

Beyond return on investment

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Many governments around the world are looking for ways to best serve and interact with their citizens, while at the same time, acting in a transparent manner. To do this, many choose an approach that emphasizes citizen service, interoperability, and connected government frameworks, and invest in technologies to help them accomplish their missions. But how effective are these investments? In my latest blog post, I discussed several elements that government organizations should consider when making information technology (IT) investment decisions. In that post, I presented a whitepaper with ideas for a simple econometric model that could enable the measure of economic impact provided by IT connected government systems.

In addition to that whitepaper, we also developed an internal Microsoft tool called “E-Gov Economics Model: Real Impact for Better Government,” which lets users model their existing citizen services, describing processes, transactions, and access channels. The overall objective of this tool is to:

- Quantify the financial benefits of a connected government using real-world inputs
- Calculate the potential savings to government and the much larger economic impact of recapturing productive citizen time

Both the whitepaper and the tool have received very good reviews from government officers who had access to them, as well as from academics who are interested in e-governance models and evaluating process efficiency in government. The tool was even mentioned in an excellent whitepaper from the University at Albany’s Center for Technology in Government (CTG), which proposed a methodology to extend the scope of the tool. Under CTG’s approach, the tool would include decision-making criteria that go beyond the basics of return on investment (ROI) in government. The authors, Anthony M. Cresswell and Djoko Sigit Sayogo, propose a detailed public value framework in their whitepaper, and more details are available in this brief abstract.

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