Four Ways to Deliver a 21st Century Citizen Experience
Anne’s phone beeps. The aspiring entrepreneur is on a call with potential investors. It’s a reminder to complete the registration for her new startup.

Her 82-year-old grandmother prefers to get her medical statements by post. She carries a phone with her at all times, but finds it easier to pay her bills at the bank.

Governments have to meet the needs of both these generations. “Gen Z is coming into the workforce, and they interact very differently from the pioneer generation and baby boomers,” says Tan Yew Luan, General Manager, Fuji Xerox Global Services.

The company has been studying the way people interact with technology. The challenge is: how governments can cater to individuals’ differentiated needs, say Tan and Wayne Williams, Group General Manager, Regional Services at Fuji Xerox Document Management Solutions.
How can governments deliver a 21st century customer experience?

**The power of choice**

The first step is to let people make the choice. Giving them the option to choose the kind of service they prefer - paper or digital - already makes the experience better for them.

Some organisations may decide to be completely paperless, but this does not always go down well with customers. For instance, a large Australian multinational company started charging its customers for paper bills, Williams says. The result was unhappy customers, who moved to another service provider.

“There will be digital documents in the new digital age, but there will still be paper documents,” Williams says. “We give our clients the ability to give their customers a choice.”
Governments should start with the end in mind, Tan says: “What do users want to experience with your organisation?”. They can then work from there and design processes around how citizens prefer to interact with agencies.

Be agile

Governments must be agile, keeping up with changing citizens’ needs and technologies. Governments spend time and resources building hundreds of apps, but how many of these are regularly used?

People’s preferences are rapidly changing with new technologies. Citizens will use whatever is most convenient for them, and successful services must be able to hold users’ attention, Tan says. “We noticed that whenever there is a new technology, the interest spikes up. Adoption rates go up and then it comes down,” she adds.
Officials must constantly iterate their services based on feedback from users. This also allows governments to experiment with new ideas. They can put out a trial, if it doesn’t work they can modify it based on the data. This is one of the advantages of going digital, Williams says. “You can’t do that in a paper-based environment.”

**Preparing for future needs**

Government has to provide for current needs, but also prepare for the future. This comes down to the technology, infrastructure and software that they use, says Tan.

Systems must be flexible and nimble enough to be able to bring governments to the next stage when change is needed, she says. “This is a very fickle-minded world. The way people interfaced with the internet 12 months ago is probably very different from the way they interact with it today.”
Agencies have to choose between building systems in-house or outsource them, she says - and understand the cost associated with these. If an area is still new and emerging, it would be faster for governments to engage an external service provider, she recommends.

Governments must also look into the security processes and governance of their systems, she adds. These have to be constantly updated to ensure that systems are protected against rising threats.

**Multi-channel strategy**

Governments must implement a “multi-channel strategy”, Tan and Williams say - a single system that is able to handle paper, web, mobile, and all other kinds of digital services.

The problem for organisations moving to digital is that they have separate systems for paper and online, says Tan. This means slower responses to citizens’ needs, and higher maintenance costs when changes need to be made, she adds.

Paper and digital processes must be integrated as part of the government’s service strategy. In practice this means that paper documents can be as easily handled as digital ones. Paper forms submitted can be inserted into the digital system, which can automatically extract data from them.

Government must have the right digital strategy for this. Simply converting paper statements and forms into PDFs and emailing them out does not work. One telecommunications provider that tried this “couldn’t increase the adoption rate beyond a single digit”, Tan says. “They used to send out PDFs and people lost interest.”
On the other hand, another telecommunications provider, which worked with Fuji Xerox to design and implement a digital billing app, achieved an adoption rate of more than 90% over a period of less than 10 years for the service.

User interfaces have to be designed with the end in mind - the customer’s experience. Organisations that get this right will deliver better services, and cut costs by moving away from redundant systems.

The demographic is such that governments have to cater to a wide spectrum of experiences. The right technology, mindset and strategy can help them deliver this.

To arrange for a discussion on your citizen experience strategy, make an enquiry with Fuji Xerox at: www.dms.fujixerox.com/en/contact/