

Digital Citizenship: KSF and Constraints in Traditional and Emerging Democracies

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-----ABSTRACT:-----

*Digital citizenship is transforming the relation between governments and citizens around the world. According to Christopher G. Reddick *: “E-Governance: A dynamic process enhancing interactions between citizens, consumers, public administration, private sector, and third sector. It applies electronic means to foster such interaction between these actors.”*

Digital citizenship involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services.

This essay provides an overview of Digital citizenship, a benchmark between traditional and emerging democracies focusing on various opportunities and risks that this innovation give rise to.

This paper is concerned also with the Key Success Factors and constraints of implementing E-governance: Safety, Security, Legal Framework, Awareness and Education.

I have concluded that the same challenges are faced by all the countries, with different degrees, regarding the accessibility of their citizens to the online services. And I have recommended to include some policy tools, like “Universal Service”, “ICT Education”, a “Legal Framework”, “Law Enforcement” and “raising awareness” in the governmental programs in order to ensure the same opportunity to everyone, promote the use of technology and protect citizens and Data against all the potential threats.

KEYWORDS: *Digital citizenship, E-Government, e-Governance, Innovation, Technology, Democracy, success, failure, Challenges.*

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Nowadays, Digital citizenship, E-participation and E-government are ineluctable and many projects are ongoing, around the world, to enhance the relationship between the governed and governors and to make it more transparent.

However, we have to keep an eye on the constraints and limits of these new modes of communication and delivery, and stress the fact that many challenges are facing emerging and developed countries.

This article, will present an historical review about the evolution of the current mode of governance, cases from around the world will show us the main constraints we are meeting in different contexts. More than that, the article describes the main challenges faced in order to give the same opportunity to all the citizens to express themselves and defend their rights through the new channels!

Thus:

- What are the KSF of a “Good” Digital citizenship and E-governance” model?
- What are the Limits and problems faced to succeed this shift to a Digital relation between Government and Citizens?
- What about the recommendations and best practices, we could provide in order to succeed such an important project for the history of a country!

II. METHODOLOGY:

In order to find answers to the above questions, I have chosen a pragmatic and basic methodology.

In fact, I have used, different books, chapters, articles published during the last decade. In addition to that, I have taken and compare data from the reports published by some emerging and developed countries as well as those of the international organizations.

III. BACKGROUND:

Digital Governance is using information and communication technologies (ICTs) at various levels of the government and the public sector and beyond, for the purpose of enhancing governance (Bedi, Singh and Srivastava, 2001; Holmes, 2001; Okot-Uma, 2000).

According to Keohane and Nye (2000), "Governance implies the processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide and restrain the collective activities of a group.

Government is the subset that acts with authority and creates formal obligations.

Governance need not necessarily be conducted exclusively by governments.

Private firms, associations of firms, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and associations of NGOs all engage in it, often in association with governmental bodies, to create governance; sometimes without governmental authority."

Clearly, this definition suggests that e-governance need not be limited to the public sector.

It implies managing and administering policies and procedures in the private sector as well.

The UNESCO definition (www.unesco.org) is: "E-governance is the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective.

E-governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services.

Digital citizenship generally considered as a wider concept than e-government, since it can bring about a change in the way citizens relate to governments and to each other. Digital citizenship can bring forth new concepts of citizenship, both in terms of citizen needs and responsibilities. Its objective is to engage, enable and empower the citizen."

"E-democracy builds on e-governance and focuses on the actions and innovations enabled by ICTs combined with higher levels of democratic motivation and intent" (Clift, 2003).

The concept of electronic governance chosen by the Council of Europe covers the use of electronic technologies in three areas of public action; relations between the public authorities and civil society; functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process (electronic democracy); the provision of public services (electronic public services) (Council of Europe, <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/e-voting/definition.asp>).

E-governance is defined as the, "application of electronic means in (1) the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as (2) in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of Governance." (Backus, 2001).

Some authors contend that e-government constitutes only a subset (though a major one) of e-governance.

According to these authors, e-governance is a broader concept and includes the use of ICT by government and civil society to promote greater participation of citizens in the governance of political institutions, e.g., use of the Internet by politicians and political parties to elicit views from their constituencies in an efficient manner, or the publicizing of views by civil society organizations which are in conflict with the ruling powers (Howard, 2001 and Bannister and Walsh, 2002). It is clear that considerable confusion exists in explaining e-government and e-governance. In what follows, we attempt to resolve the ambiguities and come up with clear and non-overlapping definitions. Our premise is simple: e-government's focus is on constituencies and stakeholders outside the organization, whether it is the government or public sector at the city, county, state, national, or international levels.

On the other hand, e-governance focuses on administration and management within an organization, whether it is public or private, large or small.

Based on this classification, e-governance concerns internally-focused utilization of information and internet technologies to manage organizational resources – capital, human, material, machines and administers policies and procedures (both for the public sector or private sector).

The telecommunications network that facilitates e-governance is the Intranet. What has been generally termed as G2E (Government to Employee) will be now under the label of e-governance.

Digital citizenship deals with the online activities of government employees. The activities might include information to calculate retirement benefits, access to important applications, and content and collaboration with other government employees anytime, anywhere.

Any interaction of a governmental agency (G) with outside constituencies is called e-government. Outside constituencies can be citizens (C), businesses (B), or other governmental agencies (G) themselves.

Government agencies should be held responsible and accountable for their actions in collecting taxes from its citizens in various forms and then using these revenues to provide diverse services to its constituents in the areas of defense, security, economic vitality, education, and health care.

To perform all these activities efficiently and effectively, if the governmental agencies deploy information & Internet technologies, it is called e-government.

The TC network that provides these is the Extranet or the Internet itself. One special type of G2C is when elected representatives and political parties interact with the citizens nationally or in their constituencies.

This type of G2C is also called e-democracy.

In case of private enterprises, any interaction through information systems with external organizational entities – customers, suppliers, partners in the global supply chain management fall within the domain of inter-organizational systems. Such systems generally utilize extranets.

Under this category, we will have B2B (e-procurement, e-CRM, e-MarketPlace, e-Learning), B2C (e-tailing, e-banking, e-insurance, e-Grocery, e-ticketing), and even C2C – primary examples being Craig's list and e-Bay.

According to Sheridan and Riley (2006), e-governance is a broader concept that deals with the whole spectrum of the relationship and networks within government regarding the usage and application of ICTs whereas e-government is limited to the development of online services).

According to them, e-government is an institutional approach to jurisdictional political operations whereas e-governance is a procedural approach to co-operative administrative relations, i.e. the encompassing of basic and standard procedures within the confines of public administration.

Challenges and constraints of Digital citizenship:

However, these new modes and new ways of exchange are facing a number of challenges and limitations:

- Digital Accessibility and non-connected citizens:

A real citizen engagement means targeted and mixed-methods that ensure all citizens are heard.

Indeed aging and seniors requires a specific approach due to weak percentage of Internet users among this population.

Furthermore, the accessibility to High speed Internet is not reached yet in most countries for several reasons. Financial barriers, geographical problems and a lack of commitment on the part of the Telecom providers and the non-profitability of the current business model.

- Cyber-Security:

Online services provided by governments and the complexity of new technologies make devices and data vulnerable to malicious breaches of security and privacy.

Thus, the exchange between the citizens and government must be safe, secure and transparent.

Moreover, data requires a set of security requirements like authentication, authorization, Confidentiality, Integrity, Traceability and Non-repudiation.

- Protection of private and personal Data:

Privacy concerns exist wherever personally identifiable information or other sensitive information is collected, stored, used, and finally destroyed or deleted. Improper or non-existent disclosure control can be the root cause for privacy issues.

Solutions and recommendations:

- With respect to "Digital accessibility and Non-connected citizens":

-Mechanisms of generalization of Universal service, Territorial & Social Solidarity.

- The government should use a mixed-methods approach to protect the rights of seniors to be involved and consulted in all the stages of the policy development.

- In terms of Cyber- Security:

- The governments has to ensure this shift happens in a way that guarantee the safe and secure delivery and use of digital services to protect information against all threats.

- Use of Crypto solutions, like E-Signature and Block-chain Technology to anonymize Data and make it useless.

- Law Enforcement

- Education: Educate People and raise awareness around Cyber security and algorithms in the schools and create an IT passport for all the citizens (a parallel with driving rules and education).

- On the question of Data Privacy:

- Creating National Data protection authorities

- Information privacy laws

- Improving privacy through individualization

IV. CONCLUSION

This essay provided the current state of the digital relation between citizens and government in different environments with different challenges.

The role of technology is very decisive in this shift of practicing democracy without making a change in “the rules of the game”.

The democratic expression is still perceived as the act of voting in local or national elections and in referendum. Open Data, Decisional tools are able to resolve the problem behind the creation of parliaments and governments...these disruptive tools are able to gather, aggregate in a few seconds the inputs of the population and providing an exact picture of the needs and the wishes of the population and recommending the best ways to achieve it.

Notwithstanding, the essay noted some limitations and challenges faced by the government to cover all the citizens while using these new tools and to protect information and privacy.

The question now is what will be the next stage or innovation in terms of E-participation? In other terms, how will we extend the expression and the practice of our democratic values beyond the simple act of voting?

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