E-Government Benchmarking:
A Regional Experience

by

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Regional IST
(www.regional-ist.org)

- A two year project financed by the European Commission in the context of the Fifth Framework Program of Research and Technological Development
- 5 Partners: Piedmont, Catalonia, Baden-Württemberg, Portugal and Hungary
- Project objective: Creating an international network of regional official observatories dealing with the development of the Information Society.
Benchmarking Methodology
(Correspondence Table)

Hierarchical structure: we created a correspondence table linking targets with indicators and statistics. This allowed us to act coherently with e-Europe.
Benchmarking Methodology (II): Indicators Harmonization

- **Definition filter**
  - classifications
  - nomenclatures
  - demarcations
  - etc.

- **Methodology filter**
  - transparency
  - sample size
  - date of survey
  - etc.

Homogenous indicators in the regions
Benchmarking Methodology (III): Data Collection

We used three sources of information in order to capture all the aspects of e-government.
Output: Benchmarking Platform

**HOUSEHOLDS WITH INTERNET CONNECTION (%)**

- **BW**: 47,0
- **CT**: 31,6
- **HU**: 8,8
- **PI**: 44,7
- **PT**: 18,0

**Source**: Regional-IST 2002

*Note: The image contains a bar chart showing the percentage of households with internet connection in different regions.*
Analysis of Results: Supply

Infrastructure:

- 99.2% of Municipalities in Piedmont are connected to the Internet, but over 90% of them are still using narrow band connections.

- In Catalonia and Baden-Württemberg more aggressive broadband policies have resulted in a higher adoption of broadband connections (respectively 36.6% and 49.3%)
**Analysis of Results: Supply**

- Websites: 43% of Municipalities in Piedmont and 32.8% in Catalonia, but in both regions about 77% of the population leaves in a municipality with a website.

- But 70% of the websites are static (updated sporadically) and only 25% of them allow some form of interaction with users. (a similar situation may be reported also in Hungary and Catalonia).
Analysis of Results: Supply

Service provisioning:

- 13 Services identified as of competence of local Municipalities in all the partner regions
- 4 level of sophistication (level 1 less sophisticated)
- 21% of services are on average available online, mainly rendered at level 1 and level 2. The situation looks similar in all the other regions apart from Baden-Württemberg in which a higher level of sophistication may be found.
Analysis of Results: Demand

Population:

- Potential users’ base 44.7% of households have an I/net connection, but only 27% of the population uses the I/net regularly (at least once a week).

- High level of interest 71.9% of individuals have accessed PA websites for information and 50.9% for procedures.
Analysis of Results: Demand

 Enterprises:

- Internet penetration reaches 99.6% in Piedmont, similar situations may be found in the other partner regions.

- High level of interest: the percentage of firms accessing Governmental websites for information, procedures and payment of taxes is respectively 71.5%, 64.3% and 9.6%.
**Conclusions**

- Benchmarking E-gov activities at regional level is possible and above all useful.

- Methodologies adopted should meet two main criteria:
  - Compliance with Eurostat & e-Europe Framework
  - Representation of local idiosyncrasies

- E-government initiatives in the regions surveyed are still in their infancy: a significant distance still to be covered both in terms of sophistication and penetration.
Conclusions (II)

- A cost/benefit analysis on e-Government is still difficult to carry out, nevertheless:
  - The high level of interest shown could lead us to think that there may be significant benefits to be enjoyed by end users.
  - The e-Government call for projects has resulted in the creation of large consortia that should guarantee a wider exploitation of the knowledge assets generated.

- Future research should focus on classifying the e-Gov activities according to their aim, in order to allow the creation of context specific indicators.
Thank you for your attention!

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