

Vehicle Registration Renewal iPad Kiosks Dramatically Reduce Wait Times at Arkansas Revenue Offices

Category:	Digital Government: Government to Citizen
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Project Initiation Date:	May 2014
Project Completion Date:	July 2014 with ongoing enhancements

Executive Summary

Since 2008, Arkansas has had an online vehicle registration renewal system called ARStar (Arkansas Streamline Auto Renewal) that enables citizens to renew from mobile devices and get their tags delivered in the mail. However, the largest percentage of renewals are still done in-person (71% in 2015) at revenue offices often resulting in long lines and stress for citizens and state employees alike.

In July 2014, the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) piloted an ARStar kiosk solution that enabled customers in the main revenue office to renew their vehicle registration at one of four self-service iPad kiosks. Using the familiar iPads, drivers can complete their renewal and walk out the door with new tags in less than four minutes, shaving up to 30 minutes or more off their wait time.

The pilot program was launched in less than two months and exceeded adoption expectations with 45% of all in-office renewal transactions taking place on the kiosks in the first month of use. Due to the success of the pilot, DFA installed 21 new kiosks in 10 additional revenue offices in 2015, for a total of 33 kiosks in 14 locations. As of April 2016, More than 84,500 citizens have used the kiosks with a 50% adoption rate. This means revenue office agents are seeing about half of their traffic diverted, and half the citizens who would be standing in line are being helped in minutes through the self-service kiosks.

Concept

The ARStar kiosks were implemented quickly to solve a customer service problem – many Arkansas motorists were unhappy with the wait times in excess of 30 minutes at revenue office locations and wanted a faster way to renew their vehicle registration in person.

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration has had an online vehicle registration renewal system, called ARStar, since 2008 that has been updated for improved mobile accessibility and usability.

Instead of purchasing expensive industrial kiosks and developing new software to run on them, DFA and eGovernment partner Information Network of Arkansas (INA) strategically optimized ARStar for tablet display, added an integrated credit card swipe to the devices and mounted the hardened devices to revenue office service counters. A designated DFA support person monitors the kiosks, helps users and provides the printed license plate tags.

Now drivers can bypass the lengthy lines, renew their vehicle registration and leave happily with new license plate tags in less than four minutes.

The iPad kiosk solution includes many innovations that streamline the tag renewal experience:

- **iPad Optimized Design:** INA optimized the ARStar user interface for iPad display by including large buttons and an integrated credit card swipe to minimize data entry and enable quick use while standing.
- **Integrated Card Swipe:** Instead of entering their credit card information manually, users can simply swipe their card on an integrated credit card reader, which then populates the user's information into the payment fields for verification. This reduces manual entry and significantly speeds up the checkout process. If the card swipe fails to read a card, users have the option of manually entering information.
- **Hardened Kiosk Shell:** The iPad, its buttons and power cords are securely fastened inside a rugged, hardened kiosk shell, which is mounted to countertops to withstand repeated use.
- **Property Tax Assessment & Payment Notifications:** In order to renew at an ARStar kiosk, motorists are first required to assess their property,

pay property taxes and have current liability car insurance. DFA tracks these requirements for each user. An error screen alerts users when they have not completed any of the renewal requirements and prevents them from completing the online renewal. DFA updated the error screen on the iPad kiosk by including an option for users to receive emailed instructions for assessing and/or paying property taxes in their county, and to receive an email notification when their assessment and/or property tax payment has cleared. This will enable the completion of renewing their tags online. Users will receive a link in their final email that will take them back to ARStar to complete their renewal transaction right where they left off, without having to re-enter vehicle information. This allows an ineligible user who began the car tag renewal process at the kiosk to quickly finish it on their mobile device after assessing and paying their property taxes.

Significance

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration is one of the first, if not the first, motor vehicle agencies in the nation to use iPad kiosks. This innovative approach to kiosks--using a device citizens are familiar with and comfortable using--has transformed the way DFA interacts with its customers, especially in the context of a DMV visit. Feedback gathered from users clearly shows that people love the kiosks and the efficiency they bring:

- “WOW...This just made my day. I thought I was going to be here a while...WOW, this is awesome!”
- “Cool...that’s easy! Wow, and no line!”
- “That was quick!”

Additionally, the kiosk software has a key enhancement that helps motorists meet their vehicle renewal eligibility requirements (property must be assessed, property taxes must be paid) by prompting users who have not yet completed one of these requirements to:

1. Assess and/or pay property taxes. The error message displays helpful links for assessing and paying property taxes online in their county, and contact information for their county assessor and/or collector.
2. Receive an email notice once their assessment and property tax payment cleared and they are eligible to renew
3. Receive reminders for assessment and property taxes next year

This small enhancement is significant because it bridges the gap between the services of three government agencies (DFA, county assessors and county collectors) at different levels of government, and simplifies a cumbersome and complex process for citizens through a mobile delivery channel. It’s also an innovative, one-stop way to help the 40% of motorists who have not completed their property assessment or paid property taxes during their vehicle registration renewal period.

Since launching the ARStar iPad kiosks, DFA’s customer service level has dramatically improved by creating a better experience and higher satisfaction for motorists who renew their vehicle registration in person.

Impact

The implementation and use of the ARStar kiosks has far-reaching benefits that make state government work better and ultimately improve the lives of citizens.

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration benefits by being able to provide a better DMV experience for customers. Kiosks effectively shorten the lines by diverting traffic, which enables DFA staff to provide better service for each customer they help.

Drivers benefit by shaving up to 30 minutes or more off their revenue office visit. Self-service kiosks enable drivers to renew their vehicle registration and leave with new car tags in just four minutes. Even customers who don't use the kiosks benefit from them because the in-person payment lines are shorter as a result.

The system was developed in partnership with the Information Network of Arkansas (INA), a state government-created public/private partnership responsible for the development and promotion of enterprise e-government in Arkansas, at no upfront cost to government.