A Study on the Problems of E-government in China

Yunqing Wu
School of Management, Tianjin Polytechnic University, Tianjin 300384, China
E-mail: jxb@smtjpu.net

Abstract
In the last several years, “e-government” plays an important role in the construction of modern government in China. Much has been promised, but the reality is a little prosaic. There are potential problems with e-government. This essay analyzes the problems and further points out how to settle them.

Keywords: E-government, Problems, Approach

Introduction
E-government, as a term, refers to “the use of information technology, in particular the internet, to deliver public services in a much more convenient, customer-oriented, cost-effective, and altogether different and better way. In the first years of the twenty-first century, parallel to developments in e-business and e-commerce in China, there have been sufficient governmental changes induced to warrant the name “e-government”. The e-government do a lot for the public management of Chinese government: Permits the integration of data from lots of sources, thus, enables the memory of organizations to be vastly magnified; Permits greater flexibility in arranging who may access and exploit information resources. Permits new kinds of interactive communications within and between organizations (including between organizations and their populace.) Results in less work time spent in processing routine work, thus creates a government that works better and costs less. But we should realize that with the rapid development of e-government, potential problems have emerged, which lies in many public management reform processes.

1. Problems lying in e-government: The digital division rising from the weakness of network infrastructure
Although the number of people connected to the Internet shows remarkable growth, there are still many in china who are not connected and perhaps never will be. There is a serious problem that such citizens could be neglected by government or left behind by others who have the access to internet. A private provider of goods or services can decide to exclude those who do not wish to be on-line; government can not, As it must make its public services available to everyone who want to get and on similar terms regardless of the level of technology its populace can possess. It will be necessary to allow other channels for government providing public services, such as telephone call center. Another aspect of the digital division in china is that people in developing areas have less access than those in developed ones; this exacerbates the gap between rich and poor areas.

2. The computer security
The need for computer security currently is the most pervasive of the fundamental issues raised by e-government in china. Not only must security problems be solved, but also both populace and governments must believe that these problems are solved before the use of e-government reaches its full potential. The underlying problem is the vulnerability of networks and telecommunications to snoopers and those seeking to do mischief or harm. Large public networks are vulnerable because they are so huge that when abuses do occur, they can have an enormously widespread impact. In addition, hackers have been able to find their way into government computers. What hackers do may harm public interest and even endanger the National security.

3. The privacy
The e-government does offer much for governments as well as offering enhanced service delivery for its clients. However, the problem is that these capabilities also may impose problems of privacy invasion. With the widely spread of modern information technology, many people have the skill and technology to intercept and spy upon streams of electronic information that flow through the internet and all other open networks. For example, a simple e-mail message, as it works its way through the net, passes through many points, sometimes hundreds of them. Can be intercepted at any of these points along the route. Valuable data might be intercepted including credit card numbers and names, secret business planes, negotiations between organizations and even national political or Military secret. A further issue with privacy and security is that through data mining, and in combination with modern marketing techniques, government information could be used to target particular kinds of products. It would be possible if a register of births was in private hands for direct mail to be used to sell baby products. Without safeguards it would be possible for an agency involved in the delivery of health care services to on-sell its data to
insurance companies, who could then use patient records to determine risk.

4. The absence of related law and regulation

It is impossible for e-government to make a rapid and smooth development without an integral and unified legislation and regulation frame. In the developed country, in order to guarantee the development of e-government, many have established and promulgated special law and regulations. Such as “Legal Framework for Promoting E-Government “in America,” the Law of Information and Communication Services” in Germany, and so on. Currently, in China, the legislation of e-government is not satisfying. Firstly, there are no related basic laws, such as “Government's Dual Role As Technology Promoter and Regulator”, “the law of public Information”; Secondly, the old law and regulation has fallen behind the request of the new period, such as “Exclusive Law”, “Criminal Law”, and “Copyright Law”.

5. The approaches to solve the problems in e-government

Firstly, making clear the goal of e-government. According to what other governments have done in constructing e-government, we believe that the goal of e-government in china is to build a more efficient, reliable, service-oriented government by the application of modern information and communication technology.

Secondly, as one of the advantages of e-government is allowing the populace of all circles sharing the public information, establishing the integrated information platform is significant for e-government. Via this unified information service platform, all social circles can inquire the enterprise and personal credit information, pay for public transit, water, power, gas, heating, telephone call, and enjoy the information services provided by departments on social security, education, medical services, tourism, community, road & bridge and other fields.

Thirdly, constituting laws and regulations about the open of public information. For the people, the open of public information is not only helpful to exercise their civil right but also convenient to servile the government, so it is of importance to set out to constituting related laws and regulations. In general, these laws and regulations should at least include the following items: the principle, object, mode, cost, procedure, applicant and so on.

Fourthly, developing correlative information and communication infrastructure. First of all, the most urgent is to establish the “Government-to-citizen links”, “Government-to-business links” and “Government-to-government links”, thus, the government, business, citizen are connects in together. Then the GSN (Government Service Network) based on the Internet should be constructed which can offer electronic news, e-mail and electronic lists.

Finally, the security problem of e-government is always being a field that is criticized by many people. This is the biggest disadvantage of e-government. How to overcome the fault to build a secure and reliable system? Firstly, Setting up a specialized agency to lead and coordinate the construction of e-government is very necessary, the agency should be authorized to institute correlative policy and plan, to punish the illegal activity and to launch safety education and training. Secondly, The e-government will establish a fully functional alternative disaster recovery site, and accredit major systems for security, and continue to monitor and improve the security of Commission systems and the privacy of Commission data. Thirdly, the related institution should establish certificate authority to afford consultation services on the information security.

References