



Government as a Platform: Critics of a Technocratic Culture of Public Governance in Digital Era

Leonid Smorgunov^(✉)

St. Petersburg State University, Universitetskaya nab., 7/9,
St. Petersburg 199034, Russia
l. smorgunov@spbu.ru

Abstract. The formation of the digital government nowadays belongs to the main directions of reforming public policy and governance. In Russia, the Federal Target Program “Digital Economy” is planned to be implemented with a conjugate transition from electronic to digital government. At the heart of the formation of the digital government is the idea of the state as a platform that allows to effectively implement state functions and services on a new technological basis. The technocratic approach that dominates this idea is accompanied by the conviction that effective public policy and governance is possible almost without a person and public relations. The paper aims to critically analyze the technocratic cultural values of the state as a platform. Adequate answers to the political challenges of the digital government (values of control, centralization, excessive governability, etc.) are possible when integrating a new culture of political opportunities for co-production and the emerging system of state governability through cooperation.

Keywords: Government · Platform · Technocratic approach · Citizen participation · E-government · Consumerism · Cooperation

1 Introduction

Historically, the transformation of public policy in the era of the communicative revolution in the 21st century is already restrained by the traditions laid down by the practice of the implemented e-government, in which considerable attention is paid to services, information and reactive behavior. E-government becomes “narrow” for evolving technology, providing new opportunities for public administration and politics, not only in form but also in content. At the same time, the movement for “e-government 4.0” is gaining momentum, which breaks old habitual forms of interaction between the state and society. Some researchers say that, apparently, it is necessary to abandon the adjective “electronic” in describing the structure and activity of state bodies and to talk either simply about “government 4.0” or to focus on its new mechanisms and the culture of interaction with citizens, using the term “citizen-centric-government” [7, 14]. This transition is connected with the technological and political basis of modern structures of coordination of interaction [5, 20]. In particular, it should be noted the notion of “platform”, which acquires not only the importance of an open

and neutral means of communication, but also a public basis for the formation of political networks.

In the process of transforming e-government from portals to platforms, the political nature of the possible use of the state as a platform was manifested. A narrowly technological approach to platforms allowed only to improve the efficiency of service delivery. A broader interpretation spoke of a change in the ideology of public policy, which began to be characterized by such features as the orientation toward citizens inclusion, the cooperation of the main stakeholders in the development of public decisions, the discursive practice of setting the agenda, and so on. And here “collaboration may now lead to a new role of the state: a state that rather enables and empowers the social creation of value by its citizens. It protects the infrastructure of P2P cooperation and the creation of commons: The state evolves into a manager of a “marketplace”, stimulating, enabling and organizing the assets of the country—the abilities and motivations of its citizens—in an efficient manner” [1, p. 188].

The idea of the state as a platform, designed by some scholars [12, 16, 17], received international support. In many countries, it acquired the character of a practical idea and was placed in the basis of appropriate administrative reforms [18]. This idea has support in Russia. However, in our opinion, often its use is based on technological optimism and does not take into account the complex structure of the public state. The platform, of course, is a technologically advanced tool and a base for using large data with various applications for connected governance [8]. However, the platform is not only a technology, but also a convenient basis for representing the state as a ground for civil activity. In this respect, the idea of the state as a platform cannot be effectively realized outside the social and political contexts. This paper draws attention to (1) the idea of the platform in the technological and socio-political sense, (2) describes the use of new technologies in the process of introducing e-government, (3) reveals the main content of the technological view on the idea of the state as a platform and (4) describes some areas of criticism of the technocratic use of this idea. The center is based on the Russian practice of using e-government and the idea of the state as a platform.

2 From Portal to Platform

In the first decade of the existence of electronic governments in the world (conditionally 1995–2005) they were organized into Internet portals. With the emergence of the ideology of “e-government 2.0” began to talk about the fact that the portals no longer provide the government with the whole complex of relations with society and business. They are narrow in their function and government-oriented. Not more portals are more democratic, but Internet platforms based on interactive Web 2.0 technology. In reality, there was a mixture of portals and platforms as a means of modern government activity and cooperation between business and society with the government. There is an international organization called the Open Government Partnership, opengovpartnership.org, which seeks to promote the ideas of a new e-government in the world, creating the basis for national reforms aimed at making governments more open, responsible and sensitive to citizen. It works already as a platform, not a portal, i.e. allows to carry out interaction on the basis of initiative use of electronic

applications. This organization was established in September 2011 by representatives of eight countries - Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Currently, this organization includes 63 countries.

Currently, the functioning of e-government is only partially organized in Internet portals, i.e. complex electronic means that provide for the implementation of a number of government functions and services for citizens. Internet portals provide search and information acquisition, interaction of citizens and organizations with state authorities, holding events for citizens and organizations, and providing public services. Internet platforms are complex electronic tools that provide not only services, but the participation of citizens in the choice of public services and influencing the decision-making process. If we use the direct meaning of the concept of platform as an aggregate of ICT 4.0, oriented to the use of a web application system on one server for interactivity and personal participation, modern public administration includes such technologies under the flag of “e-governance”. In this respect, electronic platforms are an open and technically neutral means of ensuring the free exchange of resources. In general, attention is drawn to such political characteristics of electronic platforms as the free structure of political opportunities for participation, the populist orientation of the policy of openness of content, egalitarian involvement, the stimulation of innovation, competitiveness.

E-government 4.0 has characteristics that promote democracy in the broadest sense of the word, including civic participation virtually in the day-to-day activities of the state and in the processes of providing public services. In this respect, e-government becomes the basis for the network interaction of citizens, associations of civil society and business with the state in various areas of public activity. At this stage, the importance of assessing the electronic participation of citizens through the diverse sites of such e-government. As Kay Erickson and Henry Vogt rightly write, “the e-government movement” not only transformed public administration, but also influenced decisively our political self-awareness. New electronic channels seem to create an attractive environment for a new kind of interaction between the government and citizens. New digital forms of policy and management include network-based inputs for organizing all government information and public services in accordance with the needs and interests of certain segments of the population. This approach from the standpoint of “one window” is built on the concept of self-service with the requirement for users to become more active and self-governing “ [14, p. 159]. Platforms are technical and information conditions for increasing the self-organization of communities formed in networks. Governability of a network commune is provided by network learning supported by platforms.

3 Russian E-Government Platforms

There are three main stages of Russian public policy in the implementation of new electronic technology in governmental activities and involving citizens in policy-making. The first stage is related to the Federal program “Electronic Russia (2002–2010). This could be named “involving public authorities in electronic space”. The second stage is connected to the Governmental program “Information Society

(2011–2020)”. This stage is “involving the general population in using electronic public services”. The third stage, which overlaps with the second one, is the development of open government in Russia. The third stage is directed to “cooperation of government and society in policy”. These three stages or trends in public policy are important for understanding the issue of open government implementation in Russia. These three steps show the process of forming the structure of political opportunities for more active involvement of citizens in public policy. It is particularly important in this context to identify three significant elements for the study of the structure: (1) the transformation of the mentality of instrumental use of new ICT (efficiency of public services) in their use as a means of civic engagement in public policy; (2) expansion of the platforms for citizens to influence the political agenda and their involvement in the process of formation of public decision-making; (3) the formation of the ideology of “open government” with the Russian understanding of mutual responsibility of citizens and the state for public policy.

There are some platforms which realize Russian idea of e-government. On 15 December 2009, *the Single Portal of Public and Municipal Services* (SPPMS) (www.gosuslugi.ru) was launched as a demonstration. The SPPMS provides a uniform point of access for citizens to the corresponding state and municipal services given by public authorities, to give to citizens and business organizations a uniform interface for access to governmental information and to receive public services with the possibility of transition to the Internet site of the authority responsible for granting concrete state service or to an Internet portal of public authorities of the subject of the Russian Federation (a regional portal of the public services). Among them the following services are provided - filing forms for registration of identification documents (passports, driver’s licenses), various children’s grants, and filling receipts for payment of penalties for infringement of traffic rules. In 2015, 4,200 state and municipal services were available on the Internet. However, according to monitoring by the Ministry of Communications, only about 50% of these services are operating.

To receive a public service the citizens must be registered in the Unified System of identification and authentication (ESIA). In 2015 the number of Russians registered in the Unified System of identification and authentication (ESIA), increased on 7 million. Currently (January, 2016), in the system almost 23,4 million people are registered.

The intensive development of electronic government in Russia was started in 2011 when the platform of “BolshoePravitelstvo” (Big Government) was put on the Internet in a demonstrative version. The ‘Big Government’ idea was equal to the ‘Open Government’ (open.gov.ru). The whole system of open government in Russia started to form in 2012, which took a civil-centered approach as the basis of its work. Visitors to the site 10 thousand per month, views more than 40 thousand.

The Portal of Open Data of the RF (data.gov.ru). Here, the Portal focuses on the most current information about the public data of federal authorities, regional authorities and other organizations, places documented data sets, links and metadata of published data sets, information about software products and information services created on the basis of open data. It also publishes normative legal acts regulating the activities of state bodies on disclosure of data, methodical and journalistic resources. Here, communication interfaces have been implemented to interact with organizations that act as owners of socially important data.

Let's show the results of Rosstat's research on the indicator "The proportion of citizens using the mechanism for obtaining state and municipal services in electronic form" (Fig. 1). In Russia in general, 63.4% of citizens in 2017 received electronic public services. The leaders in this indicator in 2017 were the Moscow region (86% of respondents who received state and municipal services in the last 12 months indicated that they did this via the Internet), the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (86%), the Republic of Tatarstan (81%), The Krasnoyarsk Krai (80%), the Republic of Tyva (79%).

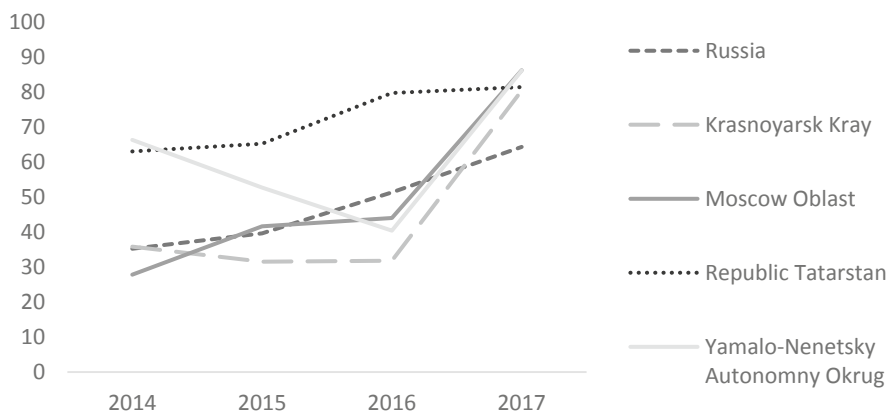


Fig. 1. Percentage of citizens who received electronic public services

To compare the level of e-government development in Russia, we used the indicators of the e-government development index (EGDI) used by the UN for the annual review of the state of the world (see Table 1).

Table 1. E-government development index (UNPAN, 2016)

	Global	Europe	Estonia	Russia	UK
EGDI	0,4222	0,7241	0,8334	0,7215	0,9193
OSI	0,4623	0,6926	0,8913	0,7319	1
TII	0,3711	0,6438	0,7329	0,6091	0,8177
HCI	0,6433	0,836	0,8761	0,8234	0,9402
EPI	0,4625	0,6985	0,8136	0,7458	1

Russia here is compared by three main index indicators, by the index itself and by the index of electronic participation (EPI) with the most developed countries implementing the idea of the state as a platform. This is the UK and Estonia¹. Also, the state

¹ "In 2013, the UK signed a memorandum of understanding with Estonia, representing 'a commitment by the two countries to work together on developing public services that are digital by default' In

of affairs in Russia is compared with Europe and the average indicators in the world. The E-Government Development Index (EGDI) is a weighted average of normalised scores on the three most important dimensions of e-government, namely: scope and quality of online services (Online Service Index, OSI), status of the development of telecommunication infrastructure (Telecommunication Infrastructure Index, TII) and inherent human capital (Human Capital Index, HCI). Each of these sets of indices is in itself a composite measure that can be extracted and analysed independently [22, p. 133].

Russia in this rating of 2016 takes 35 place. Great Britain is in the first place, and Estonia is at 13. Russian indicators for all components of the index are above the average world data, and its indicators are comparable to the average in Europe. This is clearly seen in Fig. 2. Data on online services (OSI) and the development of e-participation (EPI) in Russia is higher than the average in Europe. This shows the significant progress of Russia in the development of the e-government in recent years.

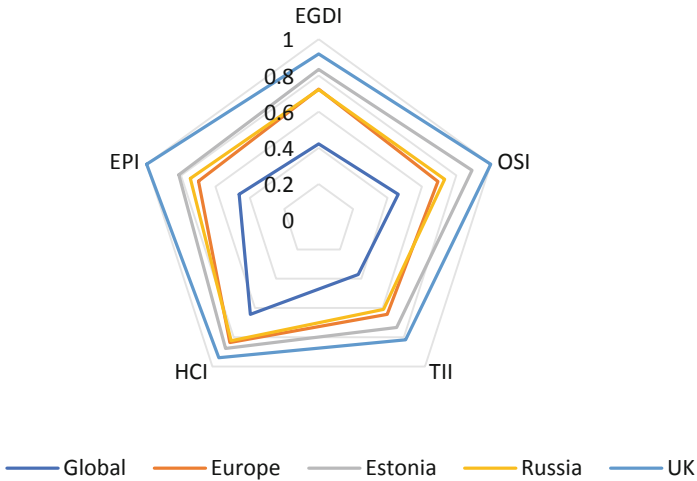


Fig. 2. E-government development index (UNPAN, 2016)

Of course, there are a number of problems with the implementation of the idea of e-government in Russia. First of all, it should be said about the digital inequality that exists in various aspects - generation, regional, social. The greatest digital differentiation is observed between the inhabitants of the city and the village. Although the proportion of users is growing everywhere, but there is no convergence of positions on this indicator between the city and the countryside. There is practically no difference between men and women. Women lag behind men by less than one percent.

(Footnote 1 continued)

2016, accolades finally came the UK's way, with the UK leading the UN rankings for digital government, just as Estonia was slipping down to a middling position" [18, p. 25].

Secondly, it is often said that the development of electronic platforms in Russia should be viewed as an imitation fact that has little effect on real politics and the real interaction of citizens with the state. Of course, some limited use of electronic platforms is available both from officials and from citizens. However, the gradual and expanding use of these platforms indicates a gradual process of learning interaction through electronic mechanisms. Third, there is a certain distrust on both sides of the use of electronic means. It is overcome only by a gradual process of increasing the effectiveness of the provision of public services and the adoption of citizens' initiatives.

4 Russian Idea of a State as a Platform

At present, Russia is implementing the concept of "e-government". However, in April 2016, the World Bank and the Institute for the Development of the Information Society project "Digital Government 2020. Prospects for Russia", in which it is recommended to develop the concept of "digital government". This document defines a "digital government" as a government, created and operating so that when optimizing, transforming and creating public services, the advantages of digital data are used. The emphasis is on information and data, not on processes and services, as it was in the concept of "e-government" [9]. Many governments now think how to provide application programming interfaces to different intermediaries and to open opportunities for new private and public sector services for reducing costs of government itself and increasing policy effectiveness. This approach has been termed "Government as a Platform" by O'Reilly [12, 13]. "The initial focus on information and communications technology (ICT) was aimed at improving efficiency and productivity, as a precondition for sound fiscal policies. In the longer-term, the use of digital technologies will need to be considered in the broader context in which governments are operating, with users' perspectives increasingly to the fore" [11, p. 9].

Approved by the decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 9, 2017 No. 203, the Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in the Russian Federation for 2017–2030 defines a list of promising technologies (which includes artificial intelligence, Internet of things, processing of large amounts of data etc.) and, in principle, sets the task of applying them to the government bodies of the Russian Federation. In July 2017, the government program "Development of the digital economy" was adopted, which, although it does not contain a direct section dealing with the digital government, but focuses on the formation of the corresponding public administration.

The Center for Strategic Research, headed by Alexei Kudrin (now the Chairman of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation), has been developing a project of the state as a platform since 2017. In 2018 the Center offered its vision of this process in a special report [19]. In the future, we will use this document and related materials to describe the constituent elements and principles of this public administration model.

Two key characteristics of the "State-as-Platform" are the provision of maximum "human orientation" of the results of governance and provision of services, and at the same time the maximum "human independence" of the processes of rendering services (both in collecting and processing information, and in making decisions).

It is necessary to create a transparent public administration system that will be based on a data-centric and process approach and will provide the following effects:

- “From documents to data”: collection, storage, processing and ordering of all necessary data are provided, rules for differentiating access to data (including assigning them to different degrees of secrecy) and protecting data, storing and archiving data, responsibility for the correctness of the data (based on the data lake concept), the priority of trusted data over paper documents was established, complete abandonment of paperwork and the transfer of processes to digital form after their qualitative reengineering;
- state information systems are transferred to a platform that allows to ensure “seamlessness” when using any stored data and functionality on the basis of uniform regulatory rules;
- the decisions made are transparent - first of all, due to the maximum possible disclosure of data, the introduction of automated decision-making technologies and the maximum elimination of the human factor, thereby ensuring the necessary level of trust in the public administration system;
- decisions are made on the basis of real-time data, as well as reliable historical data;
- a digital ecosystem has been created in which citizens and business interact with the state in a multi-channel mode using various mobile devices, providing the necessary convenience and speed, and which, with the relevant speed, allows to expand the opportunities for interaction of citizens and business with the state;
- provides the ability to create independent application/service providers for users;
- established practice of continuous improvement of processes based on feedback from users on the level of satisfaction with the solution of their tasks;
- the costs for the state apparatus are optimized by eliminating unnecessary processes, functions, and the staffing of civil servants.

Accordingly, these ideas a government should start working as an advanced IT company. Proposed basic principles could be the following:

Integrity/controlling: the presence of a single integrated IT architecture (a single IT architect).

Unique/deduplication: identification of unique data and unique services in the zone one business/state agency. Elimination of duplication/erosion of their elements (under a single architectural IT control).

Formalization/algorithmization: bringing services from manual/semi-automated, unclearly formalized unstructured management objects to the unique services with structured unique data (for example, judges will have to render solutions in a strict structured format, available for machine interpretation).

Blockness/efficiency: the implementation of End-To-End processes (services that are complete in their meaning), which are logical workflow of the services and data with maximum reuse of the services and data of adjacent government agencies (absence of duplication of services by public bodies).

Layering/flexibility of governance: a clear division of architecture into a triad of front-line scenarios, back-up scenarios, an interaction between systems. Each of the three components must be holistic (one IT implementation with derived open communication protocols).

Quick development and implementation: development teams work in agile, flexible rules for forming technical assignments, financing, implementation.

As claimed by the developers of this idea “of course, it was important for us to offer a vision image of the future state, in which the state apparatus is small, decision is accepted quickly, there are no intermediaries in the form of state bodies between the person and his data, the possibility of constructing individual trajectories in the development and solution of life situations that a person faces, both in everyday life and in work” [19, p. 3].

5 Critics of Technocratic Approach to a State as a Platform

More or less radical criticism of e-government in general is based on new trends, manifested as in the development of information technology, and in politics and society in this century. Of course, many of these trends have already manifested themselves at the end of the last century, however, their growing importance became clear only today. These tendencies are also characteristic for criticizing the idea of the state as a platform. One can single out the following main directions of the critical approach to the technological theory of the state/government as a platform:

- criticism of the opportunistic nature of the use of ICT in politics and public administration;
- criticism of the consumerism approach to e-government due to the dominance of the ideology of the new public management;
- criticize the prevailing emphasis on information, its storage, dissemination and use in government portals and not take into account that modern public administration is based more on knowledge than information;
- criticism of the liberal/individualistic model of democracy, on which the idea of the state as a platform was based.

All these directions of criticism, of course, are connected with criticism of the optimistic attitude towards the use of new information technologies, which is based on the belief that the technological parameters of development are the determinants of social changes. However, public administration and public policy are social phenomena with their parameters and deterministic relations. We agree with the statement that “government is inherently a social enterprise. The problems of digital government are not entirely technical and often not common to typical businesses and service providers, and little commercial effort can be found addressing the non-technical and uniquely governmental aspects of government needs. In particular, decisions on target constituencies and functionality in government services (such as issues of privacy and trustworthiness) are legal and political, not subject to simple economic or business tradeoffs. Such intertwining of social, legal and technical issues is something that can best be addressed by research efforts targeted specifically at digital government. Therefore, in addition to government’s ultimate reliance on utilization of technology, disciplines such as sociology, political science, public administration, business, and law are inextricably involved” [3, p. 7]. Therefore, “the key issues that need to be tackled

are about the suitability of technology in government processes rather than developing the right technology” [4, p. 221].

In the process of critically examining the possibilities of new ICTs that have arisen in the course of the post-industrial (fourth) revolution, two main questions arise, to which optimists and pessimists respond in different ways. The first question touches on the problem of the depth of the transformation of technology: How revolutionary are the new ICTs, so that it can be said about their fundamental difference from the previous media and communication? The second question is related to the first and concerns the revolutionizing influence of ICT on political practice and relations: Do new ICTs require new policies and management? Is there something radically new in this process of the Internet?

Criticism, on the one hand, of course, tries to adapt new technologies to old forms and relations. On the other hand, it is recognized that technology affects society in a complex way in a direct and indirect form. And yet, “maybe we need to expand or move beyond our traditional definitions of what constitutes a political one”. Technologies could contribute to the development of the nature of political activity and disputes, as proponents of technological optimism write cautiously. The sociotechnical concept of introducing ICT in public administration and politics, of course, a technique put in a social context, and the effectiveness of its use is determined by a complex combination of socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological institutions, attitudes, and attributes, but it is one thing to regard technical innovations as additional and adapt them to the existing system, and the other - to see prospects in the simultaneous change of technology and the surrounding social institutions. “The political approach to DG research addresses the effects of information and technology on transparency, accountability, and citizen and community engagement” [15, p. 3].

In the course of administrative reforms based on the ideology of new public management, this discussion was related to the role of e-government in this process, whether it is an instrument for solving the tasks of reform, or it itself requires reforming public administration. For supporters of the application value of e-government, on the one hand, it is only some additional conceptual and practical means for new public management and reforms based on it. Some reputable experts say that the new public management has had little effect on the interest in new information technologies, and only its actual death as an influential ideology has made it possible to talk about the transition to the era of digital governance (digital-era governance) [10]. The new public management was seen as a global theory of administrative reforms that were implemented in national contexts and which this ideology took little account of. In this respect, the introduction of the state as a platform also claims a global project without taking into account the national and cultural specifics. We agree that “the cultural perspective shows how reforms and change in public organizations trigger an institutionalization process that gradually introduces the ‘core informal norms and values’... Hence, a reform is more likely to be successful when its underlying values are better aligned with the values embedded in the existing administrative system” [5, p. 5].

The program for introducing the state as a platform focuses primarily on the ideology of new public management with its main idea “to make the government effective and cheap”. To a large extent this means that, using e-government, it is possible to provide public services for citizens and businesses more efficiently and less costly. It is

no accident that the main task of introducing e-government in many countries was the rapid use of government portals to provide the largest number of services. In general, this task turned out to be feasible, and the possible services using the Internet turned out to be qualitative, cheap and fast, although, naturally, there are difficulties and problems in this process. However, it turned out that the consumerist approach to the e-government suffers from many shortcomings, as well as the ideology of the new state management in general. In general, no one particularly challenged the feasibility of electronic services, it was said that this emphasis is clearly not enough when considering the possibilities of new ICT and the Internet. Especially many among these critics are those who consider the functions of the government to provide services and its relationship with citizens through a socio-political prism. Andrew Chadwick and Christopher May point out the limited nature of the attitude of the government and citizens when the latter act as “clients” of the state. ICTs will increase the provision of services with more accurately targeted communication with citizens and faster responses [to them], but the democratic possibility of such communication is generally ignored. In the center of the managerial model lies the premise that the changes are additional. While ICTs can challenge and provide opportunities for governments (their interactions with the national economy and, more broadly, with civil society), their basic operational logic remains unchanged [6].

The information approach is dominant in the theory and practice of e-government. It is recognized that e-government is an effective means of accumulating government online documents, providing information services to citizens, businesses, disseminating information and sharing it among government departments to improve decision-making and overall management. Modern governments place a huge amount of information on their portals, and this is often considered the main indicator of their information transparency. The use of large data in this regard is considered a breakthrough in increasing the effectiveness of the government.

However, the information paradigm is now in conflict with the principles of a knowledge-based society. The circulation of knowledge implies a different nature of information exchanges. Haridimos Tsoukas summarizes the limitations of the information paradigm for the analysis of organizational knowledge. First, the world, social and natural, is thought to consist of units of information - decontextualized representations - and we tend to explore the world through layers of abstract representations of the world. Secondly, information is viewed through the prism of the “metaphor of the channel”: information is supposed to be objective and exist independently of human agents. Thirdly, in an information rich society, social engineering becomes the dominant form of policy making: the world is thought of as rationally managed mainly through the collection, functioning and manipulation of necessary information about it. Hence the paradoxes of the information society: the more information, the less understanding; the more information, the less confidence; the more social engineering, the more problems [21, pp. 20, 21–22]. Therefore, the digital government cannot be conceived only as a platform for providing a multitude of public services in electronic form, i.e. as technology of an impersonal market of services and goods. The state as a platform can only take place in unity with the new deliberative character of the political

regime as a whole. “Digital governance can be viewed as a tool for providing citizens with the ability to choose the manner in which they interact with governments. It is a mechanism for ensuring that ICTs are used effectively to improve the flow of information between citizen and government... In general, digital government involves electronic service delivery, electronic democracy, and e-governance (digital support for policymaking and the policy process)” [2, p. 130].

6 Conclusion

The development of the conceptual foundations for the introduction of ICT in the system of public policy and management is carried out as quickly as the technology itself. Theoretical language in the 1990s up to the present time has used various concepts to describe this situation: “online government”, “digital government”, “network government”, “e-government”, “mobile government”, “electronic government”, “government as a platform”. If in the initial period this evolution was determined to a large extent by the theories of management, organization, public administration, informatics, in the last ten years political science has been seriously influenced by this process. The result of its influence, recognized by experts of other fields of knowledge, is the conceptual design of the modern movement for the introduction of ICT in public administration and politics in the ideology of e-governance. This ideology is based on new trends in social development - the network society, the communication revolution, the knowledge society, the growing importance of risk and uncertainty in social processes, personalization, etc. Political science in this regard was more sensitive than before to interdisciplinary synthesis with cognitive science, social synergetic, sociological phenomenology, communication science, etc. And the fact that this turned out to be effective is confirmed by the discursive, but still acceptance of the research governments, and international organizations of a new conceptual paradigm of governance and e-government.

An attempt to reduce the use of the idea of the state as a platform to a pragmatic version of an effective mechanism for the provision of public services will have only partial support. This attempt does not take into account the complex nature of the introduction of any technology in the living space of public policy. The brake of reform here, obviously, will be two components of the context of any administrative reform: first, basic cultural values, embodied in the existing system of public administration; secondly, the close connection between the administrative reform and the political regime. The technology of the fourth technical revolution is keeping pace with the need for civic participation and cooperation of the state, civil society and business. Without this context, reform on a purely technological type “state as a platform” is doomed to half of purely commercial success.

Funding. The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This work was supported with a grant from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (grant 18-011-00756 A “Study of citizens participation and building digital government”).

References

1. Al-Ani, A.: Government as a platform: services, participation and policies. In: Friedrichsen, M., Kamalipour, Y. (eds.) *Digital Transformation in Journalism and News Media*. MBI, pp. 179–196. Springer, Cham (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-27786-8_14
2. Asgarkhani, M.: The reality of social inclusion through digital government. *J. Technol. Hum. Serv.* **25**(1–2), 127–146 (2007). https://doi.org/10.1300/J017v25n01_09
3. Arens, Y., Callan, J., Dawes, S.S., Fountain, J., Hovy, E., Marchionini, G.: *Cyberinfrastructure and digital government* (2003). http://www.digitalgovernment.org/archive/library/pdf/dg_cyberinfrastructure.pdf. Accessed 12 May 2018
4. Aleixo, C., Nunes, M., Isaias, P.: Usability and digital inclusion: standards and guidelines. *Int. J. Public Adm.* **35**, 221–239 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2011.646568>
5. Castelnovo, W., Sorrentino, M.: The digital government imperative: a context-aware perspective. *Public Manag. Rev.* (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2017.1305693>
6. Chadwick, A., May, C.: Interaction between states and citizens in the age of the Internet: “e-Government” in the United States, Britain, and the European Union. In: *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*. Malden, MA, USA, vol. 16, no. 2 (2003)
7. *Citizen Service Platform: Strategies to Transform Government in the 2.0 World*. Microsoft (2010)
8. Dais, A., Nikolaidou, M., Alexopoulou, N., Anagnostopoulos, D.: Introducing a public agency networking platform towards supporting connected governance. In: Wimmer, M.A., Scholl, H.J., Ferro, E. (eds.) *EGOV 2008*. LNCS, vol. 5184, pp. 375–387. Springer, Heidelberg (2008). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-85204-9_32
9. *Digital Government 2020: Prospects for Russia* (2016). <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/562371467117654718/pdf/105318-WP-PUBLIC-Digital-Government-2020.pdf>. Accessed 17 May 2018
10. Dunleavy, P., Margetta, H., Bastow, S., Tinkler, J.: New public management is dead – long live digital-era governance. *J. Public Adm. Res. Theory* **16**(3), 467–494 (2005)
11. *OECD Comparative Study: Digital Government Strategies for Transforming Public Services in the Welfare Areas*. OECD (2016)
12. O’Reilly, T.: *Government as a platform*. In: Lathrop, D., Ruma, L. (eds.) *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*. O’Reilly Media, Sebastopol (2010)
13. O’Reilly, T.: *What’s the Future and Why It’s up to Us*. Penguin Random House, London (2017)
14. Eriksson, K., Vogt, H.: On self-service democracy: configurations of individualizing governance and self-directed citizenship. *Eur. J. Soc. Theory* **16**(2), 153–173 (2013)
15. Gil-Garcia, J., Sharon, S., Pardo, T.: Digital government and public management research: finding the crossroads. *Public Manag. Rev.* (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2017.1327181>
16. Gillespie, T.: The politics of ‘platforms’. *New Media Soc.* **12**(3), 347–364 (2010)
17. Knox, C.: Public administrators’ use of social media platforms: overcoming the legitimacy dilemma? *Adm. Soc.* **48**(4), 477–496 (2016)
18. Margetts, H., Naumann, A.: *Government as a platform: what can estonia show the world?* (2017). <https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/publications/government-as-a-platform-what-can-estonia-show-the-world.html>. Accessed 12 May 2018

19. Petrov, M., Burov, V., Shkliaruk, M., Sharov, A.: Gosudarstvo kak platforma. (Kiber)gosudarstvo dlia tsifrovoy ekonomiki. Tsifrovaya transformatsia. [State as a platform. (Cyber) state for digital economy. Digital transformation]. Moscow, The Center for Strategic Research (2018)
20. Parker, G., Van Alstyne, M., Choudary, S.: Platform Revolution: How Networked Markets Are Transforming the Economy and - How to Make Them Work for You. W. W. Norton & Company, New York (2016)
21. Tsoukas, H.: Complex Knowledge. Studies in Organizational Epistemology. Oxford University Press, Oxford (2005)
22. United Nations E-Government Survey 2016: E-Government in Support of Sustainable development. United Nations, New York (2016)