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**e-Citizen: Perceptions and Experiences of Modern Citizenry in Croatia**

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**Introduction**

The e-Citizen project was launched in 2014 by the Croatian Government in order to modernize, simplify and speed up communication between citizens and the public administration and increase the transparency of the public sector in providing public services. Project e-Citizen is part of strategy e-Croatia 2020 which includes approach to digital development and coordination of entire Croatian population. The main strategy objective is to enlarge the number of users of e-government services.

**Theoretical framework**

Trust in government has been declining for more than three decades now. E-government has been proposed as a way to increase citizens’ trust in government and to improve citizens’ evaluations of government more generally (Mossberger; Tolbert, 2006). According to the statistical data presented by various authors, most of the e-Government projects fail (Mates, et.al., 2013). Every successful e-government project should be citizen-centered, it needs to meet citizen expectations and needs, and actively seek to discover what citizens want from e-government (Bertot; Jaeger; McClure, 2008).

**Research questions**

The aim of the study is to find out the current condition referring to e-Citizen namely e-government system in Croatia. For this reason the following research questions are raised:

* Have citizens heard of e-Citizen system?
* When and where citizens have heard about e-Citizen system?
* How often citizens use e-Citizen system?
* Which services of e-Citizen system do they use?
* Would they recommend system e-Citizen to someone else?
* Have they ever heard about education in case of e-Citizen system?
* What are their opinion on e-Citizen system?

**Methodology**

Study results are based on online quantitative survey which has been conducted above random sample of citizens. Survey included multiple choice and open questions. The pilot study presented at the poster will serve as a testing phase for a future large-scale study.

**Research results**

Research has included 123 respondents, mostly (77,24%) females. Average age of respondents is 26 years, with range from 18 to 61 years old.

Nearly all respondents (98,37%) have heard of e-Citizen project. Most of them have heard about e-Citizen project on internet (55,28%) and on television (43,09%), trough social media (39,84%) and in school or college (39,84%).

When it comes to usage of e-Citizen system, statistic displays a worrying number of users between the respondents. About half of the respondents (53,66%) are using e-Citizen system, which means that rest (46,34%) of them haven’t recognized the utility of e-Government, e-Citizen and e-Croatia 2020 projects.

When asked “Would they recommend e-Citizen system to others?” the most of respondents (82,11%) stated that they would. This indicates that some of the respondents (26,82%) are not using the system but they would recommend it to the others.

Education referring to the system and project e-Citizen was also subject in one of the question groups. Majority of the respondents (89,43%) haven’t heard about any kind of education neither attended it. Those who have heard (10,57%) were actually the attendants of such education.

The quantitative results of this survey are followed with qualitative statements of the respondents and they will be presented on the poster.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The project e-Croatia and e-Citizen, in the beginning, were substantial accomplishments of the Croatian government. Project goal was to improve interaction between governmental services and citizens. Technological implementation of e-Citizen project was conducted very well but main problem in regard to e-Citizen system is in its usage. Citizens haven’t recognized usefulness of the e-Citizen system and they created negative perceptions towards it. Source of these negative perceptions can be recognized in citizens‘ ignorance of e-Citizen system which could be the result of poor promotion of the e-Citizen and e-Croatia projects. Respondents of this study are mainly digital natives and it is expected that they will adopt new technologies which will make their life easier but obviously this is not the case in Croatia. Project e-Citizen was launched four years ago and it hasn’t accomplished its goals. We will suggest possible directions of raising the usage of e-Citizen system in hope that Croatian citizens will really become e-Citizens.

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