Chapter 22
Evaluation of E-Government Services: A Citizen-Centric Approach to Citizen E-Complaint Services

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ABSTRACT

Do e-government services meet citizens’ needs? This chapter examines the performance of e-government services from a citizen-centric perspective. This chapter, taking the Kaohsiung Citizen Electronic Complaint System (KCECS) in Taiwan as a case study, identifies satisfaction and service quality as evaluation indicators when assessing e-government services. The empirical results show that citizens perceive moderately positive satisfaction toward the e-complaint service, and that a citizen-centric approach for evaluating e-government service is desirable. Complaint resolving ability makes the most contribution to the overall satisfaction of e-complaint service, but remains the top priority for improvement of the KCECS. Some solutions are proposed to help public officials to meet citizens’ needs and thus better serve citizens.

INTRODUCTION

To examine the extent to which the goals of implementing an e-government initiative or service having been achieved, and to justify its investment, performance evaluations are necessary. Among various e-government evaluation approaches, a citizen-centric or demand-side evaluation (Reddick, 2005), which is the assessment in terms of citizen’ demands or needs, is highly desirable because the promise of e-government is to engage citizenry in government in a citizen-centered manner, i.e. citizen-centered e-government (Bertot & Jaeger, 2006; 2008). Furthermore, with the knowledge regarding citizen needs, it is expected that administrations will tailor e-government better to citizens (Schedler & Summermatter, 2007).

This chapter takes the Kaohsiung Citizen Electronic Complaint System (KCECS) in Taiwan, one of
critical e-government services allowing citizens to file complaints to government officials regarding all government services or request information/services online, as an empirical example to evaluate e-government services from a citizen-centric perspective. A survey was conducted to collect demographics, characteristics, perceived service quality, and perceived satisfaction of the system’s users. Determinants of perceived satisfaction are also explored for realizing the top priority for improvement of the e-service. In the following sections of this chapter, we first introduce the citizen e-complaint service (CECS), and the KCECS, as a background for this chapter. Evaluation approaches of e-government services are then reviewed for determining a suitable method for the demand-side evaluation of the KCECS. Section 4 and section 5 describe method and results of our evaluation of the KCECS. Section 6 provides some discussions, including ways to improve satisfaction of the system, and conclusion.

CITIZEN E-COMPLAINT SERVICE IN THE E-GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

Email Contact Material Worldwide

CECS with its communication vehicle being email, allowing citizens to file complaints to government officials regarding all government services or request information/services, is one of the most critical e-government services. According to West’s (2008a) global e-government reports: “Improving technology utilization in electronic government around the world, 2008” witnessed eighty-eight percent of global government websites offering email contact material that allows ordinary citizens to pose questions or request services. Many government websites around the world provide citizen e-complaint services, e.g. The US Government Web, http://www.usa.gov/; Dubai Government’s Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, U. A. E.’s Website (http://www.dubaitourism.ae/about/default.asp); and the website of the Local Government Ombudsman in the UK, an independent organization investigating complaints about councils and certain other bodies (http://www.lgo.org.uk/index.php).

The Kaohsiung Citizen Electronic Complaint System

The Kaohsiung City, with an area of 154 square kilometers and the population of 1.5 million people, is the second largest metropolis in Taiwan. To comply with the e-government policy of Taiwan, in 2003 the Kaohsiung City Government (KCG) employed customer relationship management (CRM)/citizen relationship management (CzRM) to re-design the Kaohsiung Mayor’s Email Box (KMEB) as a new web-based system: the KCECS. It aims to provide an efficient communication channel between citizens and the government. The architecture of the KCECS, incorporating its functions, comprises the following segments (Chu, Yeh, & Chuang, 2008) (see Figure 1):

Citizen Access Channel

The KCG integrates all agencies’ email boxes into the KCECS as a single access channel to facilitate communication with citizens. A web-based mechanism is adopted to offer a 24-hour, 365-day, boundary-free service. Citizens could therefore request the government to deliver services without the limitations of time and space. In addition, the KCECS creates a user-friendly interface by simplifying user’s instructions, and provides frequently asked questions (FAQs) for citizens to make inquiries online (http://soweb.kcg.gov.tw/).

Workflow Mechanism

To efficiently handle complaints, the KCG re-engineered the complaint-handling mechanism and incorporated a responsive design for citizens.