Chapter XIV

E-Government Adoption in Canadian Municipal Governments:
A Survey of Ontario Chief Administrative Officers

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Abstract

This study examines Ontario, Canada’s municipal e-government adoption. This chapter specifically focuses on how e-government has increased citizen-initiated contacts with these local governments. This study uses survey data of these local governments to determine the key factors that predict increased citizen contact with e-government. What these municipal governments most commonly are doing is informational e-government, such as providing downloadable forms for manual completion. Transactional e-government is done less often, with very few local governments offering online payment of taxes, for example. The regression results indicated that offering more online services or e-services and having a separate information technology (IT) department developing the e-government budget increased citizen contact with e-government. The traditional factors that are used to explain...
citizen-initiated contact, such as socioeconomic status of the community, were not found to have any impact on increasing citizen contact with e-government.

Introduction and Background

E-government has been defined as the use of the Internet to deliver services and information to citizens and businesses (Ho & Ni, 2004; Holden, Norris, & Fletcher, 2003; Reddick, 2004a). There are several studies that examine the adoption of e-government at the local level in the U.S. (Edmiston, 2002; Holden, Norris, & Fletcher, 2003; Ho, 2002; Reddick, 2004a; Moon, 2002; Reddick, 2004b). However, there are few studies that have empirically examined e-government at the local level outside the U.S. (Criado & Ramilo, 2003; Archer, 2005). Some recent research examines theoretically the impact of e-government on governance in Canada (Charih & Robert, 2004; Kernaghan, 2005). Therefore, most of the empirical evidence on local e-government adoption is provided from the analysis of a single country. In addition, most of the work on e-government literature focuses on the features of local governments that have adopted the Internet for information and e-service delivery (Edmiston, 2002; Ho, 2002; Moon, 2002; Reddick, 2004a). A smaller number of studies actually has tested the impact of key features that explain e-government adoption rates (Ho & Ni, 2004; Holden, Norris, & Fletcher, 2003; Reddick, 2004b; Moon & Norris, 2005).

Citizen-initiated contacts with government occur when individual citizens contact government personnel with requests for services or complaints (Thomas & Melkers, 1999). Increased citizen initiated contact with e-government is important, since it enhances political participation and validates government institutions (Thomas & Streib, 2003). E-government is a way to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of citizen and business access to local governments (Kernaghan, 2005).

Few studies have examined how e-government has changed citizens’ interaction with their local governments (Thomas & Streib, 2003). The studies that have examined citizen-initiated contact with public administrators focus on the perceptions and characteristics of citizens and their contacts (Serra, 1995; Thomas, 1982; Thomas & Melkers, 2000). Few studies examine administrators’ responses to citizen-initiated contacts (Green, 1982). Therefore, the existing literature presents only one side of the relationship between citizen-initiated contacts and government, because it has not extensively considered bureaucrats and their responses to contacts.

Increased citizen interaction with government is a tool for enhancing democracy, since it represents an avenue for increasing service delivery and confidence in government (Green, 1982). With such an emphasis on enhancing performance at all levels of government, e-government is an excellent mechanism with which to
The Key Organisational Issues Affecting E-Government Adoption in Saudi Arabia
www.igi-global.com/article/key-organisational-issues-affecting-government/37439?camid=4v1a