

## The Government of Norway Provides Its Citizens with Internet-based Public Administration Services

### THE *Open* GROUP



Royal Palace Slottet – Oslo, Norway

#### Norway Streamlines Government Processes by Going Online

In Norway, over 35 per cent of the population are experienced in navigating the Internet. The Norwegian government intends to leverage off of this knowledge by using the Internet to deliver more effective and cost-efficient public administration services. Termed the Public Sector Network, this initiative is a joint venture between Norway's Ministry of National Planning and Co-ordination and The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities. The objective is to create a national Internet-based infrastructure that will enable the public administration (both local and central government) to transform from a traditional paper-based, bureaucratic organization into an easily-approached, responsive on-line body. Initially, over 100 paper-based reporting mechanisms between public bodies are being targeted for conversion to on-line systems. The aim is to convert every applicable service by 2001.

Through the Public Sector Network, the Norwegian people will be able to manage their relationship with the public administration in the fields of taxation, welfare and other public administration functions. As a result, the Norwegian government will deliver improved service levels and significantly reduce its costs on currently labor-intensive, paper-based tasks. Consequent savings can then be allocated to furthering the public good in areas such as health care and education.

#### Working with The Open Group to Plan the Future

In helping to establish the Public Sector Network, an ongoing relationship has been established between the Norwegian Ministry of National Planning and Co-ordination and The Open Group.

The Open Group will serve as a central resource that tests, brands and guarantees compatibility with IT DialTone™ specifications, products and technologies. In this capacity, The Open Group will contribute substantially to the Norwegian Public Sector Network and similar projects around the globe.

#### An Internet 'Dialtone' Framework As Easy To Use As The Telephone

Creating a national infrastructure such as the Public Sector Network poses a number of challenges. There are currently many point-solutions, technologies and products from a growing number of suppliers. But how do companies wishing to utilize the Internet understand the benefits and risks associated with each one? Which ones work with each other, conform to agreed standards or will remain relevant in five years time? How do companies avoid making proprietary decisions that could erode the required benefits of the Internet?

"The more common approach to this project would have been to build one big government network that is planned, constructed and managed centrally. However, this approach is not very flexible and would almost certainly have required the costly duplication or replacement of existing infrastructure-in fact it would probably have failed. It's really a challenge to match the formal, juridical framework with the needs of the marketplace, especially under the European Union rules for public procurement," says Gard Titlestad, head of the Secretariat for IT Standardisation.

"The alternative is to adopt a more 'open' approach that protects the vast investment of public money in existing infrastructure and enables the ongoing integration of new technology from a broad range of suppliers. To do this we identified the need for a common framework—an industry-agreed reference point by which to identify standards, products and technologies that provide consistent features and attributes, such as security and reliability—now and in the future. A solution is to work closely with The Open Group to assist in the delivery of its IT DialTone architecture."

To ensure that the Public Sector Network remains flexible and maximizes the use of the latest market developments in technology and service, the project is based

on a framework agreement. The IT DialTone set of technologies provides the framework with a reference point and an agreed approach to the development and implementation of Internet standard specifications, technologies and products. In turn, this framework guides the procurement policies of each municipality and government department, guaranteeing a consistent approach to the network implementation. Yearly re-negotiation of the framework will consistently reflect market development dynamics.

Joseph De Feo, president and CEO of The Open Group, said, "The Norwegian Government is leading Europe in the charge to realize the true social potential of the Internet. As part of this process they have identified the benefits of basing their future infrastructure development on robust, industry-agreed standards not on proprietary solutions, which they realize could eventually erode the country's ability to communicate freely with the world if alternative, non-compatible decisions are made by other governments, companies or organizations."

With the Public Sector Network, Norway leads the world in creating a national, Internet-based infrastructure to administer public services and improve government operational efficiency. The country's proactive steps guarantee the construction of an effective, supplier-independent and flexible national on-line resource.

**The Open Group**

The Open Group is an international consortium of more than 200 members, including leaders in government, academia, worldwide finance, health care, commerce and telecommunications, which have combined IT budgets in excess of \$55 billion annually.

As the industry's flagship specifications organization for more than a decade, it provides a vendor-neutral forum for buyers and suppliers of technology to build the critical linkages between the \$3 trillion worth of heritage systems currently installed and the new operating environments and applications emerging today, including the Internet and World Wide Web. The Open Group's breakthrough IT DialTone™ initiative will ensure that the Internet remains open by collecting a core set of specifications, products and technologies to create a common level of global security and reliability for the Internet. To that end, The Open Group membership is working with standards bodies and its members to address the areas of core information exchange, transaction processing, application services, location services and security.

The Open Group's charter, which provides for research and development of non-proprietary technologies and specifications, enables collaborative development among leading high technology companies worldwide. The Open Group's unique testing and branding process guarantees compatibility of products developed against The Open Group specifications.

Formed in February 1996 by merging X/Open Company Ltd. and the Open Software Foundation, The Open Group's nine sponsors are Digital Equipment Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company, Siemens-Nixdorf Informationssysteme AG, Fujitsu Limited, Hitachi Limited, International Business Machines Corporation, NCR Corporation, Novell, Inc. and Sun Microsystems, Inc. Headquartered in Cambridge, MA, The Open Group can be reached on the Worldwide Web at [www.opengroup.org](http://www.opengroup.org).

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