

Lessons learned - Advertisement for public sector services (SEED Project)

Submitted on 26 May 2014 by Alejandro Echeverria

Public sector information (PSI), sometimes referred to as government data, refers to all the information that public bodies produce, collect or pay for (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2013). Examples include geographical information, statistics, weather data, data from publicly funded research projects, and digitised books from libraries.

Although PSI represents a large market in Europe (estimated at around €30 billion (Kroes, 2010)), on average less than 41% of citizens are impacted by it (European Commission, 2010).

A large amount of pre-existing investments in e-Government back-offices, platforms and services are available across Europe, deploying a wide set of services. However, in most cases efforts are duplicated, little to no reuse of e-Government data is implemented, and obsolete technologies are still put in place.

The aim of the [“Speeding Every European Digital” \(SEED\)](#) solution is to boost “citizen-centric” e-Government services. It aims to maximise the reuse of European, national, regional and local stocks of PSI, and to leverage saving costs of e-Government and e-Governance deployments through a cloud computing approach and a cheap network of interactive PSA nodes. SEED reuses existing PSI, making mash-ups of e-Government contents for raising citizens’ awareness about e-Government services available across Europe. It is about transforming PSI in interactive advertisement messages.

Over the past year, a series of evaluation actions have taken place, helping us to extract initial conclusions that the interactive public service advertisement (i-PSA) advantage of SEED makes the administrative e-services that were deployed in the past more efficient:

- It offers governments the opportunity to deliver services “very fast, very cheap and with little upfront investment”; proposing solutions that change the way things have previously been done.
 - SEED highlights several inefficiencies seen in government agencies, such as the duplication of systems and stagnation of innovation.
 - Multi-channel interaction: starting on one device (awareness), continuing on another device (engagement).
 - Being interactive guarantees that content and message delivery will be easy to implement, adapt and impact to target audiences - due to the combination of inclusive interfaces and ICT multi-channel capabilities.
 - The friendliness of the SEED service, as highlighted by citizens, can easily spot the playlist, understand the meaning of the advertisements, and realise how to interact at that time or later.
 - Scalability, affordability and long-term sustainability of SEED SaaS, delivered from cloud, is something that appeals to users even in the case of government. This is because most surveyed people are looking for solutions capable of managing a wide range of data and integrate a wide range of different infrastructures (pre-existing or new). Also, for public authority staff, being able to customise and manage all the information (from any place through any device) has always been a highly desirable feature – one that they have now found in SEED.
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However, the results found when examining the impact of SEED were not always positive. The evaluation and validation activities also helped us to better understand the weakness of SEED solution (SEED Consortium, 2013). Although supporting the Open Data movement, it was found that many PAs do not publish their content in a re-usable format (RSS, Atom etc.), instead using non-re-usable approaches (static Web pages, PDF documents etc.).

Considering this, the partners of SEED had to “evangelise” PAs in relation to the advantages of open data alternatives, and help various content providers to publish their content through re-usable alternatives (such as RSS feeds).

Although most public administration officers and pilots’ staff (90%) agree that information delivered through SEED is up to date, in the case of third-party sources, it is out of SEED’s control to ensure updated content - resulting in outdated messages on public displays.

You can read the **full paper** [“The good, the bad and the beauty of advertisement for public sector services”](#) by Daniel Pop (Institute e-Austria; Timisoara, Romania), Vasiliki MOUNTZI (Balkan Services, Sofia, Bulgaria), and Josefina Farinos (IDI EIKON, Valencia, Spain).

For further exploration of the topic, check out the upcoming workshop [“Open Data and Public Service Advertising: A European cloud of opportunities”](#) taking place in Riga (Latvia) this June.