

Transparency and Responsibility in the Public Administration Institutions: The case Case of Romania

Abstract: An important topic often found in the media, but ambiguously treated is “transparency”. This article will present a blueprint for Romanian municipalities’ Websites done through the transparency concept’s filter. We will see that although the law imposes to municipalities to post specific items on the Internet, they either omit or post a minimum of information just to “follow” the rules, without giving any evidence of interest. Assuming that displaying online more information requested by the law will lead to an increased users’ confidence in the system, we accessed the Website of each municipality in Romania (103) to search for the existence of financial data (budgets, financial indicators, assets etc.). In the end, we have presented a brief report on how the government responds to citizens’ concerns. The results are not very satisfactory, but we consider that such analyses will create a competition between municipalities, in which citizens are the winners.

Keywords: government; municipality; electronic; transparency; responsibility

1. Introduction

This ~~analysis article aims to~~ presents a ~~radiograph~~ of the ~~status of the~~ ~~Websites’ websites status~~ for all the municipalities in Romania and ~~showcases on~~ how they respond to the need for transparency ~~needs~~ (Baltac, 2011). ~~It is understood that t~~The mere existence of a very well-designed Web-web platform (from a technical point of view) does not ~~imply mean~~ that ~~they’re the also website is or will be~~ used by citizens or ~~the business people part of in the society~~ (Porumbescu, 2015). ~~Users may not rely on he reason for this is that the a w~~Web platform if it does not provide the information they need (MCIS[®]).

Taking into consideration the ~~legislation regarding the concept of on~~ Transparency-transparency (Chamber of Deputies[®]), we ~~took take~~ a closer look ~~on at~~ each of the Romanian municipalities’ official Website ~~websites~~ in order to present, in figures, how close they are to ~~this achieving the transparency threshold by~~ putting this concept into motion.

2. Background

~~The An aspect of interest in assessing not only the current state of the e-Government in Romania, but also possible future developments in this regard is represented by~~ Romanian citizens’ level of satisfaction ~~with and their requirements for from the the~~ public administration ~~can help assess both the current state of e-Governance in Romania and potential developments in the area. From this perspective, our Romania (54.1%) country holds ranks a position below the European average, if we are to take into consideration (73.5%) in terms of the number of Internet users of only 54.1% compared to 73.5% which is the average of all European countries.~~

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Thank you for choosing to upgrade your service to Scientific Editing. I have edited this manuscript carefully and thoroughly for structure, logic, and flow, in addition to checking its language and readability. I have ensured that my work meets the scope of this service, and I look forward to receiving your feedback regarding my work on this manuscript.

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At the end of 2014, ~~the World Bank reported, at the end of 2014~~ (World Bank, 2014), ~~reported~~ the evolution of the Internet users' number in Romania for the period between the years 2000 and 2014 (Figure 1).

[Figure 1 here]

Figure 1. Evolution Trends in the number of the Internet users' number in Romania (2000–2014)

Source: Based on data collected from the World Bank's Website

We cannot say for certain whether ~~the results of the last years are due to a possible~~ market saturation of some other circumstances ~~that exist and~~ may have slowed down ~~this the trend, but~~ However, we ~~certainly can~~ certainly see that the numbers ~~have exploded in the between period 2000- and~~ 2014.

Looking at ~~the population,~~ however, Romania is in a bad position ~~when~~ compared to other countries. In 2014, ~~the country it~~ had about 54 Internet users/100 people, ~~similar to like~~ Serbia and Bulgaria, ~~while and in~~ Albania, ~~the ratio was of which had~~ 60 Internet users/100 people. ~~In this context, the more highly rated was~~ Iceland, ~~ranked highest,~~ with 98 users/~~per 100 inhabitants~~ people.

According to ~~The National Institute of Statistics, in the whole country the share of only 54.3% and 17.8% of Romanian households in urban and rural areas, respectively, with had Internet access, is of 54.3% in urban areas and of only 17.8% in rural areas~~ (The difference remaining users to 100% is due to are from the business users) sector (National Institute of Statistics).

In this respect, ~~the~~ The European Commission, ~~through in a the study titled~~ "User expectations of a life events approach for designing e-Government services" (Figure 2), ~~discusses explained the main reasons why people use the Internet to relate to the public administration (in the European Union EU). We can thus see that~~ Most people used the Internet ~~he biggest increase occurred in to completing complete and submitting submit~~ electronic forms (29%); ~~and followed by to send ing~~ regular e-mails to ~~public administration administrative bodies authorities~~ (22%). ~~Instead~~ However, the use of ~~the Internet only to get obtain~~ information ~~from the public administration administrative institutions was affected by a decline of at~~ 4% and the "just clicking" method had a growth of only 2%. We can understand from these numbers that those who use the Internet at home are expected to use the network to better relate with the public administration, and not just as a means of access to information.

[Figure 2 here]

Figure 2. Percentage of individuals who use the Internet to get in touch with the public administration

Source: Personal elaboration based on data collected ~~form from~~ the European Union's Website

~~Considering An index listed in~~ the "e-Romania" report prepared by the ~~Romanian~~ Ministry of Communications and Information Society, ~~in which the index showed showed how that countries are better prepared countries are~~ for e-Administration. ~~Romania is does not rank on among~~ the top positions, ~~although although~~ it belongs to the group of countries with the highest percentage increase of ~~in the number of~~ Internet users and ~~has witnessed also~~ an increase in the number of online services designed to support citizen participation (MCIS^b).

3. Case Study: Romanian Municipalities' Radiography

In ~~this section, we had the objective to verify verifies~~ how ~~the municipalities of~~ Romanian municipalities, which ~~represent constitute~~ the main focus of this ~~research study~~, meet citizens' demands

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and address complaints. In this regard, we have analyzed what the kind of information that municipalities provide via the Internet online, to both citizens and to the business sector. Specifically, we looked examined for the mode of the dissemination of financial and management information, and the for data on the services provided, and their quality. The present study was made-conducted in 2015 (Vrabie, 2015).

To determine the “responsibility” (Vrabie, 2013) of municipalities through the global network, we firstly investigated the presence on the Internet of Romanian municipalities on the Internet. Only 96 municipalities have had an active Web page websites at the time of study, representing accounting for 93.20% of the total, and As many as 7 (6.80%) municipalities do did not have a Web page websites, at all or their web addresses is were not active representing 6.80%. These results are shown in (the results are shown in Fig. 3)- Figure 3.

[Figure 3 here]

Figure 3. Romanian Municipalities’ Radiography

Source: Based on data collected using the methodology described

Afterwards, we analyzed the-particular aspects related-pertaining to the dissemination of financial information and petitions in the 96 municipalities which-that have had an active Web page websites.

3.1. Dissemination of Financial Information

Strategic planning

Regarding the dissemination of strategic information (Fig. 3), from Among the 96 municipalities which that had an active Web page websites, 89 municipalities (92.71%) do did not expose-indicate their long-term objectives and only 7 municipalities show-resented this type-of information via the Internet online. However, some of them displayed only strategic information taken from the mayor’s election program.

Dissemination of financial accounting

Regarding the dissemination of information related to financial accounting (Fig. 3), As many as 38.54% (37) municipalities analysed-analyzed published this type-of-such information on the Internet online, while-whereas 61.46% do did not.

Budget information

For information on the budgets of previous years displayed on the Internet, A total of 29 municipalities (30.21%) show-presented their budgets from previous years, and-whereas 67 (69.79%) do did not provide such information. In Fig-ure 3 presents these results, it can be seen that, for the first category mentioned, the percentage is of 30.21, while for the latter is 69.79.

Regarding the Updated budgetary information, it must be pointed out that municipalities which provide information on the current budget was available only for are 21 in-number municipalities, which means (21.88% of the total), while-whereas 75 (78.13%) municipalities which do did not provide updated budget this information are in number of 75, meaning 78.13%.

Interim financial information

None of the Romanian municipalities provided interim financial Regarding the dissemination of financial information via the Internet online on-for particular specific economic periods, none of the Romanian municipalities provide intermediate financial accounting.

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Information ~~about on~~ financial indicators

The city of Sibiu was the only one to provide information on ~~Regarding the diffusion of~~ financial indicators, ~~the city of Sibiu is the only one to provide that sort of information~~ on its Web page ~~website~~. We have found, on this municipality's official Website, ~~It presented its~~ budgetary indicators, savings, and ~~the city's~~ financial ~~picture~~ status. Unfortunately, those indicators ~~do not are not specific to the refer~~ to the current period, but ~~only~~ ~~pertain to when~~ ~~to the one in which~~ the city was the European Capital of Culture ~~(, back in 2007)~~.

Information ~~about on~~ assets

A total of 94 municipalities ~~do did~~ not provide information ~~about on their~~ assets ~~—which means~~ (97.92%), ~~and whereas~~ only 2 municipalities (2.08%) ~~show provided~~ detailed information ~~about this~~ aspect.

Environmental information

As many as 33 websites (34.38%) ~~provided~~ Details ~~about e~~ environmental information (Fig-ure 3) ~~are provided on 33 Web pages out of 96 municipalities, this meaning 34.38%.~~ ~~In contrast, whereas 63 municipalities do did~~ not provide information about the environment and/or sustainability.

Information ~~about on~~ corporate governance

Regarding this aspect, ~~As many as~~ 51 municipalities (53.31%) ~~exposed, on provided~~ their Web pages information ~~about on~~ corporate governance ~~on their websites~~. Some ~~only~~ municipalities just showed who attended ~~the meetings, while whereas~~ others, ~~in addition,~~ displayed full ~~Courts' court~~ procedures and meetings ~~which that have taken took~~ place over several years. ~~Instead, Further,~~ 45 municipalities (46.88%) ~~do did~~ not display, ~~this information~~ on their official Web page, information of this kind ~~websites (the results are shown in Fig-Figure 3)~~.

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3.2. Commitment to Citizens – ~~the The~~ Institution's Response

Only 13 websites presented information on ~~Regarding e~~ citizens' complaints (Fig-Figure 3), ~~from all of the municipalities' Web pages only 13 present such section. Consequently, whereas 86.46% did not~~ municipalities which did not implement something on this aspect represent 86.46%.

4. Conclusions

~~In this paper, we have Romania seen that our country~~ is far from being ~~in the among the~~ top-ranking ~~countries-countries~~, in Europe ~~or and~~ in the world, with the most developed e-government systems, ~~Romania has although it has achieved reached~~ peaks that exceed the average (Holzer, You, & and Manoharan, 2009), ~~on several fronts, therefore and the our~~ country's situation is promising. ~~Things can obviously improve — the country Romania can gain-improve its ratings through the overgrowth development of some certain sections (e.g., design, navigability). However, but~~ this does not necessarily ~~come to serve the citizens' needs~~.

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~~The This~~ article analyzed the level of transparency ~~level has been analysed for this article~~, which is an issue that connects ~~the~~ administration and citizens. The analysis' ~~content~~ (based on the provisions of Law no. 544/2001 (MRDT) and 161/2003 (Chamber of Deputies^b) shows that, ~~in terms of transparency,~~ municipalities seem to ~~have do well in terms of transparency a good level~~, having an average score (on ~~all all~~ 103 municipalities) equal to 3.01 (Vrabie, 2015). ~~We might may~~ say that the situation is ~~refreshingly getting better~~, but if we investigate ~~more deeply~~er, taking into account elements ~~that~~

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showing only direct interest of the city halls to in publicly presenting information and also the manner in which the municipalities respond to citizens, we will see that no element exceeded 50% of affirmatively responses.

After searching for the administration's response, we began to point out that e-Citizen's petitions are tools available can to notify the administration about of their dissatisfaction in with some aspects of life. Although there is a Government Ordinance from 2002 regulating-regulates the resolution of complaints (Bucharest Autonomous Transportation), only 13.54% of the country's municipalities have implemented it, on their Websites-websites, in the form of online methods-mechanisms for to help citizens to make such notifications-petitions. We can, therefore-thus, understand that transparency is not a strength-strong point of for the Romanian municipalities.

5. Acknowledgments

5.6. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

6.7. References

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