

Technology

Figure 2: IT Architecture (Once, 1999)

OBC had to explore technologies related to the Internet, private networks, and main frame applications, as well as middleware applications. Indeed, most of the ministries programs use mainframe computers that could not be replaced. The workstations are administered through a private network, although it is planned to provide all transactions on the Internet. Middleware applications are necessary to exchange information between two ends: the programs and the clients or retailers. OBC's development efforts rest mostly on these applications. The integration capacity of service components in the infrastructure allows bringing the programs' business rules to OBC clearinghouse, making them more transparent and giving the opportunity to wholesalers and retailers to combine their service offers. This also renders the business community's service requests and other programs easier while facilitating interaction and transactions.

The two characteristics deemed most important are the isolation of the programs that change the speed of customer and delivery channels as well as the establishment of interconnection standards that allow direct access to the client, and the interoperability between jurisdictions, clients, and value-added services of the private sector.

Technology is not yet capable of supporting the type of exchange --security and transparency-- that OBC service vision requires, but a light and efficient development infrastructure has been put in place and seems able to deliver solutions that will lead to the achievement of OBC's mandate.