

In Brief

Australia to Launch One-Stop Online Gateway for Aged Care

The “My Aged Care” Internet portal, to be supported by dedicated phone services, will go live in early 2013. It is part of a US\$3.8 billion reform agenda designed to overhaul aged care services in Australia. For the first time, the My Aged Care portal will feature a star rating system for nursing homes and other aged care services, including any previous history of complaints or feedback about the quality of service.

The government is introducing a single information-access gateway to consolidate information about services, according to the Minister for Ageing, Mark Butler. He said the My Aged Care website will offer detailed information about aged care providers, available services, amenities, staffing levels, fees and other charges. This online-gateway will enable families and other Australians to compare and make informed choices about the quality of available care and amenities. The My Aged Care website is the latest Internet portal that caters for specific communities including the MySchool, MyHospital and MyUniversity websites.

Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard said Australians are living longer, this has implications for how the government runs its aged care program. The latest reform tackles long-standing concerns about the quality of aged care in Australia affecting elderly and often poorly-informed residents. “We now have a new generation moving into retirement, the baby boomers, who will clearly want more options and choices than older Australians have sought in the past,” Gillard stated. “Families can’t get the information they need to make difficult choices.”

Australia’s system of monitoring and compliance needs to be overhauled to give would-be residents and their families a true picture of nursing home quality. “Now it’s just about putting a tick or cross in a box, all residents or family members should be asked their

views for a start.” Internet-savvy baby boomers are changing perceptions about ageing, they also expect better information and choices about the quality of care, nursing homes, and other facilities. Australia’s aged care services are severely stressed – with many Australians are forced to sell homes under “fire sales” to finance their need for care.

Commercially-run nursing homes are under scrutiny about the quality of services, while being expensive to finance for families seeking services for parents or elderly relatives. More disturbingly, 40% of older Australians are forced into emergency fire sales of their homes.

China to Plans Personal Data Protection Guidelines

The China Personal Data Protection Guidelines for Public and Commercial Service Information Systems have been submitted for auditing by experts in 30 organizations before coming as the national standard. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) coordinated the drafting of the standard. Ouyang Wu, Deputy Director General for Information Security at (MIIT) noted that “the current situation for personal data protection in China is ‘very concerning. Criminal organizations have been exploiting the data they obtain from government and commercial databases. A number of personal data leakage incidents in 2011 have significantly caused public awareness of the issue.”

The guidelines cover gathering, processing, transmitting and removing of data. Ouyang Wu indicates that organizations adhering to the guidelines need to follow eight principles: a clear purpose for the data collection, minimum amount of personal data possible, prior notification of the collection, uses, consent, security, trust and accountability. ‘Minimum amount’ means that the service provider will only collect information sufficient for their use. In other words, for

a small transaction, the users should not be asked to provide home address and telephone number.

The guidelines also require online service providers to have stringent internal security policies and practices, it has been estimated that 70% to 80% of personal information thefts in China come from insiders. Currently many service providers allow their employees access to customer information without proper authorization. The guidelines, however, expected to be published 'soon' are not mandatory. The legislative process also is expect to begin in a few months.

Currently, there are more than 200 laws and regulations which touch upon the area of personal data protection. However, there is no comprehensive legal framework governing this area. In 2009, the revised penal code added a new category of crimes on "selling or illegally provisioning of citizens' personal data. However, the articles did not clearly define what would qualify as criminal activities in this category. Moreover, legal experts believe that punishments are not sufficient, and the government needs to regulate the entire flow of personal information.

US States Moving e-Mail Accounts to the Cloud

In the United States, Colorado will be one of the first states to make the move to Google cloud, following Wyoming and Utah. Colorado expects to save some \$2 million a year by bringing fifteen siloed and disparate e-mail systems into one unified communications platform. The move will cut the cost of maintaining current e-mail systems by nearly half and also allow employees across departments to find co-workers and communicate more effectively with one another.

The state believed that by giving employees modern collaboration tools and better mobile access will help them deliver better services to citizens. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) has already completed thorough testing and analysis of multiple product solutions, including an independent third-party comparison prior to selecting Google technology. According to the OIT, the decision to migrate to Google apps is closely aligned with its six priorities of customer success, innovation, information security, people, service excellence and trusted partnership.

As part of this evaluation, the security controls used by Google Apps was reviewed by the State's OIT to

comply with or exceed state standards. The OIT will work closely with Google Apps Premier Reseller Tempura Nova to bring Google Apps to Colorado employees. Apart from the State Government of Colorado, other agencies like Larimer County and Eagle County have already used the same technology. Also, in the summer of 2010, Colorado announced a statewide agreement to allow schools and districts to use Google Apps for Education in which some of Colorado's larger education institutions including Colorado State University, Metropolitan State College of Denver, Jeffco Public Schools and Douglas County School District have switched to Google Cloud.

Asian Association Outlines Cloud Readiness Index

The Asia Cloud Computing Association (Asia Cloud) is launching a "Cloud Readiness Index" designed to track the region's progress towards a complete spectrum of cloud computing based infrastructure and services. (www.asiacloud.com) By mapping the conditions and criteria required for successful implementation and uptake, the association aims to identify potential bottlenecks that could slow adoption and threaten Asia's digital future.

The new "Cloud Readiness Index" will analyze 10 key attributes critical to the deployment and use of cloud computing technologies across 14 Asian countries. That includes China, Australia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. To further support the discussion, the association is also launching a Cloud Map on its website that will graphically illustrate the current state of the cloud debate – charting and analyzing the issues, the stakeholders and influencers and how the debate is developing. The new index is expected to be particularly relevant to governments as they are charged with creating the conditions for success – in their countries, around the region and across the globe

The Association believes that national policy-makers are starting to understand the benefits of this new IT delivery model and how it can make their countries more competitive. However, there might not necessarily yet be an understanding of issues that underpin cloud computing, or that policy decisions, such as data

privacy or intellectual property protection, can have on the success or otherwise of cloud computing.

The attributes that comprise the first release of the index include:

- Regulatory conditions,
- International connectivity,
- Data protection policy,
- Broadband quality
- Government prioritization,
- Power grid quality,
- Internet filtering,
- Global risk,
- ICT development

Asia Cloud computing is “poised to help accelerate the momentum around trade and economic integration in Asia. However, to realize this potential, the region needs to harmonize the policy and regulatory frameworks to facilitate effective trade in digital information and services. It is therefore necessary to have an active debate with an Asia focus. This is what Asia Cloud is aiming for in terms of its overall mission and with the Cloud Readiness Index.”

Worldwide spending on cloud services is expected to reach \$150 billion by 2014 and spending on cloud computing is predicted to reach 30–40% of IT budgets by 2013. The knowledge economy is recognized to be the fuel for Asia’s future. The cloud is the next great leveler, according to Asia Cloud. It lowers the barriers to entry, reduces costs by converting cap-ex to op-ex, and allows flexibility for scale and deployment. The impact of cloud computing is estimated to be potentially huge. It is expected to create 2.3 million new jobs across Europe’s top five economies by 2015. The World Economic Forum (WEF) reports that many believe the impact to expand to or exceed that of mobile technologies.

Cloud computing is said to offer significant opportunities for local industries by attracting investments and overseas businesses and provide a significant boost to e-Government initiatives. Countries with the most insightful, transparent, and fair regulatory environments are expected to be the most successful in capitalizing on this new opportunity.

First ASEAN CIO Forum Endorses Innovation Role for CIOs

The 1st ASEAN CIO Forum 2012 with participants from all 10 members, took place in Bangkok on April 19, 2012. It was the first opportunity CIOs from ASEAN countries to exchange views and knowledge on key ICT policy from each country, while learning of problems which may arise through working together, in order to strengthen ICT systems in ASEAN countries. The CIO 16 group presented a Public-Private-Partnership model, which could act as a mechanism to materialize new ideas and initiatives, with ICT acting as a key tool to enhance personnel capabilities.

ICT is considered to be a key enabler for ASEAN’s social and economic integration and drive towards achieving the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). By developing next generation ICT infrastructure and skilled human capital, promoting content and innovative industries, as well as establishing and enabling policy and regulatory environment, ICT will help ASEAN to transform into a single market. ICT will also foster greater collaboration between ASEAN businesses and citizens, leading to integration of ASEAN.

A number of topics were presented at the Forum in several sessions. These included Cloud Computing and Cloud Security; Convergence of Networks; Mobile Communications and Content Delivery Providers; and Cyber Security. These key issues focused on ‘supports’ which rely on cooperation that would lead to building up good communities using ICT.

Thai Minister of ICT, Anudith Nakornthap, the opening speaker, noted that “Launching the ASEAN CIO Forum is one of the key initiatives of the ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015. The forum is considered a platform to promote sharing of best practices and collaboration not only amongst ASEAN CIOs, but also amongst government, business, citizens and other institutions. The Master Plan has been developed for the 10 ASEAN Member States to provide a clear strategic direction in order to harness the potential of ICT in establishing the ASEAN Community.

ICT Key to Sustainable Development, ITU

the Broadband Commission of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has issued a call to action (<http://www.broadbandcommission.org>) to include information and communications technologies (ICT) as catalysts for sustainable development according to delegates attending conferences ahead of the Rio+20 conference.

The call to include ICT networks, services and applications as enablers of sustainable development was issued at the start of the second round of negotiations on the proposed outcome for the 2012 United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development (Rio+20). An ITU news release stats that “In a world where more people now have access to a mobile phone than to clean drinking water or a bank account, ICTs, in particular broadband connectivity offer an unparalleled platform to host an array of development services, such as mobile payment systems, e-Health applications, earth observation services and increasingly, e-Government. Inclusion of a strong reference to the catalytic role of ICTs and broadband in the Rio+20 roadmap will help ensure solutions are found to meet the challenges of sustainable development in a rapidly evolving world where technology is increasingly central of all aspects of society.

“The ‘Call to Action’ comes just a few weeks after the launch of its report “The Broadband Bridge, linking ICTs with climate action for a low carbon economy (www.broadbandcommission.org/working-groups/Bridge.aspx). The report presents ten recommendations for policy-makers and global leaders to utilize ICTs to accelerate global progress towards a sustainable low-carbon future. It also urges leaders to: bring convergence to ICT policy formulation so that it aligns with other policy areas such as energy, health, education and climate in order to maximize impact. Rio+20 provides a vital opportunity to mainstream ICTs and broadband in achieving sustainable development.

“It is vital that ICTs are given due recognition in the outcome of the Rio+20 as ICTs provide the critical technical solutions needed to attain sustainable development for all humankind and the planet we live on.” ITU Secretary-General Hamadoun Toure said. “ICTs promote the integration of smarter and more energy-efficient economic growth, social development and environmental protection, failure to recognize the power

of ICTs for development could well lead to a “Future e don’t Want.”

Singapore and Mongolia Signal ICT Cooperation

Singapore’s IDA International has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ICT and Post Authority (ICTPA) strengthening the collaborative relationship between the two countries. (www.ida.gov.sg) ICTPA is a government organization which is tasked to oversee the development of laws, regulations and policies related to Information Technology. One of its objectives is also to oversee the development of laws, regulations and development policies related to information technology. One of its objectives is to also establish an information society and a foundation for a knowledge-based society in Mongolia by enhancing extensive application of ICT in all society sectors.

IDA is the international subsidiary of the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) and serves infocomm between Singapore and countries around the world. The MOU defines the framework within which both organizations can explore opportunities to collaborate on ICT activities and projects related to e-Government. The Mongolian government sees this initiative as a step in the strategy of transforming Mongolia into a knowledge-based society. Singapore sees this agreement as a significant milestone for collaboration with Mongolia on public service infocomm.

Under the MOU, both parties will collaborate on several areas for the next three years. The included related projects such as enterprise architecture, cloud computing and project management. In addition, both countries have agreed to collaboration on e-Government projects which will benefit citizens and businesses in Mongolia.

Dubai Improves Mobile Payment Gateway

New features such as auto-payments have been added to Dubai e-Government’s mobile payment gateway, making it pay government fees or charges. M-Pay as

the payment gateway is called, is currently used by a number of government agencies including Dubai Police and Dubai Electricity and Water Authority. This update enhances activation of auto-payment/auto-recharge of government services provided by M-Pay on a regular basis. Users are also able to control over the minimum

balance and the maximum payment charge per transaction. It will also allow users to configure their application to support multiple accounts. A senior official has confirmed that all departments need a set of electronic components and infrastructure to provide their service online under high quality and security stipulations.