Abstract: The e-governance remains very critical and crucial in public administration effectiveness and efficiency. The success and survival of a state is contingent upon administrative as well as technological strategies and public efforts to achieve set goals. This paper discusses the nature, aim and scope of e-governance, specifically in terms of the need to extend its relevance and benefits to the level of public administration in the interest of both the government and the public, specifically in relation to Nigeria. It adopts a qualitative approach and discusses the concepts of public administration, governance and electronic governance thereby creating a distinction among the various concepts. Furthermore, the understanding of the positive impact of e-governance on public administration activist through the various literary arguments and schools of thought, especially the theory of principal-agent have also been captured, the essence of which is to generate a clearer understanding of the discourse under review. The paper’s findings revealed that e-governance applications have emerged rapidly in, especially in the developing world. Many countries now use e-governance as an enabling tool to increase efficiency, enhance transparency, collect more revenue and facilitate public sector reform. Above all, it is revealed that e-governance remains a powerful enabling tool that has the capacity to help governments achieve some of their development and administrative reform goals. The paper ends with conclusions.

Keywords: Governance, Electronic Governance, Electronic Government, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Public Administration.

1. Introduction

There is a growing consensus among governments across the world of the need to revitalize public administration to facilitate customer centered, cost-efficient, and user-friendly delivery of services to citizens and businesses, thereby improving the quality of governmental functions. More and more public administration emphasizes how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used to support
transformational change in governmental functions globally to achieve efficiency and cost effective service delivery to citizens (Bhuiyan, 2011).

Technology has strengthened reforms in many areas and e-Government is widely recognized as fundamental to the reform, and as a modernization and improvement of government (Foley & Alfonso, 2009; PIU, 2000). As a result, governments are introducing innovations in their organizational structure, practices, and capacities, as well as in the way they mobilize, deploy and utilize the human capital and information, technological, and financial resources for service delivery to citizens (UN, 2008).

The potential for electronic government to transform public administration has been heralded at various points throughout the past half-century (Fatile, 2012). E-governance which is also conceived as the adoption of web-based technologies to deliver and conduct government services has become a global trend in public administration (Gasco, 2003). E-governance often comes with a promise to improve public administration in terms of efficiency, one of the primary values in public administration (Lee and Perry, 2002). The role of electronic governance in public administration has become a continuing topic of discussion and argument. The current worldwide reassessment of the functions of the State and of public officials and civil servants arises from two major sources (Rondinelli, 2007): one is globalization and its impacts on what governments must do to adapt and respond to rapidly changing international economic, social, political and technological trends; the other is increasing dissatisfaction among citizens in many countries with the functions of government and the services that public administrations provide.

By the 1960s and the 1970s, as computers started to appear in government organisations, some public officials and commentators predicted that information technology would bring a revolution to public administration (Fatile, 2012). As increasingly sophisticated information and communication technologies (ICTs) spread across all organisations during the 1980s and 1990s, politicians jostled to claim credit for “information age movement”. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, as use of internet became increasingly widespread, claims for the transformative power of ICTs became correspondingly enthusiastic (Margetts, 2005).

Assessment made by World Bank (2001) indicates that e-governance is in nascent stage of implementation in both developed and developing countries. Government departments in many developing countries publish information on web sites as a first step towards e-government. According to Schwester (2009), e-governance initially began as process where government entities developed websites and began populating these sites with information. After mastering this information dissemination aspect, government units moved toward processing online transactions. Subsequent to mastering transaction processing, governments moved across a continuum and engaged citizens online in a participatory framework; that is, offering Internet applications that connect citizens with public administrators, decision-makers, and perhaps elected officials.

In recent years, the world has witnessed the rapid growth and ever-increasing importance of ICT (UN, 2011). Accordingly, it is hard to imagine an organization operating successfully in the 21st century without a strong ICT infrastructure. ICT has become a dynamic and strategic asset of an organization for the successful achievement of its mission and goals. ICT is essential to managing transactions, information and knowledge necessary to achieve and sustain an organization’s mandate and goals. Hence, organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on a well-functioning ICT infrastructure. Shapiro and Varian (91999) have argued that the rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT), especially the emergence of the Internet in recent years, has been influencing our society in general and business management in particular in such a fundamental way only comparable to the impact of the industrial revolution more than a hundred years ago.

Governance is defined as the way things get done, rather than just the things that are done (McLellan, 2011). According to the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), e-Government is defined as: “the pragmatic use of the most innovative information and communication technologies, like the internet, to deliver efficient and cost-effective services, information and knowledge. It is an unequivocal commitment by decision-makers to strengthening the partnership between the private citizen and the public sector (Wong & Welch, 2004, p. 292). In general ICT Governance emerged as an attempt of
business to deal with the impacts of major software system failures on business (Gotterbarn, 2009). Although it was primarily a part of corporate governance which focused on information technology, many ICT professional organizations contributed to the process of developing standards. These organizations advocated that their members adhere to these standards.

Nigeria is facing a number of challenges in the introduction of e-Government. Challenges to Nigeria’s e-governance efforts are well documented. One is the socio-economic inadequacies that exist in countries belonging to the Sub-Sahara region. Other identified challenges include, poor organizational skills, inadequate infrastructural support and poor or limited human capital resources (Ifinedo, 2005). Local e-governance initiatives have also been examined, but from a macro level where identification of policies and initiatives has occurred and the impacts measured using surveys (Ogbomo, 2009).

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1 Public administration

Administration is often discussed in the generic sense, and if one qualifies the term by the word ‘public’, it refers to the practice of administration in a particular segment of society (Adebayo, 1981). Public administration has to do with the marshalling of human and material resources in order to achieve the objectives of public policy (Balogun, 1983). In line with this description, Pfiffner (1935) conceives public administration as the coordination of individual and group efforts to carry out public policy and being mainly occupied in accordance with the daily work of government. Central to this argument is the view of Wilson (1887) that public administration is simply ‘government in action’. In essence, the task of public administration is ‘to straighten the paths of government, to make its business less un-business-like, to strengthen and purify its organization, and to crown its duties with dutifulness’. Wilson broadly defines public administration as the machinery for implementing government policy and by extension; it is the study of the most efficient way of organizing the executive branch of government, its institution and its procedures.

According to UNDP (2004), public administration refers to: (a) the aggregate machinery (policies, rules, procedures, systems, organizational structures, personnel, etc.) funded by the state budget and in charge of the management and direction of the affairs of the executive government, and its interaction with other stakeholders in the state, society and external environment. (b) the management and implementation of the whole set of government activities dealing with the implementation of laws, regulations and decisions of the government and the management related to the provision of public services.

2.2 Governance

Governance is conventionally conceptualized, as the process by which a political system achieves such values as accountability, participation, openness (or transparency) and respect for the rule of law and due bureaucratic process. It also includes, according to Boeninger (1992), the capacities of a system to exercise authority, win legitimacy, adjudicate conflicts as well as carry out programme implementation. In other words, the bottom line of governance is its ability to respond to the needs, aspirations and yearnings of majority of the citizenry. And once a political system is able to achieve these, it is referred to as responsive, accountable and effective governance.

2.3 Electronic governance

Usually e-Government is defined as the usage of ICT to provide public services (therefore, it is closely related to an administrative management unit). For instance, digital technologies (remote network systems, internet and mobile technologies) are used to facilitate the process of decision-making for public institutions, improve public policy in local communities and transform relations with citizens, business and other public institutions. (Gatautis, 2008). E-governance refers to the use of information technologies (such as the Internet, the World Wide Web, and mobile computing) by government agencies that can transform their relationship with citizens, businesses, different areas of government, and other governments. These technologies help deliver government services to citizens, improve interactions with businesses and
industries, and provide access to information (Moon, 2002). E-governance can also be defined as the use of emerging information and communication technologies to facilitate the processes of government and public administration (Drucker, 2001). This definition focuses on the use of ICT to assist in the administration or management of government. ICT governance is viewed as the responsibility of executives and the board of directors, and consists of the leadership, organisational structures and processes that ensure that the enterprise’s ICT sustains and extends the organisation’s strategies and objectives (ITGI, 2003).

Basu (2004) states that “e-governance refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government”. In terms of actually using these technologies following are some ends, better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with businesses and industries, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. Benefits resulting from these activities could be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and cost reductions. According to Chatfield (2009), e-governance refers to the use of information and communication technologies, particularly the internet, to deliver government information and services. E-governance is understood as the use of ICT to promote more efficient and cost effective government, facilitate more convenient government services, allow greater government access to information, and make government more accountable to the citizens (World Bank, 1992).

For Ahmedabad (2003), e-governance is expected to help deliver cost-effective and easy to access service to citizens, and improve processing of transactions both within the government, and between the government and other agencies. Above all and for the purpose of this paper, the definition of e-governance as provided by the European Commission (2003) will be preferable: e-governance is the use of information and communication technologies in public administrations combined with organizational change and new skills in order to improve public services and democratic processes and strengthen support to public policies. The United Nations World Public Sector Report (2003) notes that e-governance is justified if it enhances the capacity of public administration to increase the supply of public value, i.e., the things that people want.

2.4 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Origin and Comparative meanings of e-Governance

The term e-governance is of recent origin and there is no commonly accepted definition. E-governance concept originated at the beginning of 21st century, mostly as a copy of e-commerce into public sector. All intentions were directed towards the presence of the public services on the Internet. The development of electronic public services enters in the new phase, which is mostly determined by reengineering of existing processes of public government, and public sector by its nature (based on information and communications) is ideal for international increase of efficiency and quality (Mario, et al 2009). The term was perhaps coined about a decade ago after the success of electronic commerce to represent a public sector equivalent of e-commerce. Definitions of e-governance abound. The definition of the concept of e-governance and its evolution in time has been the focus of a large body of research (Fang, 2002; Hu et al., 2009). More or less restrictive definitions of e-governance have been given, but there is still no unique definition of the term (Yildiz, 2004). Nevertheless, it has been generally recognized that e-governance offers a huge potential to increase the impact of government activities for citizens (Fang, 2002). This shows that the interpretation of e-governance is quite broad and divergent.

There are many definitions of e-governance, and the term itself is not universally used. Definitions of e-governance range from ‘the use of information technology to free movement of information to overcome the physical bounds of traditional paper and physical based systems’ (Okot-Uma, 2004), to ‘the use of technology to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees’ (Deloitte, 2003). The common theme behind these definitions is that e-governance involves the automation or computerization of existing paper-based procedures that will prompt new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding strategies, new ways of transacting
business, new ways of listening to citizens and communities, and new ways of organizing and delivering information (Okot-Uma, 2002).

Rao (2003) defined electronic governance as the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of government programs, projects and activities. E-governance may be understood as the performance of the public governance via the electronic medium in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the general public, and other agencies, and for performing government administration activities. The term refers to the process of using information technology, particularly the internet-based one, for automating and improving government operations. It covers both, internal and external operations of the government. Automation of internal government operations improves efficiency and effectiveness, while reducing the cost of governing. Automation of government external operations and their interactions with citizens also reduces the cost and improves the responsiveness bringing the benefits for both - the government and the citizens.

According to UNESCO (2005), e-governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services. The idea is to move beyond the passive information-giving to active citizen involvement in the decision-making process through the use of information and communication technologies. This is believed to be the core or essential benefit that introduction and use of e-governance can bring to the society.

The OECD e-Government Project, defines the ‘e-government’ as the use of information and communication technologies and particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government (OECD, 2003). Ultimately, e-governance aims to enhance access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens. More importantly, it aims to help strengthen government’s drive toward effective governance and increased transparency to better manage a country’s social and economic resources for development. The differences are not just semantic and definitions and terms adopted by individual countries have shifted, as priorities have changed, and as progress has been made towards particular objectives.

The European Union regards e-governance as a way for the modernization of public administration bringing it closer to civil society and businesses through the use of information and communication technologies. Its action plan, which was given the name of “e-Europe” and was launched at the Seville summit in 2000, envisages not only the development of high-speed access and the security of the network, trade and electronic services, but also on-line access to public administrations. EU confirms that the information and communication technologies (ICT) can help public administrations to cope with many challenges. However, the focus should not be on ICT itself. Instead it should be on the use of ICT combined with organizational change and new skills in order to improve public services, democratic processes and public policies (EU, 2003). It considers e-government as a prerequisite for improving Europe’s competitiveness in the 21st century.

According to the Council of Europe, e-governance is about the use of information technology to raise the quality of the services governments deliver to citizens and businesses. The concept of electronic governance covers the use of electronic technologies in three main areas of public action:

- Relations between the public authorities and civil society;
- Functioning of the public authorities at all stages of the democratic process (electronic democracy); and
- Provision of public services (electronic public services).

2.4.2 Electronic Government versus Electronic Governance

Both Electronic Government and Electronic Governance received numerous definitions in the literature, none of them becoming an accepted standard. For example, (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2003) introduced four definitions of Electronic Government: 1) Internet service delivery and other Internet-based activities by government; 2) all uses of ICT by government; 3) transforming public administration through the use of ICT; and 4) the use of ICT, particularly the Internet,
as a tool to achieve a better government. Grönlund & Horan (2005) further mapped these definitions into a democratic model of society with interrelated spheres of the political system, administrative system and civil society and the four definitions of Electronic Government mapped into these spheres: definition 1 belongs to the intersection between the administrative system and the civil society, definition 2 belongs to the administrative system, definition 3 belongs to the intersections between the administrative and political systems and between the administrative system and the civil society, and definition 4 belongs to the intersection between all three spheres.

Grönlund & Horan (2005) also pointed out the difference between Electronic Government referring to what is happening within government, and Electronic Governance (EGOV) referring to the whole system involved in managing the society. Similarly, “e-Governance comprises the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support public services, government administration, democratic processes, and relationships among citizens, civil society, the private sector, and the state” (Dawes, 2008). Based on this distinction, Estevez and Janowski (2013) put forward their own definition of Electronic Governance (EGOV): Electronic Governance is the application of technology by government to transform itself and its interactions with customers, in order to create impact on the society.

2.4.3 Objectives and Scope of E-Governance

The aim of e-governance is to allow the public to initiate a request for a particular government service without going to a government office or having direct contact with a government employee. The service is delivered through government web sites (Brannen, 2001). E-governance comprises of an alignment of ICT infrastructures, institutional reform, business processes and service content towards provision of high-quality and value added services to the citizens and businesses. The primary aim of governance is to regulate and protect the state and its citizens. It also has the mandate of managing the affairs of the state on behalf of the citizens. The use of electronic medium in governance, that is E-governance, is to facilitate the easy flow of interactions between the government and the citizens or its clients. Thus, e-governance enhances the efficiency and flexibility of providing public goods and services.

Wimmer and Traunmüller (2001) contend that the main objectives of e-governance should include the following: (1) restructuring administrative functions and processes; (2) reducing and overcoming barriers to coordination and cooperation within the public administration; and (3) the monitoring of government performance. Besides, Backus (2001) noted that there are two main objectives of e-governance, namely:

a. To provide citizens access to information and knowledge about the political process, about services and about choices available; and

b. To make possible the transition from passive information access to active citizen participation by:

- Informing the citizen
- Representing the citizen
- Encouraging the citizen
- Consulting the citizen
- Involving the citizen

The OECD listed out the following as the major objectives of e-governance:

- Online data collection to reduce data entry costs and automate error checking;
- Reduce the communication costs with citizens;
- Greater sharing of data within government and between the governments and other such stakeholders as NGOs, international agencies, and private sector firms;
- Greater re-use of data; and
- Reduce government publication and distribution costs through online publication (Gant, 2008).

In the same vein, Nkwe (2012) listed out the objectives of E-governance, to include:

- Cost reduction and efficiency gains;
- Quality of service delivery to businesses and customers;
• Transparency, anticorruption, accountability;
• Increase in the capacity of government;
• Network and community creation;
• Improve the quality of decision – making; and
• Promote use of ICT in other sectors of the society.

The scope of e-governance services extend from posting generally requested information on a website to providing and processing online requests such as electronic payment of taxes or other fees. The main rationale of e-governance initiatives is to put together services focused on citizens needs (Moon, 2002). E-governance involves novel forms of delivering and tailoring information and services, connecting communities and businesses locally and globally and reforming us towards digital democracy. E-governance offers flexible and convenient access to public information and services with the view of providing citizens an improved service (Moon, 2002).

In terms of scope, this covers the areas or sections which e-governance is sub-divided into. According to Ojo (2014) there are three broad scopes of e-governance, namely:

a. E-Administration: This is the application of ICT in the processes of government or the public sector organization;
b. E-Services: This is the use of the internet, the web and mobile technology to improve upon the delivery of government or public services; and
c. E-democracy: This is the application of ICTs in a view to enhancing greater involvement of citizens in the decision making processes of democratic institutions in the country.

Likewise, Savic (2006) stated out the scope of E-governance to include:
a. E – Democracy: This refers to the use of electronic mediums in between democratic institutions and processes to build links or relationship between the elected and the electorates. Thus, it includes:
• Creating access between the elected and the electorates;
• Opening discussion forum via the web, that is, e-participation;
• Providing access to public meetings and documentations arising from them; and
• Registering voters, and online voting, also known as e-voting.
b. E-government: This refers to the creation, allocation and execution of the policies, laws and regulations that provide legal backing to the use of ICTs in governance (Savic, 2006). E-government is a two pronged concept which includes:
• Disseminating information through the use of ICTs, and
• Delivering public goods and services through the improved processes of governance occasioned by the application of the internet, the web and mobile technology.
c. E-business: This can be referred to as the institutions and activities that outline interactions between the public sector and the private sector (Savic 2006). This involves the Government –to-Business model or type of e-governance that deals with the interactions between the government and private sector businesses, entrepreneurs, firms, etc (The Models of E-government would be exhaustively discussed in a separate sub-heading).

2.4.4 The State of e-Governance in Nigeria

Though e-governance implementation in Nigeria varies from level to level of government as well as agency to agency, there was actually an attempt at providing a unified, national framework of ICT adoption in governance. According to Olatokun and Adebayo (2012), the federal government of Nigeria, in 2001, announced ICT as a policy of national importance. This further culminated in the creation of a policy on information technology in the same year.

The need for adopting ICT in governance, that is, e-governance, came as an awareness that no country or its government can function properly in the information or digital age without the use of the web and other mobile internet technologies. Seeing the importance of ICT in governance, the Nigerian
Federal Government deemed it necessary for the country to have a national policy on ICT. Hence, in 2007, the enabling Act - the National Information Technology Development Act - was enacted by the National Assembly with an Agency established along with the Act, which was empowered to “plan, develop and promote the use of information technology in Nigeria” (Olatokun and Adebayo, 2012).

With the enabling act, various government agencies embarked on the implementation of ICTs in their operations. However, in 2011, the Federal Government created a new Ministry called the Ministry of Communications Technology which was saddled with the mandate of streamlining ICT development and progress in line with the nation’s plan for e-governance (Omerie and Omeire, 2014).

In 2012, a National ICT draft policy was presented by the ministerial committee on ICT policy harmonization which included several policy recommendations and reports. The following are the policy thrust of the National ICT draft policy of 2012, as it pertains to e-governance:

- To facilitate the implementation of e-government initiatives;
- To develop frameworks and guidelines, including interoperability and e-government framework for the enhanced development and use of ICT in the government;
- To develop and implement ICT training programs for public sector employees, in connection with introduction of e-government and other digital functions within government offices;
- To coordinate the integration of national e-government network infrastructure and services; and
- To promote e-government and other e-services that would foster broadband usages (National ICT Policy, 2012).

The Nigerian legal framework covering the use of ICT in governance is not based on an integrated system but on various policies. They include: the Information Policy, which is supervised by the National Media Commission; the Telecommunications Policy, which is regulated by the National Communications Commission (NCC); and the ICT policy which is overseen by NITDA which stands for the National Information Technology Development Agency (Fraser-Moleketi and Senghor, 2011).

The private sector was not left out of the drive for implementing ICTs in the business of governance in Nigeria. In 2007, the National Information Technology Development Act also provided for the avenue of public-private partnership in the adoption and management of ICTs in Nigeria by establishing the National e-Government Strategies limited (NeGST) (Fatile, 2012).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The paper uses principal-agent theory as a guide to analysis. Applied to the public sector, it focuses attention on problems of accountability and transparency created by asymmetric information flows between agents and principals (Lane, 2002; Laffont and Martimort, 2003), which leads to problems such as corruption and huge time and cost factor involved in service delivery. E-Governance has the advantage of empowering the principals who can either bypass agents by using IT based processes to help themselves or required to deal with principals empowered by improved knowledge of service delivery processes. These factors have the ability to transform the way public services are delivered and improve relationships between the public sector and citizens. IT enabled systems remove opportunities for corrupt use of discretion by disintermediating services and allowing citizens to conduct transactions themselves. Such systems also extend accessibility of information within the public sector and in the public domain and, in so doing cut the impacts of ‘distance’ and ‘time’ that shore up official monopolies of information. Further, by providing enhanced accounting, monitoring and auditing systems, such systems ensure that public business is more fully open to senior managerial and external scrutiny. More generally, there is less excuse for not publishing the rules and criteria governing decisions and entitlements and those responsible for particular decisions or activities can be more readily identified. Finally, enhanced communication means that citizens can be more fully involved in all aspects of government, including policy-making, thus reinforcing the creation of a culture of trust and mutual interest (Naz et al, 2006). E-Governance can also address a number of principal aims of quality: empowerment, efficiency and effectiveness, and customer-driven Teicher et al (2000).
3. Methodology

This paper dwells on a review of the literature and it primarily provides an analysis of secondary sources. It involves an analysis of secondary data derived from the literature and policy review all of which forms the core of this paper. Further information for this paper was obtained mainly from academic journals, articles, books, reports, and materials available on the Internet. The focus was on literature review of published national and international information resources with special attention given to literature published by international organizations and national governments. Therefore, the aim of the paper was to cover, through literature review, major and most relevant papers and topics which would be regarded as sufficient for proper understanding of the topic being studied. Moreover, this paper attempts to answer to the following research questions:

a. What are the aims and scope of e-governance?
b. What is the current state of e-governance in Nigeria?
c. Does e-governance facilitate effective public administration?
d. What are the problems and challenges for the implementation of e-governance?

4. Findings

E-governance applications have emerged rapidly in the developing world. Many countries use e-governance as an enabling tool to increase efficiency, enhance transparency, collect more revenue and facilitate public sector reform. While e-governance is not a panacea that can improve the performance of the public sector, it is a powerful enabling tool that has aided governments achieve some of their development and administrative reform goals (Fatilé, 2012). Although e-governance can be a catalyst for change, it has been argued that it is not a complete solution and it must be part of a broader commitment to reform the public sector (Bhatnagar, 2007). Three factors are critical for the successful implementation of e-government. These include willingness to reform, availability of information communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, and the institutional capacity to absorb and manage change.

The proponents of e-government are concerned about the ways for incorporating digital technology into exercise of power. Aware of the risks entailed in these technologies, it is being reaffirmed that there is need to strengthen democratic institutions and processes and to involve the public in political choices so that their needs and priorities are respected. By this is meant that Governments should involve the whole population, in particular by ensuring that the largest possible number of citizens is educated in the use of computers.

E-Governance is regarded as an ICT-based tool for strengthening democracy and supporting development. Proponents of e-governance concept argue that e-governance, combined with democratic intent, can make governments more responsive, can connect with citizens to effectively meet public challenges, and ultimately, can build a more sustainable future for the benefit of the whole of society and the world in which we live.

The introduction of e-Government is justified if it enhances the capacity of public administration to increase the supply of much needed public value (World Public Sector Report, 2003). For instance, the use of electronic service delivery frees citizens to engage with public services at their own convenience, not just when government offices are open. The interactive aspects of e-Government allow both citizens and bureaucrats to send and receive information (West, 2004), a major transformational shift in public policy, processes and functions.

The potential of e-Government to improve transparency and control corruption in public administration has received overwhelming attention from practitioners and researchers in this field (for example, Cho & Choi, 2005; Khan, 2009; Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2009; Lenk, 2006; Pathak, Singh, Belwal, Naz, & Smith, 2008; Pathak, Naz, Rahman, Smith, & Agarwal, 2009). Admittedly, transparency can be attained by providing citizens with more and direct access to governmental information, as increased transparency leads to decreased corruption.

Kim et al. (2009) has argued that e-Government reflects a “new face of government,” and similarly, one that is transforming government-citizens interactions at all levels of government, and within and
between governments around the globe (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009). An efficient and effective public administration is an essential precondition for economic and social development (Schuppen, 2009).

Heeks (1998) indicates that the level of corruption in the public sector sharply decreases in countries where e-Government exists. A recent report on Bangladesh found that due to computerization of the Railway Reservation System, the number of black-marketers has decreased considerably (Kabir, 2008). In the same vein, a survey in India has revealed that, in the states where e-Government has been established even partially, the corruption rate has substantially dropped. The survey has found that due to implementation of egovernance in some public sectors, the corruption rate in the Indian cities Kolkata and Mumbai has declined to 19% and 18% compared to 51% and 38% respectively in 2000 (Bhuiyan, 2010; Kabir, 2008). Many successful cases in developing countries demonstrate that the introduction of e-Government positively correlated to corruption control.

The benefits of e-governance come in different forms. Some relate to the provision of fast, inexpensive services to the population (Heeks, 2001) and for socioeconomic development and political reformations for developing countries (Ifinedo, 2004; Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005). E-governance enables the citizenry to participate in the governance of their country (Moon, 2002). Nowhere is this benefit more relevant than in the developing countries, where governance excludes a majority of their populations by either commission or omission. Similarly, corrupt practices that are rampant in many developing countries, including SSA, could benefit from a purposeful e-governance initiative (Ifinedo & Uwadia, 2005). Similarly, the fourth African Development Forum (held in Addis in October 2004) produced a Consensus Statement declaring that e-governance is an important innovation for enhancing good governance and strengthening the democratic process. It further acknowledged that E-governance can facilitate access to information, freedom of expression, greater equity, efficiency, productivity growth and social inclusion (Kitaw, 2006).

The potential benefits of e-governance that accrue from the use of IT according to Shatne (2001) and Symonds (2000) include: Reduced government spending and increased interest earning. Costs incurred by a government in providing services can be reduced by the use of the Internet. Reduction in the number of in person government contacts. Governments are under pressure to meet rising expectations for their service. With the use of the Internet more individuals are able to access the government’s services without necessarily going to the government office or contacting by telephone. The use of the Internet will reduce the negative attitude individuals have toward government agencies because not many people enjoy interacting with their government. Delivery of government services from any place to citizens 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Websites serve as convenient and cost effective platforms for centralized service provision. Businesses, residents, visitors, and intergovernmental agencies can easily access public information related to their specific needs by simply checking on different web links. They can also contact government officers directly though email or online request forms. One such development is the use of CRM software, which provides a vehicle through which governments can increase cooperation through integration of back office and front office, and another beneficial outcome of e-governance is the promotion of e-democracy. Some examples of digital democracy include voter registration, public opinion polling, and communication among elected representatives and their constituents.

Nigeria might benefit from e-governance initiatives (in its advanced forms) in many ways (Fatile, 2012). The climate of political instability that has bedeviled the country could be checked through e-governance endeavors. Properly implemented e-governance initiatives could help improve the culture, lack of transparency, and accountability seen in Nigeria. In addition, moving away from a heavily paper based system to an electronic system would reduce the need for man power. Thus, this would allow the process to be handled by lesser employees and therefore to reduce operations cost. No doubt, the society is moving toward the mobile connections. The ability of an e-governance service to be accessible to citizens irrespective of location throughout the country brings the next and potentially biggest benefit of an e-governance service (Muhammed, et al 2010).

E-governance can reduce or overcome barriers of coordination and cooperation within the Nigerian public administration (Fatile, 2012). Centralized databases and standards could become available to several
government agencies. Interoperability between government agencies increase and duplication of services may decrease. A poor country like Nigeria could benefit from such cost effectiveness in governance when common standards and timely data resources are shared. The improved services may enhance decision making in governance. The ongoing PSNet project in Nigeria is clearly a step in the right direction.

In recent years the concepts of government and administration have been transformed radically (Gatautis, 2008). Transformations were caused not only by growing requirements and expectations for ways of governing civil society to reflect modern methods of efficiency and productivity, but also the attitude that government should be more open to democratic control and accountability. Many authors state that e-Government ensures efficiency and democracy in a more economical way than it was forecasted before, and the application of ICT creates opportunities for government to modify the traditional compromise between these two objectives. However, new technologies allow moving still further. They help change the government by changing power and responsibility links between all participating parties – service providers and industry, public and private sector, and government and citizens.

In recent years, the world has witnessed the rapid growth and ever-increasing importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) (UN, 2011). ICT has become a dynamic, strategic and indispensable asset of an organization in the achievement of its mission and goals. In UN’s opinion, an effective ICT governance framework should include the following:

- A well-functioning ICT governance committee or equivalent, which should be composed of senior managers from all parts of the organizations and meet regularly, and whose functioning is reviewed periodically;
- Strong leadership over the ICT governance infrastructure by the executive management, preferably at the level of the deputy head of the organizations (recommendation 1);
- An appropriate Chief Information Officer (CIO) or equivalent in a senior-level post with overall responsibilities and authority and access to the executive management;
- A full-fledged corporate ICT strategy aligned to the organizations’ business needs and priorities, and yielding true value of the ICT investment, which should be reviewed and updated periodically;
- A well-established mechanism to monitor the implementation of the ICT strategy; and
- Strengthened efforts to track ICT costs in the organizations and conduct post-implementation reviews of major ICT investments so as to facilitate strategic decision-making, cost-effectiveness, accountability and transparency.

5. Conclusion

This paper has looked at the role of e-governance in improving service delivery and quality in the context of a developing country like Nigeria. It is argued in this paper that e-governance has the potential to improve service delivery and citizens’ satisfaction. The agenda for modernizing public administration through e-governance is a contemporary phenomenon in many countries as this promises a people-centric, accountable, and transparent government, and lessens transaction costs. From the experiences of other developing countries, Nigeria can learn a great deal. In order to achieve the articulated development goals of the current political administration, the government can begin to establish “Digital Nigerian Administration”. No doubt, “Corruption” and “poverty” are two powerful factors that seem to affect the lives of millions and have spillover effects on the quality of governance. It is suggested that e-governance can play a significant role in corruption control and poverty reduction, and thus offers opportunities to cost effective service delivery to citizens, a daunting task of modern public administration. The experiences of other developing countries demonstrate the benefit of e-governance. Drawing upon lessons from global experience, Nigeria can develop the appropriate policy guidelines on the implementation of e-governance, so as to help combat corruption and reduce poverty. The Nigerian government must build the economic capacity or the political will to carry out this task.
6. References


