Chapter XII

Shanghai’s E-Government: Implementation Strategies and a Case Study

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Abstract

This chapter will present and discuss some successful experience of Shanghai’s e-government strategies and implementation from the perspective of a developing country. A case study of Social Security Card System (SSCS) in Shanghai will be conducted to further illustrate Shanghai’s e-government strategies and implementation experience. Differences of e-government implementation strategies between China and USA are identified and discussed, which may provide some useful insights to the other developing countries, especially to those developing countries that are under the process of transiting to the “market economy” model when implementing e-government in the near future.
Introduction

Starting with the “Three-Gold Projects” in the 1980s, China gradually embraced the e-government concept. As the biggest developing country in its transformation from Soviet Union’s “plan economy” to the West’s “market economy,” China has some disadvantages and weaknesses in e-business development, which might be detrimental to its renaissance in the so-called “Information Era”. And then, e-government has been considered as an effective driving force for government to promote and enhance e-business development in China.

The coastal provinces and cities in China, due to some historical and geographical advantage reasons, are relatively more prosperous and advanced than the inner provinces and cities. Their economical edge generally results in their leading role in the e-government implementation of China.

Among those coastal provinces and cities, Shanghai, Beijing and the other big cities are rushing to e-government implementation recently. All of them have already set up timetables in their strategic blueprints of “informationization” projects (the term “informationization” is a Chinese word used to describe the diffusion and adoption of modern information technology in industries, public sector and residents’ daily life). According to the Mayor of Shanghai (Yan, 2002), Shanghai will try to catch up those central cities of the developed countries in its informationization process in 2005; at that time, the Internet users in Shanghai may reach 50% of its 14 million population, and nearly 90% of traditional government public services will be put on Web sites through e-government implementation.

In order to reap e-government implementation benefits for China in a long run and minimize risks involved in the implementation, it would be a wiser strategy to have a few cities and/or provinces such as Shanghai to lead the way in e-government implementation, so that their successful experience and lessons learned in e-government implementation can provide useful guidance to the rest of the cities and provinces of China in the future.

In the 1990s, Shanghai started its e-government projects. Through detailed analysis of local “5-N” factors (namely, Network Access, Networked Learning, Networked Society, Networked Economy and Network Policy) and the other social and culture factors, Shanghai’s e-government strategic goals, Increasing the transparency of government functioning and affairs; Providing the convenience and better services to citizens and enterprises; and improving the efficiency of government administration” (Shanghai Municipal Government, 2003), were worked out and approved by the municipal government. After a few years of implementation of such strategy, some first-stage e-government implementation projects were completed successfully. This book chapter will present and discuss some successful experience of Shanghai’s e-government strategies and implementation from the perspective of a developing country. A case study of Social Security Card System (SSCS) in Shanghai will be used to further illustrate Shanghai’s e-government strategies and implementation experience. Differences of e-government implementation strategies between China and USA are highlighted and discussed, which may provide some useful insights to other developing countries, especially to those
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