

## E-GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

Dr Desmond. O Nnamani

Asomba, Ifeyinwa.U

Egwuagu, Uloma .B

**Dept of Public Administration, Enugu State University of Science & Technology,**

Email: [dungabrazil8@yahoo.com](mailto:dungabrazil8@yahoo.com),

08037442527

### **ABSTRACT**

*The main thrust of this paper is to find out the extent electronic governance and social service delivery has improved public bureaucracies in Nigeria. Specifically, the study will find out the extent the adoption of electronic governance encourages quality service delivery in implementing the policies and programmes in Nigeria public sector. Communication theory was adopted as its framework; this theory tries to elucidate that communication is one of the ingredients that makes a system effective in contemporary society. Electronic government makes an impact on the knowledge of the society as well as on the literate level of the society. The adoption of e-governance in running the affairs of the ministries brings about effective service delivery in Nigeria. It helps in define and re-define the current vision and mission of the government and curtails the level of corruption, encourages accountability and transparency in governance since it serves as a yardstick for auditing in governance. E-governance in bureaucracies helps to facilitate formulation of strategies for policy implementation in Nigeria. This paper recommends that Nigeria government should adopt e-governance to institutionalize for real budget. Government should adopt the use of electronic governance in Nigeria public sector since it brings significant improvement in governance through*

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*accountability and transparency; detects and prevents poor service delivery, curtails unnecessary waste and leakages, as well as arbitrary behaviour in bureaucracies. Finally, government should employ qualitative manpower that is experienced in e-governance to carry out government programmes efficiently.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

E-governance refers to the use of internet technology as a platform for exchanging information, providing services and transacting with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government (UN e-government survey, 2004, 2005 & 2008). E-governance may be applied by the legislature, judiciary, or administration, in order to improve internal efficiency, the delivery of public services, or processes of democratic governance. Today, citizens are becoming more and more conscious about their rights to get the required services at their doorstep and both the state and central governments recognize the need to deliver faster and efficient services to ordinary citizens through e-governance which is an effective instrument of administration. India's experience in e-governance and ICT initiatives has demonstrated significant success in improving accessibility, cutting down costs, reducing corruption, extending help and increasing access to un-served groups. E-governance initiatives have reached millions of people belonging to these sections of society. It helps to improve access to information and services because these have provided economic and social development opportunities, facilitated participation and communication in policy and decision-making processes and empowered the weakest groups. This has led to the fostering of a sense of ownership and the building of social capital, which in turn, constitutes a basis for local revitalization ([www/projects/e-government/India](http://www/projects/e-government/India), 2011). Technology has proliferated in all spheres of life. Accompanied by the rapid growth of the internet there has been a concomitant rise in online transactions (Trivedi, 2008), this information age paradigm shift is characterized by citizen and business integration driven as it were by the choice of service providers and means of access. It has seen a fundamental shift in the concept of governance both in the method by which e-governance initiatives are being implemented at the central, state and local government levels through various PPP's. This new practice of public administration has developed into the concept of e-governance helps makes access to government information easier for public sector agencies and citizens.

Akunyili (2010) puts it that Nigeria joined the global train of ICT like most developing countries as a consumer of the technologies particularly in the areas of personal computers and digital electronics. For Danfulani (2013), the implementation of e-governance in Nigeria was made possible with ICT revolution, which according to Ojo (2013), kicked off at about two decades ago, when the country, rapidly got evolved in Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and permeated nearly every aspect of government, business, and daily life. It is an IP-based virtual private

network based on broadband technology introduced in April 1998 and further upgraded in February 2004. E-governance aims to help strengthen government's drive towards effective governance and increased accountability and transparency for better management of resources, growth and development. E-governance has consequently become an accepted method involving the use of Information Technology to improve transparency, provide information speedily to all citizens, improve administration efficiency and improve public services such as transportation, power, health, water, security and municipal services ([www://ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com), 2006) in Ojo (2013). E-governance is a political device adopted to ensure good governance at any level through which government and citizen's relationships are facilitated to ensure effectively and efficiency service delivery. It helps to create new jobs, foster development of business and enhance citizens' participation to improve the efficiency of government services. E-governance is a political mechanism to evaluate the performance of government in many developed nations of the world. It enhances citizen's ability to have access to the basic programmes of government while it brings about openness in performing public functions. The result of this benefit can be less corrupt practices, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and cost reduction.

## **2. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **2.1 E-Governance**

E-governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to assist the government for efficient and meaningful delivery of government services. According to Ojo (2013), e-governance is a wider concept that defines and assesses the impacts technologies are having on the practice and administration of governments and the relationships between public servants and the wider society, such as dealings with the elected bodies or outside groups such as not for profits organizations, non-governmental organizations or private sector corporate entities. E-governance encompasses a series of necessary steps for government agencies to develop and administer to ensure successful implementation of e-government services to the public at large ([theinformationdaily.com](http://theinformationdaily.com)). According to United Nation's e-government survey (2004, 2005, and 2008), in Danfulani (2013), e-government is the use of internet technology to exchange information, provide services and transact with citizens, business, and other arms of government.

According to Akunyili (2010), e-government is the use of Information and Communication Technology to enhance access to, and delivery of government services for the benefit of all. E-governance is also defined as the process whereby the use of Information and Communication Technology and service are deployed and employed by the government in the delivery of services to members of the public and the use of same in the internal running and linkages among different government department and agencies. E-government is the art of using tools offered by information technology in various aspects of the process of governance with the purpose of achieving efficiency, transparency, accountability and user friendliness in all the transactions that the citizens and business conduct with the government. In the words of Akbar (2004), e-governance is the computerization and automation of common government processes with the goal of lowering costs, improving efficiency and generally provides better services to citizens. According to Abdulkareem (2015), e-government is the use of information technology to improve governance, promote efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public service. It is the form of government adopted to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of

disseminating information to the public, and other agencies, and for performing government administrative activities. Backus (2001) adduces e-governance as the application of electronic means in the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of governance. According to Ojo (2013), e-governance is a medium for the delivery of government services and information to the public using electronic means, usually Information Technology, which is seen as the best way for the implementation of e-governance since it is always efficient, speedy, participatory, transparent affords accountability in disseminating information to the public and at the same time, better in performing government activities.

## **2.2 Service Delivery**

Social Service is a set of program aimed at achieving some objectives. It relates to the social system in the goals of social policies. All social policies are directed towards making some change not only in the structure of society for the living conditions of the people in the society. Social service programs are services provided by a governmental agency for welfare of persons or the community at large such as housing, child protection, free education and health care delivery. Social service programs and their delivery help the people with necessities of health, education and housing to attain self actualization and happiness. Social welfare is a wide concept which encompasses improvement in the social status of the people and society in general. It necessitates in reality and not deceitful the provision of such services as health, education, housing, roads, portable water and electricity. It also encompasses reduction of poverty, improvement of women and workers. Geol (1981) states that social service is a process of bringing community welfare through social change and the implementation of social policy decisions for the total welfare of the community. It encompasses every act, technique and consideration in the process necessary to transforming social policy. Donnison (1968) states that during social services delivery, social legislation aimed at private philanthropy and religious charities into the dynamics of services and benefits for humanity are implemented. Currently, Nigeria has weak state supported social welfare; most people rely on the extended families in their old age. Medications are only provided for government employees and few company workers in commercial enterprises while the rest of the populations are left on their own. Several attempts to reform primary health care centers suffer set-backs in Nigeria. Drugs and other facilities are undersupplied and these centers are lacking in qualified personnel. Patients pay user fees and purchase medication which sometimes they cannot afford because the drugs are expensive. This results increases infant mortality, thus 94 of every 1000 births die and the life expectancy for Nigerians is forty-eight (48) years. Malaria and other curable diseases remain the major cause of death. Other preventable ills that government has been unable to halt include measles, whooping cough, polio, cerebrospinal meningitis, diarrhea, tuberculosis, bronchitis and sexually transmitted infections with Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) becoming more prevalent. Arguably, Nigeria's fiscal arrangement by the three levels of government has problem of coordination in service delivery.

## **2.3 Importance of E-governance in Nigeria Public Sector**

Most governments have embarked on major projects with the use of modern technologies to improve and develop government activities. These technologies have improved government services to the citizens. It has facilitated the interactions within the public and private agencies by providing quick access to information transmission

(Moon cited in Fatile, 2012). Scholars have identified the relevance of e-governance in a developing nation; Gianluca (2007) observes that e-governance can impact transformation in the public sector in three major areas such as; economic dimension, social dimension and governance dimension. The economic dimension deals with the reduction of cost of operation to better the capacity for service delivery, increase coverage and quality of service, enhance response capacity to address poverty challenges and increase avenues for revenue generation. The social benefits include job creation, education and health enhancement, improving safety and security of lives and properties of citizens among others. To buttress these points, the following has been identified as the benefits of e-governance (World Bank, 2016):

1. Facilitate the circulation and implementation of government programmes
2. Facilitating the flow of information from government to the citizens
3. Increase transparency and accountability which has resulted in a drastic reduction in corruption.
4. Improves efficiency by reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks experienced in government operations.
5. Sustains the security of lives and properties of citizens to a large extent.
6. Improves service delivery through the interdepartmental exchange of Information and the merging of related agencies and ministries,
7. Reduces the cost of transaction, manpower, time, and space needed for good governance
8. Strengthens government ability to deliver services and expand citizens participation in governance.
9. Helps in achieving development especially in relation to government operations by introducing new concepts of e-governance.
10. Reduces corruption by promoting transparency, opening government data to public scrutiny, and by automating government processes, restricting discretion of officials and limiting citizens' interaction with gatekeepers to access key services.

#### **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this paper is communications theory as propounded by theorist like Karl Deutsch and later expanded by other scholars such as Morton R. Davies, James Charles worth, Vaughan A. Lewis, David H. Everson, and Joan Papard Paine. Communications theory is based on cybernetics, which is the science of communication as the major source of system control. Cybernetics is likened to information machines or tools like computers and other ICT gargets that controls the flow of information in a system. The key idea of communication theory as argued by Nwachukwu & Pepple (2015) is that communication is the basics of all the political activities. When communications flow from top to bottom in a political system would fast-track the implementation of government policies and improves the political life. Communication theory is one of the ingredients that make a system effective. Some of the major aspects of the theory are:

1. Human beings play an important role in steering and coordinating information flow in a system by using several channels to transmit information. This implies that without the efforts of humans, information cannot be communicated in and out of a system.
2. Political goals can be achieved through co-ordination and co-operation among people of society which is affected by communication.
3. Deutsch is also of the opinion that human habits of the citizens determine the success of political decisions and habit is development through information gathered

from communication. A good system maintains good communication and relationship among the agencies.

4. Another aspect of the communication theory is the feedback mechanism; Deutsch believes that feedback is a crucial stage in communication. Information is originated and transmitted to other systems or environment and then converted into decisions which are then disseminated around the system.

These decisions are implemented and transmitted back through feedback mechanism. The relevance of communication theory to the study lies in its contributions to idea of e-governance. The theory explains how information delivery in a political system determines its success. This is important because information is the major component of any system network. Making decisions in any system is a function of the quality of information available to the leaders. The Nigerian public sector is cybernetic in nature with regards to its relationship to its environment. This implies that it is self-steering since it has the ability to develop mechanisms to collect, interpret and apply feedback in its decision making process. This theory advocates the use of communication variables to enhance service delivery. Communication process is vital in any organization as it provides the avenues for transmitting vital information on organizational activities. To achieve productivity in the public sector, employees should be able to communicate effectively among themselves and to the citizens; this can be achieved through effective e-governance system

### **2.5 The Development of E-government in Nigeria Public Sector**

Nigeria's e-government system aims to enhance internal efficiency, public services and democratic processes in the legislation and administration section of the public sector (Aneke, 2009). By providing a funding mechanism for governmental organizations, the Nigerian government's ambition is to extend e-government implementation from federal government departments to both state and local government public services with a view to initiating a programme aimed at enhancing computer access across the country (Adeyemo, 2011). However, although the government ostensibly utilizes their e-government website to deal with public affairs little information is made available on this website (Aneke, 2009). The implementation of e-government in Nigeria was first managed by the Nigerian Port Authority, which saw the need to computerize the port's activities to ensure safe and effective operations and administrations, and this was taken over by the Nigeria Immigration Service (Adeyemo, 2011; Adeniran, 2008). To enable the development of e-government in Nigeria, the government planned to identify existing skills gaps among employees with the aim of implementing e-government projects in an effective way as well as providing training to fill those gaps (McGrath and Maiye, 2010). According to Okwuoke (2013), the Nigerian government's new ICT policy, which aims to promote its e-government services, is a catalyst for national development. The limited success of e-government in Africa and specifically, in Nigeria, was recognized and detailed in a recent UN (2014) bi-annual survey. According to the UN (2014), African countries still lag behind Europe and the US in e-government development with West Africa showing no major improvement in this area of government. The UN (2014) attributes Africa's lack of development to poor telecommunication infrastructures and lack of broadband access. Reddick (2010) argues that governments in developing countries have failed to provide e-government effectively due to lack of achievement of pre-defined goals and benefits. However, a slight improvement can be discerned when the UN 2012 E-government Survey is compared with the same survey

undertaken in 2014. By 2014, Nigeria had moved up 21 positions in the rankings from 162<sup>nd</sup> in 2012 to 141<sup>th</sup> in 2014

## **2.6 Scope of Electronic Governance**

The scope of e-governance according to Ojo (2013), revolve around e-registration, e-participation, e-taxation, e-mobilization, e-education, e-service delivery, e-feedback, e-policing, e-planning, e-debate and analyses of public finances.

**I.E-Governance in Education Sector** this involves information relating to citizen's democratic exercises such as voting eligibility and sensitization towards citizen's political rights. The adoption of internet facilities may enhance the actualization of these various programmes that may benefit the citizens at the grassroots level in Nigeria. According to Norris (2002), democracy requires two-way communication as well as information, at regular intervals beyond elections, so that political leaders receive feedback and maintain contact with the grassroots. Many commentators who advocate strong or direct democracy commonly argue that these functions are not well served by e-governance, and this criticism has some value if judged by government websites alone. The opportunities for bottom up interactivity in communicating with official departments are fewer than the opportunities to read top down information.

According to Dan Fulani (2013), recruitments and examinations in schools, ministries, departments, and parastatals are electronically done. Candidates apply online, write examination online via buying well secured scratch cards and their scripts marked electronically. Within days results of examinations are out and candidates knows his fate. The practice wasn't like that before; it was slow, esoteric, and manipulated due to excessive involvement of personnel rather than machines. This process nips in the bud inconsistencies associated with age and other academic claims by candidates; issues very essential for recruitments. In each recruitment exercise especially into Nigerian Armed Forces, so many candidates are rejected or recruitment offer withdrawn because of phantom claims that contradicted regulations associated with the recruitments which are noticed due to the employment of e-governance. Porta (2010) argues that ICT can be used to extend access to education delivery techniques, to support the ongoing professional development of workers and facilitate education-related data collection and processing efforts in ways previously not possible. ICT infrastructure can provide a fundamental building block upon which whole sets of knowledge and information service and activities can be enabled. The emergence of ICT tools offers new opportunities to develop some of the critical early literacy skills. According to Adeogun (2003), ICT has broken the barrier of distance and location experienced by researchers which use to impede the growth of formal education.

### **ii. E-Participation and Mobilization**

Following the level of insecurity in urban centres, there is need for decentralizing urbanization derivable from the nature of prevention, which requires proximity actors to be implemented. It will empower the local authority to act in ameliorating insuring problem in the municipal areas. Baron Montesquieu (1748) in Okoli (2015), opines that there would be an end of everything if the same person or body, whether of the nobles or of the people, were to exercise all three powers and everything is fused in the centre. Obviously, a central government, by definition is distant from the reality of cities and challenges of the people of various neighbourhoods. Sequel to this, Okpata (2006), explains that government agencies/ sectors are extended to rural areas with the purpose of intervening to a reasonable extent, in the private needs of the people in order to expand the area of human development and prevent crime rate in the state. Since the government cannot prevent insecurity in the urban areas only by developing

the areas, it therefore, must decentralize development for the effective prevention of insecurity. When decentralization takes place, local authority will be encouraged to implement security policies as government is closer to citizens' needs and more importantly people will understand better their municipality and what is going on within, proximity is not only political but cognitive.

**Participation** e-governance promotes citizens participation while political class is more accessible through the provision of information communication technology. The modern system of communication encourages citizens to be involved in local decision making. According to Hina (2007) successful e-governance mechanism can operate through strong private and public participation. Trust and accountability will play a role in converting potential to reality, awareness creates such participation, yet literacy plays a role in obtaining ICT to provide enabling environment.

Participatory approach translates within government institution at the local or state level through horizontal and vertical integration. This will follow the model where citizen, individual, marketplace, employees and government institutions have direct access to government services, maximizing interaction through online transactions. One way of achieving this is through mandatory adapting offline financial services online framework to minimize cost of governance. Participation occurs through electoral process as well as e-voting mechanism to ensure democratic e-governance.

E-mobilization foster citizens' participation in local decision making and community projects for instance, the activities of community development associations can be placed on government data page, informing citizens to participate in communal project to facilitate people's participation in ensuring grassroots development.

iii. **E-Consultation:** The programmes of government become informative through the application of ICT at the grassroots level. When the activities of government are widely and popularly disseminated, it keeps the citizens informed on the various programmes provided for sustainable grassroots development. Sier (2005) corroborates this argument that the increased availability of political information using e-governance is envisioned to improve participatory democracy. For the citizens, information on both the process and the outcome (resulting ordinances) may raise their appreciation of the policymaking process, including the role of their elected officials, which may, in turn, increase their participation in the selection of local leaders. Consulting citizens through online surveys facilitates direct feedback that could raise the quality of decision making and help promote the partnership

iv. **E-Policing:** Security of lives and properties is the primary responsibility of any responsible government all over the world. E-policing could be a platform for citizens to alert the security agency of the major issues related to security anywhere in the society and this will also facilitate adequate feedbacks. After being aware of the security situation in urban centre, the next step to take is community policing,, empowered by e-governance, where every individual uses electronic apparatus watch over criminals who may come to perpetrate any criminal activity in people's vicinities: homes, work places, street, worship centres and their environs. Be that as it may, the application of ICT could be very beneficial in the security of lives and property of the people. According to ADT (2011), the adoption of ICT facilities could guide the people in protecting their lives and property at home and outside the home in the following ways:

- a. Changing of Locks
- b. Installation of Alarm System
- c. Lighting Up of the Entrance to one's Home
- d. Installation of Deadbolt Locks

e. Using of Metal Bars on Sliding Doors

f. Using of Interior Door Hinges

**v. E-planning:** is important for any organization to survive, be it private or public, it is through planning, managers attempt to anticipate forces that will influence the future supply of and demand for employees. The plan is done electronically by the government sector and this informs the public on the policies and programmes of government before the final implementation (Onah, 2008). The citizens may advice and share their view towards government initiatives to enhance better outcomes through the use of internet.

## **2,7 .Types of Social Service Delivery in E-Governance among Nigeria Public Sector**

To improve service delivery through ICTs in governments focus on four dimensions:

1. G2C (Government-to-Citizens): focus on developing user-friendly one-stop centers of service for easy access to high quality government services and information.
2. G2B (Government-to-Business): This aims to facilitate and enhance the capability of business transactions between the government and the private sector by Improving communications and connectivity between the two parties.
3. G2G (Government-to-Government): This is an inter-governmental effort that aims to improve communication and effectiveness of services between federal, state and local governments in the running of day-to-day administration. It generally aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of overall government operations.
4. Intra-government: This aims to leverage ICT to reduce costs and improve the quality of administration and management within government organization (Islam and Ahmed, 2007).

### **E-Governance and Productivity in Public Sector**

Globally, governments adopt e-governance to enhance efficiency, transparency, accountability and effectiveness for interaction between government and its citizens. The need to remain abreast with the ever changing environment of administration and communication is the main reason why government agencies at every stratum have employed different approaches of ICT in their operations. In taking this initiative, a lot of investment have been made by many government to develop ICT to improve stakeholder's efficiency and to minimize the cost of governance (Kaliannan, et.al, 2009 cited in Azemi et.al, 2016). E-governance can provide an outline to reduce cost of communication, security, education and service to the citizens (Gant, 2008). The motive is to facilitate interaction between government and citizens, since e-governance enhance efficiency and flexibility to provide public goods and services (Nchuchuwe and Ojo, 2015).

## **2.8 Challenges of e-governance in Nigeria**

A number of challenges and barriers have been associated with e-governance in the developing countries, and World Bank report of 2016, about 30% of e-governance projects failed because they were abandoned before completion while less than 20% are successful. In cases where the projects are successful the implementation may be done haphazardly leading to poor outcome. Sometimes, poor implementation and lack of adequate regulation may even result to greater opportunities for corrupt practices and fraud (World Bank 2016). In line with this Kamar & Ongo'ndo (2007) and Abasilim (2015) summarized the challenges of e-governance in Nigeria as presented below:

1. Insufficient allocation of financial resources due to financial constraints and mixed government policies which has slowed down the rate at which e-government is introduced.
2. Inadequate planning and political instability;
3. Insecurity of facilities due to inadequate manpower to manage the ICT tools.
4. Reluctance to share information has resulted in policies that deny access to information and creation of empty government ministries websites with no information.
5. Inability of government to manage and implement e-governance programmes to facilitate the activities of government, low quality and insufficient e-content information from the grassroots level.
6. Inadequate personnel to oversee ICT programmes.
7. Irregular circulation of internet services and high cost of connection
8. Inaccessibility of e-government sites by many citizens, especially those living in the rural communities with low literacy and income
9. Poor electricity supply;
10. The resistant to change attitude by the civil servants

### **2.9 E- Governance and Quality Service Delivery in Nigeria Public Bureaucracy**

The knowledge of Information Communication Technology, metamorphosed to electronic governance for quality service delivery in ministries, department and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. This is because it exposes the staff of the ministries to the current trends and makes them fit in to solve problems using different kinds of knowledge gathered from ICT. As Obasi (2000), states that the accumulation of knowledge in our daily lives is a process that involves separate methods as well as a combination of methods. Nwankwo (2014), emphasized that transferring knowledge, for quality service delivery, some electronic gadgets are important such as laptops, palmtops, desktops, projectors, film strips, micro-projectors and opaque projector. The usage of these electronic gadgets facilitates quality service delivery in any civil service. Overhead projector, according to Shahriza et al (2007), is an increasingly website reading source, also Okpata and Ukeje (2010), argued that e-governance has impacted on effective research in many ways. Islam (2007), states that the application of web-based information retrieval trends of researchers is on increase and the electronic material will eventually replace the traditional library and users need not go there to find and collect information they need. ICT infrastructures provide a fundamental building block upon which whole sets of knowledge and information service and activities can be enabled. The emergency of ICT offers new opportunities to develop some early literacy skills for optimal performance. According to Adeogun (2003), ICT have broken the barrier of distance and location existing among workers as it concerns sharing of ideas and principles to enhance quality service delivery. Information Communication Technology has profound impact on the tasks and skills of workers in both pattern and quality delivery.

### **3.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The information revolution has ushered a new paradigm for administrative efficiency and effectiveness leading to improved service delivery for socio-economic development, peace and stability of a country. The adoption of electronic governance facilitates administration in the public service since it enhances quality of public services. It brings efficiency, cost-effectiveness, convenience and makes administrators more transparent, nevertheless some challenges pose serious impediments to the application of ICT operations in Nigeria public sector.

The following recommendations were made:

- The management of Nigeria public sector should use ICT facilities in running the affairs of the ministries for effective service delivery in the state.
- Since evaluation of job performance is vital in ministries, government should adopt the use of electronic government for better job evaluation in the state.
- The government should make sure that there is adequate power supply nationwide to facilitate the electronic activities in the state.
- Government should adopt e-governance to help managements of ministries to carry out adequate internal and external auditing in the state.
- Government should employ qualitative and quantitative workforce to experience electronic governance in ministries for the programmes and projects of government to be effectively and efficiently carried out.

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