

Gov2Go - Arkansas' Citizen-Centric Government Service Delivery Platform

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Executive Summary

Gov2Go is an intelligent “personal government assistant” that proactively brings Arkansas government services to more than 144,000 Arkansans through a single channel powered by data in the cloud. It leverages deep knowledge of its users to deliver highly personalized, relevant and timely information through their desktops and mobile devices - even the Apple Watch.

The citizen-centric platform knows and tracks users’ government deadlines (property taxes, assessment, car tag renewal and franchise taxes), reminds them when it’s time to do something and provides instructions and links that enable citizens to complete secure transactions in one place.

Gov2Go’s biggest innovation is that it breaks down silos so citizens no longer have to navigate government hierarchy. It bridges different agencies across state and local government to deliver highly personalized conveniences that have not been possible until now. For example, Arkansas drivers must assess, pay property taxes and have insurance to renew their vehicle registration. If a user’s registration expires before the May assessment deadline, he would be prompted to assess first – something more than 40% of Arkansas drivers fail to do each year. This is an innovation that is truly needed and makes it easy for citizens to comply with complex state and local laws without having to know them.

Ultimately, Gov2Go will understand enough about its users to recommend public services they may not have known about. As Gov2Go learns more about its users and as more services are added, it has the potential to become an indispensable part of citizens’ lives and strengthen their connection to government.

Concept

Arkansas's official eGovernment services provider, the Information Network of Arkansas (INA), conducted focus groups in late 2014 on behalf of the state to understand citizens' ideal digital interactions with government. Findings revealed that citizens feel confused about where to go within government to accomplish certain tasks. Things that happen once a year are especially hard for them to track. Knowing which agency handles property taxes, for example, or how and when and where to pay is frustrating. And tasks that involve several agencies--such as renewing your vehicle registration--tend to compound the confusion, resulting in stress and negative experiences with government. Even though many of these services are available online, research participants still expressed disappointment with first having to know they need to take care of a civic obligation, and then having to find the right place online. Put simply: Citizens dislike having to understand and seek out government services.

Gov2Go is a breakthrough that solves this long-standing problem by bringing government services and information to citizens in one convenient place on their phones, right when it's needed. The Gov2Go experience of government is simple, proactive and personal - a new way of delivering citizen-first government services.

Imagine a future where you move to a new city and know little about the inner-workings of government and what it requires of you. Gov2Go, your personal digital assistant, proactively helps you navigate the various tasks you need to complete. It offers to notify the local tax assessor of your address change for you and tells you the dates and times of your kids' school registration. It connects you with the local city government to move your business license. Because there is an election coming up, it registers you to vote, notifies you when the sample ballots are available, tells you when and where to vote and updates you on the outcome of the local elections. This is the long-range vision for Gov2Go and a real-life example of how the technology can transform the relationship between citizens and government, connecting the two in meaningful ways.

Here is how Gov2Go works today:

- **Startup Wizard:** Rather than forcing users to select specific government services to engage with, Gov2Go asks users a few simple questions about themselves and then maps their responses to services that are integrated into the platform. What county do you live in? Do you own any vehicles? What is your license plate number?

- **Profile:** Based on information provided, Gov2Go creates a personal profile that tells the user what government services are being tracked. “My Vehicles” tracks the registration for any license plates entered. “My Locations” tracks personal property assessment and taxes in the counties selected. “My Businesses” tracks annual franchise taxes for any businesses entered. Users can open their profile at any time to add, edit or delete information.
- **Timeline:** The timeline plots all of the user’s government deadlines and key dates for the year in sequential order as a task. Users can open a task to take action (“renew now,” for instance), mark a task as complete if they’ve already completed it, or view more options for handling a task via mail, phone or in person. Each task includes a countdown of days remaining until the deadline.
- **Notifications and Reminders:** For each government deadline tracked by Gov2Go, users can opt to receive email reminders, in-app messages and push notifications when the deadline is approaching. Reminders are written in plain language, include helpful instructions and links to take care of everything quickly online. Future releases will include stored payments to enable secure, one-tap transactions.
- **Platform Approach:** More than just a mobile app, Gov2Go is currently available to citizens on the web as a responsive website, native iOS and Android apps, and on the Apple Watch. In the future, the platform will expand to include integration with Apple TV, gaming systems, Amazon Echo, Facebook Messenger and other popular communication platforms to reach users where they are.

The development of Gov2Go was an exercise in collaboration that began long before the initial requirements and code were written. The project involved coordination and input from an oversight board comprising 12 governor-appointed public and private members, Arkansas citizens, a private company, and numerous state and local government agencies. Armed with guidance from its board and input from citizens, INA worked closely with leaders at the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration, the County Collectors Association, and the Arkansas Secretary of State’s office to first get their support for the platform and approval to integrate their existing government services into it. The team reported progress to its agency partners and board at every milestone in the development and testing process, and continues to collaborate on messaging around specific services, promotion to citizens and usage reporting.

Gov2Go is hosted in the Amazon Web Services cloud and maintained by the network manager for the state of Arkansas, and benefits from the accessibility, security and privacy policies that are standard for Arkansas state information technology. User privacy is a major cornerstone of Gov2Go, as user information is encrypted from end-to-end and is never shared with or sold to companies, government agencies or individuals. Users are in complete control of what information they provide and the conveniences they get in return. They can add, edit or delete their information at any time.

Gov2Go has been primarily cross-marketed to potential users through the existing government services that are integrated into the platform. For example, when someone pays their Arkansas property taxes online, they have a chance to opt-in to Gov2Go and receive property tax payment and other government service reminders. This has been an incredible effective and no-cost marketing method that has resulted in more than 140,000 Gov2Go users. Additional promotion efforts will include aggressive media relations, targeted Facebook advertising, Google Display Network and Adwords ads, video promotion online, and both digital and print outreach through government agencies.

Significance

Gov2Go offers a completely new approach to digital government service delivery by integrating existing digital government services into a platform that delivers them based on individual users' needs – all in one place through their favorite devices. It's transforming how citizens interact with government and represents a dramatic shift in service delivery from government-first thinking to citizen-first thinking. The project is a result of the state's enterprise-approach to government technology and aligns with Governor Hutchinson's goal to reduce state government costs by leveraging technology across agencies.

This innovation is significant because it connects the services of four government agencies (Department of Finance & Administration, 75 County Assessors, 75 County Collectors and the Arkansas Secretary of State) at different levels of government, and simplifies a cumbersome and complex process for citizens through a mobile delivery channel. Furthermore, it's a one-stop way to help the nearly 40% of motorists who have not completed their property assessment or paid property taxes during their vehicle registration renewal period. As more services are added to the platform, Gov2Go has the potential to become their primary interface with government and increase civic engagement.

Gov2Go saves users time, travel and effort, and makes it easy for them to take care of their government business on time so they avoid costly penalties and fees. For citizens, the cost of missing important Arkansas government deadlines related to assessing, paying property taxes or renewing car tags—the core services available in Gov2Go—could be as high as \$270, including penalties and fines. Beyond these potential hard cost savings, the most important intangible benefit for citizens is reduced stress through better experiences with their government. Additionally, when citizens can easily get what they need through Gov2Go, government agencies will enjoy higher constituent satisfaction levels and a higher rate of compliance.

Feedback gathered from users clearly shows that people love Gov2Go:

- “It was so easy to register all the things I need to keep track of having assessed and taxes paid on. Thank you.”
- “It was so easy to setup my company profile!”
- “Simple, to the point questions....just what us older folks need. Thanks!! “
- “Easy to setup. Excellent service to have.”
- “This is a great service and I appreciate notifications of upcoming obligations.”
- “Great App!”
- “This is a great app for my phone as a friendly and convenient tool to keep my dealings and civil duties on track. Cool tool! Love it!”

The implications for improved government service delivery through Gov2Go are obvious. Agencies already notice significant reduction in costs for online versus in-person transactions. Numerous studies prove that it’s less expensive for government agencies to provide and manage online services than an offline format. Online services also provide financial benefits to government and contribute to broader state government efficiency efforts set forth by Governor Hutchinson. Because Gov2Go connects citizens to existing online services, it has the potential to dramatically increase their adoption. As the Gov2Go user base grows and people use it to carry out transactions remotely instead of in-person, agencies will enjoy even greater cost savings and operational efficiencies.

Impact

The implementation and use of Gov2Go has far-reaching benefits that make state government work better and ultimately improve the lives of citizens.

Both Arkansas residents and government agencies benefit from Gov2Go. More than 140,000 Arkansans ages 18 and up who own vehicles and other taxable personal property are already using Gov2Go to track and keep up with their property-related government tasks. Arkansas state and local government agencies gain efficiencies from Gov2Go as citizens access their services through it. These currently include the Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration, County Assessors and County Collectors, and the Arkansas Secretary of State Business & Commercial Services Division. In future releases, Gov2Go will become a service delivery channel for the SOS Elections Division, the Arkansas Legislature, numerous professional licensing boards, the Arkansas Department of Health, the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Department of Human Services and other agencies.

There was no cost to Arkansas government for the development and marketing of Gov2Go, making it an incredible value to state government. The Information Network of Arkansas funds the research, application development and support through its self-funded business model, in which portal processing fees associated with payment transactions fund the development of enterprise state government projects. Because of this no-cost arrangement, there is a significant return to state government and citizens in both dollars and time-savings.