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M – Powering The Parliament of India

A Case Study (Series-2)

December 2008

Introduction

The Rajya Sabha (Upper House)

Parliamentary Committees play a vital role in the parliamentary system. They are a vibrant link between the Parliament, the Executive and the general public. The need for committees arises out of two factors, the first one being the need for vigilance on the part of the Legislature over the actions of the Executive, while the second one is that the modern Legislature these days is over-burdened with heavy volume of work with limited time at its disposal. It thus becomes impossible that every matter should be thoroughly and systematically scrutinized and considered on the floor of the House. If the work is to be done with reasonable care, naturally some parliamentary responsibility has to be entrusted to an agency in which the whole House has confidence. Entrusting certain functions of the House to the committees has, therefore, become a normal practice. This has become all the more necessary as a committee provides the expertise on a matter which is referred to it. In a committee, the matter is deliberated at length, views are expressed freely, the matter is considered in depth, in a business-like manner and in a calmer atmosphere. In most of the committees, public is directly or indirectly associated when memoranda containing suggestions are received, on-the-spot studies are conducted and oral evidence is taken which helps the committees in arriving at the conclusions.

Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees

The need to constitute some kind of subject committees or the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees was being felt for the last several years. In 1989, in fact, three Standing Committees were constituted which dealt with Agriculture, Science and Technology and Environment and Forests. In 1993,

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Introduction

It was finally decided to set up twenty four Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees to cover various Ministries/Departments of the Union Government in order to further strengthen the accountability of the Government to Parliament.

The main purpose of these committees is—

"... To ensure the accountability of Government to Parliament through more detailed consideration of measures in these Committees. The intention is not to weaken or criticize the administration but to strengthen it by investing it with more meaningful Parliamentary support".

These Committees are entrusted with the following functions:

- To consider the Demands for Grants of the related Ministries/Departments and report thereon. The report shall not suggest anything of the nature of cut motions;
- To examine Bills, pertaining to the related Ministries/Departments, referred to the Committee by the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, and report thereon;
- To consider the annual reports of the Ministries/Departments and report thereon;
- To consider national basic long term policy documents presented to the Houses, if referred to the Committee by the Chairman or the Speaker, as the case may be, and report thereon.

Provided that the Standing Committees shall not consider matters of day-to-day administration of the related Ministries/Departments.

The Need

M-Governance

Parliament of India (Rajya Sabha) needed a unique solution to fulfill its communication and connectivity needs keeping in mind the requirements of standing committees for expert analysis.

Another concern was to find an optimum solution for various continuous communications of Rajya Sabha i.e.

NIC Secretary to Members
NIC Secretary to general public

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ValueFirst Solution

After a thorough examination & analysis of Parliament of India's standing committees requirements, ValueFirst proposed best-in-class application ValueFirst Velocity.

ValueFirst Velocity is an enterprise class SMS suite designed to create, process and transmit SMS in a complex database environment. It provides a highly reliable mobile messaging platform to the enterprise segment. The ValueFirst application enabled both the houses of Parliament of India to communicate through mobile messaging between its members and general public. The Rajya Sabha's designated agency for all communications, NIC send all the information to its members and general public's mobile phones. The mobile messaging suite in addition, offered complete automation of various processes of Parliament of India.

M-Governance of Processes at Parliament of India

Internal Communication:

The NIC can directly contact the members of both houses by sending a SMS to their mobile phones.

General Communication:

The NIC can send general information to the general public by sending a SMS to their mobile phones.

Critical Communication:

The NIC can send critical information to the general public by sending a SMS to their mobile phones.

Benefits

- Reduced Communication costs.
- Reduction in delivery time of information due to automation.
- Provided remote connectivity for internal communication.
- Easy to adapt technology enabled mass reach.
- Provided continuous connectivity among the members of both houses.
- Highest availability of mobile phones ensured delivery of critical information on time.

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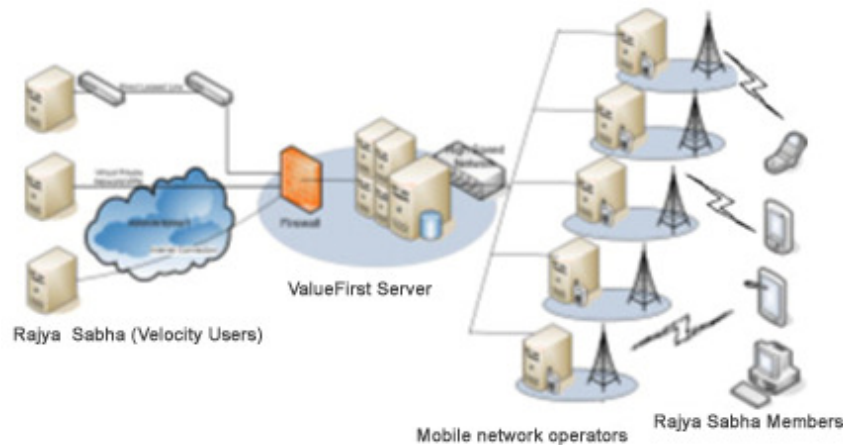
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ValueFirst USP

- 24 X 7 supports.
- Least time to market – deployment typically is done in one day
- Scalable solution in terms of architecture
- Highly configurable products - processes can be configured on-the-fly
- Redundancy of servers with load balancing, failover mechanism and least cost routing
- Carrier-Class enterprise mobile messaging including delivery reports and queuing in case of server breakdown
- Redundancy of operators by virtue of being connected to multiple mobile network through operators and aggregators globally

ValueFirst Mobile Data Service Architecture



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