

Fostering Knowledge Management and Citizen Participation via E-Governance for Achieving Sustainable Balanced Development

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The fundamental principle of any political community is the mutual acknowledgment as autonomous individuals, each with a right to personal self-fulfillment (Zürn, 2000), besides their alignment towards unity and integration for the national development and its balanced contribution to the globe. Knowledge Management (KM) and citizen participation in the form of Web 2.0-based e-forums promote a facilitating buffer technique for streamlining the governance structures and processes towards balanced development and growth by satisfying the enablement of the principle along with e-governance. A metric that targets learning and growth perspective of balanced scorecard strategy remains the foundation for all strategies (Kaplan and Norton, 2000, p. 93). Therefore, the objective of this paper is to deal with the KM and also present the illustrations of the state-of-the-art e-governance efforts for citizen engagement.

Keywords: Achieving balanced development, Citizen engagement, E-governance, Fostering knowledge management

Introduction

According to Zürn (2000), the fundamental principle of any political community is the mutual acknowledgment as autonomous individuals, each with a right to personal self-fulfillment besides their alignment towards unity and integration for national development and its balanced contribution to the globe.

Many organizational development strategies are trying to follow the balanced scorecard strategy. Kaplan and Norton (1992) mentioned that the balanced scorecard puts strategy and vision at the center, not the control. It establishes goals, but assumes that people will adopt whatever behaviors and take whatever actions are necessary to arrive at those goals. The measures are designed to pull people toward the overall vision.

Effective Knowledge Management (KM) capabilities can contribute in the construction of meaning and value to an individual's life.

It can be understood from the citation of Bingham (2006) that the construction of meaning and value to personalization, customization and their alignment towards community,

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society, and nation's development, as a part of globalization, is gaining importance in recent times. This reflects the feeling of having not only the physical features of our local environment, but also our fundamental interests towards security, wellbeing, belongingness, recognition and autonomy within our community (Fisher *et al.*, 1991). Fundamentally, social beings show interest to live in association with one another, and the recent growth and development of urban governance is one of the manifestations of this truth. Research studies demonstrated that the perceptions of fairness and legitimacy of governing processes depend largely on the nature of citizen participation, especially opportunities to voice the citizens' view (Lind and Tyler, 1998). The meaning and value of community can be recognized when other members of the community listen to the voice of community as evident from the group value theory (Tyler, 1989). Thus, citizen participation and community participation are gaining momentum in building societies in our local environment and their useful patterns in the sustainable development of the nation as well as the world.

Current Barriers to the Growth and Development of a Nation

According to Rodrigues (2005a), the following are the barriers to the sustainable growth and development of a nation:

- Blurred strategic objectives;
- Inflation of priorities and measures;
- Lack of implementation, coordination and participation mechanism; and
- Lack of financial incentives.

In the present paper, the discussion is limited to the scope of the 'learning and growth' perspective of 'balanced scorecard strategy'.

Kaplan and Norton (1992) have reported this perspective as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Learning and Growth Perspective of Kaplan and Norton (1992)				
"To achieve our vision, how will we sustain our ability to change and improve?"	Learning and Growth			
	Objectives	Measures	Targets	Initiatives

Rodrigues (2005a), while presenting the Lisbon strategy, elucidated the strategic guidelines for sustainable development. The extracts of it, specific to learning and growth perspective, are as follows:

Goals, Objectives and Priorities

Goals

- Sustainable living conditions for citizens in a global economy;
- Making the nation a stronger player in improving global governance; and
- Creating more citizen participation and effective political system.

Strategic Objectives

- Need to improve the synergies between the three dimensions of strategy—economic, social and environmental—is also underlined in the more general context of the sustainable development principles (Brussels European Council 2005);
- Renewing the basis of competitiveness, increasing the growth potential and productivity, and strengthening social cohesion;
- Placing the main emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimization of the human capital (Brussels European Council, 2005, p. 2); and
- Stepping up the transition to a knowledge-intensive society remains the central direction.

Priorities

- An agenda of structural reforms with the coordination of the macroeconomic policies;
- Trade policy with innovation policy to redeploy to new areas of learning and growth;
- Focused international initiatives with clear and strong views about multilateralism; and
- Sound enlargement with deepening citizen participation.

Therefore, one of the major political priorities of the strategy for learning and growth has been identified as knowledge and innovation—one of the engines for sustainable growth.

Strategy for Integrated Learning and Growth

- Increase and improve investment in R&D;
- Facilitate all forms of innovation;
- Facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society; and
- Encourage the sustainable use of resources and strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth.

In order to achieve the integration, Lisbon European Council SN 100/00 and Presidency 9088/00 Strategic Guidelines (Rodrigues, 2005b, p. 8), recommended an 'open method of coordination' with the following guidelines:

- Identifying common objectives or guidelines;
- Translating them into national policies, adapting to national specificities;
- Organizing a monitoring process based on common indicators, identifying best practices and peer reviews;
- Development of a common approach to economic migration; and
- Support to manage the social consequences of economic restructuring.

In cinch, as mentioned by Rodrigues (2005a), stepping up the transition to a knowledge-intensive society remains the central direction. As mentioned earlier, there is a need to improve the synergies between the three dimensions of the strategy—economic, social and environmental.

So the objective of this paper is to deal with KM, as it also matches with the subject of learning and growth component of balanced score card strategy.

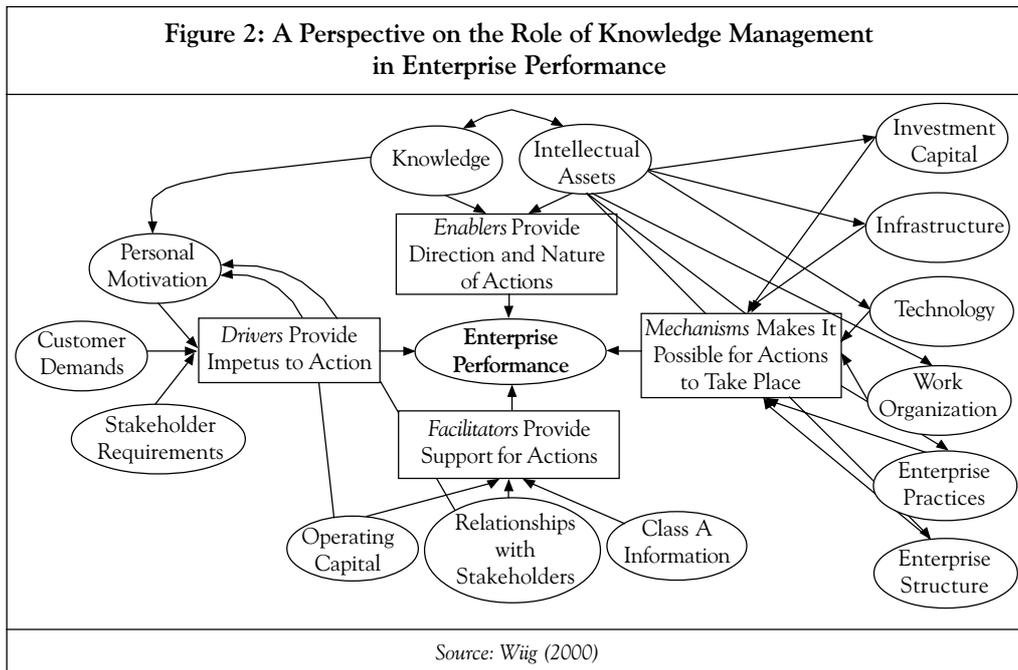
Role of Knowledge Management in Public Administration

Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) mentioned that the primary role of a public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer the society.

Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) cited that an exploration of new approaches to KM, including interpretation capabilities based on interpretive theory (Harmon, 1981); critical theory (Denhardt, 1981); and postmodernism (Farmer, 1995; Foex and Miller 1995; Miller and Fox, 1997) is becoming an important issue. These approaches have sought to focus on the issues of giving more attention to the needs and concerns of employees within the public organizations as well as citizens outside the organization by finding a solution to the issue of exercising authority and control with care.

Wiig (2002) elucidates that KM plays several roles in public administration. Each role serves specific constituencies and purposes and is implemented differently. Jointly, they build society's Intellectual Capital (IC) to improve the effectiveness of public and private decision making and situation handling. The four public administration areas considered in this regard are: (i) enhancing decision making within public services; (ii) aiding the public to participate effectively in public decision making; (iii) building competitive societal knowledge and IC capabilities; and (iv) developing knowledge-competitive workforce.

Public administration shares the responsibility to assure that its area has the ability to maintain or improve the quality of life it intends to offer to its citizens. From a knowledge or society's IC point of view, this implies participation in building and leveraging its society's IC to obtain the necessary economic foundation. It also implies long-term responsibilities to foster development of a competitive workforce that can compete in the regional and global economies.



Thus, it becomes a new responsibility for public administration to manage knowledge to strengthen public service effectiveness and improve the society.

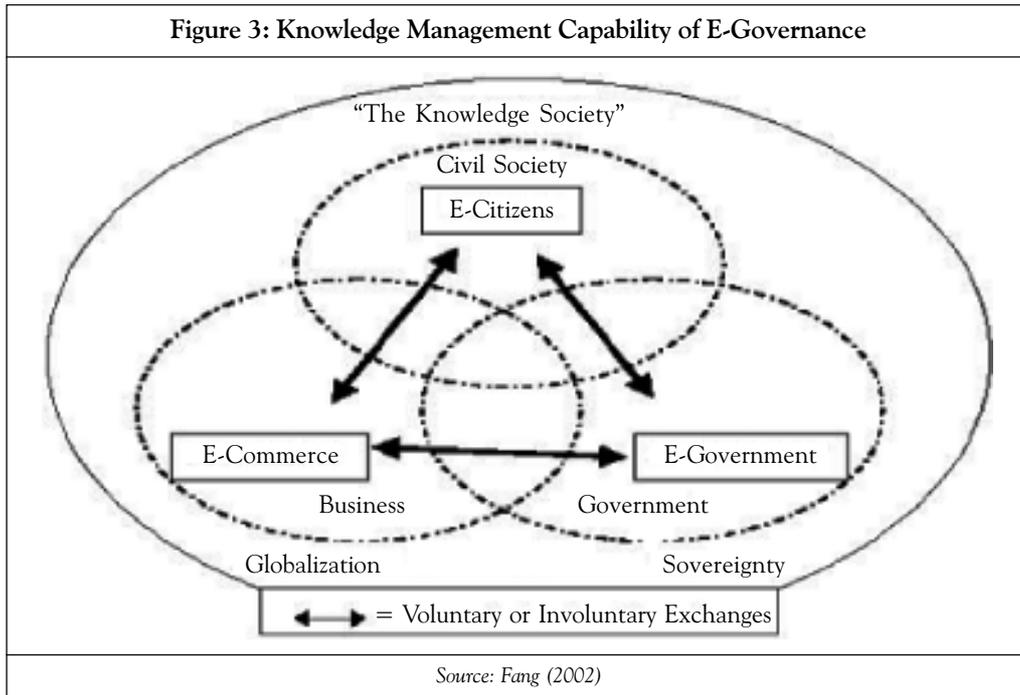
Figure 2 represents a dynamic model perspective of the role of KM in enterprise performance. In this model, four principal factors are indicated, viz., enablers, drivers, facilitators and mechanisms. Solid arrows indicate performance-influencing relationships. Broken arrows indicate some dominant relationships between factors. Knowledge and other intellectual assets are the principal enablers of performance. They provide means to establish the proper course, content and quality actions. Drivers provide energy and impetus to act. Facilitators provide lubricants to reduce friction that works against actions. Mechanisms consist of the functional elements that are manipulated—the processes that are operated—to produce actions.

Role of E-Governance in Knowledge Management and Citizen Engagement

This section of the paper presents the description of the state-of-the-art e-governance efforts towards KM and citizen engagement.

Cardoso (2005) says that in a country where population is becoming increasingly alien to the system of KM, education policy becomes central to everything—a policy by which education is based on the model of learning to ‘learn along the life cycle’, and geared towards stimulating creativity and innovation in the ways and goals of applying this learning capacity in all domains of professional and social life. KM can establish a relation between e-government, e-business, and e-citizens in the context of the emergence of the so-called ‘knowledge society’, globalization, and sovereignty (Fang, 2002), as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Knowledge Management Capability of E-Governance



E-governance is particularly appropriate for managing the relationship between people and their environment. Citizens and stakeholders can exercise their voice through e-governance in the movement toward developing sustainable cities. These innovative processes have to be held beyond the governments, from municipal to national, by implementing collaborative practices.

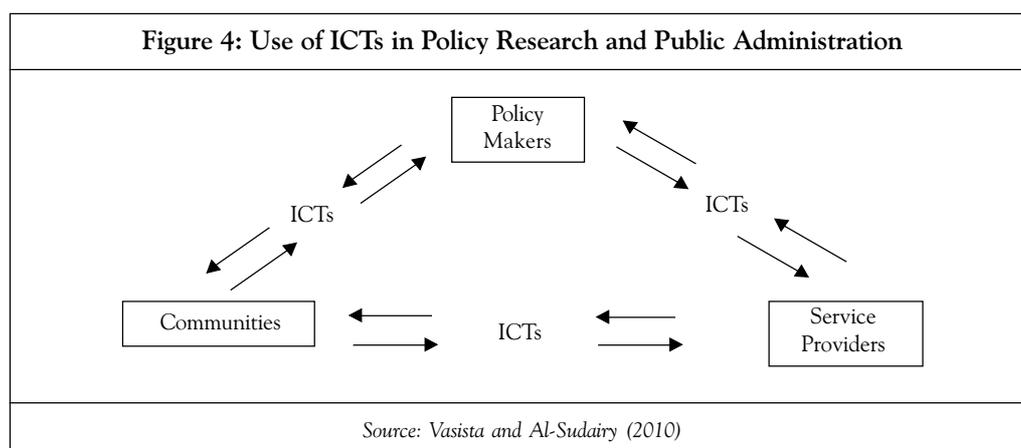
Bingham (2006) elucidated the processes of citizen engagement and stakeholders in the form of introducing new governance. According to Bingham (2006), Web 2.0-based e-governance, also called Gov 2.0, has the capability of including processes for identifying policy preferences, choosing priorities, implementing decisions, and enforcing law. This kind of new governance uses the metaphor of the flowing streams (O’Leary and Bingham, 2003) such as upstream of e-governance—it involves the earliest stage of the policy process, which entails the identification of policy problem and the ordering of policy preferences. It also involves the creation of policy and the quasi-legislative process for crafting ordinances, regulations and language to establish the rules so as to enforce them towards downstream. Midstream of e-governance—its uses include efforts to implement rules through permits and projects that bring the policy choices into practice. Downstream e-governance—its uses involve the enforcement of public law, for example, conditions approved in the permitting process. These uses are quasi-judicial and substitute for litigation or administrative adjunction. This stream of metaphor is imperfect, as not all government actions are so easily classified and many processes can be used in more than one location along the continuum. However, it is useful to think more systematically about what processes may be most helpful to public administrators and for what ends.

E-governance requires not only tools (like tax incentives and contracts for privatizing government functions), but also new processes to put the tools into effect, indulging in deliberation and dialog for making policy and dispute resolution (like negotiation, mediation and voluntary monitoring) for implementing and enforcing it. The processes vary with their application in the policy process, from upstream identification of policy preferences to downstream enforcement. These processes share certain characteristics which empower citizens and stakeholders to exercise their voice and become more engaged in their communities. All can substitute for or supplement traditional government processes such as rule-making and adjudication. They make it possible for leaders to collaborate with community stakeholders and together consider a broader and perhaps different set of ideas and proposals. These processes may permit participants to develop a consensus on priorities based on community values and interests rather than simply legal rights.

Citizen Engagement Using ICT and Gov 2.0

Ferro and Molinari (2010) mentioned that a recent step in that direction has been made by the United Nations (2008) with the concept of connected or networked governance, which involves “the governmental promotion of collective actions to advance the public good, by engaging the creative efforts of the whole society.” This emerging approach to public sector service delivery stipulates the need to move from the old-fashioned model of government dispensing services via traditional modes to the emphasis on an integrated approach focusing on the use of technologies to enhance the value of services to the citizen. In this context, (e-)participation takes up a new role of growing importance in modern societies; not only are connected governance efforts aimed at improving cooperation between governmental agencies, but they also focus on enhancing stakeholders’ involvement and consultation as well as a more active citizens’ engagement, supported by ICT tools.

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan suggests that for the world to achieve the Millennium Development Goal in 2015, ICT must figure prominently in this effort (Vasista and Al-Sudairy, 2010) (see Figure 4).



Ferro and Molinari (2010) further mentioned the drawbacks in the current state of ICT investments and development as:

- Lack of policy intelligence skills in the governance of ICT investments;
- Automation rather than innovation of the existing processes; and
- No or little orientation towards the generation of value for the citizenry.

Chadwick (2009) elucidates that the use of digital network technologies to shape public policy is generally met with incredulity by most politicians, public servants, and citizens in the form of adopting electronic citizen participation. Successful e-citizen participation programs may require a plurality of different socio-technical values and mechanisms. The push for Internet-enabled e-citizen participation emerged in the early to mid-1990s, as Internet diffusion began to take off in the developed world. The trend towards more user contributions on the web and an increased interest in, for example, social media technology, from both governments and citizens, lead to new potentials and challenges in designing citizen-government interactions.

Slaughter (2004) elucidated the role of governance network in sustainable development: “It is the governance through a collection of nation states that communicate via presidents, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and the United Nations. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and corporations also participate in various ways.” It is a form of ‘trans-governmental’ governance, creating networks of ministers, judges, and legislators to govern the national policy and economy. Government networks can enhance the existing national cooperation by providing mechanisms for transferring regulatory approaches that are proving increasingly successful domestically to the national arena. Most important is regulation by information, which allows regulators to move away from traditional command and control methods and instead provides individuals and corporations with the information and ideas they need to figure out how to improve their own performance against benchmarked standards.

Ferro and Molinari (2010) mentioned that the recent explosion of Web 2.0—the ‘social interaction’ dimension of the Internet—has been seen by many as a potential turning point, enabling a change in the role of users, who would participate more proactively in service delivery, as much in the public sector as in the private. The value of the specific competences and skills of the users is widely recognized as a unique source of service improvement.

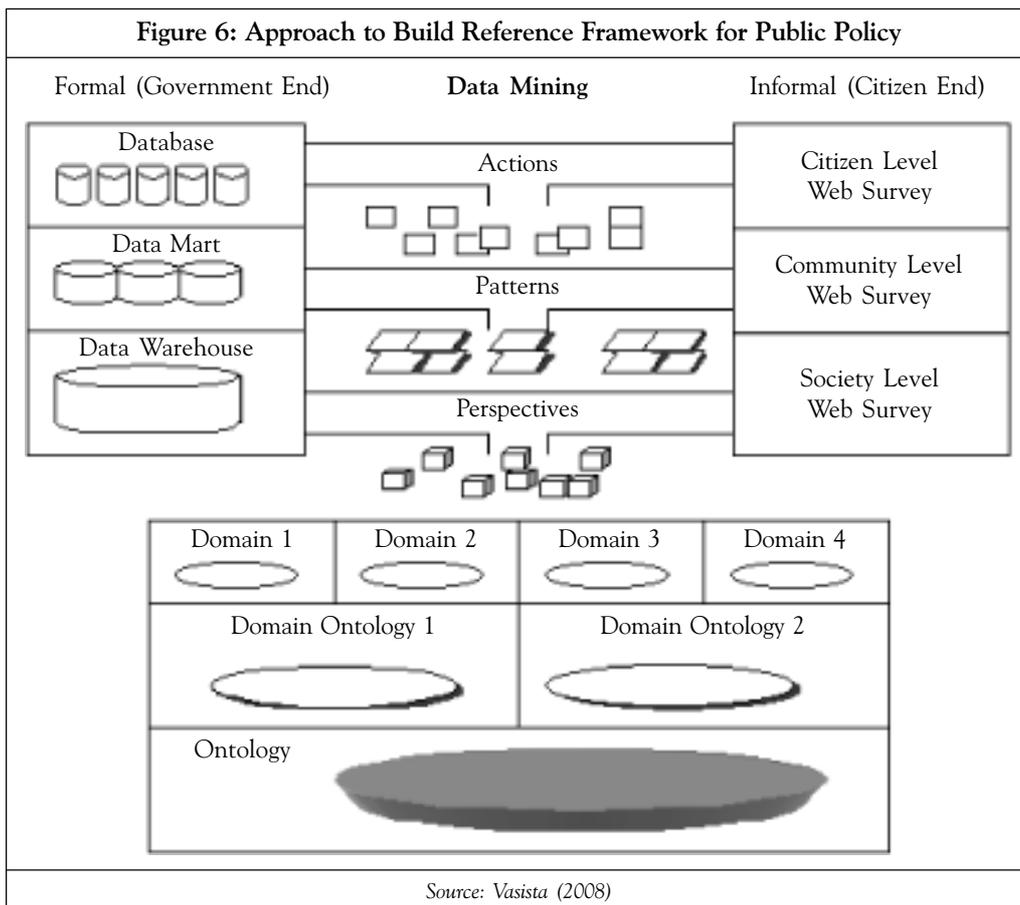
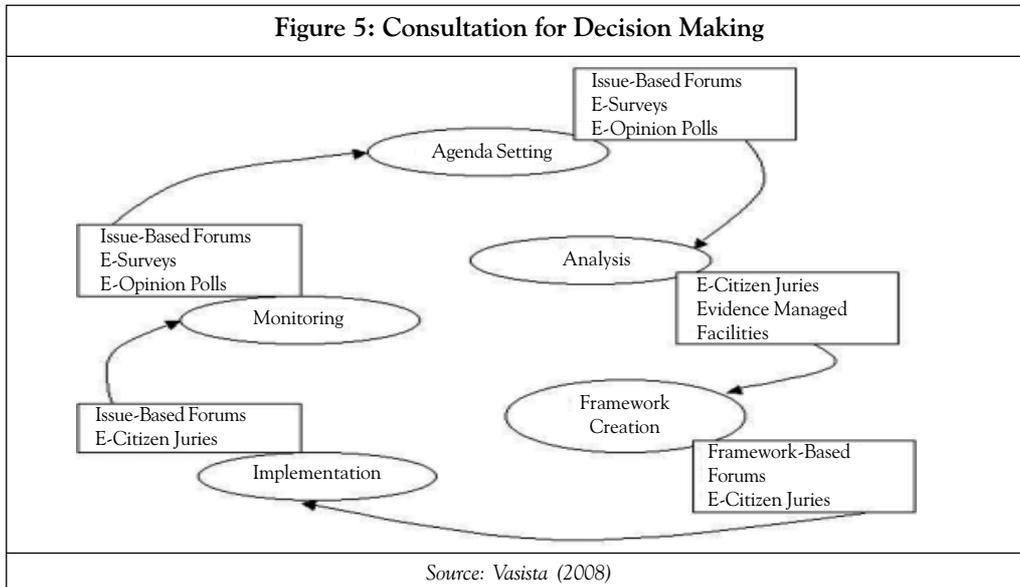
Chadwick (2009) elucidates the potential of Web 2.0 in the public administration domain as a contemporary technology that offers e-citizen participation. Chadwick further mentions that O’Reilly’s technology-centered approach defined Web 2.0 in terms of the following seven key themes:

1. The Internet as a platform for political discourse: The value of Web 2.0 web-as-platform service lies in the interface of its distributed advertising network, its search algorithm, and its huge database of crawled pages.

2. The collective intelligence emergent from political web use: The core idea is that a distributed network of creators and contributors, a majority of them amateurs, can, using simple online tools, produce information goods that may outperform those produced by the so-called authoritative and concentrated sources. This can be achieved via web-nars, blogs and forums.
3. The importance of data over particular software and hardware applications: Data aggregator can emerge as dominants if the huge amounts of information can be successfully elicited, refined, and if used subsequently in a protected manner.
4. Perpetual experimentalism in the public domain: Web 2.0 applications have been characterized by an unusual amount of public experimentalism via social network tools like Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, blog posts, etc., for the purpose of election campaigns and e-petitions.
5. The creation of small-scale forms of political engagement through consumerism: The integration of smartphone mobiles and the worldwide web enables the provision of biased opinions to the web information consumers.
6. The propagation of political content over multiple applications: The information that is transferred on to web by various means, for example, via smartphone with images and video content, can further be taken to multiple applications use such as to actually reveal the live conditions and situations prevailing in the constituency to initiate the importance of development activities, thus forming a kind of witness report.
7. Rich user experiences on political websites: Technologies possess inherent properties that shape and constrain political norms, rules, and behavior, but these must be situated within political contexts. In the narrow technical sense, this refers to the development of applications designed to run the code (specifically Asynchronous Javascript and XML (AJAX)) inside a web browser in such a way that it facilitates the interactivity and rapid retrieval, alteration, and storage of data.

Chadwick (2009) mentions that e-forums are one of the most important forms of civic engagement to have political communication. Through e-forums, it is assumed that citizens would provide rich, critical, self-reflective, tolerant and sustained elegant expressions of their feelings deliberately with having no time and space constraints. This would contribute as an addition to the traditional policy-making structures.

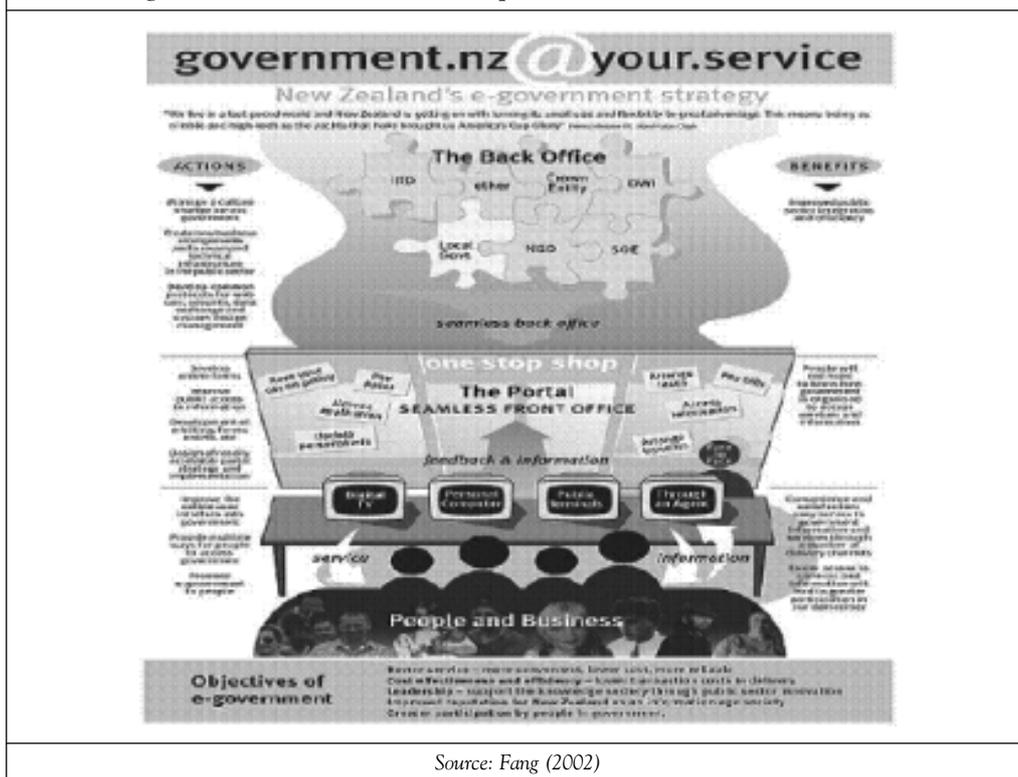
Figures 5, 6 and 7 enhance the reader's understanding of the process of citizen engagement for the contribution towards public policy making, and Table 1 provides a sample data of e-citizen participation-based citizen participation program via forums in UK during 2006-07, as cited by Chadwick (2009).



Forum	Duration (Months)	Number of Citizen Posts
Department of Communities and Local Government Forum	6.0	411
Department for Constitutional Affairs Family Justice Division Forum	3.5	172
Department for Constitutional Affairs Family Justice Division Forum (Children and Young People)	2.0	26
The Review of the Funding of Political Parties Forum	2.5	217
Foreign and Commonwealth Office European Youth Parliament Forum	1.5	57
Planning Portal Forum	4.0	67
Law Commission Tenth Program of Law Reform Forum	1.75	43

Source: Chadwick (2009, p. 17)

Figure 7: A Manifestation of E-Governance Effort Towards Service-Based Knowledge Management with Portals – An Example of New Zealand Government in 2001



Conclusion

Thus, e-citizen participation in the form of Gov 2.0 (based on Web 2.0)-based e-forums can be promoted as a facilitating buffer technique for streamlining the governance structures,

processes and controls towards balanced development and growth by satisfying the enablement of the principle of citizen engagement in public policy along with e-governance happenings.

As the e-government, in the form of Gov 2.0 initiatives, can create a primary access point for millions of citizens to access government, some of the research questions that may be of significance, are:

- How will e-government influence the performance of public organization?
- What are the organizational effects of e-government and information technology?
- How did e-government change public administration, organizational structures, processes, controls and interfaces in an information age?
- How semantic web services help in bringing contextual intelligence while striving towards achieving and establishing a reference framework of standards and benchmarks?■

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