Chapter XVIII
Innovation and E–Government:
An in Depth Overview on E–Services

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that e-government is a phenomenon of our era. E-business is becoming vital on the private sector as well as in the governmental institutions. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in order to change the structures and processes of government organizations in an attempt to allow the exchange of information with citizens, businesses and other arms of government, results to improved efficiency, convenience as well as better accessibility of public services. The three segments of e-government services are Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B) and Government-to-Government (G2G) in a correspondence to the business model segments. As many others aspects of science in their very beginning, e-government suffers from a definitional vagueness of its concept due to the fact that there is not a widely accepted definition among researchers. So, what exactly is e-government? Has anyone tried or managed to define its exact concept and meaning? Is it just an Internet-based government or are there any other non-internet technologies used in this context? How can next-generation heterogeneous networks, enhance its abilities on interconnectivity? These are all questions seeking for an answer in this paper. This study does not try to stand out either as a review or as a synthetic summary of the literature concerning e-government, rather, its main objective will be an in depth overview of the current status of e-government phenomenon. Future works need to give an answer to the dilemma whether e-government is really a tool for decentralization and democratization or the result of a sociotechnical process towards a new model of public administration. Finally, in an attempt to focus on the changes in business process that are needed inside governmental institutions in order e-government to be successfully implemented, a second recommendation for future work resides on the need for a holistic model which can embrace the back-office, the front-office as well as the real citizens' needs.

INTRODUCTION

It is a common knowledge that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) contribute substantially to the acceleration of financial development and the elimination of poverty. This can be achieved by initially providing and continuously improving health and education. This, however, can only be implemented through the sharing of information and communication technology resources across governments and their citizens. Ample and uninhibited access to new technologies is essential for uniform and consistent diffusion of innovation.

The use of internet capabilities by governments all around the world has increased significantly over the last years. Among all the constituencies that are affected by the development of electronic government, businesses represent one constituency that may experience significant benefits (Thompson, Rust & Rhoda, 2005). Electronic government projects have a breadth of impact that extends far beyond the agency concerned and where benefits often expand beyond the agency owning the aforementioned project.

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The rapidly changing business environment of the last years has created uncertainty in the market place and high risk for future decisions in the years to come. In order to survive in this demanding market place, service organizations have only one choice, to successfully develop new services. However the failure rate for new services projects is high, because the knowledge about how new services should be developed is limited (Kitsios, 2005). The success rate of new service projects is an average 58% (Griffin, 1997). In other words, four out of ten new service projects fail in the market place.

It is often argued that e-government research suffers from definitional vagueness of the e-government concept, oversimplification of the e-government development process within manifold institutional and political environments as well as various methodological limitations. In order to confront and resolve these issues, this study reviews the barriers in the e-government literature, and it suggests ways forward. In order to achieve these, this study provides an analysis of the development as well as various definitions of the e-government concept. After discussing the barriers of the concept, methodological and conceptual rectifications such as better studying and explaining the processes of e-government projects within complex political environments, addressing the problem of under-specification in the e-government literature by the production of more grounded, empirical studies that would create new theoretical arguments and provide new concepts and categories so as to enhance our understanding of e-government policy processes and actors, as well as attaching the subject of e-government strongly to mainstream public administration research are suggested in the final part of the analysis.

WHAT IS E-GOVERNMENT?

E-government is one of those concepts that mean a lot of different things to a lot of different groups (Grant & Chau, 2005). Electronic Government or e-government has emerged as a popular catch phrase in public administration (Yildiz, 2007). There is no e-government textbook and no e-government theory; knowledge comes from practice; excellence comes from best practices (Center for Democracy and Technology, 2002). Part of the problem that this article deals with arises from the vagueness of the e-government concept (Aldrich, Bertot & McClure, 2002; Hwang, Choi & Myeong, 1999). E-government can embrace a wide range of services. Services for citizens, for example, might include registration to government services such as health care, education or employment benefits. As regards businesses, e-government services can take the form of online alerts for public procurement or funding opportunities as well as information and support on applicable legislation in a given

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