

Chapter 2

Analysis of National ICT Strategies for USA, EU, India, South East Asia, and Australasia

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines available secondary research data from various national ICT government strategies of the USA, EU, India, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand to determine the centric inclination of these strategies and how these strategies support and facilitate public service delivery in the digital era. This research had the objective of determining the major ICT trends of the respective countries by five dimensions, namely citizen centric, civil society centric, business centric, government administration centric, and technology centric. The ICT strategies from the various geographical regions may be summed up by two aims, as expressed by the USA President Obama in his directive “Roadmap for a Digital Government” of 2012, namely to use technology to make a real difference in people’s lives (i.e., government reinvention through the transformation of processes) and to innovate more and enable entrepreneurs to better leverage government data to improve the quality of services to the general public (i.e., utilisation of information for improved decision making).

INTRODUCTION

While the invisible hand looks after the private sector, the invisible foot kicks the public sector to pieces. Herman E. Daly, American Ecological Economist

It is important to recognise that an ICT strategy supports an organisation’s corporate strategy and as such helps to sustain the various corporate policies. Hence, at a government level, the ICT governmental strategy must be viewed as a political statement supporting the general government policies be they fiscal, economic, societal, technological, or/and administrative. Furthermore, when examining a government’s ICT strategy there must be a distinction between the rhetoric contained in the ICT strategic document

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and the true meaning and intention of what is written. This why it is important to examine the particular government ICT strategies of various countries and geographical regions to determine the centric forces that dominate the particular ICT strategy. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to analyse a number of national ICT Government strategies related to the USA, EU, India, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand and generally determine each ICT strategy's partiality towards five identified centric forces, namely citizen centric, civil society centric, business centric, government administration centric and technology centric. These centric forces provide a comprehensive basis for Public Service delivery in the digital era. The analysis of the various strategies from the selected countries and geographical regions is also of great consequence because they directly related to the governmental corporate strategies that define the fiscal, economic, societal, technological, or/and administrative policies.

BACKGROUND

The notion of Public Service delivery in the digital era is closely related to the concept of reinventing government as envisaged by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) and Heeks (1999). As it was stated in the previous chapter, the concept of reinventing government is based on three fundamental principles: Citizens are regarded as clients who become the central focus in designing government service delivery; the move towards embracing the values of catalytic government and community ownership; and public officials are challenged to think about how to empower citizens to take ownership of community problems by urging them to partner with citizen groups and non-profit organisations to identify solutions and deliver public services effectively.

These three fundamental principles embrace a centricity approach to public service delivery. The first principle focuses on the citizen, where the citizen is the central and most significant focus. This principle is thus promoting the concept of Citizen Centricity. The second principle refers to catalytic government and community ownership. Hence, the second principle is viewed as promoting the concept of Civil Society Centricity and Government Administration Centricity. Finally, the third principle refers once again to Civil Society, but makes particular mention to non-profit organisations. Hence, the focus of the third principle is to identify solutions (through innovation) and deliver public services effectively (through technology). Therefore, the third principle is promoting the concept of Technology Centricity. The fact that the third principle refers to Civil Society with particular emphases on non-profit organisation implies that the reference to Civil Society in the second principle includes the business community as being part of Civil Society. For the sake of clarity, it would be more meaningful for the business community to be viewed as a separate focus, thus Business Centricity. The reason for viewing Business Centricity as a separate aspect is based on the fact that the business community has particular needs that are quite different from that of non-profit organisations.

A CENTRIC APPROACH TO PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

From the above, it may be implied that Public Service delivery in the digital era may focus on five aspects, namely, Citizen Centric; Business Centric; Civil Society Centric; Government Administration Centric; and Technology Centric.

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