Strategy

Over the past few decades, information and communication technologies have revolutionized public services.

At first, change affected the internal procedures of each and every department; Then, public services began to relate to citizens and businesses in a different way,. Gradually, departments began sharing information, and this was followed by the integration of separate services, which became increasingly user-oriented.

The redesigning of public services according to users’ life events (such as establishing a company or registering a newborn baby), the second generation of citizens’ shops, the citizens and business portals are just a few examples that reflect very clearly the advantages for Portuguese citizens of an integrated approach to public service provision.

But the impact of technologies didn’t just benefit the users of the Internet. The development of online services also contributed to improve face-to-face contacts in public services. The materials prepared for web-based services are also being made available by phone and provided in face-to-face contacts allowing for much quicker responses in a standardized fashion.

E-government and regulatory and administrative simplification were acknowledged as the two faces of a single coin, with technology providing the necessary tools to move from laws and regulations to actual procedures. The drive towards simplification has highlighted the added value that technologies can bring to administrative efficiency, networking and improved quality of public services.

In Portugal, the SIMPLEX programme embodies such values and principles since 2006.
SIMPLEX is a comprehensive simplification programme aimed at cutting red tape, improving the interaction between citizens and public services, turning Portugal into a more competitive economy and bringing about a more efficient public administration. The SIMPLEX programme is managed transparently and regularly reports on its stated goals and targets. It is an example of a new approach to public services based on turning obstacles into challenges and perceiving problems as advantages.

Would anyone have imagined, at the dawn of the new century, that a company could be established in less than an hour and with no paperwork involved?

The very rapid and fundamental changes that have taken place have made citizens more demanding. They present new opportunities and require from all of us, in Government and Administration, an additional effort to meet citizen expectations.

Brace yourselves for new surprises …

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