



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN UZBEKISTAN: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract.

Digital transformation of the public sector is a key aspect of modernization and economic development in any state. Uzbekistan, striving to integrate into the global economy and improve the quality of life of its citizens, is actively introducing digital technologies into various areas of public administration. This article examines the achievements of Uzbekistan in the field of digitalization of the public sector, as well as the challenges that the country faces along this path.

Keywords: digital transformation, e-government, modernization, digital economy, cybersecurity, economic development

Introduction:

In today's world, digitalization is becoming an integral part of public administration, contributing to increased efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of services for citizens. The digital transformation of the public sector is a complex process that includes the implementation of information technologies, process automation, and the development of electronic services. For many countries, this is not only an opportunity to improve the quality of public services but also a means to combat corruption, enhance economic efficiency, and improve the standard of living for the population.

Uzbekistan, currently in a stage of active development and modernization, aims to integrate into the global community and become a competitive economy. In this context, the digital transformation of the public sector plays a crucial role. The reform program initiated by the country's leadership is aimed at creating a modern and efficient management system capable of promptly responding to contemporary challenges and meeting the needs of citizens.

Analysis of literature on the topic:

Today, the digitalization process is the object of study by most modern scientists. This term is interpreted differently in different sources. Thus, in his scientific article





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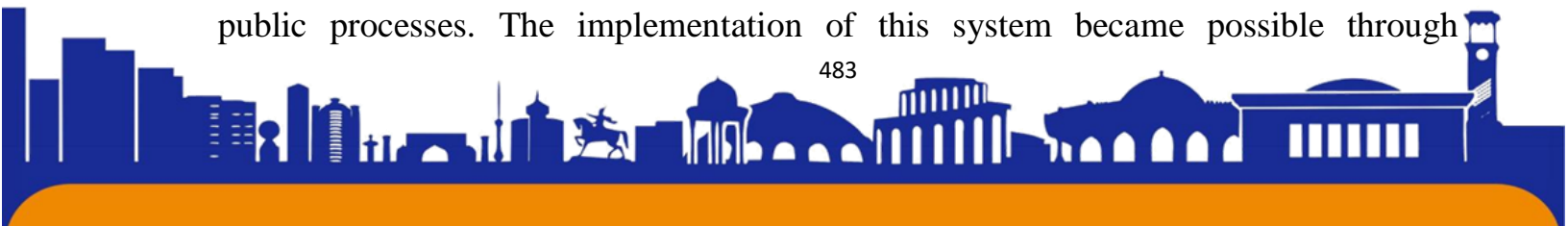
Plotnikov V.A. deciphers the term “digitalization” as follows: «Digitalization is the process of introducing digital generation, processing, transmission, storage technologies and visualization of data in various areas of human activities [2]. » Researchers at the Higher School of Economics describe digitalization as the replacement of analog (physical) data collection and processing systems with technological systems that generate, transmit and process digital signal about its status [3]. Digitalization is an evolutionary development, so just as the industrial revolution revolutionized transformed the agricultural economy into manufacture, and then machines changed the latter into an industrial one [4]. N.N. Kovaleva gives the following definition electronic state: “this is the implementation of Internet solutions and basic infrastructure to provide individuals and legal entities information resources and information services government agencies in order to ensure transparency of the public sector and ensure interactive participation among top officials in decision making [5].”

Analyzing the definitions of the term “digitalization” in the presented sources, it can be noted that this process is everywhere described as development and progress in various fields, including the introduction of modern digital technologies.

Research methodology: During the research process, statistical, analytical, comparative, observational, inductive, deductive, logical, monitoring, express assessments and other methods of analysis are used. As a result, the topic of the literature being studied was fully disclosed. Reforms carried out during changes with foreign countries are considered. The tables have been compiled and presented accordingly.

Analysis and results:

One of Uzbekistan's most significant achievements in digitalization is the creation and development of an electronic government system. The e-government platform, named “my.gov.uz” enables citizens to access a wide range of government services online, greatly simplifying interactions with governmental institutions and reducing bureaucratic hurdles. Among the most popular services are obtaining certificates, business registration, tax and fine payments, scheduling appointments with doctors, and more. Uzbekistan's e-government system saves time and resources for both citizens and government agencies, while enhancing transparency and accountability in public processes. The implementation of this system became possible through





collaborative efforts between the government and private companies that developed and maintain the necessary infrastructure and software.

The creation and support of the Government Portal is carried out in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 3, 2016 No. 188 “On further measures to implement the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Electronic Government”” [1].

The Government Portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan is a system-forming element of the infrastructure of electronic information interaction between government bodies, as well as between legal entities and individuals.

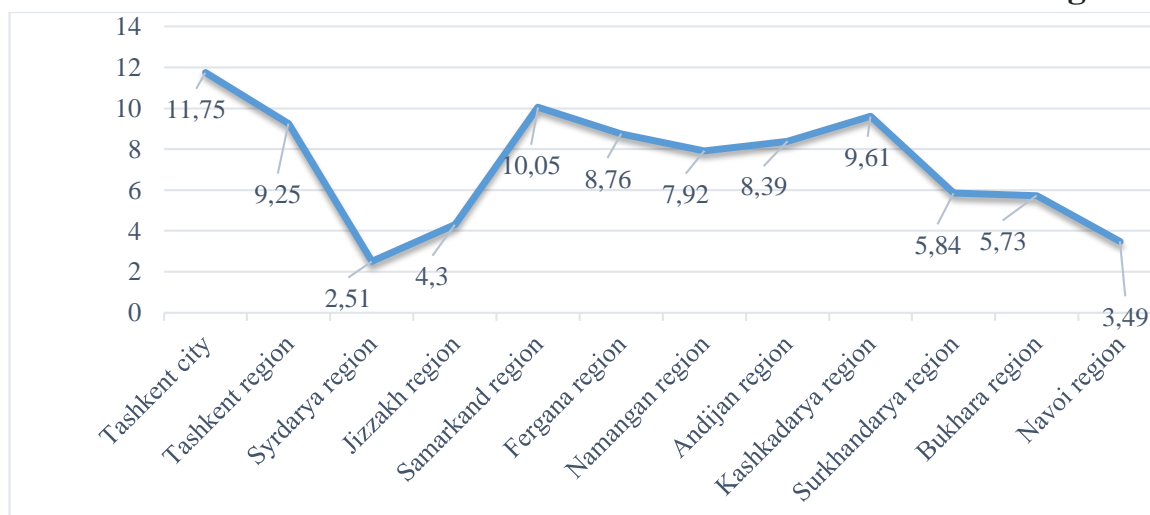
The main goals of the government portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan are as follows:

- ✚ Creating a specialized information system designed for the formation and development of state information resources, providing interactive government services to legal and natural persons.
- ✚ Ensuring the population of the Republic and the international community are informed about the activities of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, reforms in socio-economic and socio-political life through the creation and placement of relevant information resources.
- ✚ Promoting the efficiency of interaction between organizations and individuals, both legal and natural persons.
- ✚ Informing the population about opportunities and procedures for their interaction with respective organizations.
- ✚ Promoting the improvement of quality and efficiency of organizational activities through enhanced operational exchange and dissemination of information, and increasing awareness among organizations.
- ✚ Standardizing inter-agency electronic information exchange [6].





Diagram-1



Submission of applications on the website my.gov.uz for 07/01/2023 - 06/01/2024¹

The diagram 1 clearly shows an upward trend in the number of applications submitted over the past year (July 2023 to June 2024). This suggests increasing usage of the my.gov.uz website for government services. here seems to be a potential seasonal pattern, with a dip in applications in November 2023 followed by a rise in December 2023. However, with only 12 months of data, it's difficult to confirm this definitively. June 2024 saw the highest number of submissions at 3,605,844, a considerable increase compared to July 2023's low of 2,374,949. This represents a growth of over 1.2 million applications [7].

Below is Diagram-2 displaying the distribution of users of the e-commerce site my.gov.uz in Uzbekistan, broken down by region. The data is represented in percentages.

¹ The diagram was compiled by the author based on data provided on website- <https://my.gov.uz/ru/site/statistic-graph>

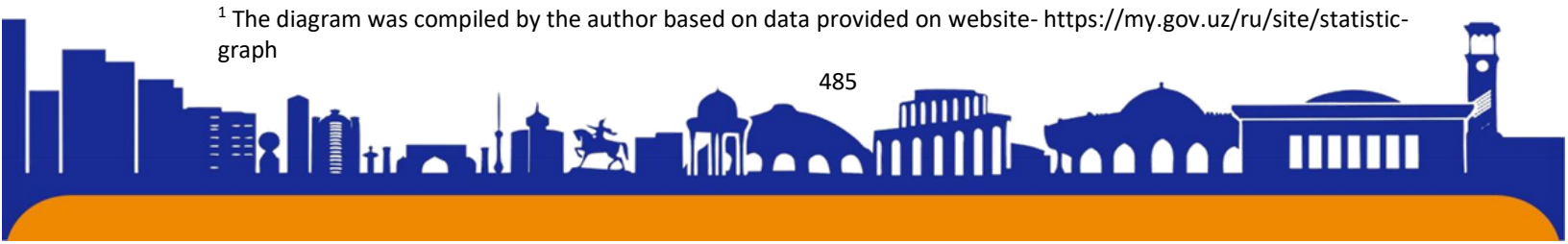
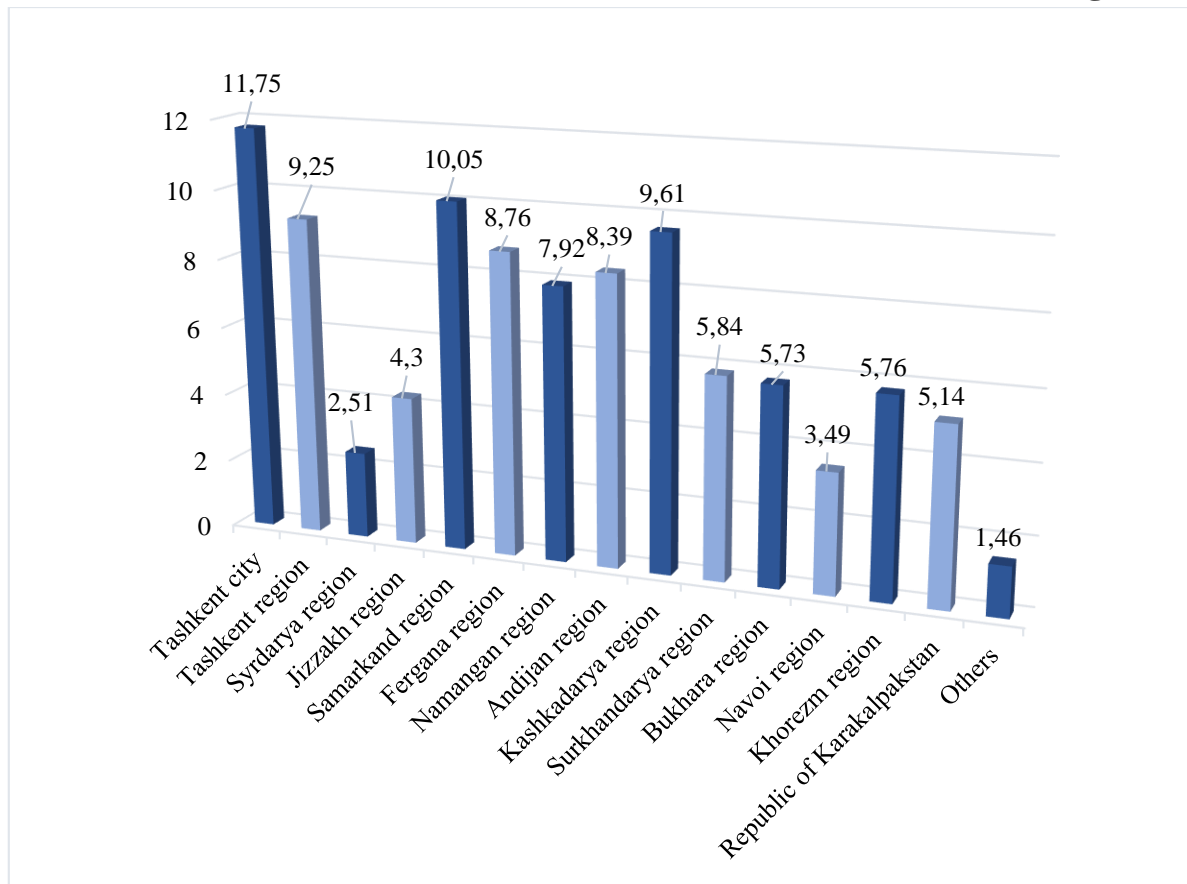




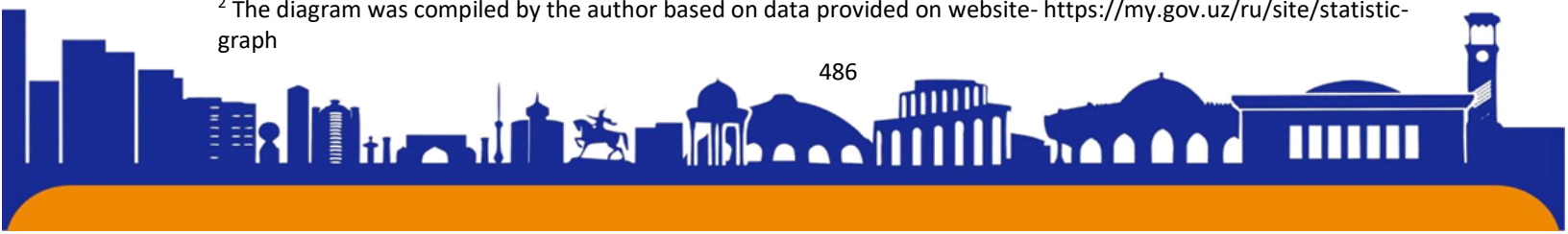
Diagram-2



Users of the site my.gov.uz in Uzbekistan by region²

Tashkent City, being the capital and most urbanized area, leads in user engagement, which is expected due to better access to digital infrastructure and services. The differences in percentages indicate varying levels of digital engagement and infrastructure development across regions. More developed regions like Tashkent, Samarkand, and Fergana show higher engagement. Regions with lower percentages, such as Jizzakh, Syrdarya, and Khorezm, indicate potential areas for targeted growth and development initiatives to boost digital engagement. The diagram 2 reveals significant regional disparities in the use of the e-commerce site my.gov.uz, with urban and economically developed areas showing higher engagement. Efforts to improve

² The diagram was compiled by the author based on data provided on website- <https://my.gov.uz/ru/site/statistic-graph>





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digital infrastructure and accessibility in less engaged regions could help in balancing this disparity and enhancing overall user engagement across Uzbekistan.

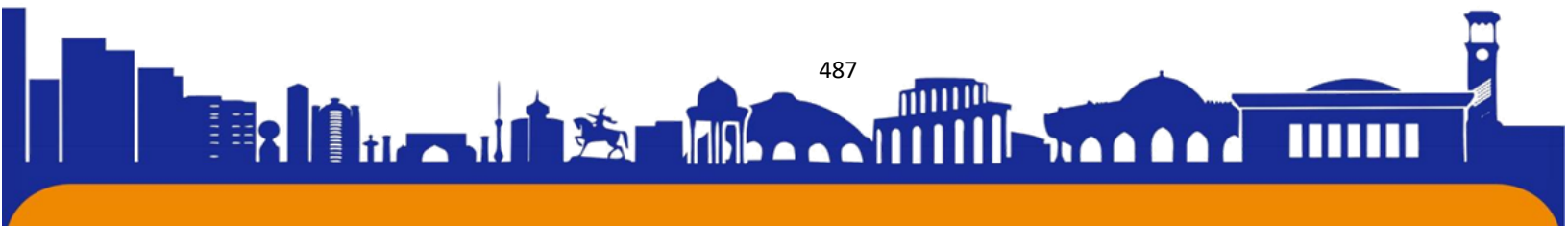
Digitalization has facilitated the automation of numerous administrative processes, significantly enhancing the efficiency of government institutions. Automation spans areas such as human resources management, financial administration, document circulation, and monitoring of government programs. This reduces the likelihood of errors and corruption schemes, accelerates decision-making processes, and improves the quality of services provided.

Digitalization of the public sector plays a crucial role in combating corruption. Electronic systems enable the tracking of all stages of decision-making and execution of government functions, making processes more transparent and accountable. This reduces opportunities for corrupt practices and enhances public trust in government institutions.

It is important to mention that Uzbekistan faces numerous challenges in digitalization of public sector. One of the primary challenges Uzbekistan faces in digitalization is the shortage of qualified ICT professionals. Advancing digital technologies require high skills and specialized knowledge that are currently insufficient among the local population. Addressing this issue necessitates significant investments in education and training, as well as creating conditions to attract specialists from other countries.

Despite significant achievements, some regions in Uzbekistan still lack access to the internet and have underdeveloped ICT infrastructure. This hinders the implementation of digital technologies in remote and rural areas, creating disparities in access to government services. To resolve this issue, ongoing investments are required in infrastructure development and expanding internet coverage. With the increased use of digital technologies, the risk of cyber-attacks and data breaches grows. Protecting information and preventing cyber-attacks becomes a top priority for government agencies. This requires the development and implementation of advanced cybersecurity systems, training of personnel, and raising awareness among the population about digital risks.

The introduction of digital technologies often faces resistance from both government employees and the general population. Changes to established processes





can provoke fears and distrust, slowing down the transformation process. Overcoming this barrier requires active educational efforts, training, and support from leadership.

Conclusion:

Uzbekistan has made significant strides in digitalizing its public sector, as evidenced by the user engagement with the my.gov.uz e-commerce site. However, regional disparities highlight the need for targeted efforts to enhance digital inclusion. By addressing infrastructure gaps, improving digital literacy, fostering public-private partnerships, focusing on user-centric service design, and ensuring robust cybersecurity, Uzbekistan can further its digital transformation and achieve uniform engagement across all regions. This will not only enhance the efficiency and transparency of public services but also contribute to the country's overall socio-economic development.

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