

Chapter XX

E–Government Strategies in Developed and Developing Countries: An Implementation Framework and Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Given the fact that more and more governments invest heavily in e-government design and implementation, e-government has become an evolving and important research area in the IS field. Most, if not all, currently published e-government strategies are based on successful experiences from developed countries, which may not be directly applicable to developing countries. Based on a lit-

erature review, this study summarizes differences between developed/developing countries. It identifies key factors for a successful e-government implementation and proposes an implementation framework. As a demonstration, we follow the guidance of the proposed framework in conducting a case study to analyze the implementation strategies of e-government in developed and developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

With the Internet surging, governments at all levels are utilizing it to reinvent their structure and efficiency, coining the term “e-government” to describe this initiative. Bill Gates of Microsoft claims that e-government is one of the most exciting fields in electronic commerce in the near future. E-government is a cost-effective solution that improves communication between government agencies and their constituents by providing access to information and services online. *The Economist* magazine estimates that the potential savings of implementing e-government could be as much as \$110 billion and 144 billion English Pounds in the U.S. and Europe, respectively (Symonds, 2000). Though a new subject, e-government has attracted more and more research interest and focus from industries, national governments, and universities (Carter & Belanger, 2005; Chircu & Lee, 2003; Huang, Siau, & Wei, 2004; Jain & Patnayakuni, 2003; Moon & Norris, 2005; Navarra & Cornford, 2003), such as IBM’s Institute for Electronic Government and various “E-Government Task Forces” in different countries (Huang, D’Ambra, & Bhalla, 2002).

E-Government is a permanent commitment made by government to improve the relationship between the private citizen and the public sector through enhanced, cost-effective, and efficient delivery of services, information, and knowledge. Broadly defined, e-government includes the use of all information and communication technologies, from fax machines to wireless palm pilots, to facilitate the daily administration of government, exclusively as an Internet-driven activity that improves citizen’s access to government information, services, and expertise to ensure citizen’s participation in, and satisfaction with government process (UN & ASPA, 2001). Narrowly defined, e-government is the production and delivery of government services through IT applications, used to simplify and improve transactions between

governments and constituents, businesses, and other government agencies (Sprecher, 2000).

The development and implementation of e-government brings about impacts and changes to the structure and functioning of the public administration (Snellen, 2000). Unlike the traditional bureaucratic model where information flows only vertically and rarely between departments, e-government links new technology with legacy systems internally and, in turn, links government information infrastructures externally with everything digital (Tapscott, 1995). Moreover, e-government will help breaking down agency and jurisdictional barriers to allow more integrated whole-of-government services across the three tiers of government (federal, state, and local). Government in the offline environment can be difficult to access, which is especially problematic for people in regional and remote locations. E-Government offers a potential to dramatically increase access to information and services. E-Government makes it easier for citizens to participate in and contribute to governmental issues.

Various stages of e-government reflect the degree of technical sophistication and interaction with users (Hiller & Belanger, 2001). A broad model with a three-phase and dual-pronged strategy for implementing electronic democracy is proposed by Watson and Mundy (2000) (see Figure 1). The three phases draw on the principles of skill development (Quinn, Anderson, & Finkelstein, 1996), and the prongs echo the dual foundations of democratic government — effectiveness and efficiency. Note that we identify e-government and e-politics as elements of e-democracy. E-Government informs citizens about their representatives and how they may be contacted and it improves government efficiency by enabling citizens to pay transactions online; whereas e-politics is the use of Internet technology to improve the effectiveness of political decisions by making citizens aware of the how and why of political decision making and facilitating their participation in this process.

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