

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR TEO CHEE HEAN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, COORDINATING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AT THE EGOV GLOBAL EXCHANGE 2011 ON 20 JUNE 2011, 9AM, AT THE MARINA BAY SANDS

“The Future of e-Government”

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It gives me great pleasure to join you this morning at the eGov Global Exchange 2011, which brings together Ministers, Ambassadors and e-Government practitioners from more than 50 countries. To our overseas guests, a very warm welcome to Singapore.

Relevance of e-Government

2. We live in exciting times – where technology pervades our lives. The news of a dramatic operation in Abbottabad in Pakistan first broke on Twitter through Sohaib Athar who unwittingly tweeted about the secret operation as it unfolded, before the news was officially delivered by US President Obama several hours later.

3. In Japan, after the major earthquake and tsunami in March, satellite technology proved invaluable in helping rescue workers assess the extent of the damage in disaster zones. It also helped bring together families who have been separated during the disaster.

4. Infocomm technologies have definitely become part of our daily lives, shaping the way we work, play and socialise. A 2010 survey by Yahoo! of more

than 1,800 Internet users aged 25 to 64 in the US found that 78 percent had abandoned the practice of handwriting letters, choosing to communicate through email instead. 71 percent said the Web had replaced reading the newspaper. 70 percent of those surveyed paid their bills online, compared to only four percent fifteen years ago, when Yahoo! was started.

5. Singapore stands at the forefront of this new technology frontier. The Infocomm Development Authority reports that many citizens own more than one mobile phone, given that our mobile penetration rate is 144%. Household broadband penetration rates stand at 82%, and more than half of all Singaporeans have an online presence on Facebook.

6. Recruitment firm Kelly Services estimated in May 2011 that one in five job seekers in Singapore are using social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to search for jobs.

7. And a 2011 survey by the Institute of Policy Studies of more than 1,000 Singaporeans aged 21 and above found that today, almost 1 in 3 Singaporeans are now accessing traditional news sources through the digital space. The pace of technology change will only get faster in the days ahead.

8. What does all this mean for governments around the world? In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing environment, government agencies need to ride the waves of change and continuously adapt to new trends.

9. In the realm of e-Government, the rising popularity of the Internet, widespread mobile access and the rapid take-up of social media tools mean that governments will need to be more connected, more innovative and more efficient in harnessing ICT to deliver higher, more sustainable public value.

10. Let me share how the Singapore Government will ride this wave of digital revolution in our next e-Government Masterplan for 2011 to 2015.

11. Through this Masterplan, we hope to achieve the following outcomes:

First, Improving the exchange of information and ideas.

Second, Catalysing the development of new eGovernment services and delivery channels.

Third, Improving public service delivery.

Improving the Exchange of Information and Ideas

12. Let me start with how the Singapore Government is using ICT to improve the way we exchange information and ideas.

13. Government agencies, by the nature of their work, possess valuable data that citizens may also find useful. The sharing of such data with the public in Singapore has been primarily through platforms set up by the agencies themselves.

14. However, with the widespread use of the Internet and social media, there is now an additional dimension, as we are beginning to see a strong wave of citizen-initiated information and ideas.

15. For example, late last year, the Ang Mo Kio – Yio Chu Kang Town Council launched iConnect@AMK-YCK, an iPhone application that allows residents to provide on-the-spot maintenance feedback directly to the Town Council from their iPhones. This is a useful avenue for Ang Mo Kio residents to make suggestions on how to improve their neighbourhood.

16. Active communities of new homeowners also congregate on popular online forums like MyHomeTown.sg to track the status of the project's development or to network with others living in their estate. They are even able to get together before they actually move into their new homes.

17. Governments, therefore, can and should leverage on the reach of the Internet. Today, the Singapore Government uses REACH and other social

media channels set up by agencies to engage people for feedback, comments and suggestions on public policies.

18. For example, the Ministry of Health has a strong following on Facebook, and uses this channel to increase the reach of its press releases on food poisoning outbreaks, educate the public on good health practices and seek public views on new healthcare schemes and infrastructure projects.

19. Government agencies have also been looking at public feedback on other online platforms where netizens naturally congregate.

20. Let me cite a local example. In Singapore, the Straits Times runs a popular website called STOMP, where citizens initiate and participate actively in topics close to their hearts. Government agencies can leverage on this platform to keep abreast of local issues related to their work. Such platforms enable government to better understand ground sentiments, making it easier for the relevant authorities to quickly be aware of pressing issues.

21. As the engagement of citizens is a key area of focus for the Singapore Government, we will be enhancing online platforms like REACH, and trying out new channels and avenues for feedback and e-consultation to facilitate the involvement and participation of citizens.

Developing new e-Services and Delivery Channels

22. Second, beyond understanding the needs and concerns of citizens and businesses, governments must also continually look at how they can catalyse the development of new e-services and delivery channels. In the book “The Future of Work”, author Thomas W. Malone highlighted that smart enterprises will use emerging technology to tap the power of collective intelligence.

23. The Singapore Government, too, is doing more in this area.

24. One emerging technology growing rapidly is mobile services. Smartphones make up 72% of all mobile phones in Singapore, and this number

continues to increase. The private sector is already capitalising on this trend, and many companies are actively pushing out services via mobile apps and websites.

25. Similarly, government agencies can roll out mobile services to reach customers who want to transact with the Government while on the move. Today, the mGov@SG mobile site will be launched, bringing together more than 40 mobile websites and apps developed by government agencies in Singapore. mGov@SG will make it easier for citizens and businesses to find and use mobile apps and websites of government ministries and agencies.

26. Beyond the *channel* of delivery, the *concept* of service delivery is also shifting, as can be seen through the example of the Apple AppStore. Today, Apple *does not design and build its* applications in-house, but provides the platform and tools for the highly talented and motivated developer community to create great applications for its customers. More than 350,000 apps are available *for download* from the AppStore, and in Jan 2011 the number of downloads crossed the 10 billion mark.

27. Governments too can take a leaf from Apple's successful AppStore concept. As long as there is a ready platform, supported by the right tools, tapping on the right pool of talented individuals, innovative individuals and companies outside of government can come up with good solutions that create value for citizens.

28. The Singapore Government is already looking at how we can develop collaborative platforms that foster the creation of new ideas by tapping on the creativity and dynamism of innovative individuals and companies.

29. We already have some examples of this.

30. SGPedia uses a combination of the Singapore Tourism Board's public data and privately sourced data on points of interest to suggest dining places,

nightspots, and tourist attractions using the location-based capability of the user's mobile phone.

31. Our government agencies are also taking further steps to facilitate co-creation through data-sharing.

32. The Singapore Land Authority has developed a platform called OneMap which encourages developers to make use of *geospatial* data to create useful map-based services in Singapore.

33. Under the new masterplan, the Singapore Government will also share *textual* data with the private and people sectors through the new *data.gov.sg* portal, a first-stop website bringing together more than 5,000 datasets from 50 agencies.

34. Similar to government data portals in the US, UK and Australia, this portal will encourage innovative individuals and businesses to stretch their imagination on how government data can be used together with other private data to create new services for citizens.

Improving Public Service Delivery

35. Third, we recognise that the bread and butter of e-Government is to support the delivery of public services. Our e-Government efforts today make transacting with the government more convenient.

36. Based on our annual surveys, more than 80% of our customers are satisfied or very satisfied with the current levels of e-service delivery.

37. But with improving technology and customer readiness and expectations we can make transacting with the government even easier.

38. We can streamline the number of transactions, reduce the steps required to complete these transactions, or in the case of the Inland Revenue Authority of

Singapore, making the process of tax filing disappear through its No-Filing initiative.

39. Today, Singaporeans are able to access government services online using their national identity number and a password. We call this single access system SingPass.

40. To differentiate between business- and citizen-related transactions, countries such as Australia and Denmark have separate online identities to carry out personal and corporate transactions with the Government.

41. We will also introduce a separate access system for business users to transact with the government to complement the existing SingPass system.

42. Today, we have an eCitizen Portal which serves as a first-stop for Singapore citizens and residents to access Government online services. Our customers do not just want standardized services, but services that are customised to their individual needs. They also want to have a say in the design of the products that are created.

43. To make it easier for users to locate the information and services they need, we are revamping the Portal, to cater to different user groups or life-stages.

44. For example, a senior citizen who logs into the eCitizen Portal will be able to find out about interesting activities for seniors offered by the People's Association, read health articles for the elderly from the Health Promotion Board, or get retirement planning advice from the Central Provident Fund, among others.

45. New features such as recommendation of relevant content and e-services will also be included, as well as options for citizens to personalize their homepage with updates on issues they are interested in.

46. Singapore also plans to introduce OneInbox, a secure online platform where subscribers can choose to receive electronic correspondence from participating government agencies, in place of hardcopies.

47. The revamped portal and OneInbox will be launched in the second half of 2012.

Conclusion

48. The emergence of new infocomm technologies calls for fundamental rethinking and transformational shifts in the way we look at e-Government. Governments must take on the roles of a facilitator and enabler - to collaborate with the public, private and people sectors in creating new solutions, new businesses, and new wealth.

49. What I have described earlier are just some of the initiatives that the Singapore Government will be pursuing under our next e-Government masterplan for 2011 to 2015, which I am happy to be launching today.

50. I am hopeful that its vision of a collaborative government that co-creates and connects with its people will deliver a new, higher level of services that people find useful and will help to improve their daily lives. We also hope to collaborate with our partners from all over the world to make this masterplan, a reality.

51. In closing, let me wish all delegates an enriching session today.

52. Thank you.