

**E-GOVERNMENT IN THE U.S.
SIGNIFICANT TRENDS & DEVELOPMENTS**

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SUMMARY

- **E-Government initiatives are taking place not only in the U.S. federal government but also in state & local governments as well**
- **There are significant differences in the type and quality of information and services provided on various Web sites not only between different governmental levels (*e.g.*, federal versus state) but also between Web sites provided by the same governmental level (*e.g.*, Virginia DMV versus Virginia Corporation Comm'n)**



SUMMARY

(cont.)

- **There is a growing trend at all levels of government toward “customer/ service-oriented” portals**
- **Governments increasingly are using Web sites to communicate with, or provide services to, their own employees**
- **Procurement functions at all levels of government are being moved to the Internet**



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SUMMARY

(cont.)

- **Distinctions between E-Gov't & E-Business are in some cases becoming blurred with businesses performing E-Gov't functions and governments performing business functions**
- **While governments move with increasing speed to implement e-government initiatives, citizens are wary of moving too quickly**



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THE E-GOVERNMENT REVOLUTION IS TAKING PLACE ON A NATIONWIDE BASIS AT ALL LEVELS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT, FEDERAL STATE & LOCAL

- “Virtually” every U.S. federal department and agency has a Web site, *e.g.*:
 - www.whitehouse.gov (White House)
 - www.state.gov (State Dept.)
 - www.doc.gov (Dept. of Commerce)
 - www.senate.gov (U.S. Senate)
 - www.house.gov (House of Rep.)
 - www.uscourts.gov (U.S. Courts)
 - www.fcc.gov (Fed. Comm. Comm’n.)

- **All U.S. states have a Web site, e.g.:**

- www.state.al.us/ (Alabama)
- www.state.ar.us/ (Arkansas)
- www.ca.gov/state/portal/myca_homepage.jsp
(California)
- www.state.co.us/ (Colorado)
- www.state.la.us/ (Louisiana)
- www.state.ny.us/ (New York)
- www.state.tx.us/ (Texas)
- www.access.wa.gov/ (Washington)

- **Many U.S. local governments have Web sites, e.g.:**

- www.ci.anchorage.ak.us/ (Anchorage, Alaska)
- www.ci.chi.il.us/ (Chicago, Illinois)
- www.columbusga.org/ (Columbus, Georgia)
- www.denvergov.org/ (Denver, Colorado)
- www.ci.la.ca.us/ (Los Angeles, California)
- www.littlerock.org/ (Little Rock, Arkansas)
- www.ci.madison.wi.us/ (Madison, Wisconsin)
- www.ci.nyc.ny.us/ (New York City)
- www.new-orleans.la.us/ (New Orleans, Louisiana)

E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

- In *“Assessing E-Government: The Internet, Democracy, and Service Delivery by State and Federal Governments,”* (September 2000) (www.insidepolitics.org/egovtreport00.html) Prof. Darrell West of Brown University found significant differences between various fed. gov’t sites, between the sites of the 50 states, and between federal gov’t sites on the one hand and state government sites on the other



E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

(cont.)

- **E-gov't sites were ranked based on an index of factors including whether the sites provided privacy and security policies, e-mail contact info, search capabilities, disability access, foreign language access and 6 other factors.**
- **Federal gov't rankings ranged from a high of 92% by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov) to a low of 34% by the U.S. Trade Representative (www.ustr.gov/).**



E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

(cont.)

- **State rankings ranged from a high of 51% for Texas (www.state.tx.us/) to a low of 29% for Rhode Island (www.state.ri.us/).**
- **The study also found that only 5% of all gov't Web sites display some type of security policy and that only 7% have a privacy policy**



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E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

(cont.)

- **Two different comparisons demonstrate the wide range of differences between E-Gov't web sites: Virginia Dept. of Motor Vehicles vs. Virginia Corporation Commission and Virginia Corp. Comm'n vs. Arkansas Secretary of State**



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E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

(cont.)

- **At the Virginia DMV site (www.dmv.state.va.us/) it is possible to change your registration address, renew or replace your drivers license, renew a vehicle registration, purchase a license plate, order a souvenir license plate & purchase an ID card.**
- **In contrast, at the Virginia State Corp. Comm'n site (www.state.va.us/scc/index.html), with respect to forming a company, it is possible only to download the necessary forms, which must then be filed out & mailed in; no online transactions can take place**



E-GOVERNMENT WEB SITES VARY SIGNIFICANTLY IN QUALITY

(cont.)

- **In comparison, in Arkansas, it is possible to form a company online by preparing and filing the necessary form electronically and paying the required filing and processing fees.**

(www.sosweb.state.ar.us/ofs/index.html)

- **The ability to file online is one reason that the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Web site is so highly ranked (www.irs.gov). In addition to the large amount of information to be found there (complete tax forms and rules), it is possible to file a tax return from the IRS Web site.**



CUSTOMER/SERVICE-ORIENTED PORTALS

- **Federal and State gov'ts. are increasingly using Web portals that focus on providing services to customers rather than adhering to strict organizational or agency boundaries**
- **Disability.gov (www.disability.gov) provides a broad range of information to disabled individuals, including information on health, education, housing, civil rights, and transportation**



CUSTOMER/SERVICE-ORIENTED PORTALS

(cont.)

- **FirstGov.gov (www.firstgov.gov) is intended to provide a single entry point to all U.S. Federal Gov't Web sites. Its powerful search engine is designed to quickly identify useful information or functions, no matter which agency or department may have that information or perform that function**



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CUSTOMER/SERVICE-ORIENTED PORTALS

(cont.)

- **My California, a service of the State of California, Web site, takes the portal concept a step further and enables the user to design a personalized Web site that includes the services or information that user desires.**

www.ca.gov/state/portal/myca_homepage.jsp



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GOVERNMENTS INCREASINGLY ARE USING THE INTERNET TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR OWN EMPLOYEES

- **Military Acclimate (www.militaryacclimate.com/) is an on-line financial counseling tool for military personnel. It is designed to assist them in determining the cost of a relocation and how to adjust to the cost-of-living in a new location**
- **The Special Needs Network web site provides U.S. Dept. of Defense personnel with special medical or education needs access to needed information and resources, as well as the ability to communicate with each other about shared problems. (<http://mfrc.calib.com/snn/>)**



GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT FUNCTIONS ARE MOVING ONTO THE INTERNET

- U.S. Government has proposed that www.fedbizopps.gov be designated as the single point on the Internet where vendors can access the information they need to bid on government contracts over \$25,000.
- U.S. Government General Services Administration site, www.buyers.gov conducts “reverse auctions” for procurement purposes & also aggregates purchases from agencies to drive down price per unit



GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT FUNCTIONS ARE MOVING ONTO THE INTERNET

(cont.)

- **The Washington State Dept. of Information Services Electronic Mall (www.emall.dis.wa.gov) provides state and local government agencies in Washington State with a single source to acquire information technology products at a competitive price, through the combined purchasing power of these agencies.**



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DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

- **Gov't search for revenues to support E-gov't. sometimes pushes gov't agencies to engage in commercial activities.**
- **U.S. Postal Service is one such example**
- **Its traditional revenue stream because of the sale of postage has been impaired.**
- **Consequently, it is seeking other sources of revenue.**



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

- **Gov't agencies sometimes engage in commercial activities because of adverse impact of Internet on their revenues.**
- **U.S. Postal Service is one such example**
- **Its traditional revenue stream because of the sale of postage has been impaired by use of e-mail.**
- **Consequently, it is seeking other sources of revenue.**



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

(cont.)

- **Recently, the Postal Service began offering electronic bill paying services on its Internet site (www.usps.com), which permits the payment of bills online from the Postal Service Web site.**
- **This action was criticized by some as constituting an unjustified incursion into the commercial sector. See “*The Role of Government in a Digital Age*” (Oct. 2000) (www.ccianet.org/)**



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

(cont.)

- **Some governments are giving consideration to selling advertising space on their Web sites to finance E-gov't activities.**
- **Fairfax County, Virginia recently announced it was considering selling advertising on its Web site. It estimated it could raise as much as \$1 million per year. (www.co.fairfax.va.us/)**
- **Honolulu, Hawaii already is carrying ads for automobile dealerships and others on its Web site.**
(www.co.honolulu.hi.us/menu/government/)



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

(cont.)

- **Even as it is considering entering into a commercial activity – the selling of advertising space on its Web site – Fairfax County Virginia also has outsourced at least one traditional governmental activity – tax collection.**
- **Fairfax County has contracted with Official Payments Corp. to provide its online tax payment services (<https://payments.officialpayments.com/>).**



DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN E-GOV'T & E-BUSINESS ARE BECOMING LESS CLEAR

(cont.)

- **Although it is not uncommon for local gov'ts. to permit the payment of taxes through banks and similar institutions, the Internet permits the seamless integration of such functions; the taxpayer may not even realize that he or she is not dealing directly with the relevant governmental unit but, instead, with an online commercial intermediary.**



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CITIZEN CONCERNS ABOUT E-GOVERNMENT

- **A Hart-Teeter study, “*E-Government: The Next American Revolution*” (Sept. 2000), prepared for The Council for Excellence in Government, reports that by a factor of 5 to 1 Americans support E-gov’t and believe that it will result in better government.**
(www.excelgov.org/egovpoll/report/poll_report.PDF)
- **However, 66% of Americans are very concerned about the possibility of hackers breaking into gov’t computers.**



CITIZEN CONCERNS ABOUT E-GOVERNMENT

(cont.)

- **A majority of Americans are concerned about the possible misuse of personal information by the government and about the potential for less personal privacy that is represented by the Internet.**
- **To a lesser degree, Americans also are concerned about the problem of access to the Internet and, in particular, that those without access will receive less government service. Approximately one-third of adults hold this view.**



CONCLUSIONS

- **E-Government is being rolled out rapidly at all levels of government in the U.S. However, the approaches to E-gov't are not uniform, even within the same governmental level**
- **The trend toward a “customer service” philosophy in E-gov't has the potential to dramatically affect governmental organization as agencies reorient themselves along customer service, rather than traditional organizational, lines**



CONCLUSIONS

(cont.)

- **As the Internet increasingly permits governments to “outsource” noncore functions in a seamless manner, there will be increasing blurring of the distinction between business and gov’t**
- **This trend may well heighten citizen concerns with respect to security and privacy – concerns that must, in any event, be dealt with effectively if E-government is to truly thrive**

