

Chapter 1

The Development of E–Government Capabilities Framework for Government

Jae Yong Lee

The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to explore the capabilities of governments in terms of e-government. A seven core e-government capabilities framework is presented as the framework for exploring and implementing in-house government capabilities needed to facilitate the development of e-government, measured by overall, business-oriented and IT-oriented capabilities and resulting performances. The seven capabilities are as follows: legitimation and relationship building as overall capabilities; IS/IT governance and business systems thinking as business-oriented capabilities; informed buying, contract facilitation and monitoring, and designing technical architecture as IT-oriented capabilities. This chapter attempts to develop an intellectual framework for practitioners and researchers to follow within the area of organizational abilities or personnel management in e-government era. On this point, this research will contribute to the readers' formulation of IT strategies for their countries which was set up as the first objective of this book.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the capabilities of government organizations to design, build, implement, and facilitate e-government. E-government is “the use of information technology (IT) to enable and improve the efficiency with which government services are provided to citizens, employees, busi-

nesses and agencies” (Carter & Belanger, 2005, p. 5). *Capabilities* are defined as “distinctive sets of human resource-based skills, orientations, attitudes, motivations and behaviors that have the potential, in suitable contexts, to contribute to achieving specific activities and influencing business performance” (Willcocks, Feeny, & Olson, 2006, p. 29). As is implied by these definitions, this chapter involves related discussions about capabilities that are required of government bureaucracy in order to

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successfully complete e-government processes, from the planning stage to the delivery of public services stage. Using the activities of governments as a way to expand the use of e-government is also considered.

In general, access to and use of advanced technology cannot guarantee better organizations. Orlikowski, Walsham, and Jones (1996) suggested that the IT characteristics of shift and change require innovation in organizational work, as well. On the contrary, such issues have used to be regarded only as a matter of technology by many practitioners from public and private sectors. According to the findings of Mead and Boeschoten (2006, p. 15), the understanding of IT governance has been inappropriately belonged only to the IT-side decisions. This aspect shown in information systems (IS) fields has many implications on practices and public management studies regarding e-government. On the other hand, IT has become a significant subject in public management. Technology has been almost ignored until recently, despite the fact that digitization by the government has a long history (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler, 2006; Fountain, 2001).

Under these circumstances, this chapter aims to provide an intellectual framework to analyze and explore government capabilities on e-government. Government organizations should identify and build related capabilities for ideal IS and manage appropriate organizational changes. On this point, this research will contribute to the readers' formulation of IT strategies for their countries which was set up as the first objective of this book. This framework is reinvented from relative literature and applied to a single case study adopted as a research strategy. This research is expected to provide implications on how to understand government capabilities in the contemporary e-government, which can be different from traditional perspectives of public management theories. It is not the scope of this research to identify the qualification of a specific capability. The reinvented and employed framework was developed

to discuss a value-neutral analytical scheme regarding capabilities. The result of a single case study is referred to as secondary evidence of the framework. The results of the single-case study are difficult to apply to other cases. Therefore, broader theoretical issues will be introduced to provide references in order to make up for the weak points of a single-case study.

BACKGROUND

Divergent literature will be introduced separately to form the theoretical perspective and analytical framework. On the one hand, *Digital Era Governance (DEG)* is presented as a main literature to form a theoretical perspective; on the other hand, *Feeny-Willcocks nine core IS capabilities model (Feeny-Willcocks IS capabilities model)* is involved as a main analytical framework to reinvent the conceptual framework of the government capabilities analysis. There will be other secondary literature supporting these main perspectives as well. These are related so as to find a way to frame and organize this research. Although all parts of the literature mentioned originated from slightly different research areas, they can be compared, shared or reorganized with each other, according to the Locke and Golden-Biddle's concepts of *intertextual coherence*, *problematizing context*, and *intertextual progressive coherence* (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997, pp. 1033-1038). These authors suggested them as processes to be considered when researchers employ a literature or point their research to existing literature. These concepts are particularly appropriate for this research which requires interdisciplinary approaches from both public management and IS studies.

Theoretical Perspective

Two groups of literature were examined as theoretical perspectives of the research, as follows: the interpretive flexibility of IT and the formal

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