



## WOUGNET: Digitizing Uganda's Public Services

Governments worldwide are adopting digital technologies and innovations to improve the efficiency, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of public services. Uganda is also following this trend, revamping traditional bureaucratic processes, and integrating innovative solutions into governance to create a seamless and citizen-centric public service ecosystem accessible to everyone. By leveraging technology and innovation, governments can address societal needs and ensure inclusivity in public service provision.

Digital technologies are crucial in breaking down barriers to accessing public services by empowering citizens with access to information, ensuring efficiency, and facilitating improved communication and collaboration between government departments and citizens. For instance, mobile applications, online portals, and digital platforms enable citizens to interact with government services from their homes, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. This enhances convenience for citizens and ensures that services are more inclusive and reach a broader demographic.

Open data initiatives make government data available to the public, fostering a culture of transparency and enabling citizens to make informed decisions. By leveraging technologies such as blockchain, governments can enhance the security and integrity of public records, further bolstering trust between citizens and government institutions.



These technological innovations also ensure real-time data sharing and connectivity, enabling a more cohesive approach to problem-solving and allowing agencies to work together seamlessly to address complex issues.

The result is a government that operates with increased transparency, responsiveness, and accountability and can touch all sectors and areas of the country effortlessly.

It is important to note that digital citizenry engagement with leaders promotes citizen participation and fosters accountability and transparency in the service delivery framework. Citizen participation is power redistribution that enables them (citizens) to make their voices heard. The thrust of citizen participation is that, as more voices are heard, a broader perspective is developed and shared. Transparency and accountability are critical for the efficient functioning of a modern economy and for fostering social well-being. Effective public service delivery founded on these principles has been emphasized in [Uganda's Vision 2040](#).



Over the years, Uganda has made commendable strides towards strengthening public accountability for improved Government service delivery through a number of reforms covering the legal and institutional, operational and public service. These include computerizing all Government Financial Management systems (FMS), such as the payroll, introducing the commitment control system and electronic Funds Transfer system, and increasing budget monitoring of key sectors through the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit, among other key interventions.

In the [National e- Government Policy \(2011\)](#) and the Uganda [National IT Policy \(2012\)](#), the government of Uganda recognizes that embracing ICT will improve the effectiveness and efficiency in public service delivery. It also observes that using ICTs will enhance the relationship between citizens and leaders. As stated in the policy, the Government of Uganda portrays a belief that ICT should be utilized to transform into the era of electronic Government (e-Government) aimed at demystifying the role of Government, simplifying procedures, bringing transparency, accountability, and making credible, timely information available to all citizens and at the same time providing all services efficiently and cost-effectively. The Uganda National Development Plan (NDPII, 2015) also envisages heavy investment in the ICT sector to turn Uganda into a knowledge economy.

To add on, recently, The Uganda Government, through the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, unveiled the digital transformation roadmap as an implementation tool towards achieving the digital Uganda vision. The [Digital Uganda Vision](#) aims to empower all citizens, striving to achieve the goals of universal inclusion, sustainable development, economic progress, and poverty eradication through digital innovation, combining initiatives across multiple sectors. It will also electronically deliver various government and private services in various fields like education, health, agriculture, social security, banking, justice, and communication. Consequently, this transition will be critical in improving public service delivery and improving transparency and accountability in the service delivery framework. Therefore, the importance of digital innovations and technologies in enhancing e-governance cannot be underestimated.



Striving to contribute to the e-Governance ecosystem, the [Evidence and Methods lab](#) in collaboration with [Women of Uganda Network \(WOUGNET\)](#) and other innovators conducting an action research project focusing on addressing the constraints to the usage of the Internet for effective service delivery in Uganda among Government agencies, departments and agencies. This aims to enhance public service delivery, promoting transparency and accountability within Uganda's public sector. WOUGNET's innovation's main aim is to promote digital citizenry engagement with the duty bearers through a customized mobile and web-based application, which in turn improves duty bearer's responsiveness to complaints of poor service delivery reported by the citizens, thus promoting transparency and accountability in the service delivery framework. The mobile and web-based application plays mediation role through a "question and answer" based forum space whereby community members raise queries in their local languages or English and send it to the platform database by means of SMS or via mobile application, the complaints received are then forwarded to the responsible duty bearers for action by the systems administrator, feedback is then received from the duty bearers onto the system database which are sent back to the complainant creating a 2-way form of digital interaction.

WOUGNET's innovation's main aim is to promote digital citizenry engagement with the duty bearers through a customized mobile and web-based application, which in turn improves duty bearer's responsiveness to complaints of poor service delivery reported by the citizens, thus promoting transparency and accountability in the service delivery framework.



Pictures of WOUGNET field visit to Apac

This improves civic engagement and encourages inclusive digital citizen participation, improving accountability and transparency in the service delivery framework.

However, creating a pathway for effective public service delivery through digital technologies and innovations goes hand in hand with a user-centric design approach. Government services should no longer be viewed as one-size-fits-all solutions but should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of citizens. User experience (UX) design principles should be applied to ensure that digital interfaces are intuitive, accessible, user-friendly, and most importantly citizen, citizen-inclusive. It is also important to acknowledge the challenges of this transformative journey. Issues such as digital literacy disparities, cybersecurity threats, and the digital divide must be addressed to ensure that the benefits of technological advancements are accessible to all citizens.

The rapid pace of technological change demands a commitment to ongoing training and development for public servants. Ensuring that government employees are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate and leverage emerging technologies is crucial for the sustained success of digital initiatives.





As we move forward with e-Governance, it is crucial to stay focused on the core principles of transparency, inclusivity, and user-centricity. By doing so, we can create a future where public services are efficient, effective, and truly responsive to the needs of the people they serve. The journey to a digitally empowered future requires collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Governments can enhance efficiency, improve accessibility, and ultimately contribute to the well-being of their communities by creating a pathway for effective public service delivery through digital means. This can be achieved by improving transparency and accountability in the service delivery framework.

#### Authors:

Peter Ongom  
[pongom@wougnat.org](mailto:pongom@wougnat.org)

Letown Saitoti Abdi  
[asletowon@wougnat.org](mailto:asletowon@wougnat.org)

#### References

Links to social media posts for the field visit.  
[https://x.com/evidence\\_method/status/1691408746579206144?s=20](https://x.com/evidence_method/status/1691408746579206144?s=20)  
<https://x.com/wougnat/status/1691397040293466112?s=20>

