

State presence on the Web

Belarusians advised on best way of forming 'electronic government'

By Alexander Benkovsky

When you hear the phrase 'electronic government' do you imagine a group of civil servants connected by cables to computers? Of course, it simply means a new way of organising government activity using information and communication technologies. Many countries around the world have taken this path, providing a new level of service to citizens and organisations.

A delegation from the Republic of Korea recently visited Belarus to share its experience with Belarusian colleagues in this sphere. Comprising representatives from Samsung SDS, the Korean National Information Society Agency (NIA) and the Korea Information Certificate Authority (KICA), the group had a great deal of useful information to impart. After all, South Korea is one of the most technically developed countries in the world, leading in the ICT sphere. In 2010 and 2012, it occupied first place in the UN index for 'electronic government'.

The Vice-President of the Consulting Department of Samsung SDS, Lim

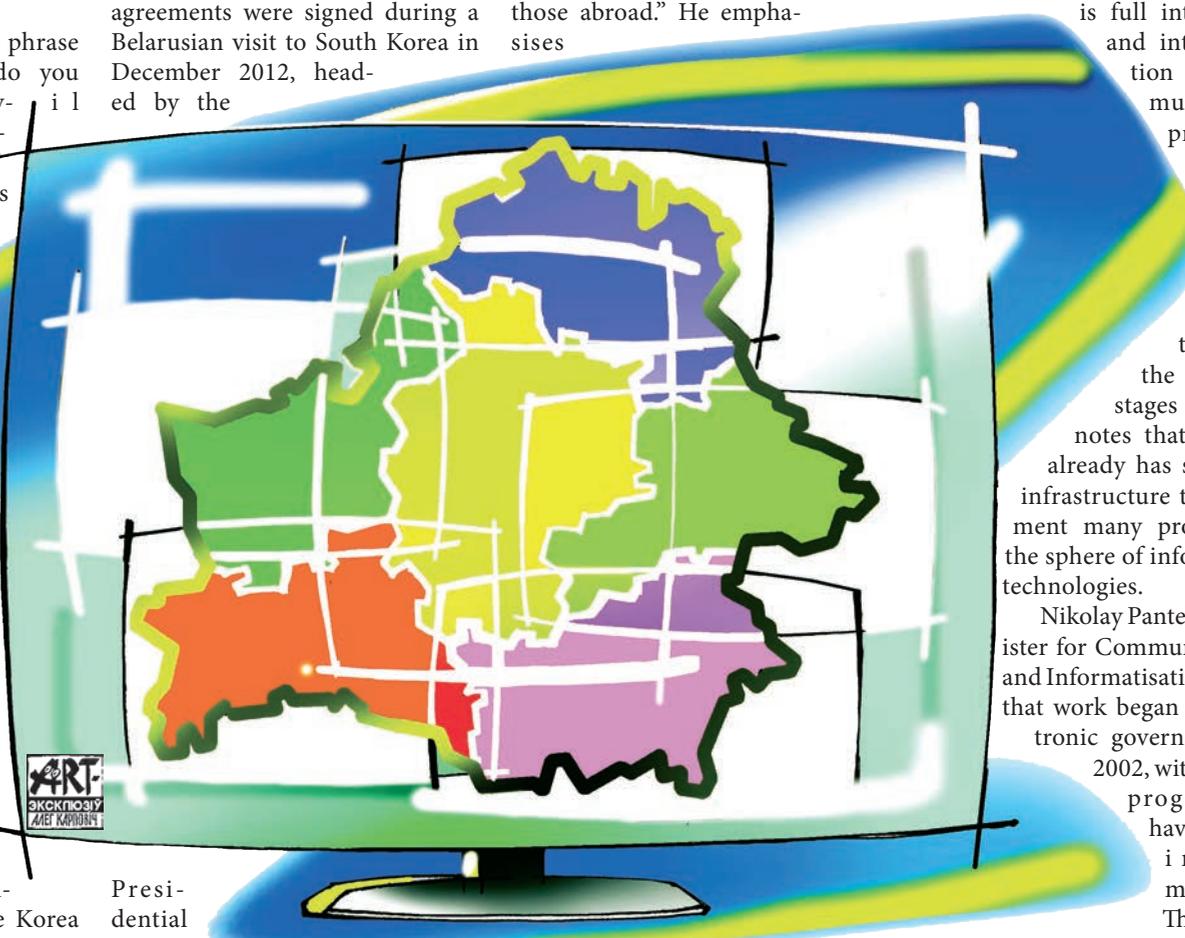
Chung Song, noted that several agreements were signed during a Belarusian visit to South Korea in December 2012, headed by the

happy to share our experience with those abroad." He emphasises

e-commerce; and the final stage is full integration and intensification of communication processes.

Korea is currently completing the third and the fourth stages and notes that Belarus already has sufficient infrastructure to implement many projects in the sphere of information technologies.

Nikolay Panteley, Minister for Communications and Informatisation, notes that work began on 'electronic government' in 2002, with several programmes having been implemented. The current National Programme of Accelerated Development of Services in the Sphere of Information and Communication Technologies for 2011-2015 mentions 'electronic government' in a separate clause. All state organisations' information systems are to be united under an 'electronic government', placing Belarus among the top 30 countries for access to electronic services.



Presidential Aide Vsevolod

Yanchevsky. He added, "We intend to conduct a preliminary study of 'electronic government' in Belarus, looking at what you have achieved so far, your current situation and the best way forward in various directions. We'll help you to deliver a number of recommendations. We share an interest in the sphere of 'electronic government', and are

that 'electronic government' gives citizens better and more convenient access to services through the Internet.

According to the Korean delegation, the traditional model of 'electronic government' progresses through four stages: the first sees the construction of networks; this is followed by wider infrastructure; the third stage introduces

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Comfortable accommodation for all pockets

About a thousand additional staff to be taken on by hotels for IIHF World Championship next year

During the championship, being held in the Belarusian capital, 12 student dormitories are to welcome guests and participants of the competitions. However, additional administrative and service personnel is needed to ensure these work as budget hotels offering accommodation for even modest pockets. It's planned to form student brigades, which will comprise of around a thousand people, and administration of hostels will be also involved.

In all, 22 operating hotels, alongside those launching by the end of this year, will welcome fans and teams participating in the championship, coaches, journalists and judges. New facilities include a second extension to the Victoria Hotel, buildings housing the National Olympic Committee and two hotels in the historical centre of Minsk.

About 40 projects are being implemented in the capital of Belarus relating to hotel construction, doubling the city's accommodation capacity. The Department of Consumer and Hotel Services of Minsk City Executive Committee is looking forward to significant tourism growth. To attract tourists to the Belarusian capital, a simplified visa regime is being offered for the major sporting tournament.

Virtual experiment takes into account applicants' preferences

Most state universities to accept virtual applications for 2013 admission

The Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio Electronics is developing an automated electronic system to receive applications for various specialties, and with various faculties.

"This year's school graduates will be offered the chance to name five specialties on their application form, in order of preference," notes the Pro-rector for Academic Affairs and Informatisation at the BSUIR, Boris Nikulshin. "There will be two stages: first, for central television production speciality; and, then, technico-technological and economic specialties." Last year, seven higher education institutions participated and, this year, most state universities will take part.

"We want to compare the preferences of applicants, to see which courses are most popular, before they receive their examination grades. We may allow submission of applications at the same time as Centralised Testing to see how far students are applying for particular institutions or courses as 'safe bets' rather than applying for their true heart's desire," explains the Pro-rector of the BSUIR.

Complete 'discharge' is beneficial and efficient

Old accumulator batteries are dangerous waste but can provide valuable raw materials

By Mikhail Serafimov

Ten years ago, you'd often see old car batteries discarded at the side of the road, their leaked fluid scorching the grass. Naturally, this posed a threat not only to the environment but to children, who might find the batteries and take them apart. However, in 2009, Beltsvetmet — the largest enterprise involved in storage of non-ferrous metals — launched its reclamation of lead-acid from electrolyte batteries.

Accumulator batteries contain a large amount of toxic lead, which destroys bone structure if absorbed by the body. Meanwhile, car batteries also contain electrolytes, held in a solution of sulphuric acid, which is also rather dangerous.

Beltsvetmet pays 80,000 to 100,000 Belarusian Roubles (based on weight) to those donating old batteries to its site in the village of Gatovo near Minsk. The hangar smells sour with elec-

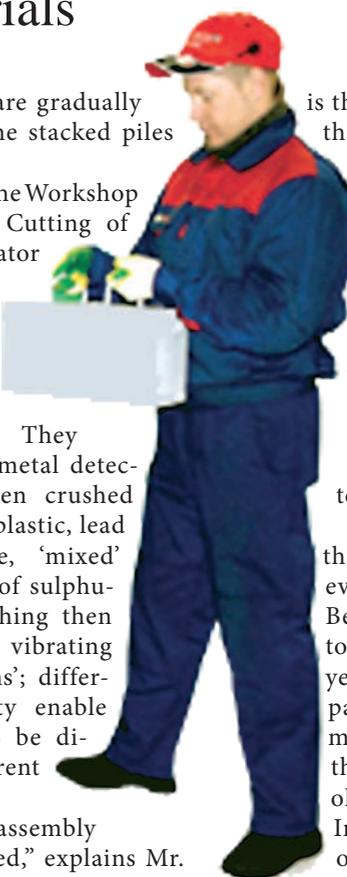
trolytes, which are gradually released from the stacked piles of batteries.

The Head of the Workshop for Mechanical Cutting of Used Accumulator Batteries, Genady Varenik, shows us batteries being placed on a conveyor belt. They pass through a metal detector and are then crushed into a 'brick' of plastic, lead and lead paste, 'mixed' with a solution of sulphuric acid. Everything then passes through vibrating sieves and 'baths'; differences in density enable the elements to be divided into different

"Battery disassembly is fully automated," explains Mr. Varenik. "Lead and paste containing this metal are recycled, as

is the plastic — although this is quite tricky, because of the toxic electrolyte." The acid is processed via a cleaning cycle, distillation and adding of reagents; the electrolyte then turns into ordinary water, which re-enters the processing chain for cutting batteries.

Beltsvetmet has the capacity to recycle every car battery in Belarus: up to 12,000 tonnes annually. It's not yet working at full capacity but hopes to see more drivers making the effort to deliver old batteries in future. In doing so, we'll not only benefit ourselves but the wider environment.



Tourists influence income

World Travel and Tourism Council publishes list of countries with most dynamically developing tourist sector (2012 results) based on pace of growth of tourism as share of GDP: Belarus occupies sixth place

Last year, Belarus increased its share of global tourist revenue, seeing growth of almost 40 percent on its 2012 figures: a record \$960m, comprising over 2 percent of GDP. The tourist services market rose by 11 percent last year. Council experts note that visitors from Russia account for the majority of those coming to Belarus, staying at local spas and often coming just for the weekend. Unlike Russia, Belarus has no ban on gambling, which attracts Russians and guests from other regions. In recent times, tourists have also shown much interest in staying in rural retreats. Qatar, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan top the list of states enjoying the most dynamically developing tourist industries.