

The Practicality of Public Service Integration

Mohammed Alhusban

Southampton Solent University

Mohammed.Al-husban@solent.ac.uk

Abstract: The concept of public service integration constitutes the current tendency in the context of joined up government initiatives. Integration enables public agencies to share their objectives across organizational boundaries, whereby information and services can be shared among ministries and government entities in a way that avoid data redundancy, boost up the efficiency of internal government processes, increase employees' productivity and ultimately provide citizen with high quality services and better level of governmental interaction. Jordanian government is now challenged to deliver an expanding set of services to a growing number of constituents whose expectations are in increase. Recent geopolitical, economic, health and social conditions are rapidly changing on the landscape, and have been impacted by the surrounding political unrest, resulting in Jordanian government having to overstretch its capabilities and cope. In this paper, the practicality of integrating online public services is investigated from government employee's views, in specific ministries for certain services. Licensing services have been considered in this paper, and that because those services have been flagged as the most commonly used online services by the study participants, and currently offered through several dispersed portals and service providers. The study aimed at answering questions related to the practicality of integrating public services in Jordan. Five areas have emerged as major themes in the context of this paper: The misconception of the definition of public service integration with electronic Government, Drivers and Barriers from intraorganisational view, the readiness and willingness towards integration, and potential services where integration may occur. The preliminary results emerged from this paper show that there is a necessity to push further in the public service integration process, especially for specific services that require the involvement of several service providers. Integrating health and social services have been highlighted through the data analysis, especially for the recently established Syrian refugee camps in Jordan. Overall data analysis has revealed that the level of support provided by the E-government program plays a vital role in eliminating possible barriers stand out against public service integration, and promotes a better understanding of e-government integration. The result of this study pointed at service integration as the key element to more cost effective service delivery.

Keywords Public service integration, joined up service delivery, practical service public provision, collaborative government initiative, connected public service delivery

1. Introduction

Integrating public services at national and local levels offers the potential for substantial cost saving and service improvements (Brown et al, 2011). Egovernment projects have succeeded when they have been planned and designed around the needs and requirements of business and citizen, and that can only be realized by the wide back office integration between government departments, in order to minimize duplication and avoid redundancy when interacting with various government departments. In an example of an individual is setting up a new Tourism Agency, and needs to provide various documents to satisfy and comply with legal and professional rules, including Criminal Records, Vocational License, Social Security Debts, etc. Such information is already available in several government entities and should be accessed automatically. In practice, this example implies service integration and alignment so that individual government departments share information and avoid the need for the client to provide information that is already held by different government entities (CSTransform, 2011).

Governments in a number of modern democracies are undertaking ambitious reforms to transform their public services and are moving toward the concept of service delivery integration. Two key drivers are pushing towards integrating the delivery of citizen oriented services across the disparate level of government. The first key driver is the citizen-centric approach towards public service delivery, as governments such as Australia, Canada and UK have recently experienced better eservices uptake level and more efficient internal services integration. (Reddick et al, 2012). The second driver is the current implementation of collaborative networks by government initiatives to collaborate with private sector, which in its turn has dramatically improved effectiveness and efficiency across organisational and political boundaries.

Public service integration strategy has emerged as a result of the connected government model (Al-Husban et al, 2012). As an attempt to enhance and optimise public service provision, integrated public service provision

has technically evolved over the past five years from the simple 'one-stop-shop' concept to much more formal organisational structures mandated at the highest levels (Hyde, 2008). Conventional e-government projects have genuinely contributed to transforming governments towards a leaner, more cost effective government and one way time based citizen service provision as indicated in the first generation of e-government initiatives Gov 1.0. (Misuraca, 2009). However, this has become more complicated and challenging as economic conditions have increased demand for services. Jordanian public service providers are now facing their most serious challenges since the earliest inception of e-government program. The demand for public services is dramatically increasing due to a number of reasons such as demographic changes, harsh economic conditions and Syrian refugee camps resulted from the political unrest in surrounding countries. The Jordanian national concerns over a wide-scale flow of Syrian refugees into Jordan have forced the government to declare north of the country as a disaster area (Omari, 2013). Consequently, an unprecedented rising demand for public services has taken place in an environment whereas public expenditures are sought to be further constrained. In the absence of a willingness to raise new revenue, public services will have to 'achieve more with less'. Public services in Jordan are unstructured and not based on any national, regional or local public service models. This fragmented view of the public service concept and the absence of integration model of public service will impact the quality and the efficiency of public service provision, increases administrative burdens and makes public service provision more costly. Therefore, before integrating public services, Jordanian government should investigate the practicalities of this joining up shift, and measure the current state of integration.

2. What is online public service integration?

Enhanced collaboration and integration across government departments is a priority for governments around the world. Conventionally, governments have been planned and organised with vertical structures (Noreng, 1980), aligned to delivery of particular services to citizen like health and education services and to businesses such as investment facilities and legal regulations. This structural separation and seclusion provides efficiency, clear lines of accountability and concentration of specific range of related service (Hyde, 2008). However, vertical governmental structures are not well equipped to deal with many recent public delivery issues, especially those require cross portfolio like in social security and safe net programs such as unemployment insurance, food assistance and healthcare. (Stegarescu, 2006)

Public Service integration, in its simplest form, refers to joining up services for the benefit of service users or providers. A more detailed definition can be drawn from the other literature: "integration is a coherent set of methods and models on the funding, administrative, organisational, service delivery levels designed to create connectivity" (Lipsky, 2010). Public service integration is also a collaborative model of service delivery achieved by moving to multichannel service delivery and a better use of back-end processes and systems, which can be perceived as an approach for government agencies to move from being system-oriented to chain-oriented with respect to their structure, functioning, skills and capabilities, and culture and management (Agranoff, 2012).

Integration in this paper is defined through coordination, collaboration, and cooperation perspectives. Each defines integration at different levels. Moreover, Public service Integration in the context of this paper is broadly defined as the provision of an integrated cluster of public services, joint up and connected in ways that suit customer requirements, sourced from a range of partner organisations and service providers. The services being integrated may be separate service areas from within the government agency, or alternatively, the partners may include other government agencies, private business and voluntary sector.

This integrated and collaborative approach may be accomplished by merging structures, sharing budgets, combining in joint teams or sharing information between distinct departments, or developing a joint customer interface such as a website or portal (Kreindler et al, 2012).

Service integration occurs horizontally and/or vertically:

1) Horizontal Service Integration (intragovernmental integration and collaboration): integrating some or all of specific set of services within one level of government. (Dean and Boutilier, 2011) It can also refer to the integration of services in government agencies with different functionality that has some relation in common to the clients. This integration model focuses on the economies of scale derived from collaborative approaches to procurement; the efficiencies and knowledge management advantages associated with developing common

IT infrastructure; and merged front counter services with the associated benefits of consolidating real estate. (Dean and Boutilier, 2011)

2) Vertical Service Integration (intergovernmental integration): a service integration in which two or more levels of government in the same function collaborate on integrates service delivery initiatives. These efforts have in some cases led to previously duplicated services being cross-delivered by a single level of government (Dean and Boutilier, 2011). The vertical integration can also address the integration between different levels of government but in the same functional areas, for instance, the integration of local level business license application being linked to state and government level to obtain an employer identification number (Layne and Lee, 2001). The multifaceted nature of the government organisational and technical structures has resulted in increase in the complexity of the service delivery. However, as connected service delivery requires government departments to cooperate and collaborate across organizational borders to provide connected services, so it can be looked at from various perspectives such as structural, administrative and technological.

3. Theoretical Background

The recent reforms in Jordanian government’s structure and organization, which was accompanied by the technological transformation through the adoption of e-government systems, have led to the emergent of a new set of services that can be simply described as closely coordinated. While these services are inherently connected, they are highly dependent on each other, as demonstrated in Figure 1. Online licencing services have been flagged up as the most demanded services in developing countries (CSTransform, 2011). Therefore, Jordanian e-government program immediately responded to the call and encouraged governmental constituents and service providers to offer online licensing services. As a result, a form of services and processes integration in relation to service delivery has emerged, explicitly in services such as Vocational Licensing (VL) and No Criminal Record Certificate (NCRC) and other closely coordinated services which cannot be completed without fulfilling other dependent services.

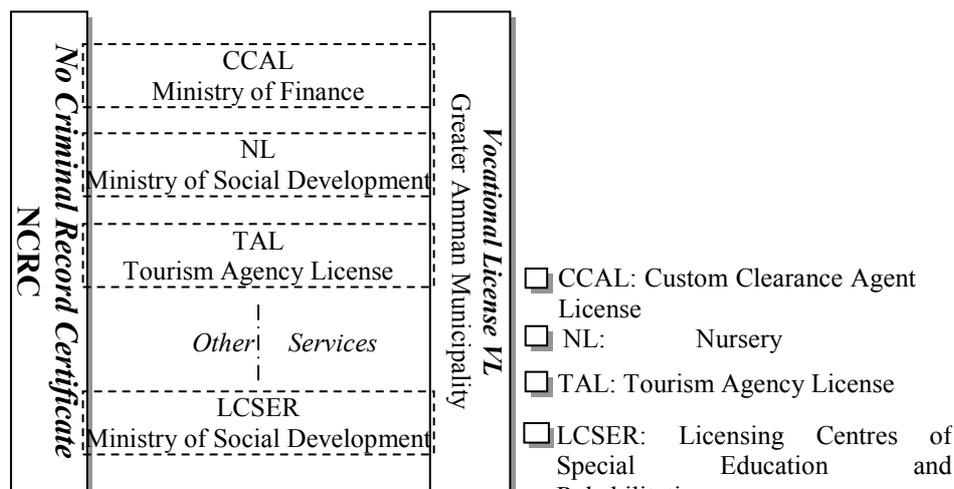


Figure 1: Online service dependency

From legal and organizational perspectives, in some scenarios these services are prerequisite to each other and the service cannot be fulfilled without validating the preconditioned service. An example of these closely coordinated services is the licensing services in Jordan, as most of the licensing services require either applying for a Vocational Licence (VL) and a Non-Criminal Record Certificate (NCRC).

VL Vocational license is a document that formally enables companies to operate within the Municipality of Greater Amman. This basic information characterizes the business itself and serves as a reference for physical inspections of the Municipality of Greater Amman representatives. Anytime the business information changes, it requires official update of the vocational license. A vocational license must be renewed annually (Jordanian e-Government Program, 2006). NCRC No Criminal Record Certificate is a certificate that is requested from Jordanians or non-Jordanians residing in Jordan (in this case the certificate indicates no-criminal record in Jordan only) in order to apply for a vacancy in public sector or in some private companies. The certificates are also necessary for obtaining a license for opening a particular type of business such as Internet cafe. There are

no regulations regarding the validity period of the certificate. Generally, certificates that are not older than 3 months are accepted (Jordanian e-Government Program, 2006).

These services are provided by different agencies and can be access and utilized from several locations and different websites, and yet required for several professions licensing such as Child Care (Nursery) and Licensing Tourism and Travel Agencies (TAL) as depicted in the figure 3. The service that requires the completion of other service or services will be named in this chapter as dependant service. Jordanian government provides links to these disparate systems from its e-government portal. Citizens will eventually get forwarded to different portals to complete the requested services, which is in nature similar to the conventional approach of requesting the citizen to physically visit two or more governmental departments to complete a service. In the domain of dependant services such as TAL, the service is subject to validate by two preconditions, which are obtaining a Vocational License and presenting valid a Non-Criminal Record Certificate as illustrated in Figure 4.1. Consequently, citizen now is required to visit three different portals, with three different login details, to fill in three similar online forms in order to get a service completed. The first portal is provided by a service provider which is Ministry of Tourism and Antiquity (MoTA), the second service (NCRC) is offered by the Ministry of Justice and the third portal is provided by the Greater Amman Municipality. Figure 3 illustrates the current technical overlap between the two services (VL and NCRC) and the dependant service such as TAL, NL, LCC and LCSER.

A significant number of government services require the completion of two other major services (VL and NCRC) in order to be fulfilled and delivered to client. The vast majority of these government services are likely to share a common procedural and information flow, but in the end, they all need to be validated legally by verifying the eligibility of the applicant through NCRC, and professionally through the process of issuing Vocational License VL. This has contributed to the emergence of new aspects of egovernment interoperability, namely as organisational interoperability, semantic interoperability and technical interoperability. Connecting these services has the effect of changing the relationship between the components that provide or manage them. In some cases, these components will need to be more closely coordinated, and this may be achieved by a combination of new technological mechanisms and organizational/ administrative measures, or even by reorganizing the structure of government. If the responsibility for delivering a service is split between several departments, this is likely to result in higher costs as well as bigger margin for error and delay. Therefore, this chapter investigates the practicality of joining up those dependant services.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research approach

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, which is primarily to investigate the practicality of integrating public services, a qualitative and interpretive based approach has been used. Consequently, this approach will position the meaning-making practices of human actors, in this case public servants, at the centre of this study, and therefore, five interactive focus groups were conducted. A focus group is always created with a specific purpose; a knowledge gap that the focus group is supposed to fulfil. Focus groups are a feasible method to gather knowledge and enquiries from different individuals.

Different participants possess pieces of knowledge about a certain matter and when these pieces are brought together, shared and discussed they should point at some potential findings. A facilitator guided the groups through discussing the predefined issues by posing questions, open ended questions and questions oriented towards public service integration. The groups were selected based in their level of involvement in the service chain, where integration was more realistically achieved, as mentioned in the theoretical background, tourism agency licensing was potentially a target for the initial integration, thus groups were formed from the ministries and agencies involved in this service chain.

Table 1: Ministries involved in the study

Group No.	Group
1.	Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
2.	Ministry of Interior
3.	Ministry of Information Technology (Electronic Government Program)
4.	Ministry of Trade and Finance
5.	Ministry of Justice

One focus group with six participants from Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (**MTA**), as this study is looking at the practicalities of joining up and integrating some of the online services offered by this Ministry. Another focus group with four participants from Ministry of Interior (**Mol**), and one focus group with five participants from E-government Program in the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (**MOCIT**), and one focus group from the Ministry of Industry and Trade (**MoIT**), and the last focus group was from the Ministry of Justice (**MoJ**). This variety of collaborative ministries is captured in the overlap in Figure 2. The focus groups differed regarding roles and number of years of employment.

Table 2: Focus groups

Focus Group	Respondent	Years of Employment	Role
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MTA)	MTA_1	12	Senior
	MTA_2	15	Director
	MTA_3	6	Senior
	MTA_4	7	Junior
	MTA_5	10	Senior
	MTA_6	2	Junior
Ministry of Interior (MOI)	Mol_1	18	Director
	Mol_2	12	Director
	Mol_3	9	Senior
	Mol_4	10	Senior
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (Electronic Government Program)	EG_1	8	Director
	EG_2	4	Senior
	EG_3	5	Senior
	EG_4	1	Junior
	EG_5	2	Junior
Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT)	MoTF_1	12	Senior
	MoTF_2	14	Director
	MoTF_3	6	Junior
	MoTF_4	9	Junior
Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	MoJ_1	15	Senior
	MoJ_2	10	Director
	MoJ_3	2	Junior
	MoJ_4	5	Junior

4.2 Generate the questions

Because a focus group can only last for little more than one or two hours, time will only allow for four to seven questions. The session started with an introductory and warm-up questions and then get to the more serious questions that get at the heart of the purpose. The introductory session started with 10 minutes introduction about how government works and issues of public service delivery, then the facilitator had to guide participants through the discussion narrowly into the context, and how the procedural and organisational crossover between the involved agencies providing TAL service implies a great potential of integration, as indicated in Fig2. NCRC and VL can be either horizontally or vertically integrated with TAL, and also the possibility to integrate all three services along the service delivery chain is high, hence the public employee selection for the focus groups. The mapping and the coordination in the service delivery was explained to the selected groups, and accordingly, questions were formed based on the perceived benefits and barriers of integrating this particular service in this context. The potential integration pointed out in TAL also entails joining up efforts in sharing information and procedures across the concerned government entities and

agencies. The facilitator of the focus group explained the integration scenario (Context based integration) to the groups, and how licensing services are inherently coordinated, which, from technical perspective, is pointing at service dependency in the service delivery chain.

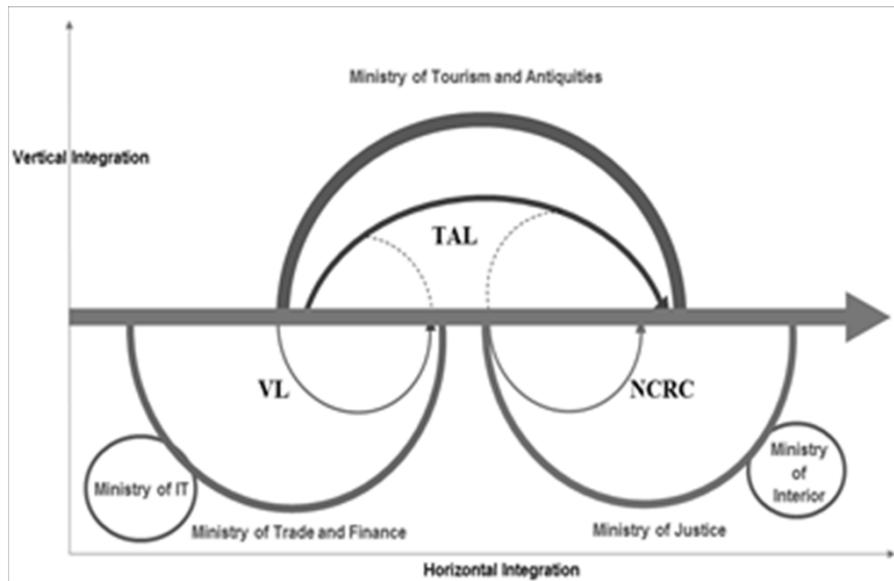


Figure 2: Public service integration styles

Questions were formed to measure the practicality from public sector employees. As demonstrated in the table No., facilitator started with a question about the general understanding of public service integration amongst public employees. This opening question, where participants get acquainted and warmed up, will help to understand some of the insights of how e-government program is perceived. Asking about the definition of PSI will also help in identifying any possibly misconceptions of the required level of collaboration between government agencies to achieve a common goal or a service. The second question is an open type question and transition based question as well, as it aims to move the dialog into key areas of the discussion, mainly to the integration context service. It is aimed at identifying the drivers and motivations to integrate public services across the different involved ministries in TAL service. On the other hand, this will help to measure the potentiality to collaborate between the ministries. The selected service (TAL) is primarily provided by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquates, but as mentioned above (Figure 2), other ministries are already involved in the delivery chain; therefore, question 2 is also an endeavour to highlight areas of existing collaboration.

Table 3: Summary of questions of focus groups

Theme No.	Question
1.	The definition of Public Service Integration
2.	Drivers of Public Service Integration
3.	Barriers of Public Service Integration
4.	Readiness of Public Service Integration / Push factors of Integration
5.	Where Integration occurs?

The third question is asking clearly about the barriers that hinder the process of integration, as previously identified, this study assumes that technology is not the main barrier for partial or initial public service integration. Consequently, this question will help identify some of the existing issues in terms of governmental collaboration, communication and coordination level on service provision. The fourth question will investigate the public views on the readiness and the push factors of integration. This question attempts to identify some of the integration priorities as perceived by the public views of the public employees. This question will support question 2 that is asking about the drivers of public services integration. This question will also help in the realisation process of public service integration. Question five will help identify where integration could

potentially occur, in attempt to highlight existing areas of integration, or take the integration model to the next level, where building technology is possible.

4.3 Analyses of focus groups statements

After reviewing several qualitative data analysis approaches such as content analysis, interpretive approaches, social anthropological approach and collaborative social research approach, this study decided to adopt the collaborative social research approach. Using this approach, researchers work with their subjects in a given setting in order to accomplish some sort of change or action. The analysis of data gathered in such collaborative approach is accomplished with the participants of the study, who are seen as stakeholders. In light of this study, 6 audio recorded conversations were produced, with a total of 11:27 hours were digitally recorded. Analysing the focus group involved firstly revisiting the aims and objectives of this, then looking through the detailed notes. This study aimed at identifying key themes and points of consensus or disagreement as well as noting useful quotations which reflect the purposes of the research.

The recordings were transcript and made into text. This process is basically achieved by listening to the recordings, one group at a time and transcript in Arabic language and then translates the produced transcript into English language. Despite the time consuming issue, this has led to a double verified results and outcomes, as they data were validated in two languages, and this has also benefited the study in capturing some of the expression and colloquium language used amongst public sector employees in the context of e-government. In fact the double review process has significantly contributed to identify common themes and patterns in the focus group sessions; especially the fact that the transcription has been translated from Arabic into English. Eventually, the recorded conversations resulted in 48 pages of transcription in both Arabic and English.

After the transcription and translation, data become easier and more tangible to be visually analysed, along with the translation, this has helped to identify some commonalities and patterns in the answers given by the participants of the focus groups. Those commonalities have been developed into codes in a form of answers, and those answers were generated in a table as can be seen in the following table.

Table 4: Question 1: The definition of public service integration

Question No.	Answer No.	Answer
1.	1.	Online Service Provision through Electronic Portal (One-Window Access)
1.	2.	Sharing services across government agencies
1.	3.	Central service provider
1.	4.	Merging structures and sharing budgets,
1.	5.	Partnership Working and Coordination (Vertical and Horizontal)
1.	6.	Working along with the Electronic Government Program
1.	7.	Data sharing and associated protocols
1.	8.	Public Service Integration is Electronic Government
1.	9.	Including citizen engagement and participation in governance
1.	10.	Outsource governmental services

The answers in the previous table were covered by all the participated groups. When the facilitator asked the question about the definition of public service integration, each group started to answer according to their knowledge, the government ministry they employed by and the level of expertise in the specialised area they work for. After a thorough scan of the transcript and the translated materials, common patterns started to appear in the transcript, and a set of categorical labels and themes begun to emerge, the themes were collected and presented in table 1.4. The identified themes were circled and then later moved into cards, so the most frequently repeated answers can be grouped together within the specific theme.

The next phase in the content analysis was to categorise the group answers into the identified themes, this will help identify potential patterns, relationships, commonalities or disparities. A matrix represents focus group number distributed across the given answers was produced, organising the answers in a table view has significantly helped in recognising commonalities across the answers of the focus group. As a result, table 1.4

was generated, it can be clearly seen that there is a variation in the answers given, depending on the focus group level of involvement in the e-government program, this is explicitly reflected on G1 answers. G1, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquates, and due to the nature of the internal processes and operation, has had the minimum number of answers. G1 viewed integration as merging structure and sharing budgets. This gives an indication that integration is perceived from organisational point of view, and as stressed by this particular group, cannot be achieved without the participation of other government departments. One interesting insight has also emerged from this group; they viewed integration from citizen inclusion perspective as in A9. In theme 1, G3 Ministry of Communication and Information Technology has covered most of the answers in table 1.4, and this is due to the fact they are considered the e-government leaders in the context of this study, and those who manage and administer the overall program.

Table 5: Perception of public service integration

T1	Perception of Public Service Integration				
Q1	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
A1			X	X	
A2		X	X		
A3				X	X
A4	X	X			X
A5		X	X		
A6	X				
A7			X	X	
A8	X	X	X	X	X
A9	X		X		X
A10		X		X	X

The most important finding in this analysis is A8, all groups have agreed that public service integration is e-government, and it should be managed by e-government program and the ministry of communication and IT. Despite the different definitions presented by different groups, there seems to be a misconception what public service integration is. This misconception stem from the misunderstanding what e-government is in its broader term, as it is perceived by the participants as a specific government department rather than a strategy to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the activities of public sector organisations, and promote better interaction between government and its citizen. Consequently, it can be noted, during the focus group sessions, that different focus groups have blamed specific government departments for the failure and the deceleration in the implementation of the first inception strategic objectives.

Table 6: Question 2: Drivers of public service integration

Answer No.	Question No.	Answer
1.	2.	Make it easier for businesses and individuals to deal with government
2.	2.	Offer services and information through new media like the Internet
3.	2.	Improve communications between different parts of government
4.	2.	Make it much easier for different parts of government to work in partnership
5.	2.	Improve Cross departmental Coordination (Vertical and Horizontal)
6.	2.	Improve Transparency, accountability and Participation
7.	2.	The necessity resulted from regional conflicts (Refugee Camps)
8.	2.	Kings Abdullah II vision towards more collaborative government
9.	2.	Current EGov activities in terms of policies, technologies and implementation
10.	2.	Impact of Arabic Spring on the government

Table 7: Drivers of public service integration

T2	Drivers of Public Service Integration				
Q2	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5
A1	X	X	X		
A2	X		X		
A3	X	X	X	X	
A4			X		
A5	X	X	X		
A6		X	X		X
A7	X	X	X		X
A8	X	X	X	X	X
A9			X	X	
A10		X	X	X	X

Answers in the second theme were evolved around public employees understanding of the drivers of public service integration. Some novel insights were pointed at by the answers presented by the groups, as in improving communication between different parts of the government. This has received special emphasis from all the groups apart from G5, which put other socioeconomic issues on the top, this appears in their concern of how technologies and IT used in government can cope with the new Arabic spring impact on the country. Another remark to make through this analysis is that all answers were given by e-government program group G3; this group has informed all the answers in the second theme, they seemed to have solid practical knowledge of the drivers of the current e-government implementation, see table 7. This has been clearly noted in A4, as G3 the only group who have perceived PSI as collaborative and communication prerequisite. This finding supports the PSI definition finding, as G3, and due to their involvement in the E-government project, seemed very enthusiastic about pushing towards more collaborative working across different departments.

One significant observation outcome of theme 2 is A8, all groups have mentioned the strategic vision of his majesty King Abdullah II towards more collaborative government. His majesty's initiative of streamlining government procedures and make them more responsive to the needs of the citizens, government, and businesses has been very well received by the public employees, this is evidenced by the common agreement between the groups to improving traditional government performance in terms of services provided, level of performance, accuracy, reducing the time and cost required to finalise governmental procedures, achieving a high degree of customer satisfaction and reaching full coordination between the governmental institutions where they fully complement each other.

Groups have also emphasized the general aim of e-government and PSI as working together to achieve a more capable, more transparent, better performing government and government employee and to change the persistent and dominant stereotype. Integration has been implicitly underlined in this theme, by using the terms such as working together or working collaboratively, public employees are touching some of the integration aspects this study is aiming to examine. The word integration is translated to (التكامل), which can be ambiguous and vague if it was out of context, it could be used to express merge, synthesis or even combination. Consequently, the frequent use of similar words, relevant in nature, scale and scope to public service integration indicates the willingness and readiness of groups to embrace the concept of integration. Terms such as (الاتحاد) which literally means union, points at a prior requirement to integration, therefore, when participants were asked what do they mean about union, they responded by working together beyond organisational boundaries or sharing resources.

Despite the fact that participants of those sessions have emphasised the importance for further integration in public services, however, they also focused on the overall controlled integration initiative, for specific services in specific departments, once an integration scenario is technically and organisationally implemented and then can be actually tested and measured, in this case, to find out if this type of integration is required by citizen and fulfil their demands and needs, then other online services may share similar integration strategy. Participants also expressed their increasing concern about the resistance to change, this was demonstrated by their understanding that joining the integration inception will divert their current workflow in line with the project objectives, however, this is not necessarily the case, especially through horizontal integration view, integration can occur with minimal organisational changes to the concerned department, and could take place

with separation of concerns between the different silos, which would improve accountability, and even provide the integrated department with a sense of departmental identity to serve their long and short term objectives.

Table 8: Question 3: Barriers of public service integration

Answer No.	Question No.	Answer
1.	3.	Funding Issues
2.	3.	Current Technical Infrastructure
3.	3.	Organisational Culture (Resistance to change)
4.	3.	Support level provided by E-government Program
5.	3.	Partnership Working and Coordination (Vertical and Horizontal)
6.	3.	Different rules regarding Licensing and Taxation procedures get in the way of integrating public services
7.	3.	Middle and high -level officials' views and attitudes towards e-government
8.	3.	Changing governments officials, procedures and rules
9.	3.	Corruption Index
10.	3.	Pooled budgets are the only way to provide integrated public services

Question 3 is asking about the barriers that hinder the process of integration, as previously identified, this study assumes that technology is not the main barrier for partial or holistic public service integration. Public employees have shared the vast majority of the answers in this theme. From the number of answers given by different groups, it can be noted that there are far more barriers to integration than drivers, as in the case of G5, where the Ministry of Justice seemed to have had a very negative outlook on the integration, this was expressed by some of the participants of this group, as they mentioned some sort of communication issues when working collaboratively with other ministries, participants expressed this by saying “Horrible Experience” when translated from Arabic, the same expression was used by the G1 and G2 in the context of level of support provided by e-government, this leads us to think that there an issue in the communication between government parts.

Table 9: Barriers of public service integration

T3	Barriers of Public Service Integration					
Q3	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	Highlights
A1	X	X	X	X	X	Funding Issues
A2		X				Current Technical Infrastructure
A3	X	X	X	X	X	Organisational Culture (Resistance to change)
A4	X	X	X	X	X	Support level provided by E-government Program
A5			X		X	Partnership Working and Coordination (Vertical and Horizontal)
A6		X	X	X	X	Different rules regarding Licensing and Taxation procedures get in the way of integrating public services
A7	X	X	X	X	X	Middle and high -level officials' views and attitudes towards e-government
A8	X	X	X	X	X	Changing governments officials, procedures and rules
A9			X	X	X	Corruption Index
A10				X	X	Pooled budgets are the only way to provide integrated public services

As it can be seen in table 9, there are four commonalities shared by the groups. A3 has been strongly highlighted by all the groups, which reflects the current rigid organisational culture and management style of the government agencies participated in this research. On the other hand, A4 was shared across all groups; the support level provided by the e-government program has been also identified as an area of concern to all participants. Participants demanded more support from the e-government program. Participants stressed the point that this should be the responsibility of e-government program, as they should be held accountable for helping various government departments use information technology to increase efficiency and improve electronic access to government services. Support can also be widely delivered on a form of ongoing short courses, workshops, seminars, lectures in order to promote best practices across government. Some of the

subjects of this study suggested an internal help desk purposefully designed to service government entities rather citizen. This was another issue complementing the communication problems mentioned in theme 2, employees didn't know where to call or what to do if information is required about a service or a transaction. Middle and high level officials views towards e-government has also brought by participants as a barrier, some of the government officials view e-government as using computers in ministries. This point along with the instability of appointed governments in Jordan has impacted on the implementation strategy, on both financial and technical domains.

Table 10: Question 4: Readiness of public service integration / push factors of integration

Answer No.	Question No.	Answer
1.	4.	Service Return on Investment
2.	4.	National awareness of what Public service integration
3.	4.	Support level provided by E-government Program
4.	4.	Kings Vision towards enforcing E-government activities
5.	4.	Level of Service Integration. The extent to which a service is automated and ready to integrate
6.	4.	The humanitarian crises in Jordan (Syrian Refugee Camps)
7.	4.	Increasing demands on certain services such as health care, social and educational services.
8.	4.	Newly established Immigrants services (Syrian, Iraqis, Palestinian and Libyan)
9.	4.	Internet accessibility, penetration and prices
10.	4.	Economic, political and social reforms

This theme was designed to investigate the readiness of Public Service Integration and Push factors of Integration. The theme will inform the process of identifying integration factors, as in A1 Service Return on investment, this answer stood out as a common answer, all groups have agreed that services with financial return should have the priority to be integrated. Groups have also emphasised that the level of support received from e-government program determines if the service has to be integrated. From the answers given from different groups, there seems to be a variation in the coordination and support provided by e-government program to some government agencies, this is apparent in the case of Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, employees from this ministry felt that they are left outside the strong circle as described by the employee, strong circle includes three ministries (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Trade and Finance and Ministry of Information Technology). Involvement in e-government program strategies and Implementation planning varies between ministries, this is due to the government agendas of working collaboratively with major ministries such as Mol and MoTF. Employees from the previously mentioned ministries stated clearly that the government is undergoing a critical challenge in terms of public service provision, and therefore, attention and focus will remain in security and social safe net services, which are provided mainly by Mol and MoTF. Level of service integration (A3), which is defined as the extent to which a service is automated and ready to integrate has been flagged as a major push factor towards integration. Some services as Vocational License by the Greater Municipality of Amman has been automated since 2008, and has gone online since 2012. As a collaborative joined up effort, e-government program has been working alongside Ministry of Trade and Finance to improve this service, and this evident the concern raised by other ministry about the level of support provided by the e-government program. Other employees mentioned that some services are currently in automated state, and can be joined up or integrated with less financial and technical efforts, however, coordination and serious intention to integrate them has always been a subject of discussion at high level government meetings, but little has been done in the ground.

Table 11: Readiness of public service integration / push factors of integration

T4	Readiness of Public Service Integration / Push factors of Integration					
Q4	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	Highlights
A1	X	X	X	X	X	Service Return on Investment
A2	X		X		X	National awareness of what Public service integration
A3	X	X	X	X	X	Support level provided by E-government Program
A4	X	X	X	X	X	Kings Vision towards enforcing E-government activities
A5	X	X	X	X	X	Level of Service Integration. The extent to which a service is automated and ready to integrate
A6	X	X	X	X	X	The humanitarian crises in Jordan (Syrian Refugee Camps)
A7	X	X	X			Increasing demands on certain services such as health care, social and educational services.
A8	X	X	X	X	X	Newly established Immigrants services (Syrian, Iraqis, Palestinian and Libyan)
A9		X	X	X		Internet accessibility, penetration and prices
A10		X	X	X		Economic, political and social reforms

The humanitarian crisis and the newly established refugee camps (A6 and A8) have been the focal point of all discussions in the focus group, there are serious concerns raised by all groups that health, security and social services should not only be considered for integration, but it is crucial to start with the integration now. Jordan continues to provide asylum for a large number of Syrians, Iraqis and other refugees, despite the substantial strain on national systems and infrastructure. This pressure has become even more acute over the past two years, as the global financial crisis has had an impact on Jordan's economic situation and infrastructure for water, electricity, waste management, education and health care. Syrian refugees has put a strain on Jordanian economy, government services and scarce water supplies. But a different threat keeps officials up at night. The refugee crisis "is turning into a security situation," says Abdallah Abu Romman, a former minister of communication and information Technology

Table 12: Question 5: Where integration occurs?

Answer No.	Question No.	Answer
1.	5.	Health and Social Services
2.	5.	Educational Services
3.	5.	Police forces
4.	5.	Holistic Integration
5.	5.	Licensing Service Integration
6.	5.	Financial Services / Fees based services
7.	5.	Services that require data sharing
8.	5.	Commonly used services
9.	5.	Automated ready services
10.	5.	Only shared services should be integrated

This theme was designed to investigate public employees' perception on what should be integrated, and where integration occurs. Despite the fact that answers of this theme have emerged as a combination of different themes, employees kept on mentioning what should be integrated first and how integration in specific services could ease and inform further integration, which in the long run, if successfully achieved, will open the door to other services for partial or complete integration. Employees shared the view that health and social service for newly established services is paramount at this point of service integration. They all agreed that the integration manoeuvre, as specifically described, should be pushed forward not only for refugees in camps, but also to citizen who have been negatively impacted by this unprecedented vast pressure on public services.

Table 13: Where Integration occurs?

T5	Where Integration occurs?					
Q5	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	Highlights
A1	X	X	X	X	X	Health and Social Services
A2		X	X		X	Educational Services
A3	X	X	X	X	X	Police forces
A4		X				Holistic Integration
A5	X	X	X	X	X	Licensing Service Integration
A6	X	X	X	X	X	Financial Services / Fees based services
A7			X		X	Services that require data sharing
A8		X	X		X	Commonly used services
A9	X	X	X	X	X	Automated ready services
A10			X			Only shared services should be integrated

The humanitarian crisis and the newly established refugee camps have also been frequently mentioned in this theme, as security issues started to take place in some of the refugee camps, in a scale that requires police force to interfere and resolve the conflict. The refugee crisis is turning into a security situation, and employees worry that armed fighters, regime intelligence agents and smugglers hide among the refugees. Licensing and financial services have also been highlighted by the employees, this goes hand in hand with the service return on investment priority mentioned before. All employees agreed that services with financial return such as licensing services should be integrated.

4.4 Discussion

This paper aimed at answering questions related to the practicality of integrating public services in Jordan. Five areas have emerged as major themes in the context of this paper: The misconception of the definition of public service integration with electronic Government, Drivers and Barriers from intraorganisational view, the readiness and willingness towards integration, and potential services where integration may occur. This section is also focused towards examining the practicality of online service delivery and service integration, a further guidance and direction to more focused literature review, a thorough investigation was required in order to shed light on how public servants perceive integration.

This paper has identified and captured the following themes:

1. The arguable view of what Public Service Integration is?
2. G2C Level of service Integration.
3. Service Return on Investment ROI.
4. The impact of the level of support provided by eGovernment program
5. His Majesty's king Abdulla vision and influence in service integration.
6. Refugee Camps Public Services.

The above mentioned themes were produced and captured by two main data collection methods. Firstly, 10 scheduled interviews were conducted with eGovernment program in Jordan; interviewees were selected from different eGovernment areas, activities and locations. Secondly, six focus groups were conducted over two weeks period, each group discussion has taken place in different day, each group of participants were asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards public services integration.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	MoTA	MoI	MoIT (EG)	MoTF	MoJ	
Themes						Answers
Definition of PSI	Q1A8	Q1A8	Q1A8	Q1A8	Q1A8	Electronic Government
Drivers of PSI	Q2A8	Q2A8	Q2A8	Q2A8	Q2A8	King Abdullah vision towards more collaborative government
Barriers of PSI	Q3A3	Q3A3	Q3A3	Q3A3	Q3A3	Organisational Change (Resistance to Change)
Barriers of PSI	Q3A4	Q3A4	Q3A4	Q3A4	Q3A4	Level of Support provided by Egovernment Program
Barriers of PSI	Q3A7	Q3A7	Q3A7	Q3A7	Q3A7	High-level officials views towards Egovernment
Barriers of PSI	Q3A8	Q3A8	Q3A8	Q3A8	Q3A8	Changing governments officials, procedures and rules
Readiness of PSI	Q4A1	Q4A1	Q4A1	Q4A1	Q4A1	Services Return on Investment
Readiness of PSI	Q4A6	Q4A6	Q4A6	Q4A6	Q4A6	Humanitarian crises in Jordan (Syrian Refugee Camps)
Readiness of PSI	Q4A8	Q4A8	Q4A8	Q4A8	Q4A8	Newly established immigrant services
Where Integration occurs?	Q5A1	Q5A1	Q5A1	Q5A1	Q5A1	Health and Social Services
Where Integration occurs?	Q5A3	Q5A3	Q5A3	Q5A3	Q5A3	Police force
Where Integration occurs?	Q5A5	Q5A5	Q5A5	Q5A5	Q5A5	Fees based Services
Where Integration occurs?	Q5A6	Q5A6	Q5A6	Q5A6	Q5A6	Health and Social Services

Figure 4: Findings of Practicality of Public Service Integration

The findings in Diagram 4 indicating five distinct potential areas of contribution, which presented an uncharted territory for further exploration:

1. The considerable differences in the interpretation of what does public service Integration mean, and how the whole of government concept and philosophy is viewed by different government stockholders. It was rather shocking to recognise through the current data that there is no common understating between different government departments in Jordan of what eGovernment is?
2. How public service integration will help to cope with the increasing demands of current Syrian Refugee Camps in Jordan. As a consequence of the recent Arabic spring movement in Syria, and to escape the violence, tens of thousands of Syrian refugees have fled to Jordan, resulting in several refugee camps being established.
3. The role of his majesty king Abdullah II in the current political reforms being carried out by the government in Jordan, and to what extent that would affect and influence public service integration, as most of the participants agreed on his majesty’s vision towards collaborative, transparent and connected government, and with linking that vision and push towards more integrated public services, how that vision is being interpreted differently by different government departments.
4. The impact of the social settings and the environment where the group sessions were conducted. A considerable difference in the opinions and attitudes towards eGovernment were noticed, which improve the level of validation of the collected data, as the validity of the opinion may vary from one location to another and from a social setting to another.
5. The transcription and translation process of focus groups and interviews, and the significance of using some local expressions to describe what eGovernment is, and some double standards quotes commonly used in the public context to describe public service integration, which may lead to establish an Integrated Public Service Vocabulary scheme identification.

5. Conclusions and further research

In this paper, the practicality of integrating online public services is investigated from government employee’s views, in specific ministries for certain services. Licensing services have been considered in this paper, and that because of they have been flagged as the most commonly used online services, and currently offered through several dispersed portals and service providers. The study aimed at answering questions related to the practicality of integrating public services in Jordan. Five areas have emerged as major themes in the context of this paper: The misconception of the definition of public service integration with electronic Government, Drivers and Barriers from intraorganisational view, the readiness and willingness towards integration, and potential services where integration may occur.

The promise and the enthusiasm of Public Service Integration should not obscure a key principle that the ultimate goal of all e-government and connected governance efforts must remain better public service delivery. Improvements in the quality of governance and the responsiveness and effectiveness of government should still serve to empower citizens. In that sense, the traditional roles of government and citizen will be changed, as government will be working with citizens rather than working for citizens, and citizens will be given the chance to play a role in influencing the e-government solutions.

It is imperative to adopt an incremental approach to launching and implementing integration through connected government and implementation should start from areas where quick and meaningful success can be achieved, and therefore, the practicality of public service integration should be further investigated in order to identify the views of the different stakeholders, and understand not only where integration occurs, but also how integration is perceived across government departments and amongst first and second line of public servants. A consistent approach over time to institute connected government should be emphasized due to the complexity involved in effecting change in government processes. The future of e-government is not merely a technological change by introducing new technologies into government operations, but also about changing the relationship and roles between government and citizens and creating new public values.

This paper presents the nature and the practicalities of public service integration and collects together the current concepts of service integration. It emphasises the need for governments to provide a new perspective on citizen-oriented government in which governments work with citizen rather than working for them. This paper makes contribution to the academic debate by underlining the challenges and opportunities throughout the transformation process to public service integration and shed a light on whether it is urgently needed. Achieving an integrated Public Service will require targeted actions in a number of areas. It should be noted that these action areas are interdependent: this is not a suite of options where only a few need to be advanced. Improved dialogue is needed to address fragmentation and disconnects between departments, their Offices and agencies, and other Public Service actors; the use of networks to bring together relevant players from across the Public Service needs to be expanded; performance measures need to look at outcomes rather than inputs and processes, and increased flexibility is needed to allow managers to achieve those outcomes; budget frameworks are needed to facilitate prioritisation and reallocation of spending; a renewed emphasis is needed on the role of ICT and e-government in strengthening information sharing and integrated service delivery; and greater mobility is needed to help develop and broaden the skills and competency base of generalist staff.

References

- Agranoff, R. (2012). *Collaborating to manage: A primer for the public sector*. Georgetown University Press.
- Al-Husban, M. Adams, C. & Sharif, H. (2012) "Towards Connected Government" Institute of Public Governance and Management. ESADE Barcelona. Spain
- Barbour, R. S. (2014). *Analysing Focus Groups*. The SAGE Handbook
- Brown, G., & Weber, D. (2011). *Public Participation GIS: A new method for national park planning*. *Landscape and urban planning*, 102(1), 1-15
- Brujin, J. A. de and Heuvelhof, E. F. ten (2000) *Networks and Decision Making*. Utrecht: Lemma.
- CSDMS. Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies. 2001. *Reviewing Jordan's e-Government Development: Seven Years of Promise*. Available at: <http://www.egovonline.net/articles/article-details.asp?Title=Reviewing-Jordan%E2%80%99s-e-Government-Development:-Seven-Years-of-Promise&ArticalID=2065&Type=COUNTRY%20PERSPECTIVE> [Last retrieved June 2th 2011]
- CSTransform (2011). *E-Government Interoperability: A comparative analysis of 30 countries*. CS Transform limited. P4. London
- Dean, T. Boutilier, M. (2011). *Joint service delivery in federal countries: Research report prepared for the forum of federation*. Forum of federation. The global network on federalism.
- DPEPA, U.N. 2001. *Benchmarking E-government: A Global Perspective*. United Nation Division for Public Economics and Public Administration – American Society for Public Administration: USA.
- Hyde J. (2008). *How to make the rhetoric of joined-up government really work*. *Australia New Zealand Health Policy*. 5:22. doi:10.1186/1743-8462-5-22 PMID:18983680
- Jordanian e-Government Program (2006) *Jordan e-Governmen Strategy*. P20. Retrieved November 2013, from: www.thieswittig.eu%2Fdocs%2FMPC_Strategies%2FJordan%2FJordan_e-GovernmenStrategy.pdf&ei=_AaJUp_OIpGthQe3kYDoCw&usg=AFQjCNF6vGV2J9PB9F6vzAeozWhoiswKbw&sig2=AOwpOup_MMQhZ7TqQZKeQ

- Kreindler, S. A., Larson, B. K., Wu, F. M., Carluzzo, K. L., Gbemudu, J. N., Struthers, A., ... & Fisher, E. S. (2012). Interpretations of integration in early accountable care organizations. *Milbank Quarterly*, 90(3), 457-483.
- Layne, K. & Lee, J. (2001). Developing Fully Functional E-government: A four-stage model, *Government information quarterly* 18(2): 122-136
- Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, 30th Ann. Ed.: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Misuraca, G. C. (2009). e-Government 2015: exploring m-government scenarios, between ICT-driven experiments and citizen-centric implications. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 21(3), 407-424.
- MOICT. Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, Jordan e-Government Program, e-Government Strategy, Page 13. Available at: <http://www.jordan.gov.jo/strategy/Strategy.pdf> [Last retrieved June 5th 2011]
- Noreng, O. (1980). *The oil industry and government strategy in the North Sea*. Kent, UK, pp.1-255, Retrieved November 2013, from: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=jZIOAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- Omari, R (2013) "Arab states should prepare national disaster risk reduction plans — UN" *The Jordan Time*. <http://jordantimes.com/arab-states-should-prepare-national-disaster-risk-reduction-plans----un>. Last access:20/12/2014
- Reddick, C. & Turner, M. (2012). Channel choice and public service delivery in Canada: Comparing e-government to traditional service delivery. *Government Information Quarterly*, Volume 29, Issue 1, January 2012, Pages 1-11
- Stegarescu, D. (2006). *Decentralised government in an integrating world: quantitative studies for OECD countries*. Volume 34 of ZEW economic studies, Springer Science & Business.
- United Nations e-Government Survey. 2008. From e-Government to connected governance. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/112. P44. Available at: <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan028607.pdf> [Last retrieved June 8th 2011]
- The Jordan Times, 2012. Retrieved 18 October
- Jordanian e-Government Program (2006) *Jordan e-Governmen Strategy*. P20. Retrieved November 2013, from: www.thieswittig.eu/%2Fdocs%2FMPC_Strategies%2FJordan%2FJordan_e-GovernmenStrategy.pdf&ei=_AaJUp_0IpGthQe3kYDoCw&usg=AFQjCNF6vGV2J9PB9F6vzAeozWhoiswKbw&sig2=AOwpOup_MMqhZ7TqQlZKeQ