

Ten Years After E-Government Act: A Policy Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation, efficiency, and impact of E-Government Act (EGA) (2002) in the United States federal government, ten years after its promulgation. It critically assesses agencies' execution of the provisions of the law whose goals and objectives emphasize the use of information and communication technologies for governance.

PROBLEM

The area of inquiry for this study is the policy evaluation of the implementation of the concept of e-Government (e-Gov) within the U.S. federal government, specifically focusing on the implementation of EGA. Though the statute is being assessed frequently by policy practitioners and regulatory bodies; such assessments are often not rooted in the rigor of scholarly inquiry. This present study provides that scholarly rigor. Its focus on a ten-year existent period is also currently absent in the literature. The study fills that gap and it provides an opportunity for an extensive and in depth analysis.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to critically evaluate the goals, objectives, and key provisions of EGA. The study could assist and benefit scholars and practitioners of public policy and public administration to better understand the value, benefits, and challenges of e-Gov implementation for public service delivery

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Theoretical Frameworks

- evaluation theory** (Alkin, 2004; Chen, 1990; Donaldson & Lipsey, 2006)
- program theory** (Donaldson, 2007)

Supporting Research

- Evaluation theory has been likened to a tree (Alkin, 2004) with accountability and systematic social inquiry making up the trunk. The main branch is the "methods" with the goal of acquiring generalizability and the two other branches are "valuing" which emphasized placing value on data and value by others, and "use" which focused on evaluation and decision making.
- E-Government Act of 2002 aimed to promote the use of Information Communications Technologies (ICT) for citizen participation, encourage inter agency collaboration and integration of services and processes for effective and efficient service delivery, and reduce costs to businesses and the government (Government Printing Office, 2002)
- The purposes of EGA also are to assist policy makers in making better and informed decisions, enhance access to government information and services, and in the process promote transparency and accountability in the federal government.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- RQ1.** How have the goals and objectives of EGA been realized?
- RQ2.** How have the key provisions of EGA been implemented in the U.S. federal government?
- 2a.** How efficient has the implementation of EGA being to the taxpayers?
- RQ3.** What is the cost of implementing EGA?
- RQ4.** What is the impact of EGA on the citizens, businesses, and agencies?

PROCEDURES

The type of inquiry for this study will be a qualitative approach. Data collection method that will be employed is the review and analysis of **documents** and **archival data**. Unclassified and publicly available documents and data will be gathered for the study from some government websites. Such documents will include reports, records, presentations, articles, and other documents.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data would be analyzed using qualitative and quantitative content analysis procedure as well as policy evaluation techniques. Using the research questions, themes and evaluation criteria will be developed from the data that would be gathered. These themes and criteria would then guide the findings and results to be interpreted and described.

FINDINGS

It is expected that this research would show that:

- RQ1.** Goals and objectives of EGA have been realized
- RQ2.** Key provisions of EGA have been implemented in the U.S federal government.
- RQ3.** Implementation has been costly to the tax payers
- RQ4.** Impact of the implementation of EGA on citizens, businesses, and government agencies has been effective.

LIMITATIONS

One key limitation of the study is that evaluation of EGA implementation cannot be done for each agency and bureau within the U.S. federal government. Data will be selectively drawn for some agencies for evaluation and analysis.

Another constraint is that the study will solely rely on publicly available data in documents and archives without employing other sources of data.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the anticipated findings from this study, it can be concluded that the goals and objectives that guided the enactment of EGA ten years ago have been achieved. Through the implementation of the key provisions in the law, the impact of its implementation on the citizens, businesses, and government agencies has been effective. Though staggering costs have been incurred for the execution of the law, the benefits outweigh the costs.

SOCIAL CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The social change implications inherent in this study include providing scholars and practitioners of public policy and public administration the value of the concept of e-Government for public service delivery. Through an evaluation of EGA, the study can demonstrate to the citizens, businesses, and government agencies how deliberate policy making can enhance citizen access to government information, participation, and transparency, as well as inter agency collaboration and cooperation and partnerships with the private sector.