Critical factors for improving E-Government in Iran

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Abstract

In order to increase the functionality of government body, proper policies must be defined clearly. The e-Government in Iran is improving gradually while the characteristics of users and availability of technical infrastructure must be considered. To improve efficiency of e-services quality and trust may increase between citizens, businesses and government organizations through internet, IT and web based applications. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to describe obstacles of improving e-Government in Iran based on relevant literature and offer practical, accessible solutions to achieve effective and efficient e-Government services in Iran.

Keywords: E-government of Iran, ICT, web services

1. Introduction

Effective working procedure of government machinery can be achieved by providing availability of information to all categories of users from rural urban to metropolitan citizens with affordable cost.

Keeping in mind that e-Government is more about government than about electronics (Sarpoulaki et al.2008).

Government of Iran is moving its governmental activities and information from paperwork into the online world while private information and data of both government and users should be secured and services to the citizens must improve.

Quality of services to end users can be enhanced by improving processes and management skills through reforming the traditional style and concepts of citizenship and democracy (Sharifi and Zarei 2004, Nikkhahan et al.2009).

Actually, growth of e-Government in Iran has faced challenges and threats because of rapid development of technology and vulnerability of the global environment. (Ahmadi, Ghazanfari, and Aliahmadi 2003)

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2.1 E-Government vision in Iran

Government infrastructure, developmental, economic, legal and socio-cultural issues are different factors of network information society!

In Iran rapidity and reliability for citizens, business centers and employees/public servants are the issues that recently received the attention of authorities and policy makers. Local particularities and globalized should be given equal consideration. Market and non-market based information also must be taken into account in the form of conceptual map of issue model of cost and benefit functioning and politics of groups unified by common interest.

Reform of current model, need to be directed towards a more equitable distribution of knowledge, information and culture in individual and worldwide level. Mechanism and legal certainty should be clear

The proposed framework of e-Governance would be helpful for the end users to be able to have strategy planning in absence of human experts, which is expensive, scarce and mortal.

Effectiveness has to be analyzed only based on providing adequate empirical evidence and theoretical justification.

Actually, lack of research-based study can be seen from a practical standpoint. Based on such information operation cycle time could be reduced and responding to challenging citizens in receiving cheap immediate service, good quality, convenient access, flexibility, downsizing the government, promoting social welfare and awareness in the society can be met.

Traditionally in Iran Public, believe that introducing new methods from the government is for earning more from the public that may cause people to hesitate in trying e-service.

From another side a large number of old generations are still computer illiterate, others are discouraged by computer related problems. Direct access to on-line information also is another problem since for a group of citizens who they don't have internet access at home, using e-station which can be an inconvenience especially at night beside slow speed for downloading Webpage’s with graphic and voices also are other issues to prevent rapid improvement of e-Government in Iran!

Intelligent technologies that could provide unlimited storage capacity, availability of useful e-Governance web services, massing computing power and less maintenance cost are superior technology compare to traditional server centric architecture of e-governance.

Innovation in technology is a creative solution for more efficiency! New technology like cloud computing concept is an intelligent creativity and this technology is accessible within reach of the masses specially the poor.

While for a large number of users in a country like Iran using sophisticated laptop or desktop is not affordable, creative technology like cloud computing could be helpful. In cloud computing based e-Governance the web services would be accessible over a network using thin
clients/mobiles which are more affordable and cheaper for nearly all type of users in urban and metropolitan cities.

In spite of the above-mentioned factors, there are opportunities for e-government to grow in Iran to show their commitment in the Middle East region through building a cyber-highway to develop strategies for planning, implementing, monitoring e-services within and between countries.

From another side intellectual property, must be respected for long-term benefit so protection of information must be determined by contract law either in the form of technology licenses or in the form of usage contracts in the way that we have politics of the environment or of tax reform, so first step is legislation of efficient rules With special consideration to copyright limitations, exception, and to expand protection on non-copyrightable material in distributional and ideological terms.

The specific contractual clauses should be overwritten by the relevant copyright rules for prevailing public interest reasons.

There are some threats as well that must be considered. Cyber terrorism is an issue that is why businesses may hesitate to communicate and disseminate information online, while still issues of copyright and intellectual property are not fully addressed.

The main objectives of e-Government 2.2

Clear goal and discussed strategies are an important issue, which need to be noticed.

Improve effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilization between government agencies through collaboration by providing timely information and delivery of government services in order to reduce transaction cost are main objectives of e-Government in Iran where achieving these goals require a strong commitment from the government by providing government data network security strategy and technology experimentation through central servers.

2.3 E-Government target groups

In Iran strategic framework of e-Government focuses on three main target groups:

First group is citizens providing people appropriate information to online payment of bills such as telephone, water, electricity and so on.

Secondly, meet the specific needs of the business community from business registration and licensing to e-procurement.

Thirdly is interaction between government and employee by using government private network to access citizen's information such as personnel benefits and retirements.

E-Government by introducing joint program of people, private and public has encouraged both the public and private sectors to contribute to the growth of e-Government.

Better job opportunities and time constraints are motives to urge the public to adopt e-services where new generation is interested to do their work through online services.

Government authority should be trusted, open to every comments, ideas and accessible for all and email must be official form of communication between authorities and people.

Conclusion

Effective e-Government must establish accurate and reliable plans and strategies according to the characteristics of end users. For a society like Iran, accessibility with affordable cost should be considered so creative technology can enhance e-Government activities in Iran. Besides that being in touch with other countries in the region with creative technology and similar characteristics and requirements can enhance e-Government activities in Iran. For example using cloud computing which is an appropriate solution for a country like India could be applicable in Iran as well.

In Iran, other strategies and policies based on socio-cultural requirements could be applicable. For example to persuade Iranian citizens for using e-services some advantages must be defined to help moving from paper work to online system.

From another side free or cheap courses must be available for different age groups to aware public and government employees of the e-services. This training process can be a part of assignment of IT students to educate society in rural and urban area as a part of their graduation program since more experts dealing with businesses and government organizations.

Allocating budget to R&D department to enhance the quality of hardware and software through benchmarking to adopt with high speed of IT changes from one side and making more Farsi language web sites for local users to motivate them for using e-services from another side could be helpful for improving e-Government in Iran.

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