

Chapter VI

Electronic Government Implementation: A Comparison Between Developed and Developing Countries

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, the Internet has become one of the most important means of communication in all social areas. The success of Web technology adoption in the private sector has put pressures on the public sector to adopt the Internet to present information and service resources. The concept of creating more efficient and convenient interaction between government and the interacting parties using Internet technology is referred to as electronic government (or digital government). Recent studies have shown an increase in the adoption of electronic government by various countries (Archer, 2005; I-Ways, 2005; Janssen et al. 2004). Nevertheless, the level of implementation diverges from country to country. This study identifies critical success factors of electronic government and proposes an implementation framework. This chapter presents an extensive case study to illustrate how the proposed framework can be used to analyze electronic government strategies in a developed country (United States) and a developing country (China). In conclusion, recommendations are made to developed and developing countries for their implementation of electronic government.

INTRODUCTION

“Electronic government” or “digital government” refers to the initiative taken by governmental agencies and organizations to use the Internet technology in increasing their working effectiveness and efficiency. It is a permanent commitment made by the government to improve the relationship between the private citizen and the public sector through enhanced, cost-effective, and efficient delivery of services, information, and knowledge. Broadly defined, electronic government includes the use of all information and communication technologies, from fax machines to wireless palm pilots, to facilitate the daily administration of government, exclusively as an Internet driven activity that improves citizen’s access to government information, services and expertise to ensure citizen’s participation in, and satisfaction with government process (UN and ASPA, 2001).

Narrowly defined, electronic government is the production and delivery of government services through IT applications; used to simplify and improve transactions between governments and constituents, businesses, and other government agencies (Sprecher, 2000).

Electronic government can improve communication between government agencies and their constituents by providing access to information and services online at relatively low cost, and provide public services through Web sites. The Economist magazine estimates that the potential savings of implementing electronic government could be as much as \$110 billion and 144 billion English Pounds in the US and Europe respectively (Symonds, 2000). In recent years, electronic government has attracted more and more research interest and focus from industries, national governments, and universities (Barnes and Vidgen, 2006; Bertot and Jaeger, 2006; Chen et al. 2006;

Table 1. Benefits of electronic government

Removed Boundaries
Electronic government will help break down agency and jurisdictional barriers to allow more integrated whole-of-government services across the three tiers of government (Federal, State, and Local). With electronic government, the provision of seamless access will be taken much further and will make government much more approachable.
Enhanced Accessibility
Government in the off-line environment can be difficult to access. While some business can be conducted by phone, it often requires a visit to a government office. This can be problematic for people in regional and remote locations. Electronic government offers the potential to dramatically increase access to information and services.
Improved Service Quality
The underlying goal of electronic government is to improve service quality for all citizens. Electronic government represents convenient and reliable services, with lower compliance costs as well as higher quality and value.
Integrated Agencies
Cross-agency initiatives can lead to high value services that provide efficiency benefits for both citizens and government. Scope for cross-agency initiatives exists where several services are closely related – that is, where information needs to be acquired from more than one agency (e.g., business services).
Improved Reputation
Electronic government helps build an image of a country as a modern nation, an attractive location for people to visit, and businesses to invest.
Greater Citizen Participation
Electronic government makes it easier for those who wish to contribute.

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