ELECTRONIC GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS & CHALLENGES

Richard Amaechi Onuigbo
Department of Political Science, Enugu State University
Email: ifeifonuigbo@yahoo.com

Eme, Okechukwu Innocent
Department of Public Administration and Local Government
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
E-mail: okechukwunnct@gmail.com and okechukwu.eme@unn.edu.ng

Abstract
The objective of this paper is to examine the roles, prospects and challenges of technology inspired government will help solve administration problems in Nigeria. The Nigerian government liberation of the telecommunication sector and proliferation of smart-phones have deepened internet penetration in the polity. Added to the new impetus is the proliferation of social media sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter among others. These platforms have their pros and cons such as using information shared on these sites to la spear phishing attacks for access to people’s online banking details with a view to fleecing them. Like every new policy, there are skepticisms about its workability. Banks have therefore taken the responsibility to enlighten their customers about the policy to achieve a seamless result. The paper highlights key-points in Electronic governance and administration. The paper goes on to explore and highlight the benefits and challenges facing the new payment system and concludes by positing that the new platforms have so far streamlined the operations of both users and government in Nigeria.

Key words: Electronic governance & administration, electronic payment, Social media platforms, Technology & Nigeria
Introduction

Technological advances have changed the way people go about their daily activities. Whether we are checking our e-mails or texting or sending messages with our phones, mobile communication is growing, and our ability to navigate the World Wide Web is improving dramatically. We use the internet to shop on-line, do banking transactions, book for our flight tickets and make payment on-line, check the weather, do research on any subject and connect with network. You may wonder what this has to do with public administration. As Internet usage grows, and the use of technology in general grows, so too does the use of technology and Internet by government. E-governance is the general term used to describe the government’s use of technology in performing its multiple responsibilities (Holzer and Schwester, 2011). This chapter is meant to develop student’s knowledge and understanding on how government services are performed through the modern technology.

E-governance in the Public Sector/Electronic Governance and Administration is very relevant in the discourse on modern usage of technology in the world of public administration. This chapter will enable you come to the knowledge of the shifting paradigm in public service delivery via information and communication technology (ICT). The shift is not only on service delivery but also on the way citizens participate in policy-making process through the tools of online engagement. The chapter is aimed at acquainting the reader with the knowledge in the world of electronic governance (e-governance) in the public sector. The chapter is premised on the knowledge that technology and service levels are intimately interwoven factors in the emerging e-Government services. The chapter is therefore designed to update your knowledge on the shifting role of how services are delivered through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). To ensure that this aim is achieved, some important background information will be provided and discussed. These include:

- Conceptualising the terms e-governance and e-administration;
- Discuss the principles and objectives of e-governance and e-administration;
- Examine and discuss types of service delivery in e-governance and e-administration;
- Discuss the major administrative and democratic improvements of e-governance.

Conceptualizing E-governance and E-administration;
E-governance

The e-Governance has become an accepted methodology involving the use of Information Technology in improving transparency, providing information speedily to all citizens, improving administration efficiency, improving public services such as transportation, power, health, water, security and municipal services. Governance has always been dependent upon technology, in the broadest sense of knowledge, skills, techniques and epistemological strategies, as well as devices, hardware, software and power circuits. As the reach of governance has spread into new areas of the globe as well as new aspects of hitherto personal relationships, it has come to rely upon more complex assemblages of technically stored and disseminated knowledge (Coleman, 2008).
E-Government: the use of information and communication technologies in the public sector. E-government drives the New Public Management (NPM) which adopts private sector techniques. Nevertheless, as a refinement of NPM, Digital Era Governance (DEG) offers future public management which involves flexible principles, i.e. reintegration, holism and digitalization (Dunleavy et al 2006). The main aim is to enhance better public management.

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. E-governance is 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. E-governance 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 (www.unesco.org).

E-governance entails the digitized coding, processing, storage and distribution of data relating to three key aspects of governing societies: the representation and regulation of social actors; the delivery of public services; and the generation and circulation of official information (Coleman, 2008). E-governance is more than just a government website on the Internet. The strategic objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties; government, citizens and businesses. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities. In other words, in e-governance electronic means support and stimulate good governance.

E-Administration

E-Administration is a part of e-Government which handles internal administration within government instead of external users such as citizens and businesses. European Commission (2007b) defines e-administration as an application using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to support back-office administrative tasks. Sánchez (2006) pointed out that e-administration is the use of communication technology to support information flow either in or outside the public authority. Heeks (2010) describes that e-Administration covers G2G relation to improve administrative processes in hierarchical organisation.

According to Wikipedia (2014) e-Administration, or electronic administration, refers to any of a number of mechanisms which convert what in a traditional office are paper processes into electronic processes, with the goal being to create a paperless office. This is an ICT tool, with the goal being to improve productivity and performance. E-Administration can encompass both intra-office and inter-office communication for any organization. Its objective is to introduce total transparency and accountability leading to better e-Governance within any organization. In Germany, this initiative is especially targeted at government organizations, where public accountability is of special concern. Similar processes are being developed in many American corporations to aid compliance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

The implementation of any e-administration solution should be customer centric rather than organization centric, should remove dependence on specific individuals, and should introduce transparent systems of working. Examples of e-administration include online timesheets and expense account. These can be used to help reduce costs to an organization.
In autonomy era, decentralisation divides government into two level organisations, i.e. central and local government (Bache and Flinders, 2005). Each level has different authorities. Nevertheless, they are interconnected (House of Commons 2009). They have strong coordination to deliver national development goals. However, both levels consist of many departments those are divided into minor jobs in certain areas. These hierarchical structures typically lead to complexity of administration and specific duties within the organization (Niskanen 2007).

There are many drivers of e-Administration towards Change. They include:

- Economic factors cost savings, increase efficiency of work processes, the overall benefit and cost impact can be measured not only from government side, but also by user side, such as better service quality and savings of user time.
- Organisational issue organisational cost reduction, it cuts bureaucratic within government by breaking down organisational boundaries (Fang 2002), modern bureaucracy (Dunleavy et al, 2006), streamline processes, reduce duplication and inconsistencies.
- Political driver for example, it stimulates implementation of health management in Ecuador (Salazar, 2001). Despite focus on central operation, the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador also enforced local level by central diktat.
- Technological driver electronic networks allow cross-matching and integration of data in different places and different departments. They also enable flexibility and connectivity to acquire much more autonomy which can be break down as e-Organisations or e-Agencies (Fang 2002).

Domains of e-governance and e-administration

There are three main domains of e-governance:

- **E-administration**: improving government processes
- **E-services**: connecting individual citizens with their government
- **E-society**: building interactions with and within civil society.

**- E-administration** – the main purpose of e-administration is to improve the internal working of the public sector by cutting process costs, managing process performance, creating strategic connections within government bodies, and creating empowerment. Shortening the lead time for passport application from two weeks to one day is an example of e-administration.

**- E-service** initiative focus mainly on improving the relationship between the government and its citizens by increasing the information flow between them – which notably, involves two-way communication – and improving the service levels of government towards its citizens. Public service institutes offering citizens the opportunity to apply example of e-services.

**- E-society** initiatives for business licenses through a government websites is one extend e-service domain by focusing on institutional stakeholders, such as private sector service providers, other public agencies, and not for-profit and community organizations. E-society focuses on building long lasting partnerships and social/economical communities: for example through the creation of a business community portal.

E-Administration: improved processes
E-Society: external interactions
E-Citizens/e-Service: connected citizens

The three domains of e-governance are seldom separate in their implementations; rather, they involve overlapping activities as part of the same initiative (Arjan de Jager, 2008).
The principles and Objectives of e-governance and e-administration

The principles and Objectives of e-governance and e-administration are to:

- Build services with citizen choices in mind;
- Increase government accessibility;
- Foster social inclusion;
- Disseminate information in a responsible fashion; and
- Use taxpayers’ resources effectively and efficiently (Holzer and Schwester, 2011).

According to Ojo cited in Maduabum (2008:670), some of the objectives of e-governance and e-administration include the following:

- To ensure transparency in the workings of government;
- To ensure greater efficiency, objectivity, accountability and speed in providing services and information to the public;
- To provide qualitative and cost-effective services;
- To provide a single window for all government services;
- To evolve responsive administration;
- To provide a friendly, speedier and efficient interface; and
- To eliminate the middlemen.

Major Administrative and Democratic improvements offered by e-governance and e-administration

The major objectives of these concepts include:

- Cheaper and more effective management and processing of information;
- A free flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government;
- More professional administrators, supported by standardised, electronically-embedded decision-making systems;
- The routine provision of services according to impersonal rules, as opposed to clientelist arrangements;
- Transparency, particularly in relation to the procurement of government services;
- Opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector in modernizing governmental processes;
- A free flow of information between government and citizens;
- The strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil-society organisations (CSOs) and independent media; opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development;
- Opportunities to combine traditional and modern methods of accountability (Okeke, et al, 2014).

Types of Service Delivery in e-governance and e-administration

The quest to improve service delivery through the use of ICTs in governments typically focuses on four main dimensions. These are:

1. **G2C (Government-to-Citizens):** This focuses primarily on developing user-friendly one-stop centers of service for easy access to high quality government services and information.

2. **G2B (Government-to-Business):** This aims to facilitate and enhance the capability of business transactions between the government and the private sector by improving communications and connectivity between the two parties.
3. **G2G (Government-to-Government):** This is an inter-governmental effort that aims to improve communication and effectiveness of services between federal, state and local governments in the running of day-to-day administration. It generally aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of overall government operations.

4. **Intra-government:** This aims to leverage ICT to reduce costs and improve the quality of administration and management within government organization (Islam and Ahmed, 2007).

**Key Challenges to e-governance and e-administration**

There are key challenges facing the implementation of e-governance and e-administration. They include the underlisted:

1. **Policy and Political Will:**
   - A regulation may become an impediment when it failed to support the goals of e-government (Greenhill 2010a), including e-administration projects.
   - Administrative law, copyright law, and liability law are some examples of legal areas that underpin e-administration barriers (EC 2007a).
   - A weak policy may also caused by political leadership failures. It involves the failures in favouring e-government initiatives, minor prioritisation of resource allocation, poor senior management understanding of e-government and the lack of political will (EC 2007a).

   Examples:
   - Participatory Information System (PIS) in Balochistan Province in Pakistan: In making decision, senior officials did not use the formal and rational information generated by the system. Their decisions have been based on informal and political information (Qazi 2008).
   - Pakistan’s National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA): Changes of governments often follow by changes in regulations.

2. **The Lack of Resources:**
   - The resources encompass infrastructures and human skills. To take benefits of the new information and communication technologies, the development of basic infrastructure is crucial for implementing e-government (InfoDev 2002; Greenhill 2010b), especially in small local authorities (Sánchez et al. 2006). Even though the infrastructures are available, uneducated workers cannot access the application because they lack for ICT skills (Dada 2006).

   Examples:
   - (PIS) in Balochistan: The lack of IT access has constrained the project, particularly in rural areas. The lack of IT skills were still exist.
   - NADRA Project: A lack of staff skills and the problems of hiring short-term staff caused delays in producing outputs (Ahmed 2002). The shortage of computer equipment was also a barrier to gain maximum benefit from the system.
   - National Data Bank (NDB) project in Bangladesh: Inappropriate technical, strategic and project capabilities within government had become a barrier for its implementation.

3. **Sourcing and Internal Collaboration**

   Governments have to maintain partnerships with other organisations, either private sectors or non-profit organisations, as well as relationships within departments (infoDev 2002). On the one hand, a poor coordination between central, regional and local agencies may leads to ineffectiveness of e-government (EC 2007a), especially for implementing e-administration. On
the other hand, the large demand of e-administration systems requires external vendors to provide high quality products and services (Greenhill 2010c). Examples:

- NDB’s failure in Bangladesh: $440,000 project fell to the one of main local IT provider. The poor coordination between government and suppliers then caused the withdrawal of the agent from the process.
- Computerise Programme in MoFA in a West African state: Politicisation and personalisation tendering was an obstacle on its implementation.
- E-Government Projects in Abu Dhabi: a problem of internal government collaboration caused failures. This unsuccessfulness due to the lack of cooperation within government (Ng, 2009).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at the various meanings of e-governance. As we can see, e-governance is more than just a government on the website. The strategies of e-governance can enable government and citizens to engage and partner with each other and other stakeholders. We also discussed the objectives of e-governance as well as the types of service delivery in e-governance. E-governance as we observe from our discussion may enhance access to government by citizens. It may increase access by those who work within government and those who work with government. It facilitates good governance for all stakeholders.

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