

Use of ict in the field of business and governance essay sample

[Economics](#), [Money](#)



ICT is an acronym that stands for Information Communications Technology. However, there is no a universally accepted definition of ICT. Why? Because the concepts, methods and applications involved in ICT are constantly evolving on an almost daily basis. Its difficult to keep up with the changes - they happen so fast. A good way to think about ICT is to consider all the uses of digital technology that already exist to help individuals, businesses and organizations use information. ICT covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically in a digital form. For example, personal computers, digital television, email, robots. So ICT is concerned with the storage, retrieval, manipulation, transmission or receipt of digital data. Importantly, it is also concerned with the way these different uses can work with each other. Advantages of ICT

Computers can be used with voice recognition software to type for the disabled and to carry out commands not possible Huge advances have occurred in diagnosing disease and damage to the body with the introduction of body scanners which use software to process the information produced to give us maps of the body.. Computers are used to aid surgeons in their operations and in training new doctors. Disadvantages of ICT

Information is readily available, however confidential information may be accessed unless properly password controlled. If the hardware fails - economies can be badly effected as sales may be halted, stock markets fail to receive information and systems relying on computers stop - eg air traffic control of aircraft at airports. Computers may replace human beings hence

leading to job losses. ICT can also propagate Conflict and Disaster e. g Hate Speech

e-Government - What is it?

Electronic Government (e-government) is the use of ICT to provide information and improve the delivery of government services to the citizens using electronic means. In Kenya, e-government is available at <http://www.e-government.go.ke> This shows all government publications contributed, compiled and published by all the current ministries Government information is used for decision-making, budgetary, government policies, poverty eradication and scientific research among others purposes. These multiple purposes have enhanced the need for accurate timely information achievable through e-government. Use of ICT enables the Government to:

Improve their internal systems

Deliver services more efficiently and effectively and make information more accessible to the citizenry. e-Government contributes to increased viability of investments in infrastructure: It uses technology and modern approaches to increase the government's ability to ensure transparency and employ techniques to support anti-corruption activities; Increases the communications traffic flows relevant to national and regional communications infrastructure; and It contributes to a behavioural change for citizens and businesses with regards to the increased use of broadband capacity, therefore encouraging the use of the Internet and computers as

everyday tools. This also contributes to improved viability of investments in infrastructure.

However, the problems of e-government in Kenya include:

Lack of government ICT policy,

Poor information infrastructure, entrenched graft,

Digital divide: inequality between groups broadly construed, in terms of access to, use of or knowledge of ICT Inadequate human skills.

E-government is the application of information technology in the provision of government information and services with the aim of minimizing the burden of public administration and the business activities to its citizens. It plays a big role in bridging the gap between the urban and rural population in any country With e-government, information about the services offered by the government through the different ministries can be disseminated fast up to the grass root levels. This is intended to avail and improve the delivery of government services to the citizens to all citizens wherever and whenever needed. Example IEBC online portal that enabled citizens to verify voter registers online and via sms E-government refers to “ government’s use of information and communication (ICT) to exchange information and services with citizens (Government-to-Citizen, or G2C), businesses (Government to Business, or G2B, Business to Business or B2B), and other arms of government (Government-to-Government, or G2G).” E-government is not merely computerization of government services and the use of Internet; it includes different non-internet based information technologies like telephone, mobile telephones and related features such as short text

messages, fax, T. V and radio-based delivery of government services, as well as closed circuit television. Information Technology (IT) is used to promote the generation, processing, storage, dissemination, communication and the application of information in different government sectors.

Components of e-Government

The components that need to be put in place in order for e-government to be effective include: Websites for accessing information

Improved service delivery

Affordable and reliable telecommunication Infrastructure

Electricity connectivity

Information technology

Literate citizens

Well developed infrastructures such as computer hardware and software

Adequate funding

Availability of adequate skilled human resources to collect and organize information Well developed government policies

Implementation of e-government

The different stages of e-Government implementation can be summarized as follows: 1. Website Development: This is the first stage that involves setting up of websites to provide information about structure, functions and services of the government agencies. At this stage there might be links to related websites. 2. Initiate two-way interaction: This is the second stage at which the websites also include downloadable forms that can be submitted offline and there can be a two-way interaction between government officials and

users via e-mail. 3. Online transactions: At the third stage the websites support some formal online transactions like payments or creating and submitting information such as tax returns. 4. Comprehensive government portals: The final stage exhibits availability of comprehensive government portals that can provide a wide range of information to users and support one-stop transactions without the need for dealing directly with different agencies.

E-government and its impact in Kenya

Increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to enhance transparency and accountability in the delivery of government services through the use of information technologies. Improve the internal workings of government to be externally oriented and more customer-focused. Facilitate collaboration and the sharing of information within and between government agencies. Reduce significantly transaction costs leading to savings.

Encourage participation and empowerment of citizens including the disadvantaged groups and, communities in the rural and remote areas (grass-root level) through closer interaction with the government. E-

Government Examples in the Government

Kenya has an official national website, <http://www.e-government.go.ke> that provides comprehensive government information to a wide audience.

Nineteen Kenyan ministries have websites, as compared to four government websites in 2001. There is e-learning initiative at the public universities like Kenyatta University, Egerton University through the African Virtual University

(AVU) and Mount Kenya University through its virtual campus. These programmes connect to over 2000 institutions and have about 20 million subscribers worldwide. The Planning Ministry and the UNDP under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ADAF) introduced the use of the VSAT technology in a pilot programme to allow communities in eight districts to get access to government information and other strategic resources. They have also been empowered through the Internet to collect information and forward it to the ministry. Through this empowerment, access information on the government system through KenInfo in some eight (8) districts at grass root level. This is geared towards monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and other development indicators.

E-health facilitates access to health information and service delivery towards improved and quality services to Kenyans wherever they are. In Kenya, e-health has been a joined venture between the ministry of health and a Non Governmental Organization - AfriAfya with a mandate of providing health services and information to all Kenyans so as to improve health information flow and service profession to the grass root. The project tries to harness the potential of modern ICT for health The Kenya Revenue Authority and the Kenya Ports Authority have embraced ICT in service delivery towards and transparency. Use of computers and related technologies have helped speed up service delivery in these areas though it met with resistance initial e. g. processing of PIN online and filing of Tax returns. E-governance has been embraced for democracy. One of the major potential areas of e-Government

services is that it can facilitate democratic activities (' e-democracy') such as online voting, campaigning and fund raising, voter registration, opinion polling, representative-voter communication and public. In Kenya, telephones (more so the cheaper SMS facility), and Internet facilities have been used to disseminate electoral results to a wider population. Electronic Payment Systems

Implementing e-Commerce typically requires electronic payments. Electronic payment systems enable you to pay for goods and services electronically, rather than writing a check or using cash. Electronic payment systems include electronic checks, electronic credit cards, purchasing cards, and electronic cash. Payments are an integral part of doing business, whether in the traditional manner or online. Traditional payment systems have typically involved cash and/or checks. 1 Electronic checks (e-checks): are similar to regular paper checks. They are used mostly in B2B. A customer who wishes to use e-checks must first establish a checking account with a bank. Then, when the customer buys a product or a service, he or she e-mails an encrypted electronic check to the seller. The seller deposits the check in a bank account, and funds are transferred from the buyer's 2 Electronic credit (e-credit) cards: allow customers to charge online payments to their credit card account. 3 Purchasing Cards: The B2B equivalent of electronic credit cards is purchasing cards. In some countries companies pay other companies primarily by means of purchasing cards rather than by paper checks.

Unlike credit cards, where credit is provided for 30 to 60 days (for free) before payment is made to the merchant, payments made with purchasing

cards are settled within a week. Purchasing cards typically are used for unplanned B2B purchases, and corporations generally limit the amount per purchase (usually ksh. 80, 000 to ksh. 160, 000). Purchasing cards can be used on the Internet, much like regular credit cards. 4 Stored-Value Money Cards: Although they resemble credit cards, stored-value money cards actually are a form of e-cash. The cards that you use to pay for photocopies in your library, for transportation, and for telephone calls are stored-value money cards. They are called stored-value because they allow you to store a fixed amount of prepaid money and then spend it as necessary.

Each time you use the card, the amount is reduced by the amount you spent. 5 Smart cards: Are frequently multipurpose; that is, you can use them as a credit card, a debit card, or a stored-value money card. In addition, when you use a smart card in department store chains as a loyalty card, it may contain your purchasing information. Advanced smart cards can help customers transfer funds, pay bills, and purchase items from vending machines. Consumers can also use them to pay for services such as those offered on Television or personal computers e. g VISA 6 Mobile banking eg Mpesa, Mshwari, Mkesho, Airtel money which have money business and money transfer very effective and efficient in Kenya because of their widespread distribution agents

Benefit of e-Government

The often cited benefits of e-government in a developing country like Kenya include: Improved efficiency

Increase in transparency and accountability of government functions.

Convenient and faster access to government services

Improved democracy

Lower costs for administrative services

The citizens get connected to the government more easily using electronic means of communication. Efficiency in public service delivery is achieved through faster dissemination government information to a larger audience. The cases of corruption are reduced as accountability and transparency is increased. These results from the fact that the physical contacts of the citizens and government service providers are limited and their activities are easily monitored Equal opportunity to access to information is provided regardless of one's physical location and physical disability. The barrier of distance is overcome with diversified service points. The bureaucracy experienced in the government offices is broken because the hindrances caused by those in 'power' are removed and the services are offered regardless of one's background. Interdepartmental exchange of information and merges of related services is enhanced between government agencies. This leads to significant reduction of transaction costs E-Government

Challenges

Reluctance to share information: This has resulted in policies that deny access to information and the creation of 'empty' government ministries websites with information of little value to the public. Management

challenges: The uncoordinated e-government activities result from low level of public administration of e-services, as well as low quality and insufficient e-content information from the grassroots levels. I. T illiteracy: Most citizens

are Computer illiterate. If a government does not play an active role in educating the citizens about the value of e-government, the system would fail. There are inadequate qualified ICT staff and training schemes to serve the country. The existing training opportunities are limited and costly for the ordinary citizen. Way forward/Recommendations

In order for e-government to be effective in Kenya, the government should develop a directory of the government and NGOs websites. The government's attitude towards service provision has to change, and there must be a high level of transparency in government operations. The public should be given access to a wider range of government records. The automation and integration of government records and information infrastructure should be expanded up to the district level. The government should develop a government portal to increase involvement of citizens in decision-making and public activities. The electronic payments, advertisements of government jobs and dissemination of information on social/health issues and related public events can be channelled through the government portal Conclusion

Government information is not only crucial in the development of any nation but a basic right for each citizen. It is therefore the duty of governments to avail relevant and timely information to its citizens for timely decision making. This is achievable through use of electronic media so as to have a balanced knowledgeable citizenship as well as an efficient and effective system of governance.

Examples of Government Websites

www. helb. co. ke www. centralbank. go. ke www. e-government. go. ke

www. treasury. go. ke www. nhif. go. ke www. nssf. go. ke www. ghris. go. ke

www. meteo. go. ke www. statehousekenya. go. ke www. medicalhealth. go.

ke www. e-health. or. ke REFERENCES

SOURCES

1 [http://www. e-government. go. ke](http://www.e-government.go.ke)

2 [http://www. mku. ac. ke](http://www.mku.ac.ke)

3 [http://www. safaricom](http://www.safaricom)