

Connected Government: Creating a Springboard for Transformation and Innovation

Author

Patrick Spencer

Editors

David Bhattacharjee

Eileen L. Lavergne

October 2007



Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG)

Point of View: Connected Government

For nations in economic transition, a more sophisticated e-government model is required—one that ultimately links citizens, organizations, and government institutions in a seamless network of resources, capabilities, and information exchange. Cisco refers to this model as Connected Government.

Connected Government is a crucial element in the development of a true Connected Nation. Through Connected Government, governments can build stronger relationships with the communities they serve and foster the development of economies geared for sustainable success in the global broadband economy.

In Emerging Markets, Cisco IBSG works with leaders of key national and regional government agencies, businesses, communities, multilateral institutions, and NGOs to turn their technology investments into strategic national assets. Serving as trusted advisers in varied assignments spanning broadband connectivity, digital inclusion, smart communities, and business productivity, IBSG aligns ICT to support socioeconomic development in these countries. Connected Government is IBSG's approach to harnessing the power of ICT to serve the country's national public-service delivery and transformation agenda.

Executive Summary

Connected Government refers to the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to promote more efficient and effective government, facilitate more accessible government services, allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens and businesses. In short, it is a sophisticated evolution of the e-government model, which emphasized exchange, interaction, and efficiency, to one that links citizens, businesses, and governments on a common info-structure platform that encourages and enables citizen-centric participation, engagement, and collaboration.

The Cisco® concept of Connected Government draws upon years of experience working with governments across the world to plan and implement programs that use ICT to improve public service delivery and government operations. It provides a model for nations to follow as they move toward a citizen-centric governmental approach, providing the framework to foster development of Connected Communities and, ultimately, a Connected Nation, adapted and empowered to be a world competitor.

Among the key challenges of transforming to a Connected Government model are the cost of technology investment, the lack of available skills, and the pressure of immediate demand for improved services. The Cisco Connected Government framework considers these challenges. It enables a co-coordinated migration toward a Connected Government model that engages communities, organizations, and individual citizens, and accelerates delivery of services and resources they need.

For countries seeking faster economic growth and the ability to compete effectively in the global economy, Connected Government can loosen the constraints of red tape and instill public trust in government that boosts national confidence and stimulates strong, sustainable enterprise.

Introduction

When the concept of e-government¹ was first introduced in the 1990s, it was widely viewed as an opportunity to restore public trust in government, accelerate efforts at becoming knowledge economies, and transform what frequently was a negative image.

In some countries, citizens and businesses experienced lumbering, unresponsive, and even hostile institutions and processes in their dealings with local and national authorities. In these nations, the business of government seemed to be encumbered by red tape, with bureaucracies that appeared determined to make the lives of citizens and businesses tedious, complex, and frustrating.

E-government brought hope that government could be transformed. The evolution of new tools of communication and collaboration, enabled and accelerated by the network, provided a unique opportunity to support good governance, strengthen existing relationships, build new partnerships, and improve the quality and efficiency of services.

In many countries, the initial enthusiasm for moving forward with e-government now is tempered by past disappointments and a growing recognition of the difficulty of combining organizational change and legislative/policy reform with the technological investment that successful e-government requires. Moreover, for e-government to be successful, it must accommodate the unique conditions, needs, and obstacles characteristic of nations in transition. These can include a shortage of skilled workers, limited financial resources, unequal access to technology, and a lack of ICT infrastructure. Many countries, for example, fall on the wrong side of the digital divide² and are not able to deploy the appropriate ICT infrastructure for e-government purposes.³ In these nations, e-government now finds itself perched somewhat awkwardly between its patchy performance and its persistent promise.

-
1. "E-government refers to the use of information technologies (such as wide area networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) by government agencies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions." (Source: The World Bank)
 2. The digital divide commonly is understood as the gap between ICT "haves" and "have-nots." It serves as an umbrella term for many issues, including infrastructure and access to ICTs, use and impediments to use, and the crucial role of ICT literacy and skills to function in any information society. The fundamental digital divide, wrote Manuel Castells, "... is not measured by the number of connections to the Internet, but by the consequences of both connection and lack of connection." (Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy*, 2001)
 3. For some countries, low Internet connectivity means that traditional e-government is unlikely to be the cornerstone of a successful service delivery strategy, at least in the short term. As a result, a number of countries are introducing government services via alternate channels, including mobile technologies (where penetration rates often are high). For example, the Government of South Africa has introduced a new service known as "ID Track and Trace" through which citizens can check the status of Identity Documents using Short Message Service (SMS) on mobile phones.



Yet, e-government is a multidimensional and complex concept. While the issues and challenges are considerable, so, too, are the opportunities of expanding the role of e-government into a broader, more encompassing Connected Government. In addition to transforming public services and bringing citizens closer to their public institutions, there is the potential—if linked with wider programs of national transformation—for Connected Government to deliver economic benefits. In addition to being less of an economic burden, a Connected Government can unleash a great wave of innovation within society.

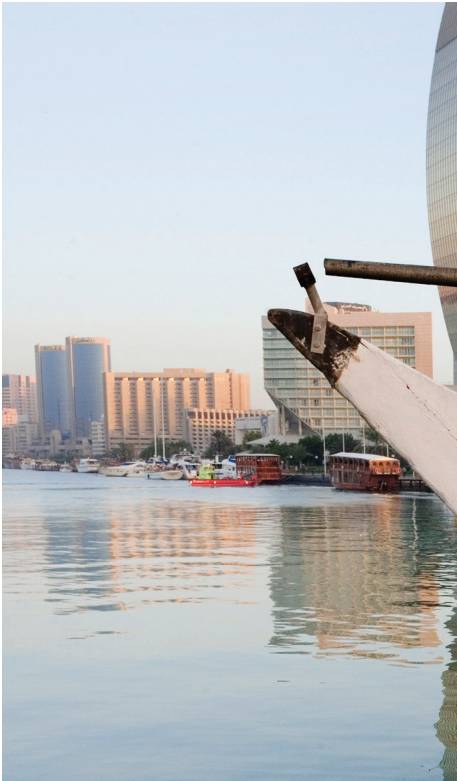
Three trends support the need for Connected Government. First, e-government is becoming less about the “e” and more about “government.”⁴ Instead of simply offering another way (or channel) to provide what government always has provided, new ICT provides the tools to transform government itself. Second, there is a growing recognition that a crucial test of e-government is the impact it has on the quality of the relationship that government has with its people. Issues such as trust and legitimacy now are critical measures of success. Third, e-government has uncovered the value and power of networks. The ability to intimately connect people, government departments and agencies, and private or community organizations in new patterns and combinations is a defining characteristic of e-government’s true potential. These trends share a common focus: putting people firmly at the center of any e-government solution.

Issues and Challenges

When nations are in economic transition, governments face tough challenges. They need a better understanding of the needs and wants of citizens and businesses. They need to improve service quality and ease of access, while reducing the cost of service delivery. And they must stimulate development of a digital economy to maximize growth, although many countries lack a modern ICT infrastructure at this stage of transition.⁵ While there are significant benefits to be gained from delivering government services over an infrastructure that can support rapid exchange of data, images, voice, and video, the costs can be daunting.

4. “The impact of e-government at the broadest level is simply better government—e-government is more about government than the ‘e.’ It enables better policy outcomes, higher quality services, and greater engagement of citizens.” (OECD, *The E-government Imperative*, 2003)

5. ICT challenges include high Internet access costs, low bandwidth, poor ICT infrastructure, and unreliable communication facilities.



In the face of these challenges, many countries are trying to:

- Combine the resources, institutions, and influence at their command to confront a crowded and complex policy agenda
- Deliver programs and services that are efficient and effective, and that provide a combination of service, trust, and security
- Create opportunities for citizens to participate in, and engage with, the new policy process, including new forms of deliberation and debate that influence the policy agenda itself and contribute to new ideas for service design and improvement

Governments must provide the best possible services to its citizens and businesses, and maximize public value. Many governments have embarked on various transformational efforts with a view to modernizing the service delivery model for the benefit of their people. The real challenge, however, lies in addressing the following questions as a government moves to higher levels of e-government maturity and eventually becomes Connected Government:

- How should governments transform the way they do business?
- How should governments improve the client experience?
- How should governments make the most strategic use of ICT?
- How should governments maximize public value from those investments?

A Point of View: Delivering Connected Government

Cisco's Connected Government initiative is central to the work and purpose of the public sector and the public policy process. It impacts the larger concerns of public sector reform, democratic renewal, and the changing role of government in the knowledge economy. Connected Government is synonymous with what government itself is about—orchestrating and sometimes leading the creation of public value by putting individuals, families, and communities at the center of responsive networks of knowledge, service, trust, and accountability. It is a crucial element in the development of a true Connected Nation—a nation empowered by technology to compete successfully in the Internet-driven global economy.

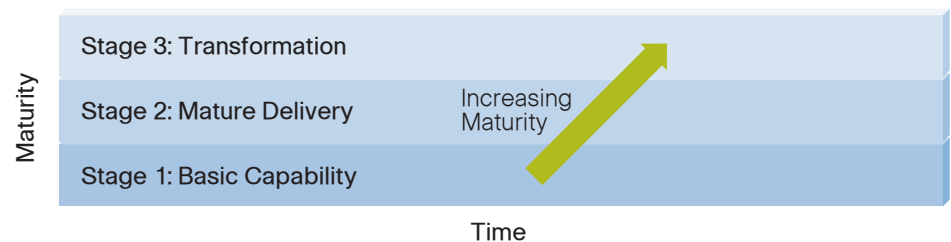
Opportunities include improved quality of service delivery; increased capacity of government; cost reduction and efficiency gains; and improved transparency and accountability. Connected Government is a call for fundamental change:

- To transform service offerings: provide simple-to-use, cost-effective offerings that are consistent, complete, and designed from the citizen and business perspective.
- To fundamentally rethink service delivery: manage the Internet, phone/mobile, mail, in-person, and other delivery channels as an integrated suite that strikes a better balance between affordable delivery and providing responsive, more personalized services.
- To develop the next-generation public service that plans and executes as one coherent organization—a single government enterprise, standing on a strong, client-centered culture, with employees reskilled to deliver Connected Government services in a transparent and accountable manner.

From E-Government to Connected Government

Through our work with countries around the world in various stages of transition, Cisco has identified three key stages of e-government, culminating in a full transformation to a Connected Government model.

Figure 1. E-Government Maturity Model



Source: Cisco IBSG, 2007

Stage 1: Basic Capability. The first stage of e-government maturity has seen governments using the Internet and Web-based technologies to become more efficient at providing information and basic forms of interaction and transaction. It requires considerable investment in technology, skills, and institutional capabilities to lift service quality, access, and reliability, while, at the same time, demonstrating positive results.

Stage 2: Mature Delivery. The second stage of e-government maturity involves moving from a focus on information and basic transactions to transforming the processes and performance of government. It is about removing barriers within government to provide a more integrated, citizen-centric experience in dealing with, and contributing to, government and the process of government decision-making. The three key drivers for this second stage of maturity are process and cultural change (rather than structural change), moving from vision and strategy to execution (and measuring benefits and results), and investing in the right ICT infrastructure.

To present seamless, multichannel, citizen-centric tools and solutions, governments will have to work as a single enterprise in some critical areas. For example, governments must adopt common and shared platforms for the core technologies, applications, and networks on which e-government will run before advancing to Connected Government. The key is to create a common vision or strategy with a single enterprise architecture to guide the evolution of e-government solutions.

Realizing the benefits of investing in this second stage requires a distributed, whole-of-government approach. Standards, operating platforms, and some applications (HR, payments, and security, for example) will need to be consistent across departments, agencies, and government systems. Departments and agencies will need to create solutions that make it easier for citizens and businesses to access services and information within a single department or agency, or across the entire governmental system.

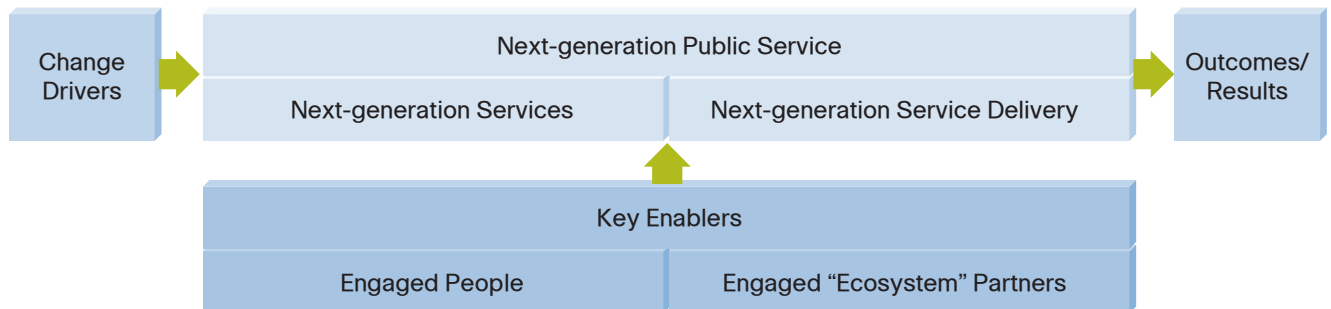
Stage 3: Transformation to Connected Government. The dominant concept of the third stage of maturity is the Networked Virtual Organization (NVO). This draws government departments and agencies, as well as the business and community sectors, into more complex patterns of collaboration that rely on complementary skills and resources, and shared systems, processes, and knowledge. Stage 3 also involves experimentation aimed at, among other things, improving participation and citizen engagement. Today, a number of governments are taking advantage of the rapid rise of social networking tools and services to reform public service delivery and citizen engagement. This is the most difficult element to achieve and requires changes that challenge contemporary practices of participation, transparency, and accountability in government and public policy. This is the essence of the Cisco concept of Connected Government.

Connected Government Framework

The Cisco Connected Government framework (Figure 2) is intended to provide the direction and means to help governments move their e-government initiatives to the next level. The Connected Government framework identifies tools that drive implementation and sets the context for vision realization. The fundamental proposition of the framework is that Connected Government can help transform governmental practices. Connected Government can provide an integrated face to the public by connecting disparate government departments, agencies, and functions to provide more client-centric services. Governments also have the opportunity to increase their level of adaptability and responsiveness, whether for servicing changing client needs or responding to emergencies and security situations quickly and effectively.

The Cisco Connected Government framework provides benefits for both front- and back-office government operations. For example, increased use of shared systems, databases, and business processes means lower costs per transaction or cost of operation. The greater the number of jurisdictions developing and using common infrastructures and services, the higher the cost avoidance or cost savings and the greater the potential for seamless service to citizens and businesses.

Figure 2. Cisco Connected Government Framework



Source: Cisco IBSG, 2007

Government priorities and citizen expectations are driving the need for change, which can be categorized into three distinct components: **Next-generation Public Service**, **Next-generation Services**, and **Next-generation Service Delivery**. These changes are required for public service, service offerings, and the delivery of those offerings. It will take key enablers, engaged citizenry, and technology and business partners to make the transformation possible (e.g., governance, leadership, human capital, funding, architecture, ICT planning/deployment, process mapping, information management, marketing). The end results that governments will strive to achieve, among many, will include cost savings and efficiencies, enhanced accountability, and improved transparency.

Note: The Connected Government framework will need to be adapted to properly reflect specific circumstances within each country.



Conclusion

The challenge for countries in economic transition is to realize the full potential of Connected Government in alignment with their own circumstances and priorities. Through the processes and technologies embodied in Cisco's Connected Government approach, nations have the opportunity to design appropriate enterprise- and citizen-centric models that improve operation of the public sector, feed innovation, and accelerate programs of social and economic transformation.

Many nations now are developing Connected Government visions and strategies, setting new targets for the next generation of services, service delivery, and public services. The great advantage they possess is their ability to learn from governments that already have achieved higher levels of Connected Government success. Drawing on this experience, these nations rapidly can adopt proven best practices, avoid damaging pitfalls, and accelerate the drive to Connected Government maturity.

More Information

The Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), the global strategic consulting arm of Cisco, helps Global Fortune 500 companies and public organizations transform the way they do business—first by designing innovative business processes, and then by integrating advanced technologies into visionary roadmaps that improve customer experience and revenue growth.

For further information about IBSG, visit <http://www.cisco.com/go/ibsg>



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

Cisco has more than 200 offices worldwide. Addresses, phone numbers, and fax numbers are listed on the Cisco Website at www.cisco.com/go/offices.