Use of information technologies of management in public authorities activities

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Abstract. At present, the state is striving to introduce modern information technologies into the sphere of interaction between the government and society, since this allows for more dynamic interaction between the state, municipalities, citizens and organizations and encourages the increase in the stability and sustainability of power relations in society. While developing the state apparatus, the role of information technologies has taken on increased significance as one of the tools to promote management decisions aimed at ensuring the greater efficiency of the state.

1. Introduction
Public administration as a system activity is closely linked to the information interaction of public authorities both among themselves, citizens and economic actors.

The interaction of the state with private actors (citizens and organizations) can be both imperative and advisory. Through information interaction the state and municipal authorities can inform citizens and organizations of binding regulatory and legal guidelines, provide public services, etc.

2. Materials and methods
A ‘traditional’ form of information interaction between citizens, organizations and authorities is considered to be ‘physical’ interaction or interaction through the mass media. However, with the advent of modern information technologies another form of interaction has obtained wide application – interaction through the Internet.

Public administration is empowered to ensure the proper functioning of the state, which involves making decisions that support the effective work of state and municipal government bodies, regulating relationships formed as authorities exercise their powers, ensuring the adoption of necessary administrative acts, determining whether or not the public administration system complies with the required standards, studying and evaluating the results performed by the authorities and certain management entities, providing informational support for public authorities [1].

Current legislation does not fully meet these objectives. The main disadvantages are: a significant lag of branches of law compared with the organizational support in the field of information and communication technologies of the public administration system; lack of systemic approaches and uniformity as per regulatory and legal framework for the use of information and communication
technologies in the management sphere; uncertainty and inconsistency of a number of legal provisions; a virtual absence of a unified approach to form the concept of ‘electronic government’ [1].

In addition, efforts to introduce e-document systems as a management system in government bodies are extremely critical in modern conditions. At the moment, there is no systematic approach in terms of the legislation regulating this process. Besides, there are some challenges related to insufficiently elaborated integration of such systems with other systems that provide management functions of a particular authority (for example, systems designed to process complaints submitted by citizens and organizations).

The use of IT management is a means of implementing state information policy. The policy is associated with the main characteristics of governance impact on public relations through the use of various government institutions.

State information policy is referred to as a specific sphere of societal activities associated with the creation, reproduction and dissemination of information that meets the interests of the state and civil society [2]. It should be noted here that for many years, Russian state information policy was primarily focused on the media alone.

In modern conditions, the vision of state information policy is significantly expanded, and includes some issues as regards the protection of rights to publicly available information that are guaranteed to citizens and organizations by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, as well as a number of information security dimensions. Significant progress in shaping the state information policy was made following the decision to build information society in Russia. This entailed the need to improve the efficiency of governance arrangements to manage information resources, individual information and telecommunication facilities, government participation in supporting information production, the market for information products, services and technologies, as well as regulation of the media.

The mechanism that ensures the performance of the infrastructure and the interaction of the agents of the information and telecommunication environment is made up of information and telecommunication technologies that in turn ensure the creation of information, its use and dissemination.

The content of tasks in the field of state information policy is based on socio-economic and political conditions for the development of the country, as well as the experience in implementing specific measures in the field of state policy related to disseminating, creating and using information, including world experience in implementing information policy in advanced countries.

The achievement of the main strategic initiative of the state information policy [3] – the implementation of the transition to a new stage in the development of the country, the formation of the information society, and the inclusion of Russia in the global information community – requires a regulatory influence of the state on the main components of the state information policy ensuring the above mentioned transition: socio-political, technical and technological [4].

The state information policy faces a number of tasks related to ensuring effective communicative interaction between the government and society. From a state-civil communication perspective, the Internet occupies a special place because it is the platform for the so-called ‘e-government’ that should provide the fastest and easiest access to all services of state and municipal institutions available for all categories of citizens, as well as the opportunity to realize all their constitutional rights to participate in state administration activities [5].

In addition to facilitating the communication of citizens with state and institutions, the concept of ‘e-government’ involves strengthening citizens’ control over the activities of government bodies, the introduction of public performance indicators, which will lead to the responsible public administration [6].

One of the most important forms of state-civil interaction through the Internet is the provision of public services in electronic form.

With the corresponding Internet portal, https://www.gosuslugi.ru, individuals and legal entities can receive services provided by federal executive authorities, executive authorities of the constituent
entities of the Russian Federation, local governments in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (including services provided by subordinate institutions designated by the authorities).

A separate way to move forward e-document management can be regarded as the treatment of complaints submitted by citizens and organizations, through the provisions of the Federal Law On the Procedure for Considering Complaints of Citizens of the Russian Federation (No. 59 Federal Law of May 02, 2006) and Presidential Decree On Monitoring and Analyzing the Results of Examination of Complaints Submitted by Citizens and Organizations (No. 171 of April 17, 2017).

The authors believe that the imperative interaction of the state and society is possible by means of Internet communications. In 2011, the Federal Law On the Procedure for the Publication and Entry into Force of Federal Constitutional Laws, Federal Laws, Acts of the Chambers of the Federal Assembly (No. 5 Federal Law of July 14, 1994) was amended. It stipulates that the first placement (publication) of a regulatory act on the official Internet portal of legal information (www.pravo.gov.ru) is the official publication along with the Parliamentary Newspaper, Rossiyskaya Gazeta and the Meeting of the Legislation of the Russian Federation. Thus, the regulatory act published on the Internet on the relevant portal, even without its publication in paper publications, becomes generally binding.

The use and advancement of IT management is viewed as the most important condition for streamlining the activities of public authorities.

However, a major shortcoming of the study area is the absence of a single regulatory act in the Russian Federation, that would arrange the rules to determine the nature and content of the state information policy, as well as the use of information technologies in government activities (for example, the Federal Law On the Basics of the State Information Policy in the Russian Federation). Despite the fact that the provisions of this law would be more declarative, ‘common’, and their practical implementation would require specification at the sub-legal level, anyway, their systematic and holistic presentation would play an important role in streamlining the system to define the use of information technologies in government activities.

A significant impediment to the use of information technologies by public authorities is the fact that in the sphere of Internet communications between the state and citizens there are absolutely no elements of the imperative impact on the state by the society. The government provides citizens and organizations with unhindered access to information, actively provides services in electronic form but it does not provide a real opportunity to influence the activities of a public authority, for example, to exercise electoral right via the Internet, etc.

It should be noted that in a legal state one of the main components of the legal status of a person and a citizen is the right of citizens to appeal to authorities. The most important elements in civil society is the right of citizens to openly appeal to authorities and the ability of citizens to influence decisions taken by authorities.

The forms of this communication are complaints of citizens, as well as the feedback to such complaints from state and municipal authorities. With this in view, it is possible to conclude that citizens’ complaints are one of the essential sources of information necessary for making governance decisions on state, socio-cultural and economic issues.

In the Russian Federation, citizens are an active initiative force that protects private and collective interests and, accordingly, provokes certain responses from the state. They also correct and prevent mistakes and abuses on the part of government officials. On the other hand, to ensure the efficiency and relevance of this influence on the actions from the authorities, it is important to establish an effective and efficient framework for providing the rights to appeal to state and local authorities.

Considering the above, the automation of citizens’ complaints to the authorities, their arrangement, automated processing, execution control and storage are of particular importance.

The authors believe that these issues can be solved by integrating departmental e-document systems with those used for processing citizens’ complaints, or by expanding the functions performed by document management systems with the functions that imply processing complaints and systematizing the registration of complaints in a single codification office.
To grasp the idea of e-document management, a broad conceptual understanding of the nature of management decisions, reporting information, etc. is required.

An order, instruction or reporting information should not be equated with their paper media.

A managerial decision is a volitional act aimed at the implementation of powers vested in an authority or official. The decision may come in various forms – verbal, written and electronic.

In other words, the core of a decision (order, guidelines, instruction, plan, etc.) lies in the decision itself, and is an intangible product of intellectual and volitional activity of an official, which can be expressed verbally, set out in paper or in electronic form. A decision is certain information that can be communicated to the addressee through the three forms indicated.

The difference between verbal, paper and electronic forms is that the last two belong to the same category – the category of ‘written documents’. In other words, if a regulatory act requires to be written, this document may be either paper or electronic.

Similarly, a report sent to a higher state or municipal government body, by its very nature is the information it conveys rather than a mere paper representation.

In this case, it is more about the psychological unwillingness of many state and municipal employees to switch to e-document management that differs significantly from the ‘usual’ and ‘traditional’ paper variant. It is the electronic form that serves as a full-fledged way of displaying management information, and can be used – moreover, should be used – in the system of state and municipal governance.

Thus, the interdepartmental interaction of information systems within e-document management is aimed at improving management efficiency in the field of executive power by speeding up the exchange of information in the system ‘decision making – notifying the decision to the executor – monitoring the performance – performance report’.

In addition, the e-document system in the interdepartmental sphere is designed to ensure the acceleration of conciliation procedures for draft regulations, which significantly expedites the stage of legislative initiative. Ministries and departments do not have to spend months on a ‘paper’ coordination of draft regulations. This process is much faster.

In general, the goals and objectives of implementing e-document systems in government bodies are to strengthen the commitment discipline, to optimize time, to increase the control efficiency and interaction between structural units, etc.

A set of tasks facing e-document management in state and municipal authorities can be summarized as follows: creation of a single database that embraces the entire documentation issued by a state or municipal authority; organization of documentation according to the approved nomenclature; reduction of the risk of a document being lost; increase in the commitment discipline among employees due to immediate reports on the executor of a specific document; simple and effective search for the necessary documentation; control of execution according to resolutions of the administration.

It should be born in mind that e-document management in the system of state and municipal management has certain specific features, the use of which, as noted by the authors, is hampered by the lack of a unified regulatory act.

With no unified legislative act there is no unified approach to the idea of an e-document. In some regulations, an electronic document is viewed as paperless documentation and contrasted to an electronic copy of the document, in others, an electronic document is any document whose information is presented in electronic form, i.e., including an electronic copy of the document.

All in all, the adoption of e-document management in government bodies is aimed at improving the efficiency of management activities through strengthening the commitment discipline, monitoring the implementation of plans, decisions, etc., improving the interaction of structural units, as well as increasing citizens’ confidence in the activities of government bodies.

3. Conclusion

Thus, the study shows that, in general, the ‘simplest’ arrangements for recording citizens’ opinions on the activities of a government body in Russia are implemented, though, they are so inefficient and unsystematic. Consequently, optimization of government activities following the opinions expressed by
individuals actually faced with the work of a public structure is not in place yet.

Considering that the ‘e-government’ itself cannot fully solve most of the problems that involve, namely, increasing the efficiency of public administration and reducing corruption, the basic possibilities for increasing the efficiency of e-government activities are primarily related to management decisions, rather than technical implementations. It (‘e-government’) should be a major component of larger-scale changes aimed at modernizing public administration, including modifications in its philosophy, enhancement of the quality of public services with a focus on the interests of all citizens.

It is assumed that it is in the context of such transformations that the realization of the whole positive potential of ‘e-government’ in the field of public administration is possible.

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