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E-government-Myth and Reality

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Contents

- Fall-out from Edinburgh
- References to Paper
- E-government-Myth and Reality



Commonwealth Initiatives

- Developed and coordinated responses to strategic issues affecting the information economy,
- Facilitated research and innovation,
- Initiated exemplar projects,
- Provided information, advice and key whole of government services,
- Captured and shared the learnings.



Activities

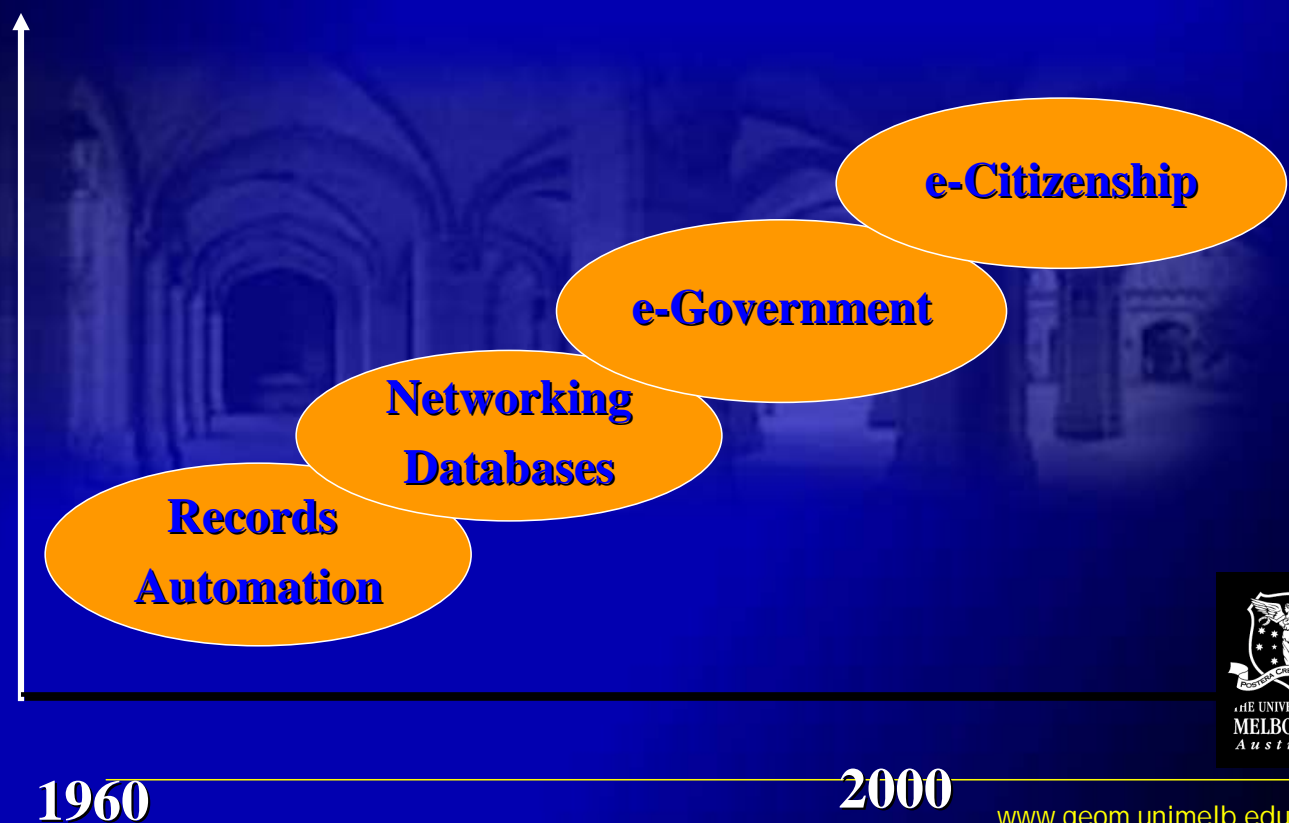
- Information Services
- Interactive Services
- Integrated services



Internet Predictions

“You can’t nail Jell-O to the wall”-Clinton

- Powerful force for political change
- Independence of Cyberspace
- Threaten tyrannies and dictators
- Strategic threat to authoritarian regimes
- Liberty will spread by cable modem-Clinton
- Freedom’s genie out of the bottle-Bush
- Empower Arab democracies-Friedman



Citizen Engagement

**Citizen Access
to Information/Services**

**Citizen-Based
Leadership**



Actions

- Establish American “corners” in libraries-Powell
- New focus for foreign policy
- Expand web access to the Middle East
- In China <1m in 1997 to > 70 m in 2003
- In Middle East doubled in the past 5 years
- Singapore 50% has regular access
- Malaysia higher than most of the developing world



Outcome

- Singapore People's Action Party returned
- United Malays National Organisation returned
- Burma human rights issues worsened
- China key human rights issues failing
- Cuba initiated further crackdown on dissent
- Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria show little progress towards democracy



Internet Reality (1)

- Ill suited to organising dissent
- Individual rather than communal activities
- Less suited than radio or TV to foster debate
- In Asia people gather to listen to radio-discuss
- Internet requires users to be literate
- Older broadcast media more effective
- Empowers individuals not communities



Internet Reality (2)

- Authoritarian regimes control, subvert, shut down and assist like minded regimes
- China has extensive Internet censorship supported by entrepreneurs to monitor online activity through firewalls and government controlled servers
- Saudi Arabia limits online dissent
- Cyber security companies selling web filtering devices to authoritarian regimes



Internet Reality (3)

- Internet cafes shut down in China and Singapore
- Internet police launch crackdowns on web items related to democracy
- Vietnamese Government has made owners responsible for users online activity- arrests of owners of Cafes have been made
- Egyptian police target homosexuals using internet-based sting operations
- Zimbabwe introduced internet controls May 2004



Good News

- Single issue groups like environmental can coordinate with less risk- small threat to regime change
- Empower small companies and so decrease state control of the economy
- Gradual emergence as a force for change
- Sell regimes the idea of technology being modern-conflict with interference of communication
- Become aware of like minds to explore and relate



Bad News

“You can nail Jell-O to the wall” Beijing

- Web is assisting to keep dictators in power
- Small group of Internet security monitors has now replaced legions of former informers
- Entrenched regimes by providing appealing, sophisticated and comprehensive websites



Recent Trends

- White House considering web surveillance techniques similar to China
- Internet sector not expanding as before
- Partnerships with authoritarian regimes reflect economic reality
- Internet industry now run by conservative large corporations which cooperate with regimes in censorship methodology

