# Impact of digitalization and e-government on good governance: achievements and challenges in Kazakhstan

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**Abstract.** The article examines the achievements and challenges, goals, and objectives of e-government and digitalization within the framework of the theory of information society. The purpose of the article is to study the impact of digitalization and e-government on good governance in Kazakhstan. Namely, it examines how the economy, social relations, management, public service, politics, and democracy based on new electronic information and communication technologies can change governance for the better. Special attention is paid to the modern problems of digitalization in Kazakhstan, key indicators are compared to digital development, such as the e–government Readiness Index (EGDI – e-Government Readiness Index), an indicator of Internet penetration and Internet speed. The article used methods of content analysis of regulatory documents, Internet resources, media materials, and the method of SWOT analysis. The result of the SWOT analysis indicates the strengths and weaknesses of digitalization, as well as challenges dictated by the geopolitical features of Kazakhstan, such as digital inequality, low speed of "Internet penetration", lack of high-quality domestic platforms, and corruption in the implementation of state programs. As a result, we recommend creating new parameters, indicators that will measure the impact of electronic public services on corruption risks in Kazakhstan.

**Keywords:** digitalization, e-governmentet, effective governance, information society, Digital Kazakhstan, Reducing corruption risks, transparency, accountability.

**Introduction**

The concept of E-Government implies the employment of the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to the citizens. The "good governance" idea illustrated the concept of effective public administration. Impact of e- government on good governance implies the idea of effective public administration using internet and modern IT technologies. According to the UN Good governance has several major characteristics such as participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive governance that follows the rule of law and assures that corruption is minimized. Impact of e- government on good governance in Kazakhstan consist of improving governance by reducing bureaucracy, risk of corruption and increasing transparency of government. The information society and e-government represent a new paradigm of the modern world. Electronic Government as a "new paradigm" replaces the "traditional" Bureaucratic Government that according to M. Weber (2006) emphasized "departmentalization, specialization, standardization, and routinization." [1, 43 p]. Titah, Ryad, and Henri Barki (2002) noted that the e-government paradigm emphasizes "coordinated network building, external collaboration and one-stop customer services" [2, 30 p]. Lai and Haleem (2002) call electronic government not only as a "new paradigm" but also as a universal "revolution" in the governance which base on the new style of electronic communications between citizen and governmental bodies in the 21 century [3, 103 p.]

**The main goal** of this article is to examine what Kazakhstan has done to develop E-Government and digitalization in improving efficiency of governance.

**The object of the study** is process of digitalization and role of e – government in Kazakhstan.

**The subject of the study** is the impact of digitalization and e-government on good governance.

**The practical significance lies in the recommendations for the creation of new parameters, indicators that will measure the impact of electronic public services on corruption risks in Kazakhstan.**

**Material and methods**

The article used methods of content analysis of regulatory documents, internet resources, media materials; the method of logical analysis; SWOT analysis which allowed to show the cause-and–effect relationships of the digitalization process in Kazakhstan; comparative analysis showing the historical retrospective of the processes of formation of e-government in Kazakhstan; structural and functional methods that identified the main problems, trends, tasks and prospects of digitalization in Kazakhstan.

**Literature review**

The idea of e-government as an effective mechanism to prevent corruption and bureaucracy is widely known in the world. According to many researchers such as Bhatnagar and Apikul (2006), Andersen (2009), Elbahnasavi (2014); L. Chen and A.K. Aklikow (2021); T. Ahmad,

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R. Aljafari and V. Venkatesh (2019);   X. Zhao and H. D. Xu, (2015)   the impact of electronic communications on reducing corruption is significant because transparent e-government services eliminate government officials as intermediaries between citizens and the state.

S. Srivastava, H. Theo and S. Devaraj (2016) argue that we cannot bribe a computer, so we can solve the social problem of corruption with ICT. (2016). K. Dean (2016) and N. Hartani, V.Cao and A. Nguyen (2020) created recommendations for the implementation of an electronic document management system for reducing corruption through the introduction of e-government.

The history of the creation of the e-government platform in Kazakhstan was studied by Yerlan Amanbek, Ilyas Balgaev, Kanat Batyrkhanov, Margaret Tan «Adoption of e-Government in the Republic of Kazakhstan» (2020), S. Bkhuyan «E-government in Kazakhstan: Challenges and its role to development» (2010).G. Sheryazdanova, Jim Butterfield (2017) consider e-government activities as part of the whole anti-corruption strategy in Kazakhstan. G. Sheryazdanova, R. Nurtazina, Byulegenova B. (2020) and others studied the impact of e-government on the level of corruption risks in Kazakhstan. S. Janenova   reviewed the experience of providing public services on the principle of "one window" in Kazakhstan in articles "New Public Administration Reform in Kazakhstan: Comprehensive Service" (2009) and "E-Government in Kazakhstan: Challenges for a Country in Transition" (2010); Riccardo Pelizzo R., Omer Baris O., Janenova S. in article "Objectively or based on perception? The dispute about the ideal measure of corruption" (2017) considered the problem of measuring the level of corruption in Kazakhstan as a whole.

**Result and discussion**

The concept of information society or "post-industrial society" has turned into a global methodological paradigm, which gave rise to the emergence of new theories and megatrends. The term "post-industrial society" was introduced by D. Risman in 1958. Also, the forerunner of modern information concepts of society development is defined by the concept of "Gutenberg galaxies" introduced by G.M. McLuhan. Unlike K. Marx, for whom the class struggle was determined by the engine of history, G.M. McLuhan believed that such an engine is the change of information technologies. The information society is understood as a new type of society formed as a result of the global scientific revolution generated by the very rapid development information and communication technologies. The modern information society is global, where information has no barriers and political boundaries. The information society is society of knowledge, the dominance of intellectual labor, in which the well-being of each person and the state as a whole depends on access to information. According to G.M. McLuhan, before the invention of writing, mankind used only oral speech. With the invention of the alphabet and writing, man entered the industrial, mechanistic era. With the development of technological progress, the first electronic media, primarily television, became available. The spread of television, allowed humanity to enter a new state of the global information "village", where information is available to everyone and immediately almost instantly.

The invention of the Internet in the 90s of the 20th century made the world even more unified by uniting it in a single information space.

In general, the following characteristics of the information society are distinguished:

– The new type of society, which is formed as a result of the rapid development of information and communication technologies;

– The society of intellectual knowledge and technical skills acquired through unhindered access to information and the ability to handle it;

– The global society in which the exchange of information has no limits in space and time, which contributes to the interpenetration of cultures and the formation of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism.

– The society of the new economy, where the bulk of the gross product is produced on the basis of intellectual labor – the creation and sale of high-tech technologies and certain information products.

Theoretical concepts of the information society include

1. Futurological theory (D.Bell, O. Toffler).

2. The theory of "informational capitalism" (M. Castels).

3. The theory of transitology (S. Huntington).

Among the futuristic forecasts, we stress the socio-political and economic megatrends of the 21st century of Nesbit. J. Nesbit in the book "What awaits us in the 1990s. Megatrends. The Year 2000" [4, 215 p.] identified 10 main megatrends' characteristic of the transformation of industrial society into an information society:

1) Transition from an industrial society to information society;

2) Transition from industrial technologies to high-tech production;

3) Transition from national economies to a global economy;

4) Transition from short-term national processes and forecasts to long-term global, forecasts and trends;

5) Transition from the centralization to decentralization;

6) Transition from institutionalized state services to the self-help;

7) Transition from representative democracy to direct participatory democracy and e-democracy;

8) Transition from a bureaucratic vertical hierarchy to an electronic, horizontal networks;

9) Transition from the dominance of the North to the importance of the South in geopolitics;

10) Transition from the dichotomy choice of "either-or" to a variety of choice possibilities and pluralism.

Starting the analysis, it is necessary to identify which megatrends in building an information society are taking place in Kazakhstan at the moment. Strategy "Kazakhstan-2050" noted the challenge of the "third industrial revolution", characterized by digitalization, the development of new electronic communications, digital and nanotechnology, robotics, and regenerative medicine. The Digital Kazakhstan program was created in 2017 and reflected the tasks of digitalization of industry, transport, logistics, and agriculture; development of electronic commerce and non-cash payments; development of e-government, digitalization of state bodies and public services; creation of smart cities with developed ICT infrastructure.

The main priority of digitalization was the introduction of digital, electronic document management, which covers several keys areas: electronic interaction of state structures – G2G, the interaction the state with citizens – G2C and interaction the state with business – G2B.

In this regard, the role of e-ICTs is manifested in the actions of e-government, e -governance, e-participation, and electronic democracy.

One of the conditions for the functioning of e-democracy is the implementation of e-participation citizens and e-governance in general. These concepts reflect the use of information and communication technologies in a dialogue between the government and civil society. Kazakhstan is gradually moving towards a new paradigm of e-government, as evidenced by the readiness rating of e-government, which is calculated by UN every two years. Kazakhstan has made significant progress in the implementation of e-government, which is reflected in ranking on the E-Government Readiness Index.

E-Government Readiness Index (E-GRI) index is published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations every two years. This index is a comprehensive indicator of the development of electronic communication, which consists of the results of the three sub-indices:

1. Index of electronic services development - Online Service Index (OSI)
2. Telecommunication Infrastructure Index (ITI)
3. Human Capital Index (HCI).

$$E – GRI = 1/3 \; OSI + 1/3 \; ITI + 1/3 \; HCI$$

According to the UN E-Government Readiness Report (E-Government Readiness Index), **[5]** Kazakhstan took the 28th position in 2022. For comparison, Kazakhstan ranked 46th in 2010 and 81st in 2008 (see Table 1.)

TABLE 1

**E-Government Readiness Index of Kazakhstan**

| EGDI of Kazakhstan | 28 | 29 | 39 | 33 | 28 | 38 | 46 | 81 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | 2022 | 2020 | 2018 | 2016 | 2014 | 2012 | 2010 | 2008 |

Source: United Nations E-Government Survey https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data-Center

For Kazakhstan, the creation of effective e-government is an important tool for development and modernization, where there are a number of pros and cons. It should be noted that, despite the criticism and shortcomings, e-government Kazakhstan demonstrates systematic development. Development of E-gove.kz includes 4 stages:

1. Information stage from 2004 to 2006, in which a single information portal was created;
2. Interactive stage from 2007 to 2009, when there was an opportunity for two-way communications between government agencies and citizens using interactive chat, forums, internet conferences, e-mail, and electronic appeals;

3. The transactional stage from 2010 to 2011 – the time of the appearance of the transactional electronic service, when citizens were able to make payments through the e-government portal;

4. The modern stage of the creation of integrated electronic services, which began in 2012 and continues to this day, increasingly reflects the realities of the information society, increasing the complexity and growth of electronic services.

The global pandemic has pushed Kazakhstanis to a massive transition to the digital environment. The process of "forced digitalization" showed the shortcomings of the development of electronic communications in the country, showing, through a magnifying glass, all the existing problems in this area. Analyzing the current situation in the field of digital development in Kazakhstan, it should be noted that the transition to a remote mode of operation in many areas of public administration created force majeure circumstances, to which many state structures of Kazakhstan were not ready to respond. Kazakhstan ranks 52nd out of 176 countries in the world Ranking in terms of the level of development of information and communication technologies, which is reflected in the Information and Communication Technologies Development Index (ICT Development Index) [6].

The ICT Development Index is a combined indicator that is calculated according to the methodology of the International Telecommunication Union (International Telecommunication Union), a specialized UN unit that defines global standards in the field of ICT. The index was developed in 2007 on the basis of 11 indicators used by the International Telecommunication Union in its assessments of ICT development. We are talking about access to the Internet, cellular communications, tele systems, radio systems, the development of IT infrastructure, etc. The index combines these indicators into a single criterion, which is designed to compare the achievements of the world's countries in the development of ICT and can be used as a tool for comparative analysis at the global, regional, and national levels.

However, despite the success in promoting the e-government readiness rating, Kazakhstan is far from leading positions in terms of Internet speed. Kazakhstan ranks 101 the out of 180, inferior in many respects to its closest neighbors Kyrgyzstan (84 th place), Uzbekistan (89 th place), and Russia (55 th place) [7].
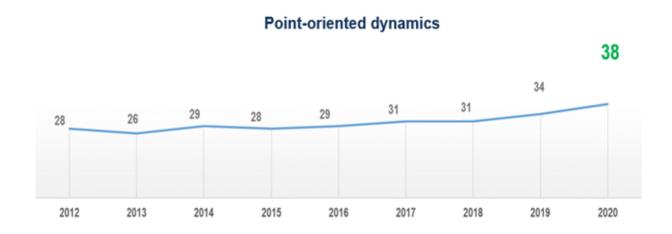
Thus, there are certain contradictions in the indicators of the development of the digital sphere of Kazakhstan. Successes in the development of electronic public services are faced with insufficient Internet speed, which, in particular, was shown by the crisis associated with the pandemic, which increased the load on the Internet several times. Based on the above data, we see contradictory information about the state of digital development in Kazakhstan. On the one hand, progress in the development of electronic public services, on the other hand, weak bandwidth and uneven distribution of the Internet among the rural and urban population of the country, which is due to the geographical features of Kazakhstan, a large territory and low population density.

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**SWOT analysis of digitalization of Kazakhstan**

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| 1. High level of e -government development<br>2. The growth of indicators for the execution of online services<br>3. Growth of human capital<br>4. Growth telecommunications infrastructure and electronic public services | 1. Insufficient speed of Internet<br>2. Digital divide between rural and urban areas<br>3. Corruption in the implementation of state programs<br>4. Lack of high-tech domestic products and on-line platforms<br>5. Distance from sites with content<br>6. Weak "Internet Penetration" |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| 1. Explosive" nature of the development of the IT sphere in Kazakhstan in future<br>2.Development of the online services market<br>3.Development of digital marketing<br>4. Creation of a transparency   in the dialogue between the local government and civil society<br>5. Formation of the Digital Economy of the future | 1. Geographical features of Kazakhstan in the form of a large territory with a low population density<br>2. The uneven development of telecommunications infrastructure, which is explained by the remoteness of settlements from each other<br>3. Remoteness from content platforms<br>4. Increased load on the Internet in the conditions of remote work |

One of the socially significant functions of e-government as a factor ensuring transparency of administrative processes is to reduce corruption risks. Electronic Government of Kazakhstan (e-gove.kz) on the basis of electronic ITCs, excluding paper documentation and bureaucracy, reduces administrative barriers and, consequently, corruption risks, since it excludes officials as intermediaries between the state and society.   In general, there are two most common types of corruption associated with administrative barriers - cronyism and extortion. The common reasons for administrative barriers are often comprised of the low quality of public services, incompetence of the staff, ill-structured organization of public services, and huge bureaucracy. How e-government can affect on reduction of corruption in the most corrupted spheres? First of all, E-government removes officials as the mediators between citizens and the government. Secondly, E-government reduces the discretion of officials, and third E-government creates electronic «transparent communications" that are the basis for government accountability.  To determine the impact of electronic services on reducing administrative corruption, there is the CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX INDEXED (CPI) BY Transparency International that is a global movement working in over 100 countries to end the injustice of corruption that "focus on issues with the greatest impact on people's lives and hold the powerful to account for the common good» [8]. According to this CPI index Kazakhstan ranked 101 from 180 countries in 2022 that correspond to 36 score from 100.

As we see from the Diagram 1. in 2020 Kazakhstan has for the first time received 38 points out of 100 in the Transparency International's rank [9] Dynamic improvement of Kazakhstan in the CPI rating happen party because of electronic services that explained by the growth of electronic state services in Kazakhstan.

## Point-oriented dynamics



Source: Transparency Kazakhstan
https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/kazakhstan

Diagram 1

Development of transparency and accountability. From this perspective, another important function of e-government is that e-ICTs provide new forms of communication and interaction between citizens and various government agencies. Citizens of Kazakhstan actively use such channels of interaction as blogs, where they can use a transparent environment of electronic interaction with the state authorities, ask questions, raise certain social problems, contribute to solving their urgent problems, and fight injustice. Here, e-government plays the role of e-governance, which significantly contributes to the improvement of public administration at the local level and in the end, contributes to the formation of the so-called electronic democracy (e-democracy). One of the main tasks of information technology is to make the government more transparent and accountable. Electronic feedback channels - blogs, open discussion platforms, and channels – are being formed on the portals of the websites of public authorities and local self-government interaction between the government and the people. In this way, since 2003, the Transparency International coalition provide us Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) that «has surveyed the experiences of everyday people confronting corruption around the world» [10].

Conclusion. Analyzing the achievements and challenges of digitalization and development of e-government in Kazakhstan, we can conclude that the absolute achievements of e-government include 1) transparency of state procedures; 2) fight against bureaucracy; 3) reduction of corruption risks; 4) efficiency of public services; 5) expansion of opportunities for electronic participation; 6) greater accountability of authorities; 7) improving the efficiency of government

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agencies and public administration. The challenges of digitalization and e-government in Kazakhstan include:1) the high cost of e-government, which demands large financial costs; 2) increased transparency may lead to a decrease in confidence in personal life and the emergence of a society of "total surveillance"; 3) the emergence of a new type of inequality - digital inequality, in terms of not equal access to the Internet in rural and urban areas; 4) technical vulnerability of cloud documents to cyber attacks; 5) a false sense of transparency and accountability. Also, the results of the SWOT analysis of the digitalization of Kazakhstan revealed an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of digitalization, as well as challenges dictated by the geopolitical features of Kazakhstan, such as the digital divide, weak speed «Internet penetration", the lack of high-quality domestic platforms, corruption in the implementation of state programs. Hence, Kazakhstan should not lag behind in the global processes of the information revolution and the transition to a post-industrial, information society. To do this, it is necessary to solve a number of problems related to the development of IT infrastructure:

– ensure equal access to information;
– increase the speed and mobility of ITK;
– fight against corruption in the implementation of government programs;
– overcome digital inequality both domestically and internationally.

From our perspective we recommend in addition to international indicators, Kazakhstan needs new parameters that would measure the impact of electronic public services on corruption risks. For example, such indicators can include - the time required to obtain a public service before and after the introduction of electronic public services; the number of instances required to obtain certain documents before and after the introduction of the "one window" principle, the degree of presence of the "human factor" before and after the removal of officials as intermediaries between the state and the service recipients; the number of necessary documents to obtain a particular service before and after the introduction of electronic public services.

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## Цифрландыру мен электрондық үкіметтің тиімді басқаруға ықпалы: Қазақстандағы жетістіктер мен проблемалар

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада ақпараттық теория шеңберінде электрондық үкімет пен цифрландыруға қол жеткізудің міндеттері мен мақсаттары қарастырылады. Мақаланың мақсаты цифрландыру мен электрондық үкіметтің Қазақстандағы тиімді басқаруға ықпалын зерттеу болып табылады. Атап айтқанда, жаңа электрондық ақпараттық-коммуникациялық технологияларға негізделген экономика, әлеуметтік қатынастар, менеджмент, мемлекеттік қызмет, саясат және демократия мемлекеттік басқаруды оңтайлы бағытқа өзгерте алады. Қазақстандағы цифрландырудың қазіргі заманғы проблемаларына ерекше назар аударылады, электрондық үкіметке дайындық индексі (EGDI – e–Government Readiness Index), интернеттің ену көрсеткіші және интернет жылдамдығы сияқты цифрлық дамудың негізгі көрсеткіштері салыстырылады. Мақалада нормативтік құжаттарды, интернет-ресурстарды, БАҚ материалдарын контент-талдау әдістері, сондай-ақ SWOT-талдау әдісі пайдаланылды. Жүргізілген SWOT-талдау цифрландырудың күшті және әлсіз жақтарын, сондай-ақ цифрлық теңсіздік, «интернеттің ену жылдамдығының төмендігі», сапалы отандық платформалардың болмауы және мемлекеттік бағдарламаларды іске асыру кезіндегі сыбайлас жемқорлық сияқты Қазақстанның геосаяси ерекшеліктерінен туындаған сын-тегеуріндерді көрсетеді. Зерттеудің практикалық маңызы электрондық мемлекеттік қызметтің Қазақстандағы сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдеріне ықпал ететін жаңа параметрлерді, индикаторларды құру ұсынымдарынан тұрады.

**Түйін сөздер:** цифрландыру, электрондық үкімет, тиімді басқару, ақпараттық қоғам, цифрлық Қазақстан, сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдерін азайту, ашықтық, есептілік.

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## Влияние цифровизации и электронного правительства на эффективное управление: достижения и проблемы в Казахстане

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются достижения и вызовы, цели и задачи электронного правительства и цифровизации в рамках теории информационного общества. Целью статьи является изучение влияния цифровизации и электронного правительства на эффективное управление в Казахстане. А именно: как экономика, социальные отношения, менеджмент, государственная служба, политика и демократия, основанные на новых электронных информационных и коммуникационных технологиях, могут изменить государственное управление в лучшую сторону. Особое внимание уделяется современным проблемам цифровизации в Казахстане, сравниваются ключевые показатели цифрового развития, такие, как индекс готовности к электронному правительству (EGDI – e–Government Readiness

Index), показатель проникновения интернета и скорости интернета. В статье использованы методы контент-анализа нормативных документов, интернет-ресурсов, материалов СМИ, а также метод SWOT-анализа. Результат проведенного SWOT-анализа указывает на сильные и слабые стороны цифровизации, а также на вызовы, продиктованные геополитическими особенностями Казахстана, такие, как цифровое неравенство, низкая скорость "проникновения интернета", отсутствие качественных отечественных платформ и коррупция при реализации государственных программ. Практическая значимость состоит в рекомендациях создания новых параметров, индикаторов, которые будут измерять влияние электронных государственных услуг на коррупционные риски в Казахстане.

**Ключевые слова:** цифровизация, электронное правительство, эффективное управление, информационное общество, Цифровой Казахстан, снижение коррупционных рисков, прозрачность, подотчетность.

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