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überregional**eGovernment MONITOR: use of e-government in the German speaking region continues to increase**

The use of e-government in the German speaking region continues to increase. In Germany, 54 percent of Internet users used digital administrative services for the first time in 2020, making up more than half of all Internet users; in Austria the figure is 72 percent and in Switzerland 60 percent. This is the conclusion reached by the eGovernment MONITOR 2020, a representative study conducted by the Initiative D21 and the Technical University of Munich (TUM), carried out by Kantar.

One of the greatest barriers to use from the past has almost been overcome: Awareness of digital administrative services is increasing continuously, almost all Internet users are aware of at least one service (DE: 97% / AT: 99% / CH: 96%).

The most well-known are searching for information, downloading forms to prepare/complete administrative procedures, arranging appointments and handling electronic tax returns.

These are results of "eGovernment MONITOR 2020", a joint study by Initiative D21 and the Technical University of Munich. It was carried out by Kantar as an online survey (computer-aided web interview (CAWI)) from 9 to 17 June 2020 with 1,005 interviews in Germany (DE), 1,008 in Austria (AT) and 1,002 in Switzerland (CH).

Digital administration in Germany is on the move

The Online Access Act obliges the federal, state and local governments in Germany to offer their administrative services digitally on administrative platforms by the end of 2022. "Digital administration in Germany is on the move and we are well on the way. This will also be more noticeable in citizens' everyday lives soon," says Dr. Markus Richter, Federal Government Commissioner for Information Technology and State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

"I see the results of the study as a mandate to think even more in terms of people's needs. We want to take citizens with us on this digital transformation. Only those who trust and understand the digital applications will use them later. One step in this direction was the recently presented dashboard on digital administration, and we want to continue along this path," Richter continues.

Corona: Impact on e-government use low, but openness is growing

The temporarily limited availability of some government services due to corona had only a minor impact on the use of e-government services. In Germany, just seven per cent state that they have carried out more official business online than before, while in Austria the figure is 13 per cent and in Switzerland twelve per cent.

Four percent in Germany and three percent each in Austria and Switzerland indicate that digital administrative services are being used for the first time due to corona. The strategy most often chosen by citizens was to temporarily avoid going to the authorities.

On the other hand, the openness to e-government services is growing in light of the corona pandemic: When surveyed in the context of corona, 75 percent can imagine that they will carry out more official business online in future in Germany, 81 percent in Austria and 70 percent in Switzerland. The vast majority of people feel that digital processing is a relief compared to going to the office in person (DE: 70% / AT: 77% / CH: 68%).

Satisfaction depends on convenient and reliable use

Overall satisfaction with digital public services is high in Austria and Switzerland at 79 and 71 percent, with Germany lagging somewhat behind at 62 percent. In all three countries, the most important aspects for satisfaction are convenience (saving a visit to the actual office), reliability of the systems (stable connection, no interruption of the process) and the easy use of the services.

In the long-term trend since 2012, satisfaction has been stable overall with slight fluctuations in all three countries, with larger increases only in Germany (57 to 62 percent), albeit at a lower level. Satisfaction refers to the citizens' personal expectations – so to maintain the same level of satisfaction, the services offered must keep pace with changing expectations.

Different types of users require a personal approach

E-government users differ greatly from one another – merely considering the average is not enough for the demand-based design of e-government in Germany. The eGovernment MONITOR 2020 therefore differentiates according to type first in order to determine the need for action for a future increased use of e-government in Germany.

The survey shows: A "typical" e-government user does not exist. However, citizens who carry out at least part of their administrative tasks online can be divided into five types of users. These are distinguishable in terms of attitudes and needs and specific usage habits.

"We were positively surprised by the great potential of the 'future frequent users', who represent the largest group with 32 percent. They are digital-savvy and are already open to digital administration. Here you can activate many citizens with little effort, you just have to inform them which offers they can find where," says D21 President Hannes Schwaderer.

Smartphone interface may be a breakthrough for online identification function

The identity card in credit card format has been available for ten years, 76 percent of the Germans surveyed for the eGovernment MONITOR own it. 24 percent of those surveyed have activated the online ID function, which allows for the end-to-end processing of official business on the Internet.

Despite improved user-friendliness, usage figures are stagnating; according to the survey, just six percent have already used the online ID function. Until 2017, it was only possible to use this with a special reader; since 2017, the NFC interface of more modern smartphones has also enabled reading. Initially, this was only possible by Android, but iOS has also allowed the interface since the end of 2019.

According to the BMI's plans, it should be possible to use the online ID even without the ID card on the smartphone by 2021. "There is huge potential for the breakthrough of the online ID function on smartphones. But still more than half of

the smartphone owners are not even aware of this possibility. What is needed here is education and more user-friendly applications," says Prof. Helmut Krcmar from the Technical University of Munich.

In Austria, 45 percent have the cell phone signature there. In Switzerland, various identification procedures are in use, the TAN procedure being used most frequently, followed by the "SwissID", 57 percent have already used at least one of the procedures.

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Since 2011, the eGovernment MONITOR study has been providing an annual comprehensive picture of the use and acceptance of digital administrative services in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

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URL zur Pressemitteilung: <https://initiated21.de/egovernment-monitor/> Download of the study (German)

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