

# Chapter 11

## Weaving the Transparency Network: Building E–Government in Brazil

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### ABSTRACT

*This analysis examines Brazil's e-government initiatives, particularly those promoting transparency and open data. It explores their evolution since the 1990s, including recent developments like the Access to Information Law (LAI) and the Open Data Policy (PDA). Bibliographic research, encompassing books, academic articles, official documents, and government/organization websites, informs this study. Though young, Brazil's transparency and open data movement shows promise. The LAI and PDA are seen as vital tools for information access and public participation. Challenges like limited internet access and digital divides remain, highlighting the need for continuous efforts. Recognizing e-government, LAI, and PDA as crucial for Brazilian democracy and socio-economic progress, civil society involvement is deemed essential for their successful implementation.*

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter delves into two crucial pillars of e-Government in Brazil – social participation and open data – exploring their interwoven impact on fostering transparency, accountability, and ultimately, societal progress.

The digital revolution has reshaped the landscape of governance, ushering in the era of e-Government. At the heart of this transformation lies a fundamental principle: empowering citizens to actively partici-

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## ***Weaving the Transparency Network***

pate and engage in shaping their communities and nation. Social participation stands as a cornerstone of effective e-Government, fostering a collaborative environment where citizens become active partners in the decision-making process. As Alves (2014) aptly states, “the open data and governmental transparency movement is based on interconnected principles.” By leveraging online platforms, participatory councils, and public consultations, e-Government initiatives empower citizens to voice their opinions, share insights, and contribute to the formulation and evaluation of public policies. This fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the common good, ultimately strengthening the fabric of democratic governance (Meijer, 2019).

Brazil has embraced this concept through various legislative measures, including the Access to Information Law (LAI) and the Open Data Policy (PDA). The LAI, enacted in 2011, enshrines the fundamental right of citizens to request and receive information from public entities, fostering transparency and accountability within the government (Presidência da República, 2011). The PDA, established in 2012, complements the LAI by mandating the proactive release of government data in machine-readable formats (Ministry of Economy, 2020). These initiatives, along with the establishment of the Brazilian Open Data Portal ([dados.gov.br](https://dados.gov.br)), have laid the groundwork for a more open and inclusive government in Brazil.

Brazil’s commitment to open data has not emerged overnight. It represents a gradual evolution, intricately linked to the country’s democratic transition during the 1990s. As societal demands for accountability surged, fueled by a burgeoning democracy, the call for transparency became increasingly pronounced. This shift catalyzed the establishment of several pivotal milestones, each contributing to the advancement of openness in governance.

A closer look at these milestones reveals a historical trajectory marked by legislative measures, policy reforms, and technological advancements aimed at enhancing governmental accountability and public participation. The establishment of the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU) in 1992 stands as a significant landmark, institutionalizing social control over public administration (CGU, 2023). This entity continues to play a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability in government actions.

The introduction of the e-Citizenship Portal in 2004 marked another pivotal moment. This online platform empowered citizens to access comprehensive information regarding public expenditure, procurement processes, and contractual agreements, signifying a substantial stride towards enhancing government transparency (Ministry of Economy, 2023).

The enactment of the LAI in 2012 stands as a landmark achievement, granting citizens the legal right to access public information and empowering them to actively participate in governance processes (Presidência da República, 2011). The launch of the Brazilian Open Data Portal (PBDA) in 2005 marked a turning point, consolidating data from various public agencies and fostering greater transparency within the government. It empowered researchers, entrepreneurs, and civil society organizations to leverage data for informed decision-making and the development of impactful solutions.

Further solidifying Brazil’s commitment to open data, the Open Data Law (LDA) was approved in 2016. This legislation mandates the systematic opening of public data, underscoring the government’s dedication to fostering accountability and stimulating innovation through the democratization of information (Presidência da República, 2016). Additionally, Brazil’s alignment with the Open Government Partnership (OGP) signifies its dedication to upholding the tenets of transparent governance (OGP, 2023).

Open data initiatives have become pivotal in enhancing transparency and fostering innovation within the public sector. By providing government data in accessible formats, these initiatives empower citizens, businesses, and organizations to scrutinize government actions, promoting accountability. Furthermore,

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