Universität Regensburg

Access to e-Government Services Employing Semantic Technologies

European Union FP6 ISTproject

The EU project Access-eGov commencing on January 1, 2006, is funded by the European Union in the Sixth Framework Programm in the Information Society Technologies activity area. The project consortium consists of 10 partners from 5 different countries (Slovakia, Germany, Egypt, Poland and Greece).

The project's main goal is the utilization of Semantic Web technologies to simplify the registration and update of online e-government services for providers of such services and to support users (citizens and companies) in locating and using services.

The underlying problem is the complexity and interdependency of governmental structures in general: A citizen faces lots of different public authority services. Picking the correct one for a given task can turn out to be quite cumbersome. Some services are offered online, others at least can be located online, while still others are completely unavailable online.

So called "Responsibility Finders" appear to be the status quo. Using these Portals, e-government services can be registered and queried. Access-eGov aims at creating a new technological platform, moving away from the static portals towards a system that facilitates so called "Personal Assistants", which act as agents to guide citizens in their interactions with public authorities. Ontologies are used to mark-up existing and new online services with a common vocabulary, which in turn allows former mentioned "Personal Assistants" to build workflow-like operational sequences for the inquiring citizen. If some services in that sequence are not available online, the platform will refer to offline instances and provide useful information.

As the interaction with public authorities often involves sensitive data, special care must be taken while addressing security issues such as identification and authentication services. Additionally, access control and auditing facilities must be provided as well as non-repudiation and anonymity.

The responsibility of the Department of Information Systems at the University of Regensburg is to design the overall architecture as well as to design and implement a novel distributed security infrastructure dealing with the aforementioned security requirements.

www.access-egov.org