Chapter XVI

An E-Government Model

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Abstract

Electronic government (e-government), the ability for government to provide access to services and information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, is an emerging force today. There are several models that attempt to explain the way in which e-government has evolved or is evolving. This paper presents an overview of a few important government models and frameworks.

Introduction

Electronic government (e-government) refers to the delivery of national or local government information and services via the Internet or other digital means. It is defined as the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as wide-area networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability
to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government (Venkatachalam, Shore, & Sharma, 2003). These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management (Larsen & Rainie, 2002; Margetts & Dunleavy, 2002; World Bank Group, http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/egov/definition.htm). E-government, the ability for government to provide access to services and information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, is an emerging force today. The purpose of e-government is to provide an e-portal, “a one-stop Internet gateway,” to major government services by the streamlining, simplification, and integration of services of various government agencies (Sharma & Gupta, 2002, 2003). Heeks (2001) describes e-government as i-governance or integrated governance since it integrates both the processing and the communication technologies, and since it integrates people, processes, information, and technology in the service of achieving governance objectives (Bertucci, 2003; Bollier, 2003; Heeks).

The e-government concept is under implementation at the federal or provincial/state level in many countries. Governments have taken the initiative and are intent on applying e-commerce tools and techniques to the business of governing (Dearstyne, 2001; Grönlund, 2002; Howard, 2001). Federal, state, and local governments, under pressure to deliver services more efficiently at lower cost, are recognizing e-commerce as an attractive option both commercially and politically. E-government has the greatest potential to revolutionize the performance of government and revitalize the democracy by speeding transactions, increasing efficiency, and bringing people closer to the government (Sharma & Gupta, 2002, 2003). All OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) member countries have already embarked on an e-government revolution, offering government information and services online, although the quantity and range varies considerably (Carey, 2004; Coleman & Gotze, 2002; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001, 2003). For example, the government Web portals of the United States and Norway provide a single entry point to access hundreds of public Web sites (United States, http://www.firstgov.gov; Norway, http://www.norge.no). Worldwide, many initiatives have been taken to create electronic states in order to increase the efficiency of the government and its services. Such projects include the Intelligent Island: Concept of Singapore, Golden Bridge Project of China, Multimedia Super Corridor of Malaysia, Access America of the USA, and Government Direct of the U.K. (Gurstein, 2000; Harris, 2002; Hunter & Jupp, 2001). As e-government principles and practices have been applied in the past few years, this chapter presents an overview of a few important e-government models and frameworks that have been evolved or are evolving.
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