

How E-Government and Technology Can Lead to a Smarter Government in the United States

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If 2013 is an indicator of what will occur in 2014, it is safe to say that the United States bureaucratic system is heading toward a calamitous state. Inadequate leadership has been a major factor in prohibiting the American government from more efficiently meeting public needs, progressing information, and evolving into a more robust and smoother bureaucratic system. Older models have shown that our current bureaucratic system is not capable of the task of generating a sensible government system. Taken together, these factors have led many to see the public sector bureaucracy as a monolithic entity, non-responsive, and hierarchal. On top of this hierarchal pyramid the President of the United States who is vested with executive power. The ambiguous nature of the words “executive power” lacks defined objective, hinders the president’s ability to coordinate, and makes it difficult to accomplish set objectives . In *The Politics of the Presidency, Revised 8th Edition*, political scientists Joseph A Pika and John Anthony Maltes explained “even within the executive branch, presidential powers of command are limited and that a president’s success as an administrator depends greatly on the ability to win the trust of others” (P&M, 253).

When we evaluate the scope of the job, the president is responsible for a bureaucratic system made up of fifteen departments and fifty-four independent establishments and government operations. Such a daunting task can be overwhelming not to add the risk a president runs when trying to control the system. Since the bureaucracy is also ran by both congress and other entities, attempts to make modification are sometime seen as excessive use of power. These restrictions on those who are in control of the bureaucracy (president, congress and other entities) keep these departments in a permanent, stationary, and regressive position. As Professor Francis E. Rourke stated in his book *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy*, “bureaucracies at rest tend to stay at rest and bureaucracies in motion tend to stay in motion”. When we analytically appraise our current bureaucratic system, it is fair to conclude that our bureaucratic

system has been in decade long, despite the incremental change of leaders. One of the biggest issues for bureaucratic institutions and government departments are they struggle to store and manage all the information that is collected. These struggles in turn lead to the loss of documents, denial of necessary services to its citizens, and decreases in the ability for data analyst to interpret and examine data. The leaders of bureaucratic institutions must play a vital role in creating policies that shift the bureaucracy from a motionless, inefficient, ineffective, and unequal state to a one that creates bureaucratic inertia.

Information and communication technology's (ITCs) have been advancing and expanding at an accelerated rate. These progressions in the field of ITC are a means of overcoming limitations to traditional forms of bureaucratic organizational ineffectiveness. Through the proposal of policies that promote an increase in both e-government and technology to the bureaucracy, policy makers will have the ability to incrementally restructure and renovate the bureaucratic system as a whole. E-government has the ability to integrate dissimilar data resources into portals that improve access and communication between bureaucratic institutions, separate departments, businesses, citizens, and other interest for little to no cost. With the implementation of policies that increase the usage of electronic governance, government office can generate linkage among government entities, bureaucratic institutions, departments, agencies that in turn can work together, provide information, and increase services. Comprehensive websites allow tax payers to gain more information at a faster pace and creates trust between citizens, bureaucratic institutions, and government officials. The increase in use of government websites will not only decrease the use of automated response systems but also will specify each citizen's individual needs. Such specifications can reduce the wait time for an operator and extends time availability for responses. Fundamentally, e-government facilitates citizen interaction with the government. In essence, the increase in interaction between government and it citizen is public services most essential objective (Milakovich, 2012). With an the implementation of a policy that increases the use of e-government, citizens have access to their public sector with few problems, public services become available to citizens 24/7, citizen begin to trust their government as a byproduct of transparency, and citizen involvement increases.

Bureaucratic institutions struggle with massive quantities of data. Through the use of technology and data analytic software, bureaucratic institutions and government departments could reduce both clerical work and errors, eliminate wasted time, collect and interpret large quantities of qualitative data, and create new systematic techniques that allow them to flow smoother. Policies that promote the increase usage of e-government and technology also decrease daily expenditures. The increase in the federal deficit has created much debate on how government can reduce many of its expenditures. With the use of Cloud based software, bureaucratic institutions can reduce departmental cost. Many government departments currently pay high licensing fees for a wide variety of software. Cloud based software not only perform the same tasks as many of the licensed software such as Microsoft products like Office and Excel but cloud based software are relatively free or significantly cheaper. No longer do workers have to wait for the completion of portions of projects to add their input. Programs that are cloud based promotes real time collaboration thereby shorten workflow decision processes. Due to online storage capacity of cloud systems, government can remove the need for multiple email or expensive email servers. With the implementation of policies that promote the use of data analytics, technological advances, cloud based systems, automate paper systems, comprehensive website, and transparent e-government, policy makers will change bureaucratic institutions from a necessary evil to the catalyst that aided the United States government in moving towards a smarter government.

With every policy created there are unintended consequences, challenges, and obstacles. In the case of polices that promote technology and e-government, applying new technology to traditional bureaucratic structures potential for new forms of inequality are created. Digital divides will begin to emerge. Individuals who are not financially capable of affording a computer or access to internet will be disenfranchised. As globalization increases there are is a serious concern for malfeasance. As hacking becomes more prevalent, citizen's personal information becomes accessible to cyber thieves (Milakovich, 2012). While e-government possesses an immense capacity to alter public service provision, senior officials may be afraid of shifts in the status quo, middle Managers afraid of being replaced, and bureaucrats may find learning new ways of doing their job challenging or unnecessary. Factors such as these can lead to a lack of implementation or a lack of transformational application.

References, Footnotes, and Exhibits

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