

Young Minds in Telecom Essay Competition

**Research on**  
**THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF BUILDING AND DEPLOYING**  
**E-GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS**

To  
The Policy and Strategy Unit of the  
International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

By  
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## **What is E-governance or E-government?**

It refers to Electronic governance that serves an interaction between governments, their citizens and businesses. It is a system that effectively and efficiently streamlines internal government processes, operations, simplifies and improves democratic government and business aspects of governance with citizens.

The use of the Internet in performing government administrative activities offers an efficient, speedy and transparent process for disseminating information to the public service and other relevant agencies.

It is true that access to Information using relevant Information Communications Technology are very important in any organization so as to allow full participation in a society for total development. But in many countries, a sizeable number of the populace are ICT illiterate. Many of the people lack the skills to access and understand the opportunities delivered by Information Communications Technology (ICT) for e-governance. Unless measures are taken, the information revolution of going e-government will be for the benefit of the already empowered few. In this light, I intend to study and outline the challenges and opportunities of developing and deploying e-governance systems. This I believe will help make the monitoring, and access by citizens and businesses easier and effective.

E-governance systems falls under several other electronic applications like the E-education, E-health, E-commerce, etc.

## **Challenges and opportunities of E-governance systems**

There are many but these are few challenges that affect the development of e-government systems discussed in this paper.

### **1. Leadership and Strategic Thinking Readiness**

This is a critical pre-condition for a successful e-governance system. Our leaders need to put e-governance onto the national agenda and ensure it works. As it is true all over the

world, government especially in developing countries are crippled with servicing debts thereby making no serious commitments and investments to developing systems.

More government-government co-operations can really lead to the rapid deployment and total development of a country. But we should be conscious however that, most e-governance initiatives fail. Some countries when faced with too many challenges sink in them.

## **2. The Data Systems Infrastructure**

It resolves the question of whether there is real need for an e-governance system. We first need to review and access our management systems; records and work processes to ensure the quality and amount of data to be supported by the system. When data system infrastructures are set up, the right knowledge group are needed to be engaged to manage these solutions.

In the course of my research, I identified that there are many data left redundant in most of government agencies in Ghana. Also, data administrators should ensure that policies set to manage them do not allow redundancies.

## **3. Legal Infrastructure**

The legal systems should be oriented towards the development of serious ICT programs and projects. There are laws and regulations in place that support the move to e-governance. It is significance however to mention that many countries have failed in their quest to develop and implement e-governance systems because their local legal systems do not support such projects. Records show that there are some countries where digital signatures are not accepted. It is high time our lawmakers with the help of other government agencies pass more legislation to protect the rights of all citizens and businesses.

## **4. Institutional Infrastructure**

Fortunately there are many who have the requisite skill to manage these systems should the project start. Going e-Governance require that institutions support the systems.

Government agencies should act as facilitators in creating the awareness for the total acceptance of the system.

### **5. Human Infrastructure**

The attitudes and mindset of workers and citizens in this new system environment will have to change. Although people are resistant to change, the knowledge groups will have to do more customer-orientation to reduce apathy and the resistance to data sharing; etc.

When all these are done, governments and citizens alike stand to benefit a great deal.

### **6. Technological Infrastructure**

Over the last two decades, there have been great strides in developing and deploying ICTs, The facts still remain that many developing countries are a long way short of computerizing and building the needed telecommunications infrastructure on which many of the advanced e-governance systems are based. Government need to be more proactive by contacting the technology market for customizable software to meet the cultural context.

A summary of all the challenges can be made in six (6) C's. These are capital, content, capacity, community, commerce and connectivity.

The test of how strategically prepared we are to meet these pre-conditions should be carried out before further funds are outlaid for projects in e-government.

In addition, the tactical challenge of choosing and closing in the reality gaps by employing good technologies and designs are critical to these types of projects. We need to adopt good and best practices in the development of e-governance systems to be successful.

## **The Opportunities**

The opportunities provided by e-government are economic development in the general improvement in the quality of life, efficient and effective monitoring systems to check corruption in government setups. E-government can narrow the development gaps of the urban and rural areas. It also affords citizen to access online services anytime, anywhere in the world thereby enhancing the interaction of citizens with government and businesses. Countries with e-governance systems have news and online registration forms. Citizens can give government feedback on request.

E-governance has got the power to transform a nation using relevant ICT tools. It provides three basic change potentials for development: Automation of all of government processes using the relevant information gathered to transform society.

E-governance system provides cheaper outputs but at lower cost in less time with considerably more innovations.

Clearly, there is much to be done to improve the performance of work, reduce corruption in government offices and to raise the income levels and the physical quality of life of people. This requires greater involvement of the people and greater transparency. These objectives are best met through electronic governance.

Spectacular efficiencies have been achieved in countries like Singapore, Malaysia and India, in activities such as on-line transfer of property, payment of tax, licensing of motor transport, electronic vehicle registration system in the state of Arizona.

In conclusion, the challenges tend to show that e-governance has key roles to play in the current and future development of any country. It can greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governance; and probably offer future legitimacy for governments.

However, the issue for us in the developing countries should therefore be how e-governance can be developed with scarce resources to meet our social and cultural context?

In addressing the “how”, this paper has shown that we can improve as a nation if we plan ahead and take the necessary steps to develop real-time systems.

Policy makers and implementers need to establish and sketch a clear roadmap to give direction to support these infrastructures. Also our leaders and other stakeholders need to be in the forefront to integrate their vision into the overall concepts of e-governance.

We need to employ best practices that are needed to close the reality gaps and to steer E-governance projects to success.

It is very necessary for governments and other international agencies like the ITU to organize seminars and conferences on e-government to establish clear cut guidelines to help member countries to develop e-governance system. In all, good governance can be developed when resources are carefully managed to take advantage of the technologies available. The question then is, will governments have the courage to commit scarce resources into such capital-intensive adventure?

I believe if these challenges are addressed; real-time systems can be developed to make our communities and countries a better place to live.

Supporting Diagrams

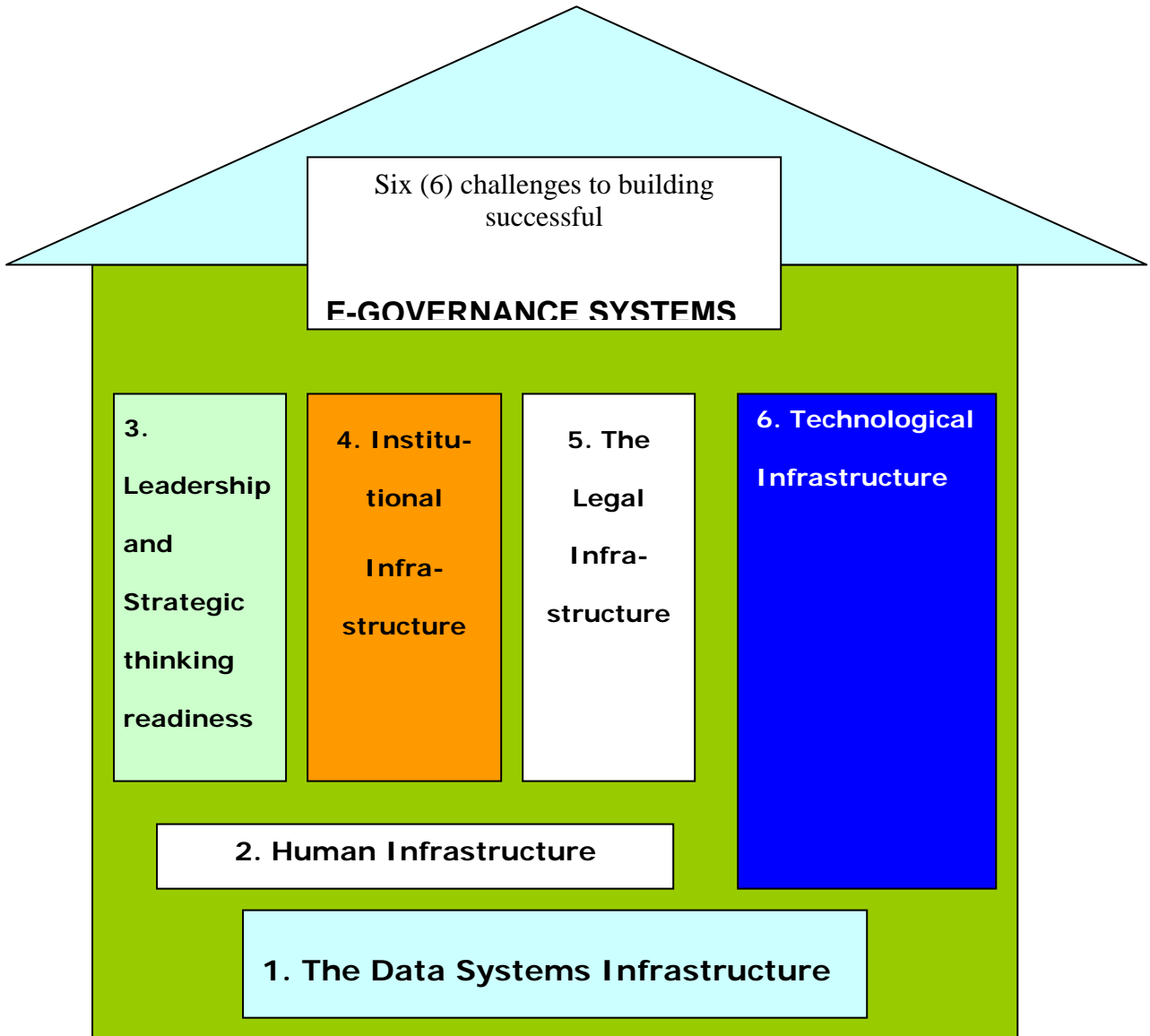


Figure 1: Challenges to building E-governance systems

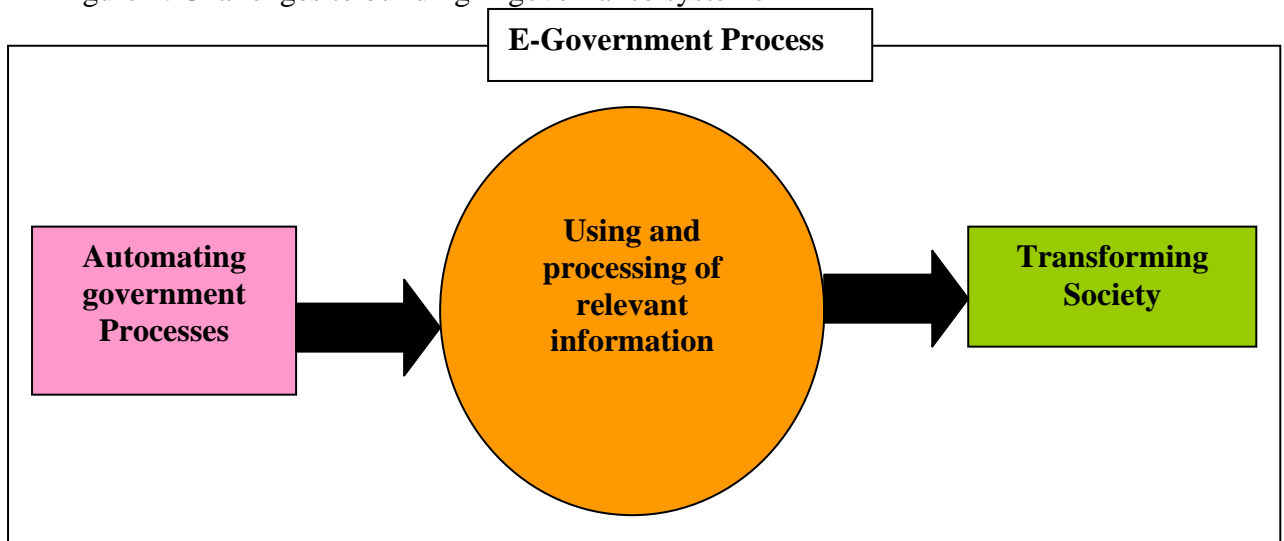
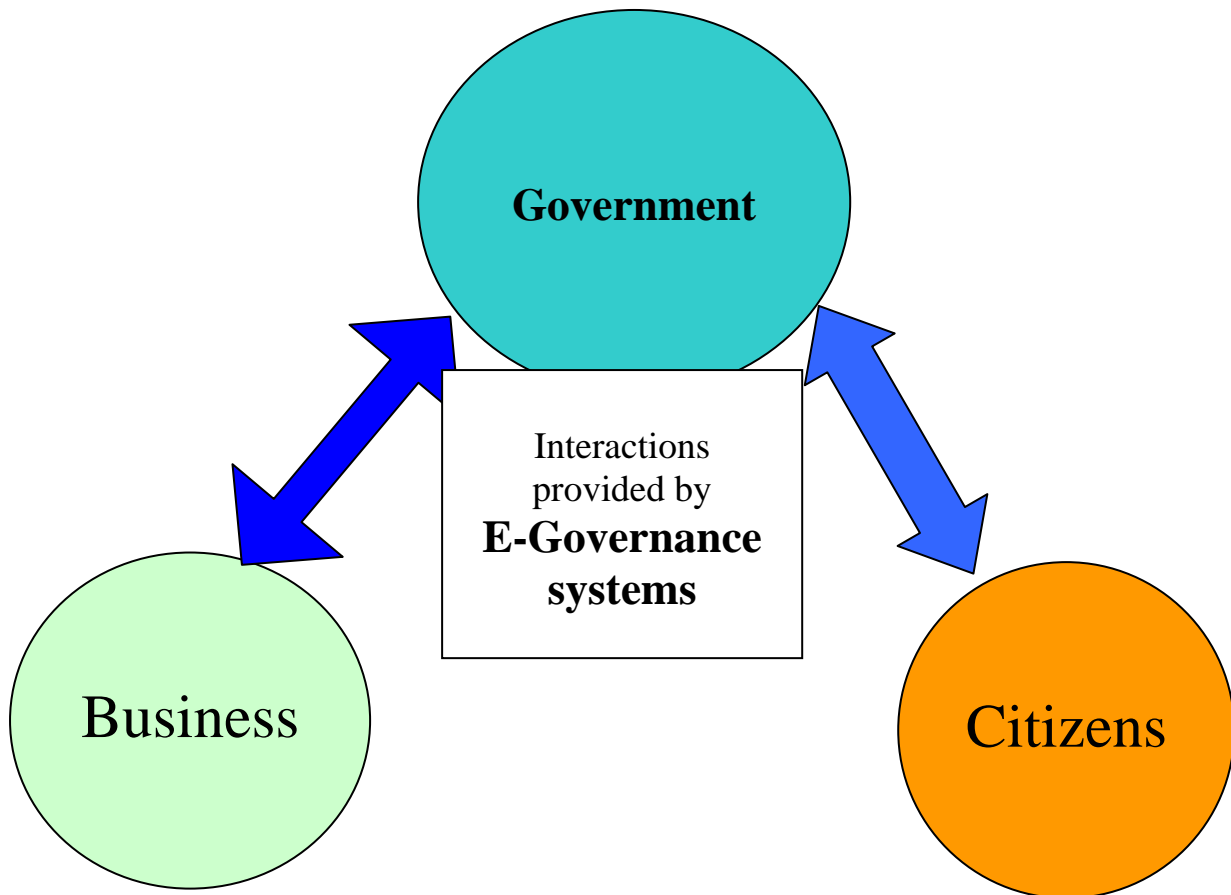


Figure 2: The E-governance process



**INTERACTIONS**

- B2C:** Business to Citizens
- B2G:** Business to Government
- G2B:** Government to Business
- C2B:** Citizens to Business
- C2G:** Citizens to Government

Figure 3: Interaction provided by E-governance