A Universal Design Approach to Government Service Delivery: The Case of ChileAtiende

Leonardo SANDOVAL[1]
University of York, United Kingdom

Abstract. A common challenge for government administrations that aim to improve the delivery of information and services to citizens is to go beyond a government-centred approach. By focusing on citizens and the needs of a wide range of citizens, Universal Design (UD) can help to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction of government services. This paper examines the case of an internationally recognised Chilean government service delivery programme inspired by UD principles known as ChileAtiende ("ChileService"). A brief account of its creation and current status is provided.

Keywords. Universal Design, government services, citizen-centred services, multi-channel service delivery

1. Introduction

Since the 2000's Chile has consistently been recognised as an innovative leader in digital government in the Latin American region [1,2,3,4,5,6,7]. This paper presents a case study of a successful and internationally recognised government service delivery programme in Chile known as ChileAtiende. The first section of this paper briefly summarises the context of government service delivery in Chile from the 1990's. The second section describes how the ChileAtiende programme was created and how it used Universal Design principles to improve the delivery of information and services. The third section summarises the main results and current status of the programme.

2. The path towards integrated government service delivery in Chile

One of the main innovations of ChileAtiende was the adoption of an integrated approach to service delivery. Before ChileAtiende was introduced, service delivery in the Chilean government during the 1990's was characterised by a traditional *government-centred* approach [8], in which services were created and delivered according to the needs and structure of the government. Government agencies independently defined their own mechanisms to provide information and services without any form of interoperability. One of the main disadvantages of this approach was that citizens' interactions with the

---

[1] Corresponding Author. Human Computer Interaction Research Group, Department of Computer Science, University of York, York YO10 5GH, United Kingdom; E-mail: lfsg500@york.ac.uk.

government were constrained by its fragmentary structure. In order to access information, services or benefits related to their needs, citizens had to interact with different institutions at the same time. The lack of access to local government agencies in small towns and rural areas also forced citizens to travel great distances to reach the nearest centre in an urban area. Since not all agencies were represented in all urban areas, whenever a citizen needed interacting with more than one agency this could also result in traveling to more than one city.

According to a recent OECD report [9] the Chilean government pioneered in the use of e-government services amongst Latin American countries in the 2000's. This contributed to improving service delivery by making government information and services available online. Early attempts at integrating government services online led to the launch of the projects Tramitefacil ("EasyProcedure") in 2003 which was replaced by ChileClic in 2008, and the PISEE (State Integrated Electronic Services Platform) introduced in 2010.

According to an internal report of the Chilean Digital Development Agency [10], by April 2011, the ChileClic website provided access to information for more than 1700 government services from more than 140 public institutions. By 2010, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recognised ChileClic as one of the best examples of making government procedures available online (UNCTAD, 2010) [11].Despite its success and international recognition, ChileClic still required improvement. Although information about services was widely available it was usually expressed in the technical or legal language that characterised government institutions. Only a small number of procedures were available completely online, and most of them were available only as static forms that citizens had to download, print and submit to government agencies in physical format. Although the idea of a one-stop-portal for all e-government services had been proposed in the first Chilean Digital Agenda in 2004 [12], these websites still replicated the fragmentary structure of government services and lacked a truly citizen centred approach to service delivery. In fact, unlike ChileAtiende, ChileClic was only an online directory of services and lacked functional integration between public institutions and other service delivery channels.

As previously mentioned, another important attempt toward the integration of government services was the PISEE, an interoperability system that allowed government institutions to exchange information using XML metadata schemes. The creation of the interoperability network and the validation of the initial set of official XML metadata schemes was a rather slow process. Although the PISEE project started in 2006 [13] it only became fully operational in 2010. At that time only 6 out of 250 government institutions successfully used this system for exchanging information related to just 26 procedures [14]. Although the technical interoperability offered by the PISEE was promising, its slow growth rate made effective integrated service delivery a distant and difficult goal to reach in the foreseeable future.

3. ChileAtiende

3.1. Background

The first decade of electronic government in Chile in the 2000's gave rise to early initiatives towards integrated service delivery such as TramiteFacil, ChileClic and the PISEE. However, by 2011 despite the widespread use of electronic systems to provide

information *about* government services, effective access to these services was still difficult due to the lack of institutional integration, the low rates of interoperability and lack of digitalisation of government services. Citizens still had to interact with a fragmentary service delivery system both offline and online spending time and effort to access government services.

In terms of Universal Design principles it was necessary to provide an *equitable, flexible, simple* and *effortless* system focused on the needs of citizens rather than the inner structure of the government. Providing such a *citizen-centred* system was one of the main objectives of the 2010-2014 Electronic Government Strategy [15] and of ChileAtiende in particular.

3.2. Setting up ChileAtiende's network

Drawing on the experience of successful international initiatives such as eCitizen (Singapore), Service Canada (Canada) and Centrelink (Australia), ChileAtiende was conceived as a service network rather than just a website. The main aim of the network was to facilitate access to government services by adopting a multichannel strategy. This strategy comprised, physical services centres distributed across the country, an online portal, a free dedicated phone line, and dedicated social media accounts.

The main strategy followed by ChileAtiende to address the slow pace of service integration was to shift its focus from technological to organisational interoperability. The main aim of this shift was to consolidate a true *whole-of-government* approach which has been defined by the United Nations [7] as "agencies working across portfolio boundaries to jointly achieve integrated responses to the issues of policy development, program management and service delivery" (p.75) Thus, a horizontal collaboration network was created with the participation of 19 institutions that provided key services to citizens under the coordination of the government's Modernisation and Digital Government Unit. Services from these member institutions could be accessed simultaneously at all service centres in the network.

Setting up the physical infrastructure of the network was an important challenge in the initial phases of the project. In order to reduce costs and increase the efficiency in setting up this network, the project utilised the existing infrastructure of the largest participating institution [16]. Thus, when ChileAtiende was launched in 2012 it already had 142 services centres distributed across the country.

In order to communicate this change a new corporate identity was created. This identity was not restricted to decorative and information materials, but also involved the development of a renewed citizen service ethos. This involved a change management strategy in which public service agents no longer represented a particular institution but the whole network. For this purpose, public service agents working in service centres and call centres were specially trained in citizen service techniques, the procedures and services of participating institutions, and the use of ChileAtiende's information portal.

The information portal www.ChileAtiende.cl was also designed from a citizen centred perspective in terms of content and organisation. Previous studies on the quality of e-government services in Chile informed this process. Focus groups with citizens were used to identify the most important aspects of their experiences interacting with the government online. In order to generate the most appropriate information architecture for the website, a team of designers conducted collaborative card sorting sessions. A specialised team of communication experts set a common standard for publishing ChileAtiende's content. Based on this standard, and in collaboration with a designated

representative in each government public agency this team curated the contents from the database of the old ChileClic website. Curating these contents was consider essential to ensure that contents were updated, simple, easy to understand, and presented in a consistent manner speaking the citizens' language free of technical and legal jargon.

3.3. ChileAtiende as an example of Universal Design

From a Universal Design perspective, it is clear that ChileAtiende has effectively contributed to make government services *equitable, flexible, simple* and *effortless*.

Equitable access to services:

in order to address the lack of access to government services of citizens in rural areas and small towns, ChileAtiende has created a large network of more than 200 services centres distributed across the country.

Flexible access to services:

ChileAtiende provides citizens with different information channels to accommodate a wide range of preferences and needs. Citizens can use social media, the

Simple access to services:

ChileAtiende provides access to more than 2.200 information services and about 200 fully transactional services online. The contents and organisation of ChileAtiende's portal are continuously improved using a citizen centred approach.

Effortless access to services:

service centres provide citizens with access to information from several government institutions in one place, thus reducing the need to travel to several locations. Citizens can also contact network agents online using social media and by phone using a dedicated free phone line. As of June 2016, ChileAtiende has five mobile service centres that travel the country visiting isolated communities in rural areas and small towns bringing government services closer to people.

4. ChileAtiende's results and current status

In four years the network has grown significantly and has achieved outstanding results. Today ChileAtiende is integrated by 31 institutions which are represented in 202 service centres throughout Chile. In the last four years ChileAtiende has provided more than 35 million services to citizens. ChileAtiende's website has been completely renovated as a result of user experience studies conducted with citizens. This website currently offers more than 2200 information services and the number of procedures that can be fully completed online has increased from 26 in 2010 to 187. An independent study about citizen's satisfaction with ChileAtiende found that 89% of ChileAtiende's users expressed a high level of satisfaction with their services [17].

References

[1] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2003: E-government at the Crossroads. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2003).
[2] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2004: Towards Access for Opportunity. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2004).
[3] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2005: From E-Government to E-Inclusion. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2005).

[4] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2008: From E-Government to Connected Governance. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2008).

[5] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2010: Leveraging E-government at a Time of Financial and Economic Crisis. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2010).

[6] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2012: E-Government for the People. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2012);

[7] UNDESA: United Nations Global E-government Survey 2014: E-Government for the Future We Want. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, USA (2014).

[8] Ho, A.T.-K.: Reinventing Local Governments and the E-Government Initiative. Public Administration Review. 62, 434–444 (2002).

[9] Kapellman, D. (2015) Chile: Leading but lacking in e-governance. In OECD Insights [Online] http://oecdinsights.org/2015/06/10/chile-leading-but-lacking-in-e-governance/

[10] Varas, S. (2011) Uso de redes sociales en instituciones públicas - Caso ChileClic. (Spanish only) Digital Development Agency, Government of Chile. [Online] http://www.socinfo.es/contenido/seminarios/redessociales/chile.pdf

[11] UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2010) UN Public investment in administrative efficiency for business facilitation – sharing best practices. United Nations, Geneva. [Online] http://unctad.org/en/Docs/ciid8_en.pdf

[12] Grupo de Acción Digital (2004) Agenda Digital Chile 2004-2006 (Spanish only) [Online] http://www.agendadigital.gob.cl/files/otros/AGENDA_DIGITAL_2004-2006.pdf

[13] World Bank (2008) Chile: Estudio de evaluación en profundidad del programa de mejoramiento de la gestión (PMG) (Spanish only). World Bank. [Online] http://www.dipres.gob.cl/595/articles-141077_informe_final.pdf

[14] Digital Observatory (2016) Interoperabilidad (Spanish only). Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency, Government of Chile. [Online] http://www.observatoriodigital.gob.cl/gobierno-digital-al-dia/interoperabilidad-1

[15] Modernisation and Digital Government Unit (2011) Interoperabilidad (Spanish only). Ministry General Secretariat of the Presidency, Government of Chile. . [Online] http://www.observatoriodigital.gob.cl/sites/default/files/estrategia_gobierno_electronico_2010-2014_chile.pdf

[16] Open Government Partnership (2013) CHILE Bringing Government Closer to Citizens. [Online] http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Chile.pdf

[17] IPSOS.(2012) Estudio de Evaluación de la Experiencia del Usuario con los Servicios de ChileAtiende para los canales Presencial y Telefónico [Online] http://www.observatoriodigital.gob.cl/sites/default/files/informe_final_ipsos_0.pdf