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Language equality across govt platforms must for effective public service delivery: Arvind Pani

'India's internet is more in English than local languages. We seek to address this and democratize the Internet by empowering Indian languages online'

ETGovernment   May 14, 2020, 15:30 IST

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By T

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One of the challenges in dealing with migrant workers

is communicating in local language. Though many state governments have come up with online platforms for facilitating e-passes, these registration forms are developed in English, creating discomfort for users.

The incident of emergency management highlights the importance of local language bridging the gap between the people (non-English speaking) and the government organizations.

"India's internet is more in English than local languages. We seek to address this and democratize the Internet by empowering Indian languages online," said **Arvind Pani**, CEO, Reverie Technologies in an interview with *ETGovernment.*

Edited Excerpts:

What has been your market-experience with the public sector?

We want to impact the lives of Indians on a daily basis. We have developed Indic localization and user engagement solutions for digital platforms for the benefit of users, who can speak, read or write.

Working with the government has been a key part of our priority towards achieving the goals and contributing to the success of Digital India's vision. We have worked on and successfully localized various government projects in Indian languages, like BHIM App, Bhamsha in Rajasthan, Bhoomi in Karnataka, Government e-Marketplace (GeM), e-NAM, and Department of Income Tax to name a few.

Our aim is to become the language platform of choice

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across the user's digital journey, making internet adoption easier and faster and also help to drive digital literacy at the school-level.

How do you see your engagement with the government?

We intend to contribute to the proliferation and adoption of digital access mediums beyond audio and video (AV) content consumption. This means helping the government to drive the creation of Indian language content, access to high-quality informative contents, homogenous and discoverable Indian language content in the digital space and at the same time, able to help in driving ease of doing business on the internet for the non-English speaking users.

We want to help and implement Indian language technology standards. Working with the government is important to achieving this objective.

The government's mission of making digital services accessible to the common masses echoes our vision of bringing 'language equality on the Indian internet.' The success of digital initiatives and e-governance services depends on their easy accessibility and broad reach, which cannot be achieved without localization in Indian languages. In order to reach maximum users, it's imperative that online services and products be offered in the language of the local user.

Providing true Indian language experience makes on-boarding and educating first-time internet users faster and easier, thus resulting in strong citizen engagement.

What is your USP to the government? Which are your

past and ongoing projects?

We are the only full-stack Indian language product and technology company that has offerings ranging from Indic keyboard, Indian language fonts, search and discovery in Indian languages, speech solutions in Indian languages to a comprehensive AI-enabled Translation Platform. Also, the accuracy of our Indian languages products is much better than the solutions provided by even the global giants.

Managed hosting and data security are some of the critical requirements of any government project. Our solutions can be deployed on-premise as well as on the cloud. Moreover, our cloud is within the geolocation of India which ensures enhanced data security.

We have been working on key projects at national-level. We have successfully localized projects like e-NAM (widely used by farmers across 500+ mandis), e-Bhoomi (Government of Karnataka), Government e-Marketplace (Government of India). Presently, we are engaged in a prestigious project for the Department of Income Tax, Ministry of Finance.

We have been working with the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), helping them in localizing the educational content into multiple Indian languages in digital formats. Also, in terms of content and IVR localization, we have helped some of the state governments to quickly and effectively localize it into multiple Indian languages.

How would you gauge government of India and state governments and their digital transformation initiatives?

Most of the governments have been proactively promoting digitization to ensure the Government's services are made available electronically to citizens, even in the furthest corners of the country.

The initiative of Digital India by the Government of India in 2015 was a big boost to make sure that government services are available to the citizens digitally. One of the main objectives of this initiative was to improve digital literacy, but the majority of the projects under this initiative provide information in English.

With 536 million users accessing the internet in their regional languages, serving them with content in a language that they are comfortable with ensures higher and regular usage of these facilities. Many State governments have embraced the e-granthalaya project (a digital platform for Government libraries for automation of In-house activities as well as member services).

While many states have undertaken large digitization projects, it has been majorly for legacy data and information dissemination. However, localization of the information and use of technology to achieve the scale and efficiency is largely missing. For real benefits to the citizens, these aspects should be considered seriously.

To make the Indian language users digitally inclusive, we need to ensure that typing in native languages is introduced in schools during the formative years. This will ensure that they not only consume content in native languages but will also be able to create high-quality content in their languages.

How significant is government business for the company?

While the government business is important for our company, the key driver has been our vision of bringing 'language equality on the internet' for Indian users. We expect our government to facilitate creating our own standards for Indian language computing for this new era and drive the proliferation of digital access to the masses. This will drive ease of doing business for non-English speaking internet users and help solve many economic problems. We have a strong focus on our partnership with the government, not only from a commercial business perspective but also from our firm resolve to realize our vision.

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