

Section I

Introduction



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Chapter I

The Promise of Digital Government

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ABSTRACT

E-government promises to mark a new era of greater convenience in citizen access to governmental forms, data, and information. Its advocates promise that not only will e-government bring the convenience of online transactions, but it will also reverse citizens' disaffection from government, create dramatic savings, and reinforce rather than erode traditional American freedoms and liberties. E-government, however, is better thought of not as a revolution, but as an attempt to bring the e-business model into the public sector. A component-by-component examination of the e-business model shows that it is fraught with problems, challenges, and limitations as well as opportunities. The promise of digital government will be fulfilled only by a new generation of public managers who are generalists, not technocrats, capable of integrating the disparate fields of consideration, which are necessary aspects of the vision of e-government as a whole.

THE PROMISE OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

The promise of e-government is not, as some suppose, putting existing paper-based processes of bureaucracy into digital form. Rather, the promise is really nothing less than a profound transformation of the way the government does business. E-government advocates envision a future in which citizens have 24 hour, 7 days a week interactive access to all important government bureaus; where online transactions with government can be conducted from the comfort of home; where government officials make all purchases online; where there are one-stop web portals for businesses seeking to deal with regulatory requirements, students seeking assistance, and ordinary citizens seeking

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