E-Government
as an Instrument
of Public Management Reform

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Abstract

The Internet provides a powerful tool to reinvent governments. It encourages transformation from the traditional bureaucratic paradigm, which is agency-centric, and emphasizes standardization, departmentalization, fragmentation, and operational cost-efficiency, to the “e-government” paradigm, which is customer-centric, and emphasizes coordinated network building, external collaboration and customer services.

E-government is as much about changing an organization’s culture (the way we do things around here) as it is about technology. In fact, most knowledgeable experts agree that the technology side of e-government is relatively easy. Replacing rigid organizational structures with more dynamic networks of small organizational units; replacing autocratic top-down decision and policy making practices with a more consensual, bottom-up approach which facilitates the participation of as many stakeholders as possible, especially ordinary citizens; adopting a more ‘customer-centric’ attitude to public services; and applying market principles to enhance efficiency and productivity is the hard part of e-government.

This paper looks at a major public management reform proposal, the Government Restructuring Program, against the backdrop of what other governments have accomplished with their e-government initiatives and let’s the reader decide for him/herself whether Kuwait can achieve its e-government goals without first putting in place a major change management strategy and program.
E-Government as an Instrument of Public Management Reform

Introduction

When the U.S. Department of Defense invented the Internet in the 1960s (Zakon 2002) as a communication network for defense research purposes, no one could foresee how it would transform society three decades later. Today, the Internet has become part of the daily life of approximately 400 million worldwide (McConnell International 2001). As of April 2002, the number of Americans seeking information from government Web sites increased by 70 percent, rising to 68 million people, within the past two years according to a study just released by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2002).

The explosive growth in Internet usage and the rapid development of e-commerce by the private sector have put growing pressure on the public sector to serve citizens electronically, which is often known as the “e-government” initiative. The initiative is to provide public services and empower citizens and communities through information technology, especially through the Internet.

However, the Internet has brought more than a technological breakthrough in service delivery. It has stimulated a transformation in the philosophy and organization of government. This paper sets the stage for an analysis of this trend by contrasting the traditional bureaucratic paradigm with the new “e-government” paradigm while suggesting that this shift in paradigms may yet require many of the transformative components of the Government Restructuring Program proposed in 1996.

A Paradigm Shift of Public Service Delivery in the Internet Age

Challenges to the Traditional Model of Bureaucracy

When people think of government they usually think of it as a hierarchical bureaucracy. And that’s exactly what it is. This model, commonly known as the Weberian model of organization, named after the famous German sociologist Max Weber, focuses on internal and managerial concerns and emphasizes departmentalization, specialization, standardization, and routinization of the production process.

At the turn of the 20th century Weber conceptualized a new form of organization hierarchy capable of meeting the emerging challenges of the new industrial era and summed up the principles by which these new bureaucracies were structured (Gerth and Mills 1958):

- They were centralized and hierarchical: “The professional bureaucrat...is only a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march.”
- They were ordered by rules: “that is, by laws or administrative regulations” which were “more or less stable, more or less exhaustive.”
- They were standardized and impersonal, offering the same treatment or service to everyone.
• They used administrative processes -- i.e., their own staffs rather than contractors or market mechanisms -- to achieve their goals.

• They chose their staffs on the basis of examinations, not subjective criteria.

In Weber’s bureaucracy, officials who perform similar functions are grouped and organized into the same administrative unit or department. Each unit is responsible for understanding its clients, assessing the demand for its services, delivering those services, and setting administrative goals for planning and evaluation purposes. To ensure that departmental plans are consistent with each other and fiscally feasible, the budget office (Ministry of Finance) and the National Assembly are responsible for centralized control and coordination.

One advantage of the Weberian bureaucracy is that the transaction costs of official communication and coordination are reduced through departmentalization and routinization. This approach also encourages professional specialization and maximizes efficiency and potential economies of scale. Furthermore, through rules, regulations, and hierarchical supervision, the bureaucratic model reduces the chances of unintentional errors, fraud, negligence, and opportunist behaviors by officials. It also ensures the equitable treatment of clients.

However, the Weberian bureaucracy is often criticized for its rigidity, proceduralism, inefficiency, and incapability to serve “human clients” who have preferences and feelings (Rainey, Pandey, and Bozeman 1995; Bozeman 2000).

Bureaucracies, as they evolved, give employees powerful incentives to follow the rules and keep their heads down. Innovation can only bring trouble; the status quo brings steady rewards. Employees are paid the same regardless of the results they produce. And most government organizations are monopolies -- or near monopolies -- that are insulated from their failures.

In response to widespread abuses by politicians, bureaucratic reformers long ago established a professional civil service to insulate the management of departments from political influence. Managers and employees gradually became accountable for following the rules of the civil service. Hence managers are held most tightly accountable for following these rules and for spending their funds as appropriated by elected officials. Rarely is anyone held accountable for the results.

Bureaucratic systems use detailed specifications -- functional units, procedural rules, and job descriptions -- to mold what employees do. They make initiative risky. As employees become habituated to these conditions, they become carriers of the culture. They become reactive, dependent, fearful of taking too much initiative themselves. In this way, bureaucracies create cultures of fear, blame, and defensiveness.

The bureaucratic model worked well in its time. Bureaucratic systems were designed to be stable. As long as the tasks were relatively simple and straightforward and the environment stable, it worked. But for the last 20 years it has been coming apart. In a world of rapid change, technological revolution, global economic competition, highly differentiated and segmented markets, an educated workforce, demanding customers, and severe fiscal constraints, centralized, top-
down monopolies are simply too slow, too unresponsive, and too incapable of change or innovation (Osborne and Plastrik 1997).

A few years ago this conclusion was a hotly debated issue. Today it is hard to find any thoughtful observer who does not agree that traditional bureaucracies must change.

There have been many labels: “reinvention,” “redesign,” “public sector reform,” “the new public management,” “managerialism.” But whatever the label, a process of profound public sector restructuring is sweeping the developed world. In March 1996, the 24-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) held its first ministerial-level meeting on public management. Alice Rivlin, then director of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, chaired the meeting. In her OECD summary report, she explained that most of the 24 governments were facing the same fundamental pressures for change, including a global economy, dissatisfied citizens, and fiscal crisis. “Equally startling to me and, I suspect, to many of my colleagues,” she added, “countries are responding in remarkably similar ways:” (Puma/OECD 1996).

- decentralization of authority within governmental units and a devolution of responsibilities to lower levels of government...
- a re-examination of what government should both do and pay for, what it should pay for but not do, and what it should neither do nor pay for;
- downsizing the public service and the privatization and corporatization of activities;
- consideration of more cost-effective ways of delivering services, such as contracting out, market mechanisms, and user charges;
- customer orientation, including explicit quality standards for public services;
- benchmarking and measuring performance; and
- reforms designed to simplify regulation and reduce its costs.

Kuwait’s Bureaucracy

Many aspects of Kuwait’s bureaucracy are an eclectic mixture of those found in British colonial administration and the Egyptian/French models. This mixture has to some extent been supplemented, in recent times, with American concepts imported through the active involvement of engaged consultants and through the education of many Kuwaitis at American universities. However, a primary influence on the Kuwaiti bureaucracy over the past 25 years, and particularly since 1991, has come from Egyptian administrators and technocrats who migrated to the Gulf seeking higher wages and are employed throughout the government.

As the winds of change were blowing through government bureaucracies in other parts of the world, Kuwait issued an invitation to the World Bank to study its economy and offer recommendations for improvement.

World Bank Report

Following an initial report on the need to privatize many of the state’s holdings in 1993, the World Bank, at Kuwait’s invitation, submitted in March 1995 an Economic Memorandum
(World Bank 1995) identifying nine structural problems facing the country and told Kuwait it had no choice but to reform its present practices. The structural problems identified by the Bank included financial reform, public sector and civil service reform, rebalancing the labor market, investing in human capital, privatizing state-owned utilities and businesses, elimination of subsidies and determining a future direction for the country. As a result of this report Kuwait has privatized selected business holdings and Parliament passed a Direct Foreign Investment Act to attract new capital and investment opportunities, and a Manpower Act to encourage and support Kuwaitis seeking employment in the private sector. Several other World Bank recommendations from the report are at various stages of study and/or analysis at this time.

**Government Restructuring Program**

The Government Restructuring Program (GRP) was originally established by the Council of Ministers in 1994, and was to address five spheres of national interest, implemented through four committees, each chaired by a minister:

- The Committee for Public Finance and Economy was responsible for restructuring the country’s economic situation, working to improve fiscal responsibility which, among other things, would help ease the deficit by the year 2000;
- The Committee for Administration was responsible for restructuring the country’s public administration system, working to rationalize the organizational structure of the government;
- The Committee for Human Resources was responsible for restructuring the country’s human resource situation, working to better regulate the effective distribution of the work force in the public and private sectors and for identifying ways to improve the development of the country’s human resources; and
- The Committee for Legislation and Information Systems was responsible on the legislation side for recommending the laws/regulations necessary for the economic, administrative and human resources restructuring efforts, and on the information system side for developing the information systems necessary for these restructuring efforts.

The GRP Secretariat, based in the Civil Service Commission, was responsible for providing the implementing Committees with the support necessary to facilitate their work, monitor their progress, and coordinate the Program efforts.

In 1996 a joint United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-Kuwaiti team conducted a five-month study on the reorganization of the state structure under the auspices of the Government Restructuring Program. Based on this study a “Report on the Reorganization of the State Structure” (UNDP 1996) was submitted to the executive branch of government in June of that year.

The Restructuring Implementation Program has four components, each progressively more difficult to achieve:
Performance Improvement: Development planning and analysis would be strengthened. Management systems would be introduced based on performance. A strategy for collecting and disseminating information would be introduced to facilitate decision-making. Public service excellence awards would be established as a motivating incentive. Process improvement efforts would be strengthened. Administrative Affairs would be given a separate portfolio under the Prime Minister, and an Institute for Public Administration would be established to provide agencies with technical guidance and support in administrative-management functions.

Functional Change: A distinction would be made between guiding the nation and doing all the work itself. Ministries would become primarily policy bodies. Service delivery alternatives would be introduced using cost-effectiveness criteria, making public authorities operate on a commercial basis and relying more on the private sector, non-governmental or community organizations, and the Governorates.

Structural Change: Overlapping responsibilities and gaps in policy coverage would be sorted out. Structure would be aligned with the new functional responsibilities, and units would be consolidated along sectoral lines. Special projects would be introduced to help absorb redundant staff into the expanding private sector.

Building Civic Responsibility: Stress is placed on strengthening the national identity, drawing upon Islamic values that Kuwait’s assets are blessings that are the responsibility of its citizens. Appropriate authority and responsibilities would be devolved to local community institutions and the Governorates, assuring that government actions are responsive to the needs and aspirations of its people.

The “reinventing government” movement in the U.S., which started in the late 1980s, is an effort to reorient the focus of government operations away from an inward-looking approach to an outward-looking one by emphasizing the concerns and needs of end-users. Under the model proposed by Osborne and Gaebler (1992), citizens are regarded as “customers” who become the central focus in designing government service delivery. This model also emphasizes the principles of “catalytic government” (steering rather than rowing) and “community-ownership”. Public officials are challenged to think about how to empower citizens to take ownership of community problems. The approach urges officials to partner with citizen groups and nonprofit organizations to identify solutions and deliver public services effectively.

Those writing the Government Restructuring Program’s report in 1996 were heavily influenced by the “catalytic government” and “community-ownership” principles in Osborne and Gaebler book (Reinventing Government) and by a 1993 report by the National Performance Review entitled Creating a Government that Works Better & Costs Less, written by then vice president Gore as well as by the reform movements under way in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Canada.

One plausible explanation for why the recommendations contained in the UNDP/GRP report on the “Reorganization of the State Structure” were not implemented at the time may have been the burden of transaction costs on both public officials and citizens alike which, elsewhere, has
proven to be a major obstacle to the reinventing reform movement.

Government officials may find citizen engagement time-consuming and costly. Given the time pressure they already face in the daily operation of government, networking with citizens and soliciting public input proactively seem to be an unnecessary and unwanted burden. Citizens may also be reluctant to participate in the decision-making process of the government. Attending meetings, writing formal feedback, and responding to surveys about public services may require a time commitment that many citizens are not willing to give regularly. As Schachter (1995) suggests,

“More fundamentally, many individuals do not understand why they might want to take the trouble to seek [out] information [about government performance]. ... If we envision citizens as owners, then it is a problem that the proprietors lack the psychological and informational resources to mind their own business.” (535-536).

The Role of the Internet in Reinventing Government

It is in addressing precisely these challenges that information technology has played an increasingly important role in public administration (Gore 1993; Bellamy and Taylor 1998; Heeks 1999). Before the emergence of the Internet in the late 1980s, some governments were already actively pursuing information technology to improve operating efficiency and enhance internal communication (Brown 1999). However, the focus of “e-government” in this era was primarily internal and managerial.

The arrival of the Internet and the World-Wide Web marked a watershed in information technology usage by shifting the focus of governance to the external relationship with citizens (Scavo and Shi 1999; Seneviratne 1999). Technology itself certainly played an important role in fostering the change. From the newsgroup and commercial e-mail technology started in the mid-1980s, to the development of the World-Wide Web and the web browser technology in the early 1990s (Zakon 2002), the Internet gradually matured to become a cost-effective and user-friendly platform for officials to communicate directly with citizens and deliver massive quantities of information to the public.

The rise of e-commerce in the private sector further reinforced the shift in the focus of government. The Internet allows not only companies but also individual citizens to exchange information and conduct business transactions cost-efficiently. The flexibility of the Internet in providing access to goods, services and information raises citizens’ expectations of customer service in a range of contexts, including interactions with government. Many now expect to find what they need to know about the government on the web around the clock, seven days a week.

As a result of technological advancement and economic changes, policymakers have had further incentive to shift the focus of information technology usage from internal managerial needs to external linkages with the public. The National Performance Review report (Gore 1993) suggests that e-government “will allow citizens broader and more timely access to information and services through efficient, customer-responsive processes -- thereby creating a fundamental revision in the relationship between the federal government and everyone served by it.”
These remarks clearly reflect a new way of thinking about public service delivery and about how these services will be delivered.

**Paradigm Shift**

As a result, information technology and the Internet are transforming public administration in the digital era (see Table 1). In the traditional bureaucratic paradigm which is “Agency-centric,”

**Table 1**

**Shifting Paradigms in Public Service Delivery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bureaucratic Paradigm</th>
<th>E-Government Paradigm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Production Cost-Efficiency</td>
<td>User Satisfaction &amp; Control, Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process Organization</strong></td>
<td>Functional Rationality, Departmentalization, Vertical Hierarchy of Control</td>
<td>Horizontal Hierarchy, Network Organization, Information Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Principle</strong></td>
<td>Management by Rule and Mandate</td>
<td>Flexible Management, Interdepartmental Team Work with Central Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Style</strong></td>
<td>Command and Control</td>
<td>Facilitation and Coordination, Innovative Entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Communication</strong></td>
<td>Top-Down, Hierarchical</td>
<td>Multidirectional Network with Central Coordination, Direct Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Communication</strong></td>
<td>Centralized, Formal, Limited Channels</td>
<td>Formal and Informal, Direct &amp; Fast Feedback, Multiple Channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mode of Service Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Documentary Mode, and Interpersonal Interaction</td>
<td>Electronic Exchange, Non Face-to-Face Interaction (so far)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principles of Service Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Standardization, Impartiality, Equity</td>
<td>User Customization, Personalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

public managers focus on internal productive efficiency, functional rationality and departmen-
talization, hierarchical control, and rule-based management (Osborne and Plastrik 1997; Bozeman 2000).

In contrast, under the e-government paradigm, which is “Customer-centric,” like the paradigm of information-technology-based organizations in the business world (Applegate 1994; Wigand, et al. 1997), public managers shift from emphasizing producer concerns, such as cost-efficiency, to focusing on user satisfaction and control, flexibility in service delivery, and network manage-
ment with internal and external parties. The new paradigm also stresses innovation, organiza-
tional learning, and entrepreneurship so that government can continue to reinvent itself. In addi-
tion, public service is no longer standardized in the new model. With the help of information technology, an e-government can customize services based on personal preferences and needs.

The new paradigm also transforms organizational principles in government. While the bureau-
cratic model emphasizes top-down management and hierarchical communication, the new model emphasizes teamwork, multidirectional network, direct communication between parties, and a fast feedback loop (Reschenthaler and Thompson 1996; Rosell 1999, 13-15). Citizens no longer need to know which departments are responsible for what in the “network” production of services. The functional departmental structure and production process of public services behind the operation of the “one-stop service center” become “invisible” to users. This is not to suggest that central leadership is unimportant in an e-government. However, leadership in the new paradigm encourages facilitation and coordination among parties, rather than hierarchical command and control.

However, the extent to which the shift between the traditional bureaucratic paradigm and the emerging e-government paradigm occurs will, of course, depend on the willingness of the bu-
reaucracy to undertake the long e-government journey.

The Government Restructuring Program Viewed Through a Prism of Other Countries E-
Government Initiatives

To gauge the extent of reforms that may be required by Kuwait’s bureaucracy in implementing its e-government initiatives, it may be instructive to view the need for such reforms within the context of government experiences in other countries.

What is e-Government?

The Gartner Group, an internationally recognized information and communication technology consulting firm, defines E-Government as follows:

“E-Government is transformation of public sector internal and external relationships through Net-enabled operations, information technology, and communications to opti-
Gartner's Four Phases of E-Government

One of the issues facing governments is how to measure progress for e-government initiatives and to establish a road map to achieve the desired levels of constituency service. The Gartner Four Phases of E-Government Model (see Figure 1) provides a reference framework for positioning e-government initiatives. By mapping each project against the model, a department, agency or government can determine its level of progress, understand which areas must be addressed, and develop a checklist to plan and prioritize policy, organization and technology interventions required to meet e-government objectives.

Figure 1

Gartner’s Four Phase Model of E-Government


Four Phases of E-Government

According to Gartner, the four phases are defined as follows:

Phase 1 — Presence: This phase of e-government development is characterized by the land rush to simply have a cyberspace placeholder on the Internet. The primary goal is to post information
such as agency mission, addresses, opening hours and possibly some official documents of relevance to the public.

Phase 2 — Interaction: This phase is characterized by Web sites that provide basic search capabilities, host forms to download, and linkages with other relevant sites, as well as e-mail addresses of offices or officials. This stage enables the public to access critical information online and receive forms that may have previously required a visit to a government office.

Phase 3 — Transaction: This phase is characterized by allowing constituents to conduct and complete entire tasks online. The focus of this stage is to build self-service applications for the public to access online, but also to use the Web as a complement to other delivery channels. Typical services that are migrated to this stage of development include tax filing and payment, driver's license renewal, and payment of fines, permits and licenses. Additionally, many governments put requests for proposals and bidding regulations online as a precursor to e-procurement. This is the current stage for several agencies and the most immediate target for many e-government initiatives worldwide. It not only highlights the benefits of 24x7 availability but also provides opportunities to develop cross-agency common, shared services.

Phase 4 — Transformation: This phase is the long-term goal of almost all national and local e-government initiatives. It is characterized by redefining the delivery of government services by providing a single point of contact to constituents that makes government organization totally transparent to citizens. This phase relies on robust customer relationship management (CRM) tools and new methods of alternative service delivery capabilities that reshape relationships between citizens, businesses and governments. It also enhances the ability of constituents to participate more directly in government activities (e.g., "e-referendums and "e-voting"). Examples of transformation include highly tailored Web sites, or "virtual agencies," where government information is pushed to citizens, and where they can pay local property taxes, renew state driver's licenses and apply for federal passports all in one place, with seamless interfaces back to the respective agencies involved in the transactions. Such applications would have robust customer relationship management capabilities required to handle a full range of questions, problems and needs. In recent months several websites have been developed to this level of technological sophistication (see Deloitte Consulting, 2002 and www.michigan.gov). This phase will also include the development of state-of-the-art intranets that can link government employees who work in different agencies. Governmental transformation will also include the design of extranets that allow the seamless flow of information and collaborative decision-making among federal, state and local government agencies; private and not-for-profit sector partners; and the public.

In Figure 1, these phases are plotted on three axes of cost/complexity, time and constituency value.

The vertical axis measures cost and complexity. The total height of each phase shows the comparative cost and degree of complexity. The height of each segment within each phase shows the relative complexity not only with the phase but with the same segment across the phases. For example, the impact on technology is likely to be the greatest during the Transaction phase.
The horizontal access is relative time. The width of each phase shows the comparative time that each phase will take. The placement on the time line shows a logical progression, but it is important to realize two key facts:

1. It is not necessary that every agency, department or government go through all four phases. A savvy government could skip to Interaction or even Transaction without going through the other phases. It is unlikely, however, that any bureaucracy will jump right to Transformation.

2. An agency or department can run multiple sites in different phases of development. For example, a city's property tax department might be well into the Transaction phase and accepting credit card payments over the Internet, while its utility department has a Web site that only gives office locations and hours.

The Z axis, which is in the third dimension, represents constituency value. As the government progresses through each phase, it should become increasingly constituent-focused. By the time it reaches Transformation, it should be completely remade to best fit the needs of the constituent *even if positions are consolidated or eliminated and agencies are reorganized or abolished*.

Successfully deploying an e-government initiative in each phase requires government organizations to address and resolve a number of issues that can be categorized as follows:

**Strategy and Policy:** Existing policies, laws and regulations can be inadequate to address new kinds of internal and external relationships that are enabled by e-government. For instance, publication and written response policies that are perfectly valid for paper documents often prove to be inadequate for electronic documents and exchanges; copyright rules and transaction fees need to be reassessed; funding mechanisms for different agencies may require significant changes.

**People:** The human factor is extremely important in any transformation process. Civil servants will have to change the way they work and interact with the public and with colleagues. In some regions, where civil service is an alternative to unemployment and rigid rules exist to protect public employment, the radical changes caused by the Transaction and Transformation phases may encounter significant resistance. Costs will be incurred to displace, recruit, retain, and retrain staff.

**Process:** Most bureaucratic processes are built around the assumption of a hierarchical structure and the existence of a paper trail. Constituent centricity and electronic interactions reverse some of these assumptions, and processes need to be redesigned accordingly. Examples of brand new processes include constituent or customer relationship management (CRM), knowledge management, content management and channel management.

**Technology:** A variety of information and communication technologies play a key role in different phases, such as Internet, wireless communication, application integration and security. Technology procurement and sourcing also change from phase to phase.
Current State of e-Government Development

The United States is currently the undisputed leader in e-commerce worldwide; however, when it comes to e-government, they are no longer in the lead. According to the latest report by Accenture (2001), a leading international consulting firm, Canada and Singapore have leapfrogged the United States in the past year with other countries not far behind (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Country Maturity

To determine the current status of e-Government development in 22 countries Accenture researchers “behaved as citizens and businesses” and turned to the Internet in an attempt to fulfill service needs that might typically be provided by national governments. Two measures were used to determine the e-Government maturity of the countries in the research: Service Maturity and Delivery Maturity. These were then combined to find each country’s Overall Maturity.

Accenture defined the level of Overall Maturity as follows:

- **Innovative Leaders** - stand apart from other countries due to the high number of mature services offered online.
- **Visionary Followers** - those countries that have exhibited the beginnings of strong growth based on a solid base of services online and generally showing some development in Delivery Maturity.
• **Steady Achievers** - generally show a large breadth of services, but have significant opportunity to grow through maximizing the potential of online services and growing Delivery Maturity.

• **Platform Builders** - low levels of online service, and large potential to develop a coordinated cross-agency web presence of government.

Four key themes emerged from Accenture’s research:

• **Reality is catching up with rhetoric:**

  Any transformation program must begin with the rhetoric of the vision in order to garner support for the journey ahead. e-Government programs have all been launched with a great deal of rhetoric about the new ways governments will interact with citizens and businesses.

• **Government online is moving up the maturity curve:**

  This second round of research found evidence that governments are moving up the maturity curve, but still have a long way to travel to reach full online maturity. Only in isolated cases has online service delivery moved all the way up the maturity curve, enabling citizens to complete entire transactions with government, such as paying taxes or claiming benefits, online.

• **Portals are emerging as the new single points of access for Citizens and Businesses:**

  The emergence of government portals is the most significant development observed in this round of research. Government portals are now emerging as the means of bringing some order and citizen-centered functionality to government online. Sites such as www.firstgov.gov, 'Your first click to the US Government', attempt to provide a single gateway for users to all government websites, and are organized around the information the user is seeking, as opposed to the name of the agency, its services, or the tier of government responsible for that service.

* **The e-Government Landscape will be unrecognizable in two to three years time:**

  The Governments surveyed are experimenting with a range of political and administrative structures to provide leadership for, and build momentum in, their e-Government programs. The fundamental challenge all governments surveyed are facing is how to create a model that provides a framework within which all agencies can work, targets achievable goals and specifies deliverables to which all agencies can commit.

**Leadership characteristics**

Accenture identified five characteristics shared by e-Government leaders:
• Vision and Implementation:

The leaders articulated a vision early, and proceeded to put in place the right administrative mechanisms to support agencies in implementation, to communicate deliverables and establish accountability for delivery.

• Citizen-Centric - An intentions based approach:

An online presence should be based around what the citizen wants to do, rather than how the agencies are organized. This approach, known as intentions based design, is common in the online activities of the leading countries. Singapore introduced this design early through its e-Citizen website which was developed around the lifecycle of the citizen and the typical interactions they would have with government at various stages of their life.

• Introducing Customer Relationship Management (CRM):

Governments have the largest customer base in the world and stand to benefit enormously from adopting CRM disciplines in terms of increased efficiencies and lower service delivery costs. The Innovative Leaders showed some evidence of this approach in their online service delivery. The countries that are first to integrate CRM with online service delivery will secure for themselves a defensible position in the leaders group in the future.

• Volume and complexity:

Accenture’s research methodology was designed to recognize not just volume of services online, but to give recognition to those countries that tackled more complex services and provided both interactive and transaction capabilities. The Innovative Leaders have moved beyond the earlier construct of 'every agency must have a website' and are now creating innovative solutions for the citizens and businesses they serve.

• Portals - Single Interaction points:

Many governments in the survey have now recognized that it is not citizen-friendly to require visits to individual sites, just as they would have visited a range of physical facilities to conduct business. Portals offer single points of entry to multiple agencies and afford citizens or businesses the opportunity to interact easily and seamlessly with several agencies. Portals are growing in importance, and the leading countries have all begun to consolidate their online service delivery into this next generation of government web presence.

Customer Demand for e-Government Service Delivery

According to a study by Deloitte Consulting (2001) governments need to make an educated estimate as to how many customers will actually use the Internet for access – and to what degree. As of today, all governments report that relatively small numbers of customers (about 12 percent) use the Internet as their primary means to access services. However, they expect that figure to nearly triple within the next two years, to about 34 percent. For governments, this is a stag-
E-Government as an Instrument of Public Management Reform

Figure 3
Customer Demand for Internet Services is Surging

Today, U.K. governments have the smallest percentage of customers using online services – about 8 percent. But with the leadership pushing online availability, they are anticipating a 424 percent surge in the next two years, which would bring customer demand for Internet service delivery up to 40 percent, the same figure as Canada. Departments that interact most often with the public need to seize this opportunity to change the service paradigm. Administration, revenue and transportation organizations have very routine and high-volume contact with customers, and they are responding with online forms submissions, electronic filing of taxes and registration/renewal of automobiles and drivers’ licenses. These agencies are moving quickly into advanced stages of e-Government and will likely be the trendsetters for future innovation.

But with the Internet, "more" only equates with "better" when customers see the benefits of using electronic service over traditional means. While both customer-centric and non-customer-centric governments anticipate significant growth of online customer use (177 percent and 164 percent, respectively), customer-centric governments will use the accelerating public demand as an opportunity to make bold advances in streamlining operations.
There are critics to this point of view however. Greg Curtin, chief executive officer of Civil Resource Group in Washington, DC, believes one of the fallacies with e-government is the perception that the public is demanding Web-based government services. “That pressure is probably the least real of all of the pressures out there. People are certainly responding favorably to the idea of e-government, but there is no overwhelming pressure from citizens to provide it.” Most of the pressure is coming from businesses, according to Curtin, who are calling for online availability of such things as permits and licenses, and for information about economic development. The biggest pressure on government executives is one of human nature. Someone sees their counterparts in other places getting accolades for things they have done with their Web sites, and that spurs a desire for something similar (Robinson 2002).

Indeed, a recent poll by Hart/Teeter (2001) found that 65 percent of Americans agree that “we should proceed slowly in relying on the Internet for communication between citizens and their government because many people do not have access to the Internet and there are important issues of security and privacy that remain unresolved.”

Figure 4

U.S. Public Says “Go Slow”

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<tr>
<th>Government-citizen communication using Internet should proceed:</th>
<th>General Public</th>
<th>Institutional Customers</th>
<th>Government Officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quickly: opportunities for improved services, communication, efficiency in government</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slowly: many have no Internet access, security/privacy issues unresolved</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The concept of e-government often brings to mind efficient and convenient interaction between the government and citizens. But some research suggests citizens aren’t yet ready for e-government, and governments should instead improve their back-office IT systems.
While e-government is perceived to be more efficient and can help contain costs, a series of reports by Gartner Group (www.gartner.com) has warned European governments that the race to provide as many services as possible online could be a mistake. It said that "e" is in some cases costing more to achieve less, and governments should focus on smart use of IT rather than "e", to meet their objective of providing better service levels to the public.

According to Gartner, better service levels can often be achieved without excessive reliance on Web delivery. For example, Sweden has achieved higher tax collection rates and service levels by dramatically simplifying paper forms and preferring stronger back-office IT processes to an electronic front-end. This means taxes cannot be filed online yet, but the effort to file them is much lower than in countries where online filing and payments are possible. A survey conducted by GartnerG2 in Britain in September also shows that face-to-face or telephone interactions are still preferred for several services.

**Governments Put New Priority on Customer Service**

At the heart of the e-government vision is the aspiration of using technology to help organizations move from a departmental ‘silo’ structure to one where services are organized around the needs of the citizen (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

From Traditional to Portal Customer-Centric Service Delivery

Source: Adapted from PricewaterhouseCoopers promotional materials
This means more than building a website. It requires the use of technology as an enabler to generate value to the citizen through all the relationships that an organization has, both internal and external.

E-government therefore provides the opportunity to transform public sector services through a renewed focus on core business, citizen-centric service delivery, reduced cost of service delivery and the broadening of service delivery channels, to achieve increased user satisfaction, better performance management and improved targeting of services.

The Internet has long promised to revolutionize government service delivery, but if agencies merely replicate their own complex bureaucracies online, constituents will not experience a kinder, gentler government office. Instead, they’ll find themselves face-to-screen with the electronic equivalent of the stereotypically somber, contrary government agency with no ability to offer real help.

If digital government ventures are to truly work, observers say, agencies need to apply a “customer-centric”—also referred to as “customer-facing,” “citizen-centric,” and “constituent-centric”—approach. Of course, the idea of putting customers first is not a new one to the private sector, but it has been introduced in government circles only in the last decade. The cyber element adds a new twist to the idea: Approach government entirely from a constituent point of view, and bring their needs to the forefront of the digital government effort.

Technology officials are increasingly employing the customer-centered approach to Web sites, back-office systems, and other aspects of digital government by looking at the commercial world’s take on customer service and deploying its best practices: 24/7 customer support, one-stop shopping, personalized accounts, and Web sites that use simple language to make navigation easy.

For citizens and businesses, a customer-facing government eliminates the frustration and wasted time that comes with linking through page after page of bureaucracy in search of a service or piece of information, and it almost guarantees that they can find those things without resorting to a phone call or a visit to a local government branch. For agencies, a Web site or a help number such as an 800-number that provides that kind of self-help capability translates into fewer routine tasks and time to devote to more mission-critical projects.

**How a Customer-Centric “One-Stop Service Center” Works**

The philosophical change regarding customer-centric service delivery outlined earlier in this paper rejuvenated the idea of “one-stop service centers.” To be sure, the idea of “client-based” organization is not new. In the 1970s and the 1980s, agencies involved in social services had already experimented with this alternative organization model as a way of integrating government services and operations. However, such efforts often faced bureaucratic resistance and slack resource constraints. As a result, bureaucratic systems based on functional operations persist in many public services.
In the Internet age, the idea of “one-stop shopping” has resurfaced as an alternative to functional, fragmented departmentalization. As Reschenthaler and Thompson (1996) suggest, computers erode economies of scale in hierarchical organization and offer new justification for the establishment of responsibility centers -- an arrangement similar to the “one-stop service center.”

A one-stop service center is an umbrella organization that operates on top of existing functional departments, and is intended to maximize the convenience and satisfaction of users through service integration. As the gateway for specific client groups, such as businesses, residents, expatriates or visitors, the center collects information about user demand for inquiries and service assistance and processes the information centrally. It then coordinates with different functional departments, such as law enforcement, urban planning, and transportation, to deliver public services and carry out holistic planning (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

Customer-Centric Service Delivery as “One-Stop” Shopping

Unlike early “client-based” reforms in social services during the 1980s, the creation of one-stop service centers today does not require a massive reorganization and consolidation of personnel. With the help of information technology, such as local area networks (LAN) and project management software, public managers at the service center can easily coordinate with different functional departments to conduct central planning and provide integrated services. By avoiding massive reorganization, the reform is less likely to receive bureaucratic resistance in implemen-
The emergence of the World-Wide Web further facilitates the growth of a “one-stop service center” model because the website of a government can itself serve as a convenient and cost-effective platform for centralized service provision. Businesses, residents, expatriates, visitors, and intergovernmental liaisons can easily access public information and services related to their specific needs simply by clicking on different web links in the portal website. They can also contact government officials directly through email or online request forms to give feedback about specific issues.

**A Comprehensive Approach Required**

Many government agencies have already begun implementing the customer-centric approach with innovative tactics that go a long way toward allowing citizens and businesses a hassle-free and bureaucratic-friendly interactive experience with government. But getting from here to there requires strong leadership, a solid understanding of how customers think when looking for information and services, and a thought-out approach to back-office architecture and front-office applications.

For example, entrepreneurs who log onto Access Washington, the state of Washington’s portal, no longer have to know the six state agencies that handle business licenses. Instead, they see a link that simply reads, “Get a Business License,” and are whisked through an integrated application that fulfills the information requirements of all involved agencies. Thus, instead of filling out six different forms, the entrepreneurs enter name, address, and common data elements only once—along with answers to agency-specific questions. If users need help, they can pose questions to a search engine named Ask George or submit e-mail messages to an around-the-clock customer-support center (Washington Department of Information Services 2001).

Developing this user-friendly version of its Web page, however, took Washington years of planning. The challenge: balancing department autonomy and needs against the new single-face-of-government approach and encouraging agencies to work together to develop common applications. “It takes a lot of work to make it look easy to the user,” notes Paul Taylor, Washington’s head of management oversight for strategic technologies (Hayes 2001).

The comprehensive approach that many government agencies are now taking underscores the fact that digital government cannot simply involve Web-enabling an old application. It’s a brand-new world, notes Chris Dixon, digital government issues coordinator at the National Association of State Chief Information Officers, one in which state-of-the-art e-business sites like Amazon.com and eBay have sent customer expectations through the stratosphere (ibid).

**Setting the Stage: Re-Engineering for the Customer**

A global public sector study (Deloitte Consulting 2001) found business process re-engineering (BPR) emerged as the most frequently implemented form of customer service enhancement over the past several years. Recognizing that establishing longer-lasting service improvements often requires significant changes to delivery models, almost 70 percent of governments participating
in the study committed substantial time and money to rethinking and redesigning the fundamental ways they interact with their citizens – far more so than on automation (30 percent) or staffing (17 percent). According to the study this strategy is most commonly found in New Zealand and Canada, where 83 percent and 80 percent of governments, respectively, undertook BPR (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

Re-Engineering Sets the Stage for E-Government

Because more processes will be technology-driven in e-Government, customer-centric governments are already ahead of the game (see Figure 8). With 80 percent of this group having completed reengineering projects, they are better prepared to use Web technology to streamline work

**Figure 8**

Customer-Centric Governments are Better Prepared for E-Government
flows and reduce departmental red tape. As a result, customer information will flow more logically and efficiently from the initial point of contact to the back office via integrated technologies. Not only do customers enjoy easier initial access, they can expect that they will less likely be burdened by repetitive questions, missing files or inaccurate data in future governmental encounters.

All governments, however, need to consider a potential major pitfall given how quickly e-Government has come to the forefront of the government arena. Because the average re-engineering project took 17 months to complete, there is a good chance that many entities did not fully plan for all the business modifications needed for the transition to e-Government, much less the implications regarding staffing and existing technology. Therefore, it is quite possible that further re-engineering efforts will be necessary.

A Hidden Threat to E-Government

Most governments experience problems when implementing large IT projects. Budgets are exceeded, deadlines are over-run and often the quality of the new system is far below the standard agreed when the project was undertaken.

Moreover, governments are not alone in failing. Evidence suggests that private sector companies have similar problems. The Standish Group, for example, estimates that only 28 percent of all IT projects in 2000 in the US, in both government and industry, were successful with regard to budget, functionality and timeliness. Twenty-three percent were cancelled and the remainder succeeded only partially, failing on at least one of the three counts.

Large public IT projects can pose great political risks. Ministers and governments are held accountable for the failures and the accompanying waste of taxpayer money. These significant economic losses comprise not only outright waste in exceeded budgets and abandoned projects, but also – and equally importantly – lost opportunities for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency.

The inability of governments to manage large public IT projects threatens to undermine efforts to implement e-government. Many countries have formulated ambitious action plans for implementing e-government. The aim is to move service delivery to the World Wide Web, to enhance information to citizens and to make public sector workplaces smarter for the benefit of citizens, politicians and civil servants alike.

Unless governments learn to manage the risks connected with large public IT projects, these e-dreams will turn into global nightmares. Governments must get the fundamentals of IT right if they want to harvest the huge potential of going online (Puma/OECD 2001).

Money Spent Has Not Resulted in Commensurate Performance Improvements

Information technology (IT) spending at the federal level alone in the United States will exceed $48 billion in 2002 and $52 billion in 2003. That level of IT spending provides enormous opportunities for transforming government into a citizen-centered e-government. Indeed, a good
portion of current federal IT in U.S. spending is devoted to Internet initiatives, yielding over 35 million web pages online at over 22,000 Web sites. But past agency-centered IT approaches have limited the government’s productivity gains and ability to serve citizens.

While the U.S. federal government is the world's biggest spender on information technology, it has not experienced commensurate improvements in productivity, quality and customer service. In many companies, major gains have come from leveraging the technology to transform old business practices. There are at least four major reasons that the federal government has been unable to increase productivity (OMB 2002):

• **Program Performance is Calculated on Agency-Centric rather than on Customer-Centric Values:** Agencies typically evaluate their IT systems according to how well they serve the agency's processes and needs—not how well they respond to citizens' needs. Systems are often evaluated by the percentage of time they are working, rather than the internal and external performance benefit they deliver to the programs they support.

• **Technology Leverage:** In the 1990s, government agencies used IT to automate existing processes, rather than to create more efficient and effective solutions that are now possible because of commercial e-business lessons learned.

• **Islands of Automation:** Agencies generally buy systems that address internal needs, and rarely are the systems able to inter-operate or communicate with those in other agencies. Consequently, citizens have to search across multiple agencies to get service, businesses have to file the same information multiple times, and agencies cannot easily share information.

• **Resistance to Change:** Budget processes and agency cultures perpetuate obsolete bureaucratic divisions. Budgeting processes have not provided a mechanism for investing in cross-agency IT. Moreover, agency cultures and fear of reorganization create resistance to integrating work and sharing use of systems across several agencies.

Better leveraging technology investments will require that government managers look beyond the current ways of doing work. Today’s IT solutions incorporate more productive ways of doing work, either through eliminating paperwork or integrating activities across longstanding organizational silos. Consequently, affected program officials need to be involved in strategic IT investment decisions. These investments need to be based on valid business cases that clearly articulate the value to both the citizen and the government, and provide for privacy and security that is critical to successful e-government.

A fundamental barrier to getting productivity from federal government IT is government’s inherent resistance to change. E-government uses IT to improve federal productivity by enabling better interactions and coordination. But each opportunity requires substantial changes in current bureaucratic procedures. Success will depend on breaking down the resistance to such change. A holistic approach is needed, and each e-government initiative must include results oriented performance measures, policy alignment, training, communications, and organizational change milestones.
Potential Challenges to E-Government

Smart e-government should be focused on one goal: helping citizens solve problems. Most people are not interested in which government agency, or even which tier of government, is responsible. Nor should they be. Nor are they interested in bureaucratic acronyms and government self-promotion. Digital government should deliver services to citizens seamlessly and in a common-sense way – without requiring them to surf around to find the right Web site.

Unfortunately, e-government today is fraught with problems. Visitors to many government Web-sites are liable to find (Leigh and Atkinson 2001):

- **“Stovepipe” structures.** Too many government Web sites require users to know which agency delivers the service that they are seeking. Agency-specific Web sites are not only confusing to consumers but can exacerbate the stovepipe problem, as departments develop their Internet strategy in isolation, becoming automated islands unable, perhaps unwilling, to communicate with other agency sites.

- **Sites that only list information provided by their own agency.** Not only are eb sites too often organized by agency, they frequently only provide links to “their” information. Government agencies need to approach the web with a philosophy of helping users solve problems, not merely delivering their same old services through a new medium. And this means that government agencies need to help direct citizens to a wide range of services – including ones they don’t provide.

- **Web sites promoting government.** Although the role of government is to help citizens, too often e-government seems to be a publicity portal for programs and politicians. On too many Web sites world-wide top billing is given to a photograph of the chief executive officer or other key personage of the agency combined with the latest press releases from the agency highlighted.

- **Unfriendly portals.** Web sites need to be designed with an intuitive interface, making them easy to navigate. Instead, too many are confusing and unfriendly – particularly once the user goes a level or two below the opening page.

- **Search engines that don’t work.** The problem with many so-called search engines is generally with the agency’s “back-room” computer systems. Most data on government Web sites are not properly indexed into a core database system. There is a need for a better, more complete, and standardized indexing/classification system that is used and applied across government. Setting up such a robust database structure will be resource-intensive, but it is essential.

E-government offers potential to deliver public services in a far more efficient, more holistic manner. As British Prime Minister Tony Blair has argued, “Joined-up problems need joined-up solutions (Blair 1998). Old division between agencies, between tiers of government, and even between the public and private sector become increasingly irrelevant in the digital age.
Around the world, governments are eagerly looking toward a digital future, but their view is obstructed by the challenges they face in modernizing such vast enterprises. Even though most of the excitement revolves around the Internet, governments must understand that e-government impacts every aspect of their organization, from work-flows to technology to staffing. It is not just about the Internet, and it is not a simple, packaged solution. How well governments grasp the integration of all the components will largely determine how much value e-government can bring to citizens and to governments themselves.

The Challenge for Kuwait

For Kuwait, moving from agency-centric to citizen-centric Web sites will not be easy. It will require a new way of thinking for much of the civil service workforce. It will require integration of a vast array of information and services. It will require simplification of processes. And, since many citizen services span a number of agencies, it will require an unprecedented level of cross-agency cooperation. These requirements represent a massive change in culture. What are the conditions in which such change can be successful? Here are a few (Smith 2001):

- **Strong top management support.** From Council-level ministers on down, leaders in the executive branch must genuinely support e-government initiatives and hold those developing e-government systems accountable for success. E-government is line management’s responsibility, not just that of an agency’s ICT officials.

- **Become Personally Involved.** Personally become involved in information technology projects and do not delegate all responsibility for technology to the technology specialists. One of the most valuable ways to keep in touch with technology is to acquire familiarity with computers. Those who use the Internet for instantaneous news, information, research, shopping and communication more readily understand how powerful it is and are better equipped to develop an effective plan (Mechling 2000).

- **Clear, consistent, and frequent communications about the reasons for the change.** As with any major change effort, employees must understand the benefits of the change, both for themselves and people who will be using the new processes or systems. Clarifying the rationale for change is much more effective than just saying “that expanded electronic government is now a top management priority.”

- **Avoid the quick-fix.** When searching for innovative solutions, look at the big picture and not just the incremental quick-fix. Push for ten-fold improvements not just 10 percent patch jobs. Follow the lead of companies like Amazon.com. They did not seek to automate traditional bookstores, but instead reinvented how we shop for books and other consumer goods, moving us away from brick-and-mortar stores to the point-and-click technology of e-commerce.

- **Patience.** Any change that affects culture in a major way almost always takes more time than is expected. Reinventing those aspects of government that can be improved through technology will require a considerable amount of trial and error, and the leaders promoting this change will need to give it sufficient time.
- **Involvement of end users in planning and testing new systems and procedures.** In this respect, moving to e-government is similar to any other process change. Users, not designers, should be the arbiters of value.

- **Privacy and security.** Do not ignore information privacy and security by going with a quick-fix but also do not allow privacy and security issues to paralyze new systems and services. There are terrible problems with network security and reliability for both the home user and the corporate giant exemplified by the recent "denial of service attacks" by hackers on Yahoo.com and others. Governmental leaders need to make Internet privacy and security a priority to ensure both the continuation of access to information and the flow of e-commerce.

- **Reassigning affected employees.** People resist change if they think they will lose their jobs. Many e-government processes will undoubtedly result in a reallocation of work, and some jobs will be lost. If management makes good faith efforts to find affected employees good jobs elsewhere, and to retrain as necessary, this resistance can be significantly lessened.

In the final analysis to make digital government a reality, Kuwait’s government must direct as many resources to change management as to technology. To reach this level of activity, government officials will have to find innovative ways to overcome formidable barriers and provide the leadership needed to implement their e-government vision.

**A Fresh Start for the GRP?**

With the advent of e-government initiatives and the shifting paradigm of public service delivery systems a number of recommendations proposed in the UNDP/GRP report on the “Reorganization of the State Structure” will, by definition, need to be re-visited if e-government is to become an effective service delivery channel in Kuwait’s bureaucracy. Among these recommendations are:

- Strengthening management systems based on performance criteria
- Creation and dissemination of information to facilitate the decision-making process
- Strengthening process improvement efforts
- Developing new service delivery channel alternatives
- Eliminating overlapping responsibilities and sorting out gaps in policy coverage
- Re-aligning organizational structures according to functional responsibilities and consolidating along sectoral lines
- Introducing special projects to absorb staff made redundant by streamlining operations
- Devolution of appropriate authority and responsibility to local community institutions and governorates.

**Conclusion**

The Internet has long promised to revolutionize government service delivery, but if agencies merely replicate their own complex bureaucracies online, constituents will not experience a kinder, gentler government office. Instead, they’ll find themselves face-to-screen with the elec-
Electronic equivalent of www.redtape.com where citizens are forced to wait on-line rather than in-line.

Within several years most governments throughout the world will have established at least a presence on the Internet or phase one in Gartner’s four-phase model. At the same time, many government Web sites will allow citizens to download forms as well as to access critical information online, allowing for some limited interaction, or phase two of Gartner’s model. However, going from downloading forms to completing entire tasks online (phase three) or personalizing your own webpage through robust customer management relationship capabilities (phase four) may require a quantum leap in paradigm thinking.

The question this paper poses is whether a country can progress to these higher level phases of e-government without first shifting from a bureaucratic to an e-government paradigm?

The Innovative Leaders, Visionary Followers and Steady Achievers in Accenture’s research on country maturity (Figure 2) have all undergone extensive management reforms over the last ten to fifteen years. The net result of these reforms has been results-driven and customer-focused cultures within each of these governments before embarking on major e-government initiatives.

Each of these countries has in turn established statutory frameworks for ensuring high performance and accountability from their government agencies. The United States, for example, used legislation to enhance the efficiency and accountability of their Federal Government. In 1993, the United States Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act. This Act — the Results Act — is creating a cultural change throughout Government that is bringing measurement and accountability to the forefront of management. The Results Act is helping to create this change because it requires accountability:

- The Results Act requires agencies to establish strategic plans for government programs. These plans must cover a period of 5 years and are updated every 3 years. Strategic plans must include a mission statement, outcome-related goals and objectives, and a description of how the agency will achieve, evaluate, and revise those goals and objectives.

- In addition to 5-year strategic plans, the Results Act requires that agencies submit annual performance plans to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. Annual performance plans establish outcome-related, objective, quantifiable, and measurable goals. The plan must also establish performance indicators and provide a basis for comparing program results with plan goals.

- Finally, the Results Act requires agencies to submit program performance reports. These reports must review the agencies’ success in achieving the performance goals established in the performance plans. If goals are not met, agencies must report the reasons why.

Other countries have undertaken similar reform programs within their own statutory frameworks. The point is that these countries had already developed service-oriented performance cultures with streamlined procedures and well-organized “back-offices” long before they took their first tentative steps toward putting their customer delivery services on the Internet. In other words,
they had shifted from a bureaucratic to an e-government paradigm some years ago.

These countries understand that the key word in “e-government” is not electronic, but government. E-government is still about government, not electronics.

References


