
Electronic government: theoretical foundations and directions of an action

Ibadov Nazim *^{1 A}; Mammadli Nuran ^{2 A}

*Corresponding author: ¹ PhD, Associate Professor, e-mail: ibadov.nazim1@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-8881-0686

² PhD, lecturer of the Faculty, e-mail nuranmammedlli@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0003-4319-0089

^A Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan

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Abstract

The presented article describes the theoretical foundations and modern role of e-government as an important factor in increasing the efficiency of public administration. Methods of evaluating the levels of electronic services are analyzed. Various models of state policy are shown in the formation of electronic government.

The article also shows the emergence of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan, its main directions and principles of operation.

Key words: electronic government, electronic democracy, digital government, information society, ASAN service.

Introduction

In recent years, the formation of electronic government is considered to be one of the factors that further develop democracy in developed countries. The problem of increasing the role of electronic government in modern society, social groups and people's lives is now significantly updated for a number of reasons. It is very difficult to imagine e-government without the use of the latest digital information and communication technologies (ICT), which allow to significantly increase the efficiency of the activities of state bodies and the decisions they make. Every state faces the important problem of effective management of society in ever-changing socio-cultural, socio-political and socioeconomic conditions in order to achieve social stability and social order, social security and economic growth.

The political and management aspects of the use of information technologies in public administration, the reasonableness and acceptable forms of adopting advanced foreign experience, as well as the theoretical understanding of electronic government and its impact on the political space are relevant. This relevance is also reflected in the need to study new management methods that occur in the political system of modern states under the influence of the application of electronic government technologies.

The main goal of the article is to analyze the models that reveal the features of the application of electronic government technologies and mechanisms in the state administration system, and to review the process of e-government formation and the main working principles in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Result and Discussion

Forming stages and main models of electronic government.

E-government is a new model of governance. In modern times, the Internet has emerged as a result of the emergence and development of communication technologies. If we look at previous models

in management, we can consider them according to the years of their formation as follows:

- the stage of traditional bureaucratic regulation (up to the 1980s) is characterized by various factors such as citizens waiting in long queues, a large number of bureaucratic obstacles, late provision of information. This led to a decrease in citizen satisfaction and a strengthening of distrust towards this model (Backus Michiel, p.4).

The new public administration that emerged in the 1980s represented an attempt to make the public sector more businesslike and to improve the efficiency of the state's ideas and management models. It emphasized the centralization of citizens, who are the recipients or customers of services, into the public sector (Mammadli N.N., p.112).

The new public administration system also suggested more decentralized control of resources and the exploration of other service delivery models to achieve better outcomes.

The main principles for the new State Administration were:

- Strong focus on financial control, value of money and efficiency improvement.
- Command and control mode of activity, definition and setting of goals and also continuous monitoring of performance, delegation of authority to senior management.
- Implementing audits at both financial and professional levels, using transparent tools to review performance, setting benchmarks, using protocols to improve professional conduct.
- Greater client focus, sensitivity and increased coverage of the roles played by non-public sector providers.
- Deregulation of the labor market, replacing collective agreements with high levels of individual remuneration packages with short-term contracts.

Empowerment of citizens is one of the main features of New Public Management. NPM ensures the citizen's freedom of choice and provides quality services to citizens.

NPM focuses on decentralizing power from a rigid, hierarchical bureaucratic system to flexible and dynamic management support systems

The main goal of implementing the new state administration is to provide quality services to citizens. Although the new state administration was formed as a protest against the power of the bureaucracy, it also included the limitation of state power. The effects of liberalization, market economy and globalization have been felt by the states and certain changes have occurred in the state's welfare level. As a result of this, the need to create an electronic government with citizen-centric management features emerged, and the implementation of electronic government began in the mid-90s. In recent years, the formation of electronic government is considered to be one of the factors that further develop democracy in developed countries.

Implementing e-government is not as simple as it seems. This is due to the failure of e-government projects in some countries of the world. The establishment and implementation of e-government services requires a high level of technical and technological knowledge, competences, structures, as well as cross-country and visionary concepts for accurate implementation.

E-government covers three main areas:

electronic administration: aims to improve all internal and external administrative processes of management. Thus, e-service aims to improve the processes of providing services to both individual and business citizens. In addition, the measures implemented at this level are mostly related to the internal activities of the public sector. These are financial cost reduction, time optimization and process performance management. It occurs as a result of activities such as planning, monitoring and control. The performance of resources (human, financial, etc.) is also part of this area. The goal of e-administration is to create strategic relationships between various management stakeholders, which stimulates research opportunities, the development and implementation of strategies and policies that guide the management process (Satry Fadwa, Juillet 2019, p.9);

e-democracy: aims to develop and improve relations with the citizen as a political actor, owner of legitimacy and consumer of public services. In this context, it is an indispensable act to communicate with the citizen and provide him with detailed information about the activities of the public sector. In addition, listening to citizens helps to increase citizen participation in public decisions and actions. This is considered a democratization in the contribution to political life. This area also gives officials a certain degree of autonomy, while increasing responsibility for their decisions and actions. Finally, quality, convenience and cost are now key dimensions of improved public service delivery;

e-society: the third area dealing with the development and improvement of external social relations, that is, interactions with civil society, including government institutions, private companies, other institutions, non-profit and community organizations. On the one hand, this improves quality and convenience, and on the other hand, relations with non-profit organizations help to create and build solidarity. E-society participates in socio-economic development thanks to established partnerships and organizational groups. At this level, the public sector operates on the basis of an approach of cooperation, acting as a mediator to facilitate procedures and remove obstacles to achieving the expected goals (Satry Fadwa, Juillet 2019, p.9).

Five important e-governance models are presented that can be used as a guide in e-government design. These include broadcasting, critical flow, comparative analysis, electronic mobilization and lobbying, and interactive service models.

Each of these models exhibits several variations depending on local conditions and management activities. In addition, there are similarities between the models:

1. Each model provides equal access to information for everyone connected to the digital network;

2. Creates conditions for the dissemination of information in the entire digital network, etc.

Broadcast model

It is based on the dissemination of useful management information related to the public domain to the wider public through ICT and convergent media. The strength of the model is that a more informed citizen can better assess the functioning of existing governance mechanisms and form an informed opinion about them. Widespread application of this model corrects “data error situations” by providing relevant information across the management domain to give people informed insight and influence management processes.

Critical flow model

It relies on disseminating/channeling information of critical value to a target audience or wider public sphere with ICT and convergent media.

The strength of this model is that when information is placed on a digital network, ICT makes the concept of “distance” and “time” unnecessary, and this can be put to good use by immediately transmitting critical information to a strategic user group or making it freely available to the wider public sphere.

Comparative Analysis Model

It is a very important model for developing countries and can be used to empower people. Essentially, the model continuously adopts best practices in management areas and then uses them as a benchmark against which to evaluate other management practices. (Dr. Arie Halachmi, p.6).

Electronic Mobilization and Lobbying Model

It speeds up real-world processes by showing the opinions and concerns expressed by virtual communities. This model helps global civil society influence global decision-making processes. It relies on building a planned, directed flow of information to create powerful virtual allies to complement real-world activities. Virtual communities are formed that share similar values, and these communities in turn connect with or support real-life groups for concerted action.

The interactive service model

It opens opportunities for direct participation of individuals in management processes and brings more objectivity and transparency in decision-making processes through ICT. In principle, ICT has the potential to involve each individual in a digital network and provide an interactive (two-way) flow of information between them. According to this model, various services offered by the government are interactively made directly available to its citizens. It does this in various aspects of governance, such as the election of government officials (electronic ballots); online resolution of specific complaints; sharing concerns and providing expertise; opinion polls on various issues; and so on (Satry Fadwa, Juillet 2019, p.7).

Currently, there are 2 models of state policy in the formation of electronic government: Western and Eastern models. Accenture, a Western model of e-government, has studied the online service of 23 countries covering areas such as defense, education, services, justice and public security, postal communication, finance, and transportation. The researchers evaluated the possibilities, interactivity and informativeness of the transactions. For two years in a row, the first place was taken by the government portal of Canada. Therefore, the Western model refers to the state policy of the United States and Canada, and the Eastern model refers to the e-government sphere of Singapore and South Korea (Shivakumar Kolachalam).

Creation of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan and directions of activity.

The formation of e-government in Azerbaijan is based on international experience. The basis of the activity aimed at the formation of e-government was laid by the adoption of the National ICT Strategy (2003-2012) for the development of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which provides for the preparation and transformation of the information society.

The National Strategy on Information and Communication Technologies for the Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2003-2012) aims to develop the information society, create an environment for citizens and social institutions to obtain, disseminate and use information, implement efficient, transparent and controlled state administration and local self-government. was adopted in order to increase the country's economic, social and intellectual potential, create a competitive economy, and eliminate the "digital divide" in the country.

In August 2010, the State Program for the development of information and communication technologies ("Electronic Azerbaijan") was adopted for the implementation of the National Strategy in 2010-2012. In addition to the further development of ICT in the country, "the application of electronic government and the provision of electronic services through a single window principle" were also indicated. It also emphasized expectations such as "creating an effective, transparent and monitorable state administration and local self-government, participation of large sections of the population in state administration, expansion of access to state services and information, establishment of effective relations with the citizen-public".

In order to accelerate the implementation of the goals and to integrate these services in a single space, the Presidential Decree on the provision of electronic services by state bodies was adopted in May 2012. By order of the President, the Ministry of Communications and High Technologies (now Ministry of Digital Development and Transport (was given tasks to improve the "Electronic Government" portal for the organization of electronic services based on the "one-stop" principle.

Following this, in July 2012, the State Agency for Service to Citizens and Social Innovations was established under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Rezident olun, imtiyazlardan yararlanın!).

Through the electronic government portal (www.e-gov.az), all electronic services can be easily accessed from one place. It is also possible to group the services provided here. First, there is a news section where the latest changes related to e-services and government agencies will be

announced. Thanks to this, citizens who will apply for services can easily find out the latest events that concern them. Second, the most applicable tax, insurance, pension, identity, etc. includes a services section. Third, there are sections to inform the public. As of June 2016, the number of applications to the “Electronic Government” (e-gov.az) portal was more than 26 million (On ensuring the activities).

More than 50 state institutions of Azerbaijan participated in the “Electronic Government” portal. Currently, approximately 507 electronic services are provided by these state institutions in Azerbaijan. The number of applications to the portal, as well as the number of electronic digital signature owners, is increasing year by year.

The Center is also implementing multifaceted measures for the development of electronic services, including government-to-business (G2B – government to business), business-to-government (B2G - business to government) electronic services (On ensuring the activities).

With “Asan Imza” (Mobile Identification), it is possible to use various services in tax, customs, finance, education and many other areas. Thus, such things as electronic tax declarations, declaration of customs declarations of goods and vehicles, electronic registration of employment notices, online registration of admission to higher education institutions, internet and mobile banking can be done through “Asan Imza” (Electronic Government). The advantage of “Easy Signature” technology is that no additional hardware and software are required to read smart-card readers. “Asan Imza” authentication and electronic signature certificates used in mobile signature systems are a service provided by the State Tax Service under the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the mobile operator. “Asan Imza” is legally valid with a person's signature in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Information flow at all levels in the tax system in the Republic of Azerbaijan is carried out through the Automatic Tax Information System (AVIS) of the State Tax Service over the corporate network system.

Purposeful works are being carried out in the direction of the development of electronic services in Azerbaijan. The application of each electronic service has special requirements. These requirements include facilitating the use of electronic services, facilitating the submission of documents, informing the user, facilitating integration, ensuring security, the existence of administrative regulations, payments for electronic services (obtaining payment options in electronic format), using electronic signatures, etc.

The organization and provision of electronic services in state institutions is carried out every year based on the principles of legality, objectivity, transparency and professionalism. The Assessment Network is shortly called “ASAN service” (State Agency for Citizen Service, ASAN service).

Evaluation of the level of organization and provision of electronic services is carried out by the State Agency according to three criteria (level of digitalization and relevance, level of information openness and accessibility, level of ease of use).

ASAN service centers aim to increase transparency, eliminate bureaucratic obstacles, reduce additional costs and time loss of citizens, and provide easy access to government services. The transition to the information society is not limited to reforms in public administration. It requires the development of democratic principles, e-democracy mechanisms, as well as reconstruction works based on the interests of citizens.

By using modern information technologies, the electronic government creates conditions for the provision of information and electronic services to all citizens, legal and natural persons, foreign citizens and stateless persons living in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The main operating principles of e-government in the Republic of Azerbaijan are:

- compliance with the requirements of the current legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

- implementation of state policy in the field of informatization, and protection of state and national interests;
- provision of simple and prompt access to the completeness, authenticity, relevance, security, and protection of the information provided to users;
- a division of authority and responsibility among state institutions, etc (General information).

Conclusions

Electronic government is a new form of relations between the state and society, it is a process aimed at increasing the volume and quality of services provided by the state to enterprises and citizens in the virtual space, further democratization of society, and increasing the efficiency of combating the problems encountered in this direction.

During the research, foreign and local theoretical ideas about electronic government were studied and summarized; dominant factors in the structuring of electronic government were analyzed and possible approaches were considered; the impact of the development of electronic government on the effectiveness of the state's policy of combating corruption and bureaucratic obstacles is theoretically and empirically justified;

Forms of electronic government formation and provision of electronic services in Azerbaijan were reviewed.

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