

SVGGOV Mobile: The government in your hands

In small island states such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines the government service is critical to every aspect of life. Numerous of calls and emails are made each day to and from government bodies enquiring about how to perform certain tasks or where to go to get things done or who to talk to or where to find a particular piece of information. Over time, this amounts to lots of time taken away from work duties across the entire government service and identifies a particular inefficiency with regards to access to information.

Our idea is to develop an online knowledge base for the government service and make it accessible and searchable using your mobile or what ever device you're using. The development and management of the content will be distributed across the various ministries, department and statutory bodies of the government. This way, no one department is burdened with the task and overtime the knowledgebase will naturally have comprehensive coverage of the entire public service.

At the core of this application will be a well-designed MySQL relational database, which stores the information in an HTML format for presentational purposes. The government service will be modeled according to the hierarchy of the ministries, offices, departments and statutory bodies. The knowledgebase will then be grouped according to these bodies to facilitate advanced searches and selective filtering.

To facilitate the administration of the application, there will be a control panel for both administrators and content creators. The administrators will be responsible for creating new user accounts for the various departments along with managing reported content that may be inaccurate, have grammatical errors or may have been published as a result of misuse. In each government body or office, persons will be chosen as content creators for the system. These content creators will have the responsibility for creating and editing content in the application pertaining to their department.

Primarily, the application will be a search engine for the government service. Users can search the knowledgebase using any criteria. Items will be returned in order of relevancy. If a particular item is not available then it can be requested from the relevant body through the application. The application will connect to the data store through a custom Application Programming Interface (API).

Even though the main essential feature of the application is access to a knowledgebase, other features can be easily developed if time permits. For e.g., the app can be allowed to check the status of passports, licenses, permits, bills, etc. Other interesting features will be to have profiles for Senior Officials, Permanent Secretaries and Ministers. Also we can publish data such as statistics, news, events, educational articles and speech transcripts

This idea is innovative because it drastically increases the efficiency of the government service by making its information accessible to the public. This is one step towards developing a government that is open and transparent as in developed countries such as the UK and USA. Because of the way the application is designed, the information can be made available to any developer who wants to use the information programmatically by exposing the API to the public.

The target audience is locals, the Diaspora and other persons such as outside investors, prospective visitors and international agencies.

It is expected that this application will help the government save money or resources but that's yet to be realized. The increase in efficiency and the satisfaction of users can be quantified in some way.

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