Joint Councils Executive Report on Trends this Month

Citizen-centred service, with a focus on customer experience and citizen-driven public sector, was a key theme this month…

Key Insights – Citizen-driven public sector:

Working towards a citizen-driven public sector was also a key theme this month, following the publication of a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled "Digital Government Review of Colombia, Towards a citizen-driven public sector". The review is structured along four thematic axes: 1) Governance frameworks, 2) Transparency participation and collaboration, 3) Data for a citizen-driven public sector and, 4) Coherent policy implementation.

Other Noteworthy Articles this month:

How the City of Mississauga uses mobile technology to engage workers and citizens alike, IT World Canada

Blockchain has potential to improve government services and transparency, Conference Board of Canada Report

Key Insights – Customer experience:

User-centred design is high on the list of skills that many public-sector agencies want to improve. Ensuring that government services have intuitive user-centric interfaces like those offered by the private sector is a priority for many jurisdictions.

Recently, three state governments' biggest design proponents explained why and how a new approach to user-centered design should be considered. Their advice includes: 1) you might not need a mobile app 2) don't get in the way of helping the user (with too much content) and, 3) though time consuming, user research is also reusable. Read more here.

Newfoundland and Labrador's government announced that they are going digital with service delivery, and plan to spend $8 million over five years for a new web portal. "Leveraging digital is both improving efficiency and effectiveness, but also improving the actual delivery of the services, so it's a better outcome for citizens, which is exciting," said Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Technology Industry chair Kendra MacDonald.

The government of New Brunswick announced a five-year digital strategy that would allow residents to access their information and government services from "any device, anywhere, at any time." Treasury Board President Roger Melanson said the province aims to be the first jurisdiction in North America to provide government services digitally. Read the digital strategy here.

The CEO at a growing technology company listed the core activities for improving customer service experience online in 2018.

Other Noteworthy Articles related to Citizen-centred service:

AI-enhanced experiences: a new way to connect with customers, IBM

Governments need to deliver on the high expectations of digital citizens, e-governance academy

This Month's Feature: 5 things to understand when you are considering Big Data as part of your service delivery strategy

Here are 5 considerations that are coming up often in the searches we have been doing and reflect some of the activity happening in Canada.

Blockchain: [McKinsey believes that blockchain can be used to improve data management](#). Last month we discussed privacy and identity management as the feature of the month. Blockchain is an important concept in the simplification of the management of trusted information, making it easier for government agencies to access and use critical public-sector data while maintaining the security of this information. Similarly, blockchain makes an appearance this month, because although Governments normally know a lot about individuals and organizations, it is often not used to the fullest possible extent. This is, in part, because public agencies cannot, make sensitive data accessible indiscriminately. Blockchain can help by creating an environment in which data can easily be shared across systems but in which individuals and organizations can take back ownership of their data and control the flow of personal information—who sees it, what they see, and when. Each person or organization could have all relevant data about them (basic personal information, for instance, or records of previous interactions with government agencies) stored in a dedicated ledger within an encrypted blockchain database. Individuals or companies could access these ledgers through the Internet. End users could then give government agencies the authority to read or change specific elements of their individual ledger using public- and private-key cryptography. They could use public keys to selectively share information relating to a particular service transaction with agencies. Or they could issue private keys to agencies for one-time "write" access to their data.

Virtual Agents: Watson has been a topic of conversation and was featured in a past Executive Report, but there is more than just Watson on the market. Cognitive systems are developing rapidly, championed by software giants IBM, Apple, Google, Facebook and Microsoft. Among their advantages, they are able to detect tone of voice, so they can tell when people become frustrated or angry and act accordingly. KPMG wrote a [report](#) on the subject, where they talked about the opportunity to use agents in the context of big data. For instance, they indicate that, "Governments have a lot of data, particularly text contained in documents. Because cognitive systems have natural processing capabilities and can understand language and text, there is big area of opportunity. For example, they can be used to go through years of child protection services case notes and understand systemic issues that may exist." In addition to discussing the fact that there is an opportunity to blend the work of virtual agents with real ones, they

also raise the point that the cost of processing power is plummeting and that "processing power equal to a human brain will be available for roughly $1,000 within the next 20 years".

Chatbots: Brookings Institute describes chatbots as "computer programs that leverage machine learning and artificial intelligence to complete tasks while mimicking human conversation". Chatbots depend on learning from the data they receive and answers provided. In addition to being used to answer simple and repeated questions, Brookings highlighted that public agencies can use chatbots to receive instant feedback and understand citizens' perspectives about issues. For example, "Gwinnett County in the Atlanta metro area used Textizen, an interactive text messaging platform, to engage residents about the future of local transportation. The effort focused on collecting residents' comments and opinions about improving county transportation services. The county received more than 1,400 survey responses and 2,700 text survey responses in a week, and the data is presented visually to track progress over time. By using chatbots to conduct surveys and gather information in real-time, public agencies are opening up new avenues to hear citizens' voices about issues facing communities".

Artificial Intelligence: In its report that many of you looked at this month, IBM identified that 52% of companies they surveyed planned to use AI insights for their CX strategies.

Harvard Business Review reported on ways that AI could help in the public sector, including help to make welfare payments and immigration decisions, detect fraud, plan new infrastructure projects, answer citizen queries, adjudicate bail hearings, triage health care cases, and establish drone paths. Key to these solutions will be the decisions around which tasks will be handed over to machines and how governments should spend the labor time saved by artificial intelligence.

Predictive Analytics: According to the Government Technology website "Predictive analytics is the use of historical data to look for patterns and identify trends, which can be used to reorganize service delivery, anticipate future needs and prevent potential problems". They go on to identify the following challenges that Governments must meet to be successful and call on Governments to:

• Clarify the public value that can be gained from data by focusing on the opportunities to improve outcomes rather than outputs.

• Reorganize government structure so that officials do not need to operate within narrow, activity-driven verticals, but instead engage agencies in government-wide actions.

• Break away from the status quo and change the government's default to being open to data sharing and collaboration.

- Invest in trained personnel and appropriate technology to successfully use predictive analytics for future savings.
- Figure out how to collect usable data and overcome the notion that the data being used needs to be perfect.

The end of the article includes some great examples of successes [here](#).

We would love to hear from you!

For this month, we have touched the surface by choosing 5 good reports looking at these topics. Which of these areas is your organization focusing on and where would you like to see us dig deeper to get you answers to your burning questions? Let us know and we can feature it for you. Send your questions to Info@iccs-isac.org.