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Identity in Action Case Study: BC Services Card

Foundations

Identifying Opportunity

From banking to shopping to keeping in touch with family, more people manage their daily lives on mobile devices and online. They expect to access information and services 24 hours a day and do not make exceptions for government. To meet that growing demand, B.C. needed a digital identity solution – a way for citizens to prove who they are easily and reliably, in person, online, and on mobile devices. The BC Services Card is the cornerstone of that solution and positions the B.C. government to transform service delivery and provide citizens with secure access to high value services.

Solution: BC Services Card

Most B.C. citizens over 19 years of age, receive a BC Services Card when they apply for or renew their B.C. Driver's Licence or BC I.D. During their visit to an Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC) driving licensing office, they are asked to prove who they are by showing two pieces of accepted ID, have their photo taken and then receive the BC Services Card by mail within a few weeks. There is no fee to the citizen for the BC Services Card.

All new-born residents receive a non-photo BC Services Card at birth and children under 19 may request a non-photo BC Services Card at any point. The Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ) is actively working on a reliable way to get Cards to the hard to reach groups – such as children under 19, and adults over 75. Recognizing that there are a few citizens who are unable to go in to an ICBC driving licensing office, additional processes have been put in place to appropriately support them.

Journey

Research and Discovery:

To deliver on the vision of transforming service delivery, CITZ conducted significant research into industry standards and trends starting in 2007.

Keen to make sure that the B.C. solution avoided the challenges of traditional identity management models, the Office of the Chief Information Officer set up the B.C. Identity Management forum. This forum successfully brought together representatives from the provincial government, broader public sector, and industry experts to develop the future-state conceptual requirements and architecture.

> Key Milestone: With the addition of solicited input from key vendors, CITZ had a solid foundation to move towards a chip-enabled card for citizens to facilitate secure and privacy-respecting access to services.

Simultaneously, the Ministry of Health (HLTH) was looking to modernize health services and replace B.C.'s outdated Medical Services Plan CareCard with something more secure. The convergence of these objectives was the foundation of the BC Services Card vision.

Partnering for Success:

Very early on, it was clear that this would be a multi-year effort and would require unprecedented collaboration. ICBC was added as a key partner, bringing expertise in identity proofing, card production and fraud detection to the table. The core partnership group consisting of CITZ, HLTH and ICBC was further extended to include key service delivery partners: Health Insurance BC, Service BC and SecureKey Technologies; and development partners: IBM and Sierra.

> Key Milestone: With so many parties involved, developing an integrated project plan with clearly defined responsibilities and reporting structures was a critical part of assuring success.

Integrating Processes:

A key enabler of managing the launch of the Card was establishing an Integrated Program Agreement (IPA) between the core partners. On February 10, 2013, the IPA enshrined the commitment to collaborate in the delivery of an integrated service. It not only addressed authorities and information sharing between the parties, but also roles and responsibilities, operational governance, and financial schedules.

> Key Milestone: The consolidation of all these factors into one agreement was a first for B.C. and established a new best practice.

Within CITZ, the Provincial Identity Information Management Program (IDIM) was established and brought together the BC Services Card project and other well-established identity management services.

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Journey

Establishing Governance:

The BC Services Card program is complex and there is a layered, but integrated governance structure that guides both Card issuance and its subsequent use to access services. The governance structure includes both strategic oversight and operational decision-making committees. There is representation from the three core partner organizations and senior government executives from multiple ministries. With the first 5 year-issuance cycle complete, the BC Services Card program is moving out of the "Card issuance" phase, away from the IPA and the governance structure is being transitioned to support operational service delivery.
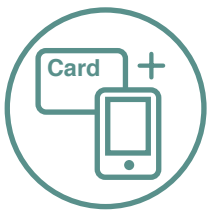
Results and Reflections

Outcomes:

The first BC Services Cards were issued in February 2013 and there are now over 4.6 million in circulation. Ever since the Cards were issued, they have been used as a physical piece of secure government-issued ID. However, the long-term vision is for an individual to use their Card to prove who they are when they access services online, in person, or using mobile devices.

> Key Milestone: Key Milestone: With over 90% of British Columbians with a Card, CITZ has the coverage required to move ahead with service launches and is seeing huge demand for the Card. The Provincial Identity and Information Management Program is actively working towards almost twenty different service launches.

Service Evolution:

The BC Services Card provides true value to the citizens of B.C. through the creation of a secure and trusted repository. Given that the identity space is highly dynamic, it's important that B.C.'s identity program continues to evolve to leverage new ideas and opportunities. B.C. has implemented a number of changes over the years and two recent initiatives are:

Mobile card — Citizens can download an app, go through a verification process and set up a mobile card. This is a digital representation of the Card on their phone and adds flexibility and convenience to the citizen experience.

Mobile video chat — To maintain a level of assurance 3 for the Card, citizens are required to go through an in-person verification event to obtain their passcode. Currently, this requires a Service BC counter visit. Recognizing that is not convenient, CITZ will launch a video chat channel in the spring. The citizen will phone a customer service representative

(CSR), and use the camera on their phone, or mobile device, to have a video conversation with the CSR. The CSR verifies who the caller's identity by checking their likeness to the photo on file.

Over time, the BC Services Card will increase in value as more government and non-government agencies leverage it as a trusted source for identity information and more services become available to British Columbians.

Identity in Action:
In April 2018, CITZ successfully launched the first public-facing service with the BC Services Card. CITZ partnered with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST) to deliver StudentAid BC services. AEST made changes to the existing financial aid system for full-time students as a result of a federal decision to discontinue using Canada Post as the point of student verification for applications. The new processes make it easier for students to apply online and track their applications, and enables faster decision making.

Key Lessons:
Be flexible—It takes hard work, patience, flexibility, and time to launch a digital identity program. CITZ faced a variety of challenges from card reader technology and infrastructure to change management. There was much that was unknown and not all technical concepts became a reality, requiring us to change course. Also, digital identity is not well understood by the public and gaining acceptance and trust takes time. Extensive public consultations in 2013 gave B.C. the advice to give citizens an opportunity to develop their understanding and acceptance before launching multiple services.

Consider legislation and policy early — Another reason for the long journey is that legislation and policy changes may be required. Digital identities have the power to fundamentally transform how people conduct their business and their lives. There are significant challenges with many aspects of existing legislation and policies. In B.C., FOIPPA, the Medicare Protection Act, and the Motor Vehicle Act had to be amended to support the BC Services Card. These changes are not quick to realize.

Develop strong partnerships with clients — A strong partnership developed between AEST, the Service Delivery team and IDIM. A single plan and weekly joint meetings ensured that everyone stayed aligned and issues were logged, actioned, and tracked.

Aligned public communications through active citizen engagement — Proactively seeking input from students through a focus group provided AEST and IDIM with valuable feedback that helped ensure that public communications were complete and appropriate. Holding daily check-ins with all the contact centres in the period immediately after launch ensured that public communications stayed aligned.

Integrated program decisions — Like many government programs, IDIM has multiple active high priority initiatives at any given time. These can include eight to ten active onboarding projects, BC Service Card product development, enhancements to other services, infrastructure projects and service operations. It has been very important to have a single, integrated plan and a strong governance structure to ensure that the impacts of changes can be assessed quickly and informed decisions made.

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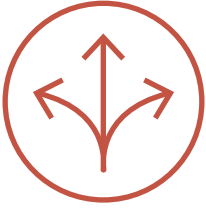
Summary and What's Next

Realizing the Potential of Digital Identity:
When the project was initiated, the dream was big: to truly transform the way in which citizens interact with their government and provide a secure way for citizens to access services digitially and in person. In the last 5 years, the Ministry of Citizens' Services created and operationalized B.C.'s Provincial Identity Information Management Program and have issued 4.6M BC Services cards to residents of British Columbia. CITZ is now at a pivotal moment, poised to unlock the true value of a trusted, secure, and digitally enabled identity program – the kind of transformation that was originally envisioned.

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