**Electronic government in Britain**

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1. **Introduction**

 Britain aims to be in the vanguard of the information age. To this end, central government has made a number of policy commitments towards the uptake of information and communications technologies, including the headline target of making all public services available electronically by 2005. This chapter will argue that despite a nationally prescribed strategy and nationally imposed targets, the reality of local e-government is one of variable practice and disparate successes.

1. **Body**
2. **Administrative framework and jurisdiction**
3. **Institutional and administrative framework**

① Unitary authorities that are found in mainly urban areas (151 in total) and which cover all of the local government functions within their area.

② Two-tier authorities that are generally found in more rural parts of England and which comprise counties, each of which has several districts within it. In total, there are 34 county councils which have 238 districts within them.

1. **Local autonomy and self-administration**

The debate around local autonomy has been an ongoing one in Britain, shaped partly by the issue of parliamentary sovereignty but also by concerns for local democracy and local self-government. Local autonomy has received a considerable boost in recent years.

1. **State-citizen relations**

Like most countries, local government in Britain has traditionally been the agency that has most contact with citizens. Nevertheless, its history is not one of cosy relations with citizens.

1. **Inter-agency coordination and cooperation**

Enhanced coordination and cooperation between different agencies of the state, and, indeed, with other social and economic stakeholders in a given territory, is a cornerstone of New Labor’s modernization programmed.

1. **National strategy for local e-government**

Britain’s national strategy for local e-government has been shaped by a number of key initiatives over the last few years. This is not the realm of any one political party in Britain.

1. **IT infrastructure**

The infrastructure for supporting e-government is shaped by two sets of factors (supply factors and demand factors).

1. **National strategy for implementing e-government**

This strategy is the belief that government services should be available continuously and not just during conventional working hours.

① The UK Online portal

This website was launched by the OeE in January 2001 to replace the open government ‘finder site’ as the ‘centre piece of a substantial programme of campaign spending and infrastructure investment’.

② The e-Government Interoperability Framework

A central concern of all those associated with the development of e-government in the UK is the need for information and connectivity standards across organizations.

1. **Players**

The OeE is undoubtedly one of the major players in the e-government agenda in the UK, and necessarily forms the focus of much of any analysis of e-government policy-making.

1. **Implementation, control and guidance**

Implementation of the strategy appears to depend upon three main tools: the development of national framework with supporting systems; the financing and encouragement of local experiments with a strong emphasis upon evaluation and policy-learning; and the collection of systematic information on e-government development across local authorities.

1. **Inter-agency cooperation**

At a superficial level, there is a good deal of inter-agency cooperation in the area of e-government. For example, Pathfinder project and so on. The degree of autonomy and independence of local government, however, should not be overstated.

1. **Conclusions**

This chapter began by arguing that Britain aims to be in the vanguard of the information age and that e-government is a central pillar of its strategy to achieve this aim. In concluding the chapter, therefore, it is useful to reflect upon some of the strengths and weaknesses of the UK’s approach to implementing local e-government. It is, of course, easy to be critical of a complex and constantly evolving policy. Much has been achieved in the UK to move it from a vision of e-government to a point at which it is becoming a reality. However, there is still much to do, especially if the dangers of a two-speed information age are to be avoided.

**<References>**

The e-government of Great Britain, <https://www.gov.uk/>

The e-government of Korea, <http://www.korea.go.kr/>