

## e-GOVERNANCE : IS THE TRUTH OUT THERE?

As more and more governments make the beeline for this not-so-new buzzword, one is compelled to ask if it simply involves 'computerisation' of day-to-day tasks or trying to redefine the task of governance itself. While experts seem to be in agreement that e-governance is a lot more than 'just computerising', there is considerable disagreement as to whether the process leads to an evolution or revolution.

There is also little doubt on the fact that either way, be it computerisation or 'a new philosophy of work', it is the citizen that is, or needs to be catered to, pampered with and maybe even indulged. Information is a powerful tool - and disseminated at the right place, at the right time and in the right quantity - and if any of these go wrong, the results have been anything but worth another inspired attempt. Examples of either exist, both in India and abroad - but to summarily pronounce or denounce schemes, programmes or initiatives can be premature.

As wise men often say, "Nothing is so good that it cannot get better, and nothing is so bad that it cannot get worse. And vice-versa." Either way, the society has something to learn.

Meanwhile, there is the WSIS - the event all ICT sectors - whether or not pertaining to development or not, look forward to. The Geneva summit will in all certainty address issues pertaining to accessibility to transparency to ethics of using information. However, there would be those that still wonder, "What's all this buzz about, anyway? Internet access? Cheaper cable TV? And what do we do with it anyway? How is it useful to us?" Oddly enough, even terms such as 'civil societies', howsoever 'groupie' they may sound, quite actually describes the common people. And the summit is about common people - rights, duties, responsibilities and opportunities.



This issue also features highlights of the first i4d seminar - that has seen the growth of the ICT4D community to strengthen bonds across civil societies. We thank you all for the support that you have provided and hope to organise more such events in the future.

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