

Chapter 67

What is Needed to Advance Transformational E-Government and Why: A Different Approach to Project Management

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the millennia, project management methodologies were developed, and as projects were completed, both theoreticians and practitioners contributed to the development of project management science and codification. Throughout this time, project management science grappled with the problem of delineating project activities from on-going operational activities. Projects require project management while operations require business process management or operations management (PMI, 2008). In the project methodology world, a project is defined as unique, temporary, a definite start and finish (PMI, 2008). Without this definition, the science of project management cannot be applied. It is this definition that provides the credence for the creation and application of project management processes, tools, and techniques. However, the science of project management exists irrespective of a project. In fact, it is the application of project management to any endeavor that creates a project. Effective project management that will drive the design and implementation of transformational e-Government must be enhanced. This chapter proposes project management enhancements to the design, direction, management, and implementation of e-Government projects that focus on project problems rather than methodological processes. The enhanced project management solution provides the tools and educates the user to take into account the impact of the holistic, synergistic challenges and barriers that surround and influence e-Government projects – heretofore, in an unmanageable way that has inhibited change instead of promoting it. The enhanced project management solution is “exogenous” of the e-Government solution; it is its external driver.

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INTRODUCTION

Transformational e-Government is the continuous innovation in the delivery of services, citizen participation and governance through the transformation of external and internal relationships by the use of technology; especially the Internet. When introduced, it offered the hope and promise to revitalize and modernize public services; reinvigorate and improve services to citizens, business and governments; and, create an exciting environment for employees to work and contribute. Countries, world-wide are inexorably engaged and urged forward by both push and pull motivational pressures to use technology to improve democratic participation, social harmony and economic sustainability. However, it has not achieved the international worldwide success anticipated. E-Government has high rates of failure; by some measures, more than 60-80% are partial or total failures (United Nations, 2003).

E-Government and especially transformational e-Government progress remains slow and halting and shackled to time honoured approaches to project management, especially in the information communication technology (ICT) domain. (e-Government being the traditional transactional and service focused improvements through the application of ICTs whereas transformational e-Government encompasses the reform and modernization of the business process reengineering opportunities and enterprise wide reform as well as what and how the government achieves its mandate). Ineffective project management is one of most significant reasons for transformational e-Government failure (Aikens, 2012b; Misuraca, 2009). There are a number of reasons and examples for transformational e-Government project failures including: the lack of capacity to manage unanticipated transparent and concealed organizational opposition; the inability to effectively and precisely identify current, changing, disparate, and conflicting key information requirements;

and lack of insight into the obstacles in obtaining parochially coveted information. These are in addition to a recent (2012) review of literature (developed and developing countries) that outlines the most common issues and problems that cause e-Government failure to be: cultural barriers; infrastructure; resources; socio-economic barriers; security and privacy; and e-integration (Zhao, 2012).

The objective of this chapter is to introduce the need for and provide enhancements to the well-established international project management bodies of knowledge; these enhancements will enable transformational e-Government project managers to be more effective, results oriented and successful. This chapter reports upon the e-Government failure rate, and project management's contribution, and proposes changes based upon an international compendium of ten transformational e-Government challenges that revamp traditional project management methodologies by redirecting their focus from project management processes to project management products, results, and accountability.

This chapter also introduces the concept that project management does not begin with the creation of a project. This redirection is based not on the definition of a project but rather on the recognition that project management (particularly ICT work) means working in a milieu of complexity and uncertainty wherein the application of the science of project management to any endeavour thereby creates a project. Futuristic projects will be created; they will not be defined; they will be created by evolution, unintended consequences, and iteration that solve problems and produces project results. This fundamentally different concept challenges the current assumption and practice that insists that a project is defined before the science of project management is applied. Accordingly it deemphasizes; streamlines; and prioritizes processes that flow out of project definition. Instead it targets project management toward problem solving,

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