

Chapter 9

Exploring Key E-Services Issues Toward Future Development

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ABSTRACT

E-services are becoming increasingly important for government and for business services. They provide benefits to all parties concerned, including service providers, users, and the society at large. This chapter presents a framework of key issues that any e-service should enjoy. The framework is based on three main domains: the e-service strategy, its architecture, and its performance. Each of these domains is structured in three groups of issues, which are associated with three main dimensions: management, targeted features, and the people concerned. Per this structure, the framework considers “45” key e-services issues, and these issues are derived from the available literature and previous experience. Awareness of the importance of these issues among staff working in the field is investigated by means of a survey designed for this purpose. The outcome shows that there is a clear lack of awareness with regards to various key issues, and this problem would demote e-services. In response, recommendations are derived for solving the problem and toward enhanced future development.

INTRODUCTION

For introducing the work of this chapter, this section provides an overview concerned with the development of e-services. This is followed by reviewing important previous literature associated with key e-services issues. The section then identifies the work objectives in preparation for its description.

Emergence of E-Services

It was around a century between introducing of the communication technology in the mid-19th century and initiating the computer technology in the mid-20th century. In the meantime, it should be empha-

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sized that both technologies belong to the same origin that is the electrical and electronic technology, and this facilitated their easy integration in manipulating information (Al-Sulaiym, Al-Muammar, & Bakry, 1997). Since 1970, both technologies provided us together with computer networks, and they moved toward becoming widely known as the “Information and Communication Technology (ICT)”. By 1990, the Internet, the network of networks; and the cellular mobile systems appeared; followed by the world-wide-web, and the e-services, which started around the mid-1990s (Bakry & Bakry, 2001). It was apparent that interconnecting the world was on accelerated move toward increasing dependence on “e-services” in various fields both in government and in business (Bakry, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates this historical development.

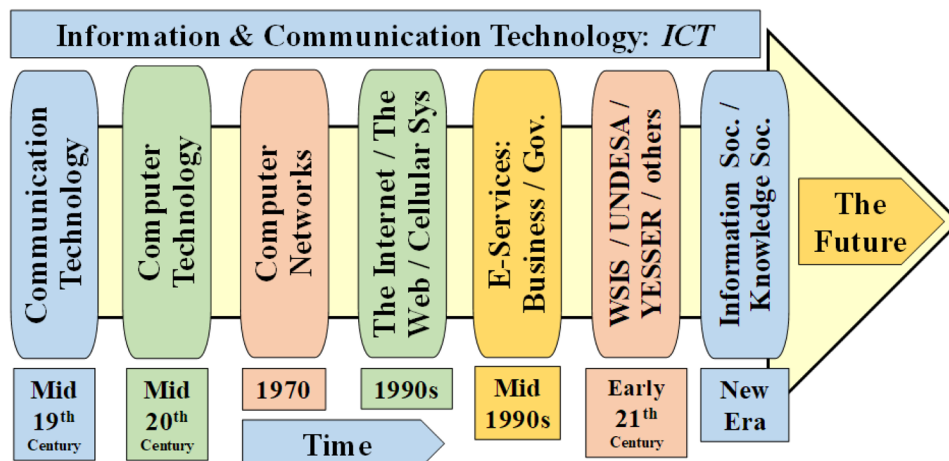
At the turn of the century, from the 20th to the 21st century, e-services, which were on limited use, attracted the attention of the international community. The “World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)” recommended wide-spreading use of ICT in activities associated with the various fields of life (WSIS, 2003); and the “United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)” recommended the use of ICT in government services (UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs, 2001). This attention came because of the benefits of ICT in “storing, processing, and transferring information” in a “faster, cheaper, better, different, and more secure” manner leading to more efficient and more knowledgeable society (Bakry, 2004).

E-services, in both: e-government and e-business, enjoy ICT benefits in their various transactions. They provide advantages to the organizations delivering the services and to the users of the services (Bakry, Bakry, & Muhaya, 2016). These advantages lead to more efficient, more knowledgeable, more transparent, and more interactive society, contributing to its sustainable development (Bin-Abbas & Bakry, 2012).

Development of E-Services

Recognizing the importance of e-services, various independent researchers and professionals in the field have addressed the problem of e-services development both in business and in governments (Bakry & Bakry, 2001; Bakry, 2004). In addition, the international organization UNDESA has developed assessment

Figure 1. Historical development toward new era of world connectivity



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