HE INTERNET AND ITS ROLE IN THE ACTIVITY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

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ABSTRACT
The evolution of the Internet has also significantly influenced the field of public administration. Currently, there are a number of problems in public administration related to how to plan resources in relation to the needs of citizens. Even in cases where transparent strategies exist and are implemented, difficulties may arise in carrying out a correct and complete analysis of the data, but also of the needs that the community has regarding the increase of the living standard. Thus, the concept of digital governance was born, which aims to remove the existing problems regarding the way of public administration. The objective of this article is to present the current role of the Internet in public administration activities, both by studying the literature but also by interviewing decision-making staff in institutions and development trends in the field.

KEYWORDS: *public administration, internet, i-administration*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's society, it is noticeable that there is a massive use of Internet access tools, due to the increase in the level of technology and the development of communication techniques. The help of the Internet ensures the facilitation of access to resources for two or more participating parties (Pelinescu, 2018). Most specialists consider that the Internet is the most important technological event that characterized the border between the 2nd and 3rd millennium (Botescu, 2019).

2. THE STAGE OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD

The Internet was born in 1989 when Tim Barners-Lee founded the Word Wide Web (www). The widespread use of the Internet began in 1994 with the creation of Netscape Navigator software. A year later, the intensively used Internet Explorer browser was developed in the following period (Botescu, 2019). The continuous development of the Internet has determined the emergence of the information revolution, this being the result of increasing the level of access to more and more information. Regarding the information age, it is necessary to use information technologies in order to establish strategic directions that take into account practical ways to meet and exceed the market objectives of organizations (Botescu, 2019). It also creates opportunities for business expansion.
The evolution of the Internet has also significantly influenced the field of public administration (Ioniță & Burlacu, 2009). Currently, there are a number of problems in public administration related to how to plan resources in relation to the needs of citizens. Even in cases where transparent strategies

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exist and are implemented, difficulties may arise in carrying out a correct and complete analysis of the data, but also of the needs that the community has regarding the increase of the living standard (Androniceanu & Burlacu, 2017). Thus, the concept of digital governance was born, which aims to remove the existing problems regarding the way of public administration (Androniceanu et al., 2017). Digital governance, also known as e-government, refers to the use by local and central public administration of IT applications and new communication technologies in order to streamline the activity of the administrative apparatus and to increase the quality of public services (Baltaru , 2012). E-government involves the achievement of a complex interaction between technology and society and technology (Burlacu & Neagu, 2007). There are rumors that digital governance is just a myth, but the current reality shows that many states have already implemented this concept successfully (Burlacu & Jiroveanu, 2012). These countries include Estonia, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, as well as other northern European countries that are at an advanced stage of e-government (Negescu, et al., 2020). Optimal digitization of public administration is a necessary condition for the economic and social development of society and for alignment with international standards.

The development of the economy is based on electronic means, and the non-use of technology is an obstacle to progress and prevents the achievement of a high level of performance for nations (Grosseck, 2003, p. 31). In the current context of digitalisation, the European Union aims to create a digital single market through a series of strategic programs and decisions (Bodislav et al., 2020).

3. FINDINGS

The main actors of e-government are represented by citizens, private sector and government and there are 6 types of interactions: government to citizens, government to government, government-private sector, private sector-private sector, private sector to citizens and citizens to citizens. Thus, the actors of e-government intercondition each other resulting in a complex system.

The most important advantages resulting from e-government are represented by (Ghilic-Micu, 2002):

1. Accumulation of large volumes of information and improvement of the level of access to public services and information.
2. Significant reduction of public expenditures - current information technologies allow the reduction of transaction costs related to the selection and processing of information, increase the level of efficiency of the activity of the entire administrative apparatus. By reducing the expenses, it is allowed to decrease the fiscal burden of the citizens regarding the maintenance of the administrative apparatus.
3. Simplification and redefinition of the relations established between the public administration, the business environment and citizens - the system of organizing the activity of the bureaucratic apparatus vertically involves a long process of coordination, which influences the deadlines for decision making. Such problems are solved with the help of the Internet because with its help portals can be created (analogous to those of consumers) within which a series of state services can be proposed.
4. Ensuring an optimal collaboration between public institutions, by conducting bilateral consultations and by a more efficient level of subordination in relation to their own voters.
5. Through e-government the image of a country is significantly positively influenced.

The use of electronic means in government also generates a number of disadvantages. First, the idea of implementing e-government is a difficult and costly process. It takes a long time to be able to implement a consolidated public administration.

At the same time, informational changes highlight issues such as the outdated mentality of civil servants and the fact that they use traditional methods that do not correspond to new working technologies. At the same time, the new working methods generate a significant reduction of the bureaucratic apparatus (Ghilic-Micu, 2002). Another problem is the transparency of information

(Pricop et al., 2016). The exchange of information between the state and citizens through e-government can generate high and easy access to a series of personal data, which violates the rights to liberty and the right to privacy. In conditions where there is a high access to information, favorable positions can be occupied by lobbies that manage to impose their own interests in front of the whole society.

E-government is based on a series of objectives represented by (Coşelev, 2009):

1. Improving the level of access to information and services provided by public administration authorities.
2. Implementation of activities for restructuring and reorganization of administrative processes or even the elimination of certain processes.
3. Significantly improve the way information and services are exchanged between central public authorities.
4. Improving the quality level of public services provided by the central public administration.
5. Carrying out activities aimed at promoting accountability, transparency and efficiency of public services provided.

At present, creativity and innovation in the public sector have become an absolute necessity, innovation being essential for improving efficiency and performance, but also for providing quality public services that give citizens confidence and increase the level of administrative transparency (Alpopi et al., 2018).

First, social media and information and communication technology (ICT) tools are important sources for innovation through the infrastructure provided.

The innovative potential of social media and ICT refers to a number of features that are embedded in available technologies, such as the ability to process very large amounts of data, the ability to significantly improve access to information, the power to improve efficient transparency of processes and public organizations, the ability to carry out processes of monitoring and control of these processes, the potential to facilitate and communicate all types of interactions that take place between the administration and citizens (Rădulescu et al., 2018).

E-government is essentially a process of reinvention of the entire public sector through digitization and the application of new information management techniques, a process that aims to increase the level of political participation of citizens and increase the efficiency of the administrative apparatus (Burlacu & Grosu, 2009). A key opportunity stemming from public sector innovation is the effective improvement of the quality and range of services provided to communities (including individual citizens, social groups and organizations). Under these conditions, the modernization of public administration must focus on improving the efficiency and speed of service delivery, but also on achieving high standards of reliability, predictability and accountability (Costache et al., 2015).

Regarding the evolution of e-government systems, it is characterized by a number of stages (Coşelev, 2009):

1. The first phase - involves the presentation of information on the websites of the institutions.
2. The second phase - involves ensuring the possibility to download the necessary forms in the interaction with local administrations as well as with the authorities.
3. The third phase - involves offering the possibility to complete online forms, and to make online payments to the authorities.
4. The fourth phase (current) - implies that the solutions are rethought in order to make full use of the possibilities offered by technology in terms of facilitating the interface with citizens.

The objectives of electronic public services

The Internet has become increasingly used by citizens to be used to communicate and interact with others, to get information, to shop online, to make payments for local taxes and fees, to vote online and to to find out about candidates or to conclude complex business between certain companies. The Internet can forge a close relationship between the administration and citizens, providing benefits to both sides. Public administration is gaining the trust of citizens and can provide efficient services,

and citizens will receive more attention in solving problems (Burlacu & Jiroveanu, 2011). The implementation of online services creates an efficient connection between public institutions and citizens. As society is constantly changing, public administration needs to be reformed and modernized to meet the needs of society (Burlacu & Grosu, 2009).

The aim of electronic services is to eliminate or simplify bureaucratic procedures, improve access to information and save time and public spending in order to form a better relationship with citizens.

Citizens' trust in electronic services is influenced by the quality of the services provided, the ease of use of online portals and the prompt resolution of problems. They have quite high expectations regarding the integrity and responsibility of the public administration to provide accurate services and information.

Citizens promote this electronic system by using it and express their personal opinions and ideas to develop services in relation to their needs. However, there are some citizens who are not aware of the benefits of this service and do not participate directly in the development of the program.

Electronic services face various obstacles in terms of the relationship with citizens (Burlacu, 2009). Their causes are also influenced by external factors, such as citizens' trust in the virtual environment or the actual trust in public administration. The most common obstacle is the uncertainty that personal data displayed on the Internet will not be stolen or used for purposes other than that electronic service. We can say that the expectations of citizens regarding these services increase with the rapid advancement of technological systems. Another influence is the other digital platforms that offer high quality services and subconsciously induce citizens that e-government must be at the same level. The main objectives of the implementation of public services in public administration are:

- guaranteeing access to official information through online platforms;
- provision of public services through electronic systems for business and citizens;
- increasing the number of citizens to participate in the e-Government process;
- optimizing the use of human and material resources in public administration activities, as well as the duration of services;
- strengthening democracy and the rule of law;
- guaranteeing the transparency of activities within the public administration;
- implementation of automated electronic systems, designed to support the processes of political, social and economic development in the country;
- development of state electronic infrastructure;
- expanding the capacity of public employees to use information and communication technologies;
- expanding the legal framework and e-democracy.

The main features of electronic services are:

- Technical paradigm, representing the use of electronic technologies to communicate (email, chat, Internet);
- Managerial paradigm, represents the application of new information management procedures;
- Functional paradigm, developing the efficiency of the administrative apparatus and influencing citizens to participate politically.

Between them, specific transactional, communication and cooperation relations are formed, which can be defined by internal or external information flows.

Internal flows refer to the communication between two public institutions or ministries, Government - Parliament. External flows flow between different classes of participants; for example communication between a public institution and citizens.

Administration - Citizens Relationship

This relationship includes the link between public administration and citizens, being the most debated public initiative in all countries on the development of electronic services. At the beginning, the relationship between the public administration and the citizen was based on the application of information online. Over time, this has become an effective communication on both sides, and later

the relationships become transactional, resulting in some services being provided entirely electronically.
Electronic public services are constantly growing, but their use is not spreading so fast as to benefit both parties. The public administration provides online services, but the citizens and the business environment use them to a low level.
Certain obstacles were encountered in the use of online public services, among which, the lack of physical contact with the employees of the institutions, the fear regarding the security and protection of personal data, the difficulty of accessing applications, the additional costs brought by these services.
The use of electronic services is also related to the trust of citizens in public administration but also to the confidence in the efficiency of using the Internet to interact with it.
Finding a job, using public libraries and declaring income taxes are the main causes that determined citizens to interact with the private sector. The contact in the online environment was made by sending and receiving information, performing transactions, uploading and downloading forms and sending e-mails.
Relationship between Administration and Companies
The relations between the public administration and companies receive increased attention, and the links between them are carefully analyzed because companies and private organizations are the most important factor of a country's economic growth, and electronic services must correspond to their level of importance.
The number of companies using online public services is higher than the number of citizens. The reasons for not using these services are generally the lack of interest in obtaining the desired information or conducting transactions over the Internet, the lack of skill in procuring the desired information, the lack of trust, the difficulty of accessing the services.
Companies have come into contact with the public sector online environment to declare their taxes, to hire staff and for public procurement. The benefits felt by companies are saving money and time, high security and control, high confidence and quality, flexibility and simplified procedures.
Administration - Administration relationship
This component of electronic services refers to communication between public institutions to solve and debate citizens' problems. As a rule, these relationships are undetectable by citizens and develop at another level of computer security of institutions.
The first step in implementing electronic services is the integration of information systems.
The creation of an integrated system requires the creation of a platform that provides all the information necessary for efficient communication, a system that brings together all the services offered by the institution. The whole organization depends on an effective integration plan to provide customized solutions as appropriate, and without this plan, fragmentation and negative effects could occur. The advantages of electronic public services
E-government has a vast influence in the social, political or economic sphere, radically changing the means of interaction of citizens with the central or local public administration. The National Electronic System Portal lists some advantages of electronic services, namely: improving the quality of information and public services of the central public administration, bureaucratic procedures have been eliminated and working methodologies have been simplified, the exchange of services and information between central authorities and access to information and services has improved.
We must also mention the advantages of electronic services over users, these being: the provision of public services have a lower cost, access to a wealth of information in a shorter time, the quality of public services is higher, not having to go from one institution to another save time, pay fees, taxes or fines with the help of the Internet or to procure information in any field from the public administration.

Public institutions benefit from a computerization of the system, procedures are simplified, employees in the field of information technology are improved, bureaucracy is reduced, the provision of information has a lower cost, time efficiency.

E-government, if properly implemented, can improve current administrative services, increase accountability, resulting in more accurate and efficient service delivery, reduce administrative costs and save time for public employees for repetitive tasks, facilitate greater transparency in public administration and allow increased access to services due to the availability of the Internet. E-Government also allows the transmission of e-mails, online meetings and forums for expressing opinions, online transactions and electronic voting. By creating a prompt presence on the Internet, public administration can generate interest in the political process among young citizens who frequently use the Internet.

The benefits of using and implementing electronic public services in developing countries are the same as in already developed countries. The differences between these two groups result from the fact that many potential benefits are not taken away from developing countries due to the limited use of e-Government. Some of its important benefits are: reducing costs and increasing efficiency, providing quality services to businesses and customers, transparency, anti-corruption, accountability, increasing government capacity, creating networks and communities, improving the quality of decision-making.

Reduce costs and increase efficiency - information and communication technology has considerable potential to help increase efficiency and reduce costs for private organizations. Moreover, these benefits are an important aspect of e-government initiatives. The introduction of online services substantially reduces the processing costs of many activities compared to the physical way of handling operations. Proper application of the technology system can reduce the number of process inefficiencies, allowing the exchange of data and information between administrative departments, thus helping to eliminate errors in physical procedures, while reducing the time required for operations. Efficiency is also achieved by streamlining internal processes that allow for more informed and faster decision-making by accelerating the processing of operations.

Providing quality services for businesses and customers - in the traditional model of public service delivery, procedures take longer and lack transparency. A company wishing to obtain a license or authorization must complete a number of registration forms, visit a number of different offices and spend a considerable amount of time doing so. If a citizen wants to receive a certificate or any other official document, he has to go to the central office, go to different offices and spend a lot of time for a simple service.

The consequences are high costs and dissatisfaction of citizens and companies. An e-Government initiative that makes electronic public services available, significantly reduces bureaucracy, provides permanent accessibility, fast and convenient transactions and obviously improves the quality of services, in terms of time spent, content and accessibility.

Transparency, anti-corruption and accountability - e-government contributes to increasing the transparency of decision-making processes. In many cases, e-government provides opportunities for citizens to participate directly in decision-making, allowing them to propose their own ideas and suggestions on online forums or communities. If websites are carefully designed, they can be valuable resources for transparency, as citizens, businesses and other stakeholders could see information and policy rules.

Before it was necessary to go directly to the administrative offices to get information, but now this information should be available on the internet. The availability of publications on public administration activities, as well as economic and legislative issues, also increases transparency.

Increasing the capacity of public administration - for the reorganization of internal administration transactions, communications and information transfer, the use of information technologies offers considerable opportunities to increase government capacity.

The intranet allows departments to distribute customer databases to solve problems. These facilities, in turn, will improve the flow of information and transfer, faster service delivery, faster and better decision-making processes and provide benefits for businesses, which become both consumers of public services and providers of goods and services. to the public administration.
Networking and communities - information technology creates both pressures and opportunities for networking and community building. The management initiative requires a complex network of relationships between public administration, users, companies, employees and other administrative systems. In addition, the e-government function requires a broad network approach to link the skills, technologies, information and knowledge of administrative agencies.
The need for learning and training requires a partnership between administrative departments and universities or research institutions. Providing integrated services in a single point requires collaboration and cooperation with different departments and agencies to create a network of diversified relationships. The successful use and delivery of information systems in the public sector involves a dynamic, multidisciplinary and collective learning process. Moreover, the implementation of electronic operations triggers the creation of networks between private companies and financial institutions. On the other hand, an e-government initiative allows for the creation of communities, giving citizens and companies the opportunity to participate in forums and decision-making processes, actively contributing to various policy discussions.
Improving the quality of decision-making - communication and interaction between public administration and citizens, creating communities and forums, continue to contribute to the decision-making process. By actively participating in political discussions, citizens can contribute their own knowledge and ideas. This, in turn, will lead to building trust in public administration and improving relations between it and citizens.
Enhancing these relationships could improve the quality of services, enabling the public administration to use broader sources of information, perspectives and solutions to meet the challenges of policy making in conditions of increased complexity. Listening to and understanding their needs and requirements is essential for better decision-making.
The proper use of data and information shared by all agencies and administrative departments offers the opportunity to make quick decisions so as to better serve citizens. However, improvements in the quality of decision-making depend to a large extent on the willingness of the public administration to receive new information, the ability of staff to process a large amount of information, the prevailing cultural values, and the motivation of the public administration to it moves from a hierarchical model to a flexible, less centralized model.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Global administrations are already using the Internet (from simplistic forms to increasingly complex forms). In the case of highly developed countries, there is a dualism of local authorities versus central authorities. Local authorities are becoming more active and closer to the citizen through applications that allow the issuance of driving licenses, payment of fines, payment of taxes and duties online, registration of votes, making purchases, access to electronic space to complete electronic forms , online registers, to participate in auctions, to read online guides or to submit documents online, etc.

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