

CASE Online service channel model for municipalities

Municipalities want to offer their inhabitants user-oriented network services and increase efficiency of using municipal services. The architecture model Ixonos developed for the City of Oulu was the basis for architecture work carried out by Finland's Ministry of Finance's KuntaIT unit, when they wished to create a model for an online service channel to be adopted by all municipalities.



Background

Along with the increased popularity of e-business come expectations of being able to transact electronically also with municipalities. From the user's point of view, the challenge is to use diverse methods to retrieve information from various sources, as services are often located on disparate technical platforms. In 2008, the City of Oulu introduced an online communication and web service portal provided by Ixonos. The portal has been received very well. KuntaIT, the local-government IT management project operating under Finland's Ministry of Finance, wanted to create a model of best practices based on Oulu's online portal. The model would show how the services provided by municipalities, despite the different systems, could be offered to the inhabitants as a maximally user-friendly entity.

Solution

KuntaIT's architecture model is based on the architecture definition Ixonos provided for the City of Oulu regarding an online transaction channel for services provided by municipalities. The architecture definition work included an architecture description from various views according to the enterprise architecture model; the definitions and guidelines related to the implementation of the applications; as well as interfaces and integration with other systems and databases.

The model shows how the various processes of a municipality can be connected to an electronic communication platform. It was particularly important that the functional partitions of the platform were able to utilize existing municipal and governmental information reserves as well as common support components. The core of the designed architecture is based on a service-oriented architecture (SOA), which makes it possible to combine services, or to isolate them into separate functional sections as needed. Additionally, new electronic services can easily be built on the platform.

Benefits

The defined architecture model allows an individual municipality's electronic services to be deployed on a consistent platform. The municipalities' own resources are spared from expensive and time-consuming case-specific definition work. The model guides the implementation of functional content partitions in the electronic transaction channel. In the implementation phases of the portals, municipalities can have various systems compete, and product vendors can utilize the documentation to develop content as well as support components. In the long term, the adoption of the electronic transaction platform boosts the utilization of the municipality's services, while also delivering cost savings.