E-Governance and the Challenges of Public Service Delivery in Nigeria: A Discourse of the Fourth Republic

Onwunyi, Ugochukwu Mmaduabuchi¹ and Okoli, Chukwunonso. C.²

¹ Department of Political Science, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University
² Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic, Oko

Abstract
The provision of effective and efficient services to the masses has become the core job description of the public officials (career and elected) in Nigerian public service and that is why it has become imperative to engage in a continuous search for the best way through which the efforts of the public officials can be turned to a concrete reality. The task of this study is to examine the role of e-governance in service delivery. The study made judicious use of secondary sources of data while the New Public Management Model (NPM) was employed as the theoretical frame work of analysis. The study found out that e-governance to a very large extent has brought about an improved service delivery in Nigeria. The study equally found out that there are inhibitions that pose a great threat to the successful operation of the e-governance policy. In this regards the study recommends that, there is need to provide the necessary quantity and quality infrastructure that will aid e-governance implementation, which will engender better public service delivery in Nigeria. Secondly, the study suggests that the government should also enact Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laws that will make computer literacy a compulsory aspect for every public or civil servant both at the local, state and federal levels. Such policies should also involve the adoption of effective ICT awareness with computer-related literacy training programmes introduced in our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.

Keywords: E-governance, Public, Service delivery, Efficiency, New Public Management

Introduction
Global shifts towards the advancement as well as the deployment of Internet communications by governments emerged in the nineties, with the advent of the World Wide Web (WWW). The technology e-governance initiative has come a long way since then. With the increase in Internet and mobile connections, the citizens are learning to exploit their new mode of access in wide ranging ways. They have started expecting more and more information and services online form governments and corporate organizations to further their civic, professional and personal lives, thus creating abundant evidences that the new ‘e-citizenship’ is taking hold (Dada, 2006).
The concept of e-Governance has its origins during the seventies with a focus on development of in-house government applications in the areas of defense, economic monitoring, planning and the deployment of IT to manage data intensive functions related to elections, census, tax administration etc. The efforts of the National Informatics Center (NIC) to connect all the district headquarters during the eighties was a very significant development. From the early nineties, IT technologies were supplemented by ICT technologies to extend its use for wider sectoral applications with policy emphasis on reaching out to the rural areas and taking in greater inputs from NGO’s and private sector as well. There has been increasing involvement of international donor agencies under the framework of e-governance for development to catalyze the development of e-governance laws and technologies in developing countries (Ajayi, 2003).

While the emphasis has been primarily on automation and computerization, state governments have also endeavored to use ICT tools into connectivity, networking, setting up systems for processing information and delivering services. At a micro level, this has ranged from IT automation in individual departments, electronic file handling and workflow systems, access to entitlements, public grievance systems, service delivery for high volume routine transactions such as payments of bills, tax dues to meeting poverty, alleviation goals through the promotion of entrepreneurial models and provisions of market information. The thrust has varied across initiatives, with some focusing on enabling the citizen-state interface for various government services, and others focusing on bettering live hoods (Abasili et al., 2017). Every state government has taken the initiatives to form an IT task force to outline IT policy document for the state and the citizen charters have started appearing on government websites.

For governments, the more overt motivation to shift from manual processes to IT-enabled processes may increase efficiency in administration and service delivery, but this shift can be conceived as a worthwhile investment with potential for returns. Nigeria joined the global train of ICT like most developing countries as a consumer of the technologies particularly in the areas of personal computers and digital electronics. However, over time, we have been able to innovate and make them relevant to our needs. The Oxford Business Group 2010 Report on Nigeria states that: “Microsoft’s regional office for Anglophone West Africa is in Nigeria and announced that growth in the hardware market has been between 30% and 40% in recent year.

E-governance in Nigeria was introduced with the formulation of the Nigerian National Policy for Information Technology in March 2001, with the cardinal objectives among others to: Improve the accessibility to public administration for all citizens, bringing transparency to government processes, bringing the government to the doorsteps of people by creating virtual forum and facilities to strengthen accessibility to government information and facilitating interaction between the governed and government leading to transparency, accountability and the strengthening of democracy. And also by utilising IT opportunities to restructure government, citizens and business interfaces for better governance, improved trade and commerce and administrative effectiveness (Nigerian National Policy for Information Technology, 2001). It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to examine the relationship and links which exists between e-governance and public service delivery.
E-governance

E-government represents the introduction of a great wave of technological innovations as well as government reinvention. E-government’s importance in public administration stems from the fact that it is a way for governments to use the most innovative information and communication technologies, particularly web-based Internet applications, to provide citizens and businesses with more convenient access to government information and services, to improve the quality of the services and to provide greater opportunities to participate in democratic institutions and processes. Shailendra & Sharma (2007:3), sees e-governance as “an instrument that will radically help transform the relationship between the government and society. While Sebastian & Supriya (2013:31), perceive e-governance as the effective use of ICTs, particularly the Web-based Internet applications, for better governance and service delivery.

Accordingly, Ojo (2014:79), sees e-governance as the “application of Information Communication Technology by the government to enhance accountability, create awareness and ensure transparency in the management of government business.” Dada (2006:1), opines that e-governance is “not only the computerisation of a government system, but a belief in the ability of technology to achieve high levels of improvement in various areas of government, thus transforming the nature of politics and the relations between governments and citizens.” E-governance is seen to be sub-divided into e-Service (interface with customers in delivering services to society), e-Commerce (cash transactions), e-Democracy (political dialogue with citizen), e-Decision-making (better informed public interest decisions), e-Management (improved management of ICT resources and staff) (Van der Walt, 2003).

Service Delivery

Chukwuemeka (2007), views service delivery as the achievement of targets (performance/output/productivity) of the tasks assigned to organizations or employees’ within particular period of time. It involves the execution of duties and responsibilities assigned by constituted authorities which one have promised to do, so as to achieve set goals of an organization. According to Oronsaye (2010:31), public service delivery can be seen as “the process of meeting the needs of citizens through prompt and efficient procedures.” This implies that the interaction between government and citizens are such that the needs of the citizens are met in a timely manner, thereby making the citizens key in public service delivery. The implication here is that as the private sector considers its customer as ‘king’, thereby ensuring quality service delivery, the public should be regarded as ‘master’ and the beneficiary of enhanced performance of the public service (Aladegbola & Jaiyeola, 2016:162).

Theoretical Explanations

This paper is anchored on the New Public Management Model (NPM) as its theoretical frame work of analysis. The New Public Management model was introduced in public organizations in the late 1980s as a new (or renewed) focus on the importance of management and ‘production engineering’ in public service delivery, which often linked to doctrines of economic rationalism by scholars from United Kingdom and Australia, Hood, (1989) and Pollitt (1993), respectively. Now, the origin of this new term was to propose a new point of view towards the organizational design in the public sector, however after a decade, the meaning of this term in discussions and debates became many. Some scholars choose to
define it as the introduction of new institutional economics to public management and some used it to refer to pattern changes in policy making. Before we make an effort to further understand the various aspects of New Public Management, let us see how it is different from the traditional public administration.

The New Public Management represents an attempt to make the public sector more businesslike and to improve the efficiency of the government borrowed ideas and management models from the private sector. It emphasized the centrality of citizens who were the recipient of the services or customers to the public sector. New public management system also proposed a more decentralized control of resources and exploring other service delivery models to achieve better results, including a quasi-market structure where public and private service providers competed with each other in an attempt to provide better and faster services (Pollit, 1993).

The basic tenet of New Public Management (NPM) is an approach to running public service organizations that is used in government and public service institutions and agencies, at both sub-national and national levels. As earlier stated, the term was first introduced by academics in the UK and Australia to describe approaches that were developed during the 1980s as part of an effort to make the public service more "businesslike" and to improve its efficiency by using private sector management models (Ojo, 2014); as with the private sector, which focuses on "customer service", NPM reforms often focused on the "...centrality of citizens who were the recipient of the services or customers to the public sector." NPM reformers experimented with using decentralized service delivery models, to give local agencies more freedom in how they delivered programs or services. In some cases, NPM reforms that used e-government consolidated a program or service to a central location to reduce costs. Some governments tried using quasi-market structures, so that the public sector would have to compete against the private sector (notably in the UK, in health care). Key themes in NPM were "financial control, value for money, increasing efficiency, identifying and setting targets and continuance monitoring of performance, handing over power to the senior management" executives. Performance was assessed with audits, benchmarks and performance evaluations. Some NPM reforms used private sector companies to deliver what were formerly public services.

The imperativeness of the New Public Management Model to this study on e-governance and service delivery in Nigeria can be deduced from the basic tenets and postulations of the theory which is an attempt to introduce the characteristics of the private organizations into the public organizations to enhance effective and efficient service delivery. Most private organizations embraced the information and communications technologies which was as a result of globalization and as such they can now render services to its customers even from the comfort of their home. This is the argument of introducing electronic governance to public service delivery which will ensure that the masses are attended to just as customers in the private organizations.

E-governance and Public Service Delivery: The Nexus

There is growing evidence that the public sector has committed itself to investments in ICT hoping to improve its internal management as well as the services it delivers to citizens through an innovative use of communication channels and facilities. According to Halaris (2004), there is greater apprehension in the public sector regarding quality of service and
many organizations are trying to evaluate and determine the quality of services delivered. To them, a considerable progress has been made in the development of e-government services as well. In the past few years, much debate has focused on e-services in the public sector context. Gronroos et al. (2002) and Rowley (2006), suggests that service quality is a key aspect that differentiates service offers and helps build competitive advantage, but Pinho et al. (2007), posits that delivery of public services by the use of ICTs is still in its early years and further states that an ample number of citizens have had modest or no experience/interaction with it. According to Zeithaml et al. (2000), online service quality is the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective delivery of products and services. Rowley (2006), has accredited to the work of Zeithaml et al. (2000), and states that it was helpful in developing scales and sets of service quality dimensions.

Akesson and Edvardsson (2008), in their study reveals five dimensions of change in the design of services because of the introduction of e-government (service encounter and service process; customers as co-creators and sole producers of services; efficiency; increased complexity; and integration). The study discusses the significance of these findings with particular examples from transcriptions of the interviews. Jones et al. in his work mentions that e-government within the next few years will transform both the way in which public services are delivered and the fundamental relationship between governments, the community and citizens. However, despite the link/relationship existing between e-governance and quality of services, Meuter et al. (2000), calls for more research and Parasuraman and Grewal(2000), emphasized further investigation into the impact of technology on the service quality-value-loyalty chain.

Santos (2000), holds that service quality is one of the main factors that determine the success or failure of electronic commerce and adds that research lags behind because practitioners have focused mainly on issues of usability and measurement of use with little consideration for the outcomes. Over the past few years, there has been a great deal of deliberations by various researchers over the effectiveness of e-service in the public sector context. According to Chan and Al-Hawamdeh and Shackleton et al. (2002) , many government agencies in the government sector have comprehended the imperative of using internet to provide services to citizens. Dabholkar and Bagozzi(2002), states that technology has had a remarkable influence on the growth of service delivery options recently. Research has focused lot of attention on use of ICTs for facilitating service delivery.

Pathak et al. (2006), in a study using a sample of 400 citizens each from Ethiopia, Fiji and Jordan found that e-governance will be able to streamline bureaucratic procedures to make operations more efficient (negative mean difference). The findings of this study implies that the more the progress is made towards attainment of e-governance goals (of coordination, cost savings and cost effectiveness), the more are the positive impacts in areas affected by the introduction of e-government (such as provision of services, ability to do the job, government transparency and accountability, convenient services, citizen communication, etc.). Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (1997), asserts that there are several competitive advantages associated with the adoption of technology in service organizations, including the creation of entry barriers, enhancement of productivity, and increased revenue generation from new services.
Atkinson (2000), pointed out that e-government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies, such as web-based Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing, that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency and productivity, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions. Buttressing this point, Fang (2013), stated that e-government is the processes and structures that define the relationship between governments and citizens; the processes and structures that define the relationship between government service delivery and citizens’ needs. The import of this submission is that the essence of e-government is to meet the needs of the citizens by improving service delivery. Therefore, given the scale, scope, multi-portfolio nature, and transformational potential of e-government in delivering efficient, cost-effective and timely service, Roy advocates that it should be treated as a holistic system adjunct to the area of e-commerce in the E-society.

Yu and Norris (2000), in their separate works on the relationship between e-government and service delivery carried out in Delhi and UK argues that the quality or level of e-government determines the efficiency of service delivery, and this depends on the level of ICT tools and Internet access (digital divide) among citizens and employees of an organization. The implication of their findings on public organizations in Nigeria is that it should ensure consistent, functional and affordable internet access for its staff, by providing the needed ICT infrastructure in the secretariats, in other to enhance the performance of its workforce and thereby improve service delivery for its publics.

In its study on the Imperativeness of e-government for Service Delivery, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001), contends that the model offers the most effective way to improving service delivery in the public service. OECD suggests that e-government offers an adaptable framework that can be used to assess tangible and intangible output of government services. Additionally, the impact of new technology on public-sector service delivery and citizens’ attitudes about government has also been debated by political observers. The study by Okot-Uma (2010), assessed the consequences of e-government for service delivery, democratic responsiveness, and public attitudes and whether it is taking advantage of the interactive features of the World Wide Web to improve service delivery, democratic responsiveness, and public outreach. Using both Web site content as well as public assessments, it argued that, in some respects, the e-government revolution has potential to transform service delivery and public trust in government. It does, also, have the possibility of enhancing employees’ responsiveness and boosting organizational performance. Eneh (2015), in his work on E-administration implementation in Nigerian Universities asserts that efficient and effective administration rests on the pillars of knowledge and recognition of this set of knowledge by the decision makers. Digitalization of this set of knowledge within a network which links every individual including the decision makers gives freedom to everyone to access and make use of this knowledge paving the way for digital governance. He concludes by stating that “E-administration is changing the power of equation based on access and control to information and knowledge (Eneh, 2015). A more informed administration is in a better position to understand and exercise its rights and e-administration will lead to reduction in knowledge gap. Digital administration will ensure that staff are no longer passive in the discharge of their duties instead would have a potential
to play decisive role in deciding the kinds of services they want and structure which would best provide the same.” The evidence from the research suggests that the advent of Information and Communication Technology has provided a platform for effective and efficient service delivery electronically and many state governments in Nigeria now embracing it (Cleverly, 2001).

Methodology

This paper made use of the Qualitative method, which according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 155), is "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases”. The study, therefore, drew data from institutional and official documents sourced from the internet, journal articles and conference materials.

Benefits of E-governance in Public Service Delivery

Madon (2005), on his part said the introduction of electronic transaction policies by the apex bank was meant to ensure efficiency in financial transactions and curb financial corruption in the system. He said while the federal government and its parastatals have also embraced a number of ICT-related initiatives in recent past in their services, with resultant cost-saving and ability to plug the leakages in its financial dealings, “there is an urgent need to popularize wider and holistic embrace of e-government in its totality.” Abuali et al (2010), maintained that the collaboration with E-PPAN was considered critical as it allows FSS2020 Office to see how it can better re-organize the major markets of financial market, insurance, pension and mortgage and agriculture and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) using e-government as strategy. He emphasized that e-government helps to strengthen public institutions, encourages delivery of civic responsibilities and accelerate the growth of the nation’s economy.

Ifinedo (2005), and United Nations (2002), observed that Nigeria has an e-governance development index of 1.02, which is below the UN’s benchmark measure of development at an index of 1.62. The emergence of e-governance in Nigeria can be traced to the advent of democracy in 1999. The first real activity in this regard was the development of government websites. These efforts were uncoordinated and only a few agencies with the resources could establish online presence although the government continues to seek policies and strategies that will accelerate the deployment of the necessary infrastructure. In pursuance of this objective the government has established the National Information Technology Development Agency, (NITDA) under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) to champion development of Information Technology (IT) in Nigeria and midwife implementation of the national IT policy. NITDA is also charged with the responsibility of implementing e-governance initiatives using National e-governance Strategy Limited, (NeGST), a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) as a special purpose vehicle (NITDA, 2001). NeGST’s mandate is to drive the development of Nigeria’s e-governance initiatives, create a practical strategy and single architecture to guide the evolution of digital government solutions with consistent standards, operating platforms and applications across agencies and government systems.

Some components of e-governance have already commenced in Nigeria e.g. the Nigerian Customs Assycuda Programme, the computerization Resident Permit by the Nigerian Immigration Service, computerization of land and Certificate of Occupancy in the Federal
Capital Territory Administration (FCTA). The payroll of some organizations are also being computerized i.e (ePayment), online checking of West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) result as well as National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) postings are part of real time and cost effective services which are part of e-government. There is therefore the need to consolidate and spread it to other services that have not been incorporated as well as to the rural areas in Nigeria (Muhammed, et al, 2010).

NITDA (2007), maintained that e-governance reduces waste, saves time and encourages simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent conduct in the delivery of government services. It will adequately position Nigeria in the global economy where it now pays a key role. NITDA (2007), cited the specific goals of e-governance as creation of better business environment for local and foreign investors as technology is a catalyst for increasing productivity and economic growth, Quick response and effective delivery of public services to citizens without bottlenecks, Strengthening good governance with broad based public participation, Improved quality of life for the entire citizenry, Improved productivity and efficiency of government agencies, and job and wealth creation as well as poverty eradication. NITDA (2007), also stated that the deliverables of e-Governance include; Increased transparency on the part of government, Reduce cost of governance, Potentials of project that create values to investors, Better services that are faster, cheaper and easier for government, business and the entire citizenry, Improved quality of life for the entire citizenry, Better productivity by employers, Wealth and job creation for investors; and Better informed citizens.

The introduction of e-governance in the country has played/ playing a vital role(s) in the herculean war against the cancer of corruption in the Nigeria. Through e-governance public and private sectors adopted measures that strangulated corruption to a comatose degree in certain sectors and in some instances annihilated it permanently. It started at the Federal Government level and private sector, State and Local Governments followed suit (Okwueze, 2010).

Before the advent of e-governance in Nigeria, understanding the real workforce in the three tiers of authorities (Federal, State, and Local Governments) was a mystery and hard like rocket science. Personnel in Administration in league with their colleagues in Finance inflate the workforce with ghost workers running into hundreds of thousands. And perpetrators of such crime created a system where most staff is not paid in the banks using workers functioning accounts, they pay cash using their ministries cashiers. The amount oozing through this channel into the pockets of these fraudsters surpasses the real salary bills government pay to workers. Successive governments battled with this menace through setting up special staff audit committees and what they called “TABLE PAYMENT” and physical appearance of staff without getting to the root of the matter (Dada, 2006). The introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) by the three tiers of governments across the nation helped in checkmating such menace. According Anbali (2003), the Federal Government made discovery of ghost workers after scrutinizing 215 Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. About 45,000 ghost workers were uncovered making the Federal government to save 100 billion in salaries of the said workers alone. Similar scenarios unfolded at state and Local Government levels, many told stories of how the introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System saved them billions in salaries only(www.cnknigeria.com 14/9/2017).
The introduction of e-governance and transaction in financial transactions like e-mail, e-verification of payment, e-transfers, Bank Verification Number (BVN) etc eliminated corrupt practices bordering on the movement of files and cheques from one desk to the other and from one accounting officer to another. It has been established that the unfortunate culture of physical following of files and other contract papers breeds unholy cum corrupt practices between the contractors, internal monitors, and the banks. E-measures ended some of those practices and cleansed the system to some level of decency. Public officers were left with working on papers and pushing their assessments without knowing owners or seeing them. The pace of files and assessment papers movement instilled confidence in the heart of owner thereby making them resist temptation of seeking of avenues to bribe their ways through.

The financial sub-sector witnessed extensive cleansing as a result of the impact of e-governance. Their integrated data system and interconnectivity checkmated fraudulent practices. It also scaled down unnecessary delays associated with clearing of transactions, which take days or weeks before customers get them or services are delivered (Dada, 2006). With the introduction of e-payments, cheques and other payment orders are ready within minutes or hours (depending on the nature or quantum of the transaction). According to Ojo, (2014), the introduction of automatic teller machines helped immensely because people transfer or withdraw cash without necessarily going through the ritual of signing cheques and queuing in long lines in branches where their accounts is. Such long queues often make people corrupt the process by cutting corners using bank staff who are products of the same corrupt system.

According to Danfulani (2013), recruitments and examinations in schools, ministries, departments, and parastatals are electronically done. Candidates apply online; write examination online via buying well secured scratch cards and their scripts marked electronically. Within days results of examinations are out and candidates told his fate. The practice wasn’t like that before now; they were slow, esoteric, and manipulatable due to excessive involvement of personnel rather than machines. This process also nips in the bud inconsistencies associated with age and other academic claims by candidates, issues very essential for recruitments. In each recruitment exercise especially into Nigerian Armed Forces, so many candidates are rejected or recruitment offer withdrawn because of phantom claims that contradicted regulations associated with the recruitments which are noticed due to employment of e-governance (Danfulani, 2013).

E-governance has helped the country’s most active anti graft body Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in tracking financial fraudsters and international money launderers. EFCC partnered with other global crime fighting bodies and law enforcement agencies of other countries to trace inflow and outflow of monies and the possible sources (Danfulani, 2013). Through their eagle eye operations, many top government functionaries and captain of industries were caught in money laundering and other financially related crimes at home and abroad. E-measures like instant sending of alerts messages which includes photos and other claims of customers by banks to EFCC on individual’s withdrawals that are up to Five Hundred Thousand Naira (N500,000) and One Million Naira (N1, 000, 000) for cooperate bodies (Saharareporters News). This measure instigated massive arrests of fraudsters and money launderers even before they left bank premises. And those who succeeded in escaping arrest from banks, proper investigations are carried out and most times clues are gotten that ultimately leads to arrest and prosecution. It is not an easy task for
money launderers to head straight banks because of almost 100% risk involved in such acts. Bank staffs abetting fraudulent and subversive practices have developed cold feet or resisting the temptation because of the high risk and possibility of falling into the net of EFCC (Danfulani, 2013).

Nigeria’s electoral body Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) boarded the e-governance plane by introducing biometric registration of voters and compilation of results. Before this era, electoral register are compiled manually which was open to various forms of manipulations in terms of double registrations in the same centre and in other centers. There was also the problem of results compilation and delay in doing so. Today, election results are transferred through their well organized site from either the Local Government or Zonal collation centers to their state offices or national headquarters in Abuja. This has helped stop the menace of election officials changing figures on transit. Elections results now reach headquarters within seconds. This has reduced to the minimum corrupt practices of politicians of violating electoral laws that promotes credible electoral contests. INEC has a well functioning website with information of their electoral calendars, results of previous elections, and everything that has to do with them (Dada, 2006).

E-governance helped state governors to develop a syndicate accounting system that linked accounts of all states ministries and parastatals to single alarm system that tell them withdrawals and deposit of monies. This trap has made fraudsters within the civil service especially men and women in the Account Department deter from the usual style of open robbery of the treasury in league with top brass of the civil service. Fraudsters now have to think twice before attempting to dip their thieving fingers into the common treasure (Danfulani, 2013).

Challenges of E-Governance in Nigerian Public Service

Previous investigations have shown that e-governance adoption would enhance public service delivery in Nigeria to the extent that the challenges inhibiting e-governance implementation such as lack of infrastructure, poor to the adoption of e-governance by public officials, inadequate knowledge of ICT deployment and poor maintenance culture of the public servants are addressed. According to Olaopa (2014:5), the challenges ranges from: inadequate funds allocated to the e-governance projects, difficulty associated with streamlining various silos of e-Government projects already existing or being implemented prior to the creation of the Ministry of Communication Technology, disparity between urban and rural dwellers or those with low literacy levels in accessing the internet, potential to erode the privacy of the citizenry, perceived lack of value for money when the huge cost of deploying e-Governance projects is compared to the actual value to the people, false sense of transparency.

Furthermore, Gberevbie et al (2015), identified the lack of the necessary infrastructure (electricity power supply, internet connectivity, telecommunications and computer hardware, optical fiber cables) as some the inhibiting challenges against the successful implementation of e-governance in Nigeria’s public sector organisations. In addition, Abasilim & Edet (2015), notes that most of the public service employees’ attitude to change was not favourable to e-governance implementation, which was as a result of their low level of computer literacy and inadequate knowledge that disqualified them in the installation,
maintenance, designing and the deployment of ICT infrastructure. What this implies is that as long as these challenges are not fixed, better public service delivery cannot be in view.

According to Abdel-Fattah and Galal-Edeen (2008), the major challenge of e-governance in the Nigerian public service is lack of trained and qualified personnel to handle and operate its infrastructures. They further state that due to the high cost associated with the procurement and training of public servants with ICT skills, government sometimes feel reluctant in the actual implementation of e-governance in the public service. Similarly, Ayo & Ekong (2008), also stress the absence of skilled workers to handle various ICT services and their applications in bringing about the successful implementation of e-governance in the public sector. They also noted that the lack of government regulatory policy is a major issue that needs to be addressed if e-governance is to be a reality in government organisations. To them, the effective and successful implementation of e-governance requires experts to coordinate and operate the ICT-related infrastructures, because where there are no competent personnel to handle it infrastructure, it will be useless to procure the infrastructures (Ayo & Ekong, 2008).

Another challenge has to do with the state of power supply in the country, which is said to be epileptic and irregular in terms of supply. These have posed a considerable challenge to the realization of e-governance objectives in Nigeria. Okwueze (2010), also noted that adequate power supply is an important element to be considered for the successful implementation of e-governance in the country’s public sector. Against the current picture of what exist in most of the public service, most government agencies operate on generators and sometimes the generators lack capacity to power adequately the ICT facilities. Corroborating this view, Gbervbie; Ayo; Iyoha; Abasilim (2015), stress that there is need for the government to establish the needed infrastructure in electricity power supply, internet connectivity, telecommunications and computer hardware, optical fiber cables, among others for the implementation of e-governance to be successful. This implies that the success of e-governance implementation in the Nigerian public service is tied to dealing with this current challenge, among others.

To Bansode & Patil (2011: 58), the digital divide also poses a challenge to e-governance implementation in Nigeria’s public service. What this simply means is “the gap between those with regular, effective access to digital and information technology and those without this access” In a clear manner, Keniston (2003), sees digital divide as the level of ICT knowledge between the rich and powerful who he terms as those part of the information age and the poor and powerless who are not. He further note that digital divide is not only limited to the level of ICT knowledge between the rich and the poor but also that which has to do with linguistic. To him, this divide separates those who can speak English from those who cannot. Another feature of this digital divide can be seen from the growing digital gap between the rich and poor nations and also the digital divide between a new elite group, which he called the “digerati”, that is, those who benefit from the enormous successful information technology industry and other knowledge based sectors of the economy such as biotechnology and pharmacology. The implication of this, is that, the challenge of digital divide encompasses the access to technology hardware physically and the required skills and resources needed for the judicious application of its use. But there are factors that are known to have contributed to this digital divide. For instance, factors like physical disability,
physical access, access to the contents and lack of ICT skills contribute to the digital divide (Bansode & Patil, 2011).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

In as much as there are numerous benefits from the introduction of e-governance in public services, there are challenges that act as inhibitions to the successful operation of the e-governance. There are problems which ranges from lack of technical know-how, diversion, unreadiness on the part government and its employees, mediocrity, lack of the necessary ICT infrastructure, inadequate ICT infrastructure, poor attitude, undue political interference and the likes has continued to hinder the rate of service delivery from the public service as a result of the introduction of e-governance. The paper therefore recommends that;

1. There is need to provide the necessary quantity and quality infrastructure that will aid e-governance implementation, which will engender better public service delivery in Nigeria in line with the study of Gberevbie et al. (2015) and Gberevbie et al. (2016).
2. The employees in the public service should be given priority and be seen as the key agent that can both facilitate the successful implementation of e-governance in the public and enhance public service delivery in Nigeria. This can be done through continuous training geared towards their reorientation for better work standard for performance in line with the findings of Fatile (2012); Ajayi (2003) and Ifinedo (2005).
3. The role of the Federal Government cannot be sidelined in achieving a better service delivery through e-governance implementation especially when it has to do with the budgetary allocation assigned to the ICT sector. By implication, a huge investment in the ICT sector will play a vital role in both ensuring the successful implementation of e-governance and enhancing better public service delivery as advocated by Dhillon & Laxmi (2015). Furthermore, the Federal Government must as a matter of urgency enforce that all levels of government adopt e-governance in their administrative processes and also evaluate the policies from time to time to ensure that the main reason for this shift is achieved as put forward by Abasilim & Edet (2015) and Gberevbie et al. (2016).
4. The government should also enact Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laws that will make computer literacy a compulsory aspect for every public or civil servant both at the local, state and federal levels.
5. The Nigerian public service (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) must show a high level of e-readiness in their operations. All that is needed must be put in place by the government, especially that which is within their capacity.

**References**


© 2017 The Author(s). Creative Commons CC-BY: This open access article is distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License. This permits anyone to share, use, reproduce and redistribute the work without further permission provided the person gives due credit to the work.