all 32 EU measured countries in the provision of online public services.

The citizen’s card is a new tool for electronic signature and authentication fostering the development of electronic transactions and giving citizens peace of mind in the digital age.
Key events and dates for Portugal

November 2011 – The Entrepreneur’s Desk, a national electronic one-stop shop for businesses, becomes available via the Business Portal. It serves as a single access point and present 462 services. Over 130 can be performed completely online.

AMA makes available on-line the source codes of several projects (e.g. Citizens’ Card, Dados.gov, Fix my street, Citizens Portal) to ease development process for all parties.

Between November 2010 and June 2011 – 452 new online services have become available on the national eGovernment portals aimed at citizens (Portal do Cidadão,) and businesses (Portal da Empresa,) respectively. This initiative - a mission of AMA - in collaboration with various government entities - aims to render the information for citizens and businesses simpler, clearer and more accessible.

February 2010 – Several Portuguese and Spanish eGov services have become interconnected. Portuguese businesses operating in the civil construction sector in Spain will be able to register their employees with the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Immigration online using a Citizen’s Card. Spanish citizens will have the possibility to set up a company online through the Portuguese Business Portal following identification with their national eID card (DNI electrónico).

April 2009 – The “Voting is Easy” campaign is launched. Simplified procedures allow young people of 17 years of age to be automatically registered. When they reach 18, they are eligible to vote by simply presenting their Identity or Citizenship cards.

June 2008 – The annual OECD report on eGov quotes “In a few years, Portugal exceeded the majority of the OECD countries in the development of services online”.

April 2008 - By 2 September 2008, 44,813 sales and purchases of vehicles have been registered online. Launched by the Ministry of Justice, Portugueses can register a new or used vehicle or trailer online with the new “Your Car Online”. Users can authenticate their transactions either with digital certificates, or using their Citizen Cards. Sales documents have to be digitalized and sent with the application. The fees for electronic registration are 50% lower than the fees for the paper-based registration. The payments can also be made electronically.

August 2007 – Following the Azores pilot, the Portuguese government has started rolling out its Citizen Card to recipients on the mainland.

February 2007 – Portugal issues the first e-ID card compliant with the IAS (Identification Authentication Signature) European standard, as defined by CEN 224 WG 15. Five services in a single card: identification, tax payment card, voting card, social insurance card, health card. Facial and digital biometrics are included in the chip.

Strategic Priorities

The aim of Portugal’s e-Government plan is to transform the public sector into an integrated and collaborative customer-oriented entity, thereby positioning Portugal among the leading countries in terms of quality of service to citizens and businesses. The increase in citizens’ satisfaction regarding these multichannel services delivered 24/7 should in time lead to a true international recognition of the quality on offer and a feeling of pride on the part of the citizens for their public services.

Portugal issues electronic residence permits

Early 2009, the Portuguese mint and national printing office, has begun issuing Gemalto’s Sealys Resident cards, compliant with the electronic European Residence Permit (eERP) specifications and the latest ICAO Extended Access Control standards. Gemalto will deliver 150,000 inlays per year over the next three years and has also supplied INCM with its Coesys Issuance personalization solution. Portugal is thus fulfilling the EU recommendation that requires all 27 member states to roll out the eERP from 2010.

The eERP card provides temporary residence entitlement for non-EU citizens. It embeds a contactless chip which securely stores biometric data, simplifying residency entitlement verification and also stores ID data for social security and tax affairs. The contactless interface is mandatory and meets the same EU standards as biometric ePassports.

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Portuguese “Citizen Shops”: making citizen-centric e-Government services a physical and human reality

The “citizen shops” contain many “information stations” whose role is to provide information at the request of users. The diversity of public bodies collaborating and participating in the services provided by public-service houses is a reflection of the global approach used. This covers the directorate general for social protection, civil servants, public agents, general pension funds, the directorate general for legal services which issues civil status certificates and extracts, the general inspectorate of economic activities and the directorate general for taxes (over 50 bodies are included). There are also relays from the Ministry of Health, the Post Office, the railways and the national tourism agency. Counters for companies and notaries are featured. Private sector organizations such as banks and telecommunication services are also involved. In addition, the “citizen shops” issue official documents: passports, identity cards and driving licenses in particular.

The citizen shops (Lojas do Cidadão) aim to concentrate the main public services in the same location, resembling a supermarket more than an administrative area. One of the main shops in Lisbon is over 10,000 m² on two floors connected by escalators and conveyor belts. A stylish building with 90 counters spread out and organized by type of activity with the style of a luxury department store. The picture shows a fully integrated shop in a shopping mall in the suburbs of Lisbon.

The “entrepreneurship counters” provide information and advice for any new business and the use of more general counters enables all administrative obligations and procedures for the allocation of aids and subsidies to be carried out.

The attention to detail offered by these new sites goes as far as incorporating citizens’ pleasure and emphasizing the citizen in his relationship with public-sector services. With the new “boutiques” located in shopping centers, information panels located on every floor provide information on the queuing times at different counters, offering citizens the choice of doing some shopping or relaxing at a café until their turn comes at the counter they are waiting for.

Another example of the attention to detail is to have dared to embark on a purely semantic front-office approach for the service, with the paths to follow marked out and with all-integrating terminals - “I’ve lost my wallet”, “I’d like to take my retirement”, “I’d like to create my own business in an hour”, etc. The aim of these counters is to mask the complexity of the interoperability of the services in the background. One of the most important innovations is the new user-reception models, multiservice and integrated services, available in the face-to-face way (Citizen’s Shop and Municipalities).

The multi-services desk, provides a generalist, multifunctional service based on user reception scripts and knowledge bases, and applies to services with a low level of specialization that are provided in a single, quick interaction (more than 60 products from 20 different public entities, more than 100,000 user visits in 2008). The integrated desk offers a service which is geared towards certain events or processes that are important to people: replacing stolen documents, “I Lost my wallet”, in a single point contact the citizens can replace 5 personal documents from 8 different entities (more than 40,000 user visits in 2008).

The Senior Desk (services from central and local government for older people in a single point contact) is available in 3 cities. Source: http://www.epractice.eu/en/cases/2gpcs , October 2009.