



Canadian Government

# Government Electronic Directory Services

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# The electronic "Who's who" for Canada's government

The Canadian Government has set up a "Who's Who" of employees on the basis of DirX, Siemens' X.500/LDAP product. You can find the names, addresses, and areas of responsibility of about 170,000 government employees in the Internet. The system has been running smoothly and successfully since 1999.

## The initial situation and the task

The objective of the Canadian government was clear: A unified, global corporate directory. Just one source to get you to the people, resources and information you need. Access to a universal, easy-to-learn and simple-to-use interface to global networks of corporate directories containing everything from e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers, profiles of network resources, technical product data, and order numbers, to IP addresses and URLs. And always up to date.

"Revenue from the directory business will be the highest ever this year and even higher in the years to come," claimed Bob Lewin, Director and Principal Analyst of Collaborative Computing at Dataquest in 1999. "Our expectations are that the directory business will take off this year. Companies and organizations are getting serious about directories as a result of the whole intranet phenomenon, and the growth of electronic commerce. There's now raised awareness of the potential this technology has within an organization, especially when they realize that they have multiple address books, multiple sources of information and inconsistencies. Companies and governments are looking at what it takes for implementation."

He and Gartner's Research Director for Electronic Messaging and Directories, Joyce Graff, were members of the Electronic Messaging Association (EMA) which defined the worldwide X.500 standards for directories. Graff, the Vice Chair of the EMA's Messaging Management Committee explained that X.500 standards ensure that products would work with one another across various vendors' directories and across all directories a company may have.

In this way companies, universities, and government directories are able to span the globe, while supporting the international direct dial telephone network.

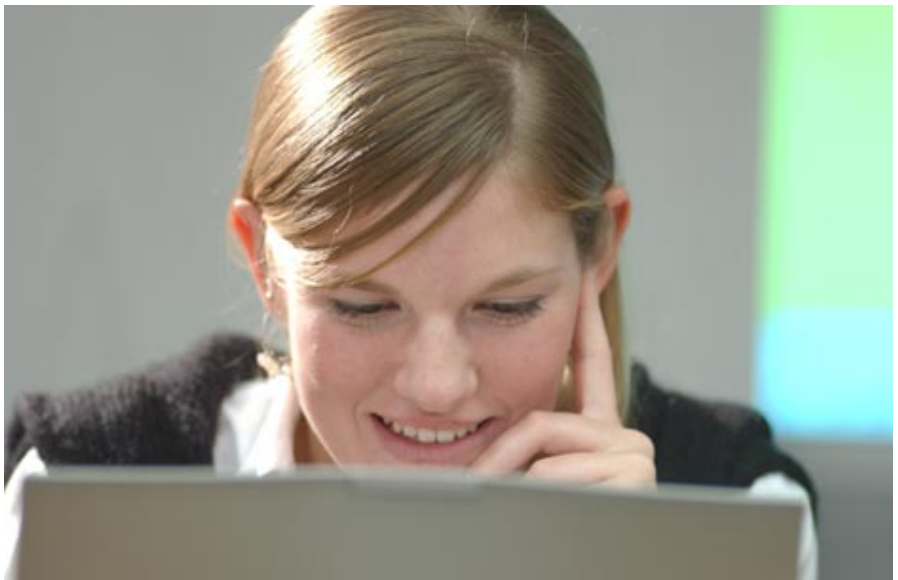
Lewin: "One of the advantages of X.500 is that it allows you to have all the information in one central repository: information, people, as well as other resources such as applications. You can define what access and security you have for these resources in a consistent fashion. This is the beauty of X.500 Directories. "Compliance with the X.500 standards should be a key part of the decision when considering directories. It's proven, it's been around, and it solves business issues."

The EMA had held a "Directory Challenge" to find out if the directories from different countries and their governments were compatible. "The results demonstrate the viability of X.500. We learned that X.500 is truly a key when considering directories. Besides, you should take a standards based product over a proprietary product," Lewin added.

## The solution

An excellent example showing that Lewin and Joyce were right on the money is the Canadian government's "Government Electronic Directory Services" (GEDS), based on Siemens' DirX. With up-to-date directory information on about 170,000 federal employees, plus other information fields and growing - it is one of the largest users of Siemens' X.500 DirX, and one of the biggest operational X.500 directory systems in the world.

The directory is for both Canadian government employees over their intranet and the Canadian public and business over the Internet, giving access to a comprehensive electronic telephone directory of federal employees.



"You have to be ahead of the game in this market. The X.500 type of directory was the only way to provide access to data for the people querying and searching," said Angèle Gosselin, the Director of Electronic Commerce Services, Public Works, Government Services Canada. She drove the implementation of X.500 for the Canadian Government.

"Siemens has more experience than any other company in the X.500 game. They were the first to be fully compliant with the '88 Directory," said another integral member of the Canadian Government team, Bill Aitken, the Manager of Applications Support Infrastructure, Telecommunications Public Works and Government Services Canada. His advice to anyone considering a directory: "Go with a product that supports X.500 directory versus a proprietary product. Find out whether the vendor has experience with an '88 product, and make sure they comply with most of the '93 options. Ask whether the vendor has an operational reference and take a look at that site reference. Go with a global player when it comes to directories, because you will be communicating with the rest of the world."

## Award for excellence

"The Siemens technology install went fast and well - it was so easy to implement. Once the schema was written the directory was up and running a few months later. Siemens' technology was proven, quick to deploy, plus it has the capability to store a lot of data on a central DSA while handling multiple simultaneous accesses just as fast," Gosselin explained.

How did the users like the directory, known as Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS)? "They love it - in both of the official languages of Canada: French and English! I receive comments that they like the organization of the directory and that each person's information field (entry) is like a home page. With X.500 it is technically feasible to let you go as far as adding each person's photo, special preferences, and resources. It's a very visible tool and even won the 'Award for Excellence in the Management of IT in the Federal Government,'" Gosselin said. As further proof of the success of this directory, it received 16,000 hits per day short after installation.

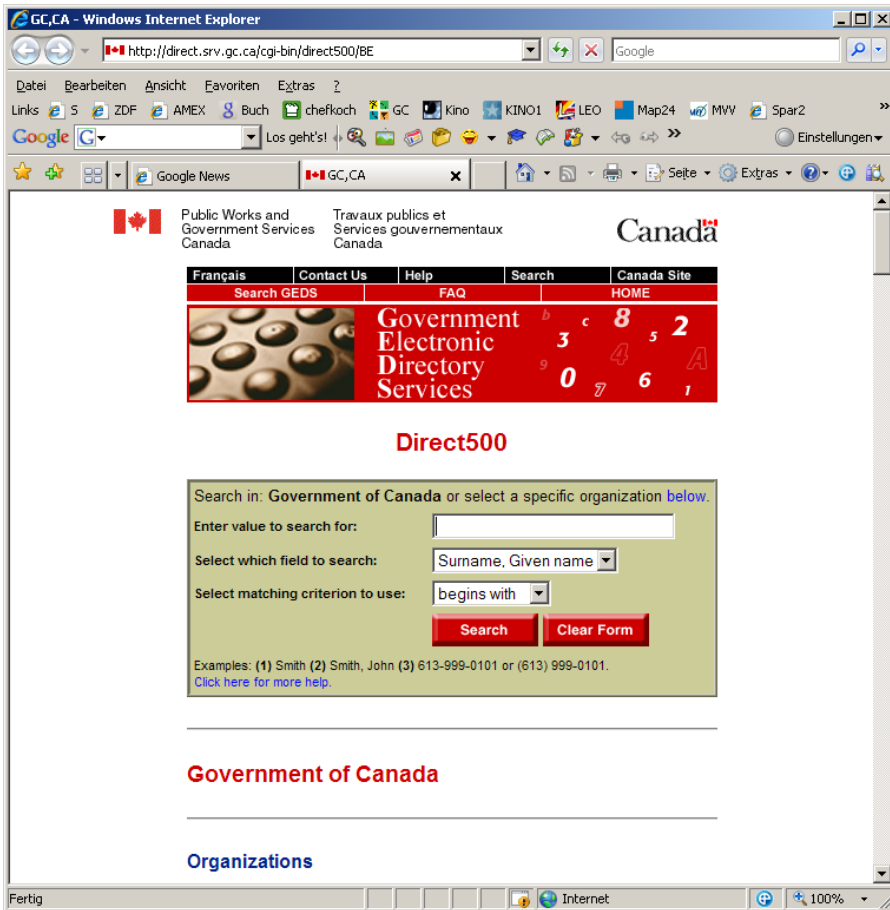
## The benefits

One of the biggest advantages is that the X.500 Directory replaced about three quarters of the Government of Canada's paper directories within the first two years. This was a huge cost saving since there were five different telephone books for the Canadian Government – one for each of Canada's regions. The paper directories were bilingual and printed twice a year. Now electronic updates are made twice a month, and daily updates are planned for the future. In addition to saving printing costs, it also eliminated the duplicated efforts involved in the collection and distribution of information.

Other advantages of the X.500 Directory: It enables the merging of the mail and telephony data, and shows organizational charts which is useful when trying to reach the right person. Additional information fields allow departments to display data of their choice, such as indicating the word processing package, spread sheet, and operating systems for each employee.

The X.500 Directory even took the Canadian Government into the future by providing the infrastructure for digital signature, mail and electronic commerce applications. Gartner's Joyce Graff was often asked to give examples of good X.500 sites. She replied: "The Canadian Government Web site is a very good demonstration of what one can do with an X.500 directory."

GEDS has even made history, since its Internet address was the first URL to be entered into the official House of Commons records. John Harvard, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works and Government Services told the House about the government's up-to-date directory information online. He told the House that "all you have to do is click on 'that little red phone' on your computer screen."



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