

Getting to Citizen 2.0: A New Model for Democratic Citizenship

by

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B.A., University of Alberta, 2000

LL.B., University of Alberta, 2003

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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The Internet and the proliferation of other digital technologies have facilitated the emergence of electronic or e-government across the world since the early 1990s. The Internet has now evolved into Web 2.0, which provides greater opportunities and platforms for interaction and collaboration than in the past. Governments using Web 2.0 in their e-government strategies are now moving towards Gov 2.0, a model of government based on increased interaction and collaboration with citizens and other policy actors. This has required a corresponding evolution in the conception of citizenship in democratic countries. While the Citizen 2.0 model is still relatively new, emerging a couple of years ago, it promotes new expectations of how citizens will engage in the political process. This raises concerns about the barriers facing citizens today in the adoption of this new model of citizenship.

Bringing together the literature about e-government, democratic citizenship and adult literacy, this thesis explores the difficulties in realizing Citizen 2.0 model. Using discourse analysis to identify the various discourses in each literature, this thesis argues that the challenges in the adoption of the Citizen 2.0 model in democratic societies, and particularly in Canada, exist partially because current adult literacy rates and their impact

on political knowledge and participation, as well as technological barriers in leveraging Web 2.0 for political purposes. These challenges carry significant implications for the realization of the Citizen 2.0 model, but also for the successful implementation of Gov 2.0.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Internet and the proliferation of other digital technologies have facilitated the emergence of electronic or e-government across the world. E-government, a term coined to describe the changes, involves the use of digital technologies, especially the Internet, to enhance government activities and to initiate a shift toward a citizen-centric approach to governance. Many western democratic governments particularly have used these technologies to improve the interaction between government and citizens to ameliorate the decline of citizen engagement in democratic and governance processes, to improve service delivery and to reduce the cost of government. This attention on the decline of citizen engagement has gained intensity since the mid-20th century when the democratic discourse renewed an emphasis on political participation in many countries around the world primarily because of declining electoral participation (Abramson & Aldrich, 1982, p. 502).

The availability of and advances in digital technologies and Web 2.0 platforms has led the e-government community and industry to move to a different level of online interaction and collaboration. This new form of government, typically called Gov 2.0, represents an evolution of e-government. More than just service transformation, Gov 2.0 is viewed to be a new version of democratic governance with the principles of interaction and collaboration with citizens articulated in a different manner than previous forms of governance (Dutil, Howard, Langford & Roy, 2010, p.131). In other words, instead of government using their websites to tell citizens what they are doing and provide some

services online, increasingly the government is soliciting input and developing services, policies and programs in a more collaborative manner than in the past.

For the most part, the literature that describes the emergence of e-government in the early 1990s reflects two perspectives about using e-government to engage citizens in the political process. Early proponents suggested that the availability of online information and the more open channels of communication and interaction allowed by e-government would mobilize disenfranchised citizens to engage with government (Norris, 2001, p.218). Sceptics suggested that existing patterns of engagement would merely be reinforced and e-government may possibly exacerbate inequities concerning access to and engagement with government (Norris, 2001, p.218).

A decade later, scholars tend to view the 21st century as the period where there has been an integration of e-government into government practices. There was also the evolution of the Internet to Web 2.0 which has encouraged greater integration and use of e-government. Gov 2.0 creates new avenues for increased interaction between government and citizens, and is intended to provide for a deeper collaboration between all actors in the policy network. As a result, Gov 2.0 represents a change to the concept of democratic citizenship. This new model of democratic citizenship has been labelled Citizen 2.0 (Holle, 2006, p.2). While Meg Holle states that “Citizen 2.0 describes the effect of the internet on citizen participation through information, organisation and mobilisation” (2006, p.2), the model for Citizen 2.0 presupposes an active and informed citizen who is intrinsically motivated to engage in the political process through whatever means, but increasingly through Web 2.0 mediums. It also presumes an individual with the necessary literacy skills to obtain, understand and apply the knowledge and

information available through the various channels, including Web 2.0 platforms. Further, it also implies to a certain extent that individuals have financial access to purchase computers, tablets and other mobile devices. These various assumptions will be explored in this thesis; however, the focus will be on the assumed literacy skills citizens are assumed to have to be an engaged citizen.

1.1 Purpose and Objective

This thesis supports the premise that citizen engagement is an important aspect of legitimising government and that, in the words of Brenton Holmes,

Participation by citizens in the governance of their society is the bedrock of democracy. To the extent that the work of building and sustaining democracy is never completed – ‘the price of freedom is eternal vigilance’ – we should expect that the institutions through which our democracy is expressed should be themselves constantly renewed, recalibrated and re-imagined (2011, p.39).

In present day, one of the ways in which western democracies are being renewed is through Gov 2.0, and in turn, the exercise of democratic citizenship is being re-imagined. As John Morison states, “Gov 2.0 will not be satisfactorily established until Citizen 2.0 flourishes too” (2010, p.576).

This work probes the presumption that the majority of citizens will be able to transition to the Citizen 2.0 model and asks what the existing challenges are today facing citizens in the transition to Gov 2.0. It is hypothesized that literacy, civic engagement, and the technology of Web 2.0 itself are the most significant challenges facing citizens today. Literacy, as will be explained in more detail later in this work, is more than the skills to be able to understand and apply information. This thesis views literacy as also synonymous with knowledge, and particularly, the knowledge to engage in the political, social and economic realms of contemporary society. For this reason, a lack of sufficient

literacy is a foremost challenge and impacts the other challenges of civic engagement and the use of digital technologies, including the Internet.

While the changes made to the model of democratic citizenship via the Citizen 2.0 model are likely to improve certain aspects of democracy, there is the likelihood that Gov 2.0 will also contribute to the widening of the gap between those citizens who can adapt and engage in the new expectations and those who cannot if the challenges facing citizens are not addressed. Moreover, those citizens who are currently engaging with the existing political system may be relegated to the group of those who cannot adapt because of the challenges in society that exist around literacy, engagement and technology use. This effect in widening the gap detracts from the use of e-government as a tool to engage citizens in the political process and may serve to further distance citizens from Western democratic governments. This is important as the vision for interaction with citizens is broad and inclusive, and not believed to be directed only to a subset of elite citizens.

1.2 Background

The transformation of Western society through the introduction of digital technologies and the Internet in the 1990s has been significant. Amongst numerous other changes, digital technologies allow faster communication and more information availability than previous forms of media technology. The Internet in particular allows for new opportunities in community building and the interaction of individuals and groups that rise above the constraints of distance and time (Saco, 2002, p.xvi).

There is increasing recognition that the Internet has evolved since it publicly appeared in the mid 1990s. In the past number of years, the possibilities for

communication and information sharing via the Internet have advanced and as noted earlier, are now being referred to as Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is dynamic and interactive (Morison, 2010, p.559) and information is not only available, but also easy to create, transmit, and can be in a variety of formats. These advancements have significantly changed how many organizations interact with their clients, customers and citizens further, and how individuals and groups communicate and interact with each other. Use of the Internet and other digital technologies has been a key feature in e-government, which is now a norm of government practices and service delivery (OECD, 2009, p.24).

In addition to e-government's ability to improve service delivery, there has been increased citizen demand for transparency in government decisions and operations in addition to greater involvement in decision-making (Coe, 2004, p.9). This demand has coincided with a corresponding decline of citizen engagement in the political process in the 20th century, referenced in the literature as a "crisis of engagement" (Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p.2). Since Western democracy assumes a level of legitimacy due to citizen engagement, and because one of the key functions of citizens in democratic systems is the ability to choose their government (Held, 2006, p.231), e-government was viewed as a forum to address this "crisis" and enhance citizen engagement (Margolis, 2007, p.764).

This perspective has solidified in the 21st century. Using Web 2.0 to move towards Gov 2.0 (Morison, 2010, p.559), this upgraded version of government is, as Patrice Dutil, Cosmo Howard, John Langford and Jeffrey Roy suggest, marked by mass collaboration (2010, p.131) within government and also with citizens and other policy actors. Along with the transformation of e-government to Gov 2.0, the expectations of

citizens in relation to their engagement with government have evolved and been re-imagined into Citizen 2.0. Citizen 2.0 represents an active participation model of citizenship and presumes that citizens will be mobilized to engage in the political process due to the accessibility of government as Gov 2.0 through Web 2.0 platforms for interaction and collaboration. This new representation of democratic citizenship requires a significant shift for many citizens in western democracies, notably in how they approach their role in the policy and decision making process and consequently, also requires certain skills and capacities in order to effectively transition to the Citizen 2.0 model of citizenship.

1.3 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

1.3.1 Methodology

This thesis performs a critical analysis of the individual subjects of e-government, literacy, and civic engagement and examines the relationship between them as a means to study the efficacy of Citizen 2.0. Each area of study contains extensive literature with varying theoretical and research approaches to their subjects and sub-topics. Further, there has been significant quantitative research done in these areas including statistical studies of political participation and surveys of literacy skill rates. Case studies of particular examples of e-government citizen engagement initiatives also exist in the e-government literature.

Critical analysis was the appropriate approach for this thesis because the purpose of this work is to review the existing literature and critically analyse the presented information in order to answer the question of the existing challenges facing citizens.

There has been literature focused on similar questions, particularly in the e-government literature, but there was a lack of linking the three bodies of literature together in critical analysis. The critical analysis was entirely qualitative – a methodology which fit best with the overall approach to the research question.

The method for data collection was to perform a literature review of the three broad bodies of literature in the fields of e-government, literacy and civic engagement. Upon the data being collected, the approach to the analysis was to group the themes presented in the literature, identify key discourses and theoretical frameworks, and then critically assess how those themes related to the Citizen 2.0 model.

1.3.2 Unit of Analysis

For the purposes of this thesis, there will be two units of analysis. The first and larger unit of analysis used is Western democracies. While e-government initiatives have been introduced throughout the world, the literature has concentrated on the experience of e-government as a tool for citizen engagement in democratic systems, and in particular, Western democratic countries. For this reason, this unit of analysis will define the scope of examination of the discourses presented in the e-government, literacy and citizen engagement literature.

The second unit of analysis is narrower and limits the focus to literature pertaining to Canada. Canada is chosen to focus the studies of adult literacy, political participation, political knowledge and a commitment to e-government. This narrower unit of analysis allows for more comprehensive analysis, using the larger unit of analysis to frame the examination of the Canadian experience. This serves to make the findings in an abstract

work more tangible and provides the researcher with a foundation to contribute to the research and discourse for the realization of Citizen 2.0 in Canada.

1.3.3 The Theoretical Framework

As Maria João Simoes argues, from a theoretical and conceptual perspective, e-government is under-analyzed in the literature (2012, p.29). This presents challenges in determining an approach to use to study e-government and associated issues. The vision of Gov 2.0 involves increasing direct participation opportunities for citizens by using Web 2.0 platforms to provide space for citizens to deliberate and contribute to decision-making (O'Reilly, 2010, p.12). This thesis does not challenge the incorporation of theories of democratic citizenship in the Citizen 2.0 model and its emphasis on participation and deliberation; instead the theories provide a framework for the conceptualization of the model and the assumptions that are being challenged in this thesis. The research for this thesis encompassed a review of the discourses present in the literature about democratic citizenship, literacy and e-government. The following sections present an overview of the discourses in those bodies of literature, beginning first with the discourses of democratic citizenship.

Discourses on Democratic Citizenship

The discourses about democratic citizenship provide context for the evolution of e-government and Gov 2.0. The Citizen 2.0 model builds on previously established discourses of citizenship by focusing on participation and deliberation. David Held, a prolific writer on democratic theory, outlined the various models of democracy beginning with classical democracy. This type of democracy provides for a model of citizenship that supports direct participation in the political process (Held, 2006, p.14). Classical

democratic theory evolved into conceptions of direct and representative democracies that furthered the model of active participation by citizens in the political process. His review of the subsequent models of democracy, including Republicanism and liberal democracy, where the concept of the democratic citizen was reduced from direct participant to one who interacted with the institutions of government (Held, 2006, p.55-60), demonstrates the evolution of the role of the citizen in Western democratic systems.

The role of citizens was further refined in Western democratic theory in the 20th century. For example, Joseph Schumpeter believed that democracy represented an institutional system through which citizens chose representatives to make decisions on their behalf (Held, 2006, p.142), which is commonly called representative democracy or government. This model for democratic citizenship did not generally encourage an active role for citizens in the decision-making process. Beginning in the 1960s, two new streams of democracy emerged out of a reaction to the concern about the liberal democratic state. On the New Right, the stream of legal democracy developed and participatory democracy on the New Left emerged (Held, 2006, p.215). These new streams were characterized by the valuation of political participation as a form of “self-realization” (Held, 2006, p.231).

The emphasis on active participation in the political and decision making processes led to a further refinement of the stream of participatory democracy. In addition to the importance of participation, a focus developed in the model of deliberative democracy on how citizens could engage in policy discussions and further their participation in the political process. In this model, deliberation was seen as a means of overcoming the private and public demarcations and a further means of sharing

information between citizens to achieve a greater understanding and level of participation in democratic practices (Held, 2006, p.237).

Discourses on Literacy

In addition to looking at obtaining knowledge through the lens of political participation, this thesis examines literacy in the context of attaining and using information and knowledge in an online environment. In literacy studies, there are two dominant theoretical frameworks that explain how literacy is characterized and understood. The view that literacy encompasses the skills of reading and writing reflect the general functionality approach in literacy studies. This very technical representation of literacy has also been described as the autonomous model, which “works from the assumption that literacy in itself – autonomously – will have effects on other social and cognitive practices” (Street, 2001, p.7). This approach dominated literacy studies until 25 years ago (Baynham & Prinsloo, 2009, p.2) and the literacy surveys performed and public discussions about literacy reflect this approach.

The other model presented in the literature is the ideological model of literacy.

Brian Street was instrumental in establishing this model and describes it as:

start[ing] from different premises than the autonomous model – it posits instead that literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being (2001, p. 7).

Theorists of the ideological model challenged the autonomous model stating that it failed to take into account the cultural context. While cultural context is important, the ideological model of literacy experiences difficulty in examining and comparing large populations. For this reason, this thesis discusses literacy using the autonomous model.

The ideological model is introduced to provide context but it is the functional aspects of literacy skills that will be focused on to show why there remains challenges in the adoption of the Citizen 2.0 model.

Discourses on e-government

The discourses on e-government tend to focus more on the purpose of the e-government activity, such as service delivery, governance or democracy, rather than a particular theoretical framework. As mentioned above, a theoretical perspective of e-government is under-developed. In the early e-government literature, there was considerable discourse between, in Pippa Norris' terms, the cyber-optimists and the cyber-sceptics (Norris, 2001, p. 98). The optimists were those who firmly believe that e-government will transform government and provide a new means of engagement with citizens. In comparison, the work of cyber-sceptics raised concerns about the promise of e-government and identified the barriers facing citizens in accessing e-government. These barriers were labelled the digital divide in the literature.

Discourses on e-government are not limited only to academic work. There is a significant contribution to the discourses on e-government from agencies and bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations and Accenture. Western governments have also contributed to the discourses on e-government, in all the spheres of activity. The discourses from these sources are not different from those in the academic realm. In keeping with the nature of e-government, all actors are engaging in discourses about e-government, the nature of e-government and currently, the new direction for e-government as Gov 2.0.

The nature of e-government has received considerable attention. There is a prominent theme in the literature that argues e-government will be transformative for Western democratic countries in that it will be a means to become more responsive to citizens and other stakeholders. This aspect of e-government will be discussed in more detail later in this work as it is an important factor in how the Citizen 2.0 model has arisen. The element regarding the engagement of citizens in a more direct manner reflects contemporary discourses in democratic theory. As mentioned above, such discourse is emphasizing active citizen participation in the political process. The discourses in the e-government literature centre on the best manner in which to allow for that active engagement such as online public spheres or Web 2.0 platforms through which citizens can collaborate directly with government staff.

The purpose of identifying these different discourses is to highlight the various themes that relate to the Citizen 2.0 model. The new vision for democratic citizenship in a Gov 2.0 world still remains largely in the abstract for the majority of the population. As these discourses all relate to the model, they are used as a framework for the analysis about the Citizen 2.0 model in this work.

1.4 Research Limitations

One of the most evident limitations involving the research for this thesis is the breadth of topics explored. As identified previously, e-government, literacy and democratic citizenship are all topics of significant study with individually developed theoretical frameworks. The limitation exists in being able to adequately review the key resources in each body of research and present them in this work. The approach taken to

address this limitation was to do extensive reading but stop where reference material and information began to be repetitive.

The size of each body of research is not the only challenge. Another significant limitation was maintaining currency with the literature developing in each field, and in particular, with respect to citizen engagement in the e-government context. The research for this thesis began in 2009, and therefore, there have been numerous advances with regards to how e-government has evolved, as well as the development of terms such as Citizen 2.0 and Gov 2.0. Recognizing the impossibility of reading every new resource, it became important to narrow reading to certain authors, reports and studies, such as new information emerging from the Government of Canada and Statistics Canada.

The continuous evolution of the literature relates to a third challenge in the research for this thesis, namely, that many discourses are still developing, and therefore, so too are the definitions and understanding of certain terms. The literature is not consistent in its use of the term e-government, for example, and in many cases, such as for the term Citizen 2.0, its conceptualization is still in progress. Where possible, this thesis identifies those terms or discourses still evolving and provides an explanation for the use of the term in the context of this work. As the literature becomes more established in the area of e-government and types of literacy, how certain terms are used will become more determined.

1.5 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter presents a literature review. The literature review will critically analyse and

assess works on e-government, literacy and citizen engagement. As noted above, each of these subjects is extensive and, therefore, the literature review in chapter two will reference the classic and relevant pieces of research to the thesis to adequately contextualise the analysis that follows in further chapters. While e-government as a tool for citizen engagement is the primary focus for this thesis, there are other aspects to the e-government discourse that will be discussed in the literature review such as e-service delivery. This will provide the necessary context for the emergence of e-government in Western democracies and its incorporation into regular government practices.

Chapter three examines the current state of e-government, adult literacy and political participation in western democracies and in Canada in particular. The key question in this thesis presupposes a particular current state upon which Citizen 2.0 is based. It is, therefore, imperative to explain how the transformation of e-government has continued with Web 2.0 and formed the basis of Gov 2.0. The Internet has been seen as a new frontier for citizen engagement and a tool to reach more citizens and increase participation in those practices. This assumption creates new expectations for the exercise of democratic citizenship as well as a belief that citizen engagement will increase.

Chapter four examines the challenges that exist for the successful realization of the Citizen 2.0 model in Canada. For example, adult literacy rates in Canada have demonstrated that there are functional literacy proficiency challenges for many adult citizens. These proficiency challenges create barriers for citizens to develop the types of literacy skills to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model. These barriers include a lack of capacity to develop the requisite levels of political knowledge, a corresponding factor of political

participation. Using Web 2.0 to participate in the deliberation and decision-making opportunities anticipated for Citizen 2.0 also presents challenges to the model. It assumes that the individualization and privatization of the Internet (Noveck, 2000, p.28) has been overcome. Further, there is the assumption that the echo chambers effect of the Internet through citizens control the information made available to them, and therefore, can exclude any information that contradicts their belief paradigm (Sunstein, 2001, p.16) decrease the likelihood that citizens will use Web 2.0 platforms for citizen engagement purposes.

The final chapter presents the conclusion to the thesis. A discussion of the findings and how those findings relate to the initial research question and hypothesis will be contained in this chapter. Following that section, this chapter will outline what implications those findings have on Gov 2.0. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on how Citizen 2.0 may continue to evolve and recommendations for the policy community and for further research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review on e-government, citizen engagement and literacy. As noted previously, each of these subjects have extensive bodies of literature and for that reason, the literature review will focus on the discourses that provide the reader with an understanding of the classic works in the field, recent research done in each area, the theoretical frameworks that contextualize that research, and the prevalent themes in the discourses for each area.

The first section of the literature review analyses the literature on e-government. The history of e-government in Canada is also presented to give context for the discussion about the current state of e-government in the following chapter. For the purposes of the literature review, however, the focus is on the research about e-government worldwide. This section concentrates on the various definitions of e-government and the use of e-government as a tool to enhance the relationship and interaction between government and citizens. This perspective has created two groups in the literature – those who are proponents of using technology for democratic purposes and those who are more sceptical of such use because of the barriers that exist for citizens to access e-government. The barriers to e-government have been identified in the literature as the digital divide and this section examines this topic as well as outlines the differences between the proponents and sceptics.

The second section examines the literature regarding citizen engagement. Beginning with a discussion of democratic theory and how democratic citizenship has been addressed in the literature, the review then outlines what has been written about the

importance of political knowledge and political participation in the context of citizenship and democracy. There has been much written and studied about why citizens do not participate in the political process; however, this is not the focus of this literature review. Instead, the purpose is to provide an overview of how political participation has become increasingly important in the democratic discourse leading to direct and deliberative democratic debates in the e-government discourse. Further, the suggestion for the decline of civic engagement, most notably from Putnam's theory of social capital (2000, p.33), will be addressed in this review because it contextualizes the research about the importance of community; a concept that is reconstructed with the use of the Internet and Web 2.0.

The literature review of literacy studies forms the third and final section of this chapter. The focus in this work is on adult literacy and how literacy is a foundational skill not only for what is commonly thought of as literacy – that is, reading and writing- but also for the capacity to obtain, understand and apply information and knowledge. Such skills are imperative for a society and an economy that is increasingly knowledge-based. To understand how literacy is approached, it is important to review the theoretical frameworks in literacy studies to contextualize the types of literacy presented in the literature. Following the review of those frameworks, this section explores how mass literacy has been promoted as an ideal for Western democracies, and how literacy had been used as a tool to shape individuals into ideal democratic citizens. This section ends with a review of the different types of literacy identified in the literature. Finally, a brief analysis of the main themes in each of the three areas and how they relate to each other will take place and any gaps in the literature will be identified.

2.1 Literature Review: E-Government

2.1.1 Defining e-government

E-government continues to be an area of extensive study and discussion. Much has been written about the emergence of e-government and the extent to which e-government has changed traditional government activities. The literature recognizes that early e-government emerged in the 1990s, at the same time as the New Public Management (NPM) approach became the leading philosophy in measuring government performance. This approach called for greater efficiencies in governments with a view to balancing budgets and performing cost-benefit analyses, in addition to the emphasis on measuring government performance (Charih & Rouillard, 1997, p.27). At the same time, public usage of the Internet and digital technologies emerged as widely used technologies. There was also renewed interest from citizens in creating a new form of government, one which was more responsive to citizens and stakeholders, less interested in the constraints of the vertical bureaucracy, and which could demonstrate a new approach to governing (Chadwick, 2006, p.178). In this environment, governments saw the potential in using e-government to achieve NPM goals. For this reason, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stated that e-government was “an important component of [the] reform agendas because it: 1) serves as a tool for reform; 2) renews interest in public management reform; 3) highlights internal inconsistencies; 4) underscores commitment to good governance objectives” (OECD, 2003, p.41).

E-government can be generally described as the leveraging of digital technologies, particularly the Internet, by government to enhance government activities.

These activities range from service delivery, to internal processes, and to democratic and governance practices such as voting and consultation. Consequently, the term e-government has been used in the literature to refer to all of these activities to varying degrees. Further refinements of the concept occurred in the maturation of the e-government literature resulting in writers such as Perri 6 classifying e-government into activities such as e-democracy, e-governance, and e-service (6, 2004, p.15-16). While these terms have been provided definitions in the literature, the terms are not used consistently and sometimes interchangeably making it difficult to define e-government (Bagir & Iyer, 2010, p.5). This work will use the more general term e-government but will later in this chapter outline how e-democracy has been discussed in the literature as that is the activity of e-government most closely associated with citizen engagement and the Citizen 2.0 model.

The early study of e-government defined it as a phased process. In their review of the literature, Victor Mayer-Schonberger and David Lazer noted that the evolution of e-government moved from “a web presence of public agencies (“information”) to a means for citizens to communicate with these agencies (“interaction”) to offering public services online to citizens around the clock seven days a week in the convenience of their homes (“transaction”)” (2007, p.2). Related, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division (DESAD) suggested the consideration of three phases of e-government. The first phase consisted of the creation of infrastructure to allow all parties access and the second phase consisted of the integration of services by using the new infrastructure. The final phase was the transformation government itself by “[p]ursuing service innovation and e-government across a broader prism of community and

democratic development through more networked governance patterns within government, across various government levels and amongst all sectors in a particular jurisdiction” (DESAD, 2008, p.78).

Others, in their study of e-government, approached defining the concept in other ways. For instance, a decade ago the OECD proposed that e-government be defined as “the use of information and communication technologies, and particularly the Internet, as a tool to achieve better government” (OECD, 2003, p.11). In their report on this topic in 2003, it was noted that there generally were three categories of definitions in the literature for e-government at that time. The first grouping of definitions center on service delivery and other online activities; secondly, e-government was viewed as using digital technologies in government to promote more efficient government, including online service delivery; and lastly, the definitions focus on the transformative aspect of e-government (OECD, 2003, p.23).

There was an understanding that e-government brought a shift in the approach to citizens, namely “the adoption of a *customer focus*, with the specific objective of providing citizens and businesses with a coherent interface with government which reflects their needs, rather than the structure of government” (OECD, 2003, p.35). Improving service delivery and government responsiveness are the two aspects of e-government that Darrell West (2007, p.17) noted as benefits for the increasing use of e-government. Responsive government is seen, according to Alison Hopkins, as the quality of the interaction between government and stakeholders and changing the way in which services are viewed and delivered (2005, p.233).

Some argue that focussing on the service delivery and transactional practices of government via e-government was not transformational, but has merely been a means for governments to automate manual processes (Behn, 2007, p.215), and to cut administrative costs (Ferdinand, 2000, p.2) while simplifying their internal processes (Lau, 2007, p.42). More prominently, e-government has been promoted as a means of increasing governments' "responsiveness to citizens" (West, 2007, p.17; Fountain, 2001, p.3) and it is within this sphere of activity that citizen engagement is also factored as a primary catalyst for e-government initiatives. The informational aspect of e-government serves not only to ensure freedom of information but also in "address[ing] informational power balances in a civil society" (Burkett, 2007, p.131). Making government information available online has been believed to inform citizens of government practices and services in a more transparent manner and to increase their knowledge of how government operates (Ferdinand, 2000, p. 5; Burkett, 2007, p.129; Noveck, 2000, p.23).

From their review of the literature, Andrew Chadwick and Christopher May identified three models of e-government which center on the interaction between government and citizens through the use of digital technologies: managerial, consultative and participatory (2003, p.272). In their view, the managerial model, defined as seeing citizens as consumers of government with concern about the efficient delivery of services, has been the dominant e-government model (Chadwick & May, 2003, p.272). They pointed to the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia as pioneers of this model in the establishment of e-government in the 1990s. This model can be seen as reflecting Robert Behn's (2007, p.216) perspective that e-government is more

representative of the automation of government processes instead of any democratic purpose.

The consultative model envisions the facilitation of government consultation via information and communication technologies to enable greater scope and speed than previously before online interaction between citizen and government existed. Chadwick and May noted that this model presents a basis for a more democratically transformative nature of e-government than the managerial model (2003, p.279). This model, however, does not fully represent the model of e-government succeeded now by the concept of Gov 2.0. The model that does so is characterized by Chadwick and May as the participatory model, which

conceives of a more complex, *horizontal*, and *multidirectional* interactivity. It is assumed that while states may facilitate political discussion and interaction, they are but one association among many with a presence in civil society. Other sites of political discourse and interaction have emerged (and will continue to emerge), even though the state may remain the principal target of organized political action (Chadwick & May, 2003, p.280).

It is in this model that e-government is viewed through the lens of more direct participation by citizens in political decision-making. This model also reflects the perspective that e-government is meant to transform Western governments and increase citizen engagement in the political process by increasing governments' transparency, accountability, accessibility and responsiveness. It is also the model that best describes the vision for Gov 2.0.

2.1.2 The Internet Becomes Web 2.0

Despite the fact that the Internet was created as a military tool by the American government, the New Left and Counterculture movements of the 1960s adopted the

Internet as a means of free expression, without oversight from business or government where there was a strong belief that the Internet could create a new age of community and communication opportunities (Margolis & Moreno-Riaño, 2009, p.28). The techno-meritocratic, hacker, virtual communication and entrepreneurial cultures characterize initial Internet culture (Castells, 2001, p.37) and the opportunities for new ways of doing business became evident. Post mid-1990s, the e-business aspect of the Internet began, with new global and economic networks being established in the wake of telecommunication deregulation (Hassan, 2008, p.100; Melody, 2007, p.57).

Promoting a new culture of change (Holmes, 2001, p.71), the Internet is understood as more than a single entity, where there is a “network of networks” (Chadwick, 2006, p.4) enabling multiples forms of communication, between individual users and groups, without geographical barriers (Chadwick, 2006, p.7). Kathleen McNutt also defined the Internet as a “network of networks” in addition to it being a “physical communication infrastructure” (2010, p.918). The advent of digital technologies and open use of the Internet in the 1990s created an economic and social shift regarding the use of information and knowledge. In 1996, Don Tapscott referred to this time as the Age of Networked Intelligence which, in his opinion, was marked by “networking not only of technology but of humans, organizations, and societies” (1996, p.8). Hassan described the network effect, essentially the need to be part of the information society, and that being unconnected “is to run the risk of sinking rapidly from the social, economic and cultural radar” (Hassan, 2008, p.9). In this new age, knowledge is commodified (Hassan, 2008, p.56) and society can be understood as an Information

Society, much like past technologies or events defined societies, such as the Industrial Age (Hassan, 2008, p.1).

Efforts by governments to ensure that their citizens had access to the Internet, such as the goal of providing broadband in rural areas, demonstrates the paradigm shift of western democratic countries as Internet penetration and digital technologies usage increased. The Internet and digital technologies, as noted by the OECD (2009, p.27) have now become completely integrated into how governments conduct their business. Moreover, the Internet and the Web that became identified with it has transformed, to what is now being referred to as Web 2.0.

While early Internet information was primarily text based with the eventual incorporation of graphics and media, Web 2.0 is distinguished from its previous version by the level of interactive capacity for users. Web 2.0 allows for greater collaboration and sharing (OECD, 2009, p.86) which is encouraging new creativity and business models (O'Reilly, 2010, p.11) and presents as a "social and visual" technology (Noveck, 2010, p.64). Dutil et al. suggest that Web 2.0 presents not just a technological change, "but also for a new social paradigm with sweeping implications for organizations in all sectors" (Dutil et al., 2010, p.130). Yet, it is not only the technology that has changed; so too have many of the users.

In addition to those who are adept at using digital technologies, there is now an entire generation in the workforce that have always known the Internet (O'Reilly, 2010, p.11). Since the "Net Generation" relates to technology in a different way than previous generations (Tapscott, 2008, location 238), they also carry new expectations of what the

Internet can do, and have new norms of freedom, customization, transparency and collaboration, as well as immediacy and innovation (Tapscott, 2008, location 1461).

These new norms are also found in Web 2.0 descriptions. Tim O'Reilly cautions against viewing Web 2.0 as simply an improved version of the Internet, in fact, he argued, Web 2.0 is "a rediscovery of the power hidden in the original design of the World Wide Web" (O'Reilly, 2010, p.12).

The language used to describe Web 2.0 is reminiscent of the early descriptions of the Internet as a "new frontier" without the controls of the state and big business. As was envisioned at the beginning of the Internet, Web 2.0 represents new forums and opportunities for individuals and groups to share information and knowledge. These new opportunities and forums include new media formats, or combinations of existing media and while governments will still be active in policy discussions, they will likely no longer be the main actor directing the information flow. This is not only due to the nature of Web 2.0, but also because the boundaries that formerly defined what governments citizens engaged with, such as based on their place of residence or citizenship status, have minimized. Citizens can now communicate, interact and influence policy discussions globally, and also exert influence on non-government actors such as large corporations to take action on a politically related matter without necessarily routing through government.

2.1.3 Moving to Gov 2.0 and Open Government

Even though there is a phased approach identified for the evolution of e-government, the consistent theme in these depictions is that e-government will transform traditional government practices and services. In the literature about Gov 2.0 and open

government, Web 2.0 is presented as the means for enabling the real transformation. As discussed above, early e-government initiatives have been seen as primarily making “government information and services more accessible to citizens while creating administrative and operational efficiencies” (Tapscott, 2010, p.xvi). Web 2.0 provides the opportunity to increase accessibility while also increasing the collaboration and interaction between government and citizens.

E-government activities by Western democratic governments have been focused not only on service delivery and efficiencies, but also on democratic and governance initiatives. As discussed above, refinements to the definition of e-government have been made along the activity of focus. For example, Perri 6 uses the term e-governance to reflect the activity of using digital means for policy work (6, 2004, p.16). In contrast, Coleman provides a more expansive view of what can be meant by the term ‘e-governance’, including service delivery, regulation and the provision of government information (Coleman, 2008, p.6).

E-democracy has been touted as the third era of democracy, following the classical Greek and representative democracies (Ferdinand, 2000, p.1). The conception of e-democracy for 6 is quite broad, seen not only as

the activities of registering to vote and casting a vote across electronic networks, but the *conduct over such networks of the whole panopoly of activities by which government solicits, or receives unsolicited, the views of the citizens and indeed of businesses and other organisations on matters ranging from full-scale legislative change to the tweaking of management of services and programmes to meet the concerns of current consumer* (2004, p.15-16 emphasis in the original).

There are, however, some critics that do not see e-democracy as anything more than moving existing democratic practices onto digital technology platforms (Margolis &

Moreno-Riaño, 2009, p. 2) and where digital technology is only assisting citizens with obtaining information or directing their civic activities, not actually allowing for increased direct participation as was envisioned (Noveck, 2010, p.59). Noveck provides *Smartvote.ch* as an example of this. This is a site where citizens provide answers to a list of questions which then are analysed to inform citizens of their political leanings. There are also initiatives such as the Online Party of Canada (<http://www.onlineparty.ca/>), which is creating a direct democracy political party completely online (although this party is not yet registered as an official party).

The e-government model now envisioned does not easily distinguish itself into distinct areas of activities. The transformational element of e-government is now moving forward, where the integration and use of digital technologies and the Internet are fully accepted, and that how government operates itself is changing. As McNutt noted, governments in Canada and other western countries are now focusing on information networks where the information is shared by and with various policy actors using various online platforms (2010, p.921). This is contrasted to their more traditional role as managing Weberian hierarchies (McNutt, 2010, p.921). The ability to create policy networks and share information so seamlessly is reason that Web 2.0 is leading the wave of Gov 2.0 discussions. Government 2.0 is seen as the new form of government, based on mass collaboration (Dutil et al., 2010, p.131), and using Web 2.0 (Morison, 2010, p.559). Others view Gov 2.0 not as a new form, but instead what government could have been if it was being newly designed in current times (O'Reilly, 2010, p.12).

2.1.4 E-government and Increased Citizen Engagement

As discussed above, the term e-democracy has also been used to describe the cluster of e-government activity related to the political process. Olsson et al. define e-democracy as the use of digital technologies, including the Internet to support democratic practices (2006, p.20). According to Michael Margolis and Gerson Moreno-Riaño, Habermas' ideas on direct participation in open dialogues in a public sphere have been influential in shaping conceptions of e-democracy and related initiatives (2009, p.54). The view of engaging citizens in the political process through e-government has remained a constant theme in the e-government literature since its early conception. Engagement through collaboration and interaction now characterizes how citizen engagement is framed in a Gov 2.0 world, in addition to only using digital technologies for certain practices such as online voting.

Olsson et al. (2006, p.17) have argued that most of the research into using e-government as a tool to increase citizen engagement is based not on empirical data or even theory, but on speculation. According to Stephen Coleman, the cyber-optimist perspective is marked by technocratic determinism, which is brought first by the representation of the Internet as a new frontier, or “a deterritorialized cyber-utopia beyond the comprehension or control of the political state (2007, p.365). Secondly, the determinism is reflected in the belief that the Internet's feedback path would enable greater direct and individual citizen engagement with the state (Coleman, 2007, p.365). Lastly, Coleman identified the third characteristic of the determinism to be the failure “to recognize the implicit codes of rationality built into the hardware and software through which most people access the Internet” (2007, p.365).

The conviction in e-government as part of the solution to the democratic deficit has been driven in part because of the crisis of the modern liberal democratic state (Ilshammar, 2006, p.104) and because of the persistent belief in digital technologies as representing new avenues for the exercise of democracy that could not have existed in prior periods in democratic history (Ilshammar, 2006, p.104). Presenting a slightly different perspective, Margolis and Moreno-Riaño argued that the conviction about e-government addressing the decline of citizen engagement arose out of the expectations of government officials to use digital technologies to interact more closely with citizens and the expectations of citizens to use digital technologies to become more knowledgeable about political issues (2009, p.5).

Proponents of e-democracy see the virtual space as a means to overcome the challenge of space; a challenge that existed even in the days of the Athenian agora. Diana Saco, who looked at democratic theories from a spatial perspective, argued that it is the view of space that has been most problematic for democratic theorists (2002, p.37). She argued that those theorists “tend to treat the space of politics literally as a static, physical container and to treat the citizen as a body that might or might not occupy or have access to that space” (Saco, 2002, p.37). For this reason, the Internet now presents the opportunity to create an online agora or, following the public sphere theory espoused by Jürgen Habermas, an electronic or networked public sphere (Benkler, 2008, p.50).

In Margolis and Moreno-Riaño’s view, it is classical theorists that advocate for greater participation, and view the Internet as a modern day Athenian agora (2009, p.10). Ulf Buskqvist, however, takes issue with the manner in which this new phase of governance is described, stating that while

digital and e-democracy refers to a representative view on democracy, cyber and virtual democracy refers to a more deliberative view. In the discussions of ICT and democracy the ‘digital’ and ‘electronic (E-)’ prefix are commonly used when talking about governance (e-governance and digital governance). But it would be quite impossible to use ‘cyber’ or ‘virtual’ in the same way though they are associated with communication and deliberation practices among grassroots and with the life beyond traditional politics. The idea of a digital democracy involves bringing together existing tools and potential for disseminating information using digital technologies (2006, p.120-121).

Overall, however, there is an emphasis on direct and deliberative democracy among the writing of proponents of this argument. This emphasis is strengthened in the literature about Web 2.0 and Open Government. For example, O’Reilly advocates for citizen participation to be understood as “true engagement ... in the business of government and actual collaboration with citizens in the design of government programs” (2010, p.25) rather than citizens merely providing input to governments upon request (O’Reilly, 2010, p.25).

The cyber-skeptical (Norris, 2001, p.98) or technological dystopian (Saco, 2002, p.xv-xvi) perspective acknowledges that there is possibility for e-government to transform traditional government to some extent, but focuses more so on the barriers to e-government, which will be described in more detail in the next section. Overall, however, e-government remains a key strategy for addressing the decline in citizen engagement in Western democracies.

2.1.5 The Digital Divide

Challenges and barriers identified for the use of the Internet and digital technologies, which extend to citizens engaging with e-government, have been characterized as the digital divide in the e-government literature. While cyber-optimists are exemplified by their emphatically positive belief in the powers of digital technologies

and the Internet to address citizenship engagement, the cyber-skeptics (Norris, 2001, p. 98), or technological dystopians (Saco, 2002, p.xv-xvi) provide guidance on what barriers and challenges exist that limit citizen engagement with e-government.

The digital divide can be first understood at a macro level. According to Pippa Norris, the

global divide refers to the divergence of Internet access between industrialized and developing societies. The *social divide* concerns the gap between information rich and poor in each nation. And finally within the online community, the *democratic divide* signifies the difference between those who do, and do not, use the panoply of digital resources to engage, mobilize, and participate in public life (Norris, 2001, p.4, emphasis in the original).

Another way of categorizing this macro level divide is using Manuel Castells' informationalism scenario (Castells, 2010, p.14) where the divide separates those nations which are informational societies and those which are not (Chadwick, 2006, p. 51). In this context, informational societies are postindustrial where information is a key resource.

At a more micro or individual level, the digital divide has been characterized primarily as an access issue (Kent, 2008, p.84); although other authors have recognized other divides such as skill divides, economic opportunity divide, democratic divide in addition to the access divide (Chadwick, 2006, p.52). The OECD noted that access was a primary challenge for citizen usage of e-government in OECD countries and that the challenges, which also include awareness and provision of e-government services, were experienced by both those countries with mature e-government and those with less mature e-government (OECD, 2009, p.16). For this reason, western governments adopted policies that encouraged greater access to technology for citizens (Cullen, 2006,

p.289) and launched various initiatives to increase computer usage across all populations in western societies (Holmes, 2005, p. 205). These policies and initiatives reflect the hardware and software aspects of what Mike Kent (2008, p.86) called the matrix of access. The matrix of access also includes the wetware, that is, the knowledge and literacy capacities of individuals and now culture ware, or cultware which refers to the social connections on and offline (Kent, 2008, p.86).

In Chadwick's review of the digital divide literature, the access divide was broken down into select aspects: mental access (in that there is no desire to have access, or access creates anxiety), material access (no access to technology), skills access and usage access (2006, p.52). Yet, the literature also recognizes that access is not the only method of characterizing the digital divide. The key barriers, according to Cullen, in addition to access are skill, attitude and content development. She noted that those being identified as being most affected by the digital divide "include people on low incomes, people with few educational qualifications or with low literacy levels, the unemployed, elderly people, people in isolated or rural areas, people with disabilities, sole parents, and, in some communities, women and girls" (Cullen, 2006, p.292). Indigenous and immigrant populations are also included in this survey of populations at a disadvantage.

A consequence of the digital divide is limiting a citizen's ability to interact with Gov 2.0. From her study on the digital divide, Cullen noted that

[a]s increasing amounts of government information and transactions are made available on the Internet, lack of access to ICTs, especially the Internet, impact severely on the ability of citizens to access information and services from government and to participate in democratic processes. Studies of citizens' involvement with e-government to date have shown that the digital divide – the lack of access to, or the lack of interest in using ICTs – has as much if not more

impact on effective communication between citizens and government than it does in relation to general Internet use (2006, p.289).

Therefore, those individual citizens affected by the digital divide, because of access issues, or because of skill or knowledge barriers, are disadvantaged as governments move increasingly to a Gov 2.0. Further, as Norris noted, those who begin in a disadvantaged position tend to remain behind because of the struggle to maintain the pace of technological change and the associated expenses (2001, p.17-18). This carries significant implications in the transition to the Citizen 2.0 model.

2.2 Literature on Citizen Engagement

The Citizen 2.0 model represents an evolution of the conception of the democratic citizen. It is anticipated that not only will Citizen 2.0 use digital technologies to engage in the political process; Citizen 2.0 will also be inclined to participate in the process in a collaborative and more interactive fashion through Web 2.0 platforms. Key to this model is the belief in participation by the democratic citizen, and more so, direct and active participation. There is an anticipation in the literature that e-government will succeed in increasing citizen engagement because of increased availability of political information and opportunities to participate. For this reason, this section outlines the literature about citizen engagement to provide the theoretical background to the engagement aspect of the Citizen 2.0 model.

2.2.1 The Importance of Political Participation

Democracy has generally been understood to be “government of the people, by the people and for the people” (Weale, 2007 p.xiii). The definition of the democratic

citizen has been in question since the beginnings of democracy in Athens (Papacharissi, 2010, p.18). Nevertheless, the role of the citizen has always been and remains important to democratic success. Albert Weale underlined that “in a democracy important public decisions on questions of law and policy depend, directly or indirectly, upon public opinion formally expressed by citizens of the community, the vast bulk of whom have equal political rights” (2007, p.18).

According to Weale, there can be two characterizations of the approach to citizen participation in a democracy: participation *as* democracy, and participation *in* democracy (Weale, 2007, p.107). It is in the first form that the idealization of Athenian democracy is most strongly found, where all citizens participate equally in order for democracy to operate (Weale, 2007, p.107), such that there is little distinction between individual and common good and that autonomy is key to individuals self-governing. The arguments underlying participation *as* democracy, also argue that participation builds and develops individuals as citizens as it “is supposed to foster citizen involvement with the political process, ending the alienation that exists in representative democracies. Participation will [it is thought] thereby contribute to a heightened sense of citizen responsibility, since citizens will be taking decisions themselves and will therefore recognize the seriousness of what they are doing” (Weale, 2007, p.115).

By contrast, participation *in* democracy is demonstrated through participation in elections or referendum, recognizing limitations on the citizen’s ability to be sufficiently knowledgeable (Weale, 2007, p.120). This premise becomes significant in the discussion of e-government fostering an increase in citizen engagement. The Citizen 2.0 model reflects adherence to the perspective of participation *as* democracy with the emphasis on

mobilizing citizens to engage in the political process through direct collaboration and participation.

If the assumption is that citizens in a democratic country are free individuals who belong to other collectivities other than the state (Touraine, 1997, p. 16) and not just subjects of the state (van Deth, 2007, p.403), then democratic citizenship is achieved. In an increasingly diverse and global society, democratic citizenship “is not synonymous with nationality” (Touraine, 1997, p.67), but rather “a status granted to individuals who meet specific requirements” (van Deth, 2007, p.405). Coleman and Blumler recognized that citizenship requires the formation of relationships and communities with complete strangers (2009, p.4) but that citizenship also defines the boundaries of civic behaviours in both the public and private spheres of society (Papacharissi, 2010, p.80).

Democratic citizenship in Western democracies has legal-judicial, political and affective aspects (Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p. 4-5). The political aspect places the most emphasis on participation through information gathering, deliberation and active engagement in political activities (Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p.4-5). Examining participation and increasing participation has been a primary focus in democratic theory literature where participation becomes a central theme in defining citizenship. According to Amanda McBride, “[c]ivic engagement is [seen as] a hallmark of democracy, the space of freedom where citizens exercise rights, voice, and conscience” (2006, p. 152). The contemporary view that citizen engagement is fundamental to democracy explains the resources being spent trying to understand why there is a lack of engagement, who is more likely to disengage, and what must be done to re-establish engagement.

In all forms of democratic theory, participation is considered important “because it fosters a sense of political efficacy, generates a concern with collective problems and nurtures the formation of a knowledgeable citizenry capable of pursuing the common good” (Held, 2006, p.231). Sidney Verba, whose research into political participation has strongly contributed in the literature, argued that participation “will increase the extent to which a nation is democratic only insofar as such participation involves at some point influence by the participant over governmental decisions” (Verba, 1962, p.22). Participation is what makes an individual into a citizen (Verba, 1967, p.56) and can be defined “as referring to acts by those not formally empowered to make decisions - the acts being intended to influence the behaviour of those who have such decisional power” (Verba, 1967, p.55). In studying participation, Verba observed that the key element of participation is not whether there is success in getting a particular decision made, but the intention to engage in any such behaviour which may be directed to any level of government (1967, p.55-56).

Maria Bakardjieva cited the liberal tradition as defining “citizenship as a complex of unalienable rights and freedoms that individuals possess in equal measure in their capacity as members of a liberal-democratic state” (2009, p.92). This communitarian view is in contrast to the more individual emphasized republican view where agency and participation are more highly valued (Bakardjieva, 2009, p.92-93). Looking forward to a more contemporaneous view of citizenship, Bakardjieva introduced a radical-democratic model of citizenship where political identity becomes a greater value (2009, p.93) which aligns with the emphasis on the self in contemporary western society.

Acknowledging that there are many ways to approach a definition of citizenship, Coleman and Blumler identified three aspects of citizenship: legal-judicial, political and affective (2009, p.4-5). Their description of political citizenship exemplifies the focus on the participatory citizen:

This conception of citizenship places great emphasis upon the importance of three kinds of participation: information-gathering, with a view to gaining balanced accounts of political questions from pluralistic sources; deliberation, which in its most basic form, entails talking with other citizens about political questions in an honest and open-minded way; and active efforts to influence public policies and decisions, which range from putting up posters, voting for a candidate or party, joining a pressure group to demonstrating in the streets or breaking unjust laws (Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p.4-5).

The Citizen 2.0 model exemplifies the conception of political citizenship and places the emphasis on information-gathering and deliberation through the use of Web 2.0 platforms. Further, the focus on being an active citizen, rather than passively interacting with the political process is also found in the Citizen 2.0 model.

The emphasis on political participation in the era of e-democracy as a “core value” (Zittel, 2004, p.74) arises out of the perspective that using digital technologies and the Internet will facilitate political participation in Western democratic countries (Zittel, 2004, p.75) and renew democracy in the face of the crisis of the liberal democratic state (Ilshammar, 2006, p.104). In this perspective, the Internet was viewed as a means to shift the power dynamics in traditional modes of political participation (Margolis, 2007, p.767) and remove the influences of political messaging through such avenues as advertising and campaigning (Rosenblum, 1999, p.70). In this shift, democratic citizenship was to move closer to the direct democracy ideal, rather than citizens relying on representatives to

make decisions for them. To this end, citizens require knowledge about government and the issues on which they are being called to deliberate.

2.2.3 Political Knowledge and Citizenship

It is important to acknowledge that political knowledge remains a central component of citizenship, and an integral characteristic of political participation (Milner, 2010, p.7). The literature about political knowledge is vast, and often linked closely with political participation. Samuel Popkin and Michael Dimock asserted that “[p]olitical knowledge does not determine *whether* citizens can make reasoned decisions, but it does determine *how* new information is incorporated into their evaluations” (1999, p.118, emphasis in original). This definition of political knowledge explains how citizens obtain information, and then incorporate it into their decision-making processes as citizens. Furthermore, this view of political knowledge clarifies how citizens use political knowledge in newer and Web 2.0 forms of participation. From a theoretical perspective, it also supports the classical democratic theoretical approach supporting the direct participation of citizens in democracy (Margolis & Moreno-Riaño, 2009, p.10; Held, 2006, p.14).

In contrast, Marion Smiley presented a slightly different perspective, offering that political knowledge “refers to a body of knowledge about how to prioritize goals, develop adequate means for translating these goals into practice, speak persuasively in public, emphasize with fellow citizens, and so on”(1999, p.374). This view of political knowledge provides a rationalization for how citizens use information to make political decisions but speaks more to the overall skills used to apply the information already obtained. It too supports the view of active citizens, engaging in political decision-

making directly, and with a more deliberative and interactive level of engagement.

Robert Dudley and Alan Gitelson concluded that political knowledge is a prerequisite for civic engagement because it allows citizens to place the information they obtain in context (2003, p.265). Without context, the information provided is just information.

Michael Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter argued that political knowledge provides citizens with greater awareness of democratic and civil society principles (1996, p.6-7) and acceptance of democratic values (1996, p.220). The results of their 1996 study showed that political knowledge is a significant variable in whether citizens seek new information (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p.278). Political knowledge is also linked to the likelihood of citizens engaging in political discussions and thought to be promoted through the Internet (Mossberger, et al., 2008, p.89).

The literature demonstrates the importance of political knowledge in the democratic citizenship. While there have been dialogues about the ability of citizens to be sufficiently knowledgeable to participate (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p.23-4), political knowledge remains a core aspect of a citizen's likelihood to engage in the political process. In the context of e-government, the emphasis on political knowledge comes through the focus on creating information infrastructures and open information. It was anticipated that providing this information would enable citizens to become more knowledgeable and therefore, more engaged (Oliver & Sanders, 2004, p.viii).

2.2.4 Theories of Civic Engagement

Generally, civic engagement is linked to political participation in the literature. McBride argued that there are four theoretical perspectives of civic engagement (2006,

p.152-159; see also McBride, Sherraden & Pritzer, 2006, p.153). Institutional theories approach civic engagement through examining the opportunities that exist for citizens to engage. The second perspective is cultural and looks at how socialization affects engagement. This perspective is often demonstrated in the literature examining voting behaviour, particularly in the examination of differences between generations across election cycles. The third perspective is resource based and this means that citizens will engage when they have sufficient resources, including time, to engage. According to McBride, “[c]ivic engagement is [seen as] a hallmark of democracy, the space of freedom where citizens exercise rights, voice, and conscience” (2006, p. 152). This belief that citizens are not engaging and participating provides the justification for the resources spent trying to understand why there is a lack of engagement, what populations in society are more likely to disengage, and what would re-establish engagement.

Norris characterized civic engagement as including political knowledge, political trust and political participation (2001, p.217). Her reference to political knowledge is similar to the discussion above (Norris, 2001, p.217). In her view, political participation involved those activities through which citizens could influence both “government and the decision-making process” (Norris, 2001, p.217) while political trust encompassed the level of support for the political system and those within it demonstrated by citizens (Norris, 2001, p.217). David Campbell presented a different view of civic engagement. Using the National Civic Engagement Study by Zukin et al. in 2006, he posited that there are four types of engagement: electoral activity, expressive activity, group membership and voting (2009, p.776). These four forms signal different ways in which citizens can

engage in a much more concrete manner than other approaches to civic engagement, and link certain forms of engagement closer to political participation than others.

Social capital theory, which focuses on the connections between individual citizens, has received considerable attention as an explanation for the decline of civic engagement in the literature. Putnam, who is considered the founder of this theory, defined social capital as the “network of social connection” (Putnam, 2000, p.116-7). He theorized that a lack of social connections stemming from a decrease in voluntary associations and an increase in television watching since the 1960s has created a society where civic engagement has declined (Putnam, 2000, p.228-9).

Leading with the idea that interpersonal trust is fundamental to citizens choosing to engage, Putnam argued that people with interpersonal trust are good citizens and those who do not engage in the political process tend to be less trusting and are less likely to be trustworthy (2000, p.137). Therefore, he contended, current generations who are less community-minded and involved become less civically oriented (Putnam, 2000, p.275).

The trust between citizens is considered important because:

to be a citizen is to enter into a promiscuous relationship with strangers within a political community that is not of one’s own making. As citizens, we are not expected to know or understand one another, but to form political attachments that require us to abide by rules and norms of civic coexistence (Coleman & Blumler, 2009, p.4).

Consequently, as connections increase and individuals become more civically minded due to their involvement in associations, they will be more inclined to engage with their governments and become part of the political decision making process.

To some extent, this perspective about the influence of community has re-emerged in the discussion about online communities and interaction via Web 2.0 platforms. While online communities and what they represent for the Citizen 2.0 model is discussed in greater detail in chapter four, the association between increasing connections between individuals and mobilizing those individuals to be engaged in the political process is made clearly in the conception of how Citizen 2.0 interacts with other citizens and contributes to the decision-making process.

Unlike Putnam, who took a narrower view of social capital than Coleman (Grootaert, 2001, p.10) by looking at it only relating to democracy and government practice, Coleman's approach to social capital drew from his research into educational attainment. In his work, Grootaert summarized a further view of social capital, which is broader than the perspectives of both Coleman and Putnam, as also involving the institutional networks within the political and legal systems of a society (2001, p.11).

Gabriel Almond and Verba, upon whose work Putnam's perspective on social capital was based, believed that local institutions provided the greatest opportunity for participation (Pateman, 1970, p.48). Connections between citizens also presented as a theme in the work of Norman Nie, Jane Junn and Kenneth Stohlik-Barry, but in the form of social networks (Campbell, 2009, p.774). As Campbell noted, those at the center of those networks have greater opportunity to be heard, particularly in light of the limited capacity of governments to respond to everyone (2009, p.774).

Putnam's observations contributed to efforts at encouraging social connections and promotion of voluntary associations, but other writers have found limitations in his

argument. For example, Elizabeth Theiss-Morse and John Hibbing drew attention to three limitations in the social capital theory approach (2005, p.228). Firstly, people generally join associations or groups that promote homogeneity, where they are surrounded by those who are similar. This presents as a limitation since Putnam's thesis was that by joining groups, citizens would be exposed to a greater number of people, and thus encourage more trust between various and heterogeneous groups of people. Another limitation identified was in the act of participating itself. Similar to other work in this area, Theiss-Morse and Hibbing proposed that becoming more active in participation eventually leads to an overall decrease in engagement when disenchantment with the political process occurs (2005, p.228). Lastly they found that groups do not promote democratic citizenship to the extent presumed as the purpose of the groups is not to promote citizenship (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005, p.228).

Technology was identified in Putnam's work about citizen engagement as a contributing factor to the decline of engagement (2000, p.229). At the time of his writing, digital technologies, including the Internet were not yet available on a mass scale and therefore, the focus was on media technology and in particular, the television. According to Putnam, television detracted from civic engagement because it was an alternative means of spending time to engaging in activities that promoted civic engagement (2000, p.228-229). Yet he did acknowledge that the Internet may present an opportunity for increased civic engagement, although he was concerned about its lack of face-to-face interaction (2000, p.170), but it was too early to conclusively determine.

Media technologies were seen as contributing to the decline of community and therefore, interpersonal trust, tolerance and a belief in the public good (Putnam, 2000,

p.228-9). It has been suggested that this decline will serve to undermine civil society.

Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski defined civil society as “the totality of non-state institutions, organizations and civic associations functioning in the public domain” (2007, p.677).

Kenneth Newton made the link between the conception of civil society and social capital theory in that:

they [both] argue that a dense network of voluntary associations and citizens organizations help to sustain civil society and community relations in a way that generates trust and cooperation between citizens and a high level of civic engagement and participation. Therefore they create the conditions for social integration, public awareness and action, and democratic stability (2001, p.201).

While Newton took issue with the validity of both of these perspectives (2001, p.202), the association between civil society and social capital illustrates the promotion of social connections and trust as a means of overcoming the “crisis of engagement”. In contrast, Robert Wuthnow argued that civil society is distinguishable from social capital theory as the conception of a civil society encompasses more (2005, p.350). It is not just associations that are important, but also the discussions between citizens, civic education and the role of government to provide support for these activities.

The e-government discourse suggests otherwise. In this perspective, the Internet does not remove the individual from the community in the same way media technologies did. Rather, the argument is that the Internet allows for the creation of new communities that extend beyond the boundaries of an individual’s local community, and therefore, serves to build social capital online. As will be discussed in chapter four, the nature of these new communities are different than the ones addressed by social capital theorists and it is still unclear the full extent these online communities will have on civic engagement.

2.3 Literacy Literature

This section of the literature review analyses the literature about literacy. Literacy does not refer only to the basic skills of reading and writing; the skills underpinning a literate person now include those basic skills as well as being able to navigate and understand the various media on Web 2.0. The literature about literacy arises mostly from literacy studies. It is within that body of literature that various theoretical frameworks about and definitions literacy have evolved. Yet, while the definitions or categorizations of literacy have included a focus on information and digital technologies, both critical pieces for the Citizen 2.0 model, the theoretical frameworks remain outside of any discussion about e-government or Gov 2.0. Literacy, however, tends to be thought of in a binary sense, such that an individual is either literate or not (Alexander, 2012). This oversimplification reduces the significance of literacy as a barrier for citizens in any transition to a new form of citizenship and more importantly, to have sufficient capacity to interact and collaborate in a Gov 2.0 context.

2.3.1 Literacy and Citizenship

Literacy has been linked in the some of the literature to economic, social and political progress. While Harvey Graff is critical of this link (2007; 1991), mass literacy took hold at the same time the Western world moved through to the Industrial Age. Industrialization brought forth a new class in society and new ideas about the importance of literacy. While it was still considered a skill for the higher classes in society, there was recognition that literacy could serve as a strategy to shape workers in lower socio-economic classes into “more obedient citizens” (Martin 2006, p.7). By the mid-nineteenth century, mass literacy became an important policy goal in Western democratic

countries and was beginning to be used as a strategy to shape individuals into the ideal citizens.

Education was the instrument used to realize the policy goal of mass literacy. Consequently, there were considerable resources put into the educational system (Hartley 2009, p.129) in order to have the infrastructure in schools and universities for the children of citizens to attend. In the 20th century, following the Second World War, literacy was identified as a means of spreading democracy across the world through writing, and a factor of modernization (Triebel, 2001, p.23), and thus further attention was placed on literacy measures and development.

Casting literacy as an educational goal for individuals to achieve created the view that being literate was a result of individual accomplishment (Triebel, 2001, p.20). Therefore, when individuals in Western democratic societies are not literate, they are viewed as deficient in their education or personal capacity (Martin, 2006, p.7). The autonomous model underpins this view, and also serves to explain how literacy campaigns in Western democratic countries as well as other countries are conducted.

Literacy remains important in contemporary society. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as contemporary society has moved into what some are calling the Information Age, knowledge and information are increasingly important. They are important not only to perform the tasks in contemporary society, but because they are the new commodity in contemporary society. Knowledge workers therefore, are in critical need of high literacy skills in the same way for individuals in western societies exercising citizenship through the Citizen 2.0 model.

2.3.2 Types of Literacy

With the emergence of digital technologies in an Information Society, there is general consensus that “reading, writing, and arithmetic, the so-called 3Rs, need to be supplemented with a set of cognitive and technical skills that lead to broader participation in a complex, media-rich, and technology-reliant global society” (Wilhelm, 2004, p.18-19). As a result, the literature about literacy has developed various typologies which focus on a particular aspect or skill. This section outlines the types identified and discussed in the literature, including those such as information literacy and digital literacy that are critical for Citizen 2.0.

A. Information Literacy

Emerging out of the field of library studies (Bawden, 2008, p.22), information literacy is generally the first form of literacy defined in the literature. Strongly linked to how information is dealt with, it has regained its importance in discussions about the amount of information available through the Internet (Martin, 2008, p.160). The definition most generally accepted in the literature is the definition presented in 1989 by the American Library Association: “To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information” (cited in Campbell, 2004). Campbell suggested that this definition can be broadly applied because that definition stresses the handling and understanding of information (2004) over the manner in which the information is presented.

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) (2010) underline the importance of this form of literacy, noting that people rely on various forms of information daily and competencies were identified for an individual to be information literate. CILIP also provided a list of skills that an information literate person demonstrates but cautions that some behaviour, such as lifelong learning, may be more attitudinal, rather than a feature of information literacy itself (2010). Linkages between information literacy and an individual's interaction with institutions, such as government and education, are made. The association between information literacy and the economy are also being made. Ola Pilerot posited that in addition to the proliferation of information on the Internet, and the shift in educational practices to a more student-centered and problem solving paradigm, another factor that demonstrates the importance of information literacy is the focus, globally, on life-long learning (2006, p.82). These connections are also seen in the Prague Declaration which stated that

Information literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information concerns and needs, and the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand; it is a prerequisite for participating effectively in the Information Society, and is part of the basic human right of life long learning (cited in Martin, 2008, p. 160).

Information literacy is a critical type of literacy for citizens in contemporary society. Due to the significant amount of information now available online, an individual's ability to synthesize information is necessary not only in the political realm, but also in the social and economic realms of contemporary society.

B. Media Literacy

The definitions of media literacy in the literature are similar to that of information literacy (Martin, 2008, p.161). In spite of this, Martin stated that “[m]edia literacy is

focused more on the nature of various genres of medium and the way in which messages are constructed and interpreted – in this perspective the characteristics of the author/sender and the receiver are crucial in understanding the meaning of the message and its content.” (2008, p.161). R. W. Burniske offered a different definition of media literacy which focuses on the individual; he defined this form of literacy as “the ability to read and understand a communications medium by looking *through* the processes it enables, interpreting its signs and symbols, while also looking *at* the medium’s effect on an author, audience, and message” (2008, p.11). This type of literacy is useful for Citizen 2.0 because information is presented in such a variety of mediums online.

C. Civic Literacy

The connection between civic literacy and information literacy is strongly made in the literature. Maggie Fieldhouse and David Nicholas pointed to the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy Standards as stating that information literacy is “a prerequisite for participative citizenship” (2008, p.65). Milner defined civic literacy “as a framework for comparing societies’ capacity for informed political participation”(2001, p.3), while Burniske defined it as “the ability to read, interpret, and respect the moral and ethical beliefs embraced by a particular social group and apply them in a responsible manner” (2008, p.19). Civic literacy provides individuals with the capacity to provide the necessary context to political information. This is an important component of a citizen’s ability to assess the information available and use it in their engagement with the political process.

D. Computer Literacy

The emergence of computers led to the categorization of this form of literacy, and initially, the definition was fairly functional in that it looked at whether an individual could use a computer and software (Eisenberg, Lowe & Spitzer, 2004, p.8). Jeremy Shapiro and Shelley Hughes developed components of computer literacy that expanded the concept beyond the simple use of the computer and reflect the multitude of functions of a modern computer. Those components include:

- tool literacy – competence in using hardware and software tools
- resource literacy – understanding forms of, and access to, information resources
- socio-structural literacy – understanding the production and social significance of information
- research literacy – using IT tools for research and scholarship
- publishing literacy – ability to communicate and publish information
- emerging technologies literacy – understanding of new developments in IT
- critical literacy – ability to evaluate the benefits of new technologies (cited in Bawden, 2008, p.23).

As computer technology has continued to evolve, the description of literacy relating to technology has also changed. Although computer literacy is important, and particularly so for citizens who cannot use computers, there are greater numbers of citizens who now regularly use digital technologies, thus requiring a better definition of the literacy needed.

E. Technology Literacy

Technology literacy could be seen as encompassing computer literacy, particularly when using Hansen's definition: "an individual's abilities to adopt, adapt, invent, and evaluate technology to positively affect his or her life, community, and environment (p.1 as cited in Johnson, 2008, p.34). This form of literacy emerged in the

1970s in response to concerns about individuals being sufficiently skilled to use the new technologies (Martin, 2006, p.158-9). The International Technology and Engineering Educators Association defined technology literacy in a similar way, stating that “[a] technologically literate person understands, in increasingly sophisticated ways that evolve over time, what technology is, how it is created, and how it shapes society, and in turn is shaped by society” (2007, p.9).

As with civic literacy, technology literacy provides citizens with a framework in which to understand the role of technology in society. With the increasing use and influence of social media and other digital technologies, this type of literacy is important, particularly in understanding how the technology can shape how and what information is provided to or provided by citizens.

F. Network Literacy

Michael Eisenberg, Carrie Lowe and Kathleen Spitzer defined a network literate person as one who:

[has] an awareness of the range and uses of global networked information resources and services

[has] an understanding of the system by which networked information is generated, managed, and made available

[can] retrieve specific types of information from the network using a range of information discovery tools

[can] manipulate networked information to analyze and resolve both work and personal related decisions and obtain services that will enhance their overall quality of life

[has an] understanding of the role and uses of networked information in problem solving and in performing basic life activities (2004, p.9).

As discussed previously, Castells argued that “dominant functions and processes in the Information Age are increasingly organized around networks” (2010, p. 500) and that “[n]etworks constitute the new social morphology of our societies, and the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture” (2010, p. 500). For that reason, network literacy is more than simply the technology that enables networks. It is the skill to understand how to live in the Age of Networked Intelligence, and use the “network of networks” – the Internet.

G. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Literacy

Recognizing that ICT literacy is beyond a purely technical skill set, the ICT Literacy Panel offered a definition that encompasses both the technical and cognitive: “ICT literacy is using digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge society” (cited in Martin, 2008, p.158). ICT literacy is important for the Citizen 2.0 model because of the integration of digital technologies, especially the Internet, in that model.

H. Digital Literacy

Claire Belisle suggested that digital literacy “has its origin in the need to develop ‘information-seeking’ competence within an emerging context of technology-based information needs” (2006, p.56). Initially used to refer to understanding and working with multimedia formats in the 1990s (Bawden, 2008, p.18), Paul Gilster took the term digital literacy and expanded it to be greater than technical skills: it is “the ability to

understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers” (cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2008, p.4). According to Gilster, there were four core competencies involved with digital literacy: internet searching, hypertext navigation, knowledge assembly and content evaluation (Bawden, 2008, p.19).

In contrast, Eshet-Alkalai spoke of this form of literacy as

based on the integration of five other ‘literacies’: photo-visual literacy (the understanding of visual representations); reproduction literacy (creative re-use of existing materials); information literacy (understood as largely concerned with the evaluation of information); branching literacy (essentially the ability to read and understand hypermedia); and social-emotional literacy (behaving correctly and sensibly in cyberspace) (cited in Bawden 2008, p. 27-8).

These newer models speak to beyond the skills or technical nature of using digital mediums; instead, the definitions speak to the overlapping nature of other forms of literacy, and the need to think critically. It is within this context that Martin offered this definition:

Digital literacy is the awareness, attitude and ability of individuals to appropriately use digital tools and facilities to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyze and synthesize digital resources, construct new knowledge, create media expressions, and communicate with others in the context of specific life situations, in order to enable constructive social action; and to reflect upon this process (2008, p.167).

Digital literacy is important for the Citizen 2.0 model because it provides citizens with the ability to use digital technologies. Further, using Martin’s definition, it is an all encompassing set of skills needed to interact via Web 2.0 platforms, access political information and transform that interaction and knowledge into engagement in the political process.

J. Other forms of literacy

Definitions of literacy are presented differently in recent surveys on literacy.

Rather than the types of literacies identified above, in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), three forms of literacy were defined and measured: prose, document and quantitative literacy. These definitions focus more on the functionality of literacy and providing a means to measure it. Although the definitions differ from those provided in the literature, the forms used in the surveys can be linked to certain types of literacy, especially information literacy. Prose literacy was defined as “the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts, including editorials, news stories, poems and fiction;” (OECD & HRDC, 1997, p.14). The definition for document literacy applies information literacy in a different way than prose literacy: “the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphics” (OECD & HRDC, 1997, p.14). Quantitative literacy, “the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations” (OECD & HRDC, 1997, p.14), demonstrates again how information literacy is measured in a particular application.

There are ever new versions of literacy being identified. For example, Burniske identified discourse literacy¹ (2008, p.42), personal literacy² (2008, p.61) and community

¹ The ability to read, understand, and abide by norms that govern the discursive practices of a particular social group. (Burniske, 2008, p. 42).

² The ability to undergo a personal initiation to the self, recognize how others read and perceive that self through social interactions, and understand the social forces that shape an individual’s identity (Burniske, 2008, p.61).

literacy³ (2008, p.79). These forms of literacy, however, are not identified in other literature on literacy. In some of the literature, other terms are used as synonyms for the forms of literacy defined here, but with a slight twist. David Bawden explained that “[t]he phrase ‘e-literacy’, stemming from ‘electronic literacy’, and still generally used as a synonym for skills-based computer literacy, has been adopted in some quarters as virtually synonymous with digital literacy” (2008, p.24-5). Further, some, such as Buckingham, posited that the proliferation of forms of literacies serve to divorce the term “literacy” from its original meaning (2008, p.75).

Defining literacy, and determining how literacy is important is essential, and likely to gain additional importance in policy discussions as our society transitions further into the Information Age. As information and knowledge are increasingly commoditized, ensuring that individuals are able to successfully participate in a new economy and society is paramount. As the OECD and HRDC recognized over a decade ago, “[t]o be literate is to be connected with the language and culture of a society, and to be able to participate in that society’s political and economic life” (1997, p.39).

2.4 Conclusion

The review of the e-government literature reveals an increasing focus on the citizen. This focus has been described as a customer focus, which ties in with the e-service delivery aspect of e-government. It also relates to viewing e-government as a tool to increase citizen engagement. With Web 2.0 and the emergence of Gov 2.0, there is further emphasis on citizen engagement through direct collaboration and interaction.

³ The ability to engage with “the other”, developing mutually beneficial relationships through collaborative endeavours intended to transform an indifferent society into a supportive community. (Burniske, 2008, p.79).

This further emphasis calls for an evolved model of democratic citizenship, namely Citizen 2.0.

Democratic citizenship is a concept firmly established in democratic theory and political science literature. The review of that literature shows how citizenship is exercised is important and that political participation is the means through which citizens influence the decision-makers that constitute their government and also legitimize government. A key factor in participation is political knowledge, which is a citizen's ability to contextualize political information for the purposes of then engaging in the political process. According to the literature, civic engagement encompasses both political knowledge and participation and is reinforced, according to Putnam and others, by social capital. Yet, there are some criticisms leveled at the explanation that interpersonal trust and membership in voluntary associations, both factors in social capital, are reduced because of increased technology use. Additionally, with the community building aspect of the Internet and greater facilitation to associations globally, the explanation provided by that theory is less certain.

A foundational skill that enables citizens to become politically knowledgeable is literacy. Civic literacy has been linked in some of the literature to the type of literacy that promotes political knowledge. Yet, in contemporary society, and more importantly, for Citizen 2.0, the ability to handle information and through digital technologies is crucial. Digital literacy and information literacy are, therefore, two other types of literacy that are fundamental. The literature review also exposes how literacy has been linked to economic and social progress, as well as democratic citizenship. Barbara Cruikshank spoke of technologies of citizenship as those actions through which citizens are shaped

(1999, p.4) and in the past, literacy has been definitely seen as a technology of citizenship.

Linkages between these bodies of literature are made in this chapter. For instance, the digital divide literature identifies literacy as a barrier for citizens. The emphasis on access to open information in the e-government literature is linked to increasing citizens' access to political information, thus becoming more knowledgeable and inclined to engage in the political process. The concern about the "crisis of engagement" found in the literature about political participation is also reflected in the e-government literature, particularly among cyber-optimists who view e-government as a strategy to address that crisis.

There are discussions in the literature about what citizenship looks like in an e-government era. The conceptualization of Citizen 2.0 is still relatively new and will continue to evolve as governments, political movements, organizations and individual citizens introduce new ways of engaging. While it is understood to describe those citizens who use online information to engage in the political process, the vision for Gov 2.0 and Open Government clearly deepens the Citizen 2.0 model to include direct participation in policy decision-making. This direct participation occurs through the more traditional democratic practices such as voting, but also through new forms of interaction and collaboration which is a level of involvement for the mass citizenry that is greater than what has been expected in the past. The following chapter explores the current state of e-government in Canada as well as outlines the current state of the digital divide creating challenges for the transition to the Citizen 2.0 model.

Chapter 3: The Current State in Canada

3.0 Introduction

It is recognized that today Canada has firmly established e-government characterized by online transactions and access to government information (McNutt & Carey, 2008, p.1). The Government of Canada continues to promote an e-government agenda, now in the form of the Open Government Strategy. This strategy moves the Citizen 2.0 model closer to reality in Canada, necessitating attention to the barriers facing the citizenry in Canada in adopting that model. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the current state in Canada in regards to its readiness for the Citizen 2.0 model including the conditions of e-government and the digital divide, including adult literacy as well as the levels of political participation and knowledge.

The first section of this chapter analyses e-government in Canada. As discussed in the previous chapter, e-government has been introduced in waves since the 1990s as technology continues to evolve. This section will outline the Government of Canada's approach to e-government in the 1990s and 2000s as well as the newly developed and launched Open Government Action Plan. While the previous chapter explained and discussed how e-government has been constructed and dialogued in the literature, this chapter will provide a description of the Canadian e-government experience with the intent of contextualizing how the Citizen 2.0 model exists in Canada.

As discussed previously, the Citizen 2.0 model represents an evolution in the concept of democratic citizenship. There is an emphasis in this model on the role of citizens in the engagement in the political process that is derived from direct and deliberative democratic theories. This emphasis is seen in the view that Citizen 2.0 will

engage or interact more directly into policy decision-making through the use of online/Web 2.0 platforms. Inherent in this model is the assumption that individual citizens have the requisite skills and knowledge to engage. Skills include the forms of literacy such as digital and information literacies that enable citizens to access, understand and apply information, and use Web 2.0 to maximize their information seeking and deliberative activities.

Assessing the skill and knowledge levels in Canada is important for the discussion in the following chapter about the challenges in the adoption of the Citizen 2.0 model. For this reason, this chapter provides an overview of the adult literacy rates in Canada. These rates were last assessed in 2003 in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey. While those statistics may seem dated, those rates represent the last major study of adult literacy in Canada and internationally and, therefore, remain the most reliable source of adult literacy rates for the purposes of this thesis. The second section in this chapter provides the analysis of adult literacy in Canada.

The third section in this chapter examines other divides in Canada. As noted in the previous chapter, the digital divide on a micro level encompasses a number of different barriers facing citizens in the engagement in e-government. The earlier section examines adult literacy in Canada while this third section outlines the Canadian experience in other respects. Canada is a vast country with many remote areas and therefore, Internet penetration and use is an important consideration. Further, there has been considerable attention to the democratic divide, or democratic deficit in Canada, resulting in extensive study into political participation and knowledge. This thesis does

not intend to review this body of research but will refer to some studies which demonstrate the current state of citizen engagement in Canada.

3.1 Canadian E-government

3.1.1 The Early Years

E-government was introduced in Canada in the 1990s. The federal government created the Information Highway Advisory Council in 1994 (Nilsen, 2006, p.68) which developed the foundation for the government's policy framework to implement e-government (Brown, 2007, p. 38). The thrust of the policy framework was to provide government information online, create the information highway and ensure Canadians would have access to it, and improve service delivery to Canadians (Brown, 2007, p.39). Government Online (GOL) was the commitment made by the Government of Canada following a Throne Speech in 1999, which set the goal "to be known around the world as the government most connected to its citizens, by enabling Canadians to access key government information and services on-line at the time and place of their choosing, and in the official language of their choice" (Health Canada, 2005).

This initiative was considered to be citizen-centric (Nilsen, 2006, p.71) as it focused on creating opportunities for interaction between citizens and the government online (McNutt, 2004, p.5). The implementation also resulted in restructuring the Government of Canada (Brown, 2007, p.58) as each department was called upon to report their GOL implementation. David Brown noted that much of the early adoption of GOL was modeled on e-commerce and followed a general phased approach of e-government, from information infrastructure to eventual transformation of services (Brown, 2007,

p.58). For this reason, Kirsti Nilsen comments that there has always been a distinction in Canadian e-government strategy between service delivery and governance, where governance was viewed as the manner in which the government and citizens interacted (Nilsen, 2006, p.70) and service delivery primarily focused on identifying traditional public services that could be delivered online and transformed.

Although the GOL program ended in 2006 (Brown, 2007, p.37), it created a fundamental shift in how the Government of Canada viewed the provision of information and services, and the interaction between government and citizens. As Kathleen McNutt and Meaghan Carey noted, the initial goal of the GOL program was to restructure how government delivered services and “establish e-channel delivery mechanisms as the principle mode of communication between the state and citizens” (2008, p.1) The Government of Canada’s program of providing government information online received international recognition as Canada was ranked first against other countries with e-government programs by Accenture for many years (www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/apropos-about/fi-fs/ged-gol-eng.html).

3.1.2 E-government in Canada Today

As outlined in the previous chapter, digital technologies and the Internet have been seen as a transformative tool for government, especially in the area of citizen relations. Western democratic countries have identified a decline in citizen engagement as a significant problem. E-government has been identified as a strategy to transform the relationship between government and citizens, with the goal of increasing the participation of citizens not only in traditional forms of engagement, but also in policy decision-making. New models of democratic government are being suggested, where

government acts as a “covener and enabler” of innovation (O’Reilly, 2010, p.13), where citizens are actively involved, which contrasts with the traditional representative model. It is therefore, with this focus, that the capacities for citizens to engage with governments through digital technologies and the Internet become progressively more important.

Web 2.0 is being used to create new, virtual communities, and social networking platforms that encourage new patterns of behaviour and use of information and technologies (OECD, 2009, p.86). It is for this reason that the platform of Web 2.0 would enable Gov 2.0 to collaborate and interact differently and more substantially with citizens. The platform also allows citizens to engage in civic action that is outside of government such as Washington Watch in the United States (Noveck, 2010, p.54). Washington Watch provides information about and tracks bills that are before the United States Congress. There is also a blog and wiki available to build the dialogue about a particular issue or bill. A Canadian example is Civic Action (www.civicaction.ca). Civic Action provides a forum for policy actors, including government, businesses, individual citizens and civic organizations to participate in discussions about issues in the Toronto area and to promote economic opportunities in the area. This forum encourages community building across a wide range of policy actors, bringing them together for a common goal, and one in which government is one actor, not the lead actor.

Web 2.0 also raises new possibilities of public deliberation for the purposes of engaging with Western democratic governments, and some writers view collaboration as a further extension of deliberation, pointing to Wikipedia and Facebook as examples of collaborative platforms (Noveck, 2010, p.63). The opportunities for deliberation and collaboration are also leading the argument for Open Government. Open Government is

a conception of government that pushes for greater transformation in how governments operate although the idea of Open Government is still being constructed (Schuler, 2010, p.92).

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international partnership dedicated to furthering the principles of open government. Canada became a partner in the OGP in September 2011 (Government of Canada, 2012, p.1) following the Government of Canada's launch of their Open Government strategy in March 2011 (Government of Canada, 2012, p.1). The goal of the OGP is to "secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance" (OGP, 2012, p.2). Governments who wish to become partners must commit to the concept of open government, create and implement an action plan that meets the agreed upon criteria and the report on their progress to the OGP (OGP, 2012, p.2).

Following consultations with Canadians, the Government of Canada introduced their Action Plan on Open Government in early 2012. This 3 year plan focuses on three activities: open information, open data and open dialogue (Government of Canada, 2012, p.5). Citizen participation is one of the principles of the OGP and is recognized as underlying the Open Government Action Plan (Government of Canada, 2012, p.3). The Open Dialogue stream is the stream identified with the principle of citizen participation. The Action Plan identifies two commitments for this stream: consulting Canadians and open regulation (Government of Canada, 2012, p.8). Open regulation is planned to increase the knowledge and information available about regulatory activities in the Canadian government. The use of Web 2.0 in enhancing the engagement of citizens

figures prominently in the consulting Canadians commitment. It is, however, too early to evaluate whether the Action Plan has been successful in increasing citizen engagement in the federal policy decision-making process.

3.2 Adult Literacy in Canada

Literacy is acknowledged in the literature as a barrier that exists for citizens to access e-government. A review of that literature demonstrates that literacy means more than simply reading and writing. To be literate in the Information Age is to be proficient at using digital technologies and being able to obtain, understand and apply information in and from a variety of contexts. Requisite literacy for Citizen 2.0 also includes civic literacy in order to have sufficient political knowledge. Yet, the statistics about adult literacy demonstrate that there is still a significant portion of Canadian society without adequate levels of literacy.

3.2.1 Literacy Levels

In the 1990s, according to Shalla and Grant Schellenberg, there was increasing attention given to adult literacy as a factor in a country's economic performance and to the social and economic well-being of individuals (1998, p.9). Some of this attention resulted in international surveys of adult literacy skills in which Canada participated. The results provide an understanding of current Canadian adult literacy levels which will impact the Citizen 2.0 model.

The first International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was conducted in 1994 and involved Canada and six other countries. The IALS was later expanded to 23 countries⁴

⁴ Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway (Bokmal), Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland,

and further data collection occurred in 1996 and 1998. In Canada, the sample population was between 16 and 65 years of age, excluding full-time military members and those in institutions. The focus of the IALS was measuring prose, document and quantitative literacy and did so by having respondents perform tasks related to all three. While these types of literacy were measured, the underlying focus of the survey was on literacy overall that permitted an individual to engage in their daily activities (OECD & HRDC, 1997, p.14).

This survey scaled the results of each form of literacy measured along five levels of proficiency with level one being the lowest, and level five being the highest levels of literacy. In Canada, very few sampled were found to be at the highest level of proficiency for prose, document or quantitative literacy (Kirsch, 1995, p.27-53)⁵. It was noted, however, that Canada's immigration policy makes the country's results unique (Jones, 1995, p.56) in that there is a significant immigrant population with high literacy skills.

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL) survey was conducted in 2003 and comprised of six countries: Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, the United States and Bermuda. The Canadian portion was called International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (Statistics Canada, 2005, p.12). Further countries were surveyed in 2006 and 2008. The ALL measured four domains, and used the same scales and definitions for

Switzerland (French cantons), Switzerland (German cantons), Switzerland (Italian cantons), Canada, Canada (French), Canada (English), Australia, New Zealand, Chile.

⁵ For prose literacy, 16.6% of those sampled were at Level 1, 25.6% were at Level 2, 35.1% were at Level 3, 20% were at Level 4 and 2.7% were at Level 5. For document literacy, a similar result: 18.2% were at Level 1, 24.7% were at Level 2, 32.1% were at Level 3, 19.6% were at Level 4 and 5.4% were at Level 5. For quantitative literacy: 16.9% at Level 1, 26.1% at Level 2, 34.8% were at Level 3, 17.5% at Level 4 and 4.7% at Level 5.

prose and document literacy, allowing for comparison of those forms of literacy in Canada between 1994 and 2003. Rather than quantitative literacy, however, the survey measured numeracy. Numeracy was defined in the study as “the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage the mathematical demands of diverse situations” (HRSDC & Statistics Canada, 2003, p.13). It was believed that numeracy was important for citizens in pluralistic democracies as “[b]asic numeracy skills are essential to understanding the complexity of the science underlying many policy debates” (Brinkley, Sternberg, Jones, Nohara, Murray & Clermont, 2005, p.73). A fourth literacy “domain” - problem solving – was also introduced. Problem solving was defined as “involv[ing] goal-directed thinking and action in situations for which no routine solutions exist” (HRSDC & Statistics Canada, 2003, p.13). The ALL also indirectly assessed individual use of digital technologies but could not perform a direct assessment due to methodology challenges (Statistics Canada & OECD, 2011, p.28).

Level 3 on the proficiency scale was “deemed as a minimum for persons to understand and use information contained in the increasingly difficult texts and tasks that characterize the emerging knowledge society and information economy” (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005, p.35). The results in 2003 demonstrated improvement among the lowest scoring adults in Canada and a decline in those in the highest percentile; however, 42 percent of adults did not achieve proficiency at Level 3 (Statistics Canada & OECD, 2011, p.28). This percentage of Canadians below Level 3 remained the same from the IALS results in 1994 (Statistics Canada & OECD, 2011, p.28).

Higher levels of education are associated with higher levels of literacy (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005, p.60) although there should be caution about using educational

attainment alone to forecast literacy rates (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005, p.61). The caution exists because education attainment alone does not explain the quality of the education. Lower levels of education are also associated with lower levels of literacy, and those who leave school early (considered to be the population between 16 and 30 who did not complete high school and have been out of the school system for a year) are more likely to score at Level 1 or 2 (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005, p.64).

According to Douglas Willms and Scott Murray, there is a demonstrated linkage between Canada's economic and social systems, and literacy rates (Willms & Murray, 2007, p.10). In their study on literacy skill loss between the IALS and ALL, they found that there is a noteworthy level of skill loss among Canadians adults, and notably among those in lower socio-economic backgrounds (Willms & Murray, 2007, p. 8). The changes in literacy rates in the Canadian population suggest that after people leave school, there is some literacy skill loss; and that while it is a gradual process, Willms and Murray "estimate that on average most Canadian adults experience a skill loss over their lifetime of about one grade level" (2007, p. 21).

While these statistics may be dated, the results of the IALS continue to be used in discussions about adult literacy in Canada. What the results demonstrate is that there is a significant challenge facing adult Canadians in respect of literacy skills. Although educational attainment rates have increased, there remains a sizeable portion of the Canadian adult population with insufficient literacy skills to engage in contemporary society. The study on literacy skill loss suggests that there remains many interpretations on what strategies are needed to address skill loss, including changing our perspective on education investment and shifting focus on the economic opportunities for individuals

from lower socio-economic backgrounds where there is a higher demand for literacy (Willms & Murray, 2007, p. 23). The focus in the discussions about adult literacy in Canada tends to be on economic and social impacts, not on political impacts. The findings, however, are instructive nevertheless, particularly since the skills needed for engagement in the knowledge-based economy are similar to those required for the Citizen 2.0 model.

3.3 Other Divides in Canada

Literacy is one of the barriers considered as part of what the literature calls the digital divide. As discussed in the previous chapter, the literature identified other factors which present impediments for citizens to engage in e-government. Although these impediments were first identified in relation to early e-government, they remain relevant today as citizens begin to transition to the newly re-imagined model of democratic citizenship. To better understand the scope of the divide in Canada, this section will first detail Internet and other digital technology use, followed by a brief overview of the rates of political knowledge and participation in Canada. Internet use relates to the access divide aspect, which will provide context for how Canadians are not only using the Internet, but also whether all Canadians are using the Internet and computers. A brief overview of political knowledge and participation rates touch on the current state in Canada of citizen engagement. This is an important consideration as engagement in the Gov 2.0 worlds assumes citizens are ready, able and willing to collaborate and participate.

3.3.1 Internet Usage Among Canadians

Internet use in Canada has changed significantly since George Sciadas reported on the digital divide in Canada for Statistics Canada in 2002. In his report, he concentrated on Internet use and income (Sciadas, 2002, p.1) and noted that the Internet did not represent a new divide, merely another form of divide based on information and communication technologies (Sciadas, 2002, p.1). He found that generally from 1996 to 2000, the digital divide was closing, but this was primarily due to middle-income households increasing their Internet use (Sciadas, 2002, p.5). There remained a significant divide for lower-income households (Sciadas, 2002, p.5).

A decade later, 10.4 million Canadians in 2010 subscribed to the Internet and 70% use broadband access (CRTC, 2011). Yet, as Catherine Middleton, Ben Veenhof and Jordan Leith explain, to better understand Canadians and the Internet, it is important to look at the actual Internet use, not simply access to the Internet (2010, p. 7). To do this, Middleton et al looked at frequency of use, the type of connectivity, user experience and age, and the scope of use. They adopted the scope of use used in Canadian Internet Use Survey performed in 2005 and 2007 on which Middleton et al drew data. Scope of use included using the Internet for searching, financial transactions, downloading entertainment and e-government (2010, p.10). With respect to e-government activities, while Internet usage amongst adult Canadians increased for downloading and financial transactions, there was no increase in using the Internet for e-government between 2005 and 2007 (Middleton et al., 2010, p.14).

While Canadians demonstrate Internet use, a number of adult Canadians, including those who are experienced users, do not demonstrate a high intensity of Internet

usage based on the further analysis performed by Middleton et al (2010, p.15). Consequently, they caution making assumptions about the readiness of Canadians to engage in an information society (Middleton et al., 2010, p.15) and e-government (Middleton, et al., 2010, p.22). Yet, Internet usage for younger cohorts was higher than for those older than 35 years and those who reported a higher level of Internet experience and higher speed connections also demonstrated a greater number of Internet activities than those with less Internet experience or connection (Middleton et al., 2010, p.17). Therefore, as those cohorts age, Internet usage may increase, including in e-government activities. Yet, according to Charmaine Fraser's assessment of the trends of internet penetration in Canada, if the trend identified in 2004 to 2005 does not change substantially, equal access to e-government will not be achieved in Canada until approximately the year 2047 (2009, p.5).

Using the 2005 Canadian Internet Use Survey data, Cathy Underhill and Cathy Ladds looked beyond just internet use and penetration, and performed analysis on Canadians' use of government on-line or GOL. While this study presents data on a program now replaced by the Open Strategy Action Plan, the information is nevertheless instructive regarding the current state of Internet use in Canada related to e-government activities. In their view, intensity and type of use of the Internet relate to a "second-level digital divide among those who are already connect to and using the Internet" (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.6). Based on their review of the literature, an individual's Internet skills were key to where they presented in this new digital divide (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.6). A factor in those skills was previous Internet use and comfort in using the

Internet (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.6). They sought to determine whether these factors also influenced the use of GOL (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.7).

According to Underhill and Ladds, older Canadians were more likely to be non-Internet users and therefore, non-GOL users whereas Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34 were more likely to use the Internet for GOL and other purposes (2007, p.8). There were also other factors along urban and rural demographics in terms of Internet use but they found that the likelihood of rural Internet users to access GOL was similar to that of urban Internet users (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.8). When the examination focused on the intensity of Internet use among GOL users, a distinct pattern emerged. Those that were GOL users also spent more time online generally, both in length and frequency of use, and number of online activities (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.8). Overall, they determined that GOL users represented approximately 8 million Canadians in 2005 (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p. 9). For those who did not use GOL, including those who used the Internet for other purposes, the reason provided was a lack of interest or need to access government online (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.10). Additionally, for non-Internet users, issues of cost and skill deficiencies were also put forward to explain a lack of using Internet at home and GOL (Underhill & Ladds, 2007, p.10).

The Canadian Internet Use Survey conducted in 2010 was revised following the previous surveys done in 2005, 2007 and 2009 and cannot, therefore, be used comparatively (Statistics Canada, 2012). It is, however, the most recent survey of Internet usage in Canada by Statistics Canada. The 2010 results demonstrate that 79% of Canadian households had Internet access and more than half of those households had more than one device with Internet access (Statistics Canada, 2012). Most households

with higher-incomes had Internet access compared to 54% of lower-income households (Statistics Canada, 2012). When surveyed, those households without Internet access reported lack of interest, cost and lacked of skills as reasons for not having the Internet (Statistics Canada, 2012).

The statistics demonstrate that Canadians use the Internet, and yet, use alone does not sufficiently describe how that use is defined, and whether that use will be sufficient to support the Citizen 2.0 model. There still remains a segment of the Canadian adult population that do not have Internet access, and for many, because of barriers described as the digital divide, namely access and skill deficiency. Still, Internet use is only part of what can impede individuals to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model. The Citizen 2.0 model is defined by the use of Web 2.0 platforms by citizens to engage in the political process; this then, assumes that citizens are inclined to become politically informed and participate.

3.3.2 Citizen Engagement in Canada

There is a considerable body of literature from the field of political studies on the issue of political participation. This section does not presume to review this research, but instead will draw from a small number of sources which will present statistics about political participation and knowledge as well as participation in social organizations in Canada. These statistics will provide context for the current state of citizen engagement in Canada. Participation in social organizations is presented since it links to social capital theory and community building.

The review of the literature in the previous chapter denoted both political knowledge and political participation as elements of citizen engagement. As Milner

stated, functional literacy is foundational for a citizen's level of civic literacy (2001, p.11). The consequence of this relationship is the exclusion of those with lower levels of civic literacy from political participation (Milner, 2001, p.3). Milner determined that Canadians have lower levels of civic literacy than other countries (2002, p.65). He used the results from the IALS and statistics on voter turnout at civic elections and found that there is a positive correlation between those elements and a "strong negative relationship of average turnout with the proportion of adults lacking the basic literacy skills to exercise informed citizenship" (2002, p. 65).

With respect to political participation, voter turnout is one of the focuses of measure in the literature. According to Schellenberg in his review of the 2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, voting in a provincial or federal election was a factor in participation in other political activities (2004, p.13). In their study on voter turnout, Pammett and LeDuc confirm that voter turnout has been declining in Canada, most particularly since the federal election in 1988 (2003, p.4). When asked why this trend exists, the majority of responses, including from those who self-identified as having not voted in the 2000 federal election, centered on the negative feelings towards politicians and political institutions. The second category of responses focused on the feelings that their participation was meaningless, followed by apathy for the voting process (Pammett & LeDuc, 2003, p.6). According to the 2008 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, 72.8% of Canadians indicated they had voted in the previous federal election and 21.4% voting in neither the last federal or provincial election (Statistics Canada, 2009, p.26).

Another traditional form of participation that has been noted in decline is membership in political parties. Whiteley refers to two hypotheses for this: first, because the increasing closeness between the state and political parties is not conducive to party membership; and second, that the new forms of participation have provided alternative means for individuals to address their concerns, and that, for time-pressured individuals, it is easier to donate money than time to political organizations (2011, p.22). While he notes that these reasons are not mutually exclusive, following the longitudinal study, Whiteley concludes that it is the environment of volunteering for political parties that is largely responsible for the decline in membership (2011, p.36). Cross and Young found such a decline in political party memberships in Canada and explain that this phenomenon is because of the changes in society that decrease a citizen's need to rely on political organizations to be their voice and source of political information (2006, p.15).

Involvement in voluntary associations was linked to social capital by Putnam in his theory on the decline of citizen engagement. Based on the 2008 General Social Survey on Social Engagement results, overall, 35.1% of Canadians did not get involved in an organization in the 12 months preceding the survey (Statistics Canada, 2009, p.9). Predominantly, those organizations were either recreationally focussed (29.3%) or professional related (29.1%). Only 9.5% of Canadians were involved in a service organization and 5.9% in a political organization (Statistics Canada, 2009, p.20).

In their study on social capital and voting participation in immigrant and minority populations in Canada, Pieter Bevelander and Ravi Pendakur (2009, p.1406) used the Equality Security Community Survey to examine the differences between those identified as Canadian born and part of the majority, and those Canadian born who identified as

belonging to a visible minority, and those born outside of Canada. They found that social capital did have a positive impact on voter behaviour and that an individual's social background also had an impact; however, those who identified as a visible minority demonstrated a lower level of participation (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2009, p.1414).

Shifts in how political participation is exercised have resulted in a distinction created of traditional and non-traditional forms of participation. The independence of citizens from established organizations and institutions has given rise to some of the elements that mark new forms of political participation. The newer forms of participation are not always directed towards the elected official, or even engage the citizen directly into the electoral process (Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010, p.188). There is considerable debate about whether the new forms of participation provide equal opportunity to the traditional or conventional forms (although whether citizen equality exists in traditional methods is an equally valid question).

Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti examine a non-traditional form of participation in their review of political consumerism (2005, p.249). They found that this newer form of political participation is not related to the more traditional forms of participation and that those who engage in this way are likely to engage in activities of all sorts along the political process, outside of those directly relating to elected officials. The criticism of how these new forms of participation are changing the nature of political participation was also explored by Stolle et al. (2005, p.251). Political consumerism as a form of participation is very individualized, is harder to see the effect of, and creates challenges in determining the political character of the participation. Political consumerism also changes how participation is viewed, because the focus of participation is different than

traditional forms, such that it is no longer directed to political institutions (Stolle et al. 2005, p.251). The decisions are not limited to solely political considerations, but also for institutional or economic reasons. This is expanding the conventional view of politics, but also reveals how interdependent the political system is with the economic and social systems globally.

Using the 2003 General Social Survey results, Keown found that level of education is the most indicative factor for Canadians in predicting their non-voting political participation, particularly post-secondary education levels (2007, p.36). Neil Rothwell and Martin Turcotte also found that higher levels of educational attainment related to higher levels of engagement, both political and non-political (2006, p.4). They also looked at the differences between rural and urban community engagement and found that while rural individuals were more likely to volunteer, those with higher levels of education were even more likely to do so (Rothwell & Turcotte, 2006, p.10). Education is not the only determinant however. Sociodemographic characteristics, attitudes, past experiences with the political process and whether one keeps informed, and by which means, have all been identified as factors in whether a citizen will participate in the political process (Keown, 2007, p.35).

These factors are important considerations in whether citizens who may not be currently politically motivated become engaged in a Gov 2.0 world. While Holmes discusses citizen engagement in an Australian context, his point about whether citizens will engage is equally applicable in a Canadian context. In his view, “[s]o-called ‘mainstream citizens’ are probably not so much ‘disengaged’ as ‘differently engaged’ – with their own responsibilities and concerns in the busy atmosphere of contemporary

life” (2011, p. 29). This brief overview of citizen engagement in Canada reveals that there is reason to be concerned about the level of political knowledge and participation, particularly among the younger cohorts, some of whom are considered to be the ‘Net Generation’ who would seem more likely to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model.

3.4 Conclusion

Governments in Western democratic countries are in varying states of e-government maturity. For those with mature e-government, such as Canada, it is now commonplace for a significant number of government services to be available online, in addition to government information and other citizen related information to be accessible through the Internet. Websites like Citizen 2.0 (www.edemocracy-forum.com) focus on information to support those citizens who wish to increase their knowledge of e-government possibilities and governments remain committed to increasing its use of Web 2.0 platforms (Treasury Board of Canada, 2011).

As Gov 2.0 and open government changes the structure and workings of governments, the expectations of citizens to use the Internet, Web 2.0 platforms and digital technologies to interact and engage with their local, provincial and national levels will likely increase. The role and value of the citizen in citizen-centric models of governance also places different expectations on citizen engagement. Although there is an understanding of the digital divide barriers facing citizens, even in mature e-government countries, Gov 2.0 and open government, as further conceived, will likely create an increasing gap between those citizens who can adapt and engage in the new expectations, and those who cannot.

The outline of the current state of Canada in relation to Internet usage, adult literacy and citizen engagement in this chapter provides the context for the state of readiness for the adoption of Citizen 2.0 model in Canada. The statistics available about the Canadian adult population demonstrates that there continues to be divides between those who use the Internet, and for what purposes, as well as between those adults who have sufficient literacy skills to adequately engage in a Web 2.0 based world, and therefore, in a Citizen 2.0 model. The picture about citizen engagement in Canada is less clear-cut. There are a numerous factors in why citizens participate in the political process but generally it appears that there remains a decline in traditional forms of political participation, some of which, such as voting, remain the focus of some e-government initiatives. Determining the level of participation in non-traditional forms of participation is more difficult and while many of these newer forms of participation are enhanced because of the information and networks available online, whether these forms of participation will result in citizens' engagement in the Citizen 2.0 model remains uncertain.

Chapter 4: Transitioning to Citizen 2.0 - Overcoming the Barriers

4.0 Introduction

The Citizen 2.0 model presumes that engaging in the political process of western democracies involves engagement in a wide range of political activities. These activities include traditional forms of political participation, such as voting or belonging to political organizations, as well as participating in political conversations and contributing to policy decision-making. Having a more direct role in policy decision-making is a fundamental feature of the new vision of democratic citizenship that is embodied in the Citizen 2.0 model. The model also supports the contemporary view in democratic theory that citizens should be active participants in the political process, rather than an elite group of trained representatives. This active participation is characterized by direct involvement in policy and decision-making discussions via Web 2.0 platforms, in addition to participation in traditional elements of the political process, such as voting, where citizens seek information and participate online.

Underlying this model, however, is a presumption that citizens in western democracies, including Canada, will be capable to engage in the political process in accordance with the Citizen 2.0 model. The operationalization of this model makes a number of assumptions about citizens in Canada. First, there is an assumption that all adult citizens have the requisite skills to engage in all of the activities envisioned by the Citizen 2.0 model. Second, it assumes that Web 2.0 has been successful at creating the environment for increased interaction and deliberation so that citizens will use the Internet for democratic reasons such as seeking out political information and conversations and that Web 2.0 will help citizens to be more informed and inclined to

engage in political activities because of this new environment. The challenges facing the realization of the Citizen 2.0 model in Canada arise out of those assumptions. This chapter will outline how adult literacy skills, current citizen engagement rates and Internet use form the challenges facing the transition to the Citizen 2.0 model.

4.1 The Literacy Challenge

Digital literacy is critical for Canadians to access government information online (Middleton et al., 2010, p.6) yet it is one of the most significant barriers to achieving Citizen 2.0. Digital literacy combines the skills obtained through high levels of information and media literacy and enables Citizen 2.0 to successfully navigate Web 2.0. Information literacy provides Citizen 2.0 with the ability to find and determine what relevant information is online, as well as contextualize the information found. In addition to digital literacy, civic literacy is important for Citizen 2.0 because it “best corresponds to the kind of knowledge and information we are concerned with, that relevant to exercising one’s role as a citizen, as a member of the community” (Milner, 2002, p.54).

In order to achieve proficiency in these types of literacy, there must be a proficient skill level in functional literacy skills. Milner studied the relationship between the functional literacy rates in the IALS, knowledge of the United Nations and civic election turnout and determined that there is a positive correlation between those variables (2002, p.65). Functional literacy skills include reading and understanding prose and documentation, as well as numeracy and writing. Without functional literacy skills, citizens encounter barriers, not only to achieving greater literacy proficiency, but also in their ability to participate in the social, political and economic realms of contemporary society. Moreover, since the Citizen 2.0 model requires high literacy proficiency in more

than functional literacy, citizens who struggle with functional literacy skills will be excluded from the activities of Citizen 2.0.

The results of adult literacy surveys demonstrate that there is a sizeable subpopulation of Canadian adults between 16 and 65 years of age that do not have sufficient proficiency of functional literacy skills (Statistics Canada & OECD, 2011, p.28). While there were subpopulations with high levels of literacy, the results for Canadians with lower levels of functional literacy present a rebuttal to the presumption that Canadians generally will be mobilized to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model. It further signals that there is a significant population that may be increasingly disengaged from the model because of literacy challenges if the rates of adults with insufficient proficiency are not reversed.

The rebuttal is not based on adult literacy rates alone. The literature demonstrated a link between literacy and political knowledge. Political knowledge is recognized as a determining factor in political participation (Milner, 2002, p.66). Therefore, without adequate literacy skills, citizens are disadvantaged in their understanding of their role in the political process as it exists now, and are further disadvantaged in understanding the breadth of the role of Citizen 2.0 in actively engaging in deliberation and policy decision-making. This becomes important in creating citizens who continue to think in terms of the public good. As Delli Carpini and Keeter state, “[a] citizen who understands the context surrounding a particular issue may be more likely to think in public, rather than purely private, terms”(1996, p.58).

Measurement of political knowledge in Canada, discussed in the last chapter, demonstrates that there is a lack of sufficient political knowledge in Canada and that this has negatively affected political participation rates. Although this study is now somewhat dated, the findings are indicative that Canadians who are less politically knowledgeable will be less inclined to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model, including the aspect involving active participation in the political process. There is also a question of whether Canadians who are currently not knowledgeable will use the Internet for political purposes. This question is the second aspect of the challenges to the realization of the Citizen 2.0 model and is discussed next.

4.2 Challenges in Leveraging Web 2.0

As much as the Citizen 2.0 model and the conceptualization of Gov 2.0 are intertwined, the concept of Web 2.0 is fundamentally linked to both to the model and to Gov 2.0. Web 2.0 has been held to enable new opportunities for deliberation, collaboration and community building because of its interactive nature. Yet, Web 2.0 may itself detract from the goal of mobilizing citizens to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model. First, the shift from exercising citizenship in public spaces to doing so in private undermines the collaborative and interactive nature of the Citizen 2.0 model with Gov 2.0. Second, the ability to individualize one's Internet experience can weaken citizen engagement. Finally, while political information is available online, its availability does not mean that citizens will access the information and add to their political knowledge.

4.2.1 Deliberation in Private Spaces

The push for deliberation online comes from perspective that Web 2.0 provides for the creation of a new public sphere. The idea of the public sphere arises from

deliberative democratic theory and supports the premise that citizens should be more active participants in the political process. In the view of Jacobs, Cook and Delli Carpini, “[d]emocratic deliberation improves the confidence of citizens in their own efficacy by helping them see the relevance of government and politics to their private lives” (2009, p.13) and increases their political participation in all forms (Jacobs, et al., 2009, p.13). In a Web 2.0 world, descriptions of the new public sphere show that it:

is comprised of emails and email lists, blogs ranging from individual thoughts to professional and semi-professional new voices like Instapundit or Talking Points Memo, to vast collaboration platforms like DailyKos with thousands of contributors or flash campaigns that re-purpose other platforms (Benkler, 2008, p.50).

Interacting through the new public sphere is an expectation for Citizen 2.0 in addition to contributing to policy discussions with government that lead to decision-making.

The success of this new public sphere is dependent on whether “reasoned online debate will flourish or be drowned out by surlier forms of argument” (Rheingold, 2008, p.73), which detract from the ability for citizens to engage in deliberation which moves the issue forward. This vision of the public sphere also assumes a level of knowledge to enter into the conversation, and a skill capacity to navigate the various platforms. It also assumes that there will be more reasoned debate with citizens positively engaging in deliberation.

Yet, what is more likely is for citizens to compete with the organizations and media outlets for space online to deliberate and for the attention of other citizens.

According to Tiziana Terranova,

[t]he current public sphere is not a sphere of mediation between state and civil society, but the site of a permanent conflict, informed by strategies of media

warfare. Communication is not a space of reason that mediates between the state and society, but is now a site of direct struggle between the state and different organizations representing the private interests of organized groups of individuals” (2004, p.134).

This depiction of the public sphere does not support the presumption that citizens will be mobilized to adopt the Citizen 2.0 model because of the increased opportunities for deliberation and interaction through Web 2.0. Furthermore, it does not embody the perspective of Citizen 2.0 as being more directly involved with the political process, especially with policy decision-making.

It was largely hoped that cyberspace will be free of the presence of and control by media companies as other forms of “public” media, thus providing public spaces for deliberation as envisioned by deliberative democratic theory. In the current environment however, Papacharissi argues that the Internet and digital technologies allow for the creation of both private and public spaces, but not the creation of a public sphere (2010, p.124). She writes that the public space cannot become the public sphere because there remains a challenge in access to information, reciprocal communication and commercialization (Papacharissi, 2010, p.124). Instead, citizens engage in politics in the private sphere by the use of private media environments. This presents challenges for measuring participation, as well as collecting the political interests of the citizen (Papacharissi, 2010, p.137).

Sharing their beliefs and interests through private channels indicates that citizens have political interests, but this does not mean that those citizens will engage in the public political process, including public deliberation forums. Because the sharing of beliefs and interests occurs in the private sphere, citizens are more likely to share only

with known others rather than strangers and not seek public forums such as chat rooms or bulletin boards (Rheingold, 2008, p.115). This private sphere exchange using social networks which are inherently personal, act as large echo chambers as well, where information, beliefs and interests continue to shared only if others in the social network are interested (Rheingold, 2008, p.115).

4.2.2 Online Individualization

The Internet may, in fact, make the effect of deliberation and participation more difficult as it “creates a radically individualized environment in which it is more difficult for policy makers to count on a coherent national, or even local, political community that it can assume has been exposed to broadly similar media content” (Chadwick, 2006, p.8). The increasing complexity and number of policy problems, combined with globalisation will also serve to undermine coming to a collective decision. Rather, there is likely to be increased fragmentation to the point where no collective decision is possible (Raab & Bellamy, 2004, p.25), thereby frustrating the efforts of those citizens who did engage on a particular issue, and intimidate those citizens who are not mobilized to engage.

Although there are indications that a more individualized environment may be created, the community building aspect of Web 2.0 is highly promoted. Feeling part of a community and interacting with those in the community had been considered critical in building social capital (Stolle, 2007, p.663). Therefore, it is presumed that online communities will rebuild social capital, thereby reinvigorating citizen engagement among those now drawn into these new communities. These communities, however, may not exist in the same way Putnam and other proponents envisioned, and thus not serve to enhance citizen engagement.

The first problem lies in the virtual nature of these new communities. There may be limits to purely virtual communities as they are too easy to enter and exit. This is because there is nothing rooting an individual in that virtual environment (Chadwick, 2006, p.106). Chadwick cited the example of community networks to illustrate the challenge of purely virtual communities. While they still exist for the most part at the local level, these networks, in Chadwick's view, generally "incorporate three main features: a high-speed network offered free of charge or at a subsidized rate to households; some form of community technology center, often based in a community building; and an emphasis on creating content specific to the local community" (2006, p.90). Unfortunately, after the initial push, community users stop using their Internet access for community building and to combat this, he argued that there needs to be community building and communication both on and offline (Chadwick, 2006, p.103).

The second problem lies with the basis on which the community is formed. Moving from what Valerie Frissen refers to as "communities of birth" to "communities of interest" (2005, p.167) changes the nature of how we understand the term community. The move to "communities of interest" reflects an individualistic shift as people adopt multiple identities as they operate within multiple communities (Frissen, 2005, p.167). The focus on the self is also indicative of the increasing individualism in contemporary society.

As maintained by the individualization thesis, modernization in the last century brought such changes to the social relationships that created societal mores that individuals have moved away from the "bonds of family, tradition, and social collectives" (Howard, 2007, p.2). The rise in individualism also explains why, as Frissen noted,

citizens are drawn now to communities of interest, where the feeling of being part of a collective is found because of the solidarity in addressing a particular issue, and not in a spatial context like local government (2005, p.169). This shift also presents challenges for policy makers to use the Internet to determine what the collective interest may be.

There is also no guarantee that Internet use will result in activity that promotes democratic objectives. For as many optimistic views of the Internet and how it can be used to transform society, there are cautionary tales of how the Internet is changing how humans think (Carr, 2010, location 176). Communities of interest are not all positive communities that contribute to the ideal of civil society. The Internet also enables communities to develop which promote hate and intolerance and the echo chambers that can result online only serve to reinforce those communities.

Echo chambers are considered to be environments online, created by individuals themselves, through which they are exposed only to like-minded individuals instead of rather than the varying opinions and stories made available through traditional forms of media such as television, radio and newspapers (Sunstein, 2001, p.16). These chambers are created through the individual's own information selection. As Noveck explains,

[t]he technologies of freedom which enable us to customize and personalize everything about the net, creating My-Browser and MyNewsSite, encourage thinking only about what is good for *me*, rather than what is good for the world in which I live. The worldwide web is dominated by personal consumption outlets for the individual purchase of information, goods and services. ... [The] hypersegmentation of information and communication channels on the Internet can eviscerate the 'public' in participatory and deliberative democratic life (2000, p.28).

According to Weinberger, echo chambers exist in all areas of the Internet, not only in relation to democracy, and the history of the Internet is still too young to determine

whether echo chambers are negative influences on deliberation (2008, p.33). The argument that the Internet is still too young for clear analysis also applies to the presumption of mobilization in the Citizen 2.0 model. There does not seem to be the same types of Gov 2.0 examples as there has been for early e-government initiatives, or to the same scale, such as the Government Online initiative. And initiatives such as the Open Government Action Plan are also too new to be studied for effectiveness.

4.2.3 Using the Internet for Political Purposes

Early research into the effects of the Internet on citizen engagement suggested the effects were negative, but the Internet has changed significantly since then (Mossberger, et al., 2008, p.50). This is largely because the Internet, and now Web 2.0 encourages two-way communication in addition to being an information medium (Mossberger, et al., 2008, p.69). The availability of information, including government provided information, has been a cornerstone of e-government, with the understanding that citizens would be able to become increasingly informed and thus engaged in the political process (Mossberger, et al., 2008, p.89). This has meant that in addition to the assumption that citizens have the requisite skills to access the information, there is also an assumption that citizens will choose to access the Internet for political purposes.

Instead of being motivated to go online to access information, citizens may shy away from using the Internet for political purposes for the reason that there is too much information and because the issues are too complex. According to Margolis and Moreno-Riaño, “the plethora of online information sources and related technologies can encourage less rather than more exposure to new information and ideas. Most people have neither the time nor the inclination to gather sufficient information to make

intelligent decisions about most questions of public policy” (2009, p.20). The statistics about using the Internet in Canada, as discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrate that a large majority of Canadians have access to and use the Internet. There are increasingly more services and information provided online by governments across Canada which encourages citizens to use the Internet for political purposes. Nevertheless, such usage still does not correlate to using Web 2.0 for the purposes of interacting and collaborating with governments as envisioned by Gov 2.0 and the Citizen 2.0 model. As Mark Bauerlein remarks, “the Internet doesn’t impart adult information; it crowds it out. Video games, cell phones, and blogs don’t foster rightful citizenship” (2008, p.36).

Rather, the power structures already in place relating to the provision of information and media will be simply reproduced online; most citizens use the Internet for other reasons than political (Hindman, 2009, p.134), and those who do use online political opportunities are more likely to be those who are already politically active, thereby reinforcing existing patterns of engagement. The theory of a virtuous circle, according to Norris, “suggests that there is a process of mutually reinforcing interaction in digital politics” (2001, p.230). Therefore, while those who are already motivated to be actively engaged will have their engagement reinforced, those who are disengaged will continue to be. This is because the disengaged are not likely to seek political information online and any political information that is encountered will be largely ignored, or met with mistrust (Norris, 2001, p.230-1). In 2001, Norris anticipated a growing divide between those who are actively engaged and those who are disengaged in the political process (Norris, 2001, p.231), yet over a decade later, the divide still exists and the anticipation for it growing remains.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter explains how the current rates of adult literacy, political knowledge and the nature of the Internet will hinder the realization of the Citizen 2.0 model in Canada. The model incorporates information, collaboration and deliberation via Web 2.0 platforms as a foundation for how democratic citizenship is exercised in a Gov 2.0 environment. These concepts are still theoretical, yet there is movement to transform governments into Gov 2.0. This movement must coincide with the adoption of the Citizen 2.0 model by citizens in contemporary democracy.

Lacking the sufficient literacy proficiency is a significant barrier for citizens. Literacy does not only equip citizens with the functional skills to read and understand information. Literacy also involves the development of skills that enables citizens to contextualize information and understand how to use digital technologies, and the implications of their use, in the pursuit of obtaining information. Literacy is also linked to political knowledge. Without political knowledge, citizens are less likely to participate in the political process, and therefore, without the skills to develop political knowledge, there will be barriers to participation, and ultimately citizen engagement in deliberative practices in the political process.

Technology is never a neutral medium and this applies also to the Internet. The ability of citizens to exclude other points of view from their information gathering serves to reinforce positions, rather than build trust and opportunities for reasoned deliberation. Additionally, while virtual communities can be built and sustained online, these may not create sufficient ties for rebuilding social capital, and may in fact create a more difficult environment for the creation of a collective interest and public good.

As discussed above, Gov 2.0 represents a transformation for governments in Western democracies to be more responsive to citizens and to address the decline of citizen engagement. Further, as Gov 2.0 cannot be fully realized without the operationalization of the Citizen 2.0 model, there remain serious implications for the Gov 2.0. Yet, governments in Canada are responding to these challenges. As will be discussed in the next chapter, there are initiatives to address digital divide challenges as well as exploring new ways of reaching disengaged citizens by opening data online and creating opportunities to participate in the political process online.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

A new sense of empowerment has been generated because the Internet is as a space where people may reinvent themselves (Papacharissi, 2010, p.9). The Internet offers this opportunity because, as Smith highlighted, the virtual nature of the Internet may empower citizens who did not feel comfortable in face to face participation to engage in the democratic or governance practices online (2009). It is also because the Internet is seen as a way to bring citizens together. Digital technologies allow for interaction beyond the confines of physical space, distance and time – all factors which have presented difficulties with past deliberation initiatives such as the salons in the 18th century and the Athenian agora.

The Internet represents a new medium for communication. This communication is between citizens, citizens and governments, and governments and others. The evolution of the Internet into what the literature refers to as Web 2.0 represents new possibilities for communication and collaboration between these same groups. The aspect of collaboration features prominently in the conceptualization of Gov 2.0 and Citizen 2.0. The Citizen 2.0 model represents an evolution of the concept of democratic citizenship and carries with it expectations for the exercise of citizenship in a Gov 2.0 context.

What existing challenges facing citizens today in the transition to Citizen 2.0 is the question being asked in this thesis. In the introduction, the hypothesis put forward was that literacy, civic engagement and the technology itself underpinning Gov 2.0 presented as those challenges. In this chapter, the key findings from the research will be

reviewed and discussed, followed by a determination of whether the hypothesis can be substantiated. Following that analysis, this chapter will outline the implications of these challenges for the successful realization of Gov 2.0. This chapter will conclude by presenting some recommendations for the policy community.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

It is understood from the literature that the conception of Gov 2.0 builds on the established framework of e-government. E-government has been incorporated into the business of Western democratic governments since its inception in the 1990s. There are various aspects or areas of activity that define e-government, notably service delivery, governance, and democracy. While there has been an emphasis on the service delivery aspect of e-government, e-government had been also been used as a means of transforming how government operates and increasing citizen engagement.

The focus on increasing citizen engagement through e-government coincided with the growing concern in both academic and government circles about the decline of citizen engagement, often referred to in the context of a “crisis of engagement”. The decline was measured largely by the diminishing numbers of citizens voting in elections in local and national elections. The concern about levels of engagement arose in the 1960s with the emergence of a renewed focus on citizen participation in the political process. Citizen participation was understood to legitimize democratic governments.

Moving forward, the view on participation grew more broadly to amplify the role of citizens in the political process. Governments in Western countries are now actively seeking consultative and collaborative opportunities with citizens about policy and

service issues. While not all of the collaborative forums need to be driven by government, Web 2.0 enables a new level of interaction between the actors in policy networks, particularly citizens and governments. This level of interaction is indeed new, and different than previously possible using older forms of technology. The feedback nature of the Internet and the ability for multiple feedback loops to exist simultaneously is one aspect of this technology that distinguishes it from others. The other aspect is its ability to connect people across space and time, and allow for deliberation and information sharing to occur in real time, and globally.

When e-government emerged as a strategy to combat the “crisis of engagement”, the academic community was split in its response. Those whose writings support e-government as transformative in citizen engagement were labelled cyber-optimists and criticisms levelled at their work centered on the technological determinism of their views, as well as their failure to fully appreciate the challenges facing citizens. The authors who examined those challenges, conceptualized as the digital divide, have been called cyber-sceptics in subsequent examinations of e-government. The literature on the digital divide identifies both skill and access issues, including literacy, as challenges facing citizens in engaging with e-government.

5.1.1 Literacy

Literacy factored in the digital divide because of the importance of accessing the information being posted online. One of the key principles underlying the transformative nature of e-government was the proliferation of government information available to citizens online. This information was considered to be key to also creating an environment for increased engagement among those who were disenfranchised from the

political process. Literacy, however, was not examined deeply in the e-government literature. While much study into literacy and how to define it occurs in literacy studies, in the e-government literature, it is presented more as a functional skill which allows citizens to access the information available online.

What the literacy studies literature demonstrates, however, is that literacy is a much more nuanced concept. The functional approach to literacy is legitimized as the autonomous model in the literature, and has formed the basis for much of the study of literacy for years, including measurement of literacy rates among adults. This has led to a binary understanding of literacy, such that people are considered either literate or not. Approaching literacy from that perspective also undermines the issue of literacy, particularly in the context of Citizen 2.0.

The literacy literature introduces a robust variety of types of literacies. Information literacy, digital literacy and civic literacy are some of the types identified, and are also the forms of literacy critical to the Citizen 2.0 model. As the literature demonstrates, an information literate individual not only can access and understand information, but also understand the context in which it is being presented. Digital literacy provides the capacity to understand information through various media formats. With the multitude of formats for sharing information on Web 2.0, digital literacy is critical. Civic literacy is a more focused type of literacy for the Citizen 2.0 model. Civic literacy adds a layer to information literacy in so far as it is the form of literacy that allows citizens to fully comprehend their political system and the policy issues surrounding it.

While these types of literacy have not been measured on a large scale, measurement of literacy rates among adults in various countries, including Canada highlight the reason literacy is an existing challenge in the transition to Citizen 2.0. The measurement in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) of components to the critical forms of literacy for Citizen 2.0, namely document and prose literacy, numeracy and problem-solving, indicated that a significant percentage of the population among the 18 to 65 year old non-institutionalized Canadians fail to have the sufficient levels of literacy. Those that studied these results conclude that this means that these Canadians will also have insufficient skills to fully participate in the knowledge based economy (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005, p.35). Since the skills to fully participate in the knowledge based economy are largely similar to those needed to fulfil the model of Citizen 2.0, it is possible to conclude that literacy remains a significant challenge for a large number of the population also being expected to engage in the political process.

This conclusion is alarming since a cornerstone principle of e-government, which has continued into Gov 2.0, is the availability of information. It was largely anticipated by many cyber-optimists that the increased availability of information would mobilize citizens to engage with the political process, not only through traditional forms of participation, but also through the more interactive opportunities online. For those proponents of online deliberation, there was a sense that the information available would enable citizens to become informed, and therefore, participate in meaningful deliberation. While a lack of literacy does not prohibit citizens from participating in deliberation or the political process, as the literature about civic engagement highlights, knowledge about the political realm is a factor in whether a citizen engages in the process at all. Further, the

vision for citizen engagement is for broad citizen participation, not solely with elite groups, as may occur if the literacy challenge is not addressed.

5.1.2 Civic Engagement

The literature recognizes both political participation and political knowledge as important elements in civic engagement. It is recognized that political knowledge is difficult to measure (Howe, 2006, p.140), but it is considered in the literature to be a factor in whether an individual will participate in the political process. Political knowledge is linked to an individual's literacy levels, as citizen who has higher levels of civic literacy, information literacy, and in a Gov 2.0 world, digital literacy, will also likely have higher levels of political knowledge than a lesser literate individual.

Political participation is a catch-all term for the various ways in which citizens can connect with the political process. The literature has started to distinguish among traditional and newer forms of participation; a distinction that is largely marked by the fact the traditional forms have a connection to the formal political process, such as through voting in elections, joining political organizations, or writing to a political representative. The newer forms of participation are less connected, or not connected at all to a government actor, for example, political consumerism; these forms of participation are also much harder to measure than traditional forms leading to less certainty of the levels of participation.

Where political participation is more easily measured, there is support for the concern that emerged around the "crisis of engagement". In some respects, it is also a crisis of legitimation, where for a variety of reasons identified in the literature, citizens

are participating less. Voter turnout in elections has been one of the focal points for this concern, although with new methods of mobilizing citizens, such as was done in the recent American presidential election, the declining trend may change. Yet, for now, in Canada, the rates in traditional forms of political participation have been declining for decades. This trend creates dissonance with the expectation that Gov 2.0 will mobilize citizens to engage in the political process, particularly those citizens who are already disengaged from the process.

Social capital theory has been strongly linked to the literature on civic engagement. This theory emerged out of studies on the decline in engagement, and focuses on the interpersonal relationships and trust between citizens. Most importantly, the theory holds that such relationships give rise to sense of community which translates into civic engagement, including participation in the political process. Digital technologies were too new for Putnam's treatise on this phenomenon in 2000, but he linked television to the decline of community based activities such as volunteering, which in turn explained the decline in trust and engagement (Putnam, 2000).

The issue of community is an important one in a Web 2.0 world. One of the positive aspects of the Internet has been the ability to create communities. These communities are not restricted by boundaries such as locales, but instead, allow people to find their communities across the world. Of course, not all communities serve to promote democratic or civil society ideals, but nevertheless, these communities of interest have, in some respects, replaced communities by birth, and certainly encourage dialogue along community lines with citizens all around the world.

The ability to find communities on a global scale also reflects the changes in the political sphere. As the literature discusses, politics have become more issue-centric and individualized. Further, for many issues, traditional borders have been overlooked – an issue about an oil pipe line, for instance, now invites deliberation and involvement from all over, even where the impact is more directly felt in a particular region of a country. The policy issues facing governments today are not only made complicated by a much bigger network; the issues themselves are more complex and involve many more actors than in previous generations. In some respects, facilitating greater access to involvement online will help address this complexity and give forums for all of the various actors; in others, it may serve to fragment and further convolute an already complicated process for citizens in a Gov 2.0 world.

5.1.3 The Technological Challenge

The optimistic view of the use of digital technologies to support a transformation in Western democracies and engage citizens in new ways assumes a particular use of those technologies. As discussed above, digital technologies can facilitate greater communication and collaboration across boundaries with multiple actors in a policy network. They can also provide greater access to government information and services, accessible to any citizen with digital technology capabilities. Yet, the data about Canadians' use of digital technologies for political purposes does not seem to support the premise that this is a primary or fundamental use of digital technologies.

Optimism about the usefulness of this medium is also challenged by the concept of echo chambers. While some authors caution that the Internet is still too new to draw final conclusions about echo chambers, the ability for individuals to self-select the

information they are exposed to allows for these chambers whereby it is likely that the information accessed serves to reinforce, not question an individual's ideological paradigm is troubling for focusing on public good goals such as citizen engagement. More fundamentally, echo chambers permit citizens to individualize the information they access, which means that if they are not inclined to seek politically related information, they will have to actively seek it in such instances where they desire it. The data about Internet use suggests that this is unlikely except where there is an issue that ignites attention.

In addition to echo chambers, the other challenge facing citizens today with technology is the plethora of information available to them. The celebrated aspect of the Internet that anybody can publish information and knowledge results in multitudes of information sources. Citizens must know how to navigate, assess the credibility of and appropriate the information available in order to make it useful. This requires information and digital literacy, and particularly to political themed information, civic literacy. This is paramount for Citizen 2.0.

5.1.4 Answering the Question

There are clear benefits to be found in using e-government to engage citizens. The e-government literature demonstrates a consistent approach used by governments in Western democratic countries to enhance service delivery for and interaction with citizens. Web 2.0 and other digital technologies signal new ways in which citizens and governments alike can create, share and deliberate about the complex policy issues facing governments today. Yet, with all of these benefits, there remain some significant

challenges facing citizens today. These challenges test citizens in their ability to fully engage in Gov 2.0, and therefore, transition to the Citizen 2.0 model.

A lack of sufficient literacy, particularly relating to those forms of literacy that are required to navigate the political process involving Gov 2.0, is a considerable barrier for many Canadians. Political participation and knowledge are considered in the literature to be key elements of engagement, yet, in Canada, there are disturbing trends indicating that increasing numbers of Canadians are disengaging from many, if not most aspects of the political process. Expecting those Canadians to reverse their level of engagement to be mobilized to engage as Citizen 2.0 will be a challenge. Finally, the technology underpinning Gov 2.0 may create barriers for citizens, one the one side providing too much information and turning off potential engagement, and on the other, by segmenting populations that deride from the ethos of democracy and the ideals of civil society. Therefore, there are existing challenges facing citizens today in their transition to Citizen 2.0. The question then becomes what implication this bears on Gov 2.0, and what can be done to address those challenges.

5.2 Implications for Gov 2.0

The concepts of Gov 2.0 and Citizen 2.0 are intertwined. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the success of Gov 2.0 is predicated on the successful realization of the Citizen 2.0 model. Both concepts draw from contemporary democratic theory which emphasizes citizen engagement in traditional forms of participation, like voting, but also in decision-making. Therefore, if the presumption underlying the Citizen 2.0 model that citizens will be mobilized through the Web 2.0 to adopt that model as the new paradigm for democratic citizenship is rebutted, there are significant implications for Gov 2.0.

The first implication for Gov 2.0 is that it cannot be realized to the full extent imagined. This may seem a dramatic statement but since Citizen 2.0 has been so closely tied to Gov 2.0, this implication does exist. Gov 2.0 represents the transformation of government with an entirely new approach to engaging with citizens. This vision is possible because of the Web 2.0 platforms which open new possibilities for citizens to access government information and participate in the decision-making process. If most citizens cannot adopt the Citizen 2.0 model, either because they lack the proficiency and skills to do so, or because their use of the Internet diminishes their willingness to engage in difficult and complex conversations, then the transformative vision of Gov 2.0 is negated.

By extension, the second implication is that only citizens who are already politically motivated and who have the requisite skills will engage with Gov 2.0 through the Citizen 2.0 model. This will widen the already existing gap between the engaged citizens and the disengaged citizens. A widening of the gap is the antithesis of the goal of e-government to increase citizen engagement. Furthermore, it will mean that the information available online will be accessible only to an elite group of citizens. Accessible only to that group because they have the skills and knowledge to understand its relevance and purpose in the political process.

A third implication of the failure of the Citizen 2.0 model is that governments will be frustrated in their move to transform. One of the key aspects of e-government which has extended to the concept of Gov 2.0 is the objective of transformation. In part, this transformation is designed to respond to the increasing demand from citizens for greater transparency, accountability and involvement in decision-making. There is also

anticipation that the transformation will take place internally to government, renewing structures to make governments more horizontal and responsive. Failing to achieve the embodiment of the Citizen 2.0 model will hinder these aims of transformation. This will mean that Western democratic governments, including those in Canada will be unable to move into the participatory model proposed for e-government. Instead, they will remain in a more managerial state.

The final implication is that governments must continue to seek ways to address the various divides and challenges facing Canadians. Governments in Canada have been adopting new methods to engage with Canadians across all demographics. With respect to engaging citizens online, the Government of Canada has introduced Consulting Canadians (www.consultingcanadians.gc.ca). The site provides Canadians with the opportunities to engage in policy discussions and other related consultations. This initiative is part of the Action Plan which promises open dialogue, open information and open data (Government of Canada, 2012, p.5). Open data initiatives also exist at the municipal government level. The City of Edmonton and the City of Vancouver both have implemented the Open Data Catalogue, and the City of Toronto, DataTO (Davies & Lithwick, 2012, p.2-3).

Canadian governments also continue to be focused on addressing the digital divide still exists in Canada. In 2012, the barrier of access to broadband Internet was a topic at the Annual Conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) (FCM, 2012). It was recognized that citizens in rural and remote areas of Canada remain disadvantaged because the Internet quality is lacking in their communities, thus removing

them from the same opportunities to engage online as urban citizens (FCM, 2012). The Canadian Digital Media Network identified this also as a priority (2012, p.7)

There is also increased recognition of the importance to interact online through a variety of platforms. This is particularly important when trying to engage younger citizens, particularly those between 18 and 34 years of age who are more likely to use the Internet for multiple purposes, including government online. Christine Bachen, Chad Rapheal, Kathleen-M. Lynn, Kristen McKee and Jessica Philippi caution that the reception of knowledge through websites is no longer sufficient to engage youth who seek instead a more interactive and interpersonal experience (2008, p.293-4). Most provincial governments and many municipal governments in Canada use RSS feeds, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook (Best Practices Wiki, 2012).

There is also an exploration into electronic voting. This is in part a response to Gov 2.0 and also because Canadians have indicated that they would be interested in participating online. According to the survey performed by Pammett and LeDuc non-voters indicated they would be more likely to vote if available online (2003, p.55-6). In their study on electronic voting, Nicole Goodman, Jon Pammett and Joan DeBardeleben identified that using the Internet for voting carried benefits of engaging populations that had difficulties participating in non-electronic forms of voting, and that voting remotely would be appealing also for increasing engagement (2010, p.15). Yet, there was also concern that the existing digital divide would create inequity among voters, particularly among groups already disenfranchised (Goodman et al., 2010, p.16). Electronic voting has been taking place in Canada over the last decade, but mostly at the municipal level with some success at increasing overall citizen engagement (Goodman et al., 2010, p.23).

5.3 Getting to Citizen 2.0

There are many remaining questions about a Citizen 2.0 world that became out of scope of this work. Firstly, with the new emphasis on open government, particularly with open data, the impact on citizen engagement remains unknown. It is anticipated that more transparency into government information and data will empower citizens in their interaction and collaboration with governments in policy decision making. Yet, if a vast number of citizens remain stymied by extensive and comprehensive Internet use and literacy challenges, the potential benefits of such data is lost.

Secondly, the present conceptualization of Citizen 2.0 is based on Web 2.0 technology and increasingly, mobile devices. The speed in which this technology evolves has already been shown to foster a greater divide among those citizens who have access and skill to this technology and this is likely to continue as the technology changes. Further, the multiplicity of the technology will likely serve to further confuse any attempt at a consistent and earnest interaction with citizens as such interaction will be increasingly difficult to manage.

Finally, there is the question of the evolution of the Citizen 2.0 model. The political realm is already recognized as increasingly complex and is moving to a more global and issue-centric model. There is a possibility that even when citizens are mobilized to engage in a policy discussion, that the interaction will be too fragmented to be useful for government decision making, or occur outside of the local political process, thus frustrating citizens who wish to influence decision making.

In the end, just as democratic citizenship continues to be re-imagined and the interaction between citizen and government is renewed through Gov 2.0, the uncertainty of a Citizen 2.0 world is not a negative. There are infinite possibilities for strengthening the voice of citizens in western democratic countries and for enhancing their participation in decision making. The challenge remains in achieving those possibilities successfully and success in such as context must mean engagement for the majority of citizens, and reversing the “crisis of engagement”.

Moving forward, there should be a focus on working on the literacy challenge. There is already attention directed at barriers of access to technology. As the literature demonstrates, adult literacy is a challenge, but there are ways in which governments can encourage literacy activities that will maintain or increase adult literacy rates. This would benefit Western democratic societies not only in the political realm, but also in the economic as economies are becoming increasingly more knowledge-based. Focusing on the literacy challenge will also help address the other existing challenges identified in this work. Enhancing civic literacy in Canada should lead to augmenting levels of political knowledge. Adding to this factor will impact political participation and citizens increased familiarity and comfort with the political process – on and offline – and in the end, support the transition to Citizen 2.0.

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