

3 WAYS THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP ELIMINATE GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION

Government corruption is one of the main obstacles to sustainable economic, political and social development, for many developing, emerging and developed countries around the world. The World Economic Forum estimates that the cost of corruption is more than 5% of the global GDP, US\$ 2.6 trillion, with over US\$ 1 trillion paid in bribes each year (Source: World Bank).

Brazil, for example, has been shaken by the largest and most significant corruption investigation in its history. The scandal implicates the core of Brazilian business and government. Hundreds of billions of dollars of contracts were awarded to some of Brazil's largest and most important companies for services provided to Petrobras, the state owned oil and gas company. In return for these contracts, companies paid kickbacks to Petrobras directors, who, in turn, made payments to government officials and Political Parties. This corruption scandal has already caused the firing of over 250,000 workers because of stopped projects and is effecting the preparations for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. The investigation is ongoing and several key figures including those involved with the transfer of illegal payments are cooperating with authorities.

After so many years of endemic government corruption around the world, there may now be a solution. Through several advancements in technology, we now have the tools to bring

efficiency, effectiveness and honesty to government administration and operations. The following are three technologies that are available and widely used today that can be implemented to help lead to the elimination of government corruption.

1. RFID Tracking

Radio frequency identification (RFID) tags are devices that can transmit data over short distances to identify objects, animals or people and have become increasingly popular for tracking everything from automobiles being manufactured on an



assembly line to law enforcement agencies responsible for the management of forensic evidence. Government corruption thrives in the "dark". It flourishes where complex, bureaucratic, and obscure processes shroud actions and decisions from the view of the general public. RFID technology can shine a light on the government process, creating an optimized, open and reviewable

environment. This technology provides a transparent and accountable handling of all government processes and transactions, including the handling of documents, bidding materials, procurement packages, permits, licenses, and regulatory approval documents. RFID technology tracks documents and identifies which individuals have possession of those materials at any given moment

2. Cloud Technology



Cloud based IT platforms allow for complete integration of government agencies' and other stakeholder's systems and data in real time making it viewable to authorized officers and the citizens they serve. Some ways in which cloud technology can help combat corruption are:

- Automation: reduce the opportunities for corruption in repetitive operations.
- Transparency: reduce the room for individual discretion
- Analytics: identify anomalies, outliers and underperformance
- Preventive detection: monitoring of networks and individuals

- Reporting: create complaint channels that can lead to concrete action and help punish violations and close loopholes
- Deterrence: disseminating information about reported cases of corruption

3. Social Media



The most visible technological innovation in the effort to end government corruption is social media. Social media is a powerful tool and, when handled correctly, allows citizens to share information that may have been, in the past, censored or manipulated by the traditional communication outlets. Modern audio-visual technology allows real time vigilance and sharing of live streaming video to a host of users. Social media outlets also allow honest government employees to expose government corruption without fear of repercussions. A good example of the power of social media is the website www.ipaidabribe.com, a site dedicated to exposing government officials who demand money from companies and citizens for government services. This site began in India and has quickly spread throughout several other countries.

Technology can create an honest and ethical environment for government management and operations. New technological solutions that promote clean and effective government are

being developed and evolving continually. The incorporation of these technologies will help build a system of government transparency and efficiency. Ultimately, these technologies lay the ground work for the implementation of “Smart Cities”, where the community and government agencies have communications and interoperability 24 hours per day, 7 days a week and in real time. This transparency in government will swiftly weed out those who wish to use their government position for personal gain and attract honest leaders who truly have the best interest of the citizens at heart.



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