

By Harley Dennett Monday February 9, 2015

Home FEATURES

Kenya and the digital service revolution we're waiting for



Australians send billions of text messages every year; it's one of those seamless interactions now taken for granted.

That type of virtually effortless efficiency is becoming the norm in developing countries like Kenya, Tanzania and India.

Many of the technology-based innovations that are being enabled by governments aren't limited to just public services.

Australian businesses are also looking at what government services (or obligations) they can improve with a digital approach

"The whole strategy around SBR has not been fully appreciated."

Marie Johnson, the former chief technology architect at the Department of Human Services, says the development of Standard Business Reporting in 2010 has been an unsung example of the potential of digital service delivery

"The whole strategy around SBR has not been fully appreciated," Johnson told The Mandarin.

With nothing more than a set of standardised taxonomies and an open door for software developers, it has negated the traditional system of agencies having forms on their website

Trusting that Australian governments will keep the same definitions for business reporting, developers of accounting software like MYOB or Quicken can take those into account

"It's a value proposition for them," Johnson explained. "The developer can say this is SBR compliant."



Get the Juice - the Mandarin's free daily newsletter delivered to your inbox. Includes a sign-up form and a subscribe button.

A digital identity crisis?

For government agencies, authenticating online identity has been a stumbling block for digital service delivery. Are you who you say you are?

Recommendations in last December's Murray report into Australia's financial system called for a new wave of innovative thinking, greater consultation and collaboration with the private sector

The inquiry chair, David Murray, didn't seem convinced myGov was the only identity solution, pointing to the "fragmented and largely unco-ordinated network" of 20-odd current systems

"The system has developed organically, driven by different standards, policies and legislative requirements. Australia has no clear strategic vision for digital identity management

Despite often redundant and repetitious authentication requirements, consumers have a clear preference for accessing services online, he argued, but identity theft and false identities were also key enablers of superannuation fraud

"Developing a national identity strategy based on a federated-style model, with a framework and common standards, would support the growth of a competitive market in identity services that enables best use of technology and promotes innovation

How the Digital Transformation Office takes on this challenge is yet to be seen, or what will happen to the legacy systems that haven't received Turnbull's stamp of approval

Pointing to the transformative impact that M-Pesa had in Kenya, Johnson says it's an example of how when there's an urgent need or call to action, and you don't have legacy environments, amazing things can be done.

About the author



By Harley Dennett Harley Dennett is editor at The Mandarin based in Canberra. He's held communications roles in the New South Wales public sector and Defence, and been a staff reporter for newspapers in Sydney and Washington DC.

Tags: Department of Human Services Digital Transformation Office M-Pesa Open government Standard Business Reporting State Debt Recovery Office

More from The Mandarin

- Sports rots: Gaetjens didn't interview PM's or McKenzie's staff...
Opposites agree on Trump and Xi
The big world of tech for the public sector
NSW Public Service Commission-backed research shows flexible work...
Australian charities need 'tailored' government support to survive...

Sponsored Business Content

- Cybercrime costs \$1b annually. Find out how to keep your firm covered
[Free eBook] SMSF & Property Investment. Download Now!
Big banks, big Tech & big opportunities. Earnings season kicks off
Healthcare providers in Australia: Who Comes Out Cheaper?
The Sector Faving the World's Exit from COVID-19

Now is the time to get Mandarin Premium. When public sector leadership is even more critical for Australia, and the business model for quality journalism is under severe threat, there has never been a more important time to join Mandarin Premium.