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**GOOGLE APPS AS E-COMMUNICATION TOOL IN LOCAL SELF-  
ADMINISTRATION**

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**Abstract:** The article presents an analysis of Google's cloud services, suggests the possibilities of their use at the level of local self-government in the region, in particular in the educational environment and the administration of other spheres of the population's life. Ways to solve specific problems using Google Apps are indicated.

**Key words:** cloud services, Google Apps, educational environment, communication.

One of the principles of the Strategy for the development of the information society in Ukraine is a policy of providing access to information and knowledge, which is firstly aimed at introducing the mechanism of available, simplified and free access to socially necessary information. The implementation of e-administration, the creation of e-government and the establishment of e-democracy provide for new forms of activity organization and interaction of public authorities with citizens and organizations [1].

The communicative potential of local self-administration in Ukraine and the use of communicative tools have been investigated by the Ukrainian scientists S.V. Shturkhetsky [3], V.O. Chmyga, O.M. Rudenko [4] and others. The use of E-

communications in the field of local self-administration is the subject of research by foreign scientists (O.S. Bykulov, G. Strohmeier etc.). However, the dynamic development of opportunities for Internet technologies in the field of mass communication and their widespread use by the participants of the communication process become agents for the search of new ideas regarding e-communication implementation at the level of local self-administration.

The objective of the article is to unleash the power and justify the motivation for the use of cloud services (Google Apps) as an effective and practical tool for e-communication in local self-administration.

**Statement of basic material.** The English term Cloud computing was first used in 1993 by Eric Schmidt (executive chairman of Alphabet Inc.) to designate services that remotely support various data and applications hosted on remote servers. Nowadays cloud technologies are data processing technologies available to many users over the Internet as online services (for example, software as a service). Most cloud services in a certain format and extent are free of charge when you sign up for a mail server account for a particular IT-company, with Google being the leader [5]. The popularity of Google cloud services is related to the variety and availability of the software suggested i.e. Google Apps (applications or services) associated with the creation, storage, information data transfer as well as various types of communications (e-mail, chat, video chat, live broadcasting, documents sharing (viewing, commenting, editing).

The integral component of the modern society involves virtual communities (e-communities), they are a new type of societies that come into service and function in the electronic environment to communicate, to solve their professional problems, political targets, to serve their own interests in arts, education, leisure, etc. These are real groups of people who use cloud services to share information.

Based on the above, the concept "e-communication" can be interpreted as the process of information exchange (data, facts, ideas, views, emotions, etc.) or communication between two or more persons using cloud services.

The process of e-communication in the virtual digital environment arises at the initiative and the needs of its participants and it is usually uncontrolled by the state authorities and other structures. From our point of view, the e-communication regulation at the local administration level by means of Google Apps is possible due to purposeful actions of the administration in order to promote the authorities activities, discuss and make joint resolutions, coverage of local news, etc. One of the most important and costly issues in this regard may be the provision of the Internet in rural areas, as well as the availability of communication facilities among the population (smartphones, computers, tablets, etc.). In addition, there are some problems with the ICT competency of Generation X and older citizens thus these difficulties will rapidly pass away with the development of the information society and IT.

Let's consider using *Google Apps* cloud services in local self-administration in a rural united territorial community depending on the purpose.

*G-mail server* provides group-level e-mailing and has a number of features: conversation view i.e. tracking the initial message with a chain of responses to it; 15 gigabytes of disk space for letters; autosave; developed contact list (photos, addresses and phones can be specified for each person); tabbed inbox instead of folders (e-mails are not stored in folders but divided into categories that the user can add and edit); search bar for searching emails and attachments by the contents; spam filtering; client applications for different operating systems that announce new inbox emails (Gmail Notifier, Google Toolbar and Google Talk); different languages support; built-in chat, etc [2].

*Google Drive* cloud storage allows users to store their data on servers in the cloud and share it with other users on the Internet. Google Drive includes Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides as well as office suite that permits collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, forms, and more.

Particularly valuable on Google Drive is the ability to create a rural community site through *Google Sites* app to cover and promote the work of residents, local news and ads, etc. Google Sites is a simplified free structured wiki- and Web page-creation tool

for anyone to create simple web sites, e-portfolio, e-tutorials, and more. By the aid of wiki technology it allows making information accessible to people who need it quickly. Site users can work together and add information from other Google applications, such as Google Docs, Google Calendar, YouTube, Picasa, and other sources.

It is a good practice to use such tool for online questionnaire and online survey as *Google Forms* for election campaigns, identifying political interests among the community, making lists of participants for a particular event, etc.

*Google Calendar* from Google Apps is a free web-based time management application to help plan community engagement. It allows to create future events in the shared calendar and set regulations for their implementation. This app should be used for community administration staff.

Another cloud service from Google is *YouTube* video hosting which allows to create, add, watch, and comment on videos. With its simplicity and ease of use, YouTube has become one of the most popular places for uploading videos. The service contains professional videos as well as amateur videos, including video blogs. The peculiarity of this application in local self-administration is the ability to organize live broadcasts of events and activities as well as to publish videos on the Internet and the village site.

For public and private e-communication it is also advisable to use *Hangouts*, which is a communication software product allowing immediate messaging and video conferencing. What is special about Hangouts is that it allows conversations between two or more users in a group video conference, to hold business meetings, webinars and video chats. The Hangout has the opportunity to demonstrate your computer screen to other participants. This service is available through Gmail, Google+, Youtube, Android and iOS mobile apps.

The effective e-communication tool is the multilingual *Google+* social network, which benefits from sharing contacts across “circles”: relatives, colleagues, fellow villagers, etc. For example, in order to discuss top-priority issues, to highlight

interesting topics, to manifest regulatory documents, it would be advisable to create the e-community comprising only members of the united community

Thus, Google Apps cloud services as web applications enable e-communication in local self-administration subject to availability of browser and Internet connection.

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