

ECOMMERCE SERVICES AS A PART OF POSTAL ELECTRONIC SERVICES

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Introduction

Information and communication Technologies have dramatically changed the are of social and business communications. There is no doubt that ICTs has had an enormous impact on postal operators and operations provided by Post. There is no reason to think that the impact has been negative, however the opposite is the case. Today we are facing tremendous decreasing of letter – post item globally. This is mainly because we live in electronic age and communication is realized mostly by email. As a reaction on this situation should Posts innovate and develop new services using application of ebusiness. Nowadays we can see how the postal operators are diversifying and providing new electronic services to their customers to make them satisfied. Postal electronic services are increasing all over the world, but there is difference between developed and developing countries. In the study of UPU (Universal postal union) there are 55 postal electronic services defining.

Impact of ICT on postal sector

Using of ICT has become progressively widespread. Over recent years, the globalisation of exchanges of goods and services has shown intense acceleration. Also, this involves the service industry too, of which postal services are a part. Posts all over the world know that their future has ICT written all over it. And what about customers? Customers should know that Posts put them first and that they are priority. Customers will not only demand suitable and secure postal electronic services, but technology will also continue to play a key part in improving postal processes that guarantee better quality of service and deliver efficiency gains.

Classification of postal electronic services

As stated in previous chapter the number of postal electronic services is 55. These services are classified into four groups:

- e-post,

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- e-finance,
- e-commerce and
- e-government services.[1]

Epost services involve for example public internet Access point in post offices, postal electronic mailbox, direct mail etc. They are widely developed and strategically important for Posts all over the world. Traditionally, postal services have been used to facilitate communication between citizens and businesses via physical means, such as letters. Epost services are communication services delivered to customers via ICT means. The next one is area of eFinance services – services provided by postal operators to their customers using ICTs, f. e. electronic invoicing, online bill payments or electronic money transfer. Ecommerce services include f. e. online shop for philatelic products or SSL web certificates. The last one are eGovernment services that are strategically important too. They are driven by government and provided through ICT means, using Posts as a trusted third part. Egovernment services are f. e. digital identity, driving license renewal, electronic medical certificates or online passport application. [1]

Development postal electronic services over the years

Postal operators are increasingly responding to their customer's needs by providing them with new postal electronic services. Figure 1 shows that the number of new postal electronic services being introduced globally each year is increasing. It is clear that the introduction of new postal electronic services continues to grow exponentially.

We can see that in 1996 were introduced only five new services globally. Just over 20 new services were introduced in 2001, compared to 50 in 2006 and 85 in 2010. We also can see that in the four years between 2007 and 2010, the number of postal electronic services introduced globally almost tripled, from 33 to 85 per year, showing that Posts all over the world are stepping up their efforts to bring new services to market. [2]

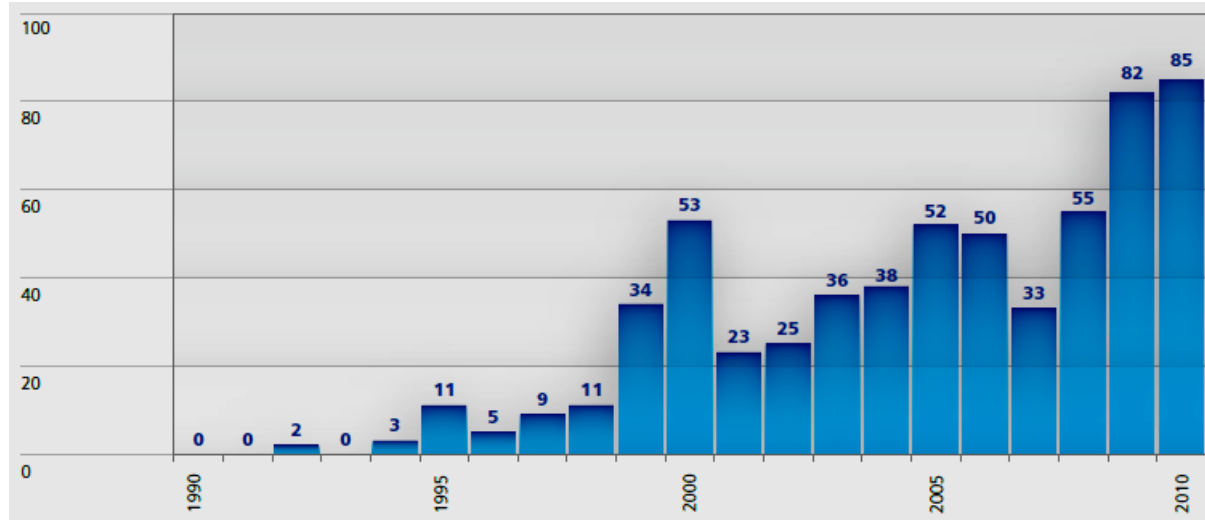


Figure 1. Number of postal e-services introduced globally each year (Source: Universal postal union. *Measuring postal e-service development: a global perspective*. 2012, [online]. [cit. 2012-10-19]. Available on the internet: <<http://www.upu.int>>)

Definitions and characteristic of eCommerce services

E-commerce services consist of buying and selling products and services using ICTs. It involves processing and delivering purchased items physically or electronically.

Table 1. List and definition of eCommerce services

Number	Service	Service description
1	Online shop for philatelic products	Customers can purchase philatelic products online and have them delivered to a physical address
2	Online shop for postal goods	Customers can purchase postal goods online and have them delivered to a physical address
3	Online shop for non-postal goods	Customers can purchase non-postal goods online and have them delivered to a physical address
4	Subscription for periodicals	Customers can subscribe to periodicals online and have them delivered to a physical address
5	E-commerce web-based customer service and contact	A service providing the customer with an electronic online account and a unique contact identifier to manage and trace operations related to an e-commerce transaction
6	SSL web certificates	The Post issues SSL certificates for securing websites

According to previous postal electronic services specification for the area of eCommerce is realized an analysis of the deployment of postal electronic services in selected countries. The main objective is to find out the level of eCommerce services in countries selected by myself. [2]

Table 2. Development of eCommerce services in selected countries

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
<i>Belarus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>Ukraine</i>	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
<i>SLOVAKIA</i>	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
<i>Poland</i>	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
<i>Germany</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>France</i>	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
<i>Hungary</i>	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗

1. Online shop for philatelic products
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6. SSL web certificates

In the table 2 we can see that development of eCommerce services is different in each country. For example in Belarus the development is on high level. On the opposite side is Poland. There is providing only one eCommerce service.

Conclusion

Systematic implementation of electronic postal services allows to postal operator flexible adaptation in the postal market. The main aim of this is to maximize customer satisfaction and reaction to the customer needs and market demands. Nowadays it is very important adapting to trends in the area of postal services electronisation. This is the only way forward.

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