Chapter X

E-Government: Emerging Trends: Organizational Challenges

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Abstract

This chapter demonstrates the importance and challenges considering technology adoption in general and e-government adoption in particular in the context of a key strategic process for the Egyptian Government. Thus our empirical findings are based on the foreign financing decision-making process of Egypt extending previous work on e-business technologies and e-government adoption in general and government-to-government (G2G) in particular. Although new trends in government support appear, such as u-government, g-government, and Me-government, none of the leading countries have reached full integration. Among some of the possible reasons is that technology adoption relies not only on the factors presented in the TAM model, but also on solving one of the most important challenges from our point of view, namely, organizational problems, which will be highlighted through our case studies. Our discussion includes identifying and documenting the decision-making processes crossing different ministries, which is a challenging task by itself. Although adopting technologies needs infrastructure, such as the IT-ready process, inter and intraorganizational integration technologies in the form of G2G or some of the new trends such as g-government, can help in resolving some of those organizational challenges existing at those strategic processes.
Introduction

Although several information systems (e.g., decision support systems, executive information systems) might be regarded as new trends or enhancements of technology and as isolated topics, we do believe that the advances of information systems have to be considered as broadening the scope of information systems. This idea is supported by Laudon and Laudon (2003); as they present, the scope of information systems has been widening from technical changes in the 1950s, managerial control in the 1960-1970s, institutional core activities in the 1980-1990s, to vendors and customers beyond the enterprise in 2000-2005. Widening the scope of information systems crossing organization boundaries has been possible through the networking and Internet revolution (O’Brien, 2003). Consequently, some trends have evolved, such as e-business, e-commerce, and e-government. Those issues do not neglect the existence of other information systems types, which are mainly used to integrate the organization, such as enterprise systems and supply chain management systems (O’Brien, 2003). Thus, the issue of e-business implies integrated systems within and outside the organizational boundaries, from our perspective.

The issue of e-government, which is the main focus of this chapter, is far more complex than the e-business, as the governmental decision-making processes at the strategic level might not be implemented in the same organization. Further, one process phase might be performed in different organizations that are not located at the same place. Thus although virtual organizations / e-business might be a solution to integrate those decision-making process, the complex decision making environment at that strategic level of a country is a barrier by itself.

Similar to the domain of e-business at the government level, as Bonham, Seifert, and Thorson (2003) present e-government (introduced in the next section), might be viewed in the context of three sectors: government-to-business (G2B), government-to-government (G2G), and government-to-citizen (G2C). In order to explore the importance and challenges of integrated e-government adoption (especially G2G) in practice, this chapter presents empirical findings from a study of the Debt Management and Foreign Financing Project in Egypt, managed by the country’s Cabinet Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC).

With the arrival of new trends of e-government, organizational challenges remain vital, and are increasingly complex. Thus, the results of our case studies are going to be linked with some of the challenges of emerging technologies to investigate whether some patterns can be related to our results. Thus, in the next of this chapter, we introduce the term e-government and the technology adoption model (TAM) and end by introducing some e-government trends. The third section provides an overview of the IDSC and the importance of the foreign financing process for Egypt. The fourth section presents the methodological approach adopted in the research. The fifth section provides an understanding of the foreign financing process, while the sixth section presents some of the organizational issues preventing successful G2G adoption now. The seventh section highlights the implications of the case study on e-government adoption, while the eighth section summarizes e-government trends and challenges. The chapter concludes with the implications of our research for the IDSC and a more general set of conclusions that we envisage will influence future research in e-government, with a reference to patterns related to new trends challenges.