

Chapter 1

Web 2.0, Social Media, and Mobile Technologies for Connected Government

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ABSTRACT

A connected government uses digital technologies for public administration to improve the democratic processes and provide electronic services to strengthen support for public policies. Also referred to as Government 2.0, it aims to harness the information revolution to improve the lives of citizens and enhance the efficiency of governmental processes. Some of the digital technologies and methods that advanced economies are already using to enhance the connected governance include mobile computing, internet of things, social media applications, and Web 2.0-related communication tools. Through the use of such technologies, governments and citizens can interact in real time, whereby citizens can voice their opinions and engage in the electronic participation. In this chapter, the author introduces Web 2.0, social media networking, and mobile technologies, and then, outlining the characteristics of a connected government, the chapter discusses how mobile, Web 2.0, and social networking tools can support governments to enhance transparency, openness, and effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Connected Government refers to the use of new emerging technologies for public administration in order to improve public services and democratic processes and strengthen the support for public policies. Also referred to as *Government 2.0* (often abbreviated as *Gov 2.0*), it is about harnessing the information revolution to improve the lives of citizens and businesses and to improve the efficiency of the government. It aims to enhance the functions and processes of a government to improve the effectiveness, openness, and the interaction between the government and the general public.

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Government 2.0 has a citizen-focused approach where citizens are active participants. It has evolved from Government 1.0 where technologies and websites were static, domain specific and Web 1.0 based, following government driven approach where citizens were passive receivers of one-way information.

In the Government 2.0 of today, we have interactive website portals that offer government services much more dynamically, using latest technologies such as Cloud Computing, Social Media, Web 2.0 tools (such as Wikis and Bloggs), and Mobile technologies, and with increased end-user community focus. Numerous benefits that technology based connected government provide include the following:

- Simplified government structures and better collaboration between different ministries
- Improved and transparent processes and better access to information for the citizens
- Better interaction with other sectors of the society, especially the commercial and banking
- Improved governance, more efficient use of resources and clear accountability.

World governments are at different stages of connectivity with the general public; as this is dependent on the amount and level of use of the available technology. It is for this reason that we notice that developed economies are well ahead of the developing nations. Initially, when the world wide web became available and popular with general public, each federal ministry developed their own static websites and provided information of a general nature such as the services provided by them, operating hours of their offices, contact details, etc. This was useful however, it was one-way communication, termed as Government to Citizen (G2C) interaction. With the development of Web 2.0 technologies, it became possible to have Citizens to Government (C2G) communication as well. This two-way interaction is referred to as Government to Citizens to Government (G2C2G) communication. This was both ways dynamic interaction where citizens were able to pay bills electronically, conduct electronic commerce (e-commerce) and make financial transactions electronically. Many world governments, usually the less developed nations, are at this stage of electronic government. With the emergence of Mobile Computing and Internet of Things (IoT) vision, electronic government advanced to the next stage that became known as digital or Connected Government. Majority of well-developed governments are at this stage. Here, citizens are able to access government services using, not only the computers and laptops but also, smart handheld devices such as mobile phones and smart watches. Through the use of Web 2.0 tools and Social Media technologies, further automation of government processes has become possible for a more open and transparent government and governance.

Some of the latest technologies that governments are using to enhance connected governance are:

- Cloud Computing and related Fog and Edge Computing paradigms
- Internet of Things based and Device Connectivity related technologies
- Mobile Technology, Social Media and Web 2.0 based communication tools.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss only the Mobile Technologies, and Social Media and Web 2.0 based communication tools; and discuss how these technologies are enabling world governments to provide a more enhanced, interactive, open and transparent connected government. The next two sections are focused on the Web 2.0, Social Media (SM) and Mobile Technologies; and provide more detail about the Connected Government vision. The section that follows, links the previous two sections to discuss how the Web 2.0, SM and Mobile related technologies can help to improve the transparency and openness of a connected government. The final section presents conclusions.

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