

Government 2.0: Gartner Definition

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Given the increasing confusion and hype surrounding Government 2.0, it is important to reflect about the key characteristics of this phenomenon. Strategic planners, department heads and CIOs need to understand the differences compared with previous technology-enabled changes in order to equip themselves with the right capabilities and competencies.

Key Findings

- There are multiple definitions of Government 2.0, but they all focus on specific aspects, such as the use of social media or the provision of public data platforms.
- Government 2.0 is both citizen-driven and employee-centric, and is both transformational and evolutionary.
- The characteristics of Government 2.0 are very different from those of e-government, mostly because they require government business and IT leaders to relinquish their control.

Recommendations

- Government strategic planners and CIOs must look at Government 2.0 as a continuous transformation process that is characterized by the progressive socialization and commoditization of data, processes and services. They must focus on:
 - Publishing and maintaining open (public) data in raw format as required by relevant open government policies and directives.
 - Identifying patterns emerging from information created outside the perimeter of their enterprise.
 - Empowering employees to engage with external communities to help identify those patterns.
 - Developing a road map to incorporate the impact of those patterns into operations and service delivery models.

ANALYSIS

The term "Government 2.0" is being widely used today in government and the IT industry to describe the use of Web 2.0 (see Note 1) technologies, both internally and externally, to increase collaboration and transparency and potentially transform the way government agencies relate to citizens and operate. A synonym that is also gaining popularity is "open government," which stresses data openness and citizen engagement.

Several definitions associate Government 2.0 with the use of social media, both inside and outside government. A more intriguing definition, introduced by Tim O'Reilly, is "government as a platform," but this turns out to be an oversimplification (see Note 2)

Although we do not believe that the term "Government 2.0" is a particularly useful characterization of the kind of transformation that social media and other Web 2.0 technologies are making possible, we recognize that it is gaining sufficient traction in industry to require a definition that helps our clients capture its real meaning and potential.

Gartner defines Government 2.0 as the use of information technology to socialize and commoditize government services, processes and data.

Socialization

With Web 2.0 and the emergence of social networks, Internet users are turning from content consumers into content brokers and providers. Bloggers, wiki editors, Facebook users, LinkedIn group creators, and so forth contribute to creating, organizing and rating information that is changing the way people make their purchasing decisions, relate to service providers and interact with government.

The socialization of information has multiple facets:

- From government to citizens, through open government data initiatives that aim at increasing transparency and allowing third parties to aggregate data to create public value
- From citizens to government, through information that is or can be pertinent to several government processes, but is generally created for a different purpose than communicating with or influencing government
- Inside government, through the use of internal or consumer collaboration platforms that enable government employees to socialize knowledge

One important characteristic of Government 2.0 is that the boundaries between these facets are blurred. For instance, government employees can mash up open government data with citizen-generated data and socialize the results with both citizens and other employees, who can in turn rate and further transform such data.

Because this information is created and managed by individuals in different roles, it is most appropriate to refer to it as being created and managed by the "collective" (see Note 3).

While at an earlier stage socialization primarily concerns information, at a future stage it will affect services, because socialized information will determine how government services are combined and consumed, and because alternative or complementary services will emerge from the collective. Areas that are most susceptible to this transformation include welfare, healthcare, education and public safety.

We already have witnessed the socialization of government data through open government data initiatives as well as the increasing use of external data to support government processes. These processes will not be limited to public data but will extend to personal data that citizens may decide to store in locations other than government agencies themselves (see "The Case for Citizen Data Vaults").

Moreover, application contests such as [Apps for Democracy](#) or [Apps for America](#) show a trend toward engaging the public at large in developing new applications. The next evolutionary step will be the socialization of government services and processes by engaging individuals as well as online communities to perform part of existing government processes or transform them by leveraging external data and applications.

Commoditization

During the past several years, government organizations in many jurisdictions have pursued, with different degrees of success, a rationalization and consolidation strategy aimed at reducing the diversity of infrastructures and horizontal, non-mission-specific applications to cut costs and complexity. More recently, the emergence of cloud computing (see Note 4) is pushing these organizations to examine how much they can meet their requirements by adopting solutions that are used by other industries and — in some cases — by consumers.

Early examples of commoditization include the use of consumer-class social media — such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter — to support internal and external collaboration goals, the adoption of cloud-based applications such as Google Gmail or salesforce.com, and the move of some government workloads onto cloud-based infrastructure. As discussed in previous research (see "Government in the Cloud: Much More Than Computing"), the socialization of information and the emergence of crowdsourcing models to engage new stakeholders (such as citizens) in government service delivery and decision-making processes are closely related to the commoditization of applications and business processes made possible by cloud computing. Therefore, commoditization will gradually move from infrastructure and applications to business processes, although at a pace that is influenced by slowly evolving regulations. As a consequence, resources for innovation will focus more explicitly on areas that are mission-specific and not candidates for commoditization.

Characteristics of Government 2.0

It is citizen-driven. Government 2.0 requires an outside-in approach. Citizens will process and transform government information and configure the services they want to use, integrating them with information and services outside the perimeter of government. Similarly, government processes will be increasingly impacted by such external information.

It is employee-centric. Government 2.0 also requires a bottom-up approach. Employees must be empowered to use seamless collaboration, to challenge existing procedures and to be innovative while remaining accountable. As social networks imply peer-to-peer communication, only the involvement of individuals will create the necessary connection with constituents and provide sufficient elements to articulate an actual agency social media strategy.

It keeps evolving. Government-driven communities must be sustained with compelling purpose and content to continue to thrive. However, the transient nature of external social networks calls for an iterative process in which employees continuously look for what matters to them and their jobs. Social networks will aggregate around specific issues and may come and go as constituents see fit.

It is transformational. Despite its evolutionary nature, Government 2.0 fundamentally transforms the way government delivers its services to constituents, manages and executes its processes,

and uses data by establishing a two-way relationship between government and its constituents based on greater transparency coupled with the ability to engage with constituents on their turf.

It requires a blend of planning and nurturing. It is almost impossible to determine the business (or public) value of Government 2.0 in general or social media in particular without understanding which purposes would be compelling enough to engage employees and constituents. Before starting any initiative, it is imperative to identify existing or nascent communities, understand their behavior, and evaluate to what extent they can be leveraged to develop a government initiative.

It needs Pattern-Based Strategy capabilities. Much information that is relevant to government service delivery and operations will be available outside the perimeter of government organizations themselves. This implies actively seeking internal and external patterns that may have an impact on organizational strategy or operations, hence evolving information-based disciplines. Patterns can be seen in activities that people engage in or from processes that occur in or around organizations (see "Introducing Pattern-Based Strategy").

It calls for a new management style. An outside-in, bottom-up approach to transformation challenges existing processes and requires managers to let their employee experiment with external engagement and social media. As a consequence, it is necessary to measure employee performances, not by the output they produce according to existing procedures, but by how they contribute to the policy outcomes that their agency is responsible for (see "Citizen-Driven Government Must Be Employee-Centric, Too").

Government 2.0 Versus E-Government

In 2000 (see "What Is E-Government? Gartner's Definitions"), Gartner defined e-government as the transformation of public-sector internal and external relationships through Net-enabled operations, IT and communications to optimize government service delivery, constituency participation and governance. Parts of this definition apply to Government 2.0, since its goals are indeed to improve the way governments deliver services, engage constituents and perform overall governance. However, the fundamental difference is the blurring between internal and external relationships, which leads to three goals of e-government overlapping.

Government 2.0 is people-centric, as technology supports a blurring of roles for individuals who are both employees and citizens, and information producers and consumers, hence making the distinction between internal and external collaboration quite artificial. Further, engaging external resources or citizen-driven communities, while addressing the goal of participation, helps at the same time to improve service delivery and internal governance processes.

Another important difference is that, while e-government uses primarily enterprise, domain-specific technologies, Government 2.0 is based on the use of increasingly commoditized technology, as well as on consumer technology.

RECOMMENDED READING

"Moving From Citizen-Centric to Citizen-Driven Government"

"Citizen-Driven Government Must Be Employee-Centric, Too"

"How Governments Can Use Social Networks"

"Use a Gartner Governance Model to More Safely Empower Grassroots Social Media Efforts"

"Introducing Pattern-Based Strategy"

Note 1
Web 2.0

Web 2.0 refers to networked applications built using Web technologies and design principles that may exploit community-based development and social networking, and that *may* also exploit new Web-based business models.

Note 2
About Government as a Platform

A discussion about the pros and cons of the O'Reilly definition can be found at http://blogs.gartner.com/andrea_dimaio/2009/09/08/why-government-is-not-a-platform .

Note 3
Collective

The collective is composed of individuals, groups, communities, mobs, markets and firms that shape the direction of society and business. The collective is not new, but technology has made the collective more powerful. Affordable and accessible technology has enabled individuals and communities to come together in a new way — and has enabled change to happen more rapidly.

Note 4
Cloud Computing

Cloud computing refers to a style of computing where scalable and elastic IT-related capabilities are provided "as a service" to external customers using Internet technologies.

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