

Chapter 80

Factors Affecting the Citizens' Trust in E-Government

Hisham M. Alsaghier

Griffith University, Australia

Marilyn Ford

Griffith University, Australia

Anne Nguyen

Griffith University, Australia

Rene Hexel

Griffith University, Australia

ABSTRACT

In e-government context, trust plays a vital role in helping citizens overcome perceived risks. Trust makes citizens comfortable sharing personal information, make online government transaction, and acting on e-Government advices. Thus, trust is a significant notion that should be critically investigated to help both researchers and practitioners to understand citizens' acceptance to e-Government. Prior research in trust has focused mainly on consumer's trust in e-Commerce. Most of existing literatures on trust in e-government focus on technical perspective such as PKI. This paper contributes by proposing a conceptual model of citizens' trust in e-Government. The proposed conceptual model of citizens' trust in e-government is integrated constructs from multiple disciplines: psychology, sociology, e-commerce, and HCI. The research is aimed also to develop items in order to measure the theoretical constructs in the proposed model. The pool of items is generated based on literature review. Q-Methodology has been utilised to validate the generated measurement items. The outcome of two Q-sorting rounds resulted in developing a survey instrument for proposed model with an excellent validity and reliability statistical results.

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INTRODUCTION

Electronic commerce, or in short, e-commerce and its sophisticated technologies have enabled governments and companies to provide their products and services for their citizens and customers through web sites. Online services are cheaper, more convenient, and easy to provide. Electronic Government or e-government has been classified as one instance of e-commerce (Schneider, 2003). Many governments around the world have launched their e-government initiatives to provide citizens and organisations with more convenient ways to access government information and services (Turban et al., 2002). Previous research has been carried out to evaluate the quality and quantity of the provided e-government services and the overall adoption of e-government. One factor that plays a vital role in e-commerce adoption, especially e-government, is a mature trust between citizen and the government. Although trust has been recently studied in e-commerce, there is still yet a lack of sufficient research that investigates the trust phenomenon in e-government. Most of the existing online trust literatures focus on e-commerce in particular B2C e-commerce.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. The first purpose is to identify the factors that most likely affect citizens' trust in e-government. This is contextualised by investigation of the elements and components that transact the trust beliefs in electronic services, whether these elements and components are related to technical aspects such as Human Computer Interaction (HCI), or related to business, psychological, sociological, or cultural perspectives. The second purpose is to develop an instrument to measure the theoretical constructs in the proposed model.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Overview of E-Government

There are a number of e-government definitions in the existing literature. Most definitions of e-government revolve around the concepts of government's employment of technology, in particular web-based application to improve the access and delivery of government services to citizens, business partners, and other government agencies. World Bank defines trust as "the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks the Internet, and mobile computing) that have ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government." (World Bank Group, 2007)

Stages of E-Government Development

There are various stages of e-government development. According to (Howard, 2001; Lau, 2001), there are four major stages of e-government development:

- **Information Publishing:** this is a basic form of e-government where government posts information on the official government websites. The presented information may include information about available public services, government contract, and government events.
- **Two-way Communication:** in this stage citizens communicate with the government through the Internet and make simple requests. Usually, the information requested is not processed immediately online but sent to the requestor by mail or email.
- **Transaction:** this stage is more sophisticated than previous stages where citizens can conduct all transactions online. Driving

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