

E-Government Public-Private Partnerships: The “Gorod” Payments System in Siberia

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June 4, 2004

Revised: Sept. 10, 2004

Accepted for Publication in the

Journal of Enterprise Information Management, Oct., 2005

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Research paper; case study

Purpose

To examine and draw lessons from the experience of creating and implementing a unique e-government payments system (“Gorod”) in a little-studied area of the world.

Design/methodology/approach

An interpretivistic methodology is used based on interviews of system developers, discussion forums, collection and tabulation of Gorod website data, and contemporaneous sources.

Findings

Gorod permits hundreds of thousands of citizens in about 25 Siberian cities to make in-person or electronic payments on a single, unified bill to a wide range of public and private service suppliers. While Gorod does improve municipal payments collections, cities where banks run Gorod have been less successful than those with more neutral public-private partnerships.

Research limitations/implications

Diffusion of innovation theory provides a useful framework for examining a system at this level of granularity.

Practical implications

By joining public and private activities in one system, and by creating an infrastructure for the expansion of e-government as the population transfers its activity to the Internet, Gorod suggests a viable means for bringing e-government to countries with less developed payment means and lower levels of Internet penetration. When appropriate incentives are in place, e-government technologies can have successful diffusion without requiring an extensive, top-down program.

Originality/value

This subject is unknown in the Western academic literature. While exhibiting typical characteristics suggested by diffusion of innovation theory, Gorod also shows a means of overcoming the “chicken and egg” network externalities problem.

Keywords: e-government, public-private partnership, Internet, payments, municipal services, innovation diffusion