

**MANAGING E-GOVERNMENT CHANGE IN
EDUCATION SECTOR IN LIBYA**

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Abstract: All over the world, businesses and governments are putting critical information online, automating processes and interacting electronically with their customers and citizens. The main advantage of e-government is increasing availability of government services beyond the traditional working days. It provides quicker delivery of government services and easier access by citizens and businesses. These significant improvements will not necessarily lead to immediate, realizable cost savings.

The process of liberalization may be very well entailed by both reduction of income disparities among countries and equity within countries. If this is so, for many countries, then addressing the digital divide issue will be as much an external as an internal battle. At both levels, e-government will be a powerful tool to help all types of economies. That is, developed, developing and transitional countries to bring the benefits of the emerging global information society to the largest possible part of their respective population.

Direct effects of e-government will in that case include cost effectiveness in government and public activities, significant savings in the areas of public procurement, tax collection, personal details compilation, and customs operation with better and continuous contact with the citizens, especially those living in remote villages and the countryside.

The indirect effect may include greater transparency, accountability in public sector issues as well as strengthening of local institutions like immigration, statistical service and birth and death to fight frauds of all types and corruption which are prominent in developing nations including Libya.

Around the world, significant resources are being employed or mobilized in addition to human resources and energies to design, develop, implement and promote the use of e-government and the Libyan government is no exception in the global drive into the virtual world. However, since resources required for this transformation are very scarce in developing countries in the face of socio-economic development and poverty, it has become prudent for e-government intervention programs to be implemented in a piece meal pace.

Taking benefits from developed countries' experience, understanding their success and failures, adapting that knowledge and applying it taken significance of local conditions will be important for the future of e-government in Libya especially for the Ministry of Education which deals with the largest portion of the country's population.

All over the world, businesses and governments are putting critical information online, automating processes and interacting electronically with their customers and citizens. The private sector was the first to take the lead and make the transition online to fulfill the changing needs of its customers.

Governments and public sector institutions are now under pressure from their citizens and other clients to speed up processes and work efficiently. Nowadays business economies and governments are gradually shifting from manual activities to the virtual processes. People's skills, knowledge, innovation, leadership, technology and others are becoming an integral part of successful business and government activities.

The technological advancement of the last decade has changed the way we live and work. The web powered by the revolution in information and communication technology managed by human capital is offering people, governments, and businesses a whole new way to interact and communicate. Private sector companies are selling their products and services online. Universities are offering distant learning and certificate over the Internet. Financial institutions are delivering services online. For each one of these, new experience and convenience for the client are the ultimate goal.

Governments all over the world have come to realize that the information and communication technology can help them to interact and communicate with the public, businesses and others. The availability of the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and the character of the web anytime anywhere, have allowed government information and services to be more available to more people at greater convenience and, hopefully, with increased satisfaction.

The operations at the Libyan government sector have been saddled with a lot of inefficiencies due to the traditional way of handling information and data. This has resulted in hold-ups in the flow of activities to the detriment of good governance and societal convenience. This therefore calls for concerted efforts aimed at removing the various bottlenecks in the Ministry of Education.

The spread of information and communication technology with its attendant benefits brings hope that the sector can transform online and improve its services.

This study therefore seeks to serve as an enabler and a road map to the Libyan governments thinking towards the implementation of an e-government project within the Ministry of Education that will provide a new ways of working at the local and country level. It will also provide a framework and guidelines for managing the transformation process.

Traditionally, the interaction between a citizen or a business and government agencies took place in government offices. With the emerging information and communication technologies and the transformation to the knowledge economy, it is possible to locate service centers closer to citizens and businesses and hence changed the way some governments work. Definition of e-government varies across the globe and authors. However a lot of definitions have been developed, most of which emphasize two points: changing the way in which government delivers its services, and the use of information and communication technology. E-government simply means a new way of delivering

government services to citizens, businesses and other partners anywhere, anytime utilizing the power of information and communication technology.

The transformation to e-government brings a great potential to improve the quality of service delivery to citizens, businesses and other partners. It makes it easy to obtain government services, helps to improve government efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness. A study by Accenture Consulting (2001) has found differences among countries in the maturity of their e-government efforts. Perhaps the key finding, however, is that even the most mature countries have tapped less than 20% of their potential.

The main advantage of e-government is increased availability of government services beyond the traditional working days. It provides quicker delivery of government services and easier access by citizens and businesses. These significant improvements will not necessarily lead to immediate, realizable cost savings.

E-government can improve the delivery of services across all levels of government: local, regional, state and central. Gradually it will help integrate fragmented public services and improve access and connections between citizens and businesses and their government.

E-government helps in streamlining traditional service delivery channels that may help government to realize savings in the long run where electronic transactions are considerably less costly than face to face.

Facilitate flexible remote working hours (virtual offices, working at home, etc.) and has the potential to realize increase in productivity in the long-term and may lead to savings in overhead cost. Implementation of electronic payment systems has the potential to improve cash flow and may increase income.

The transformation to e-government will represent one of the most radical and innovations to be introduced by the Libyan government in the past two decades in its effort to improve the level of service delivery in the government sector and in the Ministry of Education in particular.

For the Ministry to embark on such a transition, a serious consideration has to be given to the impact or the effect of such changes on the economy in general and the education sector in particular. A cost-benefit analysis of the project will have to look at the readiness of both the general public and the Ministry in order to arrive at a firm conclusion on the possibility for the change.

It has become obvious that serious participatory planning and implementation strategy coupled with strong political will is needed to ensure the success of the transformation process. It is needed to facilitate the transformation process in Libya and it is obvious that it will take a long time.

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