

The Impact and Implementation of E-Commerce in Government & Law Enforcement

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Information technology has become a key element in the success of e-commerce and has brought many new developments into the idea of an Internet government. This research is designed to evaluate various components of a citizen-oriented government that will present services that mimic private sector programs while maintaining the traditional scope of what government provides for citizens. Using data from various scholars and e-government enthusiasts, the comparison between e-commerce and e-government will illustrate the correlation between services that are geared towards customers and their success.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Constitution represents an attempt to codify the social contract between the government and its citizens in an enduring document that supports a functioning government and society. The expansion of federal power has been by accelerating development and use of technology. From curing disease and increasing food quality and supply, to the space shuttle and the iPhone, technology has revolutionized how individuals live and communicate (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2009). Governments are going on-line and using the Internet to provide public services to its citizens (Layne and Lee, 2001). Ultimately, the Internet has the capability to delivering the traditional model of government while also taking advantage of incorporating services that are citizen-oriented.

The struggle between the governments-to-citizen relationships has forever been prevalent since the establishment of the United States. The purpose for Internet government, e-government, is to bridge the gap of communication and awareness between the citizens and the government. Restoring a healthier balance can best be accomplished by strengthening the citizens or by limiting the government. Changing technology, such as facebook, twitter, social media, and e-advertisements, creates opportunity for citizens to speak and mobilize, even during economic turmoil and heated political debates (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2009).

E-government is the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees. It has the power to create a new mode of public service where all public organizations deliver a modernized integrated and seamless service for their citizens (Silcock, 2001). Daily people utilize emails and text messages because response times are, in essence, immediate; therefore, obtaining results in a shorter span of time. Citizens manage their personal finances through bank applications for cell phones or through the Internet at any time of day that is convenient to them, not their bank. People have grown accustomed to having services readily available through these types of services that are available through the Internet. Do to this modern mentality of

immediate responses, e-government can provide everything a citizen needs at the click of a finger; therefore, the ability to fully integrate e-government is what must first be established.

Technology is not a solution in and of itself, but is a set of tools to achieve particular goals. The aim is not to sidestep government with technology, but rather to make government's size and physical scope more consistent with principles of liberty while using technology to achieve societal goals- old and new alike- more effectively (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2009).

CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary justification for the move toward e-government, an electronic channel of service delivery that has proven tremendously successful in the private sector ... is the belief that it holds considerable potential for positively transforming government service delivery in a manner that is consistent with recent market-centered theories of public sector reform. Governments worldwide are moving toward e-government and implementing services that can be utilized through various social media websites and agency websites. The digital divide that exists today is between the computer literate and computer illiterate and the haves and have-nots. (Belanger and Carter, 2009).

The lack of access to the Internet is a major element of the digital divide. Making the Internet accessible to every square inch of the United States is a divide that can never be satisfied. However, making information technology accessible in certain venues in communities can and will allow access to all those that are able to take advantage of.

These divides can be identified as ethnicity, income, age, and education as significant forecasters of admittance to technology (Belanger and Carter, 2009).

There are a significant amount of citizens that lack the dexterity necessary to effectively and efficiently navigate online government sites (Belanger and Carter, 2009). Unlike the private sector, government agencies have a charge to make their information and services available to everyone; therefore, the digital divide has to be minimized in order to maintain transparency amongst those who are being governed.

Accountability plays a very important role in the implementation of e-government. Government accountability equates government openness, transparency, and interactivity. Wong and Welch suggest that transparency refers to the extent to which an organization reveals work and decision processes and procedures.

Website transparency is equivalent to a basic map of an organization as it reveals the depth of access it allows, the depths of knowledge about processes it is willing to reveal, and the level of attention to citizen response it provides. Interactivity refers to the relation between government and citizen (Wong and Welch, 2004).

A transparent government allows citizens to monitor the performance of public organizations more easily though the increase in the availability of information. A more interactive public organization enhances accountability by being more responsive to the preferences of the citizenry (Wong and Welch, 2004). The amount and caliber of information that is accessible on the websites gives citizens the impression that the agencies are providing all information necessary to maintain transparency.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Governance is moving from traditional methods of tangible communication to technology, which has become "one of the core elements of managerial reform" (Moon, 2002). With this new technology implemented into the way that citizens are governed, come many challenges such as accessibility, accountability, restraints, and whether the services will promote and increase citizen participation. Individuals are hesitant to trust information technology because of the many negative connotations that come along with Internet services: stolen identity, credit card fraud, non-secure sites, etc. E-government, though in its current developmental stage, will provide general information for government agencies, local, state, and federal, policy updates and regulations, online voting, online voter's registration, and

other services. The availability of information and services that can be obtained through the Internet and its accessibility to the citizens are key components to the citizen-to-government relationship. Movements towards government agencies on the Internet through facebook, twitter, and other social media's have already begun to be implemented and accessed. Moving towards the fully integrate and interactive websites is the e-government administrative goal.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is to illustrate how dramatic changes in technology over the past few centuries have affected the strain that the Framers built into our system. There has always been a functional limit on democratic government because it is difficult to muster the resources for a full referendum whenever an issue needs to be decided. Nonetheless, the Internet allows and provides a venue for citizens to have a collective voice that can be heard at unimaginable levels that have not been seen before (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2009). Technologies can go further to transform both the delivery of services and the more efficient and transparent regulation of market participants (Thompson and Wilkinson, 2009).

There is a genuine concern among policy makers that developing electronic service delivery and communications will lead to already excluded groups becoming, if anything, further disadvantaged. Disadvantaged citizens are those of lower income and those that live in communities with limited Internet access. There are innovative possibilities for ensuring better access to those said disadvantaged groups (Silcock, 2001). In addition to social disadvantaged, the digital divide is not so much a question of access but of education.

You can put computers in libraries or community centers, but they cannot be utilized if individuals do not know how to use them (Silcock, 2001). In order for e-government to be successful, all disadvantage groups must be satisfied.

Technology is democratically neutral. Used wrongly, it could stifle diversity or reinforce current patterns of power and debate; used well, it could create new ways for people to interact, particularly at the global and local level (Silcock, 2001). Just as citizens have matriculated from simply searching information on the internet to purchasing items; soon, citizens will move from simply searching information on government agencies to expecting to be able to cast online votes (Silcock, 2001).

In addition, the major goal for government is to gain more participation with the citizens and constituents to better service the nation. Unlike traditional structures, which are hierarchical, linear, and one-way, Internet delivery systems are nonhierarchical, nonlinear, two-way, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The nonhierarchical character of Internet delivery frees citizens to seek information at their own convenience, not just when a government office is open (West, 2004). By allowing this type of access to information, citizens will be more incline to interact with these government sites at their leisure. Moreover, this study will examine the new technologies and how they enhance communication by overcoming geographical distance, promoting ideological variety, opening citizens to more diverse viewpoints, and encouraging deliberation (West, 2004)

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many challenges as to why the traditional model of government is shifting to e-government. Traditional governments are departmentalized and emphasize routinization (Ho, 2002). This form of government is centralized with a hierarchy of power placed in the office of fiscal affairs, mayor's office, and city council. Through traditional government, backroom meetings take place in order to determine what is best for the citizens. The ideas and pleas from the citizens are barely heard simply because there is no power in the citizen's voice. However, all is not lost in traditional government. Two advantages of traditional government are that the cost of communication is reduced drastically because all communication is departmentalized and all procedures are routine.

Many times citizens complain about the long waits in line at the county court house or county tax office and this is due to the routine procedures of checks and balances. The fact that one form had to go through four different offices before returning to the citizen was quite extensive; however, those checks and balances insured that the form was filed correctly. The problem with this process is that fraud, human error, and other acts of negligence would occur, resulting in paperwork being filed incorrectly and ruining the government-to-citizen relationship. Attending council meetings, hand-writing feedback, and responding to surveys are all deterrents to citizen participation.

The revamping of the government is an effort to re-establish the government-to-citizen bond. Governments have to consider citizens as customers and try to understand what they need in order to better participate and trust the government. Governments have to think about ways to empower the citizens and allow them to take ownership of community and regional problems. Citizens seem to think that only people in that area can actually facilitate the needs of that community; therefore, by giving those citizens ownership of that problem and giving feedback and suggestions to the government will allow citizens to view the government-to-citizen bond as a partnership.

Technology has forever altered the structure of daily activities; constantly revitalizing the way businesses, social media, and governments handle daily activities. Appealing to the modern, technology sound person has become the main purpose for government agencies. Five years ago, touch screen cell phones were hardly tangible articles; today, it is unheard of a flip phone or a non-touch screen phone. Social media sites such as facebook, twitter, and other sites, allow individuals to maintain and remain in contact with friends and family, all at the touch of a button. Emails have almost become a thing of the past since text messages and various instant messaging programs have become such popular means of communication. Everything is at the click of a button, swipe of a bank card, or tip of the finger, technology continues to revolutionize how individuals live and communicate.

Governments, state, local, and federal, have grown to realize the shift in which the world is turning towards. Since the changes and advancements of technology, governments are shifting towards services that are available and accessible through the same media programs that individuals are custom to utilizing during their daily routines. Ultimately, the internet or World Wide Web has allotted the possibility for these services to be available. Nonetheless, the problems with these technological advancements are the social and technological disconnects between generations and ongoing struggle with citizen-to-government relations.

The purpose for integrating technology into the disbursement of government information and services is to create a link between the citizens and the government to establish a better relationship and connection. Restoring a healthier balance can best be accomplished by strengthening the citizens confidence and illustrating government transparency through medias that are frequently utilized; facebook, twitter, social media, and e-advertisements, etc. By utilizing these medias, the government is ultimately mobilizing its information and accessibility through the information highway. Currently, President Obama has a twitter account, and though he personally does not update his account, he is utilizing that particular social media to present information to the public in an effort to keep them informed. E-government will not decrease the amount of information or news presented on television or radio; it simply presents information to the citizens who are constantly on-the-go. The purpose for integrating the internet is not to diminish traditional means of obtaining information, rather, to increase the outlets for maximum delivery.

Before the Internet emerged in the late 1980's, the government was already actively pursuing information technology to improve operating efficiency and to enhance internal communication (Ho, 2002). After the internet evolved and the World Wide Web was developed, internal communication was not longer the goal and the shift to external dissemination of information became the goal. By allowing the shift to give access to fiscal information, missions and updates on current programs and projects, and contact information to citizens, governments began to realize that internet government was the shift in citizen relations they had been waiting for.

The availability and rise of e-commerce also contributed to the shift to internet government. Companies began to allow customers to conduct business through the internet by making payments,

money transfers, account management, and provided access to purchasing merchandise. The rise and establishment of e-commerce shifted how citizens viewed shopping and fiscal management. No longer did citizens have to physically go to stores during holiday seasons and fight the crowd, rather, sit in the comfort of their own homes and purchase items through secure payment sites that protected their identity, privacy, and fiscal information. Instead of going to the bank and transferring funds to different accounts; customers can go the banks website, sign in with a unique username and pass code, and electronically transfer funds. It was e-commerce that illustrated to the government that in order to increase in value, citizens must increase in worth. As they say in sales, the customer is always right.

The modern government has transitioned from a period of being active and having the mentality that only the people can help the people, to currently being in an activated period where the government is intertwined with its citizens. Governmental information and transparency has been a progression with the citizens. In the modern government model, citizens are empowered and governments are negotiators (Bannister & Wilson, 2011). The key component to a well working government-to-citizen relationship is the way information is delivered.

One of the purposes for e-government is to establish a two way interaction between citizens and government agency. The problem with this relationship is that governments have a plethora of department and agencies within, which illuminates the complexity of government structure within itself. In Rachel Silcocks article, "What is e-Government," she suggests that there are six stages that government agencies will have to pass as electronics develop internally and externally. Information publishing/dissemination is the first stage in which government departments and agencies set-up their websites with their designated information services and contacts. This is considered one way communication because there is no interaction with the citizen. One -way communication is just like the billboards that line the interstate; not interactive, simply informative.

After one-way communication is established, two-way transactions, which allow citizens to submit personal data, such as, change of address, paying a parking ticket, or enrolling in school. At this stage of e-government, citizens have to be reassured that the information that is being inputted will remain safe and private. With so many Internet hackers roaming around the World Wide Web, providing private information such as birth dates and maiden names has caused citizens to be hesitant. In order for two-way communication to work, government departments and agencies have to keep the site piracy free. In this stage, citizens are looking for accountability.

Governments cannot assume that all because technology is increasing, that citizens want to use or have government services through the Internet. This is the main restraint that prohibits e-government from being utilized as projected. Though the Internet accounts for the majority of the "e" in e-government, the proper channels have to be met in order for maximum access and utilization. The gap between fully integrated systems and the perception of fully integrated systems is what keeps citizens hesitant. Silcock states that citizens are looking for electronic self-services that offer all the traditional procedures for service from an employee and be fully automated from intake to uptake (Silcock, 2001). Meaning, citizens do not want to file electronically and then have to physically file the same papers again. Citizens need to be assured that e-government is truly a reality.

The skill divide is when citizens lack the knowledge and ability to successfully navigate a computer and/or internet services. This is called technical incompetence because a person lacks the general technique and knowledge of how to use a mouse, keyboard, or navigate basic functions. Secondly, citizens that lack basic knowledge of technology vocabulary and resources are at a disadvantage. Most of these citizens that represent this divide are grandparents and members of rural/agricultural communities. Members of these communities could utilize the internet to project growth of crops, find new ways to manage their land, or increase productivity. Using the internet has limitless capabilities and once the divide is decreased, e-government will see an increase just as e-commerce has.

In addition, governments could utilize incentive programs that will encourage citizens to utilize the internet services. Citizens will be more inclined to utilize the internet services if they knew that there was an incentive to gain. Another avenue to gain participation from the disadvantaged group is by having tutorials to give a step-by-step instruction on how to fully utilize the internet and the benefits from the

services. Along with the tutorial, citizens have to be able to navigate department and agency websites effortlessly. The biggest deterrent for citizens when searching for information is the inability to easily navigate to the site or service that needs to be accessed. Norris and Moon stated that in 2000, 83.6 percent of local governments had websites, and in 2002, that number increased 4.1 percent to 87.7 (Moon & Norris, 2005). Many times, the availability of local websites is contingent upon the population and regional size.

Data accuracy is another restraint that disables the ability to obtain accurate and efficient information. In a 2002 survey on the age of government web sites, 68.5 percent of web sites were three year old or less, 27.1 percent were 4 to 5 years old, and 4.4 percent were more than five years old. In order to maintain some sense of impartiality or fairness, the gap between five years or older and three years and younger needs to be drastically decrease. Updating websites has to be a priority when moving towards a fully integrated government system that provides services to the general public. In order to keep customers/citizens content with e-government, departments and agencies will have to spend more money for IT personnel.

Information Technology plays a vital role in the implementation, sustainability, and accountability of e-government. It is the key component that links the government-to-citizen boundary, which leads to the government's openness and accountability. Change in the level of website openness represents the revealed level of change in accountability of the public agency (Welch & Wong, 2004). The ability to interact with the government allows the citizens to view what various departments and agencies are doing. If the government limited the information, it would show a lack of transparency and accountability.

Technology is attempting to put the individual back at the center of life, liberty, and government (Thompson & Wilkinson, 2009). Dating back to the development of the United States Constitution to the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the "separate by equal" doctrine in the Brown v Board of Education case in 1954, the citizen has always been the determinant in what the government will stand for. The history of this nation illustrates the struggle between government and citizen relations. Birthed into a land of slavery and inequality, to the current President being an African American citizen, and this rebirth of citizen being a priority has again illustrated that citizens control government.

Finally, citizens have to choose to adopt e-government and accept the shift in how information is delivered. Do to the digital divide, it can be said that the acceptance of e-government is going to be more prevalent in certain groups, such as, younger, better educated, and have higher income status. Demographics such as age, education, and income help determine the divide and illustrate how technology has influenced America. Citizens that represent the divide as listed above are inclined to utilize e-government because they utilize e-commerce sites; eBay, twitter, facebook, social media, online banking, and purchasing other goods. The younger generation has embraced technology because technology assisted in the world in which they grew up.

Individuals, whose education and community upbringing was established on traditional means of communication, are the same individuals that represent the digital divide and lack the knowledge to fully accept e-government and all that it offers. Currently, administrators are shifting from the traditional operations of physically filing, setting up appointments in books, and typing out speeches, to moving everything to electronics. Office phones are now internet driven and e-files are emailed across the nation. Personnel can now receive monthly checks on a credit card instead of receiving a tangible check. All this to illustrate that the digital divide is not what is prohibiting e-government from being fully integrated into daily lives; rather, the digital divide lack the skills and knowledge to help fully integrate e-government.

Citizens who represent the digital divide, between the ages of 50-75, do not trust e-government because they lack the knowledge of how e-government can increase their voice and input in their own communities. Therefore, the quality of performance that citizens anticipate receiving should not overshadow the ability of services that can be delivered. One thing that most citizens have to realize is that, technology, though it appears to move very quickly, is very slow in implementation because there has to be consideration on security, privacy, and ability. For instance, anyone can suggest that e-government should be able to allow citizens to register to vote, vote, and see the number of voters in their community. Though it sounds fine in nature, the problem still exist that how a person votes is personal

preference and is not public knowledge. Also, even with unique usernames and passwords to acknowledge yourself, online voting is still a long ways in the future. There are expectations as this that illustrate the restraints of how far e-government can go.

Nevertheless, e-government aims to satisfy the citizens of the United States. Undeniably, satisfaction represents the predominant concept in contemporary marketing research (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). Citizen satisfaction is e-governments foundation. The purpose for e-government is to re-establish the government-to-citizen relationship; therefore, the implementation of e-government relies heavily on the services provided and satisfaction of those services. Inevitably, e-government cannot be an effective influence on citizen's behavior if the citizens are not satisfied with their services.

In addition, the view that citizens have on their local or state government and their trust in Washington, dictates their general trust in government all together. Many times people distrust the government because of what they have heard on the radio or television; not realizing that the radio and television are forms of e-government. Citizens distrust the nation's federal government, which trickles down to distrust in state and local governments as well. Though there is no obvious connection to e-government and Washington that can account for the distrust in both governments, it can be said that if the perception of one is changed, the perception of both will change as well. In other words, the perception of government holistically has to be positive in order for e-government to work and increase citizen participation. There are many models that scholars have used to illustrate the connection between human behavior and the acceptance of traditional government and internet government, and they all are surrounded by the citizen's perception of government and their satisfaction level.

The implementation of e-government has to be real and practical. Governance through the internet is going to happen, internally and externally. Internal governance is going to focus on system efficiency and security, while externally, citizens will determine if the government is transparent and effectively presenting information and services. Internally, the power conflicts over departmental boundaries and control of services will surface as integration progresses (Layne & lee, 2001).

In e-government, citizens must have the option and freedom to express services and effectiveness of sites. Layne and Lee suggest that fully integrated government sites should have check boxes for citizens to determine whether they want other agencies to be able to view their information or not. By putting this power in the citizen's hand, various agencies and departments are allowed to understand the citizen's wants and needs. Rethinking how e-government works and the key components of its implementation into the World Wide Web, it can be said that in order for it to succeed, the government-to-citizen relationship has to be good, citizen input has to be respected, and total system integrity has to be accomplished.

METHODOLOGY

The practice and implementation of e-government is moderately new and has a long while before its adaptation to the world is fully integrated and accepted. Avenues in which researchers have gone down to determine the best strategy for implementation has been presented through surveys, focus groups, case studies, and simply analyzing data in reference to governmental styles and its effectiveness.

Various governmental sites began to pop up in the early 1990's which simple one-way information that the general public could access. Information included contact information, general information on department, and very little access to the inner workings of the department or agency. With technology progressively transforming and evolving, the delivery methods and services provided have begun to shape what the modern economy views as government.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Research Question: Will e-Government decrease or increase public interaction with local, state, and federal governments in the United States?

Implementation of anything that is new will surely present its restraints and constraints after a couple practice runs. Just as in sports, a basketball team can only shape its strategy based off of the height and size of its team members; therefore, it would not be in the best interest of the team to establish a game plan that centers on speed when the team consist of tall and bulky members. This same strategy has been applied to e-government and the technology that surrounds the implementation and longevity of the transforming government. Websites are the common place to view and obtain information dealing with local, state, and federal government; however, not all local governments have websites dedicated to their citizens needs.

In 2004, 96.2 local governments were affianced in some sort of internet government, providing minimum information to its citizens (Coursey and Norris, 2008). Nonetheless, this percentage was also based off of populations of no less than 10,000, which leaves out quite a few rural communities whose population is less than 10,000. It is suggesting that communities, whose population is small, do not utilize the internet or need to communicate via internet because they have a ‘family’ oriented community. These types of communities suffer from the geographic digital divide because their voices are too little to be heard. Meaning, in the hierarchy of government, local yields to state and state yields to federal; in political terms, small cities do not yield large voting power and luxuries are given to those who present to have power to change.

In addition, of these local governmental Web sites, only 23 percent of the citizens actually utilized the sites (Coursey and Norris, 2008). Researchers believe that local and state governments have bought into the ‘field of dreams’ mentality that if they build it, the citizens will come; however, this mentality it not the one to utilize when presenting information in a capacity that costs and its success is based off of participation. It seems as though public administrators and the government combined have missed the point that the services and information that is being provided has to be something that the citizens want and need. If the demand is low, e-government officials have to recognize this demand and present something that will encourage citizens to utilize the services.

The findings suggest that the movement of e-government not be rushed, rather, allow the shift to progress in increments. As stated before, e-government needs to mimic the tortoise in regard to maintaining a steady pace and making changes when it best suits the administration. Electronic government is continuously evolving which is why it is important that researchers continue to develop and uncover different models to analyze for implementation to ensure that the best model is adopted. As Web sites mature, so will the technology and the ability to fully integrate government sites. The restraints or barriers that have been discussed are not deterrents of e-government, rather, tools to sharpen the blade of e-government so that when it has come out of the fire, e-government will be a well practiced way of governing it citizens. The ability to give citizens what they want will always be the demand of government; therefore, e-government sites will continue to be tested to ensure that its citizens are obtaining the services in the manner in which they feel is best or most convenient.

Simply providing classes illustrating the types of services that are and can be available could assist in increasing the likelihood of a better e-government. Table one illustrates a survey given to a diverse group to identify the demographic characteristics that differentiate users from non-users of e-government services (Belanger and Carter, 2009).

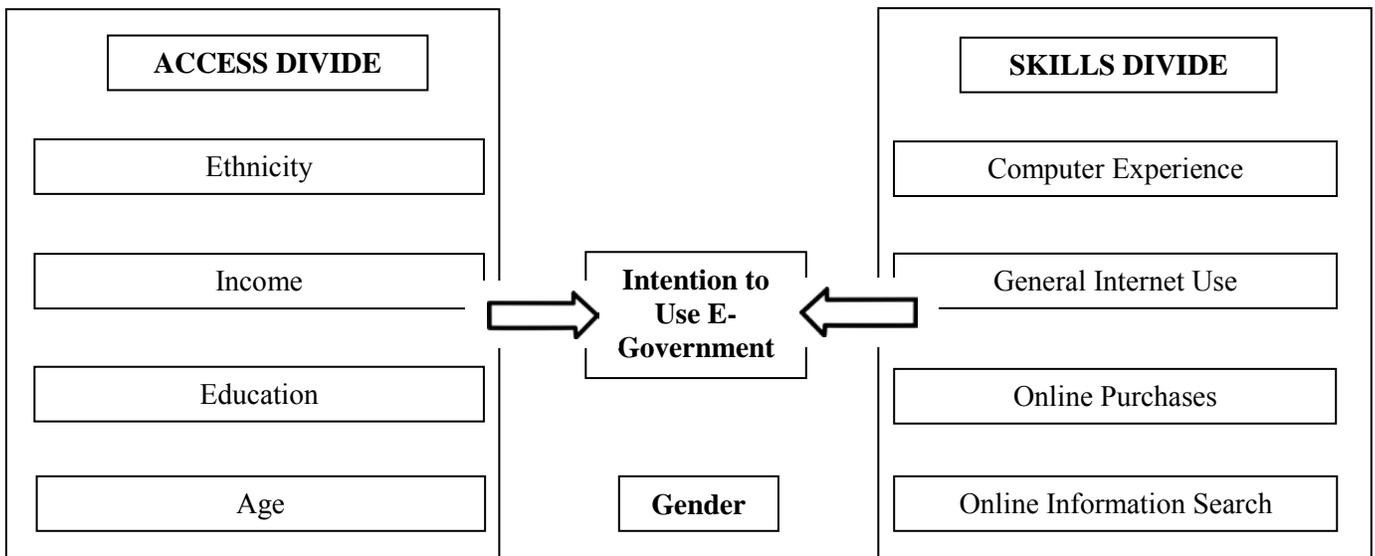
TABLE 1
INTERNET AND WEB EXPERIENCE

Percentage of respondents who...	
had convenient access to the Web	96%
used the Web everyday	80%
used the Web to gather information several times a week	67%
used the Web to make a purchase never or less than once a month	61%
used the Web to gather information from the government	83%
had used the Web to complete a government transaction	66%

E-government, unlike the private sector, has a duty to ensure that citizens have full access to information and services that is available to everyone, but because of the various restraints in the implementation of technology, the adoption of e-government has been limited. With further research on gaining access to the internet and decreasing the amount of computer illiterate citizens, e-government should see an increase in services used. The internet has proven to improve the citizen-to-business interaction by providing citizens with online payments, online banking, e-commerce, and other various services. With the same technologies implemented by the government, the government-to-citizen interaction will increase as well.

The digital divide accounts for many of the setbacks in regard to the implementation of e-government; however, e-government has proven to be a hindrance of its own. Some theorist believe that with the implementation of an internet based government, the physical size of the administration will decrease as well. Therefore, the modern public administrator has to battle the issue of various digital divides and current administrators that are, in essence, fighting for their careers. Not only are current administrators thinking of their own careers, but these are the same citizens who lack the knowledge of computer usage and capabilities. In order to alleviate this divide, government agencies and departments need to implement continued education classes that assist with current employees learning the internet and services that are available.

FIGURE 1
DIGITAL DIVIDE AND E-GOVERNMENT USAGE



Technology has afforded citizens the opportunity to look at government beyond the physical structure and has begun to usher in a new era of government that can be accessed 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Once the technology has been fully integrated and has proven to provide services that the citizens want, brand new technologies can be implemented to continuously increase the limitless possibilities of technology and the internet. The increasing possibilities of technology and internet, offers the ability to aggregate in a new way and take the social contract of individual rights and the power in the citizens voice to new bounds.

CONCLUSION

Governments are beginning to utilize social media to begin the process of allowing citizens to understand their office/department and provide needed information on a daily or weekly basis. Some social media sites that are being utilized are twitter, facebook, and linkedin. Not only are governments providing needed information on these sites but also they are slowly shifting their way of disseminating information into an internet based method. This way of disseminating information is very effective because citizens utilize these social medias hourly, if not sooner.

Not only are social networks utilized but news companies have also engaged in disseminating information through the internet because it allows companies to deliver information in “real-time.” CNN, FOX, and other major news organizations have applications that can be downloaded to any smart phone, and information can either scroll on the home screen as a marquee or text messages can be delivered to the handheld to keep the citizen informed. These capabilities have only scratched the surface as to what technology can bring to the citizen. The capabilities and services that can be provided for citizens are limitless, public administrators just have to realize this potential.

The world has shifted towards the instant gratification model in regards to making money, seeing results, marriage, and a plethora of other aspects of life, and this same instant gratification has spread to governments and the services that they can provide. Private sectors have solidified their ability to provide services to their customers that are customer-oriented and have limitless availability. Services such as personal banking through banking applications, eBay, and Amazon; customers are no allotted the privilege to deposit and transfer funds while shopping for merchandise. Some bigger metropolitans have even begun to provide online grocery shopping to prevent customers from standing in lines or having to go to grocery stores early in the morning or late at night to avoid the lines and crowds. It is this type of forward thinking that has catapulted e-commerce and the private sector into the leading organizations in regard to online services that customers want.

If e-government was to mimic the forward thinking that the private sector has presented, citizen’s utilization of internet government services would definitely increase. The question is not so much if e-government will increase or decrease citizen interactions, rather, what can citizens do to assist the government during the shift and implementation of e-government in the United States. As stated before, the private sector has been successful simply because they have listened, polled, and researched customer feedback and have developed services based solely off of what those evaluations stated. The fact that the government is grossly larger than the private sector does account for many of the drawbacks when shifting to fully integrated government sites; however, with time, e-government will be able to develop internal programs that will intertwine departments to assure a smoother transition to other departments that can be related. By developing this type of program, e-government public administrators will be able to provide departmental transparency and accountability.

In addition, e-government officials must also take into consideration the financial savings as well as the decrease in personnel. Utilizing the internet to provide services will grossly decrease the amount of salaries, operational costs, paper usage, office equipment, and actually office space. Though the economy will be gaining more funds to allocate to different departments in which would see an influx of money that can be reallocated into the economy; however, on the backside is that unemployment would increase as well. Research suggests that though the sheer size of government would decrease drastically, the physical government would not totally die. There would be two forms of government: those that monitor

internet services and those that handle the physical aspect. With this new government, some positions will be duplicated simply because administrators will not be able to handle both internet clients and physical clients; resulting in a system that is fully integrated with both technology and traditional forms of governing.

Also, public administrators and other officials can research and apply for grants that can fund programs to assist citizens that are victims of the digital divide. Most grandparents are not able to navigate the Internet, let alone, have the knowledge or skills to use the basic operations of a computer. These grants can provide needed assistance to citizens and illustrate how the basic usage of computer components and after that skill mastered, usage of the internet will be taught. Many senior citizen programs have classes that teach patrons how to use a computer; therefore, that same system could be adopted into programs that are geared to but not limited to senior citizens or individuals who lack the knowledge of computer usage.

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