Chapter VIII

A Comparative Study of Strategic Issues of Digital Government Implementations Between Developed and Developing Countries

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Abstract

Over the last decade, the Internet has become one of the most important means of communication in all social areas. The success of Web technology adoption in the private sector has put pressures on the public sector to adopt the Internet to present...
information and service resources. The concept of creating more efficient and convenient interaction between government and the interacting parties using Internet technology is referred to as digital government (or e-government). Recent studies have shown an increase in the adoption of digital government by various countries. Nevertheless, the level of implementation diverges from country to country. This study compares strategic issues of digital government implementation between developed and developing countries. Critical success factors for digital government implementation are discussed. In addition, recommendations are made to developed and developing countries for their implementation of digital government.

Introduction

With the Internet surging, governments at all levels are utilizing it to reinvent their structure and efficiency, coining the term "digital government" to describe this initiative. Bill Gates of Microsoft claims that digital government is one of the most exciting fields in electronic commerce in the near future. The Economist magazine estimates that the potential savings of implementing digital government could be as much as $110 billion and 144 billion English pounds in the US and Europe respectively (Symonds, 2000). Though a new subject, digital government has attracted more and more research interest and focus from industries, national governments, and universities, such as IBM’s Institute for Electronic Government and various “E-government Task Forces” in different countries.

Digital government is a permanent commitment by government to improve the relationship between the private citizen and the public sector through enhanced, cost-effective, and efficient delivery of services, information, and knowledge. Broadly defined, digital government includes the use of all information and communication technologies, from fax machines to wireless palm pilots, to facilitate the daily administration of government, exclusively as an Internet driven activity that improves citizens’ access to government information, services and expertise to ensure citizens’ participation in, and satisfaction with government process (UN and ASPA, 2001). Narrowly defined, digital government is the production and delivery of government services through IT applications; used to simplify and improve transactions between governments and constituents, businesses, and other government agencies (Sprecher, 2000).

From Traditional Government to Digital Government

The development and implementation of digital government will have big effects on and bring about some changes to the structure and functioning of the public administration (Snellen, 2000). Unlike the traditional bureaucratic model where information flows only vertically and rarely between departments, digital government links new technology with legacy systems internally and in turn links government information infrastructures...