China Digital Governance Development Review Over the Past Two Decades

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ABSTRACT

This article describes how with the emergence of ubiquitous technology, intelligence, and the rise of social networks facilitated by mobile Internet, big data, cloud computing and other emerging technologies, it has become a global trend that digital governance has been employed in the executive branches of many countries in the world. This article explores the data of quantity of published articles, researchers, research institutes, high-frequency key words, etc., obtained through CiteSpaceIII. The analysis of the articles related to digital governance for the recent 20 years are used to perform content analysis on the research topic and evolution. The development situations and problems of digital governance research in China are analyzed based on the literature review. The future study direction is prospected.

KEYWORDS

Big Data, Digital City, E-Governance, E-Government, National Governance, Social Governance

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s, the information technology revolution has rapidly expanded around the globe, and now influences all levels of society, politics, economy and culture. Not to be left out, governments in many countries began utilizing information technology and the concept of e-government was born.

With the rise of social networking, the maturity of technologies like the Internet of Things, cloud computing, and mobile Internet, the amount of available data in society is growing exponentially. The world has entered the era of Big Data. This evolution of information systems has profoundly affected the development of, and managerial changes in, the public sector. It has also facilitated the paradigm shift from “new public management” (NPM) to “digital-era governance” (DEG).

“Digital governance” is based on information and communication technology and big data. As a governance model, it optimizes managerial decisions and policies through integration of complex data analysis, data modeling, data optimization and data visualization in government operations and public management processes (Liu, 2015). In this way, diversified governance is introduced.

In practical terms, this means greater attention is now given to exploiting the advantages of information technology. Along with this comes a respect for citizens’ needs, a reconciliation of the conflict between integration and professionalization in management tools and methods and a nurturing of civic autonomy.

DOI: 10.4018/IJPADA.2018070107

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Digital governance emphasizes strengthening governmental managerial capacity and enhancing the legitimacy, transparency and responsiveness of good governance. All of this is done so as to better solve social problems and serve all citizens. Digital governance is now being adopted by the executive branches of many countries and is becoming a global trend (Zheng, 2014). Compared with developed countries, the application of information technology in China started late. In 1993, China’s central government started the “three gold project” (Golden Bridge project, Golden Customs and Golden Card), a prototype of e-government in China. The “Government online project” (1999) and the “twelve gold” project (2002) followed as the construction of e-government infrastructure entered its development stage. At that time, improving the government’s administrative capacity was an important goal.

The Chinese government then began information engineering in various areas, such as safety engineering, digital urban management, data centers, and emergency command. But during the period of 2009 to 2012, when scholarly circles in the know spoke of the rise of “big data”, “cloud computing” and “national modernization management system” and other buzz words, China entered its own era of digital governance.

Many experts and scholars have studied digital governance in China from different levels and perspectives. While their published papers use bibliometric methods for e-government research status and development trends for statistical analysis, there are few comprehensive analyses of the digital governance literature. What is especially lacking is a systematic literature search that focuses on theory and the development of digital governance in China.

In order to better describe the evolution of the development path from e-government to digital governance, the authors believe that it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the relevant literature. Starting with theoretical characteristics, evolution logic and development trends of digital governance, this paper studies the research results of current academic circles, including academic research strength, key words, and research topics.

This paper will provide an explanation of past research and forward-looking suggestions for future research that will focus on digital governance as a means to improve government, society and citizens’ lives. This paper will also explore a suitable path for the development of China’s digital governance and promote the development of digital governance research from an academic perspective.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

This paper uses CiteSpace III, version 3.9R7, as its analytical tool. CiteSpace runs on a Java-based platform developed by Dr. Chen Chaomei of the College of Computing and Informatics at Drexel University.

CiteSpace III is a visualized, co-citation network analysis software tool, and is based on citation analysis theory. Through a reasonable set of references, co-citations and threshold values of co-citation coefficients, it can draw intuitive and readily comprehensible information mapping. The software facilitates visualization and identification of the subject frontier and evolution path and classic fundamental literature by graphics. It assists users of excavation, analysis of scientific knowledge and their mutual relations, and identifies focus and trends in areas of research by keyword clustering. Additionally, it can carry out analysis of co-authors and institutions.

The subject of this study is relevant Chinese literature published in the past two decades. The search range is for the years 1996 to 2016. The retrieval methods are as follows: The website of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (URL: http://www.cnki.net/) is accessed. All the CNKI literature in the publication years from 1996 to 2016 is selected. The words “digital governance” or “e-governance” in the “source paper title” or “keyword” are then searched. 288 records are retrieved, each including author, title, keyword, journal, institution, publication year and references cited. This data is then downloaded for data cleansing, primarily by merging and deleting synonyms of keywords and thematic words for accuracy.
The Hybridized Nature of America’s Health Care System: Medicare as a Case of both Market and Public Failure
www.igi-global.com/article/hybridized-nature-america-health-care/62652?camid=4v1a

The ARRA Websites through the Lens of Digital Accountability and Citizen Engagement
www.igi-global.com/chapter/arra-websites-through-lens-digital/60070?camid=4v1a