E-governance: Effectiveness, Legitimacy and Equity

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ABSTRACT

The term Digital Governance (or electronic governance or e-governance) refers to governance processes in which ICT play a significant role. This role could be wide-ranging: in delivery and standards of governance services, to how people access such services, and the participation of people in the governance sphere. Digital Governance uses ICT to induce changes in the delivery and standards of governance services and more importantly, in the way citizens interact and participate in the governance sphere. In case of "good governance", information is acquired and used strategically for "public good" purposes. And in case of "bad governance", the same information is used for "private gains" and for suppression of the citizens. In either forms of governance, the selective use of information creates hierarchal structures on which power gets unequally distributed. In our paper, we will see why the effectiveness, legitimacy and equity are the bases of the e-governance.

Keywords: Digital governance, e-governance, e-government, ICT.

1. Introduction

"An open, inclusive information society that benefits all people will not emerge without sustained commitment and investment". That was the main message by General Secretary Koffi Annan to the world leaders who gathered at the first World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in December 2003. The Geneva Summit ended with a declaration of principles on which "to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, use and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life". And today on the basis of the declaration of engagements of the States and of the Agenda that developed in Tunisia during the 2nd phase of the WSIS 2005, the UN has involved itself to address the crises which exist since the evolution of ICT that affect the construction of information society. Question: Can this engagement of the world-wide community bring a new breath and framework to propagate the use of the ICT while facilitating an easy and cheap access for the people?

2. From ICT to e-governance

ICT has become very important in the management of public and private sector services. One of the changes brought about by the ICT involves the management of public administration, where the new technologies and the Internet transform the way in which the agents of the state communicate with each

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other and with the citizens. Moreover, the private sector is equally proactive in the application of the ICT to daily business services. In addition, the ICT induced new and interesting ways for the citizens to communicate and to participate in the political and administrative processes. The e-governance as the body of the actions conducted by the e-government through its electronic tools for a better management and administration does not escape to the most often resulting rule that "the thought systems and the institutional systems do not evolve at the same rhythm than the society itself". So that one thinks the tomorrow challenges with concepts and ideologies born a century ago and one manages the problems of tomorrow with the institutional systems that replied to other problems and to a previous state of the society.

The new technologies are changing era, the society needs to make it evolve, but the conceptions, the institutions, and the practices of governance did not follow in particular to the world-wide scale. Therefore, the instances of action or of consultation of the rich countries occupy the front stage. It still remains nevertheless some balance to manage between the States and between the societies of different levels, as on the priority granted to the technology in the concerned domain, than on the means of infrastructure and equipment financing. Good governance is a part of a development process which is participatory, transparent and accountable in characteristic where processes and structures guide political and socio-economic relationship; and also the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in the decision-making processes regarding the allocation of resources. Hence we will stress on e-governance. When one refers to the use and impact of ICT on the public sector, a wide variety of terms come up most notably the use of e-government, government on line, digital government, e-governance, and e-democracy. These are sometimes used interchangeably. But, more importantly, they are rarely used consistently. These terms are still so new that they haven't yet found their way into dictionaries, so it is not surprising that they often mean different things to different people.

2.1. What is e-governance?

In order to apprehend e-governance, we have to first understand the meaning of Governance. In fact, Governance has many definitions. Governance, which appeared during the 80s - the compilation of the "Principles of corporate governance" of the American Law Institute, means the management of the big corporations has to be more objective, and the management has to make better account of the managerial performance and the interests of the shareholders. Therefore the governance originates from the need of economics (as regards corporate governance) and political science (as regards State governance) for an all-embracing concept covering diverse meanings not covered by the traditional term "government".

Referring to the exercise of power overall, the term "governance", in both corporate and State contexts, embraces action by executive bodies, assemblies (e.g. national parliaments) and judicial bodies (e.g. national courts and tribunals). One can say that the term "governance" designates here the institutions, the structures and the processes by which authorities are exercised, including the decision-making processes.

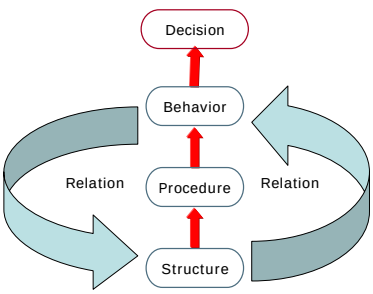

Figure 1: The three keys elements: Structure, Procedure and Behavior.

Thus, the European Commission [1] established its own concept of governance in the White paper on European Governance, in which the term “European governance” refers to the rules, processes and behavior that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence. These five “principles of good governance” reinforce those of subsidiarity and proportionality. Nevertheless, the word “Governance” is not in the same sense as the term “Government”. “Governance” differs from “Government” by the fact that contents can be translated by electronic government. That is Governance involves the use of ICT but Government does not. However, we could qualify the Governance as contents and Government as a container.

E-governance will change the way citizens relate to governments as much as it changes how citizens relate to each other. E-governance will allow citizens to communicate with government, participate in the governments' policy-making and citizens to communicate each other. The e-governance will truly allow citizens to participate in the government decision-making process, reflect their true needs and welfare by utilizing e-government as a tool. We use the terms “e-governance” rather than “e-government” to capture the notion of changed institutional relationships and the involvement of partners, both from civil society and business, in e-governance. E-government refers more narrowly to processes of national, local or regional government. E-governance is about the use of the ICT, with the aim of improving the information supply, of raising the quality of the services of governments delivering to citizens and businesses, and of making the government more responsible, transparent and effective. It is hoped that it will also reinforce the connection between public officials and communities, thereby leading to a stronger, more accountable and inclusive democracy.

3. Effectiveness, the constitutional objective of e-governance

The e-governance is not only a question of technological or material application in the framework of the political matters, it concerns also the ways of which their authorities and social are organized and used efficiently, it may be defined as the body of the actions conducted by the e-government through its electronic tools for a better management, a better administration, a better report administrators/managed, of better services. This effectiveness will be able to be the first criterion of e-governance. Effectiveness is understood not only as the capacity to realize governance objectives, but also includes the one of efficiency [2].

3.1. Improvement in quality of administration and of services: management of relation of e-governance

In the framework of public sector, the management of the governmental relations to all levels and relations between the government and the citizens is a strategy that places the services and benefits to the citizens all sectors of the population. Nevertheless, e-administration and e-services are the first preoccupation of the e-government.

3.1.1. E-administration

If there is a field in which the e-government did recur in first to the ICT, it is obviously the one of the administration. Within the administration, the information that the citizens could use is broadcasted by the computerized networks. E-administration improves the internal workings of the public sector with ICT-executed information processes. Some examples are: integrated human resources, payroll systems, integrated financial management systems, and web-based data resources to improve decision-making. Some authors refer to this dimension as back-office capability and it is generally recognized as a precondition for developing e-services and e-democracy. Internet puts everyone at the same level while the administration holds on hierarchies. Now, Internet facilitates the internal and external communication of the administration and also facilitates the communication between the governments as well as between the governments and the citizens. Internet lessens vertical and territorial barriers; this allows transparency of

activities of the administrations and the division of the inter-administrative know-how, which leads to improvement in performances of the administration with regard to the citizens and firms.

During his life, a citizen is recalled to fill multiples forms of the administration. By electronic way, the formal party common to all these formalities could be saved in order to avoid useless waste of time to the citizen. This measure, simple in appearance, leads to a better «cooperation» of administrations, whereas, currently, every administration has access to its own forms and is not concerned with those in vigor in the neighbor ministry. In Great Britain, once recorded on a common portal to all the administrations, the basic information of the citizens, constituent most common smallest denominator of the administrative forms, automatically are rediscovered to constitute the identification of the user in question. Nevertheless, the electronic data processing of the public administration on line will help it to reform if whole services of the state and territorial groups are linked up between them and that all the users can freely connect themselves. Now, in a lot of countries, the current governments or bureaucratic organisms are not able to satisfy all the needs of the public regarding improvement of the e- governance. The administrative reform is then a decisive factor to re-establish global visions concerning the future of the state. The implement and the management of the e-governance by the state depend on results of the administrative changes. The major bets of the administration on line are to improve quality of the services to user allowing quicker information, shorter treatment delays of the files and an extensive check of the citizens on the data that concern them.

3.1.2. E-services

According to some authors, “the new governance characterizes itself by the transition from the protection to the contract, from the centralization to the decentralization, from redistributive state to regulating state, from management of public services to the management according to the market principles, from the political “guidance” to the cooperation of the public actors and private actors”. Despite the critic on this liberalism vision, the management of the administration according to the principles of the market is completely possible and desirable, since currently the governments of the countries of the entire world try more and more to offer a pertinent benefit, centered on the citizen. The objective is to organize the benefit of the public services from the standpoint of citizens (the market request) and not of the governments, and to offer progressively these services as a whole of the administrations and through all the benefit channels [3]. Furthermore, it must be stated that the technology that facilitates the e-government is not the most important but what is essential is that the content be pertinent. The people will use the Internet if it offers services axes on the customers which reply to their needs and to their priorities. The citizens want to find news and to direct matters according to different interests. Usually, the services proposed currently by e-government to citizens include essentially providing information and delivering services.

Providing citizens with details of public sector activities mainly relates to some types of accountability: making public servants more accountable for their decisions and actions. It implies as well improving the services delivered to members of the public along dimensions such as quality, convenience and cost. This uses all the potentials of ICT to deliver the informational components of public services to citizens in digital form. Examples of interactive services are requests for public documents, requests for legal documents such as driver's license, the passport or the identity card, the need of services such as the creation of firm on line or again the search of employment by of intermediary governmental site. The Internet sites of the administration can also offer the services of on line declaration of taxes. Presently, there are some countries that implement many types of e-services and provide different public policies and other development programs. The evolution towards the virtual state allows proposing integrated services on line to the citizens. These have benefits. Notable examples of integrated benefit of the service include the Australian Centrelink, the centers of services to business of Canada and the Portuguese “infocid”.

3.2. Management of the economical exchanges

The management of the economical exchanges is at the center of the preoccupation of e-governance in the public sector as in the private sector. Internet offers more than ever considerable commercial perspectives for all; it offers the potential for increased availability of information, new means of communication, re-organization of productive processes and improved efficiency in many different economic activities. It offers unique opportunities for individuals, business and government to seek new ways of achieving higher levels of services both qualitatively and quantitatively at substantially lower costs. For example, a businessman from New York turns itself towards a computer and strikes on one of the keys of the keyboard, and immediately, tens of thousands of dollars changes hands, and this simple act could produce huge repercussions on the economies of a country in this era of the global economy. The management of the economical exchanges by the e-government is generally associated with the use of ICT allowing divided up exploitation of information and of transaction on line.

3.2.1. Broadcastings of the information by Internet

As all the technologies in use in the economy sector, the ICT modify the organization of supply chain of merchants. Today, there are more and more companies broadcasting commercial information and advertising by Internet, in order to get directly linked with their customer, which allows reducing the delays of the operation and making more effective transactions. The use of Internet, that allows in particular a quick broadcasting and wider information grows. As in the field of commerce, the requirement of improvement of rapidity and effectiveness of the broadcasting of the information of the quoted corporation allows also recourse to Internet.

Considering the technical particularity of this new communication tool, the administrations of the stock exchange operations recommend the quoted corporations to broadcast financial information on Internet. They would authorize all emitter to satisfy its statutory obligations of information of the public under electronic form. All emitter who would choose for this method of information to the public could select freely one or several contractors in charge of assuring the broadcasting of its communiqués.

The administration of the stock exchange would verify that the system set in place provides to market and to the general public transmission guarantees in real time, on a free and centralized site Internet, communiqués in integral text from the senders, with a good level of confidentiality and secure transmission of communicated information. This electronic broadcasting of permanent information would present two major advantages: on one hand, it allows transmitting the information to the market at better speed; on the other hand, it determines the time information is communicated to the whole public with all the consequences that are implied. Today, financial market authority has Internet supervision tools that allow for consultation of the financial sites and verification of absence of offence.

3.2.2. On line transactions

The development of ICT has changed traditional business. For example, following the information about a tender or request broadcasted by Internet, the agreement between two parties, the salesman and the buyer, is done on line; they exchange information, negotiate, sign and even carry out the contract on line without being physically present. The profits induced by e-business are firstly financial. For example, instead of selling a good in the traditional economy at 100 euros, the seller can use the Internet to sell 100 items at 10 euros; the reduction of the selling price of the item is because of decrease in production and selling administration cost. This decrease in production costs can realize itself also by the producing some goods in countries at low labor cost. This delocalization also can have an impact on the contractor himself, who can leave the city center and its expensive housings towards a more reasonable place while he keeps holding on to “his presence”, as the Internet has a balancing effect that modifies the real size of the contractor. E-government could benefit from now on the advantages of transactions en line.

As the great client of the merchandise and services, it participates also in online transaction. Many governments have created government web site to organize and present information in order to choice the best products and services but more cheap. By this way, the traditional supply chain of merchant to the government has been revaluated: the intermediaries have been delimited, the transparence of the public market could be guarantee, and the corruption between the merchants and the governors in the transaction will be disappearing. On the other hand, the electronic interchange, between banks, of data related to payment order is mastered by the actors of the bank profession.

The new methods of electronic relation between the credit establishments and their customers allow henceforth the dematerialization of the order of payment, beforehand transmitted under scriptural form. This dematerialization is widely engaged in the business world. Regarding the huge volume of operations to process, associated with the electronic transmission on the order of payment coming from big operators, it allows to reduce the cost of the treatment, meanwhile preserving the imperatives of rapidity, of simplicity and of transaction security, as for the bank than for his customer.

4. Legitimacy, the first regulating principle of governance

The legitimacy of e-government relies on the standards and the common rules. The political and administrative power must be exercised in respect with imposed rules to the all the Internet users: the self-regulation and the national and international legislations.

4.1. Self-regulation

Self-regulation can be defined as a judicial technique according to which the rules either of law or of behavior are created by the persons who are destined to apply them, whether these persons elaborate by themselves or are represented to this effect. That is to say that the self-regulation involves the elaboration and the respect by the actors themselves of rules that they formulated and for which they apply to organize themselves; in this model, the traditional role of the States seems reduced to a minimal intervention, consisting essentials in tailoring the judicial framework. The principal reasons that drive to this intervention are: Firstly, the global character of the network and its decentralization make the traditional intervention of States ineffective, for the standards enforced by the States always can be convoluted. Secondly, a part of the interventions of the States are no more justified as some sources of scarcity disappear and as numerical technologies allow a fine checking of the methods of access to information. It exist therefore different auto-regulation forms, and the government have to respect the regulated rules as the Internet users.

4.1.1. Respects of rules imposed to the Internet users

In the exercise of the political and administrative power while using the means of ICT, the e-government must respect the regulated rules imposed on the Internet users. In fact, most often in order to attain a site it is necessary for citizen to fill a detailed list and give a valid address e-mail that allows the e-governors to constitute customers files, mailing lists. Now, the analysis, the usage of thus collected information can be prejudicial to private life of the net surfer, so much the more that has often for result the reception of non solicited mailings, of spamming. With the development of the Internet, the new auto-regulation rules were progressively adopted, notably in the different preoccupation fields as the respect of private life, the rules of on line transaction, advertising, the relations of the employment, the limitation of the access to the contained prejudicial. Initiated just as well by the actors of the market as by the associations and the users themselves, they equally took very diversified forms as the contracts, the code of good conduct, ethical rules, the commercial labels, the devices filtrates, etc. Reidenberg adopted the term “Lex Information” to argue that technology impose a set of rules that policy makers should take into account, as regulation is deemed to fail in the event it is not sensitive to them. For example, with the development of the electronic

commerce, agreements were concluded that frame exchanges of computerized, grouped together data under name EDI (Electronic Data Interchange). It exists currently about twenty contracts EDI, some of them retrieving themselves to branches of specific activities, others having a national vocation.

4.1.2. Different auto-regulation forms

Historically, the first auto-regulation institution developed on the Internet resulted from elaboration of some conduit rules by the relatively homogenous community of its founders. IETF (Internet Engineering Task Forces), the organization in charge of elaborating the standard techniques of the Internet, constitutes an auto-regulation example of the Internet because of its character, which is open linked to the absence of structure lawful and of definite procedures of adhesion as well as of his decision method based on the research of the rough consensus. The creation FDI (Forum des "Droits sur l'Internet" - Internet rights Forum), a French association is an example of the co-regulation that articulates two dimensions: a permanent and furnished exchange between the actors of the Internet and the authorities of the public regulation; cooperation between the instances of the public regulation and the different auto regulation institutions of economical and social actors. Based on the principle of the growing responsibility of the Internet users, this one works itself as a self regulation institution through the adoption of rules that would be defined way more or less informal not to substitute itself to the law but would have vocation to combine with it.

ICANN (Internet corporate Body for Assigned Names and Numbers), a private company which makes political decisions under the guidance of the Department of the Commerce of the United States, was asked commercial questions regarding issues such as the division of the income of the recording of the names, and industrial property on the reports between mark and domain names. In the case of business interests, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), which is the world business organization representing enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world, presents a good example of relevant efforts. ICC supports the recently-concluded United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts as a useful reform to spur development of cross-border online commerce in the developed and developing world. ICC participated in the drafting of the convention through a joint task force of its Commission on Commercial Law and Practice and Commission on E-Business, IT and Telecoms, by furnishing expert input and sharing business experiences on electronic transactions. ICC also published its ICC eTerms 2004 as a self-regulatory complement to the convention.

4.2. Action of Internet regulation

E-governance must take legislative measures in regulating Internet in order to guarantee the good functioning of society of information on one hand; on the other hand, as the corporate governance must refer itself to the financial security law (French law), the e-governance will not be able to escape the texts of laws and regulations in the process of administration..

4.2.1. Internet regulation: rule-making

As for Internet regulation, [4] recognizes how the Internet presents a new paradigm of regulation based on the living law of communities, and as such should be viewed as opening up new chances for re-politicization and re-individualization. In all these instances, law is conceptualized as a process. Internet regulation where communities function according to internal codes of conduct, regulatory instruments that take the form of a mix of self-regulation and hierarchical intervention (with regulatory law intervening in the monitoring and enforcement stage) and regulatory instruments that denote the partnership between the State and private actors.

As regards the distribution of illegal content on the Internet, it is up to national government to enforce the law, since what is illegal offline remains illegal online. The industry is viewed as playing an important role

in helping reducing the circulation of illegal content (especially content such as child pornography, racism and anti-Semitism) through self-regulation (such as codes of conduct and establishment of hotlines) in compliance with and support by the legal system. Anyways, the e-governance has to be sensible to adapt quickly the need of regulation outcome of the evolution of the ICT in all of the fields, in particular in the field of new economics. In fact, it's very important for e-government to catch the good field which needs the Internet regulation and to make the pertinent rules. Otherwise, it risks killing or hindering the new positive thing in the promotion.

In the field of electronic commerce, it has, as early as 1996, promoted a better protection of consumer as well as a bigger lawful security in the framework of the improvement of the unique market in the matter of electronic commerce, for example, the directive 2000/31/EC [5]. On the other hand, the commission has on a recommendation on October 19, 1994, described an agreement model that is to be used by the business of the European Union. Besides, the Commission of the United Nations for the Development of the International commerce (UNCITRAL: United Nations Commission on International Trade Law) set recommendations, standard contract, uniform rules, and finally an elaborated model law in 1996, on the electronic commerce which aims to guarantee the effectiveness of EDI international law.

4.2.2. Legalization of the administration procedure on line

The national or international legislations imply the creation of rigid and precise standards on the subject regarding conditions to do or not to do. For example, the law number 2001-420 of May 15 2001 in France on the new economical regulations allows the members of the boards of directors, supervisors and shareholders of corporations to participate and to vote at meetings by means of electronic telecommunications, notably Visio-conference and Internet. The methods of the usage were specified by the application decree number 2002-803 of May 3 2002, of which the items 84-1 and 108-1 dispose that the boards of directors and supervision counsels can deliberate validly without their members being necessarily physically present. The transgression of these rules is possible, so the courts could inflict a penalty surpassing the simple financial penalty that means that the responsibility principle applies.

The responsibility principle illustrates in first link the relation between the legitimacy notions and e-governance; it is quoted by all the governance notions proposed by the European Commission, the OCDE, and the World Bank. The responsibility, precisely the accountability, is an effective capacity of the decision-makers to realize their decisions in a manner permanent and measurable; it is the source of the rules. Thus, the harmonization of the international bodies should allow creating progressively a form of world-wide public order, which is susceptible to engage the responsibility of the all states. This harmonization aims to bring progressive close to the notably applicable rules within the cyberspace.

5. Equity, sine qua non condition of the e-governance

The equity that we follow is the one that was born in the theory of justice of Aristotle which defines itself as the maintenance or the restoration of a proportion. Integrated in the notion of e-governance, the principle of equity demands the e-government to maintain an equitable distribution producing the reduction of social, economical or political inequalities to the level this is most inferior possible. One form of governance may be efficiency or legitimate, but it may not necessarily equitable. However, equity is one of the major conditions of the e-governance, in absence of equity; the e-governance couldn't be granted a real legitimacy.

5.1. Equity is one of the major conditions of the e-governance

In fact, the network represents only a luxury that can offer itself a privileged minority on the planet. The so-called digital divide between the information-rich and the information-poor is of increasing concern.

The latter element constitutes a crisis of e-governance, which is one of the major challenges of the ICT; and the problem- digital divides-- put the legitimacy of e-governance in question.

5.1.1. Digital divides: crisis of e-governance

The absence of equity shows itself by a succession of asymmetries:

- The first asymmetry is the unstable development of an information infrastructure between the developing countries and developed countries. Despite the potential benefits that can be offered by ICT, developing countries face significant limitations: for example, insufficient telecommunications infrastructure, and expensive ICT access.
- The second asymmetry concerns the level of the mastery of the information systems which includes a lack of awareness of what these technologies can offer; absence of adequate legal and regulatory frameworks, shortage of requisite human capacity, failure to develop local language content, and a lack of entrepreneurship and business culture open to change.
- The third asymmetry is inequality to access ICT between men and women, between the riche and the poor, between the population in the rural zone and the population in the urban zone. These problems are reflected in highly uneven growth in the use of ICT across countries.

Consistent with analyses by the ITU and World Bank, the top thirty places are dominated by OECD and high-income courtiers; lower-performing countries in South Asia and Africa dominate the lower half of the rankings. For example, only 1.1% Africans accessed the Internet in 2003, but in North America, the access rate is 55.7% of the population. Almost of 37% of the Australians use the Internet at home, in France, about 50% of French population access the Internet. In China, 113 millions of Chinese access the Internet, while the majority, more than 91% do not access the Internet.

5.1.2. Questioned the legitimacy by the absence of equity

Today the ICT induces new interesting manners for the citizens to communicate and to participate in the political and administrative processes. Internet diminishes the distance between the people, returns possible simultaneous communication between the citizens and government, which allows them to learn more and more quickly than beforehand, increasing the possibilities for the public to participate in the political and administrative questions. The sine qua non condition of e-democracy is the quota of citizens' participation in democracy. E-vote and Visio-conference are two principal examples of e-democracy for the citizens by which the rural citizens and expatriate can participate; they could be the supplementary means for the referendum, the election, and for the political decisions that could increase the quota of participation. But if everybody do not have access to the Internet, the democracy and e-democracy is not total and real which puts the legitimacy in question.

When ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), a private company taking political decisions under the mastery of the Trade Department of the United States, as soon as were put in full light commercial questions on the sharing of the income of the names registration, of industrial property on the relations between mark and domain names, even political on control of the States about the names of domains, it became obvious that "The consensus had been broken" and those other countries' interests were not guaranteed. So it is necessary to redefine the scope of ICANN.

5.2. Principle of equity of e-governance recalling to reduce digital divide

Reduce digital divide is the most important mission and the greatest challenge for e-government. Protection of general and common interest provides us the good measure for evaluation of performance in reducing digital divide of e-governance.

5.2.1. Reduce digital divide, the greatest challenge for e-government

Uneven diffusion of technology and inequality in access to technologies are evident in different ways with significant consequences for social, economic and political development. These consequences are reflected in the fact that concern over the digital divide now based on connectivity and access or lack of participation and representation in more advanced ICT. In the benchmarking analysis, countries from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) remain at upper rankings. This lead is partly due to the priority given to ICT policies by OECD countries, with policies across a broad range of fronts. South Asian and African countries occupy the lower half of the rankings. As a region, Africa still has a considerable distance before reaching connectivity and ICT diffusion to hold its own with other regions.

The so-called digital divide between the information-rich and the information poor is of increasing concern. A major challenge for policy-makers at the national and international level, therefore, addressing the issue of the digital divide: between rich and poor countries, rural and urban areas, men and women, skilled and un skilled citizens, large and small enterprises. This challenge is in particular sensitive to two elements:

- The need of mechanisms to monitor and access ICT readiness, usage and impact.
- And the need for linking ICT policies to other development policies, such as education, trade and health to allow for benefits from synergies between different elements and more broad-based diffusion of ICT.

OECD countries are taking the initiative on a range of ICT policies across several categories, including:

- General policy vision, and policies on the ICT environment;
- Network infrastructure;
- Technology development;
- Technology diffusion;
- Diffusion to businesses;
- IT skills, education and training initiatives;
- Globalization and international cooperation.

These different policies for ICT show how promoting ICT development needs action across a range of policy fields. Coordinated policy initiatives are needed across different areas to build the local capabilities to master and adapt these fast-changing technologies. They are useful and relevant to developing countries as they provide a preview of examples of leading policies that are currently being implemented in advanced countries, with which developing countries will ultimately inspire in order to develop their competition in the global markets for ICT, and reduce the digital divide between them and developed countries [6].

5.2.2. Protection of general and common interest

Protection of general and common interest is the mission of governance and e-governance. The policy-makers of e-government not only have to make a useful contribution to ICT policy, but also to think about how to protect the public's interest. Following the UNCTAD analysis, levels of income inequality in access to ICT remain still high, around twice the average level according to the type of technology. The distributions of Internet hosts and personal computers remain highly unequal. However, the distributions of mobile telephony and Internet users across different countries suggest strong gains in mobiles and the Internet and an expansion of ICT access in developing countries in particular.

Some good examples are, in the republic of Korea, the government took the leader role in promoting development of Internet; in China, where the government is more cautious in its approach to ICT and raising consumer incomes led to an explosion in demand and the demand-led development of ICT. In

Egypt, a dynamic Ministry of Communications and Information technology played a strong role in catalyzing telecommunications development in collaboration with the private sector, emphasizing the importance of public-private partnerships.

Table 1: Comparison between conventional governance models and digital governance models [7]

Participation Indicators	Conventional Governance Models	Digital Governance Models
Mode of Participation	Representative	Individual / Collective
Domain of Participation	In-Situ	Ex-Situ
Approach to Participation	Passive / Reactive	Pro-Active / Interactive
Impact of Participation	Indirect / Delayed	Direct / Immediate

6. People-participation in Digital Governance vs Conventional Governance Models

From the comparison above, it is evident that the use of Digital Governance transforms governance from "representative" to a more "individual based" form, and from "passive" to being "pro-active". It does not require an individual to be based in the local constituency "in-situ" to influence or benefit from governance delivery services. Further as use of digital governance leads to closer contact of individuals with decision-makers/officials in the government, the impact is immediate. On the whole, it puts greater access and control over governance mechanism in the hands of individuals, and in process leads to more transparent, accountable and efficient governance.

6.1. Generic models

Digital Governance models are continuously evolving - depending on the uses to which they are put into, the new ICT applications that are becoming possible, and most importantly, the changing political realities in the governance sphere. There are no rigid and finite models of Digital Governance. Since these models are based on strategic use of information, the possibilities are endless, depending on how innovative and imaginative the governments, the citizen groups, and the international development agencies can be.

Technology does play an important role- the role of making possible the strategic use of information. As mentioned earlier, e-governance is not about technology; instead it is about identifying what are the key governance needs that need to be fulfilled, and then envisaging models by which these needs could be fulfilled appropriately and with ease. ICT plays the important role of powering these models, making possible information flows (in volumes and speeds) which may not be possible, or in volumes and speed using conventional communication means. Several developing countries are realizing the role ICT can play in the governance sector, and are putting into practice innovative e-Governance models that may be technologically simple but are drastically changing the way information is distributed in the society.

Based on primary experimentation and secondary research, some generic Digital Governance models which are being practiced in developing countries have been identified. All these models benefit from the intrinsic characteristics of ICT, which are:

- Enabling equal access to information to anyone who is a linked to the digital network, and
- De-concentration of information across the entire digital network.

Information does not reside at any one particular level (or node) in Digital Governance Models but gets distributed across all the nodes. This is a fundamental change from the 'hierarchal' information flow structures that allow for unequal distribution of information and open greater possibility of exploitative use of information at all levels. With use of ICT, the information gets distributed along the network and this distribution of information may happen through private access to an ICT node, or through public access or through the use of convergent modes.
The Generic Models:

- Broadcasting / Wider-Dissemination Model
- Critical Flow Model
- Comparative Analysis Model
- E-Advocacy/ Lobbying and Pressure Group Model
- Interactive- Service Model

Each of these models exhibit several variations depending on the local situation and governance activities performed through these models.

7. Concluding Remarks

Today on the basis of the declaration of engagements of the States and of the Agenda that developed in Tunisia 2005 during the 2nd phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, the UNO has involved itself to address the crises. However can this engagement of the world-wide community bring a new breath and framework to propagate the use of the ICT while facilitating an easy and cheap access for the people? ICT has become very important in the management of public and private sector services. If the key players worked together in the common interests, the digital divide could be reduced effectively.

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