Optimizing E-Government for Alabama's Small Businesses: A Framework for Usability, Accessibility, and Service Delivery Excellence

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Abstract

The implementation and optimization of e-Government services are crucial for enhancing the operational environment for small businesses in Alabama. E-Government services offer numerous benefits, including enhanced accessibility, improved efficiency, economic empowerment, transparency, compliance, future readiness, and improved revenue collection. This paper aims to address the specific needs of diverse business types and industries that previous research often overlooks. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study includes a quantitative analysis of existing e-Government tools, a qualitative interview with a small business owner, and a case study of San Francisco's business portal. The findings reveal significant challenges in Alabama's e-Government services, such as complex licensing processes, the need for streamlined tax submissions, and the lack of specialized functionalities. Key recommendations include integrating AI technologies, developing one-stop e-Government portals, enhancing interoperability, focusing on user-centered design, and regularly soliciting feedback to ensure continuous improvement and relevance. These improvements aim to drive economic growth, foster innovation, and ensure long-term sustainability for small businesses in Alabama.

Introduction

Implementing e-Government services is a crucial step towards enhancing the operational environment for small businesses in Alabama. E-Government, defined as the use of digital tools and systems to deliver governmental services, has the potential to transform public administration by making it more efficient, transparent, and accessible (Alvarez & Hall, 2008).

These services are invaluable for small businesses in streamlining licensing, tax submissions, and regulatory compliance.

The numerous benefits of e-Government highlight its importance. Enhanced accessibility allows small businesses to interact with government services without needing physical presence, which is particularly beneficial in a state with diverse geographic regions like Alabama. Improved efficiency, driven by digital processes, reduces the bureaucratic burden on businesses, allowing them to focus more on growth and innovation. Furthermore, economic empowerment is facilitated by creating a more supportive business environment, which encourages investment and entrepreneurial activities.

Transparency and compliance are also significantly improved through e-Government platforms, as they provide clear and accessible regulatory information, thereby fostering a more compliant business environment. Future readiness is ensured by integrating advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and smart city innovations, which prepare businesses to meet evolving challenges and opportunities. Moreover, effective e-Government services enhance revenue collection and budget management for state and local governments, ensuring a stable financial environment for businesses.

This study aims to evaluate the current state of e-Government services for small businesses in Alabama, identify existing challenges, and propose actionable improvements. By employing a mixed-methods approach, this research integrates quantitative analysis of current e-Government tools, qualitative insights from a small business owner's experience, and best practices from San Francisco's e-Government portal. The goal is to provide a comprehensive framework that can help Alabama optimize its e-Government services, ultimately driving

economic growth, fostering innovation, and ensuring long-term sustainability for the state's small business community.

Literature Review

Implementing e-Government services is fundamental for enhancing the operational environment for small businesses in Alabama. The benefits of e-Government include enhanced accessibility, improved efficiency, economic empowerment, transparency and compliance, future readiness, and revenue collection and budgeting. By integrating advanced technologies and streamlined processes, e-Government can significantly improve the support infrastructure for small businesses, driving growth and sustainability.

E-Government platforms are essential for providing small businesses with direct access to crucial services such as licensing, tax submissions, and regulatory compliance. Vrabie (2023) discusses the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in making these services more accessible. By integrating AI, e-Government services can streamline traditionally complex processes, reducing the time and effort required for small businesses to navigate regulatory requirements. This enhanced accessibility is critical for ensuring that small businesses can operate efficiently within regulatory frameworks (Vrabie, 2023).

Digital government services also offer significant efficiency gains by reducing the bureaucratic burden on small businesses. Sedek, Omar, and Sulaiman (2014) emphasize the importance of integrated and interoperable e-Government solutions, which enable seamless communication and data exchange between government entities. This integration leads to more efficient processes, allowing small businesses to interact with various government departments more effectively and with less redundancy. Moreover, adaptive e-Government architectures

provide scalable solutions that can evolve with the changing needs of small businesses, ensuring long-term efficiency and relevance (Sedek et al., 2014; Wang, Gan, & Ju, 2009).

One of the key advantages of e-Government platforms is the increased transparency they bring to governmental processes. Enhanced transparency makes it easier for businesses to comply with regulations, as they can easily access and understand regulatory requirements at all levels. Mitrovic and Bytheway (2017) highlight the importance of awareness and engagement strategies to ensure small businesses can fully utilize e-Government services, fostering a more compliant business environment. Enhanced transparency through centralized e-Government services can significantly aid compliance by simplifying tax submissions and providing clear guidance on regulatory matters (Mitrovic & Bytheway, 2017). Additionally, secure and transparent e-Government systems are essential for building trust and ensuring reliable service delivery (Alvarez & Hall, 2008). Alvarez and Hall (2008) further explain the necessity of robust security measures to protect sensitive business data, which are crucial components for maintaining the integrity and reliability of e-Government services.

E-Government services are also critical in fostering a favorable business environment that encourages investment and economic growth. Garcia and Hinayon (2018) highlight how improved government service delivery can attract foreign direct investment by creating a more predictable and transparent business climate. For Alabama, optimizing e-Government services can stimulate economic growth by making the state more attractive to investors, newcomers, and entrepreneurs, empowering small businesses economically, and promoting economic development. This economic empowerment is further supported by the insights of Panteleev (2023), who discusses the critical role of digital infrastructure in driving economic and

competitive growth. By enhancing digital support for small businesses, regions can foster a more robust and innovative business environment (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018; Panteleev, 2023).

Effective e-Government services can also enhance state and local government revenue collection and budget management. Mehr (2017) points out how AI can be leveraged to improve public services, including revenue collection. By automating routine tasks and providing data-driven insights, AI can help governments optimize revenue collection processes, ensuring that small businesses are accurately taxed and revenue streams are efficiently managed. Features that allow access to information around the clock and in simple language, such as chatbots and searchable knowledge bases, can make the process more user-friendly. This improved revenue collection efficiency benefits the government and creates a more predictable and stable financial environment for small businesses by becoming less intimidating and more accessible for small business operators of different education levels (Mehr, 2017).

Implementing advanced technologies like AI and smart city innovations prepares small businesses for future challenges and opportunities. Thakhathi and Langa (2022) argue that smart city technologies can significantly enhance governance and service delivery, providing a model for future e-Government developments. By integrating these technologies, regions can ensure that their e-Government services remain relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of small businesses, positioning them for future success (Thakhathi & Langa, 2022). Alvarez and Hall (2008) emphasize the importance of continually updating and securing these technologies to maintain their efficacy and trustworthiness.

Considering the discussed facts, the implementation of e-Government services for small businesses holds significant promise for enhancing the operational landscape for the entrepreneurial ecosystem. By focusing on enhanced accessibility, improved efficiency,

economic empowerment, transparency and compliance, future readiness, and optimized revenue collection and budgeting, regions can create a more supportive and efficient environment for small businesses. Integrating advanced technologies and best practices in e-Government can drive economic growth, foster innovation, and ensure long-term sustainability for the small business community.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to evaluate the effectiveness of e-Government tools for small businesses in Alabama. The methodology includes analyzing existing e-Government tools, interviewing a small business owner, and performing a case study of San Francisco's business portal. This multi-faceted approach aims to comprehensively understand the current state of e-Government services, user experiences, and potential improvements.

Quantitative Research: Analysis of Existing E-Government Tools

The primary research question guiding the quantitative aspect of this study is: How effective are the current e-Government tools in Alabama at meeting the needs of small businesses? To answer this, the study reviewed official documents, websites, and online resources related to Alabama's e-Government services for small businesses. Key tools analyzed include the My Alabama Taxes platform and other online licensing and regulatory compliance resources. The functionality and usability of these tools were systematically evaluated, focusing on aspects such as accessibility, ease of use, comprehensiveness, and user support features.

For data analysis, a comparative approach was used. The performance of Alabama's e-Government tools was benchmarked against best practices and standards in e-Government services. This comparison involved identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. The

quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the findings
and highlight key trends.

Qualitative Research: Interview with a Small Business Owner

The qualitative aspect of this study explores the experiences and challenges faced by
small business owners in Alabama when using e-Government services. A semi-structured
interview was conducted with a small business owner who operates a food truck and sells in
multiple counties across Alabama. The interview included open-ended questions to allow for in-
depth exploration of specific issues while providing the flexibility to address additional topics as
they arose.

The interview questions focused on:

1. Experiences with filing sales tax through the My Alabama Taxes portal.

2. Challenges faced in obtaining business licenses across different counties.

3. Understanding and complying with regulatory requirements when moving from Florida
   to Alabama.

4. Suggestions for improving Alabama's e-Government services.

The interview was transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes
and patterns related to the user experience with Alabama's e-Government services. Themes such
as convenience, challenges with licensing, and suggestions for improvement were highlighted.

Case Study: San Francisco's Business Portal

To identify best practices that could be applied to improve Alabama's e-Government
services, a case study of San Francisco's business portal was conducted. The research question
guiding this case study is: What best practices from San Francisco's business portal can be
applied to improve Alabama's e-Government services for small businesses?

Data collection involved reviewing official documents, user guides, and website features from San Francisco's business portal. The user experience was assessed by examining the portal's accessibility, ease of use, and comprehensiveness of services provided. The study identified effective features and practices from San Francisco's portal, such as the integration of personalized guides, a centralized system for all business-related forms and permits, and a user-friendly interface.

Based on the insights gained, recommendations were developed for implementing similar features in Alabama. The strategy focused on integrating personalized guides, creating a unified portal, and adopting a user-centered design to improve accessibility and usability.

Discussion

Analyzing Alabama's current e-Government services for small businesses revealed several challenges and needs. The primary issues identified include the complexity and inefficiency of obtaining business licenses across different counties, the confusion surrounding the initial process of filing sales tax due to the lack of comprehensive guidance, and the absence of specific functionalities tailored to diverse business needs. For instance, consider a restaurant owner who operates a brick-and-mortar restaurant in Enterprise, Coffee County, and also runs a food truck that participates in three events across different municipalities each month. This owner faces a complex web of sales tax filings and regulatory requirements. Each month, they must file sales taxes for Coffee County and Enterprise, in addition to each county and municipality visited by the food truck. If the food truck visits Troy, Auburn, and Montgomery, the owner needs to file separate sales tax returns for each of these locations. This results in six different filings: one for each county and one for each municipality. Moreover, the owner must comply with health inspection and business license requirements for each jurisdiction.

Additionally, if any of these locations are in non-state administered areas, the process becomes even more complicated. The owner would need to contact the local tax administrator and create an account with them, even if the business only operates in that location once. This lack of streamlined processes and comprehensive guidance makes the system particularly burdensome for small business owners who operate in multiple jurisdictions. Creating an uninviting environment for the emergence of new business models and the creation of small business in our communities.

These challenges are exacerbated by the fragmented nature of existing e-Government tools, which require small business owners to navigate multiple platforms and agencies to access necessary services. Additionally, there is a significant need for improved access to business-related information and enhanced user-friendliness of the platforms. These insights, combined with best practices identified from the San Francisco case study and feedback from interviewed small business owners, form the basis for discussing key improvement areas.

One of the primary challenges identified is the need for streamlined licensing and more comprehensive information on tax submissions. Small businesses often face significant difficulties due to the requirement to obtain business licenses in person across different counties, which is both time-consuming and inefficient (M. Sanchez, personal communication, March 15, 2024). Additionally, the initial process of filing sales tax can be confusing due to the lack of a comprehensive guide that educates the user, making compliance easier rather than a time or financial burden (Sedek, Omar, & Sulaiman, 2014).

The proactive implementation of advanced technologies can significantly improve e-Government services, addressing current challenges and creating a positive impact. Establishing

a centralized system where small business owners can apply for and renew licenses online would greatly reduce the time and effort required for compliance. Additionally, features like smart videos can provide user-friendly, step-by-step guides for tax submissions. However, chatbots and smart filing assistants remain underutilized and should be developed further to assist business owners in navigating the tax filing process more efficiently (Vrabie, 2023).

Potential improvements include integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, developing one-stop e-Government portals, enhancing interoperability across platforms, focusing on user-centered design, and regularly soliciting feedback and updates. Integrating AI technologies can greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of e-Government services by automating routine tasks, providing personalized support, and analyzing large volumes of data to identify trends and make informed decisions (Mehr, 2017). For instance, AI-driven chatbots can assist small business owners with common queries and guide them through complex processes, improving the overall user experience (Vrabie, 2023).

User-friendliness is essential in implementing e-Government services to prevent widening the access gap. Simplifying the user interface, using clear and straightforward language, and incorporating interactive help features can significantly enhance the user experience (Sedek, Omar, & Sulaiman, 2014). Ensuring that platforms are intuitive and easy to use can increase adoption rates and satisfaction among small business owners (Thakhathi & Langa, 2022). Focusing on user-centered design is crucial for creating e-Government services that effectively meet the needs of small business owners. This involves designing interfaces that are intuitive, easy to navigate, and accessible to users with varying levels of digital literacy. Regular user testing and feedback can help identify pain points and areas for improvement, ensuring the services are user-friendly and effective (Panteleev, 2023).

Another significant issue with current e-Government tools is the lack of specific functionalities tailored to diverse business needs. Different types of businesses have unique regulatory and operational requirements, making a one-size-fits-all approach often inadequate. By integrating more personalized and specialized functionalities, Alabama's e-Government services can better support various business types and industries in an evolving ecosystem where new business models constantly emerge (Thakhathi & Langa, 2022). This includes providing tailored information and resources that address the specific needs of different industries, such as specific permits and operational requirements (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018).

Integration of services is another critical area for improvement. Existing e-Government tools are often fragmented, requiring small business owners to navigate multiple platforms and agencies to access necessary services (Mitrovic & Bytheway, 2017). A unified portal that consolidates all business-related services and resources would significantly enhance user experience and efficiency. Such integration would allow seamless communication between different government entities, reducing redundancy and improving overall service delivery (Wang, Gan, & Ju, 2009). Additionally, secure and transparent e-Government systems are essential to building trust and ensuring reliable service delivery (Alvarez & Hall, 2008).

Access to business-related information needs significant improvement. Small business owners need a centralized and easily accessible repository of information that includes regulatory requirements, compliance guidelines, and available resources (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018). This should include state, county, and municipality levels, as well as special licenses and permits regulated by specific boards and organizations. Improved access to information can help business owners make informed decisions and stay compliant with state and local regulations.

Creating an online knowledge base or resource center that is regularly updated and easy to navigate would be highly beneficial (Panteleev, 2023).

All these challenges can be addressed through effective e-Governance. Developing a one-stop portal that consolidates all services and information for small businesses would simplify access and improve efficiency (Wang, Gan, & Ju, 2009). Such a portal would provide a single point of entry for business registration, licensing, tax submissions, and other regulatory requirements. This integration would streamline processes, reduce redundancy, and save time for small business owners (Sedek, Omar, & Sulaiman, 2014).

Enhancing interoperability across different e-Government platforms ensures that data can be seamlessly shared and accessed between various government departments and agencies. This interoperability reduces duplication of efforts, minimizes errors, and improves the coordination of services (Thakhathi & Langa, 2022). By creating a cohesive digital ecosystem, Alabama can provide more efficient and reliable e-Government services (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018).

Regularly soliciting feedback from users and making iterative updates to e-Government services can help maintain their relevance and effectiveness. Engaging with small business owners through surveys, focus groups, and user testing sessions provides valuable insights into their needs and experiences (Mitrovic & Bytheway, 2017). Based on this feedback, continuous improvements and updates can be made to enhance the functionality and usability of the services (Vrabie, 2023).

Considering that rural and smaller communities might not have access to the mentioned e-Governance infrastructure, state-supported initiatives for smaller communities are needed to ensure that these communities benefit from e-Government services. Often, smaller communities lack the resources and infrastructure to fully utilize digital government services. Targeted

initiatives, such as digital literacy programs, grants for technology adoption, and localized support centers, can help bridge this gap (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018). By supporting smaller communities, Alabama can ensure that all small businesses, regardless of location, have equal access to the benefits of e-Government services (Mitrovic & Bytheway, 2017).

Addressing these challenges and implementing potential improvements is essential for optimizing Alabama's e-Government services for small businesses. By learning from successful models like San Francisco's business portal and incorporating feedback from local business owners, Alabama can develop a more efficient, user-friendly, and comprehensive e-Government system. This will not only enhance the operational environment for small businesses but also drive economic growth and innovation across the state.

Conclusion and Future Study

The implementation of e-Government services for small businesses holds significant promise for enhancing the operational landscape for Alabama's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Addressing the identified challenges and leveraging advanced technologies can create a more efficient, accessible, and supportive environment for small businesses. Key challenges include the complexity of obtaining business licenses across different counties, the confusion surrounding the initial process of filing sales tax, and the lack of specific functionalities tailored to diverse business needs. The fragmented nature of existing e-Government tools exacerbates these issues, making it difficult for small business owners to navigate multiple platforms and agencies to access necessary services. Additionally, there is a pressing need for improved access to business-related information and enhanced user-friendliness of the platforms.

To address these challenges, Alabama can integrate advanced technologies such as AI to automate routine tasks, provide personalized support, and analyze large volumes of data to

identify trends and make informed decisions. AI-driven chatbots can assist small business owners with common queries and guide them through complex processes, improving the overall user experience. Developing a one-stop e-Government portal where small business owners can apply for and renew licenses, access regulatory information, and submit tax filings online would significantly reduce the time and effort required for compliance. Enhancing interoperability across platforms ensures seamless communication and data exchange between different government departments and agencies, reducing redundancy, minimizing errors, and improving service coordination.

Focusing on user-centered design is crucial for creating e-Government services that effectively meet the needs of small business owners. Simplifying the user interface, using clear and straightforward language, and incorporating interactive help features can enhance the user experience. Regular user testing and feedback can help identify pain points and areas for improvement, ensuring the services are user-friendly and effective. Additionally, developing a centralized, easily accessible repository of information that includes regulatory requirements, compliance guidelines, and available resources can help business owners make informed decisions and stay compliant with state and local regulations.

State-supported initiatives such as digital literacy programs, grants for technology adoption, and localized support centers are needed to ensure that rural and smaller communities benefit from e-Government services. This will help bridge the digital divide and ensure equal access to e-Government benefits for all small businesses. By learning from successful models like San Francisco's business portal and incorporating feedback from local business owners, Alabama can develop a more efficient, user-friendly, and comprehensive e-Government system.

This will not only enhance the operational environment for small businesses but also drive economic growth and innovation across the state.

Future Study

Future studies should focus on developing a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness of e-Government services. This framework should encompass several key areas, including enhanced business start-up and growth, improved government efficiency, increased compliance and transparency, economic diversification, boosted local innovation and competitiveness, and enhanced accessibility and inclusivity (Sedek, Omar, & Sulaiman, 2014; Thakhathi & Langa, 2022).

Evaluating enhanced business start-up and growth involves examining metrics such as the number of new business registrations, the time taken to complete registration and licensing processes, the growth rate of small businesses over time, and user satisfaction with the ease of starting a business using e-Government services (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018). These indicators will help determine how effectively the e-Government platform facilitates business formation and development, providing valuable insights into its impact on small business growth.

Improved government efficiency is another critical area of evaluation. This can be measured by the reduction in processing time for licenses, permits, and other regulatory requirements, as well as the decrease in administrative costs due to digitization. Additionally, the efficiency of inter-departmental communication and data sharing, along with the frequency of system downtimes or technical issues, are important metrics. These measures reflect how well the e-Government system streamlines governmental processes and reduces bureaucratic burdens, ultimately enhancing the operational efficiency of public administration (Sedek et al., 2014).

Increased compliance and transparency are vital for fostering a trustworthy business environment. Future research should focus on metrics such as compliance rates with tax and regulatory requirements among small businesses, user satisfaction with the transparency of information provided, and the availability and clarity of compliance guidelines and regulatory information. The number of audits or compliance checks completed successfully can also serve as an indicator of the effectiveness of e-Government services in promoting adherence to regulations, thereby ensuring a more transparent and compliant business landscape (Mitrovic & Bytheway, 2017).

Economic diversification is another important outcome of effective e-Government services. This can be assessed by examining the variety of business types registered and supported through the e-Government platform, the increase in sectors represented among new business registrations, and the economic impact of new businesses on local communities. These metrics help gauge the role of e-Government in fostering a diverse and resilient economy, supporting a broad range of industries, and promoting economic stability (Garcia & Hinayon, 2018).

Boosted local innovation and competitiveness can be measured by the number of innovative businesses and startups using e-Government services, user satisfaction with resources and support for innovation provided by the platform, and the increase in competitive grants or funding opportunities accessed through e-Government services. Additionally, the extent of collaboration between local businesses and technology providers facilitated by e-Government platforms indicates how well these services support innovation and competitiveness, contributing to a vibrant and dynamic business environment (Panteleev, 2023).

Finally, enhanced accessibility and inclusivity are essential for ensuring that all small businesses benefit from e-Government services. Future studies should focus on metrics such as the implementation and usage rates of accessibility features, user satisfaction across different demographics, and the inclusivity of services offered to minority-owned and women-owned businesses. The number of languages supported and the quality of translation services are also important indicators. These measures ensure that e-Government services are accessible to a wide range of users, promoting equity and inclusivity (Alvarez & Hall, 2008).

By incorporating these elements into a comprehensive evaluation framework, future studies can provide a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of e-Government services in Alabama. This framework aims to ensure that e-Government platforms not only streamline administrative processes but also support the diverse needs of small businesses, fostering a more dynamic and inclusive business environment. Such studies can offer actionable insights to further enhance the operational landscape for small businesses in Alabama, driving economic growth and innovation across the state (Vrabie, 2023).

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Appendix A: Interview with Small Business Owner

Interview Transcript

Date: March 15, 2024

Location: Birmingham, Alabama

Interviewee: Marcial Sanchez, Owner of Taco Mich

Interviewer: Juliana Bolivar, Researcher

Introduction

Juliana Bolivar (JB): Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today, Marcial. I appreciate your willingness to share your experiences with Alabama's e-Government services. Can you start by telling me a bit about your business?

Marcial Sanchez (MS): Of course, Juliana! Taco Mich is my pride and joy. We're a food truck selling authentic Mexican street food, and we travel all over Alabama. We've been doing this for about three years now, and it's been quite a ride. I love bringing a taste of Mexico to people all over the state. We have a pretty loyal following now, which is fantastic.

Experiences with Filing Sales Tax

JB: Great. Can you describe your experiences with filing sales tax through the My Alabama Taxes portal?

MS: Oh lord, when I first started, it was a nightmare! The terms were so confusing, and there wasn't any guide to help out. I remember spending hours trying to figure out what everything meant. I felt like I was back in school, and not in a good way. But once I figured it out, it got a bit easier. I do like that I can file for all the counties we sell in through one portal. That part's pretty cool and saves me a lot of time. Still, it would have been nice to have some kind of tutorial or step-by-step guide to walk me through it the

first time. Maybe even some videos or something using the internet. That would have helped a lot.

Challenges with Licensing

JB: What challenges have you faced in obtaining business licenses across different counties?

MS: This part drives me crazy! Every time we go to a new county, I have to go to their city hall in person to get a business license. It takes so much time, and it's such a hassle. I remember one time, I had to drive two hours just to get a license for a weekend event. It's really tough, especially when I'm trying to run a business and keep things moving smoothly. Each county has different rules, and keeping up with them is a pain. If there was a way to do all this online, it would make life so much easier. Imagine if I could just log into a website, fill out some forms, and be done with it. That would save me so much time and stress. And I wouldn't have to keep track of all these different pieces of paper and deadlines.

Understanding and Complying with Regulatory Requirements

JB: How did you find the process of understanding and complying with regulatory requirements when you moved from Florida to Alabama?

MS: Moving here was tough. In Florida, there was this great map that showed everything you needed to do, step by step. But in Alabama, I couldn't find anything like that. I had to search all over the place to find the information I needed. It was really frustrating and took a lot of time to piece everything together. I remember thinking, "There has to be an easier way!" I'd call different offices, and sometimes they'd give me different answers. It would be amazing if Alabama had a centralized guide, maybe something online that lays everything out clearly. Like, "Here's what you need to do first, here's where to go next."

And if it used new technology, like some kind of interactive tool or app, that would be even better. Something that helps you keep track of what you've done and what you still need to do.

Suggestions for Improvement

JB: Based on your experiences, what improvements would you suggest for Alabama's e-Government services?

MS: First off, they need a centralized online system for all the business licenses. That would save so much time and hassle. I mean, think about it – being able to get all your licenses from one place without having to drive all over the state. It would make a huge difference. Also, they should have a clear, easy-to-follow guide for filing sales tax and understanding all the regulations. Something that uses the internet and new technology, like step-by-step tutorials or videos. When I was starting out, I could have really used something like that. And more personalized support, like chatbots or help desks, would be great too. Sometimes, you just need to talk to someone who can help you figure things out. Anything that makes the process smoother and less confusing would be a big help. I've spent so many late nights trying to get everything right because there's no one to ask after hours. Imagine having a chatbot that could answer your questions anytime – that would be amazing!

Conclusion

JB: Thank you so much for your insights, Marcial. Your feedback is incredibly valuable and will contribute significantly to our research on improving e-Government services for small businesses in Alabama.

MS: You're welcome, Juliana! I'm glad I could help. I really hope these changes happen because it would make a big difference for small business owners like me. Running a business is hard enough without all these extra hassles. Anything that can make it easier is a win in my book.