

## Tech & Public Administration

### Digital Service | Discussion Week 3

When implementing digital services, public administrators must be mindful of the digital divide or the gap between those with access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and those without. Ethical considerations could include many different aspects from access to privacy to security and transparencies.

If we use the COVID-19 pandemic or any digital roll out, as an example, for the segments of the population that did not have access to a digital device, the administrators needed to keep this in mind and consider it as changes evolved. This stands true today, it is critical to provide access as well as equity to the community that is being served. There should not be exclusion of elderly, rural, low-income or other vulnerable populations when implementing digital services. This rolls into literacy for all things digital. Those implementing the new services will need to look at what level of digital literacy is in the community that they are serving. Then, training programs, sufficient communication and other programming needs to be articulated and implemented so all members of the public can not only access the services but also use the services effectively. A real-world example of this is in the work that I do at Rutgers Cancer Institute for the Patient Family Advisory Council. We need to consider the elderly portion of the population that we serve when implementing 'MyChart' for communications. The older population may not be as "tech savvy" so there needs to be plans for making sure there is adequate communication to facilitate that this population is not left out from services. Also at the Cancer Institute, there is a population that may not have access to a cell phone regularly due to economic hardship, this too needs to be considered when devising a communications plan. Implementing in person training and help times as well as working to simplify the digital plan will benefit a less digital literate and accessible population.

There is also the challenge of digital security and privacy as we increasingly use digital services. The attention to the critical topic of data security and privacy must be prioritized to prevent misuse of information and any potential breaches. Communication and ethics are key here to ensure transparency about how data is collected, stored, secured and used. I go back to real world examples from Rutgers Cancer Institute as critical health information is being tracked, stored and communicated regularly. Digital security is critical here to protect personal information for the entire population that is served.

Another topic to keep in mind while implementing digital services is accountability and transparency to maintain trust. Citizens need to be informed of their rights and how their data will be used. Trust in digital services is crucial for widespread adoption. The example I use here relates to the 501c3 charity that my daughter runs. When we receive donations or other web contacts we typically also receive contact information. We work to make it clear on what we are doing with the information that we collect from every donor. We feel it is the right thing to do to communicate what information we keep and why. This transparency is critical to build trust and

have people continue to come back to you as they will know you do not misuse their information.

In conclusion there are many ethical considerations to make when implementing a digital service. Carefully considering the ethical considerations will ensure that services are accessible and beneficial to all citizens regardless of where they live and their digital status.