

Chapter 83

Evaluation of Organizational E–Government Readiness in the Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide an integrated framework to evaluate organizational e-government readiness for government organizations. This framework is necessary as current ones ignore challenges that arise due to organizational transformation issues stemming from diffusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). This study adopts an e-government framework to highlight the main internal factors involved in the assessment of e-government organizational readiness and to examine how these factors lead to successful, organizational e-government readiness. The proposed framework integrates seven dimensions for evaluating organizational e-government readiness including e-government strategy, user access, e-government programs, portal architecture, business processes, ICT infrastructure, and human resources. This paper offers valuable insights to ICT managers for effectively assessing the e-government readiness of organizations to facilitate the success of e-government programs in the public sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Critical attention is required to evaluate organizational e-government readiness to facilitate the success of such efforts. E-government focuses on the use of information technologies—including mobile

computing and the Internet—that can transform the manner in which government bodies engage with businesses, citizens, and other government agencies (ACM, 2008). E-government promises a host of benefits such as improved transparency, convenience, stakeholder relationships, and cost

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efficiencies. For these benefits to materialise, organizations should be adequately prepared so that e-government initiatives can germinate successfully. This paper examines the question: What are the primary organizational internal factors in the evaluation of e-government readiness and how do they lead to successful government initiatives?

Despite the plethora of e-readiness assessment tools, a need exists for a framework for evaluating e-readiness in public organizations in order to develop effective e-government strategies (ACM, 2008). Current tools ignore important factors such as leadership, cross-coordination, and knowledge, which should be integrated with an e-government organizational strategy to accomplish corporate visions and goals (Bakry, 2004; Caldow, 1991). Further work is essential to appropriately assess internal factors impacting within the organization (ACM, 2008; APEC, 2008; CID, 2002).

Driven by rapid developments in the ICT sphere, e-government strategies should similarly evolve to incorporate the necessary dimensions beyond simple integration and support factors inherent in existing systems. This study calls for an extension to current strategies in order to cover increasingly relevant factors such as security, compatibility, and availability.

Furthermore, there is a high demand for the provision of a comprehensive framework for evaluating the readiness of public organizations for e-government that has the capacity to embrace the use of future ICT applications with external stakeholders such as citizens, government agencies, industry, and employers. It moves beyond existing modes of delivery such as the Internet, and considers other important channels such as Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Personal Computers (PCs), fixed-line and mobile phone Wireless Application Protocols (WAPs), and telecentres in public venues. Moreover, this study explores transformative e-government applications; for instance, Business Process Re-engineering (BPR).

In essence, this paper contributes a comprehensive framework for evaluating the organizational e-readiness of e-government that combines important components in public sector organizations. The framework is based on seven core dimensions: user access, e-government programs, portal architecture, business processes, ICT infrastructure and human resources, and e-government strategy – the latter being fundamental in driving the other factors.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review of the various factors affecting the e-government readiness for government organizations. Section 3 describes the development of the conceptual framework for evaluating organizational e-government readiness while Section 4 offers a discussion on the scope of the factor review. Finally, Section 5 presents the conclusion and implications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

E-government adoption is a stream within the literature on the diffusion of ICT. It is an important component, as e-government is heralded as the critical contributor to economic, social, and environmental advancement in developed countries (Cohen, 2004; Dutton, 1996; Kahen, 1996; Patel et al., 2012; Snellen, 2007; Taylor, 2007). E-government scholars have examined the dynamics of ICT and management issues, information systems technology transfer, country-specific factors such as culture in e-government development, and ICT diffusion in developed and developing countries (Abdalla, 2006; Alshihi, 2005; Baark & Heeks, 1999; Rahman, 2007).

However, further research is necessary on organizational issues influencing e-government effectiveness (Alghamdi et al., 2011). The literature on organizational e-government readiness predominantly focuses on technological issues – for instance, portal architecture and infrastructure

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