Intranet “SaarlandPlus” – Enabling New Methods of Cooperation within the Ministerial Administration

Benedikt Gursch, Christian Seel, and Öner Güngöz

Institute for Information Systems (IWi)
at the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI),
Stuhlsatzenhausweg 3, Bd. 43.8, 66123 Saarbruecken, Germany
{Gursch,Seel,Guengoez}@iwi.uni-sb.de

Abstract. The potentials of the information and communication technology become more and more important for the optimization and support of the administrative work processes. The Saarland state government sets a special focus on the usage of the new technologies within the public administration and attaches value to it in the context of a global E-business strategy.
The presented document gives a short overview on the implementation of an intranet as a platform for ministerial comprehensive communication.

1 Introduction

The usage of the Information and communication technologies (ICT) creates beneficial potential of optimisation for the necessary restructuring of the public administration. In general, the digitalisation of information and communication as well as the rapid rise of the internet as a central resource for information exchange facilitates the integration of value-added chains independent from time and space. From the internal perspective, this enables new potentials of co-operation within and between administrative authorities, for example by creating virtual project rooms.[1]

According to this trend, an E-Business Strategy was developed by the state government of Saarland – one of the smaller federal states of Germany – as far back as the beginning of the year 2000. Included are different strategic projects, which give impulses for the efficient arrangement of administration procedures and which should set milestones for the modernisation of administration. The spreading of ICT, new forms of work and education, as well as the creation of jobs within the technical and service sector are in focus along with modernising administration [2].

The project “Intranet SaarlandPlus”, a subsidiary project of the strategic project “Networked State Government” aims at the optimization of the information and knowledge exchange within and between the different ministerial administrative authorities. This is achieved by the implementation of an intranet solution as a departmental comprehensive communication platform. Using this project as case-study, the presented paper provides in the following a short overview of the gained implementation polices and experiences.

© Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2002
2 Implementing the Intranet SaarlandPlus – Experiences within the Ministerial Administration

2.1 Business Case and Challenges

The ministerial administration as the area of application for the intranet SaarlandPlus is characterized by a dual role. On the one hand, duties of a supervising and intervening administration have to be fulfilled. On the other, the ministerial administration provides services for specific groups of citizen. As a result, the addressees can emerge at the same time as recipients of the administration’s output and as subject to the supervision of the ministries. There is only a rare contact to the citizen, moreover the main target group of the services performed is built by commercial and social partners who play the role of a intermediary to the primary beneficiaries [3].

The state government of Saarland consists of eight departments and employs an overall amount of 25,000 people. One can see, just from the number of employees involved, that a radical reorganisation of work processes in the sense of a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) would be problematic, the more so as the existing procedures have to correspond to certain formal criteria according to the described duties. Furthermore, cultural barriers as well as resistance against organisational changes represent a vital obstacle. However, to improve work processes and the flow of information, a Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) approach was pursued to implement the system. Consequently, the Intranet “SaarlandPlus” will enable that

- the knowledge is available at the location where it is needed, and
- the knowledge is stored in the place where it originated.

In addition, the Intranet “SaarlandPlus” permits the adaptation of the internet technologies already used for the state government’s web presence to the internal structures.

2.2 Conception and Implementation

The vision for Intranet “SaarlandPlus” was to provide an integrated communication platform that would incorporate the existing isolated intranet applications within the state government and that would support the co-operation within and between the various ministerial departments. To achieve this goal an integrated framework was developed that anticipates the various requirements within the state government. Considering the organizational structure described above it was necessary to realize the intranet in three expansion stages.

The first expansion stage is available for all state employees accessing the intranet. Information relevant to the whole workforce are stored there. Lists of telephone numbers and addresses, directories of legal regulations, work distribution plans, job advertisements, ICT related information as well as information concerning departmental vocational trainings fall under this category.

The second expansion stage contains the design of department specific sections. It is directed at the staff of each department and is only accessible for the particular employees. Announcements of the executive board, information of the staff council, important internal appointments or the internal departmental employee newspaper can be accessed here.