

Designing an Integrated Online-guide for Overseas Applicants Seeking to Teach English in Korea: Focus on Job and Visa Application

JaeYoul Ryu

School of Korean Language as a Foreign Education
Busan University of Foreign Studies, Busan 609-815, Korea

ABSTRACT

This study suggests an effective online guide for foreign teachers who want to teach English in Korean schools. When designing this guide for overseas applicants, there should be a consistent analysis to reflect the process of the system. Thus, this paper provides an analysis and results for an integrated online guide to increase the efficiency based on the pedagogical framework for analysis of the 'ADDIE' model (Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation). The number of job applicants who wish to teach English in Korea is growing rapidly because Korea is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the 'Korean Wave' has especially been experiencing significant changes with the development of social network services and digital technologies. As a result, overseas applicants' expectations regarding Korea when they are seeking information and applying is very high, but the aspects of the procedure provided by the government are somewhat disappointing. The paper presents customer needs and specific recommendation for each step of the application process to improve the guide's effectiveness.

Key words: ADDIE Model, EPIK and TaLK Program, Visa Application, Web Design, Online Guide.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Korea is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and even the popularity of overseas Korean Wave (Hallyu) based on K-pop and drama has contributed immeasurably to have an interest in Korean language and culture. To invite native English speaking teachers, the National Institute for International Education Development (NIIED), affiliated with the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Korea, operates the 'English Program in Korea (EPIK)' and its sister program, 'Teach and Learn in Korea (TaLK)'. Both programs are designed to foster cultural exchange between an English speaking country and Korea. They recruit only native English speakers from seven designated countries: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States, and South Africa [1].

As a result, many organizations provide information about some types of visas and its requirements via their websites. Lately, EPIK and TaLK made some revision to make up for the official website's defects. However, some offices like Consulate General of the Korean Embassy has no effective online guide or education, supporting up-to-date specific information on visas and application process, although there is a close connection between some different ministries.

1.2 Purpose of this Proposal

This proposal is to help develop an effective customer centric web information design for the intending immigrants as English teachers, and visa staffs as well. The primary goals of this research are to:

- 1) Compile information about the process and guidance for the intending English teachers.
- 2) Identify current Korean visa application system conducted by the Korean consulate offices.
- 3) Assess shortfalls and barriers in the current web based guidance.
- 4) Solicit ideas for improvements in technical and administrative support to visa application flow.
- 5) Develop recommendations for implementing any suggested changes for the effective guide.
- 6) Finally, set a new direction for future development of the combined job and visa application guide.

1.3 Methods of Data Analysis

Based on the framework of the ADDIE model (analyze, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) [2], this research was conducted to identify the applicants' need and determine the root cause of any problems that exist, analyzing data generated from a variety of tools to include surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The term 'focus group' derives from the intent of this analysis tool, which is to focus on a particular topic and capture participants' comments [2]. Especially, the target audience was surveyed through the survey

* Corresponding author; Email: ryu.jaeyoul@gmail.com
Manuscript received Oct. 06, 2014; revised Nov. 19, 2014;
accepted Nov. 26, 2014

questionnaire and two focus groups were conducted with a total of five participants to explore and identify the official issues associated with working on each step of application process.

2. DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

Many government organizations provide information about EPIK or TaLK programs' requirements and some types of visas related to the programs via their websites. To meet the purpose of this research, the data collection has been conducted for overall review and evaluation of some extant data as following (2.1). It was also estimated how the applicants or visa staffs would feel and evaluate the current application flow.

2.1 Extant Data

Any of Consulate Generals and Korean Education Centers (KEC) in the Korean Embassy has not previously done any formal research in this job and visa application process so there was not any existing data to review. However, upon review of many official websites and the promotion brochures of the government provided some related research findings. Because of this, the extant data for this paper was gathered from web-search including official and private open sources.

The data obtained from official websites—epik.go.kr; talk.go.kr; niied.go.kr; mest.go.kr (moe.go.kr)—shows that the number of people looking to teach English in Korea has grown since 2007 although TaLK, an exchange program, has been settled down to invite about 500 students since 2008.

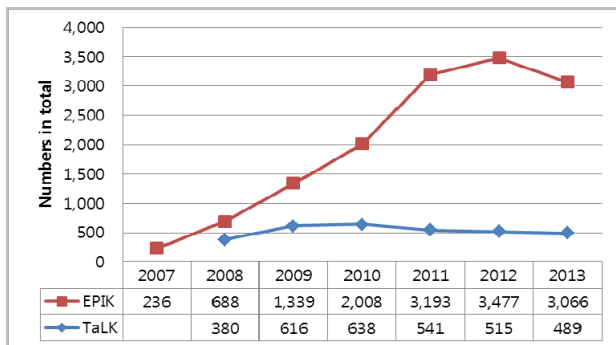


Fig. 1. Annual New Placements by EPIK & TaLK

As shown in Figure 1, EPIK supplied an annual total of over 3,000 Guest English Teachers since 2011, making a big leap compared to the numbers 236 and 688 in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Although the growth of invitation number has slightly slowed down due to the government's policy change, it is believed that Hallyu still bring many young people in Korea.

Along with this increase, NIIED appointed 5 certified and 8 cooperative recruiting agencies for those programs in the year 2013: Korvia Consulting, WorknPlay, Hands Korea, eZ English, GMSC Inc., GA Education, JJ English Inc., ESL Line Inc., Eico Edu., Job in Korea Inc., Canadian Connection, Oxford Education, and ATC Edu. They also enlisted 8 qualified agencies, and they are additionally seeking and adding recruiting agencies to work with the programs annually. In addition, a large number of private recruiting agencies are establishing and providing information about the job

application, proper types of visa and its requirements via their websites not only from Korea but also other seven designated countries.

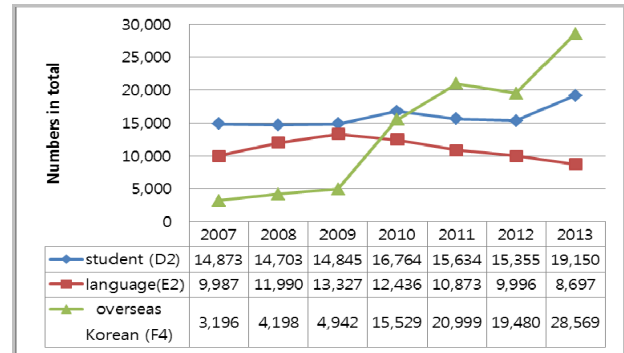


Fig. 2. Annual Entries from 7 English Speaking Countries by Visa Status

TaLK applicants should get D2 visa or E2 including EPIK applicants, and ethnic Koreans can get an F4 instead of E2 or D2 visa. According to the data from the Korean Statistical Information Service (<http://kosis.kr>) as in Figure 2, overall entry of D2 and F4 visa status keeps increasing while E2 status has been slightly declining since 2010.

2.2 Interview

An interview instrument was created for the education directors, a consul, and visa executives of the Korean embassy. Table 1 presents their responsibilities and duties.

Table 1. Responsibilities and Duties

	Embassy, KEC, Commission Agency	EPIK/ TaLK
Advertising & Marketing	- overall advertisement and marketing in Korea & overseas	advertise on the EPIK website
Employment	- classify and file employment-related documents/ interview/ assist in drawing up contracts	conduct interviews/ evaluate documents/ draw up contracts
Certificate-related Services	- assist in mailing acceptance letters and notifications	issue acceptance letters
Follow-up Support	- handle problematic official teams - replace any official teams that resign within the first nine months of the contract period - provide counselling to official teams	↓
Others	- provide administrative and logistical support including information on immigration and customs regulation and airport pickup for the orientation	Consulates
Additional Conditions	- thoroughly examine all required documents (verify falsified or fabricated documents) - conduct a complete screening of each applicant's qualifications and competence during the interview - provide reliable follow-up management for hired applicants	- review documents and permission - VISA attach/issue

They were chosen for the interview because they should be in a cooperative relationship among the sectors as the front line of the application flow system. In this interview instrument, they were asked nine basic questions as following:

- 1) Which departments are responsible for advising and supporting proper information for visa applicants who want to teach English in Korea?
- 2) What are the most common problems KECs face when they apply for visa because of lack of information electronically?
- 3) What do you think the root causes of the problems?
- 4) What are the complaints about the Korean embassy system of the application for the visa?
- 5) Is there enough information and professional guidance for each visa application?
- 6) Is there an oriented guide for each visa type such as simulation video guide?
- 7) Is it possible to apply for a visa electronically instead of face-to-face?
- 8) Are these process required specific skills that the customer should have?
- 9) Do you feel that Korean organizations' websites are well-designed to meet the customer needs?

All the individuals interviewed felt that the staffs related to this topic may not know the exact application process beyond their responsibilities and duties. Perhaps because they do not know all the responsibilities and duties, all agreed that the description should be shared easily with the public.

According to their response, the root cause of this problem is that the process does not have an easy flow because the process is closely connected with each other. They are sometimes unable to adequately advise the applicants with exact information because their position is being shifted often, but there is indeed a lack of training for the new position.

When asked ‘which departments provide help for applying job and visa process, and who is responsible for advising them and supporting information?’, there were a lot of organizations (websites) and the key three organizations can be categorized MOE (Ministry of Education), MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and MOJ(Ministry of Justice).

It is possible to apply electronically (by an email) for TaLK, EPIK and also visa application. However, there was no simulation video guide—we can now find it on the most-recently-revised websites—or help forum in the traditionally designed websites. All the staffs interviewed felt that each department’s web developer could not incorporate the needs of the staffs and applicants into the guide.

Overall, they felt a new guide must contain a bird’s-eye view of the whole process so that it could be easily trained to any new staffs. All the interview responses confirm that a closer cooperation system and an integrated ‘all-in-one guide’ should be established. First of all, the overview map combining all the related organization contacts and websites must be included in the guide, and the quick links must lead applicants to the specific information about the fields.

2.3 Survey

A survey was conducted using an anonymous ten-minute online survey about the visa application process. They were asked eight core survey questions to obtain more detailed information about the challenges of visa application and collect query thought and feelings about suggested changes to the guide. The survey was emailed to approximately 200 former applicants of E2 or F4 visa. The response rate for the survey was 35%, with 70 survey responses collected.

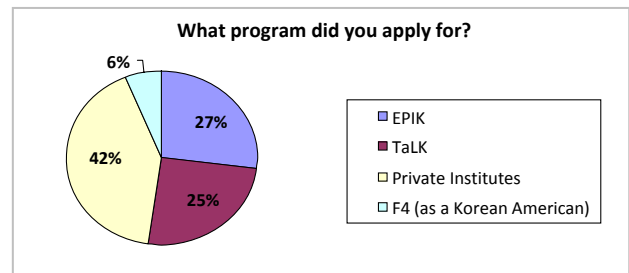


Fig. 3. Response on Survey Question #1

The chart in Fig. 3 illustrates that over half of the survey respondents (52%) are applying through the EPIK or TaLK program, but the majority of respondents (77%) are getting information not from the official organizations, but from some private agencies, their schools or friends as shown in Figure 4. These results indicate that an official real-time online guide should be developed, distributed and accessible to the public to prevent the problems from wrong information.

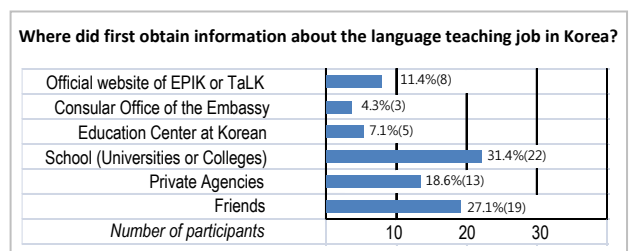


Fig. 4. Response on Survey Question #2

The following figure shows that many of the survey respondents selected the choice ‘not available’, but 83% of the former applicants feel that the overall application process was satisfactory. The number of ‘very satisfactory and satisfactory’ is greater (84.1%) than the number of respondents who didn’t feel satisfied with the information guide (15.9%).

Service Sector	Total	N/A	-2	-1	0	1	2
EPIK team (online, Seoul)	70	22	1	1	3	22	21
Education Center (TaLK interview)	70	41	0	1	2	15	11
Private Institute (individual apply)	70	24	3	3	7	24	9
Korean Embassy (Visa application)	70	17	1	2	4	21	25
Overall Satisfactory Rate			6.8%		9.1%	46.6%	37.5%

Fig. 5. Response on Survey Question #3

The chart above presents the number of applicants who do not feel any satisfaction about the current guide according to

the sectors in each service. We need to analyze the root cause of dissatisfactory even it's a small amount through the following questions.

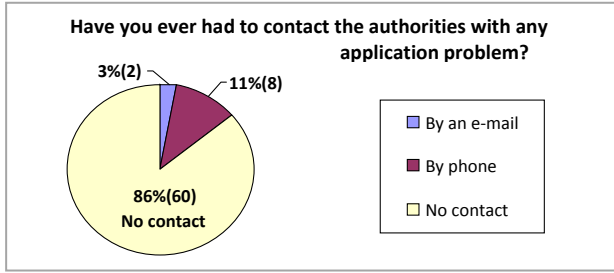


Fig. 6. Response on Survey Question #4

This result displays that most respondents (86%) did not personally contact the authorities with any problems or inquiries. However, some difficulties applicants encountered were resolved by an e-mail (3%) or by phone call (11%). An overview of some common problems and recommendations on the information guide is listed below in Table 2.

Table 2. Specific Answers (out of 27 respondents dissatisfied)

	Difficulties	Recommendations
Process	- The company I went through did not give an overview.(6) - The company I used to provide a different visa form, which was incorrect, so it was confusing.(3)	- A process overview map would be helpful.(5) - Official distribution of a guide or online tutorials are needed, and the version of the guide must be inscribed to prevent the use of out-of-date materials.(1)
Document	- Documents needed not correctly listed on the website.(4) - Visa application form is inconvenient to fill out because the scanned PDF image is not available to edit.(1)	- If there was an updated specific list of what I needed (or exactly what to mail) online, it would have helped. (4) - Filling out interactive PDF forms possible to print and save are urgently needed to be developed.(3)
Service	- KEC is in the Embassy, so it's confusing to contact an education center or a consular office. The websites are not even linked each other.(3) - I wondered why there is no official forum for Q &A.(2)	- The more categorized contact points and the links should be added on the websites.(2) - A forum containing the official discussion threads can reduce the inquiries to the staffs.(2)
Other	※ Many respondents expressed satisfaction for Korea's quick and easy process, but they pointed out the slowest background check process of the US.(8)	- Remind applicants on the guide the background check application should be conducted earlier to escape the late submission.

2.4 Focus Group

Two focus group instruments were conducted through the online conference call: two Education directors' group of the education centers (Washington DC and Houston), and three visa staffs' group of the Korean Consulate Generals in the United States (Washington DC, New York, and Houston). In addition to the interview questions in 2.2, the group participants were involved in answering following additional questions:

- 1) What do you think is the biggest challenge of supporting applicants for their teaching job application process? Why is it a challenge?
- 2) Do you think there is a closer cooperation system between the KEC and the Consular Office regarding visa application guide? What suggestions would you make to design a cooperative system?
- 3) Do you have any guidance of your own about the visa application process in your office?
- 4) If you were asked to create a new guide to help visa applicants, what information do you think should be included in a new guide?

They insisted on the necessity of the online forum containing the official guide and discussion threads powered by the ministry of the Korean government. They believed a forum containing the official discussion threads could reduce the inquiries to the staffs. Some members of the focus group mentioned that any changed policy or form is not communicated properly to the staffs as well as the applicants. Many participants also said that they had been sometimes unable to adequately advise the applicants with exact information because the staffs' position is being shifted often, but there is indeed a lack of training for the new staffs. So the participants suggested that an online tutorial should be loaded on the portal sites for the private agencies as well as for the applicants or the new staffs.

3. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As referred to earlier, there has not previously been any formal research on how the applicants feel about the current web guide and application process. Consequently, the initiated goal of this approach was to determine the need for an effective online guide on job application and visa process so as to help applicants who are applying to teach English in Korea. When researching and analyzing current information and guide materials by a variety of sources across the Internet, it was revealed that the paradigm of government system is very hard to change. Since Korea is leading on technology all over the world, overseas job or visa applicants' expectation toward Korea is very high, but the real aspect of practice provided by the government is somewhat disappointing.

For this research, more detailed data to provide TaLK and EPIK professionals with an online delivery method was gathered. The extant data showed that many organizations and agencies are providing information with any guide materials along with its increased demand. EPIK and TaLK team have made improvements to their official website, making up for the defects like incorrect or out of date information. However, inconvenience still exists in cooperating related to government agencies. To prevent this inconvenience for the applicants, each official agency should have been responsible for cooperating with reviewing and updating changed policy or correcting information and document form frequently.

Based on these results, this paper presents some recommendations when designing a unified all-in-one information guide which will combine all the different

organizations. It is urgently needed for the new staffs as well as future English teachers to be invited to Korea. For an essential time-saving guide for busy people, here's an example, when designing online guide to meet the applicants' needs.

3.1 Audience

Excessive education fever in Korea drives the demand for English in South Korea in a recent decade. Many people recently deplored the current pursuit of 'English education' in South Korea as a 'collective neurosis of English fever'. To meet this English boom, the South Korean government offers for potential teachers from the English speaking countries 'the English Program in Korea' and its sister program, 'Teach and Learn in Korea'. This web guide will be provided to the potential job and visa applicants who wish to apply to teach English in Korea.

3.2 Objectives

Based on the findings from data analysis, this project for the KEC can provide an effective online guide showing application process and supporting up-to-date specific information on visas. Familiarity with the current information for TaLK, EPIK and visa application process is vital for developing an effective web guide. After completing this web guide, the applicants should be able to:

- Get the exact documents for TaLK, EPIK and VISA application process
- Overview relationship to job application and visa process
- Get the specific contact information by the one click with the overview
- Prevent and manage the problem of 'information overload' caused by a variety of sources
- Save time and money when it comes to searching information or applying for a job and visa

3.3 Staffing and Role Plan

The following is the roles required to execute the project. It includes: the role, assigned person, the project responsibility of skills required for the web guide development by the role.

Table 3. Example of Staffing and Role Plan

Role	Assigned Person	Project Responsibility (Skills)
Project Manager	- NIIED officer (Education director)	- Lead team, report status - Review deliverables, assure quality
Content Developer	- Education Director - Researcher	- Create framework content (Research and web writing skills)
Web Designer	- Instructional System Designer - Design Specialists	- Design web-based performance management tool (Web design, web writing skills)
Web Developer	- Web Designer - Software Specialists	- Build the web-based performance management tool (Web development)
Review Team	- Education director - Visa Executives - EPIK Director - TaLK Director	- Evaluate deliverables, promote use (Project Management experience)

3.4 Critical Path Design Plan

As shown in Figure 7, the critical action plan can be applied to developing this web guide from the framework of the ADDIE model [2]. Korean consulate generals and education centers are located at many different jurisdictional sites. Therefore, web conferencing tools needed to hold meetings for multi-office project process. As internet communications have become faster and more reliable, web conferencing has grown to a rich, real-time meeting medium.

The following flow for a web-guide design may seem a bit complicated. With the growth of technology, however, no longer have to fly in staffs and managers for every quarterly meeting. Below is an overview of each step of the development process for a customer centric web guide.

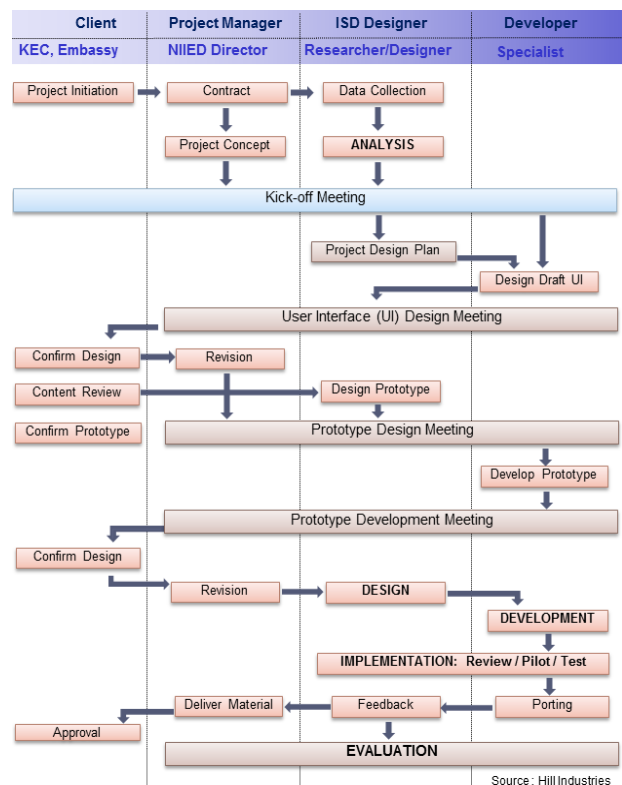


Fig. 7. Critical Path Action Plan

3.5 Technical Specifications

This section outlines some of the technical details that are important in order to effectively develop an Online Application Guide. There could be included primary web development tool, editing tools for audio and video, and graphic design program, and so on. Although it may vary depending on the needs of the developer, Table 4 as follows shows some example software that could be used.

Table 4. List of Required Software (example)

Primary Web Development Tool	Adobe Captivate, Dreamweaver 8; WebPlus X7, Web Studio, Webydo, etc.
Movie & Flash Editing	Adobe Premiere Pro, Studio 8, Sony Vegas Pro, Pinnacle Studio, Windows Movie Maker, Flash Professional 8, After Effects 7.0, etc.
Audio Editing	Cool Edit Pro, Audacity

Graphic Design	Photoshop CS, Illustrator CS, etc.
Programming Languages	JavaScript, AFP, ASP, ASP.NET, ColdFusion Java, PHP, Python, etc.
Other requirements	WS_FTP or Remote Server access; cable or DSL high speed internet; Some devices for the test and navigation of the development, etc.

3.6 Key Criteria for Success

Several factors would indicate the level of success to be achieved in this web guide. While the ultimate goal is developing an effective web guide, aiming for small successes in different key areas would greatly contribute to the achievement of milestones leading to design completion.

3.6.1 Process

- The overview map combining all the related organization contacts and websites must be included in the guide, and the quick links must lead applicants to the specific information they want.
- Many respondents expressed satisfaction for Korea’s quick and easy process, but they pointed out the slowest background check process by the US. Therefore, it also needs to be inserted in the guide for reminding that the background check application should be done earlier to escape the late submission.

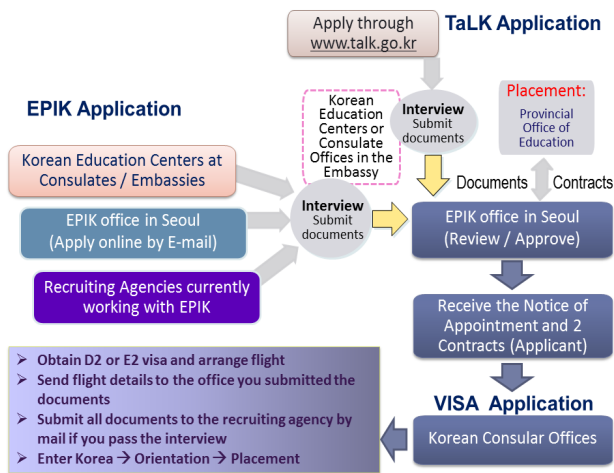


Fig. 8. Application Process in EPIK, TaLK and VISA

3.6.2 Document (it remains to be improved)

- When downloading documents is blocked and denied even with a small problem on the websites, they all stop the process and just wait, so the guide facilitates a backup plan.
- ‘Filling-Out Interactive PDF Forms’ possible to print and save are urgently needed to be developed (this was improved as of August 15, 2014).
- To answer frequently asked questions when filling out the form, the instructions to Fill-Out Forms in the application should be more specific.
- The latest and approved versions of the forms and updated specific list of what to mail should be clearly posted on the online guide.

3.6.3 Service

- It is necessary to install an online forum containing the

official guide and discussion threads powered by the ministry of the Korean government. It is believed the forum can reduce the current inquiries to the staffs.

- Staffs are sometimes unable to adequately advise the applicants with exact information because the staffs’ position is being shifted often, so an online tutorial or simulation video guide should be loaded on the portal website as a training method for the new staffs.
- Contact point is the method an applicant wishes to communicate with the staffs dealing with the application process. However, for some organizations there exists a little integration between the contact points so applicant communicating through one point one day and another point the next day may receive conflicting information. In such cases applicant are likely to become frustrated, and whenever they access it also makes the service process be delayed. Therefore, as 3.7 below, a new guide must build up an integrated contact resource which will be a gateway with the links of all the other official information so applicants can resolve any problems as soon as possible. In short, put all in a same cloud service!

3.7 Future Cloud Service for Success

The world is more rapidly changing into something too hard to easily predict with a hundred opportunities and pitfalls passing by every moment, but paradigms in the workplace are very hard to change. What’s more, the government IT system such as in consulate offices over the world is far behind the profitable sectors in applying technologies and media. It also has problems in keeping a good management system for information resource [3]. Not only applicants, but education directors or visa staffs at the Korean Embassy are located in a variety of areas throughout the world. For this reason, this study suggests an integrated platform when designing the effective online guide for overseas applicants. All application services will easy and quick to access through one single point of access such as ‘Application Guide’ tap via epic.go.kr or embassy’s website.



Fig. 9. Cloud Resource Sharing for the Guide

As shown in Fig. 9 above, the government has to build a future-oriented application system in which organic cooperation occurs among the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Justice so that whoever can share, interact and access any associated information through the easy process of cloud service. According to [4], 50% of the data in organizations will be stored in cloud-based systems by

2016. It is said that leveraging the ubiquitous access capabilities of the cloud computing platform with big data will enable organizations to implement analytical platforms on demand and utilize them as required [5].

4. CONCLUSIONS

For foreign teachers who want to teach English in Korean schools, specific difficulties related to the job and visa application process were come out as a result of the analysis in this study. One of the biggest causes of the current situation is the flood of the inaccurate information. A rapidly increasing rate of new information is being produced in this information age. It is said that a full 90 % of all the data in the world have been generated over the last two years [6]. In addition, an increase in the available channels of incoming information is also a cause of information overload. Contradictions and inaccuracies in available information are often experienced as distracting and unmanageable information for both providers and applicants. As this paper shows customer's needs and their specific recommendation, there should be a consistent analysis to reflect the system for each step of the application process.

As Amazon launched a cloud platform in 2006 to provide virtualized services over the cloud platform, the combination of big data technologies and cloud computing platforms has led to the emergence of a new category of technology [5]. It will require investment of time, money and policy for a combination of media and a combination of technologies to communicate with people [7]. Accordingly, Korea should urgently establish an all-in-one guide, investing in a collaboration platform due to its flexibility and ease of use. The collaboration and combination guide in this field of job and visa application would be an attempt to maximize the impact of Korean government's effort to the public in the world.

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JaeYoul Ryu

He received the B.S. in English from the Busan University of Foreign Studies in 1994. Since then, he has been an Army officer for seven years (retired major), a secondary school teacher for thirteen years, and a researcher for two years at the Korean embassy in Washington D.C.

He obtained the M.A. degree in Instructional Systems Development from University of Maryland at Baltimore County, U.S.A. in 2012. He is currently completing his Ph.D. Studies in the field of 'Korean Language as a Foreign Education' at the Busan University of Foreign Studies.