

Developing countries in Asia need to harness the potential of the mobile phone in e-governance, especially with the rapid diffusion of mobile technologies and the increasing trend toward using smartphones as the main access point to the Internet in parts of Southeast Asia (Nielsen, 2011). With more people accessing social media sites on their mobile device, it becomes an important platform for public announcements and government-to-citizen communication.

Two crucial conditions for successful e-government implementation are i) access to infrastructure and information and ii) good governance. Characterized by poor and/or rigid leadership, high levels of corruption, and unmotivated and ill-qualified civil servants (Wescott, 1999), it is not surprising then that it has been and continues to be difficult for e-governance to take root in the global south. A low quality and inefficient public administration system with limited resources is typical of developing countries in Asia i.e. Indonesia, India, Burma, and North Korea; and Africa i.e. Nigeria, Congo, Sudan.

In Indonesia, some of the reasons that contribute to the failure of e-governance projects are the lack of human capital, infrastructural constraints, low computer and internet penetration, the poor regulatory environment, lack of organizational culture and design, as well as insufficient e-leadership (Harijadi, 2004) and mismanagement of public funds among officials. Furthermore, unlike the developed countries which have the advantage of a well-planned e-government strategy, developing countries like Indonesia often do not have the same knowledge, skills and expertise to develop similar e-government programs.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

With the rise of the Indonesian middle class as per capita incomes increase, internet usage has surged by 1500 per cent since 2000 (Internet World Stats, 2010). [The number of Internet users in Indonesia has reached 55 million and over 50 per cent of them use mobile devices to get online.](#)

The popularity of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter make them important avenues through which the government can highlight important information and updates to the public especially since these create a viral effect. According to several web research companies, [Indonesia is the second-largest market for Facebook and the third-largest for Twitter in the world.](#)

The trend of [Indonesians' frequent engagement with social networking sites](#) demonstrates that this is an area that should be given due consideration in e-governance policy formulation and implementation.

Method

An online web analytics tool, Alexa (www.alexa.com) was used to analyze the web traffic of the top government websites in Indonesia. The following web metrics were used in the analysis: i) *top pages visited* - to determine what information was most sought after by the public, ii) *sources of upstream sites* - to find out what sources of information online led them to the main government webpages, and iii) *audience profile* – to identify the target group(s) that are reached by existing e-government efforts. In addition, secondary data were retrieved from both government and personal sources to understand e-government and ICT trends and profiles in Indonesia.

Results and discussion

The statistics from Alexa suggest that Facebook was a popular upstream site that online users visited prior to their visit to the government website. Over 70 per cent of Facebook users in Indonesia access the social media site via their mobile phones (Facebook, 2011).

In fact, Facebook was the third most popular site that online users visited prior to their visit to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture portals, the two most visited government websites. The two upstream websites that were ranked before Facebook were search engines google.co.id and google.com. For the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Facebook was the second most popular upstream site after the local google search engine, google.co.id. See Table 1 for the ranking of the upstream sites and the percentage of unique visits for each of the sites.

Table 1. Top upstream websites visited before official government portal

Ministry / Upstream Site	Google.id	Google.com	Facebook
Energy and Mineral Resources	1 (35.44)*	2 (6.86)	3 (4.22)
Agriculture	1 (37.73)	2 (7.73)	3 (4.80)
Education and Culture	1 (26.29)	3 (7.29)	2 (7.89)
Communications and Information Technology	1 (24.72)	3 (6.09)	2 (9.23)
Bank Indonesia	1 (43.16)	2 (6.94)	3 (4.12)

*Percentage of unique visits from each upstream site.

Since Facebook is such a popular conduit through which Indonesian citizens access information online, government departments that require regular communication and feedback with the public could benefit from creating Facebook profiles/accounts. Facebook can also be used as a platform to make quick announcements and/or updates on government information that are relevant, instrumental and actionable to the public.

Based on internet averages, it was found that males who have children visited government sites more frequently than other groups. This finding suggests that males in Indonesia have greater access to technology and information than females. This has important policy implications for effective government communications.

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