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## E-GOVERNMENT IN POLAND: SELECTED EXAMPLES OF PLANS WHICH ARE CARRIED OUT

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**Abstract.** *The development of advanced hi-tech technologies has an impact on every area of social life. Changes resulting from it are visible at every turn. Public administration cannot be indifferent to these changes, especially when they are desired by the society. According to the current principles of law, to make it possible for public administration to convert to electronic administration (or even e-government), it is essential to pass certain regulations. E-government in Poland is nowadays laboriously becoming a fact, and there are some projects that we can be proud of. In this paper, the author describes them in detail and reveals their weak and strong sides.*

**Keywords:** *e-government, m-government, public administration, Ikonk@, digital library, e-court, information society, Poland.*

## Introduction

The development of advanced hi-tech technologies has an impact on every area of social life. Changes resulting from it are visible at every turn. On-line banking is exploding in popularity these days, and on-line B2B, B2C and C2C transactions are breaking records. Public administration cannot be indifferent to these changes, especially when they are desired by the society. According to the current principles of law<sup>1</sup>, to make it possible for public administration to convert to electronic administration (or even e-government), it is essential to pass certain regulations, especially acts. Currently, in the Polish legal system, we can point out the following:

- Act of 27 July 2001 on the Protection of Databases (OJ No 128, item 1402 of 2001 as amended) which has to be applied when protecting electronic document sets made for e-government.
- Act of 6 September 2001 on the Access to Public Information (OJ No 112, item 1198 of 2001 as amended). It obliges public administration to allow access to information of a public nature.
- Act of 18 September 2001 on Electronic Signature (OJ No 130, item 1450 of 2001 as amended). This regulation stipulates the conditions necessary to apply an electronic signature, the legal implications of that kind of action, the rules for providing certifying services, and the conditions for supervision over subjects providing those services.<sup>2</sup>
- Act of 18 July 2002 on Providing Services by Electronic Means (OJ No 144, item 1204 of 2002 as amended). It determines providers' duties related to the provision of services by electronic means. It also determines the rules of excluding providers' responsibility associated with those services and the rules of protecting the personal data of natural persons who use these kinds of services. This act is very useful, because it delivers many legal definitions of terms ascribed to e-government.<sup>3</sup>
- Act of 18 July 2005 on Computerization of Activities of Entities Performing Public Tasks (OJ No 64, item 565 of 2002 as amended), which favours the need to edit all official journals in digital form. It also specifies the rules for enacting the National Plan of Computerization and other computerization projects which can be used for national development. What is more, this act provides rules for exchanging information by electronic means.<sup>4</sup>

Aside from that, one has to keep in mind the many ordinances which implement the authorizations from those acts as well as from regulations laid down in other acts that are not entirely devoted to computerization.

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1 As it is stated in Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2 April 1997 (OJ No 78, item 483 of 1997 as amended), state organs act under and within the limits of law.

2 Article 1 of this act.

3 Article 1 of this act.

4 Article 1 of this act.

All in all, the Polish legal system has the necessary regulations to create e-government. Accordingly, it is worth to take a closer look at how this new form of carrying out public tasks would function in practice. Those activities are implemented on various levels of administration: central, local, and also by the third sector, which fulfils public administration activities. Below, using that scheme, the most important and interesting projects are presented.

## 1. Central Programs and Projects

### 1.1. Ikonk@<sup>5</sup>

Ikonk@ is a government project for setting up and running public access to the Internet in all communal public libraries, which are called Internet reading rooms.

The established aim was to provide simple, common and free-of-charge global network access to the widest group possible, on a local basis. It was made according to the Lisbon Strategy and the Computerization Strategy of the Republic of Poland—ePolska—for 2004–2006, and also the National Computerization Plan for 2007–2010<sup>6</sup>.

Thanks to this program, communal public libraries all over the country have been equipped with computers (at least three PCs in each library) and adequate software. What is more, free training has been provided for librarians who run each point. Each library that participated in Ikonk@ has also been equipped with Wi-Fi hardware, thus, it is possible to connect a user's own computer to the Internet or any other hardware that supports it.

The program was initially set up in Podlaskie region on 17 September 2003 with 117 of 118 communes of this region participating in it. The first reading room opened on 13 November in Supraśl.<sup>7</sup> In this month, the program covered Łódzkie and Lubelskie regions, and since 2004 it has been working in the whole country.

Ikonk@ was primarily run by the Nowoczesna Polska Foundation, which provided the hardware, whilst the software was delivered by Microsoft. The then Ministry of Science and Computerization<sup>8</sup> guaranteed librarians training. In other regions, the program was carried out with government resources.<sup>9</sup>

The correctness of the realization of every single project was guaranteed by contracts between the minister responsible for computerization and the village (or city) mayor. In these contracts, parties' rights and duties were specified. The minister had to equip every participating library with at least three PCs with operating systems, integra-

5 It is a Polish word for an 'icon', but written with the @ sign.

6 This strategy is an appendix to the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 March 2007 (OJ No 61, item 415 of 2007).

7 Wolski, A. *Ikonk@ Program on the Halfway Point* [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/284/3829/Czym\\_jest\\_IKONKA.html](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/284/3829/Czym_jest_IKONKA.html)>.

8 Currently the computerization of public administration is carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration.

9 Podświatne Commune Public Library. Ikonk@ Program [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[www.gbp-poswiatne.ovh.org/ikonka.html](http://www.gbp-poswiatne.ovh.org/ikonka.html)>.

ted office suites and antivirus software. The minister also had to equip the library with Wi-Fi hardware and routers. Moreover, the minister was obliged to provide four-hour training on the use of Microsoft Windows XP Professional PL, the Internet and e-mail for the librarians. As for the mayor, he/she was required to provide a venue, typically the local library, or another suitable location, e.g. the municipal cultural centre. Furthermore, the mayor was ordered to assign a person responsible for running the Ikonk@ point. He was also responsible for covering the expenses for connecting and running the Internet, but he could choose the provider and further insure the hardware.<sup>10</sup>

The extension of Ikonk@ was the Project Ikonk@ Continued. It was addressed only to the communes that did not benefit from Ikonk@.<sup>11</sup>

The Ikonk@ program was an excellent means of providing the public with free access to the Internet. Thanks to it, access to the resources of the global network was possible by using not only the in-library PCs but also other devices via Wi-Fi. Communal libraries acquired unlimited access to many on-line libraries (including the National Digital Library of Poland). Moreover, owing to Ikonk@, through the development of on-line services and the promotion of the access to the Internet and tools necessary for that, digital exclusion can be minimized, or even eliminated.

As a result of the project, 2,464 points were established, and, since there are about 2,478 communes in Poland, this should be considered a success.

## 1.2. The National Digital Library of Poland and the Digital Libraries Federation

Under the Internet address <http://www.pbi.edu.pl/index.html>, the main website of the National Digital Library of Poland (NDLoP) is hosted. It was opened on 21 December 2003. At the time it contained a modest number of 130 titles, while up till now it has expanded to over 32,000. NDLoP is run by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.<sup>12</sup>

The NDLoP realizes the objectives of the European e-Content program. Within its range there are actions which should ease the access to public sector information.

The NDLoP catalogue focuses mainly on classical Polish literature but also textbooks and scientific publications, archives, music manuscripts, cartography, paintings, photography, magazines and scientific journals. According to the appendix to the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and Art of 24 November 1998, the NDLoP's main catalogue also contains the National Library Resource.<sup>13</sup>

10 Zon, J. Electronic Library – Digital Platform, Ikonk@ from the Perspective of the Regional Library - Księżnica Kopernikanska Example. *Third conference: Internet in Libraries. Electronic Resources: Supply and Demand*. 12-14 December, Wrocław [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[11 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. Ikonk@ Program \[accessed 04-03-10\]. <\[http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/284/4590/IKONKA\\\_ciag\\\_dalszy.html\]\(http://www.mswia.gov.pl/portal/pl/284/4590/IKONKA\_ciag\_dalszy.html\)>.](http://www.ebib.info/publikacje/matkonf/iwb3/artykul.php?p></a>>.</p>
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12 NDLoP, Passing the NDLoP [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <<http://www.pbi.edu.pl/site.php?p=MDg1ZmQzN2UwMjY0&s=YzM5ZGEzZGEwNTA2&a=ZjlkZTk0NWEyNDA5>>.

13 Archiwistyka.pl. NDLoP [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.archiwistyka.pl/artykuly/informatyka\\_w\\_archiwum/polska\\_biblioteka\\_internetowa](http://www.archiwistyka.pl/artykuly/informatyka_w_archiwum/polska_biblioteka_internetowa)>.

The Chairman of the NDLoP's Foundation considers that the biggest problem for the library is the lack of best-sellers. This involves authors who do not want to share their books with the library.<sup>14</sup>

The NDLoP is now a part of a bigger venture—the Digital Libraries Federation (DLF). The DLF website focuses on the collection of digitalized books and scripts for all Polish language digital libraries, which are run in PIONIER<sup>15</sup> network. Currently, the DLF contains over 285,000 items.<sup>16</sup>

The National Digital Library of Poland and the DLF is a simple way to access Polish and foreign classics. Similarly to traditional libraries, those websites also have a chance to play a great role in the field of education or popularizing art and culture, and they are available at any time (24/7) and in any place with Internet access. Ikonk@ is a fine way to increase commune libraries book collections.

### 1.3. The Electronic Platform for Public Administration Services

The Electronic Platform for Public Administration Services (EPfPAS) is the biggest project in the field of e-government in Poland, which is defined in the National Computerization Plan 2007–2010. It is available from <http://epuap.gov.pl> and was opened on 14 April 2008.<sup>17</sup>

The EPfPAS is part of a bigger project—the Gate of Poland. This project is an integrated digital system which allows for the provision of public services electronically.<sup>18</sup> It should exceed 10 per cent of real and 40 per cent of potential effectiveness of public administration. The main services available on the platform are: filling out an income tax return; searching for job offers; applying for Social Insurance allowances; applying for an ID card; renewing a drivers license; making an appointment with a doctor; registering and settlement of social insurance costs for employees; making customs declara-

14 Jabłońska, U. NDLOP [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.eduskrypt.pl/polska\\_biblioteka\\_internetowa\\_czyli\\_ksiazki\\_w\\_sieci-info-1709.html](http://www.eduskrypt.pl/polska_biblioteka_internetowa_czyli_ksiazki_w_sieci-info-1709.html)>.

15 PIONIER—Polish Optical Internet is a program which focuses on three areas:

- ‘construction of broadband network infrastructure supporting the science, matching similar installations in other European countries; currently, after four years of development, we can, not without satisfaction, admit that currently operating infrastructure does not differ technologically from leading European networks, as well as research networks in the US;
- development and verification of pilot services and applications for the information society, creating a base for new developments in: science, education, health care, natural environment, government and local administration, industry and services;
- creation of competitive conditions for active software development for new applications in the information society’ (Pionier.gov.pl [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.pionier.gov.pl/project/program.htm>>).

16 DLF. Searching [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <<http://fbc.pionier.net.pl/owoc/main>>.

17 Local government PAP website. EPfPAS starts [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.samorzad.pap.pl/palio/html.run?\\_Instance=cms\\_samorząd.pap.pl&\\_PageID=2&s=depesza&dz=szablon.depesza&dep=36092&data=&\\_Checksum=171210868](http://www.samorzad.pap.pl/palio/html.run?_Instance=cms_samorząd.pap.pl&_PageID=2&s=depesza&dz=szablon.depesza&dep=36092&data=&_Checksum=171210868)>.

18 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, EPfPAS [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.mswia.gov.pl/porta/pl/267/3897/Wrota\\_Polski.html](http://www.mswia.gov.pl/porta/pl/267/3897/Wrota_Polski.html)>.

tion; filling out company income tax returns and making value added tax declarations; providing statistical data; and participating in public procurement.<sup>19</sup>

The EPfPAS focuses on creating a coherent, safe and lawful electronic means of providing public services by public administration for citizens, entrepreneurs and other public entities. It must also save time and some costs linked with sharing information.<sup>20</sup>

For citizens, the platform is a website from which one can access every available on-line public service irrespective of whether it is a service administered by local or central government or any other entity which provides public services.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the EPfPAS guarantees not only G2C but also G2B and G2G information sharing.

Project authors point to these advantages for citizens, which the EPfPAS brings:

- Timesaving and increased productivity. Thanks to the platform, there is no need to visit a department or post to apply for something. One is able to use the platform wherever the Internet is available.
- Access flexibility, which is possible because one can use the EPfPAS at any time (24/7). It guarantees better time management of both citizens and entrepreneurs. Flexibility also can be assigned to the place where public services are provided.
- Public services automation. As a result of using the electronic devices, there are fewer mistakes in applications. The software, which is used to send applications, is capable of identifying a fault.
- Better transparency in public administration.
- Easier-to-find on-line public services that should be easier to use.

Currently the EPfPAS website supports a simple browser where one can define the region, district or commune to find the necessary service.

On 30 April 2008 the Electronic Registry Box (ERB) was established. The out-box has to meet the requirements established in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 29 September 2005 on the organization and technical conditions for the delivery of electronic documents to public entities (OJ No 200, item 1651 of 2005 as amended). The ERB is used for electronic communication between a citizen/entrepreneur and a public entity.<sup>22</sup>

The EPfPAS is, without a doubt, a big step towards e-government. However, it is not without fault. First of all, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration did not make the platform available for testing before the implementation of the EPfPAS. So at the time it was launched, not everyone knew how to use the website or how to solve se-

19 Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Science Matters [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://www.sprawynauki.waw.pl/?section=article&ref=issue&art\\_id=294](http://www.sprawynauki.waw.pl/?section=article&ref=issue&art_id=294)>.

20 Szafranski, B. *The EPfPAS Role in Modernizing the Informational Infrastructure of the State* [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <<http://egov.pl/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=3530>>.

21 EPUAP. What is EPfPAS from the citizens' perspective [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[http://epuap.gov.pl/wps/portal/!ut/p/c1/04\\_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3g3Z4-gYG93QwN\\_F1NHAYMX5yD-TMIsAlwNvI6B8pFm8n79RqJuJp6GhhZmroYGRmYeJk0-Yp4G7izEB3eEg\\_DrB8kb4ACOBuj6HV-2cQfq9Ay28nY3cXUz0\\_Tzyc1P1C3IjDDID0hUByAfhlA!!/dl2/d1/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnB3LzZfR-kNIUINLRzEwT0Q1QTAYRENSNVY4UDIwNDU!/>](http://epuap.gov.pl/wps/portal/!ut/p/c1/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3g3Z4-gYG93QwN_F1NHAYMX5yD-TMIsAlwNvI6B8pFm8n79RqJuJp6GhhZmroYGRmYeJk0-Yp4G7izEB3eEg_DrB8kb4ACOBuj6HV-2cQfq9Ay28nY3cXUz0_Tzyc1P1C3IjDDID0hUByAfhlA!!/dl2/d1/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnB3LzZfR-kNIUINLRzEwT0Q1QTAYRENSNVY4UDIwNDU!/).

22 Enigma Comp [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.uqpo.pl/>>.

veral problems. Second, smaller communes that do not have big annual budgets are not able to handle the indispensable infrastructure for running the EPfPAS.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the running of the platform cannot be misjudged. Only three hours after the launch, there were over 400 new users registered; also, the first applications for the ERB opening were assigned.<sup>24</sup> Expectations are very high. The most important thing to do now is to develop the platform to make it run without any obstacles.

#### 1.4. Internet Tax Relief

Tax relief on the Internet is another priority, which should popularize mass global network access. Regulations which allow for a personal income tax deduction have been applied in Poland since 2005. According to Article 26 of the Act on Personal Income Tax, one can deduct from one's income expenditures incurred on the Internet in the place where one lives. The deduction cannot be more than PLN 760<sup>25</sup>, and it is determined on the basis of invoices within the meaning of regulations on tax on goods and services.<sup>26</sup>

The deduction limit is set for every spouse. Still, there is one condition: every one has to incur expenses on the Net. Charges for installation, hardware, etc. cannot be deducted.<sup>27</sup> What is more, if the taxpayer performs telework, he/she can only deduct expenses when he/she does not have equivalent Internet access from his employer.

It is worth noting that it is also possible to deduct dial-up connection expenses, and not just broadband. However, there is a problem when one wants to deduct mobile phone Internet connection charges. Entrepreneurs can do this only if those expenses are not costs of revenue.<sup>28</sup>

#### 1.5. E-Tax Declarations

Since 2009, every taxpayer can submit an annual tax return (PIT-37 form with annexes PIT/O, PIT/D, PIT 2K) on-line. A secure certified digital signature, which has been the main barrier to the development of on-line public services, is not required. The system approves certain methods of sending e-declarations. First of all, one can do it on the website (<http://www.e-deklaracje.gov.pl>). This is an on-line process, and additional software, besides an Internet browser, is required (available free of charge). Furthermore, one can fill the declaration off-line and then send it in an \*.xml file. The last method makes the use of a taxpayer's financial-accounting software possible. At the next stage,

23 Rzeczpospolita newspaper, quoted in the Local Government PAP website [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://samorzad.pap.com.pl/?d=804300845422304&dzial=wszystkie&poddzial=>>.

24 Stradowska, A. EPfPAS starts [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://samorzad.pap.com.pl/?d=804300845422304&dzial=wszystkie&poddzial=>>.

25 Also, in the current year, the amount of deduction remains at the same level.

26 Art. 26 paragraph 1 point 6a and paragraph 7 point 1 of the Act of 26 July 2001 on Personal Income Tax (OJ No 14, Item 176 of 2001 as amended).

27 Molenda-Detyna, I. *Internet Tax Relief – When and for Whom* [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.money.pl/podatki/poradniki/artykul/ulga;na;internet;kiedy;i;dla;kogo,146,0,150162.html>>.

28 E-tax declarations [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.e-deklaracje.pit.pl/>>.

the e-declaration is verified, and the reference number and date are given. The taxpayer receives confirmation to his e-mail address. The declaration is enrolled in the central registry and then sent to a tax office.<sup>29</sup>

Over 89,000 taxpayers used the e-declarations website in 2009 and only 1,500 signed their declarations with a secure certified digital signature. When comparing those numbers to only 419 taxpayers who submitted e-declarations in 2008, it becomes clear that changes were necessary.<sup>30</sup>

## 1.6. Money Claim Online

Money Claim Online is one of the newest projects and is going to be launched on 1 January 2010. Money Claim Online is related not to public administration, but to the judiciary. However, the Polish Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) had to be amended.<sup>31</sup> The authors of this amendment were using British (Money Claim Online)<sup>32</sup> and German (automatisiertes Mahnverfahren)<sup>33</sup> solutions as examples.

The amendment introduced proper regulations at every stage of a proceeding, starting from enrolling a claim, through judgment, court services, appealing, and ending with the execution of a judgment. There also are regulations which ensure technical support during the proceeding. Moreover, only for this proceeding, a new division in the courts called 'e-court' is going to be created. Money Claim Online was created mainly for mass claimants, who are entrepreneurs. Certainly, the access to this proceeding is not limited by the law to anyone.

Communication between a claimant and a court is by electronic means only. No paper documents are created. In any event, the defendant can choose to communicate with the court either traditionally or electronically. Participants of the Money Claim Online will be logging on to the system with a special number, so no secure verified digital signature is needed, what is a great advantage.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Local Government Projects

### 2.1. Digital Office

Every Polish region has its own website. They vary in quality, but this is not the most important consideration. It is the Digital Office button that is essential. Particular websites express individual attitudes towards this term. For example, Małopolska

29 E-tax declarations (n. 28).

30 E-Declarations website, News [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.e-deklaracje.gov.pl/index.php?page=aktualnosci>>.

31 Act of 17 November 1964 on the Code of Civil Procedure (OJ No 43, Item 296 of 1964 as amended).

32 See: <https://www.moneyclaim.gov.uk/csmco/index.jsp>.

33 See: <http://www.mahnverfahren-aktuell.de/>.

34 See: Kotecka, S. Boston IT security review. Money Claim Online. NDLoPD [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[http://www.pwi.edu.pl/upload/files/18\\_kotecka\\_KJ\\_\\_PL.pdf](http://www.pwi.edu.pl/upload/files/18_kotecka_KJ__PL.pdf)>.

region's website claims it should simplify the use of on-line public administration's services in the region. It focuses all on-line services which are available in all communes, districts and regions within this area.<sup>35</sup> The Gates of Pomorze, on the other hand, informs that, thanks to the website, one can start to settle his/her case but cannot end it on-line. Moreover, traditional forms are replaced by HTML ones.<sup>36</sup> Opolski's Digital Office authors emphasize its role in the creation of the information society.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, as a result of earlier registration and creation of an account, it is possible to fill in some of blank boxes in the form on-line, and then submit it traditionally. The use of Digital Office favours transparency during the proceeding, because the client can track his application with his Internet browser.

The authors of the Gate of Podkarpackie reveal how the office should work. The client connects with the website through his/her Internet browser and then chooses the type of case he/she wants to settle. The client then fills in a proper form and sends it. The office application automatically verifies the form and sends it to the competent official. However, the client must go to a 'traditional' office if there are any documents that cannot be provided on-line.<sup>38</sup>

The Digital Office shortens the time necessary for settling the matter and, because of that, it saves time and money. But for now, its functionality is restricted. Those conditions have to be changed to make Digital Offices more efficient. Accordingly, systems have to be constantly updated.

## 2.2. Websites of Cities on Mobile Phones

Modern mobile phones are more than just phones. They are fitted with digital cameras, mp3 players and Internet browsers, and they have become multitasking devices with a wide range of possibilities.

This fact was used by the authors of over 200 city websites in Poland, which include Wrocław. On MobiWrocław WAP, one can find: a public communication timetable, information about events, the city airport's arrivals and departures schedule, a weather forecast. There are also step by step instructions on how to start a business. Moreover, it is also possible to check the phase of the case settlement. These days it is capable of issuing: an identity card, a driving licence and a vehicle registration. The city mayor, Rafał Dutkiewicz, said that 'Wrocław can be a city of modern technologies and communication and this [mobiWrocław] is another project, which brings us to this'<sup>39</sup>.

35 Małopolska Digital Office [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[http://www.wrotamalopolski.pl/root\\_Cyfrowy\\_urzadz\\_procedury/Strona+glowna/Wprowadzenie/](http://www.wrotamalopolski.pl/root_Cyfrowy_urzadz_procedury/Strona+glowna/Wprowadzenie/)>.

36 The Gate of Pomorze [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<https://www.wrotapomorza.pl/pl/cu/wprowadzenie>>.

37 The Gate of Opolskie [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[http://www.wrotaopolszczyzny.pl/pl/cyfrowy+urzadz/strona+glowna/wprowadzenie/?wbc\\_purpose=bas&WBCMODE=authoringpr](http://www.wrotaopolszczyzny.pl/pl/cyfrowy+urzadz/strona+glowna/wprowadzenie/?wbc_purpose=bas&WBCMODE=authoringpr)>.

38 The Gate of Podkarpackie. Digital Office [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <[http://www.wrota.podkarpackie.pl/pl/o\\_wrotach/cu](http://www.wrota.podkarpackie.pl/pl/o_wrotach/cu)>.

39 Money.pl. MobiWrocław. *The Whole City in a Mobile Phone* [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://www.money.pl/gospodarka/ngospodarka/telekomunikacja/artukul/mobiwroclaw;-;cale;miasto;w;komorce70,0,289094.html>>.

What is interesting is that the website has two versions: day and night. After the sunset it changes its colours, so it is more readable. Furthermore, foreign investors and tourists also have their own section, where they can find useful information or city sightseeing routes.<sup>40</sup> The same applies to the Kraków ‘mobile’ website.<sup>41</sup> They are, in fact, Digital Offices, with fewer functions.

It is also worth mentioning an initiative which many Polish cities have undertaken. They have created hot spots, which allow free connection with the global network. Although not innovative, it is noteworthy.

### 3. Actions of Third Sector Organizations

Public administration cannot act for itself. Third sector organizations are able to show to the government where certain activities are necessary.

#### 3.1. Offices’ Websites Accessibility Audit

This quite interesting initiative was started by the ‘Widzialni’ organization. Between 1 March and 21 April 2008, its supporters performed an audit of public administration’s websites. The websites of nine city offices were chosen. The accessibility for the weak-sighted and blind was the main evaluation criteria. Moreover, proper software which magnifies or reads the text was used.

The test was divided into two parts. In the first one, the title of the site, header description correctness, direct text reading, contrast between the site’s background and main text, description of links, uniformity of font styles and the general impression of the site were evaluated.

In the second part of the evaluation, the participants performed various tasks. They had to find: the telephone number for the city mayor, the list of primary schools, the councillors’ wealth declarations, the city population and the Public Information Bulletin site.

The city offices of Poznań and Kraków won the first part and Wrocław the second part. All in all, Warsaw had the best website and Łódź the worst. None of the city office websites was rated higher than C.<sup>42</sup>

This test was not pointless. Until 2010, according to the Ministerial Declaration of 11 June 2006, all EU Member States have to set up governmental sites for the disabled.<sup>43</sup>

The ‘Widzialni’ initiative highlights a very important matter—e-government can help the disabled in everyday life. For now, as the results have shown, a lot of work

40 *Ibid.*

41 MobiKraków [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010]. <<http://mobi.krakow.pl/>>.

42 Widzialni. Information. Offices’ websites accessibility audit [interactive]. [accessed 03-03-2010], <[http://www.widzialni.eu/audyt\\_dostepnosci\\_dla\\_niewidomych,m,in,38.html](http://www.widzialni.eu/audyt_dostepnosci_dla_niewidomych,m,in,38.html)>.

43 Polish Press Agency. Self-governmental website [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <<http://www.samorzad.pap.pl/?d=804280822243731>>.

remains to be done. The authors of those websites should consult the representatives of the disabled about the ways of improving those sites. Public administration cannot act against its principles if it wants to be considered ‘modern’.

### 3.2. Project N@utobus

N@utobus was accomplished by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration in cooperation with the Economic Education Foundation. This is why I have decided to put it in this part of the study.

N@utobus—Wireless Internet Bus—was correlated with Ikonk@. It was made to promote expert knowledge among officials, those employed in small- and medium-sized businesses, firemen, teachers, the unemployed, students and other people who would and should want to be a part of a knowledge-based society.<sup>44</sup> What matters is the elimination of digital exclusion, by which I mean impoverishment due to the lack of access to on-line services that can lead to social exclusion as well. Access to the Internet alone is not enough to deal with this phenomenon. The use of other available technologies is crucial, and this is the main aim of N@utobus.<sup>45</sup>

N@utobus was modelled on the Finnish Internet bus *Netti-Nysse*, which was implemented in Tampere city. With the help from the local college, the city and area entrepreneurs, an old city bus was adapted to fit in the modern technologies. It was a part of the eTampere initiative. The idea was born in January 2000, and by the next year it was on Finnish roads.

A Polish project was realized between 2006 and 2008. The vehicle on which N@utobus was based was earlier used to promote the accession to the EU.<sup>46</sup> On-board hardware and software was the property of private entrepreneurs who rented them out for the duration of the project. There were four main training areas on the bus: eAdministration, eHealth, eEducation and eBusiness.

The route of the bus was located near Warsaw. From October 2007 to June 2008, over 8,850 people had participated in the project. I calculate that more than 244,850 people were trained and that 60 per cent of them lived in rural areas, while 338 villages and towns in 202 communes from Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie and Mazowieckie regions hosted the bus.<sup>47</sup>

The N@utobus project had similar objectives as Ikonk@, but it was aimed at different problems. In localities where it appeared, it was a local spectacle and a conversation piece. The project was open to everyone and has to be assessed positively. The only thing that bothers me is the relatively small scale of the affair; however, it did what it was designed to do—to reach the maximum amount of people in an area where

44 N@utobus. History [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://test.aranea.com.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=43&Itemid=14](http://test.aranea.com.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=43&Itemid=14)>.

45 N@utobus. Aim of the project [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <[http://test.aranea.com.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=11](http://test.aranea.com.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=34&Itemid=11)>.

46 *Ibid.*

47 Adamczyk, M. *N@utobus – Wireless Internet Bus* [interactive]. [accessed 04-03-2010]. <<http://nt.ngo.pl/x/362164>>.

Internet access could be restricted. There is no data which would show the kind of social groups that were using the bus. It should primarily have been an initiative against digital exclusion among the elderly, because young people can learn how to use new technologies at school.

## Conclusions

The examples described above can give a picture of e-government in Poland. There are many good projects, some of which have to be improved, but even more has to be done. There are initiatives which provide the possibility of the use of the technologies not only to people who have the means but also to those who might otherwise have been excluded (Ikonk@ and N@utobus). E-tax declarations alone prove that citizens want to use on-line public services. I am wondering how Money Claim Online will be adopted. I suppose it will be successful, due to the resignation on the arduous secure, verified electronic signature. Currently we are also looking forward to check how electronic ID will work, especially the e-signature provided with it (legislation is to come into force on 1 July 2011). It is good that third sector organizations are also trying to help the government. Their tips are very useful and can point to certain correctable errors are. E-government in Poland is laboriously becoming a fact. However, there is still a huge amount of work to do, and therefore we should not just complain. We have to fix what is wrong, try to avoid similar mistakes in the future, and, using the experiences of other countries, build an information society and electronic government for all.

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## ELEKTRONINĖ VALDŽIA LENKIJOJE: VYKDOMŲ PROJEKTŲ PAVYZDŽIAI

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**Santrauka.** Pažangių modernių technologijų plėtra turi įtakos visoms socialinio gyvenimo sritims. Jų paskatinti pokyčiai pastebimi visur. Viešojo administravimo srityje į šiuos pokyčius taip pat negalima neatsižvelgti, ypač dėl to, jog visuomenė jų laukia. Pagal šiuolaikinius teisės principus, norint viešąjį administravimą paversti elektroniniu (ar net e. valdžia), būtina atitinkamai reglamentuoti. Taigi būtini atitinkami teisės aktai. Be to, svarbu turėti omenyje ir nutarimus, kuriais įtvirtinamos įvairių, ne tik išimtinai kompiuterizacijos reglamentavimui skirtų, aktų bei reglamentų nuostatos. Lenkijos teisės sistemoje yra įtvirtinti e. valdžiai sukurti reikalingi reglamentai. Dėl to verta nuodugnau pažvelgti į tai, kaip ši nauja viešojo sektoriaus darbų atlikimo forma veiks praktikoje. Ši veikla įgyvendinama įvairiuose administracijos (centrinės, vietinės) lygiuose, be to, ir trečiajame sektoriuje, vykdančiame viešojo administravimo veiklą. Šiame straipsnyje pagal šią schemą pristatomi svarbiausi bei įdomiausi projektai. Tokių projektų esama itin gerų, nors kai kurie yra tobulintini, tačiau dar daugiau darbų laukia ateityje. Esama iniciatyvų, leidžiančių technologijomis naudotis ne tik tiems žmonėms, kurie turi reikiamų priemonių, bet ir tiems, kurie kitais atvejais tokios galimybės neturėtų (Ikonk@ ir N@utobus). Vien jau e. mokesčių deklaracijos – įrodymas, jog piliečiai noriai naudojami elektroninėmis viešosiomis paslaugomis. Svarbių klausimų kelia tai, kaip bus pritaikyta Money Claim Online sistema. Sveikintina yra trečiojo sektoriaus organizacijų pagalba. Jų patarimai labai vertingi ir gali nurodyti koreguotinus aspektus. Po truputį, didelėmis pastangomis Lenkijoje e. valdžia tampa faktu, o kai kuriais projektais iš tiesų galime didžiuotis. Šio straipsnio autorius pateikia detalių jų aptarimą, pabrėždamas jų silpnąsias ir stiprąsias puses. Vis dėlto daugybė darbų dar laukia ateityje.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** elektroninė valdžia, viešasis administravimas, Ikonk@, skaitmeninė biblioteka, elektroninis teismas, informacinė visuomenė, Lenkija.

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