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Danish IT Policies and Strategies
Experience and Issues

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Summary

Since the beginning of the 90s the Danish government has appointed a number of committees to formulate IT policies and strategies for the Danish society in general and for different sectors. The focus will be on the 3 main reports.

1. **"The Information Society 2000".** This report was published in 1996 and covered the main sectors of the society. It was inspired of the US notion of "Super information highway" and was probably the first comprehensive government report dealing with the networked society – even before the Internet was widely used. The report recommends principles for applying IT in the different sectors of government and for specific initiatives.
2. **"Digital Denmark".** The report was published in 2001 and formulates a number objectives and initiatives in the areas of: Life long learning for all; Denmark as an E-commerce nation; More effective and cheaper service via digital administration; Danish Internet initiatives; and Creation of IT lighthouses in Denmark.
3. **"The High-Speed Committee".** The committee delivered its report in 2010 and addresses political ownership and stresses that the gap in the public sector between what can be done and what is actually done is increasing. It has recommendations for: Digitalizing of the public sector; Cloud computing; Environment, climate and green IT, and R&D in IT; Broad Band infrastructure in Denmark.

Experiences

The reports have created awareness for Information Technology but the specific recommendations have only to a limited extent been adopted by the ministry responsible for implementation. The three policy reports all have a strong focus on education, health and e-government, but there has been no ownership in the ministries for the proposed policies and strategies.

The creation of the Digitalizing Agency (*Digitaliseringsstyrelsen* in Danish) has fostered a new era of administration policy with specific plans and milestones to increase cost efficiency by use of ICT in the public sector. It's interesting to note that

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with a few exceptions it has been difficult to find funding models to finance shared infrastructures and to agree on common open standards and open architectures.

The Achilles Heel in the Public Sector is the many IT projects, which do not meet target dates, have overrun budget or do not perform according to the business case. It seems that the procurement and project model have significant systemic flaws.

Politically, the Nyrup Rasmussen Government had a strong focus on the information society, whereas the Fogh Rasmussen / Løkke Rasmussen Government had few ICT initiatives (welfare technology) other than making public administration more efficient. The Thorning-Smith Government has continued this trend but has adopted new legislation e.g. mandating electronic communication between government and citizens/companies. This government recently established a growth team for ICT which presented their report in January 2014.

Surprisingly, the Government's Productivity Commission has not yet addressed the ICT potential to increase productivity directly. Nevertheless Denmark scores extremely high in international surveys on different aspects of ICT and society.