Chapter 83

Government 2.0:
Innovation for E-Democracy

Malgorzata Pankowska
University of Economics in Katowice, Poland

ABSTRACT

E-Government and e-Democracy system development is enabled by Internet technology. The implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) accelerates the transformation of government institutions and their methods of operations. The use of ICTs at municipality institutions not only opens up possibilities for improving services to citizens and businesses, but also increases their involvement in local community governance. The general objective of this chapter is to reveal, at the municipality level, the opportunity for local community development and stronger citizen involvement in governing processes (e-Democracy). The chapter aims to present the new sources of knowledge, particularly through the involvement of individuals in local government development. The chapter aims to understand challenges in developing open information infrastructures that support municipality innovation and development. The chapter utilizes extensive literature reviews and the analysis of the content of selected e-Government portals to inform its positions.

INTRODUCTION

European Union agencies are particularly interested in supporting the creation of innovative Europe. Innovation is understood as comprising the renewal and enlargement of a range of products and services and their associated markets; the establishment of new methods of design, production, supply and distribution; the introduction of changes in management, work organization, and working conditions and skills of the workforce. There are different forms of innovation e.g., technological, non-technological and organizational innovation. The main purpose of this chapter is to highlight the different open innovations in public administration at the municipal level and attempt to understand how these innovations are developed.

E-Government is defined as the use of ICTs in public administration business value chains. It encompasses organizational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes in a bid to strengthen support for public policies. The advantages of e-Government on the public service delivery landscape are grandiose:

For example, it improves the development and implementation of public policies and helps the public sector to cope with conflicting demands of delivering more and better services with fewer resources. Public administration agencies are looking for innovative solutions that facilitate citizen-oriented strategy realization. E-Government is not an objective *per se*, it has to be seen more as means in organizing public governance for better serving citizens and enterprises. E-Government concerns the whole scope of administrative actions and the connected political processes because ICTs are an enabling force that will enhance effectiveness, quality and efficiency of public actions as well as its legitimacy. In the contemporary world, e-Government is placed at the core of any meaningful public service management modernization efforts towards a more responsive and a service more alienated towards public value. The creation of public value encompasses various democratic, social, economic, environmental and administrative roles of governments. The particular examples of the roles cover the provision of public administration services, implementation and evaluation of policies and regulations, the guarantee of democratic political processes (Centeno et al., 2004).

In e-Government, two complementary perspectives are of equal importance i.e. cooperation and knowledge. Support of computer-mediated cooperation in a comprehensive manner means that sophisticated tools and multiple media for the contacts are a must. The meeting activities as such may be performed online and via video techniques and improved by tools using multimedia. Prospects for knowledge management in e-Government are remarkable from the point of demand: nearly all administrative tasks are informational in nature, decision-making is a public task, and for any agency, its particular domain knowledge is an asset of key importance.

Generally, innovation is usually related to the first instance of using a new technology. A technical innovation is defined as the first commercial application or production of a new process or product and innovation is defined as a change of decision rules to fit with the surrounding requirements (Pedersen & Pedersen, 2006). Innovation in many organizations is not a luxury, but a critical means of keeping up with changing circumstances and opportunities. Innovations are made in the context of institutional embeddings. That is, the object of innovation does not stand alone, but is set within an economy, within cultural and business practices. The circumstances in a particular context determine the unique development of innovation. The true value of innovation hinges on the ability of an organization to exploit tacit knowledge from both internal and external sources in order to improve organizational and competitive performance. According to B. Roberts, innovation is an invention plus its exploitation (Gaynor, 2002) and at least one must be brilliant, modern and unique. Innovation is the practice of creation, conversion and commercialization of services and products. Innovative practices rely very much on existing knowledge networks in communities and on how such networks are converted to allow for knowledge management in new and meaningful ways (Justesen, 2004).

E-Participation must be seen as an activity depending on the concept of full participation, not only by the engaged citizens, but also by the staff and politicians who are intended to get involved in preparing, supporting and maintaining the community of citizens. Methods supporting e-Participation must therefore support a system of social relations. E-Participation must be rooted in important experiences and in work practices related to the contextual dimensions to future development (Kolsaker & Lee-Kelley, 2006). E-Democracy is the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) by governments, international government organizations, elected officials, the media, political parties, non-governmental organizations, and citizen or other interest groups in the political processes of local, regional, state, and national communities, up to the global level (Parlak & Sobaci, 2006). The relevance of

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