Chapter VIII

E-Government and Creating a Citizen-Centric Government:
A Study of Federal Government CIOs

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Abstract

This chapter examines the relationship between e-government and the creation of a more citizen-centric government. This study provides a conceptual framework showing a possible relationship among management, resources, security, and privacy issues that would lead to creating a more citizen-centric government with e-government. It explores the opinions of chief information officers (CIOs) on e-government issues and effectiveness. A survey was administered to federal government CIOs in June and July 2005. The survey results revealed that CIOs who have higher management capacity and project-management skills were associated more with creating a more citizen-centric federal government. The contribution of this study to the literature on e-government is that it identifies two key attributes that CIOs can attain in order to reach higher stages of e-government advancement for their department or agency.

Introduction

Electronic government or e-government in this study is defined as the delivery of government information and services to citizens through the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This definition has been used in other empirical studies of e-government adoption (Moon & Norris, 2005a). This research adds to this definition with Grant and Chau's (2005) interpretation of e-government as a broad-based transformative initiative, which is consistent with creating more citizen-centric government. Gronlund (2005) reviews the various definitions of e-government. That author has found they share a common theme of the need for organizational transformation through technological implementation. We realize that focusing on the Internet and e-government is a more limited way of examining e-government because of the rise of non-Internet technologies (Gronlund & Horan, 2004).

Citizen-centric government is the delivery of government services continuously to citizens, businesses, and other government agencies through the Internet (Seifert & Relyea, 2004). Citizen-centric government through e-government acts more as a transformation tool that provides a new government model based on being citizen focused (Schelin, 2003). Some scholars have argued that for e-government to fully realize its capabilities, it must transform government from agency centric to citizen centric (Seifert & Relyea).

The term e-government emerged in the late 1990s. It was born out of the Internet boom. The literature of IT use within government is different from e-government because it more often focuses on external use, such as services to citizens and organizational change (Gronlund & Horan, 2004). Definitions of e-government that focus exclusively on service-delivery components fail to capture the more complex aspects of government transformation because of IT (Grant & Chau, 2005). This study attempts to address this issue by focusing on citizen-centric e-government.

Existing Research on CIOs

The existing research on chief information officers (CIOs) or information resource managers (IRMs) has focused on the federal government (Bertot, 1997; Bertot & McClure, 1997; Buehler, 2000; McClure and Bertot, 2000; Westerback, 2000), state governments (Reddick, in press; Ugbah & Umeh, 1993), local governments (Fletcher, 1997), and comparisons between the public and private sectors (Ward & Mitchell, 2004). There have been no scholarly studies, of which we are aware, that examine public-sector CIOs and their opinions on e-government issues and its effectiveness. This is most likely attributed to the Internet being a relatively new research area in the public sector. In general, the management of IT in private-sector organizations has long been a focus of IS research, but the extent of diffusion has not been as extensively explored in public-sector organizations (Fletcher, 1997).

This study empirically focuses on the connection between e-government and creating a more citizen-centric federal government. The existing research has begun to explore the relationship between e-government and increasing citizen-initiated contacts with government; this study fits into that research area (Thomas & Streib, 2003; West, 2004). However, much needs to be done to identify the key attributes of CIOs, which enable them to create more citizen-centric organizations.

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