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5 best practice citizen service benchmarks from Singapore

INSIGHTS FOR SUCCESS | IDEAS TO EXECUTE

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Singapore leads the world in the delivery of e-government services. 86% of Singaporeans stated that they are either very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the government's e-services. At the same time, 92% rated that it is one of the best e-services that they have used[1]. The emphasis in recent years has **shifted from the digitisation of citizen services to helping citizens achieve better outcomes in their life journeys.**

The growth in the adoption of digital services has accelerated during the pandemic. In this study, the twimbit team set about to identify **5 of the top adopted citizen services and highlight their unique features.** We hope the lessons from this study will inspire practitioners of Customer Experience (CX) across both public and private sector organisations around the world.

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[1] Government Technology. (2019). Delivering as one Govtech annual report 2019-2020. https://bit.ly/3AcBRfh

Methodology and approach

Great government service is citizen-orientated and should deliver on seven pillars:

Efficiency

Able to use the e-service easily. The service provides clear and easy-to-follow instructions to complete the needed tasks

Reliability

Able to complete the needed e-service upon the first try. Service loads well either in desktop or mobile applications

Trust

Provides citizens with a sense of security that the service securely protects personal information

Citizen support

Able to receive help fast, whenever needed

Convenience

Able to complete the e-service with perceived minimal time, effort, and at any time

Compatibility

Matches the way citizens like to perform government services

Citizen satisfaction

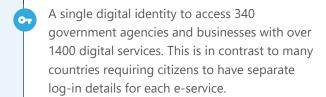Able to provide a service that citizens are satisfied with

Our analyst team did a thorough review of all secondary sources of information which included studies from a varied number of research agencies and annual reports of the government agencies. This was supplemented with a limited survey of Singapore citizens across the seven pillars outlined earlier to ensure that the broader secondary research findings were corroborated by the citizen survey.

1. SingPass

Singpass is the national digital identity and authentication system introduced by Singapore. It is amongst the world's first and also considered by many as the best national digital identity system of any country .

It is one of the five main national projects that will drive Singapore's goal to become a smart nation and is run by the Government Technology Agency (GovTech).

Key unique features

A single digital identity to access 340 government agencies and businesses with over 1400 digital services. This is in contrast to many countries requiring citizens to have separate log-in details for each e-service.

340
Goverment agencies

1400
Digital services

Singpass Mobile, launched in 2019, is the key catalyst to wider adoption and innovation in the use of Digital ID. The service integrates five key features:

i. Tell us Once
Citizens need not repeatedly provide the same information to government agencies or the private sector.

ii. Authentication service
An online authentication service that businesses and government agencies use to allow users to access their services. It also acts as one-tap access for commonly used services.

iii. Verify
The verification for the identity of users, both in the physical and digital world, simplifies the Know-Your-Customer (KYC) process critical for many businesses.

iv. Authorise
A remote digital authorisation service.

v. Sign
Supports businesses and customers to digitally sign documents and does away with the need to be physically present.

Singpass provides facial verification to authenticate one's login. It is the first country in the world to utilise this technology in its national identity scheme. The feature provides a higher level of security assurance and simplifies the verification process significantly.

1. SingPass

✓ Average rating 4.8/5

Singpass is ranked as the fourth most popular app in Singapore on the Google Play Store and the third most popular app on the Apple App Store, averaging 4.8 stars out of 5[1]. This is an impressive achievement for a digital service offered by a government agency, which gets compared by users with the digital services provided by the world's leading technology companies.

✓ 2.5 million+

2.5 million+ Singaporeans are currently on the Singpass app[2]

✓ 18 million

18 million API requests per month[3]

✓ 450,000

450,000 transactions are made through Singpass each month[4]

✓ 80% reduction

80% reduction in transaction time with Singpass[5]

[1] Similarweb (2021) Top apps ranking. https://bit.ly/3Adpa3C (checked on 2nd Aug 2021)

[2] Govtech (2021) Refreshed Singpass reflects improved services and drives digital innovations with private sector.
https://www.tech.gov.sg/media/media-releases/2021-03-04-refreshed-singpass

[3] Singpass (2021) Your improved digital ID to make life easy. https://www.singpass.gov.sg/main

[4] The Straits Time (2020) More users pleased with user-friendly govt digital services, says poll.
https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/more-users-pleased-with-user-friendly-govt-digital-services-says-poll
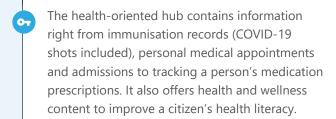
[5] Smart Nation Singapore (2021) Building A Smart Nation with Tangible Benefits For Our Citizens and Businesses.
https://www.smartnation.gov.sg/whats-new/press-releases/building-a-smart-nation-with-tangible-benefits--for-our-citizens-and-businesses

2. Health Hub

Health Hub is a digital healthcare companion aimed to provide Singaporeans with health information and services under one portal for a seamless healthcare experience. It acts as a tool of empowerment for citizens to take charge of their health. Launched in October 2015, the idea was supported by research showing that sourcing for health information online is a globally popular pursuit.

This one-stop manner in providing citizens e-health services is one of the first initiatives seen in any country. The app is under the management of the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Health Promotion Board (HPB).
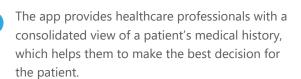
Key unique features

The health-oriented hub contains information right from immunisation records (COVID-19 shots included), personal medical appointments and admissions to tracking a person's medication prescriptions. It also offers health and wellness content to improve a citizen's health literacy.

> **tracks information from one's immunisation records to one's medical prescriptions**

Health Hub removes the disjointed experience of receiving medical information from different sources and simplifies an often confusing and potentially stressful aspect of healthcare

The creation of the app was through:

i. The integration of the -
- National Electronic Record system
- School dental system
- School health system
- National immunisation registry

ii. Multiple research rounds and redesigns to ensure that it is serving Singaporean needs and is intuitive for users from all walks of life

The app provides healthcare professionals with a consolidated view of a patient's medical history, which helps them to make the best decision for the patient.

2. Health Hub

Outcomes achieved

✓ **728,270 downloads**

In 2020, the Health Hub app had 728,270 downloads.[6]

✓ **Average rating 4.8/5**

It ranks as the fourth most popular app on the Apple App Store and fifth on the Google Play Store with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars[1].

✓ **134 million views**

Since its launch, the Health Hub portal has had more than 134 million views.[6]

[1] Similarweb (2021) Top apps ranking. https://bit.ly/3Adpa3C (checked on 2nd Aug 2021)

[6] Health Promotion Board (2020) Health Promotion Board annual report: Enriching lives. https://www.hpb.gov.sg/docs/default-source/pdf/hpb-annual-report-2019-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=9ae640ef_2

3. Inland Revenue and Authority of Singapore (IRAS) services

Since the early 2000s, the IRAS has the recognition as one of the world's most progressive tax authorities. A leader in tax digitalisation, it has achieved one of the world's highest rates of voluntary compliance and the lowest costs of tax collection.

Launched in 1992, the IRAS decided to adopt a change in mindset, one that trusts that citizens are usually voluntarily compliant. This helped kick off the course for putting citizen experiences first when it comes to tax-paying and utilising technology to make this experience an enjoyable one.

Key unique features

No-Filing Service (NFS)

i. To simplify the taxpayers' experience, IRAS introduced the concept of No Filing Service, where the taxpayers need not file an income tax. The income is assessed based on auto-inclusion of income and the previous year's tax reliefs.

ii. 1.67 million from the approximate total of 2.4 million taxpayers benefit from NFS

A truly world-class omnichannel experience:

i. 20 million self-help transactions; up 22% Y-o-Y
ii. 390K session using a virtual assistant, Jamie
iii. Migrating users to lower-cost channels

257 innovation projects and 1385 suggestions implemented to enhance systems and processes

Cost per dollar of tax collected is a very efficient 0.78 cent

IRAS (2020) IRAS annual report: Redefining taxpayer's experience.
https://www.iras.gov.sg/irashome/uploadedFiles/IRASHome/Annual_Reports/IRAS%20Annual%20Report%20FY201920_Oct.pdf

[9] IRAS (2020) Transforming the tech behind tax.
https://www.developer.tech.gov.sg/assets/files/IRAS%20-%20Stack%202020%20-%20Presentation%20(Dec%202020)%20(Portal).pdf
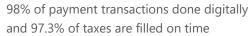
3. **Inland revenue and authority of Singapore (IRAS) services**

Outcomes achieved

✔ **98% digital payment**

98% of payment transactions done digitally and 97.3% of taxes are filled on time

✔ **98% satisfied**

98% of taxpayers are satisfied

✔ In the future, IRAS is planning to move their services onto the cloud and enhance processing capabilities with microservice architectures[9]

[9] IRAS (2020) Transforming the tech behind tax.
https://www.developer.tech.gov.sg/assets/files/IRAS%20-%20Stack%202020%20-%20Presentation%20(Dec%202020)%20(Portal).pdf

4. **Immigration and Checkpoint Authority (ICA) services**

The ICA aims to be fuss-free, where customers get to experience intuitive e-services anytime, anywhere. It also intends to remove physical visits if possible and, if not, remove the waiting time. To make this a reality, ICA created a transformation plan that will last until 2025.

In 2019, the agency won the Recognition of Excellence (RoE) award for establishing new benchmarks for government information and communications technology innovation in the ASEAN and ANZ region.

Key unique features

🔑 Singapore is the first country to allow online passport applications and photo submissions

🔑 The process for citizens to renew their passports online is seamless and convenient:

i. Log in to the immigration's online portal using Singpass

ii. The system auto-fills the necessary information for passport renewal

iii. Citizens confirm the information and submit the application with a couple of clicks

🔑 In pre-COVID times, customers get to select their location and date of choice to pick up their passports. This is the only time when customers are required to be physically present to complete the renewal or application process, where the passport would be waiting for the customer to pick it up.

🔑 To address common Singaporean inquiries regarding when and how to renew their passports, the ICA introduced a push notification service for identity or passport matters instead of the traditional mail notices.

• These notifications contain links that will send citizens to the appropriate e-service platform.

4. **Immigration and Checkpoint Authority (ICA) services**

Outcomes achieved

✓ **85% customer satisfaction**

ICA customer satisfaction of more than 85%[7]

✓ **100% digital by 2021**

Plans to reach 100% digital by 2021[8]

[7] Immigrations and Checkpoint Authority (2015) 2015 Singapore quality award with special commendation winner: Executive summary. https://vdocuments.net/immigration-checkpoints-authority.html

[8] Channel News Asia (2020) The evolution of ICA: Fewer documents and more online services. https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/evolution-ica-fewer-documents-and-more-online-services-508306

5. LifeSG

LifeSG consolidated the best of Singapore's e-government services under one platform. Instead of having individual touchpoints for different services under separate agencies, this app shines on citizen journeys. Designed and managed by GovTech, it understands that a citizen may wear different hats, such as being a mother who needs to access child-related services, being part of the workforce, as well as a caregiver.

Launched in 2018 and rebranded in 2020, the app removed the need for different touchpoints by organising the delivery of services around a citizen's important life moments and more. Now, Singaporeans can seamlessly find and access the service that they require. Note that this app is very new and we believe that it has the potential to be the best e-service platform that the Singaporean government offers.

Key unique features

Unifies more than 40 different e-government services needed in different phases of life, such as:

- Birth registration
- School registration
- Job seeking portals
- Parking services
- Healthcare
- Taxations
- Central providence funds (CPF)
- Housing

Provides personalisation based on citizen needs, so citizens can discover information and services that are relevant to them in a simplified manner

- Includes an at-a-glance view of important personal information, such as their CPF balances and annual income for tax filing
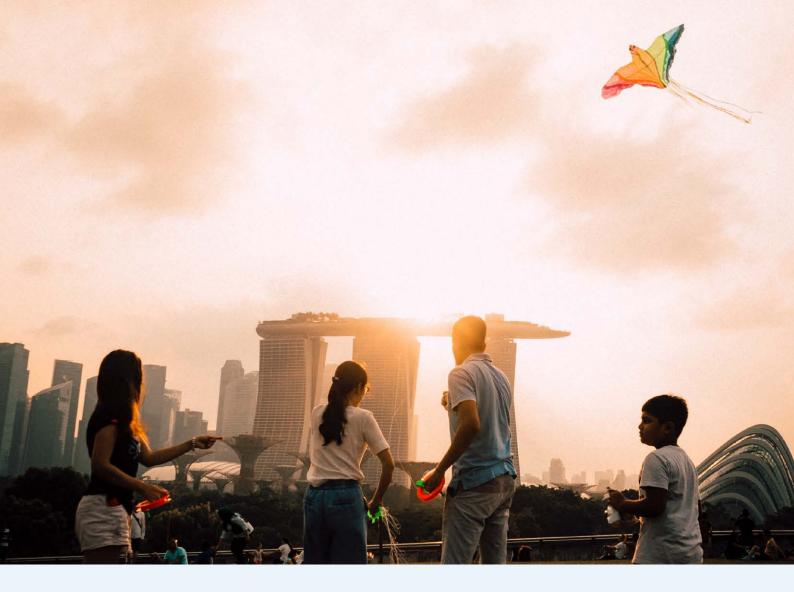

Appointment function to show appointments that citizens have with public agencies

Inbox function to receive reminders and notifications about important government transactions and processes, such as registering children for school

5. LifeSG

Outcomes achieved

✓ **7 out of 10**
Currently, 7 out of 10 Singaporeans register births on LifeSG[10]

✓ **60' to 15'**
Time reduced on birth registration and the Baby Bonus scheme applications from 60 to 15 minutes[10]

✓ **140,000 downloads**
Has more than 140,000 downloads to date[11]

[10] Open Gov (2020) Moments of Life is now LifeSG – The story so far.
https://opengovasia.com/moments-of-life-is-now-lifesg-the-story-so-far/

[11] Govtech (2020) Delivering as one: Govtech annual report.
https://www.tech.gov.sg/files/media/corporate-publications/GovTech%20AR%202019_MAIN.pdf

Lessons from Singapore

1. Focus on citizen journeys

Prioritise citizen experience to understand their pain points fully:

a. Take an outside-in approach by making changes based on citizen feedback

b. Have regular surveys, pilot them to ensure that you are asking the right questions

c. Host focus groups and communicate with citizens often

d. Create solutions hand-in-hand with citizens by having a representative board to work on projects together so they can provide constant insights and feedback

2. Data-sharing across government agencies:

a. Create an environment for safe and efficient data-sharing across different governing agencies

b. This supports the unification of different services under one platform for a seamless citizen experience

3. Collaborate with the private sector

a. Citizen journeys and experience consist of the private sector too

b. Need to incentivise private firms to collaborate and share information with government agencies to create seamless citizen experiences

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