THE PRESENCE STAGE OF E-GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND

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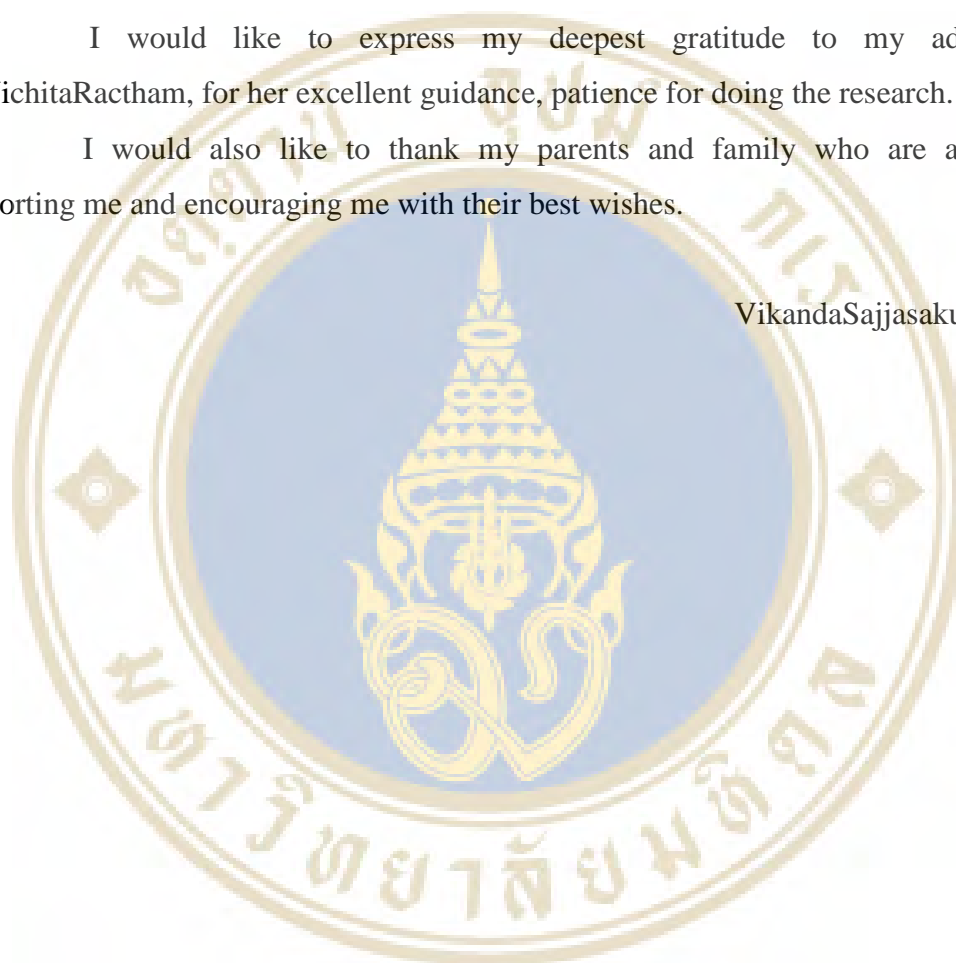
PRESENCE STAGE OF E-GOVERNMENT IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: The purpose of writing this paper is to examine the current implementation stage of e-government system in Thailand and concluding the possible opportunities in enhancing and stabilized the system to be ready for the next stage.

Design/ methodology/ approach: A brief examination and analysis on the current government's websites, the type of inputs they are using presently and interpreting to the audiences/citizens.

Findings: The findings and implications of this research show that Thailand is just one stage behind in reaching the most successful stage of e-government implementation; we've utilized information and communication technologies in order to successfully deliver the online services to citizens.

Practical Implication: The current understanding stage of e-government in Thailand would enhance involving parties such as Ministry of Information and Technology (MICT) in supporting and continually to pursue the development of public sector organizations in one context and also benefitting the country's future economical successes.

Originality/value: This paper is briefly containing up-to-date information and the analysis of Thailand current websites and their current stage of implementation.

KEY WORDS: e-Government /Thailand / Presence stage /
Implementation / Communication Technology

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In today's changing world, developing countries or industrialized countries, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become more powerful in influencing and boosting the growth of the economy and the competitiveness acrossall business related activities. This includes the way universities operate, the way the government provides services to their own citizens or even the way they interact with the share/stakeholders.

National and local governments are putting critical information online and automation systems for ICTs. In the hope, it will help enhance the way how governments and citizens interact with each other. Improving delivery of services to the public administration, resulting in a more efficient & satisfactory process to all government service related activities in all departments and sectors or vice versa. Also, it will help reduce pressure from the customers/citizens, emulating better practices for the private sector. Reducing the cost of administrative time and labor, therefore, creating a new and improved level of service that will result in more attraction from overseas investors. These investors will be more keen to invest in our country because they foreseen the stability and higher growth. In order for this innovation to work properly, professionalism and co-operation is required within these 3 sectors, the government sector, the business sector and the public sector.

A short visit to the government sector just to deal and get some "small" businesses done can be a quite upsetting and time consuming experience. In the presence, with more and more demand for "good service" on ICT and the continuous change of the rules and regulations demanded by the citizens, the governments are under a lot of pressure in providing and meeting the expectations and keeping the standards on a satisfactory and acceptable level. The initial phases of adopting information and communications technology to improve financial management

information and reporting, streamline the delivery of government services, enhance communication with the citizenry, and serve as a catalyst for empowering citizens to interact with the governments across the world.

E-government introduces the shifting of the paradigm from the normal traditional approach in the Public Administration to extending of services from the government and providing information to the public by using electronic means. This new shift of paradigm had brought about the revolution of service qualities being provided and delivered to the citizens. It covered the gaps in the government process, less time consuming through the use of one single window pages, making the process less confusing, better office, easier of recording and managing data, reduces corruption, improved attitude, behavior and job handling capacity from the staff that carrying out the tasks. (Monga, 2008)

Thailand's government has already appreciated the understanding and contribution of e-government to the government agenda. E-government or electronic government, implements a strategic approach which can also be divided into two strategic approaches, distributed and centralized. For the distributed approach, it helps the government to be able to encourage each individual agency in developing their own information technology (IT) systems on their own but still need to consider linking the systems together after implementing is completed. As for the centralized strategic approach, the center role is the government in developing of information technologies together with the public agencies.

In previous years, Thailand has dealt with both strategic approaches. By studying the current stage of e-government implementation experiences in Thailand, neighboring developing countries will be able to learn how to avoid failure and in rationalizing to apply the appropriate e-government approach that best suit them. Therefore, in this paper I'll present my own small findings which hopefully will be useful to whoever it might concern in the future.

1.2 Literature Review

A lot of studies have recorded the definition of e-government in many different ways: Coleman (2006) defined e-government as the combination of electrical information based services (e-administrations) by reinforcing with the participatory elements (e-democracy) in order to achieve the objective of "balancing e-government". E-government also being defined as the delivery of improving services to the citizens, businesses and other members of the society with a lot of changes, ways government manages information (Kumar et al., 2007).

1.2.1 The benefits & process of e-Government

By utilizing e-government, it is the key to the achievement of the integration of economic, social and environment goals for development planning; there are three main domains of e-government described below:
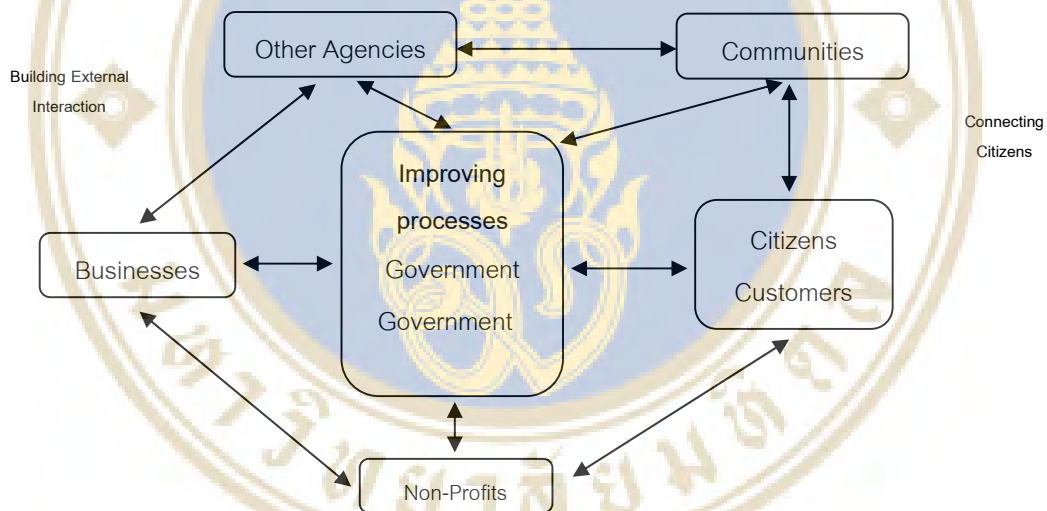
Recognize the opportunity in order to improve the government process. E-Administrative initiatives within this domain deal particularly with improving the internal workings of the public sector which include:

1.2.1.1 Cutting process costs: improve input and output ratio through reduction of financial and time costs.

1.2.1.2 Managing process performance: plan, monitor and control the performance of human, financial and other process resources.

1.2.1.3Making strategic connections in government: connecting arms, agencies, levels and data stores of government to strengthen capacity in order to develop and implement the strategy and policy that will guide the processes.

1.2.1.4 Creatingempowerment by transfer of power, authority and resources for processes from the existing locations to new ones.

Re-engineer the enabling environment of e-government that will help companies inter-connect within the government and citizens. E-Citizens & E-Services deal with the relationship between government and citizens: such as voters/stakeholders from the public sector and its legitimacy, or as its customers uses the public services. Incorporate with e-administrative which include:

Communicating with citizens and providing them with details of public sector activities that relate to certain types of accountability: making public servants more reliable in making decisions and carrying out actions.

Listening to citizens and increasing their input within the public sector's decisions and actions.

Improving public services by improving the services delivered to members of the public's dimension such as quality, convenience and cost.

Building coordination and improving connectivity between external interactions such as ecosystem and development for better outcomes. Such as e-society which deals with relationship between public agencies and other institutions - other public agencies, private sector companies, non-profit and community organizations which include:

Working better with businesses and improving the interaction between government and business. Such as digitizing, regulation of procurement from services to business, to improve quality, convenience and cost.

Developing and improving communities by building the social and economic capacity and capital of local communities.

Building new partnerships resulting from the creation of organizational groupings, achieving economic and social objectives.

1.2.2 Five Stages ofe-Government Development, *UnitedNationsDivisionforPublicEconomicsandPublicAdministration(2001)study,* **(U NASPA,2001)**

UnitedNationsDivisionforPublicEconomicsandPublicAdministration(2001)study"Benchmarking E-government: After analyzing the process and implementation, there are also four stages of framework that are used to identify which level of competence each country belongs to or is professed at. Because there has been growing recognition worldwide, e-government development in each country has varied, depending on how civilized and developed each of the countries are, the more developed the economies of the country are, the more advanced their ICT and e-government will be. We'll discuss in further details which stage Thailand belongs to in the next chapter.

United Nations Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (2001) study "Benchmarking E-government: A Global Perspective, Assessing the Progress of the UN Member States" identifies the five stages for quantifying progress of e- Government. The study identifies e-Government stages as a representative of the Government's level of development, based primarily on the content and deliverable services available through official websites. We'll describe the definition of each stage of the e-government first, with some of the examples being used in the country's most appropriate in details below. This will enhance and signify how much of the e-government needs to be improved in each of the stages:

Table 1.1 UN-ASPAFiveStages ofE-Government

STAGE	UN-ASPA Stage Description	SpecificCharacteristics / Features
Stage One	**Emerging Web Presence** • Sites serve as a public information source • Static information on thegovernment is provided • FAQsmaybefound • Contact information is provided	‰ Telephone Numbers ‰ Postal Address ‰ Email Address ‰ Services Offered ‰ Mandate, Organizational Structure, FAQs,Related RAs
Stage Two	**Enhanced Web Presence** • Access tospecific information thatis regularlyupdated • A central government homepage may act as a portal to other department sites • Useful documents maybe downloaded or ordered online • Search features, e-mail and areas for comments are accessible	‰ Updated in the past 1.5 months ‰ Forms are available (html,word, sometimeszip, pdf) ‰ Search function /Site Map ‰ Message Board / Feedback Form ‰ Newsletters or Publications / Purchase Information
Stage Three	**Interactive Web Presence** • A National governmentwebsite frequently acts as a portal • Users can search specialized databases • Forms can be downloaded and/or submitted online • Secure sites and passwordsbegin to emerge	‰ Downloadable Forms (pdf, zip) ‰ Specialized Databases ‰ On-Line Forms Submission ‰ Interactive Elements e.g. Chatroom / Forum/ Discussion Board ‰ User Log-in and Password (internal use orpublic)
Stage Four	**TransactionalWeb Presence** • Userswill be able to conduct complete and secure transactions online • The governmentwebsitewillallowusers to customize a portal in order to directly access services based on specific needs and priorities • Siteswillbe ultimatelysecure	‰ Public Use Log-in and Password (NOT exclusive for internal use) ‰ Secure ‰ On-Line Payment ‰ Confirmation of request (e-mail confirmation / acknowledgment receipt) ‰ Displayof Securityand Privacy Policy

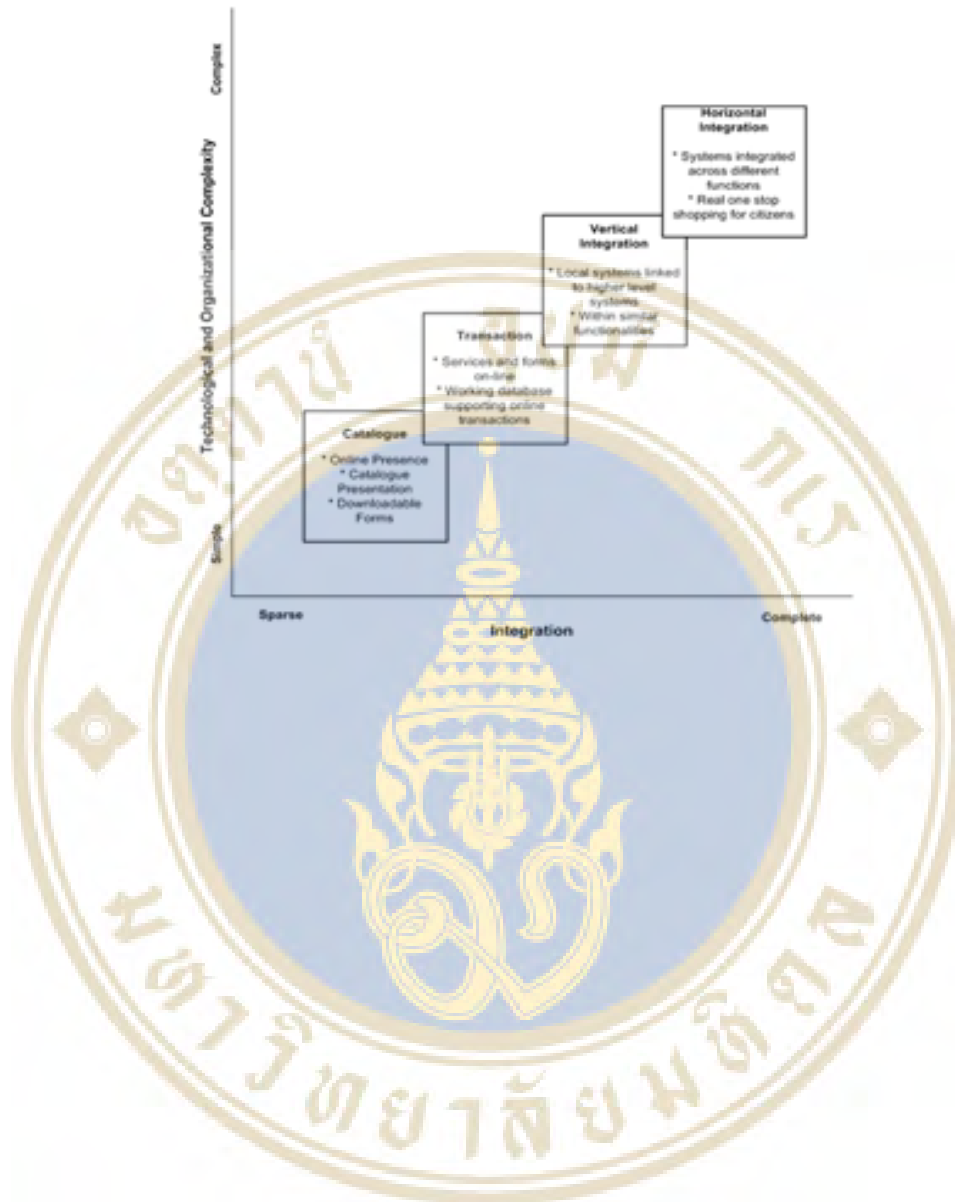|		
Stage Five	**FullyIntegratedWeb Presence** • Countryprovidesall services and links through a single portal • No defined demarcation between various agenciesand departments • All transactional services offered by governmentwill be available online	‰ All Department Information and Services maybe accessed through the Department Portal ‰ Cohesive interface coveringallattached agencies, concerned agencies and all services ‰ Frontline Services are fully-transactional online ‰ User mayCustomize his Department Portalpage ‰ Search Engine Encompasses attached

(Reference:Secure Sockets Layer - http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/S/SSL.html)

This allows for consistency in benchmarking and measurement of states' e-government progress over time which will enhance improvement in the future.
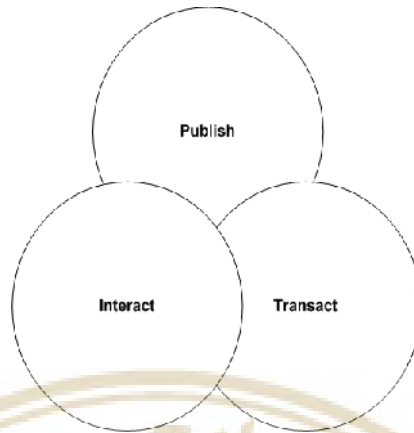
Thailand e-Government Portal has been developed to offer one-stop e-services to the public. The system serves as an efficient tool for the government to communicate with various government agencies, the business sector and the general public. There are presently twenty-five systems of government agencies linked to the e-Government Portal through the single sign-on system to enhance e-services. As the technology is one important part in revenue generation online, the government therefore tries to use this "back-office integration" through their transactional activities such as payment utilities, birth and car registration services (where citizens could obtain their driving licenses), ID cards, and birth certificates online in order to save cost for their human capital instead. These technologies however are not yet implemented in Thailand.

1.2.3Four Stage of E-Government Model,Layne& Lee Study, 2001

There are four stages of growth in e-Government that *Layne and Lee (2001)* had developed for the fully functional system. From the figure below, the horizontal integration: the integrating of the different functions and services while the vertical integration across the different levels is aligned and against the horizontal

Technological and Organizational Complexity

Complex

Simple

Horizontal Integration

* Systems integrated across different functions
* Real one stop shopping for citizens

Vertical Integration

* Local systems linked to higher level systems
* Within similar functionalities

Transaction

* Services and forms on-line
* Working database supporting online transactions

Catalogue

* Online Presence
* Catalogue Presentation
* Downloadable Forms

Sparse   Integration   Complete

Three Phases of E-Government

Progressive stages of technology infrastructure for e-government

is a very dynamic and highly responsive stage. The four waves are characterized by a common set of achievement and objectives that are being carried out by identical challenges.

            1.2.5.1 Automate: the first main focus on citizens and Web presence that is quite direct and easy to understand.

            1.2.5.2 Enhance:no further or much changes needed to make current application or policies in order to reach Wave 2.

            1.2.5.3 Integrate:the progression to Wave 3 is more complicated because it requires serious planning in transforming the business processes and integrating.

            1.2.5.4 Ondemand: the progressing to the Wave4,in transforming to the on demand model which involves three paths: business model transformation,infrastructure transformation and cultural transformation.

Table 1.2 The stages in the five modules, putting 5 studies together

Gartner	UN/ ASPA	Layne& Lee	WorldBank	IBM
Presence	Emerging Enhanced	Cataloguing	Publish	Automate Enhance
Interaction	Interactive		Interact	Integrate
Transaction	Transactional	Transaction	Transact	Ondemand
Transformation	Seamless	Verticalintegration Horizontalintegration		

From the above table, this is noted that e-Government involves multiple stages and phases of development and is not a one-step process. In order to implement e-Government into different phases that are not dependent on each other or require any phase to be completed before another new phase can start. However, conceptually these five modules offer four ways, putting in the perspectives of Accessing, Interacting, Transacting and Integrating levels. Moreover, the implementation of the e-government system occurred because it is cost effective and more efficient than other channels for governments to deal with their administrative related work which is more worthwhile and countable than the old usual ways of servicing.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Framework

From the mentioned literature review, Thailand is considered to be in the moderate stage, this studyproposed framework with 4 stages, as described below:

Table2.1: Framework of E-Government

Stages	Framework Description	Special features
Presence	▪ Serve as public information search ▪ Static information on the government is provided ▪ Contact information is provided	▪ Telephone number ▪ Postal Address ▪ Email address ▪ FAQs
Enhance	▪ Intranets ▪ Interactivity of communication ▪ Web based form ▪ Basic Search ▪ Linked sites	▪ Forms available in html, pdf, words. ▪ Search function ▪ Site maps ▪ Feedback forms
Transaction	▪ Users can conduct complete & secure transactions online ▪ Allow users to customize a portal in order to directly access services based ▪ Self service applications ▪ Mutual exchange of info ▪ Secure site with user pins/passwords	▪ Confirmation of receipts/ acknowledgment ▪ Users log in and password (both public & internal) ▪ Online payment
Integrate	▪ Provides all services and links through a single portal ▪ CRM applications ▪ Wireless Access ▪ No define demarcation between various agencies or departments ▪ All transactional services offered by government will be available online	▪ Frontline services are fully transactional ▪ Users can customized his department portal page ▪ Websites are attached with search engines

2.2 Research Methodology

There are two types of research methodology, qualitative and quantitative research methodology. We'll discuss in details below.

Qualitative Research: gaining and understanding of underlying reasons and motivations by providing insights into the problems being addressed and to generate the ideas or hypothesis for the later process of quantitative research. It relates the understanding to some aspects of social life or aim at the methodology rather than numbering for the data analyzing. (Judith Green, February 2007)

Quantitative Research: conclusive on the purpose that "quantify" the problem that spread out by concentrating on the big picture of the results through a larger population by the mean of collecting data through offline or online surveys, audits, point of purchase and click-streams.

The study relies on using the qualitative approach, by selecting the appropriate websites exploratory of e-government systems currently being used in Thailand. Thailand is still considered to be under the moderate level of e-government. Below is the e-government presence by United Nations of each country. Listed below are the 5 following websites that relate to the framework that have been implemented for this study.

1. The Revenue Department Website
(http://www.rd.go.th/publish/index_eng.html)

2. Department of Land Transport
(http://www.dlt.go.th/th/index.php)

3. Tourism Authority Thailand
(http://www.tourismthailand.org/home)

4. The State Railway Thailand
(http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/)

5. Thai Provident Fund
(http://www.thaipvd.com/content_en.php?content_id=00313)

The Revenue Department

WebServices
e - Services
e - Form
Annual Report
Tax Calendar
Gallery
Contact us
SiteMap
Thai

Individuals & Employees   Business & Corporations   VAT & SBT   Miscellaneous

- Personal Income Tax
- e Form
- Tax Clearance Certificate
- English Certificates (PIT)

What's New

Tax Collected by The Revenue
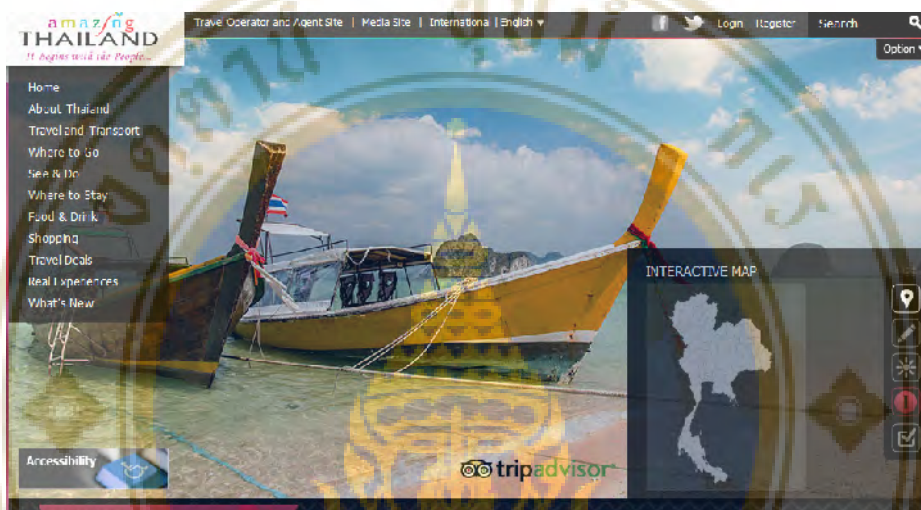Department, Fiscal Year 2013

Thailand Thematic Map
Tax Collection Fiscal Year 2012

THAIPVD.COM

กลต
Thai Provident Fund
กองทุนสำรองเลี้ยงชีพไทย

Home | SEC role | Sitemap Contact Us

Retirement Planning — Fund Management — Supervision — Laws and Regulations — Statistics —

WWW.THAIPVD.COM

Get started

Setting Up a Provident Fund

Employer

Fund Member

Fund Committee

Service Provider

- **What is provident fund?**

Provident fund ("the fund") is a fund set up voluntarily between the employer and employees. Assets of the fund consist of money contributed by both employer and employees, which means not only employees save for their retirement, employer also helps them adding to the fund. The contribution to be made by employer shall always equal the rate of the employee's savings or higher. Therefore, setting up of a provident fund can be regarded as a kind of benefit so as to motivate employees to work with the employer.

Provident fund not only provides a tool for employees to save concurrently with the employer's assistance, assets of the fund are further managed by a professional fund management called "Asset Management Company (AMC)." The benefits derived from management are distributed to members of the fund proportionately.

Member's savings could grow over time on account of the monthly contributions from both employer and employee, plus assets derived from investments or interests incurred from assets of the fund. However, interests and dividends from investments will not be paid to fund members before membership termination since the purpose of setting up the fund is to accumulate the savings into a large amount with the intention to assure a quality life after retirement. Moreover, members are not entitled to withdraw part of
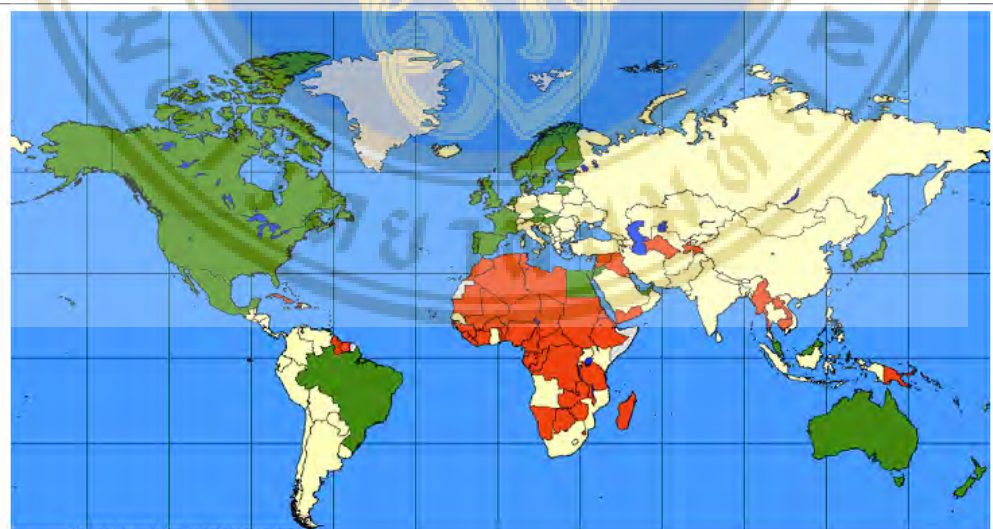
Source: UN E-government
Report 2008

Level of E-government Presence
- Missing Data
- Low
- Moderate
- High

Table 3.1: Stages of each websites

Website/Level of E-Government	Presence	Interact/ Enhance	Transaction	Integrate
1. The Revenue Department Website			✓	
2. Department of Land Transport			✓	
3. Tourism Authority Thailand			✓	
4. The State Railway Thailand			✓	
5. Thai Provident Fund		✓		

3.3 Challenges

There are still a lot of challenges faced by e-Government in order to reach the integrate stage. Monga, A. (2008), Dada (2006), Bwalya(2009), Mutula,Mostert (2008) and others have discussed these challenges.

3.3.1Internet Penetration is still very low: Thailand is not fully supported with information technology accessibility; therefore, the internet diffusion is still at a medium level through all parts of Thailand. In places where it is accessible, cost is a barrier for accessibility.

3.3.2Telecommunication infrastructure constraint: not all Thai citizens can access information and knowledge equally because of a very low ICT knowledge and educated people to spread and make people learn and understand. Although the government has tried to invest and support in e-government and ICT infrastructure, fully equipped technologies and infrastructure are mostly available in the developed towns and villages areas. The "backbone" of the networking nationwide, the civilian telecommunications, costs are relatively high in securing the appropriate services which are yet one of the main concerns in better promotion of the implementation of e-Government system. (Alomari, 2006)

3.3.3 Lack of Institutional framework to support e-Government: by setting up a high level steering committee, monitoring implementation activities, ensuring government investment reviews and establishing thorough mandates and responsibilities for implementing the e-government, can help better support and create the institutional framework to ensure effective development and proper co-ordination across all government and related agencies for the system. (UNDP, 2006)

3.3.4Privacy and security concerns: Other technical challenges that obscure the implementation are the security and the privacy of the information being taken into account for this research and all around the world. (Layton, 2007) Names, ID numbers or any other private information are considered to be quite insecure for users to risk sharing online, be it the public agencies or electronically are still seen as unsafe and dangerous. E-service systems are still unsafe for most of the websites and with many cases of "hackers" stealing personal information from time to time, not secure enough to protect this private information from being misused or fraudulent. Therefore in order to proper implement the e-government activities; the government needs to maintain trust and build confidence with the citizens. This is a difficult situation that the governments are still trying succeed. (US-GAO Report, 2002)

3.3.5 Limited IT skills and training: due to the lack of training, IT education and knowledge is still considered to be quite low in Thailand. This includes the citizens, the governments sectors or even in the businesses themselves. Therefore it's quite difficult to create awareness and promote the adoption of e-Government to run smoothly and successfully. Both the employees and those people involved are not educated enough with the necessary skills and knowledge.

3.4 Conclusion & Recommendation

Without doubt the e-Government is a very good system for practicing if the government aims to achieve and serve excellence to all interaction of services. Thailand is still considered as a developing country and therefore it is advisory to make use of the e-Government system to help enhance the economic diversification and delivery of services provided to related citizens. The benefits that the country will gain are much more worthy for the returns that everyone will gain back, if the system is adopted and used correctly by the government of course.

From my opinion, it is advisory that the government agencies should continue to develop the e-government service system to ultimately get the degree of seamless information and transaction of integrated level.

Services that can be included in order to reach the integrate level are described as below:

3.4.1 Audio & Video: the government agencies need to provide audio and video inputs onto the websites so as to elaborate and convey the messages of the organization, the work tasks, services provided, procedures and rules and regulations. This will lessen the confusion to the citizens in reading too much information provided on the websites. Audio and videos are much easier for anybody to understand. Lessening the burden of misinterpreting or misunderstanding information for all parties involved.

3.4.2 Multi-lingual websites: continuously updating relating information from the government agencies onto their own websites, applying more than one language. As the AEC is coming up in the year 2015, by starting to implement and practice the multi-lingual especially English to all. This will enhance and strengthen the benefits to the staff, enabling them to get accustomed to the English system now. This will make things easier for the citizens to understand in the future.

3.4.3 More interaction with the citizens themselves: the promotion of all important communication channels is very important for all the government agencies to know how to promote properly what best fits to the context of the organizations such as social media, newsgroup both offline and online, text messaging on mobile and smart phone applications, all aspects of channels that are available and able to reach.

3.4.4 Online transactional and connected services: the agencies that have not yet provided any electrical transactions and services online should start implementing them now. This will highlight the importance use of the electronic application submission and transactions. However these implementations also require support and involvement from the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT), should be the one elaborating and giving essential information to each of the agencies to update and keep track of their own websites' status or improvement. Making sure that all websites stay connected and related to one another, such relevant agencies are Ministry of ICT, Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), Ministry of Transport (Department of Land Transport), Ministry of Defense, and The Royal Thai Army.

3.4.5 Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) should continuously engage and provide the related information with the U.N. e-Government survey. This will ensure the information will always be updated correctly and also the accuracy of the results from their questionnaires will be more reliable for their own usage and assessments in the future.

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