Capgemini

CITIZEN SERVICES
HUMAN-CENTERED BY DESIGN

How human-centered design can deliver effective eGovernment today and lay the foundations for tomorrow

The North Star of digital government

Imagine you have just welcomed your first child into the world. Elated but exhausted, you go online to register the birth, claim child benefit and apply for a passport. But instead of submitting the same information on three different government websites, you log in to a single citizen service portal and complete one simple transaction.

Shortly afterwards, you receive confirmation that the registration has been successful. And because you consented for your information to be shared, your benefit claim and passport application are in progress too. So you can start planning a trip to show off your newborn to her grandparents overseas.

This seamless, one-stop-shop approach – in which citizens engage with government quickly and easily around important life events – represents a North Star for public sector organizations. But as of today, it remains out of reach for most.

In this paper, we will explore what's holding organizations back from realizing their goal. We will then suggest an approach for designing the digital citizen services of today while laying the foundations for the eGovernment of tomorrow.

Effective eGovernment is human-centered by design

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitization in the public sector by showcasing the opportunity it offers to connect with citizens remotely. By developing digital services at pace, organizations were able to reach more people – reducing travel miles and paperwork and helping to build more sustainable cities and communities.

The UK government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) was one such service. Announced in March 2020, the scheme aimed to provide eligible citizens with a taxable grant to mitigate loss of income. Capgemini worked with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to launch a robust, customer-focused solution in just six weeks. The service processed one million grants totaling £3 billion in the first 36 hours alone. And at peak times, it handled over 1,000 transactions per second without any issues.

On the back of successes like this, many public sector organizations now have even bigger ambitions to improve access to digital services. Through its "digital-by-default" approach, for example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aims to make digital platforms the primary communications channel with citizens by 2024.[1] The Canadian government aims to digitize all public-facing government services, accessible via a single log-in, by 2025.[2] And as part of Europe's Digital Decade, the European Commission has set a target of having 100% of key public services online by 2030.[3]

But simply moving services online does not mean people will or can use them. To be efficient and effective, digital citizen services must be inclusive, accessible and meet the needs of the target audience. Which means placing citizens at the heart of the digital design process.

What is human-centered design?

Human-centered design uncovers what users need and engages with them throughout the design and development process to create insight-driven services.

The life event approach we described earlier is the ultimate expression of human-centered design. Yet in Europe at least, just one in three governments actively invite citizens to input into the current process.[4]

So, if everyone knows what they need to do, why are they not doing it?

Silos and differing degrees of digital transformation can prevent public sector organizations from putting theory into practice. In some cases, organizations are nervous about asking citizens what they need, in case they cannot deliver on it. And even when teams do understand what users need, it may be difficult to reconcile this with what politicians have committed to deliver. Sharing lessons learned is not commonplace, either.

> " We believe in a human-centered digital transition."

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Without applying a human-centric approach, though, public sector organizations risk making assumptions based on their perspective, not the users'. Taking a "complete, then move on" approach to service design does not help; it prioritizes meeting complex stakeholder requirements, which take longer to deliver and do not meet user needs.

As a result, citizens who need extra support, or are less digitally confident, can be overlooked. For example, one in six people globally experience significant disability.[5] Yet only 16% of digital services in Europe meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).[6] Consistency and transparency are often missing from the user experience, too. Just 46% of eGovernment services in Europe allow a single sign-on, and only 43% indicate how long it will take to fill in an application form.[7]

IDC's 2022 *European Government Insights Survey* found that governments were planning to invest in a range of new technology solutions to transform citizen experience: from open data portals and mobile apps, to case management, digital citizen wallets, citizen portals, CRM and chatbots. However, only 21% of these respondents said they were taking action to strengthen their organization's customer experience culture and skills: Clearly, a missed opportunity. [8]

In short, sidelining the user can result in a poorly designed digital service that transfers the limitations of an offline service to an online one. And if a service does not meet citizens' needs, adoption and satisfaction levels will be low, and it will not deliver value for money.

The three secrets of best-in-class digital services

Fortunately, there is a way of designing digital citizen services that avoids the common pitfalls we have described. It combines human-centred design and agile techniques to create consistent, value-for-money services that work for everyone today and can slot into a life event framework tomorrow.

We recommend this approach for three reasons:

1. It places users at the center of the design process

A human-centered design process starts with a discovery stage. This involves surveying and interviewing a diverse range of citizens in terms of demographics, digital proficiency and disability. The insights you gather into user needs and pain points allow you to design an inclusive service. One that is based on empathy for, and understanding of, the people it is intended to support.

The questions you are looking to answer include:

- What do users need?
- Do those user needs align with your policy and its goals? If not, can they help you reshape them?
- What are the pain points in the current user journey?
- What opportunities are available to meet your users' needs? How you can you prioritize them to deliver the most value in the shortest possible time?
- What hypotheses can you form now to test early in the next stage?
- What other factors do you need to consider (legal, technical, legacy)? Do you have to adhere to any government standards or guidelines for digital?
- What lessons can you learn from other public sector organizations that have delivered something similar?
- Where might this service sit within a future life event framework, and how could you connect it to the other departments involved in that life event?

After completing this stage, you will have a set of personas and user journeys, complete with pain points, for your intended audience. You will also have a clear understanding of the problem and a realistic view of the opportunities available for solving it.

Subsequent stages are about designing, testing and iterating prototypes with a subset of users before building a service and making it live for all. Throughout the process, you refine your service to reflect your growing understanding of the users' needs and resolve any issues you uncover.

2. It's agile and adaptable

Traditionally, eGovernment services have been created by working through a linear, "complete, then move on" process. But this means you may not discover that something does not work until it is too late.

Agile techniques allow you to adjust, descope or rescope at every stage based on insights from users. That way, you can expand your scope incrementally, and pivot or tweak at any point. You can even drop the project entirely.

3. It allows you to constantly test your hypotheses

It's important to keep checking that you are delivering a valuable service, for the lowest cost and in the shortest timeframe. That means constantly testing your most critical hypotheses and eliminating those that could be a point of failure.

For example, users might tell you at the discovery stage that they have a particular problem, but the prototype you have created fails to solve it when tested. You can then go back to the drawing board and prioritize another prototype to test with users.

Going live to all users can also be tricky, as volume can deplete performance or even cause a service to crash. By carrying out adequate testing, and making sure appropriate support is in place, you can make sure your service keeps performing as you scale it up.
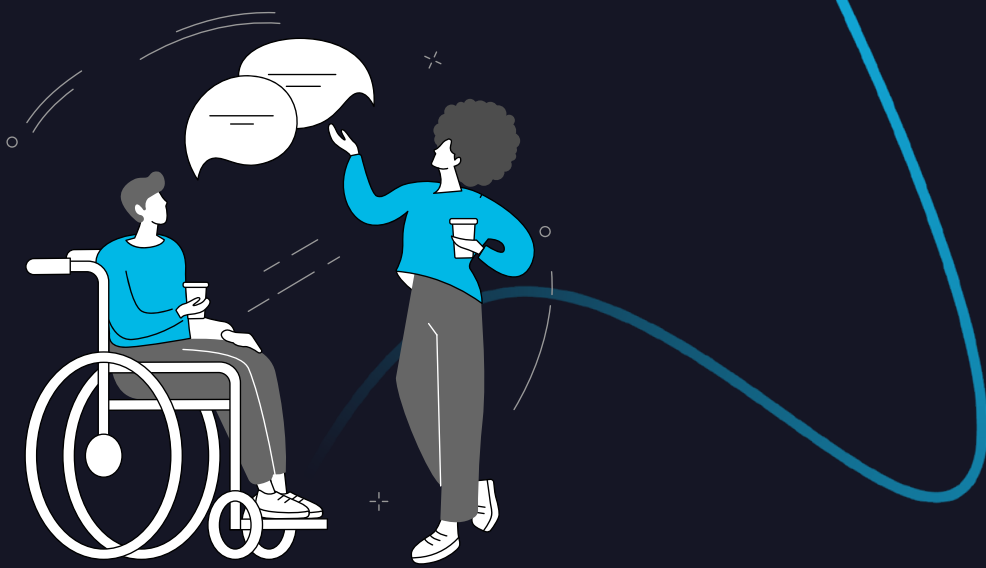
ARE YOU READY TO LISTEN TO CITIZENS?

Before you embark on the discovery stage, it is worth checking that your organization is ready to adopt human-centered design. Otherwise, you risk wasting time and money by falling at the first hurdle. If you encounter resistance, or need to strengthen your business case, it may help to remind your organization that you are not more vulnerable by involving citizens. You are more likely to design cost-effective services that your citizens need and use.

Removing the barriers to work

The Access to Work (AtW) grant, from the UK's Department of Work and Pensions, supports people with disabilities and health conditions to stay in work. As such, it is key to helping the Department achieve its ambition of reducing the disability employment gap. But the current service places a burden on customers who, by definition, have accessibility needs and may struggle with an offline process and paper forms.

To address this burden, the Department tasked Capgemini with digitally transforming one part of the end-to-end service: claiming the grant. We began by completing a discovery process to understand the problem from the users' perspective. We then used a "design, test, iterate" model to make sure our solution would work for users while meeting the Department's goals. User testing covered the entire online journey and a range of users in terms of demographics, accessibility needs and levels of digital confidence. We also imported current fraud prevention measures from the paper process as well as new online authentication.

The resulting design featured a new digital service for claiming the grant. This allows customers to submit a new claim (and upload supporting information), amend personal information and view details about their grant and previous claims. It's also secure, accessible and meets UK standards for digital services.

"Capgemini is working with DWP Digital to enhance the existing Access to Work claims process, improve the customer experience and enable faster payments," says Lead Programme Manager Stephen Tugwell. "They also worked with us to design and roll out a service where claimants could upload a 'Fit Note' from their doctor directly to our portal, to support their benefit application. Capgemini's work, in collaboration with DWP, enabled people with a wide range of accessibility needs to do this quickly, safely and securely from home, so we could process benefit claims faster. Now, 73% of people who access this service use the digital channel, which is very high for a health-related service. We also achieved a monthly customer satisfaction score averaging 80%."

> " Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the customer gets out of it."

Peter Drucker

Building a blueprint for the future

Applying the techniques that we have described here results in a service that is:

- **accessible, inclusive and intuitive** – everyone who needs it can use it
- **transparent** – users know how long it will take to complete the process
- **consistent** – it looks and feels like other services from your organization, and adheres to any formal standards
- **sustainable** – over time, it will reduce the reliance on more carbon-intensive offline services.

You also get value for money from launching an effective service, quickly and reliably. And in the longer term, you can realize efficiencies through more automation, shared data and resources, and less manual admin. All of which improves adoption and builds public trust in government services.

Finally, building empathy and understanding into your digital design helps you prepare for the eGovernment of the future: services organized around life events. This may seem like a grand aspiration. But organizations are already standardizing their back-end technology, which makes it easier to connect different networks and share data between departments or agencies. It's also possible to use common services, such as the Dutch DigiD, to streamline the user experience.

If you underpin the discovery stage by considering where your service would fit in a life event framework, it creates a blueprint for where it could go, not just what it can do now. And if all areas of your organization were to do this, you could converge to reach your North Star.

Capgemini – your partner in putting citizens at the heart of digital design

For over a decade, we have been designing human-centered digital services that meet the needs of citizens today while laying the foundations for tomorrow.

Our global experience means we know what is needed at every stage of the design process – from discussing policy to designing, implementing and managing a live service that adheres to standards. And we can share best practice from your peers across the globe for the problem you want to address.

The result is accessible, inclusive and user-centric services that deliver value for money and help you prepare for the eGovernment of the future.

STEP 1:
DISCOVERY
(6-8 WEEKS)

We engage with users to understand their needs and whether those align with your policy goal. We identify pain points in the current user journey, along with any legal and tech constraints. And we apply best practice from other engagements to suggest realistic opportunities for addressing user issues and needs.
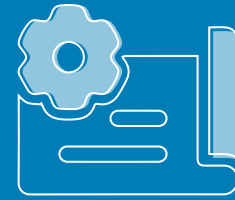
STEP 2:
ALPHA
(6-8 WEEKS)

We design prototypes which we then test and iterate with users to see which concept best meets their needs. This allows us to validate our most critical hypotheses and pivot, tweak or even stop before you spend any more money.

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STEP 3:
BETA
(6-8 WEEKS)

We use your infrastructure and technology to build, test and refine a version that is as close to the live service as possible, but without the volume of users. We then check you have the internal processes needed to support a full launch.

STEP 4:
LIVE
(ONGOING)

We make your service live, building in feedback mechanisms as well as monitoring user analytics. We use this insight-driven approach to keep improving your service so it is even more consistent, transparent and effective.

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Source

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