

# Transferring Practices for Building Up Citizen Service Portals

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Internet, wie  
Menschen denken.

## Agenda

- ✓ net-value's services
- ✓ The history and its findings
  - HELP in Austria [www.help.gv.at](http://www.help.gv.at)
  - service-bw.de in Baden-Württemberg [www.service-bw.de](http://www.service-bw.de)
  - amt24 in Saxony [www.amt24.sachsen.de](http://www.amt24.sachsen.de)
  - Content kommunal in Germany and Austria [www.content-kommunal.de](http://www.content-kommunal.de)
- ✓ Obstacles to transferring practices
- ✓ Our proposals for an effective transfer of practices

## net-value and Our Services

- ✓ Founded in 1996
- ✓ Offices in Vienna and Stuttgart
- ✓ 25 employees
  - Mainly „writers“ and project managers
- ✓ Services for e-Government platforms
  - Working out basic concepts for portals
  - Consulting for project development and requirements for IT/CMS
  - Development of project standards
    - Detail structure, navigation
    - Style guide, wording guide
    - Editorial organisation, clearance processes, quality management
  - Running editorial offices for customers
    - Investigation, writing, proofreading
    - Partner Management
  - No IT-services, no programming

## HELP – the Central Austrian Citizen Portal - 1

- ✓ Started in 1996 as „idea“ by net-value, named „Republik Online“
  - ✓ Ordered in 1997 by Ministry of Finance, funded by Telekom Austria
  - ✓ Project strategy
    - Pragmatic approach „*trying before long term planning*“
    - 1. Information – 2. Communication – 3. Transaction
  - ✓ General project management by the ministry
    - *Self-confident, but sensitive – technical orientation*
    - *BRZ/Bundesrechenzentrum responsible for CMS and serving*
  - ✓ All content related jobs by net-value - up till today
    - *Concept, content-structure and standards, writing, partner management*
  - ✓ „Life Situations“ as basis of structure are developed
    - Easy understandable for everybody and transferrable
  - ✓ 8 Life situations as a start, presented to the public end of 1997
    - Birth, Marriage, Death, Car, Passport ...
- Nobody thought of transferring any practices at this point ...**

## HELP – the Following Years 1998 – 2000 - 2

- ✓ It works!
- ✓ Finance Minister and his State Secretary start to like it
  - Discovered the political power and pushed the project
  - A government bill for help is presented to the Austrian Government: all ministries have to cooperate!
- ✓ Partners are taken in
  - In ministries, federal states, social security, institutions
- ✓ Systematic quality management methods are introduced
  - Proofreading, clearance process, wording guide, style guide became necessary
- ✓ Open reader forums with Q & A per life situation are offered
  - 1998 a *brave* decision of the project management of the ministry became a CSF
- ✓ Presentation at Austrian EU presidency
  - Demonstration on how European national portals could be linked ...

→ We learned by doing, what our practices have to be ...

## HELP – 2000 Till Now - 3

- ✓ Federal Chancellery took over in the year 2000
- ✓ General project management by the ministry
  - 2000 – 2006 „open-communicative“ for partners from public management and needs of public management - less technical
  - Mid 2006 – now „integration and network growth“
- ✓ Municipalities are becoming partners
  - In 2000 - by hyperlinking
  - In 10/2007 – by Content Syndication: municipalities can use HELP-contents in their own layout and get central updates
- ✓ HELP is getting barrier-free (WAI A to AAA in 2005)
- ✓ Target group orientation towards youngsters and seniors
- ✓ Today: 150 Life Situations published

## What Made HELP Successful?

- ✓ The early start in 1996
- ✓ A strong project owner at the ministry from the start
  - Politicians came later
- ✓ The strict citizen orientation
- ✓ The *Life Situation* approach
- ✓ The strict central approach: one portal for Austria overall
- ✓ Technique was supporting, but never leading
- ✓ The strict way:
  1. Information
  2. Communication
  3. Transaction
- ✓ Outsourcing of project development to a private content company
  - For a ministry it is too delicate to investigate, to write, to discuss texts with other ministries - and even more delicate within their own one ...

## Baden-Württemberg - Background

- ✓ Project owner: Ministry of the Interior of Baden-Württemberg
  - IT and administration reform departments
- ✓ In the tender 2001 HELP is mentioned as positive example
- ✓ T-Systems wins with „Z-Finder“ as general contractor
- ✓ net-value as subcontractor for contents since 2002
- ✓ Project strategy – *different* to HELP
  - Strong, detailed technical concept, looking several years forward
  - Based on Life Situations - but structured stronger
  - „Competence Finder“ incorporates 10.000 addresses
  - Close integration of municipality-websites
  - Workflow integration for editorial office
- ✓ Today: 41 life situations with 630 procedures
- **The will to take over practices from HELP exists!**

## Ba-Wü – Transferring the HELP Competence

- ✓ The situation at the *content* project start
  - A structure and technical basis is already designed by T-Systems
  - „Swabian perfection“ in technique, but also in content requirements
  - No concept for content making: „Start *writing* on coming Monday!“
- ✓ The necessary *fast* action – but already *within* the project ...
  - Get editorial staff (first from Vienna, later in Stuttgart)
  - Define content standards
    - Organisation and work flow
    - Wording guide, style guide
    - Quality management
  - Information and motivation work for partners in Baden-Württemberg

**→The will for taking over practices was there, but it was mainly related to technique!**

## The practices transferred from HELP to Ba-Wü

### ✓ Project development

- How to work out quality assured citizen-oriented texts with partners from ministries

### ✓ Standards

- Style guide
- Wording guide
- Proofreading

### ✓ Organisation

- Building up of editorial office
- Work flow
- Clearance system
- Partner management

### ✓ Structures

- Life Situation System
- Details of content structure

## Saxony – Basis „Another Situation Again ...“

- ✓ *Start in 2004*
- ✓ *State Ministry of Saxony is the project owner*
- ✓ *Close cooperation between IT and PR-department*
- ✓ *Contents are the core!*
- ✓ → *Therefore a content related pre-project is introduced*
  - *Content definition, standards definition, project organisation*
  - *Partner information*
- ✓ *Technical tender follows with the findings of pre-project*
  - *T-Systems wins – with some changes of the BaWü Z-Finder*

→ **Saxony used *all* findings and practices of other countries**

## Saxony – the „Ideal Practice Transfer“ – It Paid!

- ✓ Well prepared: the pre-project took 2 months, but saved time
  - Definition of contents and content structures
  - Setting of standards: organisation, wording, layout, quality
  - Information and motivation for ministries, institutions and towns
- ✓ Main project
  - Everybody was prepared!
  - Technical implementation was in line with contents
    - Smooth and in time, several „circles“ from IT to Text spared
  - Information and motivation secured a harmonic project introduction
    - Ministries proactively wanted to cooperate!
  - Contents of Baden-Württemberg were used, but had to be adjusted
- ✓ Good project basis supports the project till today
  - Ministries cooperate, municipalities use the integration actively
  - Content exchange between Baden-Württemberg, Saxony and Saarland

## The Findings Used: *Content kommunal*

### ✓ Distribution System for e-Government Standard Contents

- Municipalities can present standard contents at their website with their own design
- Implementable in short time in the homepages by PHP Include and others
- Customization for „specials“ of the user
  - Names, maps, fees, special support, special procedures ...
- Central update – does not destroy the specials of the municipalities
- Concepted and built by net-value

### ✓ Germany

- T-Systems as sales partner – many interested municipalities, but long decisions
- New: established CMS-Supplier will integrate it in their package

### ✓ Austria

- Federal Chancellery is using the basis for general contents
  - Also ministries will use it and present „their own themes“ supported by HELP
- net-value sells content to municipalities with customization feature

## Obstacles to Transferring Practices - 1

### Who sells?

- Although being a good reference, a government usually is a bad salesman ...
- Specialised (here: content) companies are willing, but the necessary investment is mostly too high and too risky
  - Very complex, long decision phases, very political decisions
  - Pre-investments – like pre-project phases - are demanded free of charge

### What?

- „Practices“ is a very fuzzy term
- States usually want to buy concrete things and are afraid to buy „consultancy“

### To whom?

- Which department of which ministry? Is there a minister who stands behind the project? Is that accepted by his people?
- The citizen-portal-projects are somewhere between IT, Organisation and PR
- Different ministries – different cultures – different views
- Some ministries are built for cooperation, others not

## Obstacles to Transferring Practices - 2

- ✓ The *Not-Invented-Here-Syndrome* is widely spread
  - States and especially federal states „want to do it better than their neighbours“
  - Nearly no IT-packages on the market for *content* AND *applications*
  - IT-suppliers affirm that opinion and like to offer their specials ...
  - ... and are preferred by their governments due to lack of knowledge
  - „do we really need these Ösis (Austrians) for that?“
  
- ✓ Other understanding of project targets and phasing
  - Other understanding of the meaning of terms
  - Other people, other culture → other project culture
  - E.g. e-services for the citizens are good ... but useless before information for the citizen is offered about the why, who, when, how

## Obstacles to Transferring Practices 3

- ✓ Many practices are developed for one-time implementation
  - Pragmatically developed
  - No systematic standards and methods
  - No documentation
  - Nobody who could transfer it
  - The idea of transfer comes later ... and might be politically influenced
  
- ✓ Specialists - for e-Government contents - are rare
  - Small markets in many countries
  - Long, extensive and politically influenced decision phases
  - Some governments are not prepared to pay for know-how transfer and establishment of standards

## The Obvious Obstacles Are Not the Big Problem!

### ✓ Language

- Methods, standards and project development strategies are important Critical Success Factors. They are easy to translate.

### ✓ Legal

- With the right methods and standards, the legal differences are sorted out (the editorial team has to be local anyway).

### ✓ Structures of administration

- With good will, you manage it – the parallels are stronger than you would think!

## Our Thoughts on Improving Transfer of Practices - 1

- ✓ A central proactive „sales support“ with top down approach
  - ✓ Listing with recommendable practices
    - Addressing the political level and the administrative level
    - Sales support by the *objective EU* makes it *easier for the countries to accept* the support
  
- ✓ Stronger focus on private business
  - Stronger inclusion of private offerings
  - Stronger support for the producers of the solutions - less for the „customers“
  - The executing, private companies should get the financial support, not the states (sorry!).
    - *E.g. reference contacts*
  - A system in which governments demand all copyrights of the project is contra-productive. Often the public administrations claim the creatorship, and knowledge-transfer is done without integration of the producers.

## Our Thoughts on Improving Transfer of Practices - 2

### ✓ Practice controll by EU

- Every country wants to sell everything
- As neutral instance
- Sorting out transferrable practices from non-transferrables
- Support making practices transferrable

### ✓ Supporting pre-start phases with money AND resource

- Pre-start phases secure the project and are relatively low priced!
- Support the „real transfer“ of practices by being active in project steering committees
- Give proactive reference that „consulting for project-development“ is necessary

**Thank you!**

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