

The impact of Information Technology on Governments

Information technology probably impacts governments more than corporations and private individuals. For the most part, corporations propel and advance technology. Consumers then jump on the bandwagon embracing new and wonderful gizmos and ideas. Governments, on the other hand, usually lag behind and are forced to catch up. And even if they do not want to be involved, they must, because current trends and business practices demand that they conform. But this leaves governments vulnerable in many ways and thus, it can be said that generally speaking, information technology has a negative impact on governments.

The first issue, as previously stated, governments are not leaders in technology. They react to the environment around them rather than trying to find new ways of efficiency. As a result, it is more costly to change everything over at once dispensing large sums of cash to meet equipment needs and staff training requirements. It also leads to more inefficiency as new systems are confused with old and chaotic situations occur.

Secondly, governments hold confidential information. Both data from its individual citizens and country specific security data. As all information becomes digital and available to anyone who cares to see it, security breaches are inevitable. And while many corporations have had scandals regarding customer information being leaked or hacked, governments are more susceptible, as they rarely attract the best IT people in the field as employees. Again, they tend to react after the fact rather than proactively.

The third issue at work is transparency. Citizens want to know what government officials and employees are doing. And the internet is perfect for this type of society. Everyone's business and personal activities are available online. And while this trend is affecting the ability of individuals to obtain jobs or entry into excellent schools, it is also adversely affecting the government. Conversations, actions, decisions and motives are being played out on the internet in emails, social networking sites, videos

and personal blogs. Government officials and employees can no longer hide in a shroud of secrecy.

Contrarily, it must be said, that these pitfalls tend to be the realm of governments from industrialized nations. In countries that have had no access to the internet and computerized systems, information technology can be a definite life saver. Enriching the lives of the poor in developing nations can be achieved through the use of modern day technologies such as medical treatment databases, cell phones to improve livelihoods, and computers to enable ability the citizens to compete for online jobs in the global market. Governments can become closer to its people through the use of information technology and communications, thereby increasing efficiency and helping to make their lives better.

Further, governments in poorer countries can bridge the gap between the global environment, the government employees, and their citizens. Having access to information allows these governments to lay foundations for policies and make commitments to improve conditions. Being able to obtain information from the outside ultimately aids in the improvement of the plight of their people.

In conclusion, information technology negatively impacts some governments while positively impacting others.