

Chapter 47

Towards a Citizen– Centric E–Government Service Index Model: Developments and Impediments within the Egyptian Context

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. First, it proposes a novel E-Government Service Index (ESI) that is a citizen-centric maturity model. Second, the model uses Egypt's E-Government services as an experimental arena to spot the maturity of the provided services and highlights e-government development in Egypt. Finally, the chapter explores the impediments of citizen-centric e-government implementation within the Egyptian context and recommends specific interventions within the frame of the proposed model.

INTRODUCTION

The emerging role of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in facilitating and accelerating social, economic and political development has been recognized by most of developing countries. Moreover, ICT has been acknowledged for paving the way towards democratic initia-

tives through shifting public authorizes towards creating new perceptions about government and governance. An increasing number of federal, state, and local governments are placing plenty of information online, automating administrative processes, procedures, and interacting with citizens, businesses and employees through online public services, nevertheless the great opportu-

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nities offered by these new technologies remain mostly unutilized. Achieving more improvements in delivery and efficiency of government services necessitates a rethinking of the role of ICT. Essentially, a UN report has indicated that most of governments perceive E-government-as-a-whole concept which focuses on the provision of services at the front-end, supported by integration, consolidation and innovation in back-end processes and systems to achieve greatest cost savings and improved service delivery (UN, 2008).

While the application of information technology in governmental bodies can be traced back to the 1970's, E-Government has been developed along with the E-Commerce and internet flourishing era in the late 1990s (Danziger, 2002; Grönlund, 2010; Hiller & Bélanger, 2001).

An assented definition of E-Government is hard to find since every definition adopt such a level of E-Government sophistication ranges from considering E-Government as simple electronic service delivery to a complex infrastructure that transform government role and enforce democratic initiatives. For example, United Nations (UN, 2002) defined E-Government as utilizing the internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens, while OECD (2003) asserted that E-Government is the use of ICT for better governance. On the other hand, other definitions focus more on goals of E-Government including cost saving, enhanced transparency, improved service delivery and public administration, and enhanced government competency and democratic process (Grönlund, 2010; UN, 2005).

As a communication system, E-Government systems can be divided into two components involves internal communication (IC) subsystems and external communication (XC) subsystems. While the IC subsystem represents the E-business layer (back-end) where knowledge processing and sharing takes place, the XC subsystem embodies

the Government Portal (front-end) layer where the public citizens can interact and obtain the necessary services (Zakareya & Zahir, 2005).

Hence, a true advantage of E-Government is not only applying ICT technology but also in answering the needs of public citizens as Figure 1 highlights some of internal and external E-Government contributions (UN, 2008).

A shared conception during the preliminary stages of E-Government development has usually been information technology-oriented to enhance data quality and integrate back-end with front-end systems.

Therefore, there is a need for developing a model that spots the level of E-Government service maturity regarding information technology, stakeholders' interactivity and participation as well as online transaction.

This chapter is an attempt to find an answer for the following questions: (1) are the current maturity models efficient enough to spot deficiencies in E-government services?; (2) How can the proposed E-Government Service Index (ESI) (Zakaria & Gebba, 2012) model overcome shortages within the current maturity models?; and (3) how can ESI model spot limitations within an E-government program in one of the developing countries?. To answer these questions, this chapter aims at proposing a novel E-Government Service Index (ESI) that is citizen-centric maturity model, using Egypt's E-Government services as an experimental arena to spot the maturity of the provided services, and exploring the impediments of citizen-centric E-Government implementation within the Egyptian context and recommending specific interventions within the frame of the proposed ESI model.

The chapter is organized into eight sections. The second section explores key E-Government maturity models. This is followed by research methodology in sections three and four, respectively. Section five presents the development

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