ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF E-GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION: LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Progress in online service delivery continues in most countries around the world. The United Nations eGovernment Surveys report that, many countries have put in place eGovernment initiatives and information and communication technologies applications for the people to further enhance public sector efficiencies and streamline governance systems to support sustainable development. Among the eGovernment leaders, innovative technology solutions have gained special recognition as the means to revitalize lagging economic and social sectors. eGovernment is a one-stop Internet gateway to major government services. However, provision of these services has not been a smooth road, while others are struggling and trying their best, others take the opportunity to exploit, mis-use and take advantage of the people and businesses in the name of eGovernment. Through document analysis, this paper discusses and highlights the advantages and disadvantages which come forth with the implementation of eGovernment. It further cites examples and scenarios where eGovernement has been exercised well and has been very beneficial to both the citizens and the governments. The significance of this research paper could be to help those who wish to learn about eGovernment and its outcome especially the government officials dealing with eGovernment policies and implementation.

Keywords: *eGovernment, advantages, disadvantages, implementation*

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1. Introduction

eGovernment refers to the delivery of national or local government information and services via the Internet or other digital means to citizens or businesses or other governmental agencies (Jain & Sharma, 2003). According to Gartner (as cited in Jain & Sharma, 2003), eGovernment is the continuous optimization of service delivery, constituency participation, and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the Internet and new media .In eGovernment, the government uses information technology and particularly the Internet to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services (Jain & Sharma, 2003). The interaction may be in the form of obtaining information, filings, or making payments and a host of other activities via the World Wide Web (Sharma & Gupta, 2003, Sharma, 2004, Sharma 2006). According to Joseph (2015), eGovernment is a progressively global marvel that depicts a highly beneficial endeavour and has consumed the attention of numerous governments and people around the world. eGovernment has been established as a promising vehicle for improving the services provided to the citizens by the governments.

Jain and Sharma points out that even though the definitions of eGovernment by various sources may vary widely, there is a common theme: eGovernment involves using information technology, and especially the Internet, to improve the delivery of government services to citizens, businesses, and other government agencies. According to Jain and Sharma, eGovernment enables citizens to interact and receive services from the federal, state or local governments twenty four hours a day, seven days a week (Jain & Sharma, 2003). eGovernment involves the use of ICTs to support government operations and provide government services (Fang, 2002).

2. Objective

This literature review was aimed at discussing advantages and disadvantages of eGovernment implementation.

3. Methodology

The information used to compile this paper was mainly obtained from several literatures. These include journal articles, seminar and conference papers, empirical studies, books, Internet websites, blogs and United Nations reports.

4. FINDINGS

This section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of eGovernment implementation respectively.

4.1 Advantages of eGovernment

There are several advantages which come forth with eGovernment implementation which have been discussed in various literatures. Some of these advantages are discussed below in this paper: ***improved efficiency, cost reduction and savings; time saving; better communication facilitation between governments with businesses and citizens***; ***online access of services; transparency and less bureaucracy and e-participation.***

a) Improved efficiency, cost reduction and savings.

One of the advantages of eGovernment is that of improving the efficiency of the current system of paper work. It reduces the need for man power of dealing with bulk of paper based work. Thus, allowing the process to be handled by lesser employees and therefore leading to reduced operations cost (MSG, 2008; Mundy & Musa, 2010).

As pointed out by Bwalya et. al. (2012), when implemented successfully, eGovernment may culminate in improved public service delivery which is relevant, efficient and appropriate. Hence leading to reduction in the cost of public services and creating responsive governance processes where the core concerns are of the consumers of eGovernment services i.e. citizens and businesses (Bwalya et. al., 2012).In other words, eGovernment offer an increased portfolio of public services to citizens in an efficient and cost effective manner (Majozi, 2012; Evans & Yen, 2006) by cutting the process costs-: financial and time cost (Heeks, 2002).

eGovernment will allow government agencies to centralize decision making and purchasing to reduce costs. The centralization of certain activities will eliminate inefficient and costly redundancies (Evans & Yen, 2006). In addition, there are cost savings in operating a virtual agency instead of renting (or building from scratch) an office and paying for all of its utilities in terms of business (Vassos, 2013). Also, the cost of offering services online and in an electronic format saves costs of buying bulk and bulk of paper.

Examples of such scenarios where eGovernment has helped in improving the efficiency lead to cost reduction and helped with cost savings are listed below:

1) It costs the US Inland Revenue Services $1.60 to process tax form, but only $0.40 to process an electronic form. The right application of ICTs has also possibly reduced the number of inefficiencies in processes by allowing file and data sharing across government departments, thereby contributing to the elimination of mistakes from manual procedures (Al-Kibisi et.al. 2001; Ndou, 2004).

2) In Beijing's business e-park there is a new system (www.zhongguancum.com.cn) that applies the latest computers and Internet technologies to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of government. It allows data to be submitted online, greatly increasing quality of services for customers (Lin et al., 2001).

3) The Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles in India simplified the process of certifying driver records to be admitted in country court proceedings by using Electronic Postmark technology which made work more efficient (Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, 2009). Another example of Bureau of Motor vehicles is of USA, where citizen are able to obtain forms and information online on an efficient manner and thus benefits many citizens who do not have time to physically visit the Bureau office (Evans & Yen, 2006).

4) The electronic death registration system in the state of Hawaii simplifies and helps the users to report, process and complete their cases online and leverages the Social Security Administration's Online Verification System to verify the decedent's information. It also provides a direct link to the City and County of Honolulu Medical Examiners' office. This has helped eliminate high cost of the paper process for death reporting in Hawaii which was also error-prone (NIC, 2013).

5) The survey done on evolution of eGovernment among Municipalities by Moon (2002) somehow showed that eGovernment has helped make business processes more efficient for the local governments: for example increasing the number of bids and quality of bids for effective procurements; reengineering business processes by some municipalities (Moon, 2002)

6) NIC helped Alabama become the first state in the USA to deploy a paperless, Web-based retail system for hunting and fishing licenses accessible through a basic Internet connection. It meets the retailers' demands of not incurring additional costs and space requirements with expensive and bulky equipment. In addition, its secure transaction processor also eliminates the need to manually reconcile payments (NIC, 2013).

7) In Maine, a publicly traded company, Keane, Inc., developed an improved system for the state with the purpose of improved design and efficiency. The new platform allowed the system to be Web enabled to better serve the citizens of Maine. The project helped to eliminate the need to maintain different applications on different platforms (Keane, 2002).

8) In the midst of a soft economy, Utah managed to conserve energy and save money – all while maintaining a gold standard of delivery of services across the state. This was made possible largely due to the state's robust eGovernment service offering Web site, Utah.gov. In the first year of Utah's four-day work week eGovernment initiative, the state cut costs by approximately $4.1 million through reduced spending on energy, janitorial services, and employee overtime (NIC, 2013).

a) ***Time saving***

The services provided by the government through their websites have many benefits both for the government and its citizens or users of the websites. Both parties are able to save time. (Hiller & Belanger, 2001; Kaaya, 2012). Sharma, Bao and Qian, (2012) points out that eGovernment services help to improve the competitiveness of business environment to create intelligent customers, helping businesses save time, money and energy to be invested elsewhere. According to Mundy and Musa (2010) by providing the services the government appears to have a more human face by providing links to government officers and offices, attending to citizen complaints and responding to their suggestions.

A fully-fledged eGovernment service is expected to provide users with 'one-stop shopping' to access and transact the information they need via a government website (Ho, 2002; Fagan &

Fagan 2001). Business and citizens can obtain information at a faster speed and it is possible at any time of the day (MSG, 2008).

Tasks which used to demand and take more time to be done manually could be done through computerisation or electronically hence saving time. This include: accounting and record keeping, information and forms access and downloads. Files and linked information can now be stored in databases versus hardcopies stored in various locations and thus could save time when retrieving.

Example of scenarios where eGovernment has helped in saving time of processing and handling organisational procedures are listed below:

1) Arkansas gov's electronic fingerprinting program dramatically reduced turnaround time for background checks for hiring managers in child welfare and long-term care facilities. Professional licensing agencies often waited six to eight weeks for background check results in order to complete the hiring process for new employees. The new electronic solution reduces the background check process to five days or less and allows managers to hire faster and more confidently, reduces errors, and eliminates paper from the process flow. The Criminal Background Check System processes more than 70,000 civil fingerprint FBI checks in Arkansas each year (NIC, 2013).

2) The Beijing's business e-park system (www.zhongguancum.com.cn) which applies the latest computers and Internet technologies has helped improve not only the efficiency and responsiveness of government but also helped to reduce the time required for gaining approval for specific applications from 2-3 months to few days, thus time saving (Lin et al.,2001).

3) The Tennessee's law and justice portal provides a one-stop viewing of information and has become invaluable to the state and its users. Previously, law enforcement and officers of the court often have the onus of digging through various databases, conducting multiple searches, and accessing numerous systems to simply find the information and support they needed to keep communities safe. Now, with the assistance of the new system, law enforcement agencies across the state have saved thousands of hours of staff time, which has created more time to enforce the law (NIC, 2013).

b) Better communication facilitation between businesses, citizens with governments

Another advantage which comes forth with implementing eGovernment would be facilitating better communications between governments with citizens and businesses (MSG, 2008). An example of that is E-Procurement, which facilitates G2G and B2B communication; this will permit businesses to compete for government contracts. Thus, creates an open market and stronger economy, hence improving the interaction between government and business (Heeks, 2002).

Many observers have also noted a trend toward more partnership among governments, users and the private sector agencies because of implementing eGovernment services (Allen et al. 2001, Ho 2002, Holliday 2002, La Porte et al. 2002). The private sector is exerting pressure on the government agencies to improve efficiency while the governments are creating a spill over effect (acting as role models) to small businesses to improve efficiency by adopting e-commerce strategies (Kaaya, 2012). The development of an eGovernment system helps to disseminate information and further the attitude that citizens are customers and that their satisfaction is important, not irrelevant (Evans & Yen, 2006).

Example of scenarios where eGovernment has helped in facilitating easy better communication between governments with businesses and citizens are stated below:

1) The Argentina government launched CRISTAL initiative in order to disseminate information regarding the use of public funds, including information about the amounts of money for different programs, financial and employment data, public debt account and customs obligations of privates companies. Users can also send their questions, comments and suggestions for further improvements. User's feedback allows the government to adjust the content and information, to customise the information and to reorganise itself around customers' needs and requirements (Radics, 2001).

2) The high rate of broadband diffusion in Korea has contributed to the gro himwth of electronic commerce and e-government (Lee, O'Keefe & Yun, 2003; Lee, Oh & Shim, 2005). Based on this growth, Korean government and businesses are rapidly developing a next-generation infrastructure, services, and applications such as WiBro (mobile broadband) and DMB (digital multimedia broadcasting) (Nam et. al.,2008; Shin, 2006; Kim, Kim & Lee, 2009).

3) In India, the Gyandoot project (government to citizen intranet project) offers numerous benefits and to the community in general (citizens and businesses). The goal of the project has been to establish community owned technological innovative and sustainable information kiosks in a poverty-stricken rural area of Madhya Pradesh. The benefits assured by this intranet system have increased the awareness of ICT importance and have spin off other IT initiatives and programs, such as: the creation of new private ICT training institutions; a high level of student enrolment- about 60% and parliament allocating resources to set up other kiosks in schools and to develop new models for e-education (Bhatnagar & Vyas, 2001; Ndou, 2004).

4) SC.gov has been successful in providing online applications that deliver efficiencies to citizens who interact with state government. A content management and secure payment processing solution has been created for more than 60 local governments in South Carolina by leveraging the state Web portal infrastructure in a cost-effective manner to deliver services that benefit cities and counties across the state. These systems currently support 99 projects in 69 cities and counties across South Carolina. They have helped process more than 285,000 secure payments worth $42 million on behalf of South Carolina local governments in 2009 (NIC, 2013).

c) ***Online access of services***

eGovernment helps simplify processes and makes access to government information programmes and services easier for public sector agencies and citizens (Evans & Yen, 2006). Citizens are able to interact with government when they want to and from anywhere they choose without the necessity for physical travel to government offices and agents (Nkomo, 2012; Layne & Lee, 2001; Hiller & Belanger, 2001; Ndou, 2004; Mundy & Musa, 2010).

According to Ndou (2004), in the traditional model of public service delivery, the procedures are long, time consuming and lack transparency. Citizens and business often spend a lot of time for simple service (travelling to get the services and even queuing and waiting for the services), consequently leading even to higher costs and dissatisfaction hence an eGovernment initiative on the other hand which put government services online, thereby reduces the bureaucracy, offers rounding clock accessibility, fast and convenient transactions and obviously enhances the quality of services in terms of time, content and accessibility.

Example of scenarios where eGovernment has helped in facilitating easy online access of services by citizens and businesses are mentioned below:

1) In Bahia, Brazil, citizens' assistance service centres have been created offering over 500 separate services. These centres are placed in various shopping malls and other public places hence people (citizens and businesses) can access this services anywhere. These have reduced time that users spend on accessing the services: getting official documents, queuing to get documents and travelling to get the services (Rinne et al., 2001a; Ndou, 2004).

2) The time saver centre in Sao Paulo, Brazil, brings together multiple services in a single location. Its objective is to deliver services more quickly and to increase the satisfaction level of its citizens. A person requiring a service, on reaching the appropriate agency, can register in the computerised tracking system and receive an electronic ticket which indicates the services desired and the estimated waiting time (Rinne et al.,2001b; Ndou, 2004).

d) Transparency and Less Bureaucracy

When official policies and legislation are uploaded on the Internet, it is easier for analysts and the general public around the country to evaluate and debate government decisions. This guarantees a level of transparency and freedom of information, effectively preventing corruption (Vossos, 2013; Bwalya & Healy, 2010). In addition, eGovernance means less bureaucracy, as digital information can move instantly from one liable office to another, without the need to wait for paper documents.

There is common belief, that eGovernment is a lever that can be applied towards changing outmoded bureaucracies (Bwalya et. el., 2012). Due to the fact that information and statistics are posted online, the idea of an "opened up" government is practised. Thus, reflecting a greater transparency of the service provided by the government which in turn can help reduce or minimise corruption (MSG, 2008).

According to Kim, Kim and Lee, (2009), more information delivered to citizens in a more timely fashion is expected to increase the transparency of government and empower citizens to monitor government performance more closely. Florini (2000) points out that transparency enables citizens to understand a government's accomplishments because the government provides them the necessary information. eGovernment is, therefore, viewed as a positive channel for

enhancing trust in government through government accountability and the empowerment of its citizens (Kauvar, 1998; Demchak et al., 2000).

eGovernment is increasingly being used to improve transparency in the government sector and to combat corruption (Kim & Cho, 2005).

Examples of scenarios where eGovernment has been deployed as a tool which enhanced transparency and reduced the level of corruption are stated below:

1) The central commission (CVC) in India started an initiative to create a website with the objective of reducing corruption and increasing transparency by sharing a large amount of information related to corruption with citizens. The CVC website communicates directly with the public through messages and speeches to bolster confidence in the institution, informs the public about its efforts in fighting corruption, and makes public names of officers from the elite administrative and revenues services against whom investigations have been ordered or penalties imposed for corruption. Members of the public are highly encouraged (mainly by rewards) to make their complaints and to provide information against a public servant about taking of bribes in order for the commission to undertake the necessary anticorruption actions to eliminate bribery and to increase the transparency of rules, procedures and service delivery (Bhatnagar, 2001;Ndou, 2004).

2) The anti-corruption system called OPEN (Online Procedures Enhancement for civil application) in the Seoul Metropolitan Government helped to reduce corruption. The OPEN system has been recognized (not only by Korean citizens and government, but also by international organizations such as the UN, OECD, and the World Bank as enhancing administrative transparency and reducing corruption tool (APDIP, 2006). The success of the OPEN system led to the Korean central government's adoption of the OPEN principles in its nation-wide eGovernment system, called "Saeol."(Kim, Kim & Lee, 2009).

3) In Chile, the Compra e-procurement system saves approximately US $150 million annually by preventing price fixing or inflation by corrupt officials and contractors (Bwalya et. al., 2012).

4) The department of Budget and Management (DBM) in Philippines has implemented an online e-Procurement system (http://www.procurementservice.org). This system allows the

public to bid for government needs and tenders. This steered increased transparency in tendering procedures and helped reduced price fixing (Andersen, 2009).

5) Through the Integrated Tax Administration System in Tanzania (ITAX), transparency and tax revenue has increased, while processing time and the possibility of fraud have been reduced. Also, in Ghana, through Ghana Community Network (GCNet), bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption has reduced (Schuppan, 2009).

5) In Pakistan tax department, a system has been made which helped in reducing contact between tax collectors and taxpayers and which eliminated and guarded chances of corruption (Andersen, 2009).

6) The e-Government implementation has helped Fiji minimise corruption, increase confidence in government, and has increased overall responsiveness of the government (Pathak, Naz, Rahman, Smith, & Agarwai, 2009).

7) Rural property records online in India removed opportunities for local officers to accept bribes (Bhatnagar, 2003).

8) The Bhoomi electronic land record system in Karnataka, India helped reduce waiting time and saved Rs. 806 million in bribes to local officers (Chawla & Bhatnagar, 2004).

e) e-participartion

eGovernment promotes a better life characterized by representative and participative democracy, transparent, open and collaborative decision making, close relation and interaction between government, business and citizens (Ngulube, 2007). eGovernment has a possibility of increasing honesty, efficiency and effectiveness and accountability between the government and the citizens (Coursey & Norris, 2008).

Through the internet, people from all over the country can interact with politicians or public servants and make their voices heard. They can make use of facilities such blogging, chat rooms and social networking media. According to Ndou (2004), an eGovernment initiative enables

community creation, giving citizens and businesses the possibility to participate in forums, decision making process and contributing actively to different political and governmental discussions.

Examples of scenarios where eGovernment has enhanced **transparency e-particpation** of citizens are mentioned below:

1) Columbia's government portal is the entry point to every government agency website in the country, allowing citizens to search for and consult government information and to e-mail government representatives either to complain about problems or to make suggestions (Porrua et. al., 2001).

2) The CRISTAL initiative of Argentina's government was launched in order to disseminate information. Its primary goal is to inform customers /citizen, to disseminate content and information, empowering customers to exercise more control over their political representatives. Citizens can send their questions, comments and suggestions for further improvements (Radics, 2001).

4.2 Disadvantages of eGovernment

In spite of the several advantages gathered from successful e-government implementation, there is also an infinite of disadvantages (Ndou, 2004). Some of these disadvantages are briefly discussed in this paper below and includes: ***lack of equality in public access to the internet, Lack of trust and cyber-crime, Hyper- surveillance, False sense of transparency and accountability and Costly Infrastructure.***

a) Lack of equality in public access to the internet

Studies have shown that there is potential for a reduction in the usability of government online due to factors such as the access to Internet technology and usability of services and the ability to access to computers (MSG, 2008). Thus, literacy of the users and the ability to use the computer. There are users who are illiterate (do not know how to read and write), who would need assistance. An example would be the elderly (senior citizens). Generally, senior citizens do not have much education and they would have to approach a customer service officer for assistance

(MSG, 2008). Bwalya et. al. (2012) echoes the same sentiments that some of the disadvantages of eGovernment implementation could be the likelihood of excluding citizens and businesses that have no access to technology due to the digital divide (e-exclusion).

b) Lack of trust and cyber crime

Even though the level of confidence in the security offered by government web sites are high, the public are still concerned over security, fear of spam from providing email addresses, and government retention of transaction or interaction history (Ngulube, 2007). Similarly Varros (2013) posits this too that, despite the efforts of government agencies to ensure the safety of citizens's personal data, e-governance websites are still liable to attack from hackers. Personal data can be exposed and there is less trust to how the information is kept secure and whose hands it lands on. This is also pointed out by Bwalya et. al. (2012), that one of the disadvantages could be generally a lack of engagement due to the anticipated low levels of trust by citizens of the e-government platforms.

c) Hyper surveillance

Sharma, Bao and Qian (2012) hints that even though developing countries attempt to improve public services through eGovernment implementation, they also turn to increase control over people through eGovernment.

Augmented contact between government and its citizens is bi- directional (it goes both ways). Once eGovernment starts to develop and become more sophisticated, citizens will be forced to interact electronically with the government on a larger scale (Jay, 2006). This could potentially lead to a lack of privacy for civilians as their government obtains more and more information on them. There are very real concerns about turning over much information to the government by the citizens or businesses (Ryan, 2007). While the government may see like a benevolent organization, it is possible this may not be true in the future or that outside governments/or parties could use this information to harm the citizens of this country and the businesses.

d) False sense of transparency and accountability

Those against eGovernment argue that online governmental transparency is dubious because it is maintained by the governments themselves. Information can be added or removed from the

public eye. To this day, very few organizations monitor and provide accountability for these modifications. This is also highlighted by Majozi (2008) that one of the disadvantages of eGovernment implementation could be of hidden agendas of government groups that could influence and bias public opinions.

e) Costly Infrastructure

According to Varros (2013), an efficient e-government system requires all citizens or at least the vast majority to have access to the Internet. Therefore, Internet-enabled devices, hardware such as routers, and a connection infrastructure are essential to connect to government websites. Additionally, public sector agencies need advanced servers and security systems to cope with vast amounts of information and fire walls for complex cyber threats. All these requirements constitute a costly investment, far beyond the reach of less developed economies (Varros, 2013). Ngulube (2007) concurs to this that one of the disadvantages of eGovernment implementation is technological costs. The costs include infrastructure development, interoperability of the technologies, permanent availability and preservation, education and training of operating and using the technology, cost structures and benchmarking. The cost can not only be disadvantageous to the government only but also to the citizens and the businesses who cannot afford (MSG, 2008).

5. Conclusion

The literature has highlighted and shown that indeed eGovenment could be helpful in helping governments offer services online hence saving a lot of costs and resources. However, the literature has also highlighted some disadvantages or challenges which come forth with the implementation of eGovernment. Therefore, when implementing eGovernment, all the challenges aforementioned in this paper gathered from various literatures should be paid attention to. Governments' officials as well as the privates sector should find ways in which eGovernement cannot be exploited since its intension is to serve a good purpose hence they should put in place strong measures which will protect eGovernment,

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