



Guiding Principals of E-Governance Strategy

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ABSTRACT

This paper signifies the importance of e-governance and suggests some guiding principles for establishing it. Finally it concludes why in India it is still a far cry for most of its citizens.

1. Introduction

Today we are talking about pervasive computing and hence government which controls and looks after the welfare of its citizens has to be present anytime and anywhere for its citizens; this is possible only by being networked with its citizens. Delivery of the services (with efficiency and transparency) to the citizens is the primary objective of any government. To achieve this, a proper strategy for developing an effective and efficient E-Governance is required. Hence *e-government Strategies* should be designed to prepare senior government officials and professionals to become engaged in strategic governance initiatives in order to achieve national economic and social development goals. The achievement of good governance goals is highly dependent on the availability of robust administrative capacity in government machinery without which good governance is not sustainable. Efficient and effective public sector management is a key for attaining the goals of good governance such as accountability, transparency, legitimacy, openness, and enabling environment for citizen services. E-government implies exploiting Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to build capacity of the public sector to deliver and sustain good governance. The executives need to build awareness of ICT potentials, create organizational readiness, and become involved in preparing and implementing e-government plans for high value projects.

2. Strategies for E-government

Effort should be designed to make better use of Information Technology (IT) investments to eliminate crores of rupees of wasteful government spending (especially in a developing country like India), reduce government's paperwork burden on citizens and business, and improve government response to citizens—from weeks down to minutes. A key goal should be for citizens to be able to access government services and information with the click of the mouse.

The three guiding principle should be:

- Citizen-Centered—not bureaucracy or agency centered.
- Results-Oriented---producing measurable improvement for citizens, and
- Market-Based---actively promoting innovations.

Apart from these guiding principles the next requirement is for a Government Enterprise Architecture. Enterprise architecture is a comprehensive view of what an organization does, how it does it, and how IT supports it. Keeping this in mind the overall E-Government strategy should address the following areas:

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- *Driving results and productivity growth:* Driving results and productivity growth: IT and management reform investments that create an order of magnitude improvement in value to the citizen, especially in the areas of homeland security information sharing and knowledge flow;
- *Controlling IT costs:* Consolidating redundant and overlapping investments, enterprise licensing, fixing cost overruns, and competing away excess IT services charges;
- *Implementing the E-Government Plans:* Including government-wide architecture governance and web-based strategies for improving access to high quality information and services;
- *Improving cyber security:* Desktop, data, applications, networks, threat and vulnerability-focused, business continuity, and privacy protection; and
- *Building an effective IT workforce:* Obtaining needed project management – CIO staff and architects who have a passion for solutions for success in leveraging IT spending for strategic results

The government should make considerable progress in integrating IT investments across agencies and around groups of citizens. Much of this improvement can be accomplished through the deployment of the E-Government projects. The projects can be organized into “portfolios” or common groupings, defined by the customer segment served. Following is a description of each portfolio

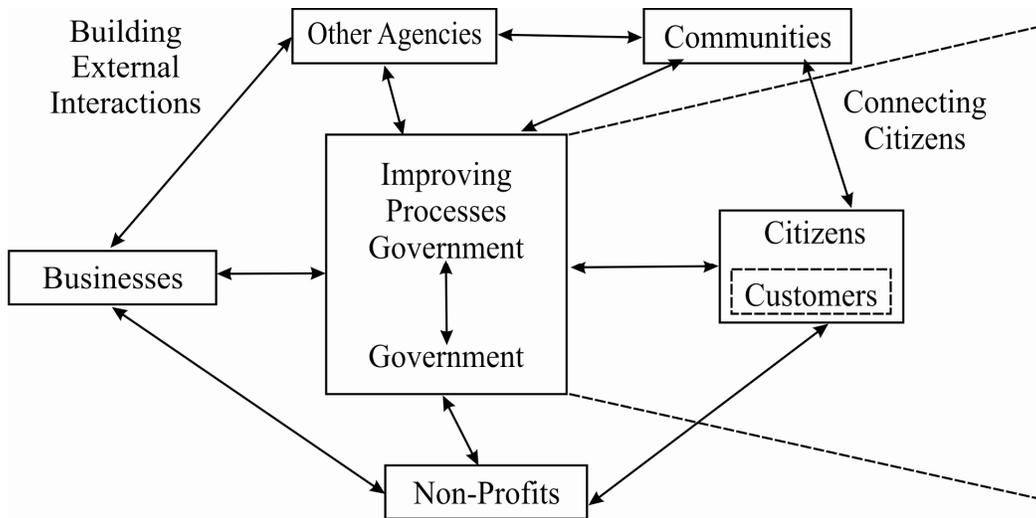


Figure 1: Focal Domains for E-Government Initiatives

2.1 Government to Citizen (G2C)

The objective of the G2C portfolio is to provide one-stop, on-line access to information and services to individuals. Citizens should be able to find what they need quickly and easily, and access information in minutes or seconds, instead of days or hours.

2.2 Government to Business (G2B)

The goals of the G2B portfolio are to reduce burdens on business, provide one-stop access to information and enable digital communication using the language of e-business (XML). The Central government should not continue to make businesses report the same data, multiple times to multiple agencies. The government should reuse the data reported appropriately and take advantage of commercial electronic transaction protocols. The deployment of more effective technology will help streamline the myriad of reporting requirements as well as facilitate a more efficient means for businesses to interact with the government.

2.3 Government to Government (G2G)

The G2G portfolio's primary goal is to enable central, state and local governments to more easily work together to better serve citizens within key lines of business. To achieve this goal the Central government must make it easier for states and localities to meet reporting requirements, while promoting the use of performance measurements. State and local governments will see significant administrative savings and will be able to improve program delivery because the data necessary to measure performance will be more accurate and timely.

2.4 Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness (IEE)

The Central government must modernize internal processes to reduce costs for central government agency administration. The IEE portfolio's focus should be to apply industry best practices to improve government operations. By adopting industry best practices in areas such as supply-chain management, financial management, and knowledge management, agencies will be able to improve effectiveness and efficiency, eliminate delays in processing, and increase employee satisfaction and retention.

E-Authentication, will deliver a solution that supports the initiatives that have requirements for authentication. By building an authentication system that supports multiple technologies and is committed to respecting and protecting the privacy and security of users, the E-Authentication initiative enables the trust required to make the other E-Government initiatives successful.

The following are the performance objectives for each E-Government portfolio:

3. E-Government Portfolio Performance Objectives

Following objectives may be met for each categories of e-government portfolios.

Government to Citizen

- Reduce the average time for citizens find benefits
- Reduce the average time for citizens to find loans/assistance.
- Increase the number of citizens filing taxes electronically.
- Reduce the time for citizens to find information any relevant matter.

Government to Business

- Increase the ability of businesses and citizen to find, view, and comment on rules and regulations
- Reduce burden on business by enabling online tax filing.
- Reduce the time to fill out export forms and locate information
- Reduce time for businesses to file and comply with regulations

Government to Government

- Decrease response times for jurisdictions and disciplines to respond to emergency incidents.
- Reduce the time to verify birth and death entitlement information
- Increase the number of grant programs available for electronic applications

Internal Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Increase availability of training programs for government employees.
- Reduce the average time to process clearance forms.
- Increase the use of E-Travel services within each agency.
- Reduce the time for citizens to search for government jobs.
- Reduce time and overhead cost to purchase goods and services throughout the governmental agencies.

E-Authentication

- Reduce the number of credentials by customer segment needed to interact with the central or state government

4. Concluding Remarks

The last couple of years have seen e-governance drop roots in India. IT enables the delivery of government services as it caters to a large base of people across different segments and geographical locations. The effective use of IT services in government administration can greatly enhance existing efficiencies, drive down communication costs, and increase transparency in the functioning of various departments. It also gives citizens easy access to tangible benefits, be it through simple applications such as online form filling, bill sourcing and payments, or complex applications like distance education and tele-medicine. This is just the tip of the iceberg. We have to go a very long way to connect each and every citizen to the government machinery. The problem has to be tackled from all the sides by building proper strategies for implementation, standards and legislation for monitoring and controlling the functioning of e-governance, and powerful and smooth IT infrastructure for bringing e-governance to the doorstep of each and every citizen. In a country where even today a large number of its population does not have the basic necessities of life, like clean drinking water, good roads, electricity, a decent meal a day etc., establishing e-governance in its true sense is still a far cry.

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