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A LEADERSHIP MODEL FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNMENT

ABSTRACT
Governments around the world, since the late 1990’s, have invested aggressively in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). This strategic trend has paved the way for moving into the “Digital Age” providing reported improvement in public services and benefit realisation. However, research on eGovernment suggests that it has not yet reached its full potential of full seamless integration. In this paper, the author reports an empirically case study that derived possible reason for this potential shortfall, using model of adoption of innovations coupled with maturity model and relating them to the paradigm of eGovernment. In doing so, a sub “Leadership Model” of tGovernment model is proposed, to further understanding in transforming government services and widen the agenda for further research.

Keywords: eGovernment; Leadership; Technology Adoption Lifecycle; Organizational Change; Transformation

1. INTRODUCTION
Globalisation and the advancement of the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have changed the world that we live in. In line with the rapid development of eCommerce and the emergence of eBusiness activity has increased expectations amongst citizens and businesses for similar improved services from governments. As a result, this phenomenon has forced governments around the world to change by becoming more aggressive in the deployment of electronic services to its citizens and businesses. Furthermore, the drive towards a digital society in the global economy has caused many governments to rethink their position and their role for
development; and Dubai Government in the United Arab Emirates is no exception. However, it should also be recognised that eGovernment is more about government than about “e” for it to reach it full benefit (OECD, 2003). On the other hand, Heeks (2000) asked the question “will ICT help reinvent government? It might, but only if it is correctly managed.” Hence, management has become central to the debate for a successful implementation of eGovernment and reaching seamless integration, i.e. the highest level of maturity. In pursuit of “re-inventing government” policy-makers have emphasised more effective leadership to improve the performance of public sector organisations (Currie et al., 2009). In moving through the stages of development model as developed by Layne and Lee (2001), the author argues that it is imperative to have a strong management team with a strong visionary leadership that is capable of cross boundary implementation of eGovernment. This study suggests that a new style of leadership which has certain characteristics is required in order to advance the agenda of eGovernment. Furthermore, the development should be sign posted where it can encapsulate the whole aspect of eGovernment. For this reason, Caldow (1999) proposed seven eGovernment leadership milestones and she argues that “leaders who define eGovernment in a narrow sense -- simply moving services online -- miss larger opportunities which will determine competitive advantage in the long run.” To demonstrate this, she suggested that a broader grasp of eGovernment is needed for leaders to be able to position their government, citizen, businesses and communities at large for sustainable strategic advantage.
Table 1 illustrates the main milestones and highlights the main area of achievement with brief descriptions of each milestone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Area of achievement</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Process and technology integration through a portal. The government use of the Internet is vital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Economic development</td>
<td>Digital age economic development generally has five dimensions—leveraging small and medium-sized businesses, education, attracting high tech industry, access to technology infrastructure, and a business-friendly government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>E-democracy</td>
<td>The manifestation of e-democracy stretches across the spectrum of democratic process. It is to inform and engage citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>E-communities</td>
<td>Government is intrinsic to community in fundamental ways. Public health and safety, parks and recreation, elderly and youth services. Electronic technologies offer government ample opportunities to enhance communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>The intergovernmental phenomenon is a core ingredient of e-government. At the global level, quasi-governmental bodies are emerging to pool knowledge and resources. Higher performance would be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>Policy environment</td>
<td>Creating a new legal framework to cope with the digital age. Such as digital signature, digital divide, and hackers law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>Next Generation Internet</td>
<td>This is the capstone of a competitive strategy. eGovernment will be defined environment to gain advantage. eGovernment in tomorrow’s</td>
</tr>
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</table>

These seven milestones encapsulate what eGovernment is all about and provide government leaders with a framework to conduct that transformation process. As discussed earlier, the
process of implementing an eGovernment transformation passes through different stages until it reaches the maturity level. There are also other models that suggest three to seven stages of development, but all agree that reaching the last phase is what governments should aim for, even though it is the hardest to achieve. Generally, the normative literature is in complete agreement about the evolution process that eGovernment passes through, and the complexity surrounding the implementation. For the purpose of this research, the author proposes to use the ‘widely quoted model’ that was developed by Layne and Lee (2001), which shows four phases of development to eGovernment implementation (I to IV). It is worth noting that the work done to explain the transaction stage of eGovernment system, its location and importance is well documented by Irani et al. (2006). Their empirical work provides an insight into the complexity surrounding the attainment of Phase IV, as it represents the biggest challenge to government leaders since it requires cross-boundary integration.

2. WHAT IS THE ADOPTION TECHNOLOGY LIFECYCLE?

The success of fully implementing eGovernment requires a careful adoption and full understanding of the technology that is being applied. Moore (1999) begins with the diffusion of innovations theory from Everett Rogers, and argues there is a chasm between the early adopters of the technology product (the technology enthusiasts and visionaries) and the early majority (the pragmatists). Moore believes visionaries and pragmatists have very different expectations. Furthermore, he attempts to explore those differences and suggest techniques to successfully cross the "chasm." This could well be applied to government adoptions of technology in its quest for tGovernment.

Crossing the eChasm, as will be mentioned later, is closely related to the Technology Adoption Lifecycle where five main segments are recognized; innovators, early adopters, early majority,
late majority and laggards. Therefore, it is argued that those leaders who possess the quality of innovators and early adopters would be able to move successfully into the last stage of the eGovernment maturity model. Figure 1, shows the position of those leaders that will cross the “eChasm” and aid in the transformation of government.

Figure 1: Technology Adoption Lifecycle as applied to eGovernment (Adapted from Moore, 1999)

It is the Innovators and Early Adopters Leaders that drive the eGovernment agenda and progress through various stages of eGovernment. Those leaders who are innovators and early adopters will live up to expectations of fully integrated services that citizens and businesses want from their government (Elnaghi et al., 2007, Tolbert et al., 2008). Indeed, what has brought into focus is that, at the time when one has just achieved great initial success in launching a new eGovernment initiative, creating what he calls early market wins, one must undertake an immense effort and radical transformation to make the transition into the final stage of the eGovernment and that is the seamless integration.

The gap that exists in the maturity model of transition is what the researcher refers to as the “eChasm” (Figure 2). Moreover, the technology use by governments is not new, however,
putting an “e” into government indicates a major paradigm shift in this information age and the way citizens, businesses and other stakeholders look at government.

Figure 2: The “eChasm” in the Stages of Development of eGovernment

The argument in this paper begins with a description nature of government and builds a case for a new kind of leadership that must emerge to meet the expectations and challenges of eGovernment. The competencies of this new kind of leadership underpin the development of cross-boundary leaders to meet the challenges of eGovernment, by which to reach horizontal integration; phase IV. This will further call for a new style of leadership to take government truly into tGovernment, hence, reaching the desired level of seamless horizontal integration.
3. WHY LEADERSHIP IS IMPORTANT IN eGOVERNMENT?

As outlined earlier, strong leadership can speed up the process of eGovernment implementation, promote co-ordination within and among agencies and help reinforce good governance objectives. The fact that eGovernment has multiple dimensions is a complex issue. Each dimension demands strong leadership, strategy, cross-coordination, and know-how, all combined with a technology strategy to take vision to reality. In recent years the “collaborative advantage” (Huxham & Vangen, 2005) has become somewhat of a phenomenon across all sectors of society (business, public, and non-profit). Where an empirical studies illustrate how structures, processes, and people can catalyse integration across boundaries toward the creation of public value (Morse, 2010).

The following are some of the reasons, to mention a few, why there is a need for a new visionary style of leadership:

- Task is very complex;
  Awareness of New Emerging Technology, Overcoming Barriers, Organisational Change
- Transformation is highly costly;
  Budget Allocations, System Development and Management, Infrastructure Change
- Requires a long term commitment; and
  Risk Factors, Change of Technology
- It also needs to have profound understanding of the whole government strategy;
  Formulating New Strategy, Awareness of Cross Boundary Barriers and Policies

The author argues that a new type of leaders is required for crossing the “eChasm”.

4. LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The challenges of leadership in this digital age offer great promise and great challenges. To be successful in eGovernment implementation, leaders must manage bilateral networks and leverage partnerships and resources across organisational boundaries. The lack of authority is considered as a major contributing barrier for a national level eGovernment development. It is also perceived that the whole exercise is a “technological mission.” (Salem, 2006). Successful leaders of organisations have well developed ‘vertical muscles’ but leaders who assume responsibility for cross-boundary change initiatives need to exercise ‘horizontal muscles’ (Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team, 1995), cited in (McDaniel, 2005).

Since achieving transformation requires the mobilization of those with the power to define the role of government (Swedberg and Douglas, 2003). Irani et al, (2006) argue that prior to Transformational Stage, government leaders should take extra care during the Transaction Stage, as it represents the first real challenge for successful eGovernment implementation. Adding further, organisational innovation and change is known to be a complex phenomenon and that it is not well understood in the context of government growth. It is strongly believed that from taking multiple perspectives on the problems of change—what drives it, what enables it, and what factors facilitate and hinder its success (Rouse and Baba, 2006). In meeting those challenges for digital transformation, a leadership transformation model is proposed as shown in Figure 3.
As shown in Figure 3, that coupling visionary leadership with the appropriate use of integrated technology will have the desired results in transforming government into tGovernment. This will encourage business process re-engineering of services to make them more focussed on and responsive to the citizens and businesses. To illustrate this further, AlNaqi (2004) reported that Chief of Dubai Police stated in an interview by saying “Let's open our e-doors to the public” indicating a new paradigm shift in policing, and a new style of leadership. Hence, indicating a strategic direction that it is the image of visionary leader who put citizens first and provides a
role model for future digital leaders. Silcock (2001) summed up the extent by which eGovernment will make a difference and add value, however, that will depend on three factors: strong leadership, management of the ‘digital divide’, and well managed innovation.

As discussed earlier, governments need to integrate services seamlessly across horizontal and vertical levels of different agencies. Highly effective strategies will use the opportunities presented by internet based technologies to alter the delivery of government services dramatically. In some cases, services will be transformed (and improved) so radically that old service models will disappear completely (Accenture, 2004).

5. CONCLUSION

The development of eGovernment is an evolutionary ‘revolutionary’ process, while leaders will ensure that it continually improves services through internal processes and efficient response to external demands. Hence, wider choices in accessing government services with more open and transparent government decision making. It is, rather, required to change the whole society and to train people on how to use eServices and how to deal with the related technologies. Jones et al. (2006) argue in a similar drawing conclusion outlined some of the lessons that have been learnt from empirical study, as follows:

- Senior executives must fully engage with eGovernment investment decision processes to improve decision-making;
- Organisations should carefully consider BPR to change business processes and relating notions of success other than costs, such service user satisfaction, to help evaluate and improve understanding of tGovernment implementations;
Organisations should clearly identify and articulate who is responsible for tGovernment implementation; and

A senior executive taking charge of tGovernment implementation and evaluation to drive cross-collaboration and give importance to the process.

It can be seen from those lesson learnt the importance of leadership in bringing about a successful transformation in government implementation. Adding further, senior executives need to actively engage with the eGovernment agenda, responsibility and resources to this important public sector initiative. From this it is proposed a more detailed empirical study could follow to validate the aforementioned findings which could form the basis for future research.

REFERENCES


