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Article

The governance of back-office integration

Organizing co-operation between information domains

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Abstract

Given the political nature of back-office integration, should cross-organizational back-office integration be seen as a command and control challenge or a process management challenge? Comparative case study research has primarily shown that integration is the outcome of a process in which offices have been able to create a shared understanding about the necessity of integration and in which conflicting rationalities, with their own core values, internal logic and legitimacy, have to be weighed against each other. It is a goal-searching, incremental process, which should anticipate a changing political agenda in order to gain support. Understanding is reached through the ongoing recognition of the interdependencies among back offices, and as a result of a focus on the content of the problem and not on jurisdictions and costs. Trust and political and legal pressure are the lubricants that facilitate this process. In terms of project management, command and control approaches play an important role, but not a decisive one.

Key words:

Back office integration | domains | e-government | ICT | information management | information politics | interoperability

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