

Evaluating the Impact of E-Government and Digital Transformation on Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

Chinonye Nnenna Nwokoroeze

Department of Political Science
Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Tobechukwu Rapuluchi Onwuekwem

Department of Psychology
Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Udoka Helen Chukwu

Department of Political Science
Enugu State University of Science and Technology

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Abstract: *Electronic governance is the application of information and communication technology initiatives in the provision of services by a governing agency to its citizens. This implementation of E-Governance in a country improves the overall efficacy of public service delivery, and governance, by facilitation a more efficient, transparent, cost effective and accountable system of government. The implementation of E-Government facilitates reduced cost of information management and sharing, it increases the portfolio of public services to citizens, facilitates the free flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government, builds better relationships between government and the general public which in turn promotes transparency and accountability in government, and empowers the members of the country to participate more actively in their own governance. For these benefits, the level of implementation of E-Governance is seen as an indicator for the assessment of a country's governance and the quality of its service delivery. The current study set out to investigate the impacts and level of implementation of E-Governance in Nigeria. Similar to most other African countries, the implementation of E-Governance in Nigeria, even though it was seen to be on the rise, still lags significantly behind the global average. This was seen to be a result of the many unresolved challenges to the proper implementation of E-Governance in the country, all of which has led to a reduced impact/benefits of E-Governance to the Nigerian populace. To combat these barriers to the implementation of E-Governance, this paper recommends that Nigeria increase efforts to fully adopt E-Governance in the Nigerian public sector, to realize and protect equitable provision of services to Nigerians.*

Keywords: e-government, digital transformation, public service, delivery

INTRODUCTION

E-Government or E-Governance as used interchangeably by some scholars is a concept that tries to incorporate ICT into the governance process to provide improved, effective, and economical delivery of public services, as well as effective communication with the general public (Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021). E-Government, can be simply described as the use of ICTs in carrying out government processes, in order to improve the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of government processes, leading to better service delivery and citizen engagement (Vertika, 2013).

E-Governance may be applied by the legislature, judiciary, or administration, in order to improve internal efficiency, the delivery of public services, or processes of democratic governance (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). Nigeria joined the global train of ICT like most developing countries as a consumer of the technologies particularly in the areas of personal computers and digital electronics. In Nigeria, E-Governance is increasingly recognized as essential for improving public sector efficiency and transparency (Omotayo, Kehinde & Alaba, 2025). Though, Nigeria has been recognized as one of the fastest growing information and communication technology market in Africa, yet the country is still ranked low in the provision of E-Governance and E-Government services to its Citizens (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024).

In the most recent report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), in 2024, Nigeria was reported to be at the global 144th position, out of 193 UN global member nations, with an EGDI of 0.4815. In Africa, the same UN DESA report still placed Nigeria below the top 10, occupying the 14th position with it's EGDI score putting it among the middle performers in Africa. On the global scale, Nigeria's EGDI ranking has remained fair stagnated, around then 144th position. According to the UN DESA report, In 2003, Nigeria was ranked as the 145th country, and now in 2024, more than 2 decades later, Nigeria is still ranked as the global 144th country. Despite the Nigerian government's investments in digital infrastructure and policy frameworks, many citizens continue to experience significant delays, inefficiencies, and bureaucratic bottlenecks when accessing public services. The nation's best efforts to increase the employment of E-Governance initiatives, has been repeatedly undermined by issues such as poor internet penetration in rural areas, inadequate digital literacy, resistance to change within public institutions, and corruption have hindered the full realization of E-Government's potential (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). Irrespective of these challenges, E-Governance holds a lot of promise an opportunities for Nigeria and it only needs the right environment to be of maximal impact to the country (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024).

In the face of this reality, it becomes imperative to ensure regular evaluation of E-Governance in Nigeria, including the actual impact of these digital initiatives on service delivery outcomes, including efficiency, accountability, transparency, and citizen satisfaction. There is however, still a considerable knowledge gap in the level of implementation of E-Governance in Nigeria as a whole (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023)(Omotayo, Kehinde and Alaba, 2025).

Concept of E-Government

Electronic government (E-Government) can be defined as the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), in the governance of the public, including concepts like the internet, in the delivery of government services, to enhance communication, with and within the government organizations, and facilitate/promote citizen engagement (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023; Vepkhvia, 2022; Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023). There is no consensus on the definition of E-Governance, with different definitions of the concept of E-Government by different authors, according to Bannister, & Connolly, (2012), E-Governance can be defined as the application of ICT tools in the interaction between government and citizens and businesses, the general populace. According to Giguashvili, (2024), E-Governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), in government to improve the efficiency, accessibility, transparency, and accountability of government services and processes. And according to Nnamani, *et al.*, (2023), E-Governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to assist the government for efficient and meaningful delivery of government services.

From these and other definitions available in literature, it can be said that E-Governance is simply the use of ICTs in carrying out government processes, highlighting the shift from the traditional method to digitization of government activities, in order to improve the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of government processes, leading to better service delivery and citizen engagement.

Concept of Service Delivery

Service delivery in this context can be described as the ability of an arm or department of governmental organization to discharge their assigned or statutory responsibilities. This determines the attainment of set goals or task assigned to government agencies. Badmus (2017) described service delivery as the basic services provided by the government including social amenities like hospital, road, electricity, water supply, market place, customs services, licensing, sanitary services, physical infrastructure, town planning, housing among others. Social service programs are services provided by a governmental agency for welfare of persons or the community at large such as housing, child protection, free education and health care delivery(Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023). According to Omotayo, Kehinde and Alaba (2025) Public service is the backbone of governance, created to provide essential services like security, water, electricity, healthcare, education, transportation, and municipal services in the most effective way. Government through various ministries and agencies render public services in a dynamic fashion which exert influence on its methods, procedures and processes of meeting the needs and expectations of the populace. Service delivery can be used as an indicator of good governance as it entails meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023)(Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023).

Benefits of E-Governance

There are numerous benefits of E-Governance in public service delivery. The implementation of E-Governance has been shown to improve the overall efficacy of governance, and to confer advantages, such as;

Cheaper and more effective management and processing of information; E-Government reduces cost of running governmental affairs and promotes more efficient service delivery (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023). In a study by Adegoroye, Oladejo and Yinus (2015), the authors highlighted the

role of E-Governance in increasing the portfolio of public services to citizens in an efficient and cost effective manner.

The implementation of E-Governance facilitates the free flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government, as well as, fostering better flow of information between government and citizens; these same E-Governance initiatives builds better relationships between government and the general public by facilitating better interaction with citizens in a smoother, easier, and more efficient manner. This in turn promotes transparency and accountability in government, and empowers the members of the country to participate more actively in their own governance (Olalekan, Jide and Oludare, 2017).(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

E-government fosters the strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil-society organizations (CSOs) and independent media (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023). Increased social awareness of the general population. E-Governance provides platform for citizens to be aware of various activities of governmental agencies. This serves to make the citizens more knowledgeable to demand accountability and transparency in government (Dibie and Quadri, 2018). according to Omotayo, Kehinde and Alaba (2025), In Nigeria, E-Governance is increasingly recognized as essential for improving public sector efficiency and transparency.

Domains of E-Governance

According to Arjan de Jager, (2008), there are three main domains of E-Governance. The main purpose is to improve the internal workings of the public sector by cutting, managing process performance, creating strategic connection within the government bodied(Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021)(Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). These domains of E-Governance are seldom separate in their implementations (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024), rather, they mostly involve overlapping activities as part of the same initiative, they include;

- I. E-administration: improving government processes
- II. E-services: connecting individual citizens with their government
- III. E-society: building interactions with and within civil society. -

E-administration

This domain is mainly concerned with improving the internal working of the public sector by cutting process costs, managing process performance, creating strategic connections within government bodies, and creating empowerment (Arjan de Jager, 2008)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

E-Service

These E-Governance initiatives focus mainly on improving the relationship between the government and its citizens by increasing the information flow between them, this notably, involves two-way communication– and improving the service levels of government towards its citizens (Arjan de Jager, 2008)(Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

E-society

E-society initiatives focuses on building long lasting partnerships and social/economical communities amongst it's stakeholders, such as private sector service providers, other public agencies, non-profit and community organizations (Arjan de Jager, 2008)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

Types of Service of Delivery in E-Governance

The quest to improve service delivery through the use of ICTs in governments typically focuses on four main dimensions. These are:

1. Government-to-Citizens (G2C):

This entails government interaction with citizens to access quality government services, resolve social issues, access information, track complaints and participate in decision-making(Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). The goal of government-to-citizen E-Governance is to offer a variety of ICT services to citizens, to strengthen their relationship with the government, in an efficient and economical manner. This focuses primarily on developing user-friendly digital service centers for easy access to high quality government services and information (Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

2. Government-to-Business (G2B):

The main objective of G2B entails the use of ICT to reduce difficulties for business, provide immediate information and enable digital communication by e-business with the aims to facilitating and enhance the capability of business transactions between the government and the private sector, through improving the level and ease communications and connectivity between the two parties (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024).

3. Government-to-Government (G2G):

Government-to-Government E-Governance, refers to the online non-commercial interaction between Government organizations, departments, and authorities and other Government organizations, departments, and authorities. The strategic objective of E-Governance in the case of G2G is to support and simplify governance for government, citizens, and businesses alike while improving communication and effectiveness of services between and within federal, state and local governments in the running of day-to-day administration. E-Government brings many advantages to play such as facilitating information delivery, application process/renewal between both business and private citizen (Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

4. Government to Employee (G2E);

Government-to-employee represents the online interactions between government units and their employees. This encompasses all online tools, sources, and articles that help employees to maintain the communication with the government and their own companies (Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

Assessment of E-Governance Implementation

Amid the growing implementation of E-Governance worldwide, there are growing concerns about intended benefits of E-Governance not reaching the target beneficiaries particularly in the context of developing countries.(Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). The estimation of the impact an implementation of E-Governance in a country is therefore, important to ensuring the maximum utility is extracted from all implemented E-Governance initiatives. The low success rates of E-Governance projects, the persistence of the underlying challenges and opportunities/potential benefits of proper implementation of E-Governance call for developing deeper insights about performance of E-Governance projects (Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021).

There are several measurement instruments developed by public and private sector organizations to meet their own needs for assessing the state of E-Government development. Many of these assessments include a scan of governmental online services in combination with data from national statistical offices, information on E-Government policy and indicators of administrative efficiency. The United Nations E-Government development index (EGDI) is widely recognized as an authoritative measure of public sector capacity to provide electronic and mobile services.

The EGDI (often called the "UN survey") is among the primary models used to rank countries by their relative implementation of E-Governance. This composite index is derived from the weighted average of three normalized sub-indices: the online service delivery index (OSI), telecommunication infrastructure index (TII) and human capital index (HCI). The overall EGDI score provides a relative measure of E-Government development across countries rather than an absolute, goal-oriented metric. (Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023). OSI is measured by the maturity of a country's E-Government websites, such as its national website and related portals. Whereas TII calculates a country's telecommunications infrastructure score using five parameters: the percentage of individuals who use Internet access, fixed telephone lines, mobile subscribers, fixed Internet subscriptions, and fixed broadband facilities. Finally, HCI is determined utilizing a country's adult literacy and education enrollment data (Nnamani, *et al.*, 2023)(Ogechukwu & Chukwurah, 2023).

Since the establishment of the United Nations E-Government survey, the programme has taken up a comprehensive method of analyzing E-Governance, based on a comprehensive survey of the online presence of all 193 United Nations member states. The EGI values range from 0 to 1, and countries are grouped into four levels as follows: very high EGDI value range from 0.75 to 1.00 inclusive; high EGDI group value range from 0.50 to 0.7499; middle EGDI value range 0.25 to 0.4999 and low EGDI values 0.0 to 0.2499 (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024).

Global Practice of E-Governance

Despite existing socioeconomic disparities, developed and developing countries have been and continue to embrace the delivery of public services through E-Government, albeit at different pace, influenced by each country's specific factors, such as socioeconomic status. E-Government development has improved at the global level, based on the last United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) E-Government Survey 2024 report published in September 2024.

The report highlighted advances in E-Governance across the 193 UN Member States.

Notably, the proportion of digitally underserved populations dropped from 45% in 2022 to 22.4% in 2024, indicating a substantial upward trend in E-Government development with a reported global average EGDI value reaching 0.6382 on a scale of 0 to 1, up from 0.6102 in 2022. This was the first time that the number of UN member states reported to have very high EGDI values (above 0.75) comprise the largest share, accounting for 39 % of the total (76 of the 193 countries assessed), and this number has been steadily increasing for the last 10 years. The number of countries with very high EGDI values has more than tripled over the past ten years, rising from 25 in 2014 to 76 in 2024. The combined number of countries with very high and high EGDI values has also increased from 87 in 2014 to 138 in 2024.

However, the number of countries with low EGDI values has increased from 7 to 11 (6 %) in 2024 since 2022. This increase in the percentage of low EGDI countries, was reported to be due to geopolitical conflicts and post-conflict situations that have hindered their digital development. The aforementioned report also highlighted the correlation between the socioeconomic status of a country, and their EGDI values. They reported that there has always been a positive correlation between EGDI values and country income as measured by per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Higher-income countries tend to have higher EGDI values than do lower-income countries. This suggests that wealthier nations typically have more resources to invest in the necessary infrastructure, technology, and human capital required for advanced E-Government services. Having a higher income allows these countries to develop robust telecommunications networks, comprehensive online services, and extensive educational programmes to boost digital literacy – all of which contribute to higher EGDI values.

Recognizing the relevance of E-Government, particularly in light of the success stories of industrialized economies, African countries are making frantic efforts to embrace the tide of change. However, due to a lack of e-readiness for E-Government, E-Government is only slowly spreading throughout Africa. This is accounted for by the fact that African governments employ older generations of technology, have fewer E-Government initiatives, and use ICTs less frequently than governments in industrialized nations (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). According to the UN DESA 2020 report, Africa had an average EGDI score of 0.391 (out of 1.0) in the year 2020 which was well below the global average of 0.60 in the same year. The same report does give hope as the African EGDI was reported to be on the steady increase since 2010, with the mean African EGDI, rising from 0.267, in 2010, to 0.282, 0.288, 0.342 and finally to 0.391, in the years, 2012, 2016, 2018, and 2020 respectively (Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021).

Though, Nigeria has been recognized as one of the fastest growing information and communication technology market in Africa, the country is still ranked low in the provision of E-Governance and E-Government services to its citizens (Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, 2024). The most recent UN DESA report, 2024 places Nigeria at the global 144th position, out of 193 UN global member nations, with an EGDI of 0.4815. In Africa, the recent 2024 UN DESA report still placed Nigeria below the top 10, occupying the 14th position with its EGDI score putting it among the middle performers in Africa. On the global scale, Nigeria's EGDI ranking has remained fair stagnated, around then 144th position. According to the UN DESA report, In 2003, Nigeria was ranked as the 145th country, and now in 2024, more than 2 decade's later, Nigeria is still ranked as the global 144th country, a fall from its 140th position in 2022. It is however important to note that despite the stagnant position in the world EGDI ranking, Nigeria has been steadily improving on its implementation of E-Governance, with its EGDI index rising almost steadily from 0.225, in 2003 to the current 0.445 in 2024. This shows that while Nigeria has been moving along with the world's current trend towards E-Governance, but more efforts is needed to ensure a reversion to, and maintenance of the continuous uptrend in the country's growth, and even then, there is still plenty of room for faster growth. Data quality and data security in Africa are in short supply coupled with insignificant mechanisms to address the challenge. Institutions to harmonize, lead and drive E-Governance are also lacking. Additionally, there is a mindset gap, which is manifested in a general aversion to change, a lack of customer orientation, an unwillingness to share data (Alshehri, *et al.*, 2021).

Challenges to E-Governance in Nigeria

In a report by Nwafor, Afuecheta, & Umetiti, (2024), they reported on the correlation between the per capita GDP of the country and the level of implementation of E-Governance in the country. According to the aforementioned author, the socioeconomic standing of the country can determine E-Governance success, and that countries with higher GDP's tend to have higher EGDI values, than lower and middle income countries, such as Nigeria.

Nnamani, *et al.*, (2023) in their study also reported on a number of barriers to the implementation of E-Governance in Nigeria which are summarized below;

- i. Insufficient funding from poor allocation of financial resources due to financial constraints and mixed government policies, as well as poor management of allocated funds and corruption.
- ii. Inadequate planning and political instability leading to some initiatives being abandoned at the early stages.
- iii. Reluctance to share information on the part of government agencies and policies that deny access to information limiting the quality of information made available to the public.
- iv. Insufficient managerial oversight on the implementation efforts.
- v. Lack of adequately trained personnel to manage relevant ICT tools, alongside a lack of government initiative for personnel training.
- vi. Inequitable distribution of internet connectivity amongst the general populace, which is exacerbated by poor internet connectivity and high cost of internet services.
- vii. Poor management of government servers and critical ICT infrastructure, often leading to service interruption and lack of frequent updates of government sites, leading to lack of timely information.
- viii. lack of critical social infrastructure such as electricity

CONCLUSION

The global adoption of E-Governance as an institutional mechanism for driving efficiency in the public sector is on the increase, this is in no small part due to the advantages E-Government brings, as a relatively new innovation in governance, as it helps to achieve good governance and to improve the quality of public service delivery. This global push towards the digital revolution of governance is also present in the African continent, with African countries making strides to incorporate E-Governance initiatives into their day-to-day interactions with the citizens and the private sector. However, the implementation of E-Government in Africa has faced a myriad of problems which has caused it to still lag significantly behind that in other regions of the world. In Nigeria, like most other African countries, global assessment has shown that despite the growth of ICT in Nigeria, there are still certain challenges which have hindered the development of E-Governance status to an international standard, and as a result, this has led to blunting of the potential benefits of E-Governance implementation in Nigeria. Irrespective of these challenges, E-Governance holds a lot of promise and opportunities for Nigeria and it only needs the right environment to be of maximal impact to the country.

Recommendations

It is imperative that Nigeria as a nation should strive to keep abreast of new innovations in the international community vis-a-vis E-Governance, so as to improve its impact in the country, and to meet up with standards. In light of the importance and potential benefits of proper implementation of E-Governance in the country, the following recommendations were made.

- I. The government needs to fully tackle the barriers hindering the implementation of E-Governance in the country, such as poor internet penetration in rural areas, inadequate digital literacy, resistance to change within public institutions, and corruption have hindered the full realization of E-Government's potential
- II. The federal government should strive to promote maintenance culture as an accepted ethic or norm in public life, as this would help in maintaining the available resources and infrastructure that enable E-Governance. This can be achieved through making available to all departments or institutions the required funds and infrastructures for maintenance purposes.
- III. There should be effective implementation of ICT at all levels of education in both urban and rural areas.
- IV. A follow-up strategy must set up as special monitoring and evaluation unit with a feedback mechanism to ensure that policies concerning the provision of ICT infrastructures are effectively implemented
- V. Principle of the rule of law must be upheld to promote equality before the law. every individual should be treated equally and given fair hearing irrespective of age, gender, status, religion or educational qualification

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