# Chapter 3
# The E-Governance Concerns in Information System Design for Effective E-Government Performance Improvement

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## ABSTRACT

*This chapter investigates a set of governance concerns related to the electronic transformation of public administration for performance improvement under the context of reinventing government in the knowledge age. Of specific interest is the organizational context to situate information systems (IS) design for services referring mainly to the decisions that define expectations, enable empowerment, or verify performance of the people or units involved. In particular, this research is looking into the transformative impact of such an IS effort on the design of a citizen-centric model of public service in the digital operation of today's government (or e-government). Meanwhile, e-governance should relate to the practical rendering over an electronic environment such practices as consistent management, cohesive policies, responsive processes, and decision-rights for different areas of responsibilities. The framework of analysis in this discussion should accommodate the configuration of a government unit's value profile in public sector as exemplified in many of today's citizen-centric societies. This framework highlights a public sector reform approach to nurture information systems (IS) support for improving public sector management. The premise of our exploration is that as we move into the knowledge society, more and more public sector organizations should fulfill their roles from the creation and application of knowledge. This is an example of the value shop model, in which value is created by configuring and applying specific knowledge to solve problems in citizens' areas of interest. This discussion covers the issues in digitizing knowledge portfolios in support of performance improvement among institutional units. Thereby, managing knowledge work at the e-government level is a behavior involving various e-governance concerns such as challenges on internal enculturation of participative knowledge sharing among public sector organizations, and on the proper understanding of the institution's context of public service development.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the emerging digital economy of the 21st century (Tapscott, 1997), organizations co-evolve with their environments. The advance of Internet technologies (Vossen & Hagemann, 2007) coupled with the trend of globalization is forcing many a government to devise new strategies, develop new capabilities, design new organizational structures, and deploy new governance models (Eifert & Puschel, 2004; Rivard, Aubert, Patry, Pare & Smith, 2004). Oftentimes, the governance model in a public sector organization could be considered as a prototype being creatively constructed and deconstructed over time. The disruptive effect of fast technological innovations and adoptions has literally redefined the essence of governing effectiveness from sense and respond to anticipate and lead. If governments are planning to sense the changes and then respond, it might be already too late; rather anticipating the coming changes and executing with speed to lead, is a fact of life today.

Like an enterprise, it is a governing necessity to be equipped with the ability to respond quickly and effectively to change. This necessity has rendered the concept of electronic governance (e-governance) (Riley, 2003, 2001) indispensable, relating to the practical rendering over an electronic environment, such practices as consistent management, cohesive policies, responsive processes and decision-rights for different areas of responsibilities. Of particular interest is the electronic medium to support e-governance activities referring mainly to the decisions that define expectations, enable empowerment, or verify performance of the people or governmental units involved.

In this chapter, the author is peculiarly interested in a set of e-governance concerns related to the design of IS (information systems) support for effective e-government performance improvement (Wiig, 2004). Our framework of analysis examines the public sector organization's efforts to nurture IS support (Checkland & Holwell, 1998) for collaborative knowledge work that should accommodate the configuration and visibility of the organization's value profile in public service as exemplified in today's citizen-centric society. The discussion is also situated around the installation of electronic knowledge portfolios for government units, through providing suitable IS support in the electronic transformation of different public services amidst the technological advances of the Internet.

## THE CONTEXT OF E-TRANSFORMATION IN GOVERNANCE

Today, the connotation behind the "e" transformation of governance is an important policy issue and surely one that will influence how governments and citizens will interact in the coming decade (Oliver & Sanders, 2004). Clearly, the Internet and the information technologies have the potential to fundamentally change how society is governed and what role citizens come to play in that important process (Garson, 2007). Still, as the "e" prefix becomes affixed to more and more aspects of governance and government operations, it is helpful to clarify the differences between governance and government, and the implications behind their "e" counterparts. According to Kettl (2002), government is an institutional superstructure that society uses to translate politics into policies and legislation.

Governance is the outcome of the interaction of government, the public service, and citizens throughout the political process of policy development, program design, and service delivery. Put it simply, one might say that governments are specialized institutions that contribute to governance. As for the meanings of their "e" counterparts, Riley (2001) provides a useful description for e-governance: In its simplest sense, e-governance is about the use of emerging information and