

# A Survey of Information Disclosure and E-Services Provided by Municipalities in Thailand

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**Abstract**—In the past twenty years, the internet has changed how governments interact with their citizens. However, there are disparities among different groups of countries when it comes to e-government and e-services. The current article aims to examine the current situation of e-services provided by local government units in Thailand. A purposive sampling technique was used, and a sample of 90 municipal websites was analyzed. The findings show that municipalities in Thailand provide a relatively limited e-services on their websites, implying that the implementation of e-government in the country has not much changed since the dawn of information age.

**Keywords**—e-government, e-service, municipality, Thailand

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the past twenty years, the pervasiveness of information technology has changed how governments interact with their citizens, and vice versa [1]. E-government and e-services have been promoted by international development agencies and international organizations as means for greater quality and more inclusive service delivery. Despite technological advancement at the global scale, there are disparities among different groups of countries. While developed countries have implemented e-government for years, countries in the developing world are lagging behind, both in terms of quantity and quality.

As reported by United Nation in 2016, only 97 countries from 193 countries passed the e-government development index. In Europe, the UK ranked first with 0.9193 points. In the Americas, the US sat in the first place with 0.8420 points followed with the other 34 countries. In Asia, South Korea was leading with 0.8915 points and Singapore in the second place with 0.8828 points. Nonetheless, Singapore is leading in Southeast Asia with Malaysia in the second place, Philippines in

the third place, and followed by Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Lao, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, and the last spot is Myanmar [2].

In 1997, Thailand established a government agency and set up mechanisms to promote and implement the use of information technology in the public sector. In 1999, the government signed the e-ASEAN Agreement with aims to increase information technology capacity and to encourage the adoption of e-government. Over the past years, multiple e-service platforms have been adopted by the national government as its agencies. These platforms include e-Procurement, Government Fiscal Management Information System (GFMIS), e-Revenue, e-Passport, e-Registration, and Smart ID Card. These e-services, however, are relatively diminutive compared to a wide range of public services provided by the national government. The situation at the local level might be far more worrying as local governments generally lack administrative capacity and financial resources. Adopting e-government and e-services would pose a greater challenge to any municipality.

## II. OBJECTIVE

The current article aims to examine the current situation of information disclosed and e-services provided by municipalities in Thailand.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are at five stages-models in public services delivery, in which the higher the stage, the higher the customer orientation will be required: (1) stovepipes model; (2) integrated model; (3) nationwide portal; (4) inter-organizational integration; and (5) demand-driven, joined-up government model [3][4]. In the first stage, the government lets citizens to apply for a government service by going to each of the department related to the problem. In this model, the application, services, and the product are interconnected but the information is not shared within the

government departments. Second, the integrated model is where service delivery within the government is integrated enough to create a one-stop service centers at the top levels. Third, the nationwide portal model, the government offers an access to existing services, including digital files. Fourth, the inter-organizational integration is where everything is clearly defined and standardized within the government agencies and public services are integrated and bundled. In this model, a wide range of public services can be requested via one portal. Fifth, the highest stage is the demand-driven or joined-up government model. It is where, instead of waiting citizens to file a request to the government, the portal offers a recommendation to either citizens or business sectors. The chain, thus, changes from supply-driven to demand-driven [3]. The demand-driven model has become the main goal for many countries. In addition, public service delivery is divided into three different specifications: (1) government to citizen (G2C/C2G); (2) government to business (G2B/B2G); and (3) government to government (G2G/G2G) [5].

#### IV. METHODS AND DATA

The current study developed a measure of municipal website information disclosure and employed the measure to examine municipal websites in two aspects: first, general characteristics of the website; and second, information disclosure and e-services provision. A purposive sampling technique was used, and a sample of 90 out of 2,442 municipalities nationwide was analyzed. Content analysis was conducted to examine the content of 90 municipal websites.

#### V. FINDINGS

##### A. Information Disclosure

Findings reveal that most municipalities disclosed essential information in line with the national government criteria on their websites. In any case, only one in three posted proceedings of the meeting of the Municipal Council, and that is important since those meetings are significant for stakeholders or the local citizens. There was also a lack of information on budgets and results of performance evaluation. Many administrative, financial, and statistical information were provided in the .pdf format, which inhibits further statistical analysis of the information or aggregating databases. While there might be complete information on the websites, complex website structure and design hindered access to information (Table I).

TABLE I. INFORMATION DISCLOSED BY MUNICIPALITIES IN THAILAND (N = 90)

Information Disclosed	Available		Not Available		No Websites Found	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Four-year development plan	76	84.4	12	13.3	2	2.2
Annual expenditure	65	72.2	23	25.6	2	2.2
Financial and fiscal situation	47	52.2	41	45.6	2	2.2
Internal audit report	7	7.8	81	90.0	2	2.2
Performance evaluation report	55	61.1	33	36.7	2	2.2

##### B. E-Services

Findings show that a thin majority of municipalities offer e-services. These services normally are provided on-site at the municipal offices; the e-services are supplementary. Of 90 municipalities, 47 of them (52.2%) offer some kind of online system for complaints and grievances: users can file their complaints against local officers or grievances regarding problems in their locality. Three municipalities (3.3%) provide online booking systems for documentation and records. After making a reservation, the user can come to the municipal officers and meet the registrar at the designated date and time. Two municipalities (2.2%) allow users to retrieve information on their payable local taxes (i.e. sign post tax, house and land tax, and maintenance tax) and print out tax payment vouchers. One municipality (1.1%) offers an online booking system for meeting rooms and other municipal venues. Users then need to bring the voucher and make payment at a bank. Around 43.3 percent of the municipalities do not provide any services on their websites (Table II).

TABLE II. E-SERVICES PROVIDED BY MUNICIPALITIES IN THAILAND (N = 90)

E-Services	Number	Percentage
Online system for complaints and grievances	47	52.2
Booking system for documentation and records	3	3.3
Local tax payment vouchers	2	2.2
Meeting room booking system	1	1.1
No e-services provided	39	43.3
No municipal websites found	2	2.2

#### VI. CONCLUSION

The current study has demonstrated that municipalities in Thailand provide a relatively limited e-services on their websites, implying that the implementation of e-government in the country has not much changed since the dawn of information age. The national government and related IT agencies of the government should provide human resources and technical support for the improvement of the municipal websites for greater accessibility and e-services. The government should also provide greater assistance in terms of software and hardware that are suitable for managing big statistical data, for ease of data analysis and prompt information-based decision making.

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