Chapter VII

The Impact of M-Government on Organisations: A Mobility Response Model

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Abstract

Adoption of mobile technologies by government organizations not only benefits the parties who use these services, but also has positive impact on the internal workings of the public sector. Those government entities which initiated mobile applications have visible gains in productivity and cost and operational savings. This new way of performing tasks also undoubtedly has some repercussions on the organizational structure, civil worker, and the business processes. This chapter tries to underline some of the issues that might arise in these areas by examining some ongoing mobile government projects.
Introduction

Wireless technologies are leading the trend toward a ubiquitous and pervasive living environment enabling individuals and organizations to communicate and perform specific tasks anytime and anywhere. Tablet PCs, mobile phones, PDAs, and smartphones are becoming an indispensable part of the personal and professional lives of an increasing number of people in an increasing number of countries, with time-saving applications both on and off the job. Location, and to some extent, context-based mobile applications are allowing users to benefit from not only the mobility, but also the information and guidance that these devices provide.

Advancements in information and communication technologies (ICT) and especially the rapid adoption of mobile phones around the world contributed to the introduction of new mobile technology applications and services in recent years. Hence, mobile technologies offer solutions to a wide range of audiences ranging from individuals to businesses and government institutions in a world where speed and efficiency matter the most. The benefits and consequent improvements in efficiency and service that earlier generation technologies have provided are evident in activities that are now often taken for granted, for example, banking or paying bills online, or what is commonly referred to as e-commerce. Applications of information technologies in the governmental sector are sufficiently different from those in the private sector such that they are commonly referred to as e-government. However, special consideration is warranted for those government applications and services made available to the citizens specifically via the use of mobile technologies, hence the emergence of the field of mobile government or m-government (Kushchu & Kuscu, 2003).

At first glance, applying wireless solutions to the bureaucratic, slow-paced, and rigid public sector entities may seem a little out of place, but the increasing number of mobile government applications around the world show that there are indeed many opportunities for governments to improve and enhance their services, cut down on operational costs and create a better functioning organization. Traffic updates, navigation assistance, emergency assistance, weather updates, notification for tax and bill payments, field inspections, and tracking systems for stolen vehicles, all of which are possible with mobile technologies, are some of the more common applications used by governmental agencies (Yu & Kushchu, 2004). Though these applications have much promise, their widespread acceptance by governmental agencies is still in question.

Kushchu and Borucki (2004) further argue that while mobile government applications can have immediate and significant benefits for end users, many of the governmental units offering mobile solutions have yet to achieve major gains, especially in terms of workplace productivity. Given the bureaucratic nature of governmental agencies, critical changes in decision-making processes and shared values under guiding organizational culture and organizational structure tend to occur much slower than
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