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Design Principles for Essentially Digital Governance

Digital technologies and platforms are now at the core of government; governments *are* their digital presence. The majority of citizen-government interactions take place digitally, generating huge quantities of social big data. These data provide policy-makers new sense-making capabilities, in terms of understanding citizens' needs, preferences, concerns and behaviour and generating capacity for innovation, efficiency and the agility to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

So in the design of governmental organizations and services, the digital comes first. We need to move beyond Digital Era Governance – the dominant reform paradigm of the 2000s (Dunleavy and Margetts, 2006, 2013). The Essentially Digital Governance (EDGe) model puts forward principles for the design of governmental organizations fit for purpose in a digital world. 'Do' principles guide the design of services including 'Use already existing digital data', building data science capacity in an intelligent centre–devolved delivery model, and 'Do it once!', using a government as platform approach. The principle of 'Isocratic (Do-It-Yourself) Administration' makes the most of citizens' willingness to manage their own affairs in digital settings. 'Choice' principles provide a normative framework for digital governance, including 'Value equality of outcome over process' (a direct confrontation of the bureaucratic model); 'Experimental learning', using RCTs in a build and learn approach; and the 'Keep the state nodal' obligation, to avoid loss of government visibility in a digital world.

Each of these principles have cultural origins from outside government, in the world of computers, information systems and the internet. By synthesizing them in a 'whole of government' approach, governments may avoid some of the cultural clashes that characterized earlier models of digital governance. Essentially Digital Governance can harness the willingness of citizens to participate in policy-making and the capacity of large-scale data to provide understanding, explanation and predictive models which can be used to tackle social problems.

Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S., & Tinkler, J. (2006) *Digital Era Governance: IT Corporations, the State, and e-Government* (Oxford University Press).

Margetts, H., & Dunleavy, P. (2013). The second wave of digital-era governance: a quasi-paradigm for government on the Web. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences*, 371(1987), 20120382.