

Open Government and “E-Government” in Russia

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Abstract

With the advent and widespread information and communication technologies, pace of human activity has accelerated markedly new industries, new management techniques. And in the world community, now prevalent idea of democracy with equal rights and freedoms for all citizens of a democratic state is a risk and a challenge to the integrity of a community. Against this background, it becomes important not only process control, but also a system of communication between society and the state. For effective interaction between society and the state, the government needs a new, streamlined platform for the provision of public services. This site was e-government. Currently, the concept of “open government” is implemented in the administration of the state in all developed countries. This paper deals with modern communication mechanism of the state and society in Russia, for example, “e-government”, and the effectiveness of this mechanism in the process of changing demands of society.

Keywords

Political communication, mass communication, public relations, e-government, open government

An open government is not a new imperious structure, and is system of mechanisms and principles, providing effective cooperation of power and civil society. For such effective cooperation of society and state, power needs a new and modernized ground for providing of state services. This area has become e-government (open government). The result of this cooperation not only upgrading decision-making and quality of work of state machine on the whole and upgrading of life of citizens, but also forming of new for Russia culture of cooperation of society and state will become. A basic scientific problem is an analysis of modern mechanisms of communication of the state and society, on the example of e-government and estimation of efficiency of this mechanism in the process of changing queries of society.

Already more than 20 years’ conception of “open government” is inculcated in the management by the

state in the entire developed countries. An “open government” is legally identified with a term which is the “open state”. First, at high enough state level, the term of the open state was considered as a duke by Lancaster in 1993 and had next maintenance:

The open state is part of effective democracy. Citizens must have an adequate access to information and analysis on the basis of that the state works. Ministers and public office workers are under an obligation to explain their laws, decisions, and actions of public. The state, nevertheless, needs that to keep some secrets and it is obliged to protect the personal life those, who it manages. (Begtin 2012)

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BEGINNING OF REALIZATION OF IDEA OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT

In Russia, the idea of open government was begun to realize from 2002 with the acceptance of the federal target program “Electronic Russia”¹, although the idea of such program came into question at the beginning of 2000². The aim of the accepted program was to provide the “cardinal acceleration of processes of informative exchange in an economy and society on the whole, including between citizens and public authorities, increase of efficiency of state administration and local self-government”³. On the whole, the program was sent to the grant of electronic state services and creation of electronic circulation of documents between different departments. On results work, the program appeared ineffective from distinguished on realization of project 77 milliards of roubles which were spent only 21 billion (Olejnik 2010). To the planned term, the portal did not earn though big infrastructure work was carried out. Basic directions of program activity were sent to forming of standards with the sphere of information and communication technologies, perfection of legislation, and system of government control in the field of information and communication technologies, to providing of openness in activity of public and popularity of state informative resources authorities, large work was similarly conducted in the field of informative safety and counteraction to terrorism. Works were conducted on development of materiel, to creation of programmatic-technical decisions for support of activity of government and their passing bodies to the electronic interdepartmental turn. The complex of works is executed on forming of single informatively-technological and telecommunication infrastructure of electronic government⁴. On the base of the prepared infrastructure on the federal program “Electronic Russia”, a stride was done to development of conception of “electronic democracy” on the whole and to the “e-government” in particular. Due to a

material and technical base and experience got during realization of the program, further development of “open government” became possible.

Idea of creation of the “open government” in that kind, to that it exists presently Vladimir Putin said of in 2011. Coming forward on April 20 in state thought by a report on working as of Government Russian Federation for 2010, he marked importance of passing to conception of the “open government”, applied in the entire developed countries for providing of involving of citizens to state administration. “Russia too needs *uòmu* on this way—to encourage active social work, taking into account suggestions, advices, and recommendations of the so-called independent folk experts”⁵.

On October 15, 2011, President of Russia D. A. Medvedev on meeting with the supporters marked importance and actuality of creation of “large government”, which will co-operate with ruling party, institutes of civil society, expert association, regional and municipal power. So in October 2011, Dmitry Medvedev initiated creation of original expert ground —“large government”.

In an interview to the newspaper *Kommersant*, President of Russian Federation V. V. Putin declared:

“Modern democracy, however, power of people can be taken only to ‘going near urns’ and to close” them. Democracy, according to his opinion, consists both in a fundamental right for people to choose power and in possibility continuously to influence on power and process of acceptance by her decisions. And, democracy must have mechanisms of permanent and direct action, effective channel of dialogue, public inspection, communications, and “feed-back”. (Putin 2012)

In February 2012, a working group was formed on preparation of suggestions on forming in Russian Federation of the system “The Open Government”. For realization of the aim pronounced before in the day of the inauguration of B. B. Putin, signs Decree of President of Russian Federation from May 7, 2012, No. 601 “about basic directions of perfection of the

system of state administration” (CL Russian Federation 2012). On May 21, 2012, President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin confirmed composition of new cabinet of ministers. Mikhail Abizov was appointed by Minister of Russian Federation on questions of the open government (Decree of President of Russian Federation “About Minister of Russian Federation” from May 21, 2012).

Thus, senior officials expressed the need for a participatory approach to the formation of public authority in Russia. This approach implies the maximally large participating of ordinary citizens in a management by a country on principle from a “top” to bottom.

BASIC PRINCIPLES, PURPOSES, AND TASKS OF THE DOCTRINE “THE OPEN GOVERNMENT”

The doctrine of “open government” is based on principles such as: the involvement of citizens, accountability and accountability, access to information, clarity and transparency of government⁶. Citizen engagement involves a wider public in the government at the municipal, regional, and federal levels. Accountability requires public control authorities and public examination of the decisions taken. The principle of availability of information involves the disclosure of government information to citizens and businesses on an equal footing, as well as the admission of organizations to participate in public procurement on the basis of competitiveness. Clarity and transparency of government mean that the state information and management decisions should be accessible and understandable to all citizens, not only skilled in the art. Projecting the concept of “open government” on Russian reality can come to the following conclusion, “open government”—a system of principles, mechanisms, and instruments governance through the development of forms of citizen participation in governance, transparency, and

accountability of government, as well as extensive use of modern information technology and new media in the implementation of cooperation with citizens⁷. So based on the above principles, the following objectives have been identified:

(1) Ensure public control and expert support execution of strategic goals and commitments of certain decrees of the President of May 7, 2012;

(2) Increase public confidence;

(3) Increase in the number of citizens involved in public administration;

(4) Improving the quality of public administration and public services: efficiency and de-bureaucratization.

Today, “open government” in Russia has the following objectives:

For citizens:

(1) Public civil self-realization;

(2) Participation in governance;

(3) Interaction and feedback;

(4) Impact on decision-making;

(5) Convenient and quality services;

(6) Public control.

Business:

(1) Clear and predictable rules;

(2) Transparency and fairness of public resources;

(3) Improving the quality of public services and supervisory functions;

(4) The availability and quality of information;

(5) Improving the investment climate.

For the government:

(1) Improving the quality of public decision-making;

(2) Advisory council—a platform for discussion of difficult decisions;

(3) Public support;

(4) Efficient use of resources;

(5) Improving the quality of public institutions.

Objectives for 2013-2014 year:

(1) Public and expert control execution of the decree of the president at the federal and regional level;

- (2) Control and optimization of public spending;
- (3) National plan of open government;
- (4) Open clear authority—an open state.

Currently, the structure of “open government” includes:

- (1) Russian Minister of “open government”;
- (2) Advisory council;
- (3) Government Commission.

According to results of the 2013, expert advice to the government of the Russian Federation has been modified more than 30 bills and 10 state programs in areas such as health, housing, science and education, environment, transport, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and social entrepreneurship. Six ministries published the goals and objectives for 2013. Received governmental policies and public discussion of expert support plans of various departments have been implemented information system course of execution plans online. For 2013, 27 pilot subjects and municipalities have joined the initiative of “open government”, 60 ministries uncovered more than 600 data sets, and all state bodies uncovered more than 5,000 data sets. They adopted the concept of public control over natural monopolies and formed Consumer Council. Embarked on improving transparency of state companies, an independent technology and pricing audit state-owned⁸ investment. Thus, they passed the synthesis and regulation of the issues of information transparency and accountability of agencies and the involvement of experts and the public to take management decisions within the framework of the accepted standard of openness.

Returning to the interview V. V. Putin on *Kommersant* newspaper, in February 2012, it should be noted that the president stressed the need to discuss the general civil laws, decisions, and programs taken at all levels of government, the evaluation of existing laws, and the effectiveness of their application (Russian public initiative as a form of modern democracy). “It is therefore proposed to introduce a rule of mandatory consideration in the parliament of

the social initiatives that will gather a hundred thousand or more signatures on the Internet”, said the president (Putin 2012).

In 2013, he founded the Russian Marketplace Community Initiative (RMCI—internet resource for locating public initiatives of citizens of the Russian Federation). An online resource created pursuant to the decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated March 4, 2013, No. 183 “on consideration of public initiatives to citizens of the Russian Federation with the use of the internet resource” Russian public initiative⁹. At this website, any citizen can file his initiative. You must register on the portal of public services (gosuslugi.ru)¹⁰, complete the form supply initiatives to determine its type and send it to a vote. When you dial 100 thousand, votes it will be reviewed by a public authority.

“Forty-one percent of Russians do not know about the state body”, says the company SAP CIS and the polls were based on a study “E-government and e-democracy in Russia: current state and prospects of development”. It was conducted in February to March 2013 and consists of two parts: “public opinion on the development of mechanisms for e-government and e-democracy” (the number of respondents: 3,200 people) and “e-government and e-democracy in Russia: prospects for the formation and development” (in-depth interviews with 40 experts from the federal and regional authorities, expertise, and the non-profit organizations).

Ministry of Communications aims to 2018, to provide citizens with the opportunity to obtain 100% of public services on their own and at any time. However, on the way to this goal, it is important not only to solve infrastructure problems to overcome the “digital divide”, but also the need to form a new population: the use of electronic services for public services, to actively participate in discussions of legislative initiatives, urban development, social reform, using a system of electronic voting and feedback.

The study also showed that 41% of Russia's population still does not know about this federal resources as gosuslugi.ru, with which you can receive electronic services to more than 30 ministries and departments. At the same time, as noted by Kirill Rodin, first Deputy Head of Social and Political Studies VTsIOM, Russia, successfully developing projects to create "smart cities": modern cities, comfortable and safe to live and work, recently signed an agreement on the construction of such complex control systems with the administration of Surgut and Nizhny Tagil¹¹.

Over the past year, it was received over 3,500¹² initiatives. Spring of last year passed online vote for candidates for Public Chamber of the Russian Federation. RMCI was warmly welcomed at the international level: the meeting of the leaders of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and the Council of Europe. It is noted that at the moment, it is one of the most technologically advanced, protected, and comfortable platforms of e-democracy in the world¹³.

The level of overall satisfaction of citizens with the quality of public and municipal services through the electronic portal is constantly growing. According to the survey of economic development "quality of" public services are satisfied 78% of citizens¹⁴. More than 2/3 of citizens are satisfied with the provision of public services and this figure is increasing every year, although not significantly. It is also not significantly reduced rate citizens, not satisfied with public services rendered. Data from this study, it is clear that over the past six years, the quality of public services has improved, as evidenced by the 44.3% of respondents. This is largely due to the beginning of informatization of public services and the possibility of getting through the internet. It grows and the number of citizens who believe that the quality of public and municipal services has increased and within government and in the multi-function centers (MFC), 42.6% and 61.7% of respondents said the change in

the quality of public and municipal services for the better, respectively. The most important working bodies of "open government" is the Minister of the Russian Federation, the Department of the Government of the Russian Federation on the formation of the "open government" Project Center "open government" Government Commission for the coordination of open government and the Expert Council under the government of the Russian Federation.

Federal Minister of the Russian Federation guides the formation of the "open government" and organizes the work of the Government Commission on coordination of open government. The minister did not direct the ministries.

Department of the Government of the Russian Federation on the formation of the "open government" is part of the Government of the RF¹⁵. The department provides organizational and technical support of the Government Commission for the coordination of Open Government Project Center "open government" provides support site "Open Government", cooks, prepares and distributes a variety of information and analytical materials, to collect and systematize expert assessments on issues under consideration by the Expert Council and more¹⁶. They carried out the most extensive information support.

The government commission on coordination of open government—a permanent body under the Government of the Russian Federation, is responsible for interaction of public authorities and civil society representatives on the formation of open government. The main objective of the commission is to develop proposals for the formation of openness of public authorities and improve governance and the quality of public services¹⁷.

Expert Council under the Government of the Russian Federation—an advisory body established to organize the examination of economic and socially significant decisions. The main objective of the council is the participation of the expert community in

the preparation and implementation of the decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation and the federal executive bodies.

The structure of open government indicated in Figure 1.

INTERNATIONAL ASPECT OF INTRODUCTION OF “THE OPEN GOVERNMENT”

The authors should also mention the importance of the international dimension of the implementation of the “open government”. Implementation mechanisms of openness, transparency, and accessibility of public administration in the Russian Federation and in the municipal authorities are one of the most important components of the country’s success on the world stage in the global competition. Clear rules, access to government information and order, low levels of corruption—all these have a positive effect on the country’s investment image and contribute to additional financial flows to different areas of economic activity.

The general movement of openness to data, the use of advanced ICT, formation of a new management culture contributed to the emergence in 2011, the organization “partnership for open government” (Open Government Partnership—OGP)¹⁸. The initiators of the partnership were the United States and England. The partnership was established on September 20, 2011, by eight countries (Brazil, Indonesia, Philippines, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States).

At the end of 2012, its intention to join the Danny Initiative announced 47 countries, including the Russian Federation. Developed countries such as the US and Germany have extensive experience in the construction of the “Open from the state and the government has become a global trend as a result of imposition of a general trend to recognize and guarantee the right of citizens to know the information

and the development of ICT”.

Along with the implementation of plans in the field of internal development and implementation of open government, raises the question of Russia’s accession to the partnership “open government” (Panov 2012).

You can select a few basic questions about the appropriateness of Russia’s accession to this partnership. Thus, the system of “open government” implemented in the country, takes into account the experience of other countries, but is fully adapted to the realities of Russia, unlike some issues ultimatum to the concept of partnership (Davletshina 2011). One of the tools incorporated in the partnership is fully accountable to the governments of the participating countries to national and international monitoring organizations that can substantially weaken the political sovereignty of the country. In connection with this, it inevitably raises the question of how the information will affect the security of Russia by the fact that the work of all government agencies and departments will be in electronic form and, therefore, will be transparent to our geopolitical competitors?

Another issue is that the member states participating in the partnership focus on one of the priorities presented. That is, some states pay more attention to public data, others—to fight corruption, and others—on interactivity, feedback of the state and civil society. However, the road map of open government of the Russian Federation suggests the involvement of the state on all the issues raised after a certain period of time. It is worth noting that the development of the Russian concept of “open government” assistance rendered by a group of American advisers from Monitor Group Company (MGC), which is considered as the world’s leading consulting company engaged in projects in the field of competitiveness of countries. From 2007 to 2011, the company was engaged in advice and assistance in the development of the concept of “open government” under the Russian reality, based on a standardized

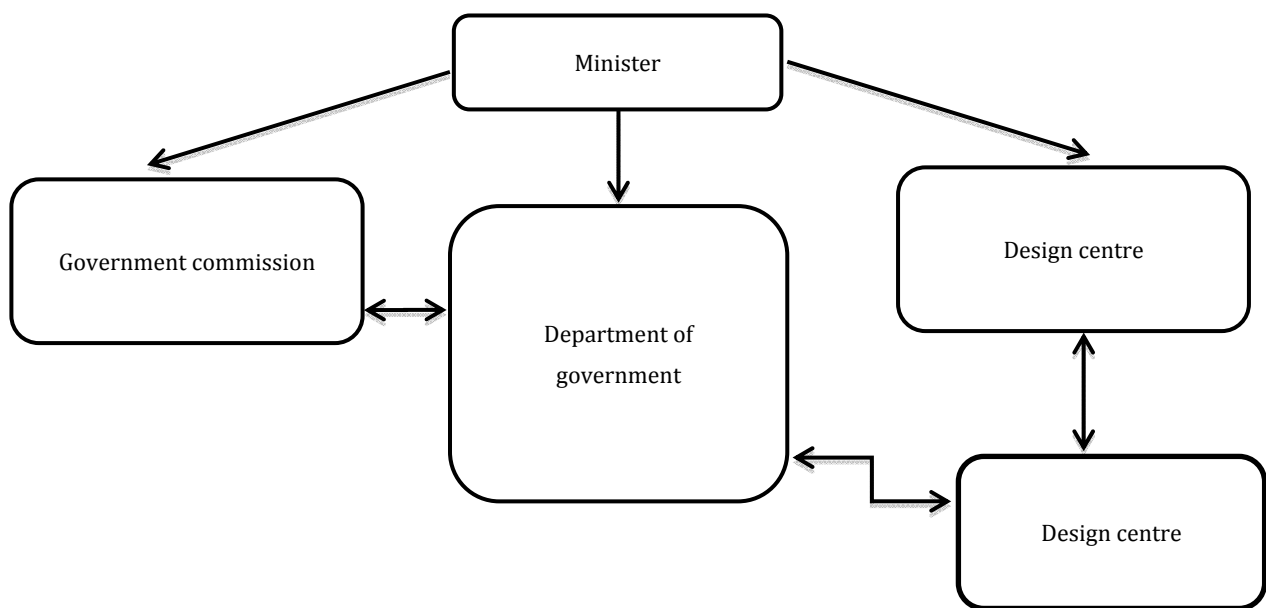


Figure 1. Structure of the Open Government.

global experience. And after the active phase of theoretical developments from June to December 2012, it helped the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education to introduce the concept of “open ministry” (Pivovarov 2013). So we cannot say that the world experience in this area has not been taken into account in the development of the concept of “open government” in Russia (Mantulina 2012).

Supporters of Russia’s accession to the partnership put forward a number of arguments. Among them, participation in the partnership will enhance international economic rating of the country and have a positive impact on the international assessment of the investment climate in Russia (Foerstel 2009), will provide access to the best international practices of public administration, worked out on the basis of active interaction between government and civil society, and will allow faster implement mechanisms for electronic access of citizens to public services¹⁹.

Opponents of accession fear that Russia could become part of the system, the center of decision-making which is located in Washington, D.C.,

in view of the fact that the idea of creating a new international network structure called “open government” was born in the apparatus of the National Security Council and implemented in practice in State Department (Begtin 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

The future open government should be an open platform to generate dialogue: power—society and identified with democracy. It will provide direct public participation in decision-making and control their execution. To do this, you must develop material and technical infrastructure to use the latest software developments, to overcome the resistance of the bureaucracy, not wanting to work in the new environment and to exclude additional opportunities for corruption. Attracting population to more active citizenship and participation in governance, as well as to form a positive opinion to the project and to inspire confidence in the electronic platform.

In general, the introduction and development of

the doctrine of “open government” are the next stage of historical development of a democratic society. Modern technology allows you to connect all the people in one network across the country and the world provides a unique opportunity in the history of mankind to realize the power of the people. Modern communication channels enable real-time chat people together, to receive e-government services and make purchases.

Currently, modern ICTs enable participation in government to all citizens. In a time when people are not only concerned about food production and guarantee their personal safety, there is a need of involvement in the “big business”, which is the administration of the state and they can realize this need through the “open government”.

Access to a large amount of information dispersed among experts, allows you to take more effective management decisions. Civil servants do not have the volume of knowledge which is rapidly increasing due to the development of new technologies, and the involvement of experts to make decisions appropriate.

Just open government to citizens enhances the legitimacy of the current government, the level of public confidence and reduces the anti-government sentiment in society. “Open government” is a powerful anti-corruption tool, making the information open and transparent decision-making mechanisms. Clear rules and access to public information, transparency of the decision increases the competitiveness of the economy in the struggle for foreign investment. In the domestic market, favorable conditions for reinvestment reduced the share capital outflows. There are new jobs. “Open government” encourages the development of civil society. Electronic systems allow to take into account the opinion of each citizen, contributing to the adoption of consensus decisions and exclude the fact of ignoring minorities, thereby undermining the dictates of the majority society and showing that each member is important.

So, it is worth noting the important role of the introduction of a tool such as “e-government”. Implementation of “electronic government” was due to the ability to create networks of each city. State used this opportunity to provide access to public services and business electronically and to minimize the terms of service and transaction costs.

Electronic document management to reduce bureaucracy and to eliminate duplication of functions related government agencies.

The success of “open government” in general and “electronic government” in particular are dependent on active citizenship population, its computer literacy and development of telecommunication systems. Leadership of the country adopted a policy of openness and accountability to the people of the state, civil society development and preservation of democratic principles.

With proper information support mechanisms of advertising and public relations will be able to attract people’s attention to the “open government” and implement this ideology more effectively.

Notes

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