Chapter 88
Legal Issues Surrounding Connected Government Services:
A Closer Look at G-Clouds

Mariam Kiran
University of Bradford, UK

ABSTRACT

Recent technological advances have led to a knowledge-driven economy, where we expect and need information accessible from anywhere. Connected Government (c-government) enables governments to communicate through technology with their citizens and other governments. The use of ICT and emerging technologies has made this relationship much more effective. Although, most research is focused towards infrastructures and flexible services provision, form, there is a need for a layer of legal regulations to be followed. Legal issues can further aid in the provision of transparency, data confidentiality and encryption techniques. This is where Cloud Computing infrastructures can play an important role. This chapter looks into the Cloud infrastructure and discusses how Clouds are being used for connected government services, while further extending the discussion by looking at the legal issues surrounding the use of Clouds, particularly focusing on the UK G-Cloud as a case study.

INTRODUCTION

C-Government (Connected government) extends the concept of e-government (electronic government) and describes the services and interactions that take place between the government and its citizens using digital connection and socially connected media. These digital connections can influence businesses and government agencies, where information is communicated through technologies. Traditionally, operations of the government were mostly paper-based and involved understanding their citizens, with finding new manual ways to engage with their citizens. Recent technology advances, as a result of smart phones and M2M connected devices, have led government services to now being used as smart applications which

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can be accessed through any mediums such as mobile phones or tablet devices. This change in trend has led to a knowledge-led economy where information is constantly needed to be available every second and on-the-go in any location.

With this current push led by technology, there is an additional trend that the governments are pursuing and that is towards *Smart Cities*. The drive towards fast innovations in the digital world has raised a number of concerns from the user's perspective in terms of safety, security and manageability, particularly through the available infrastructures. In addition to these, there are major legal and ethical issues, which are still playing catch up, to encompass the various changes being brought about by technology. This chapter discusses these various legal concerns which have become the focus of much user and end user usage when they use the c-government services. The chapter highlights the need for a holistic framework which provides an effective governance procedure aiming for a citizen-centred vision of a government with increased transparency, improved management and efficient use of services through the Internet and ICT.

Figure 1 presents the various delivery models the governments use to connect to the public. These involve various layers of interaction such as connecting with other governments, citizens, businesses and the government employees. Information can be communicated through mechanisms such as 'push notifications' for regulatory services or through 'two-way' communications such as through city councils for localised interaction. Further services such as health, taxation, military services, all form examples of services which the government needs to offer. Governance laws such as encouraging voting, consultation and localised aid is all part of government activities which need to keep a proper functioning of the system.

Although, Figure 1 highlights the complicated architecture in which the government functions, due to the number and complexity, some of these tasks have to be automated for the services being offered. C-government services do this, by making some of these processes and information available online. However, this method of communication is plagued by various controversies of incorrect information,

Figure 1. C-Government delivery models