

# Chapter VIII

## Horizontal Process Integration in E-Government: The Perspective of a UK Local Authority

**Jyoti Choudrie**  
*University of Hertfordshire, UK*

**Vishanth Weerakkody**  
*Brunel University, UK*

### ABSTRACT

*This article examines how horizontal integration between the various departments of a local authority in the United Kingdom (UK) occurs. Following that the aim of this article is to extract the “success factors” in government intervention that support horizontal and vertical integration based on the strategies pursued in the UK in order to render favourable results if applied elsewhere. The research methodology consisted of an in-depth case study that used the research tools of interviews and referring to archival documents. This research is timely as the maturity of e-government increases the issues of integrating processes and systems across various government departments becomes pertinent. The conclusion and lessons that can be learnt from this research is that e-government integration on a horizontal level obtains significant efficiency and effectiveness as more and more public services are being centralized.*

### INTRODUCTION

Due to the advent of the Internet, business opportunities involving information and communication technologies (ICTs) have multiplied, persuading not only commercial enterprises, but also governments around the globe to invest profoundly into

e-services. However, now the potential of a clear link between the use of ICTs and economic growth has become apparent, thereby urging numerous organisations and governments to invest profoundly into it (OECD, 2002). The e-services offered by governments are aimed at relaying information and public services to citizens over the Internet

and is referred to in general as “e-government.” E-government encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that are offered using ICTs and allows an improved service of the government to citizens (Northrup & Thorson, 2003). There are many varying definitions of e-government, but for the purposes of this paper, the following definition is offered. *E-government is an electronic technology that has the ability to transform relations within general government and between government bodies, citizens and businesses to better deliver its services and ultimately improve efficiency (World Bank, 2005).*

According to Lee, Tan, and Trimi (2005), various countries adopting the e-government initiative are at different levels of development, and to date very few governments have initiated the collaboration of government agencies across horizontal and vertical levels. With reference to the United Kingdom (UK), which is the backdrop of this research, in 1997 the Prime Minister announced that a quarter of all government services in the UK will be electronically delivered within five years (Phythian & Taylor, 2001). However, by the end of 2005 the deadline for providing 100% of the government services online had to be extended as most local authorities failed to meet the cut-off date; thereby causing the deadline to be extended to 2008 ([www.computing.co.uk](http://www.computing.co.uk)). It has been recognized as pertinent to offer services according to users’ needs, as this enhances cooperation among agencies, which is categorically required in order to provide central services and present an enhanced user experience for citizens using the services (Traunmuller, 2004). Furthermore, Jaeger (2002) argues that e-government will need to promote horizontal and vertical integration of the various governmental branches in order to satisfy the citizens’ need for a 24 hours and 7 days service.

Bearing in mind the importance of providing online public sector services, generally governments across the globe are considering ways of amalgamating back office systems, horizontally

integrating Web applications across government agencies, and vertically combining levels in order to provide portals, seamless services, and information delivery to citizens more efficiently and effectively (Varshney, 2005). It has also been found that there is no local UK government Web site that can offer users the sophisticated functionalities and interactions associated with online private sector equivalents, such as banks and supermarket Web sites ([www.computing.co.uk](http://www.computing.co.uk)). Furthermore, many governmental agencies are affording only basic online services such as downloadable forms and transactions; whereas horizontal integration grants real-time systems offering a one-stop-shop for all e-services (Layne & Lee, 2001). Consequently, according to Norris and Moon (2005), very few governments offer much in the way of two-way transactional e-government or provide horizontal e-government integration.

In this article we undertake an examination of the horizontal integration among the various departments of a local authority that occurs in order to deliver e-services to the citizens in a particular vicinity. Therefore, the research question guiding this paper is: What can be learnt about the achievement of horizontal integration among local authorities in the e-government context in order to better deliver e-services to citizens? In line with that, the aim of this paper is to extract the “success factors” in government intervention that support horizontal and vertical integration based on the strategies pursued in the UK in order to render favourable results if applied elsewhere.

This research is timely since currently governments around the globe are becoming technically savvy and the issues of integrating various and diverse departments are becoming important. Subsequently, we intend to examine the possibilities of generalizing our findings to other geographical and/or cultural settings. We believe that our analysis will be useful to policy makers seeking to promote the use of online products and services to communities in a country in an equitable manner. Researchers in the area of

16 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/horizontal-process-integration-government/8996](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/horizontal-process-integration-government/8996)

## Related Content

---

### Exploring the Moderating Effect of Perceived Usefulness on the Adoption of E-Government Services

Isaac Kofi Mensah (2019). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 17-35).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/exploring-the-moderating-effect-of-perceived-usefulness-on-the-adoption-of-e-government-services/231561](http://www.irma-international.org/article/exploring-the-moderating-effect-of-perceived-usefulness-on-the-adoption-of-e-government-services/231561)

### Globalization, Citizenship and New Information Technologies: From the MAI to Seattle

Peter J. Smith and Elizabeth Smythe (2004). *eTransformation in Governance: New Directions in Government and Politics* (pp. 272-307).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/globalization-citizenship-new-information-technologies/18633](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/globalization-citizenship-new-information-technologies/18633)

### Digital Governance and Democratization in the Arab World

Deborah L. Wheeler (2008). *Electronic Government: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 676-687).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-governance-democratization-arab-world/9744](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/digital-governance-democratization-arab-world/9744)

### The Cashless Society Has Arrived: How Mobile Phone Payment Dominance Emerged in China

Sarmann I. Kennedy, Guo Yunzhi, Fu Ziyuan and Kai Liu (2020). *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* (pp. 94-112).  
[www.irma-international.org/article/the-cashless-society-has-arrived/269395](http://www.irma-international.org/article/the-cashless-society-has-arrived/269395)

### Transparency in Electronic Governance: Freedom of Information via Governmental Website

Jing Shiang, Jin Lo and Hui-Ju Wang (2012). *Electronic Governance and Cross-Boundary Collaboration: Innovations and Advancing Tools* (pp. 270-280).  
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/transparency-electronic-governance/55184](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/transparency-electronic-governance/55184)