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## E-Governance in the Russian Federation: prospects and challenges

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**Abstract.** E-Governance is a crucial element of the digital transformation of the state. Amid global digitalization, Russian government agencies strive to enhance the efficiency of interactions with citizens, businesses, and other institutions. However, despite notable achievements in this field, the implementation of digital technologies faces several challenges, including technical, organizational, and institutional barriers. This makes the study of the prospects and challenges of E-governance in Russia highly relevant. This study applies content analysis methods to official documents, including national programs and legislative acts. Additionally, data from international indices (such as the UN E-Government Development Index) and expert assessments are utilized. The analysis is based on statistical information and the practical experience of implementing specific e-governance solutions across different regions of Russia. The authors highlight the main security challenges and threats faced by the process of digitalization of government agencies and services in the Russian Federation.

**Keywords:** digitalization, digital government, public administration, cybersecurity

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# Электронное правительство в Российской Федерации: перспективы и вызовы

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**Аннотация.** Электронное правительство представляет собой важнейший элемент цифровой трансформации государства. В условиях глобальной цифровизации государственные органы Российской Федерации стремятся повысить эффективность взаимодействия с гражданами, бизнесом и другими институтами. Однако, несмотря на очевидные успехи в этой области, процесс внедрения цифровых технологий сопровождается рядом вызовов, включая технические, организационные и институциональные барьеры. Это делает исследование перспектив и вызовов электронного правительства в РФ крайне актуальным. Применены методы контент-анализа официальных документов, таких как национальные программы и законодательные акты. Использованы также данные международных индексов (например, UN E-Government Development Index) и экспертные оценки. Анализ проведен на основе статистической информации и опыта внедрения конкретных электронных решений в различных регионах России. Авторы указали на основные проблемы и угрозы в сфере безопасности, с которыми сталкивается процесс цифровизации государственных органов и услуг в РФ.

**Ключевые слова:** электронное управление, цифровое правительство, государственное управление, кибербезопасность

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## Introduction

E-government, which is an essential element of the digital transformation of the state, has been developing in Russia since the early 2000s, when the first initiatives aimed at digitalizing public services were launched. The most notable achievement was the Gosuslugi portal, which provides access to key

services such as paperwork, admission to institutions, and payment of fines. According to the Ministry of Digital Development, by the end of 2024, the number of registered users of the portal exceeded 100 million people<sup>1</sup>.

Projects aimed at improving interaction between citizens and government authorities are being implemented at the regional level. For example, electronic document management systems are used to improve the efficiency of administrative processes. Nevertheless, there remains a significant disparity between regions: the level of digitalization in large cities is significantly higher than in rural areas. This is due to the difference in access to the Internet and technical infrastructure in various federal subjects and their territories. International indexes demonstrate Russia's moderate progress in the field of e-governance in the public sector. For example, in 2022, Russia ranked 36th in the UN e-government Index<sup>2</sup>. However, to reach the level of leaders (Estonia, South Korea), more efforts are needed in the field of cybersecurity and accessibility of services to a wider segment of the country's population. At the same time, the vast territory of the country, difficult climatic conditions in a large part of its territory, external sanctions and the growth of cyberbullying are natural constraints on this process. E-government has become the subject of intensive study both in Russia and abroad. Among the international studies, there are works devoted to the analysis of digital platforms, electronic voting systems and cybersecurity. In the Russian context, special attention is paid to the implementation of projects such as the Gosuslugi portal and digitalization programs for regional government. Nevertheless, a systematic analysis of the prospects and challenges in this area remains limited. The development of e-government in Russia has gone through several key stages reflecting the evolution from the concept of e-government to a broader digital public administration. In 2002, the federal target program "Electronic Russia (2002–2010)" was initiated, aimed at creating elements of electronic government. The main goal of the program was to increase the efficiency of public administration through the introduction of information technology. The main goal was to create an IT infrastructure for government agencies, simplify access to information and improve government interaction with citizens. During this period, the first online services appeared, but digitalization was spot-on<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of users of the Public Services portal has reached 112 million. *Interfax*. 15.12.2024. URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/997759> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

<sup>2</sup> *Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002–2010)"*. URL: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/reports/un-e-government-survey-2022> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

<sup>3</sup> *Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002–2010)"*. URL: [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://digital.gov.ru/ru/activity/programs/6/&ved=2ahUKewiD1dGXhNyLAXVQS\\_EDHXzyKTQQFnoECBkQAQ&usq=AOvVaw10-Wqkvujg5P9hDj\\_IW-\\_r](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://digital.gov.ru/ru/activity/programs/6/&ved=2ahUKewiD1dGXhNyLAXVQS_EDHXzyKTQQFnoECBkQAQ&usq=AOvVaw10-Wqkvujg5P9hDj_IW-_r) (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

In 2008, realizing the need for systemic digital transformation, President Dmitry Medvedev approved the Concept of e-Government in the Russian Federation<sup>4</sup>. This concept included two stages: the development of a regulatory framework in 2008 and practical implementation in 2009–2010. The reform provided for the transfer of public services to electronic form and the creation of the basic platforms “Unified Portal of Public Services (Gosuslugi)” and “System of Interdepartmental Electronic Interaction” (SMEV). But at this stage, attention was focused on individual services, rather than on comprehensive public administration reform.

In 2010, the state program “Information Society (2011–2020)” was adopted. The purpose of the program was to create a unified information technology infrastructure for the provision of state and municipal services in electronic form. Within the framework of this program there were developed, key elements such as the “Unified Portal of State and Municipal Services” and the “Unified System of Interdepartmental Electronic Interaction”. On this basis, by 2016, the digital transformation of individual departments began, but the problem of fragmentation of digital solutions persisted.

Since 2019, the focus has shifted to the concept of digital public administration, which is reflected in the national program “Digital Economy of the Russian Federation”<sup>5</sup>. The federal project “Digital Public Administration” was aimed at improving the efficiency and transparency of government processes through the integration of modern digital technologies. At this stage of the digital transformation of public administration, the introduction of end-to-end technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and big data analysis has played a key role. The most important step was the creation of a single digital public services platform, GOSTECH, which provides a centralized infrastructure for public services. Automation of decision-making using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has made it possible to increase the efficiency and speed of government agencies, and big data analysis has formed the basis for proactive management, which makes it possible to predict the needs of citizens and adapt government processes in real time<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 632-r dated 05/06/2008 (as amended on 03.10.2009) “On the Concept of e-Government formation in the Russian Federation until 2010”. URL: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://digital.gov.ru/ru/documents/3021/&ved=2ahUKewjh1pDxhNyLAXUJQfEDHWJKG40QFnoECBIQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3IOro21F8u8hWcP7IUGlHc> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

<sup>5</sup> Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 234 dated 03/02/2019 (as amended on 08.01.2024) “On the Management System for the implementation of the national program ‘Digital Economy of the Russian Federation’”. URL: <http://government.ru/docs/all/120905/> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

<sup>6</sup> Passport of the national project “National Program ‘Digital Economy of the Russian Federation’” (approved by the Presidium of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and National Projects, Protocol No. 7 dated 06.04.2019). URL: [https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_328854/9e733b9ece0472e8f17a73cd753a75784f9e1fab/#dst100002](https://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_328854/9e733b9ece0472e8f17a73cd753a75784f9e1fab/#dst100002) (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

Thus, the development of e-government in the Russian Federation has gone from the first attempts to introduce IT solutions into public administration to a full-fledged digital transformation. Now the key goal is to make the interaction between the state, citizens and business convenient, transparent and effective. Since 2020, digital transformation in Russia has become systemic, becoming one of the priorities of government policy. During this period, key programs and projects aimed at accelerating the digitalization of various sectors of the economy and public administration were initiated and implemented. On November 9, 2021, Government Decree No. 1922 was adopted, which introduced significant changes to the Information Society state program<sup>7</sup>.

The main goal is to adapt the program to the modern challenges and needs of the digital economy, as well as to ensure technological sovereignty. As part of the updated program, special attention is paid to the development of information infrastructure, improving digital literacy of the population and the introduction of advanced technologies in public administration. An important aspect of digital transformation was the adoption in 2020 of methodological recommendations on the digital transformation of state-owned corporations and companies with state participation. These recommendations define approaches to developing digital transformation strategies, establish key performance indicators, and propose financing models for relevant projects. The main goal is to increase the efficiency and competitiveness of state-owned companies through the introduction of digital technologies<sup>8</sup>.

According to a report by the Analytical Center under the Government of the Russian Federation, by the end of 2020, active development of digital technologies was observed in the banking sector, telecommunications, housing and communal services, insurance and the oil and gas industry. The number of pilot projects in the largest companies increased by 38% compared to 2019, and 85% of these companies started using artificial intelligence-based solutions. Projects have also been launched to introduce unmanned vehicles, including trucks and agricultural machinery<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> *Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 1922 dated November 9, 2021 “On Amendments to the State Program of the Russian Federation ‘Information Society’ and Invalidation of Certain Decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation” (with Amendments and additions)*. URL: <https://digital.gov.ru/ru/documents/8068/> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

<sup>8</sup> *Methodological recommendations on the digital transformation of state-owned corporations and companies with state participation*. URL: <https://digital.gov.ru/ru/documents/7342/> (accessed: 13.02.2025) (In Russ.).

<sup>9</sup> *Digital transformation in Russia: 2020 results and development prospects*. URL: <https://ac.gov.ru/news/page/cifrovaia-transformacia-v-rossii-itogi-2020-goda-i-perspektivy-razvitiia-26801> (accessed: 13.02.2025). (In Russ.).

Within the framework of the Information Society state program, special attention is paid to increasing the digital maturity of government agencies and organizations. This includes moving to data-driven management decision-making and providing broadband Internet access to 97% of households. Such measures are aimed at creating an effective and transparent public administration system capable of responding promptly to the needs of citizens and businesses. Thus, the digital transformation in Russia is developing according to a systemic model, covering both public administration and key sectors of the economy. According to the strategic goals, the implementation of the updated Information Society program and the introduction of digital technologies in various sectors of the economy are designed to contribute to the creation of a modern digital ecosystem that ensures sustainable economic development and an improvement in the quality of life of citizens.

### **The main challenges of digitalization of public administration**

Despite the achievements and prospects, the process of implementing e-government in Russia is facing several serious challenges. At various stages of the development of both e-government and because of the transition to the concept of digitalization of public administration, challenges have repeatedly transformed.

Thus, until 2017, Russia actively developed e-government, following global trends and striving to involve citizens in the decision-making process using information and communication technologies. During this period, important legislative acts were adopted aimed at simplifying the interaction of citizens with the state in a digital format. Sociological research conducted during this period and later made it possible to identify key problems hindering the development of e-participation. First, administrative and regulatory barriers were noted: the lack of clear regulation of digital interaction procedures, insufficient technical support and bureaucratic resistance to the use of online tools. In addition, the low level of public confidence in government agencies, as well as in digital platforms, was noted as a serious obstacle. Many citizens doubted that their participation could really influence decision-making, and the lack of transparency and feedback reduced their motivation<sup>10</sup>.

Another important challenge was digital inequality, which is particularly noticeable in the regional context. According to government statistics, this

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<sup>10</sup> *E-Participation in Russia: Developmental Difficulties and Recent Achievements*. URL: <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2013/ict/YuriHohlov.pdf> (accessed: 15.02.2025).

statement was relevant only at the beginning of the digitalization process, when the Internet spread in Russia was 58%. However, it should be noted that the situation has changed significantly over time. Thus, by the time of the sociological study in 2017, Internet penetration in Russia had already reached 72.8%. Consequently, 27.2% of Russians remained beyond digitalization<sup>11</sup>.

Finally, in 2025, according to Datareportl, the Internet penetration rate in the Russian Federation was 92.2%<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the factors related to uneven access to technology and insufficient level of digital skills among a significant part of the population, limiting the potential of e-participation, that is, feedback on government reforms, remain the closest to reality. Research has also shown that institutional and political support for e-initiatives remained weak [1. P. 1283; 2. P. 29]. Political leaders often showed little interest in developing digital democracy mechanisms, and some initiatives were created more to simulate civic participation than to involve society in governance.

Several problems that the system faced at various stages of its development were solved over time or the risks associated with them were reduced. However, despite significant advances in the digitalization of public administration, the development of e-government in Russia is facing several institutional and managerial challenges. The main problems are related to insufficient coordination of digital reforms, regional disparities in the level of technological development, staff shortages, cybersecurity threats, and low levels of digital literacy. One of the key challenges is the inertia of administrative processes that have been formed for decades and are not adapted to digital transformation. Bureaucratic procedures slow down the introduction of new technologies, and the lack of a single coordinating body leads to inconsistencies between departments and duplication of functions. This complicates the implementation of integrated digital projects and reduces their effectiveness [3. P. 419–420].

Additionally, the regulatory framework in the field of digitalization remains fragmented and does not always meet modern challenges. Legislation often does not keep pace with technological changes, creating legal gaps, especially in areas such as digital currencies, intellectual property, and big data processing. Political risks caused by external sanctions, excessive regulation and complex approval procedures can slow down the introduction

<sup>11</sup> The share of Internet users in Russia has reached 75%. *Vedomosti*. 07.04.2017. URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/technology/news/2017/04/07/684637-dolya> (accessed: 13.02.2025) (In Russ.).

<sup>12</sup> Statistics of the Internet and social networks of Russia for 2025: the main trends and figures. *Web Canape*. 13.03.2025. URL: [https://www.web-canape.ru/business/statistika-interneta-i-socialnyh-setej-rossii-na-2025-god-glavnye-trendy-i-cifry/?utm\\_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fyandex.ru%2f](https://www.web-canape.ru/business/statistika-interneta-i-socialnyh-setej-rossii-na-2025-god-glavnye-trendy-i-cifry/?utm_referrer=https%3a%2f%2fyandex.ru%2f) (accessed: 13.02.2025) (In Russ.).

of innovations, making it difficult to attract investors and international partners [4. P. 297].

Despite the active development of digital technologies, Russia is facing serious imbalances in the level of their implementation between regions. In large cities, the digital infrastructure is much better developed than in rural and remote areas, where there is a shortage of high-quality Internet connections and limited access to electronic government services. This increases digital and social inequality, as well as reduces the population's ability to fully participate in the digital economy.

Another important factor hindering digitalization is the shortage of qualified personnel. The development of digital infrastructure requires specialists in programming, cybersecurity, and data analysis, but the education system does not always have time to adapt to market needs. As a result, there is a shortage of staff, which slows down the implementation of digital solutions. Additionally, the situation is complicated by the outflow of specialists abroad, where more competitive working conditions are offered.

Digital transformation also creates new risks in the labor market. Automation of a number of processes can lead to job cuts, especially in traditional sectors of the economy. This increases the threat of rising unemployment and social discontent if measures are not taken to retrain workers and ensure equal access to digital opportunities [5. P. 32, 34].

As the volume of data processed by government systems increases, the threat of cyber-attacks and leaks of personal information increases. Insufficient attention to cybersecurity issues, a lack of specialists in this field, and outdated security standards are exacerbating the situation. Citizens often express distrust of electronic services, fearing unauthorized access to their data and possible abuse by government agencies or third parties.

To increase the level of protection, it requires the introduction of modern cybersecurity standards, the development of domestic software and the constant updating of the regulatory framework governing data processing and storage. Otherwise, trust in digital government services will remain low, making it difficult for them to be widely distributed.

The successful functioning of a digital state is impossible without a sufficient level of digital literacy among citizens and government officials. However, in Russia there is insufficient training of the population for the use of digital tools, especially among the elderly and in regions with a relatively lower level of education.

Officials are also experiencing difficulties with the transition to digital work formats, which leads to inefficient use of new technologies [6. P. 104]. For the



further intensive development of e-government and improving the quality of public services in digital format, it is important to conduct systematic training and advanced training programs in the field of digital technologies.

### **Prospects and opportunities for the development of electronic government (e-government)**

The digital transformation of public administration in Russia opens significant prospects both for improving the efficiency of administrative processes and for strengthening citizens' trust in government institutions. Modern technologies make it possible to minimize bureaucratic barriers, increase transparency of decisions and create convenient mechanisms for interaction between the state and society.

Electronic government (e-government) is becoming one of the most important tools of this transformation. It not only automates document management and reduces financial costs, but also makes government services more accessible. The introduction of superservices and the expansion of the functionality of the Unified Portal of Public Services allows citizens to receive the necessary services online, without the need for personal visits to departments. This not only saves time, but also reduces the burden on government agencies, speeding up decision-making processes.

However, the successful development of a digital state is impossible without a clear regulatory framework. The fragmentation of approaches to digitalization remains one of the key problems, which is why a federal law is required that will ensure uniform standards for all regions and departments. The creation of such legislation will allow not only to unify approaches, but also to strengthen coordination between different levels of government [7. P. 122–123].

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies opens great prospects in this area. AI-based systems can analyze large amounts of data, predict socio-economic processes, and even personalize public services [8. P. 12–13]. For example, the introduction of voice assistants with artificial intelligence can simplify citizens' interaction with digital services, making them more intuitive and convenient.

Blockchain technology plays an equally important role in ensuring transparency of public administration. Its use makes it possible to create databases that are protected from forgery and unauthorized changes, which is especially important in areas such as electronic voting or registration of legally significant documents. However, practice shows that the lack of openness of such systems, as, for example, in the pilot project of electronic voting in Moscow, can cause

distrust in society. At the same time, international experience in Switzerland, Estonia, and Canada demonstrates that inclusive blockchain systems can provide a high level of transparency and public control [9. P. 35].

Digitalization encompasses not only government institutions, but also the urban environment. The concept of “smart cities” based on the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and big data analysis is already being actively implemented in megacities, helping to optimize traffic flows, increase safety and improve the environmental situation. Such systems allow for more efficient resource management, making the life of citizens more comfortable [10. P. 48].

However, as the volume of data increases, so does the threat of cyber-attacks, fraud, leaks of personal information, and other digital risks. The development of cyber resilience mechanisms is becoming a priority: it is necessary to improve protection systems, develop legislative norms and increase the level of digital literacy among civil servants and citizens [11. P. 59–60]. In this context, educational programs that teach the basics of cybersecurity and the safe use of digital tools are particularly important. One of the main challenges of digital transformation remains the digital divide between regions. Access to government digital services should be equal for all citizens, regardless of their place of residence. The expansion of the Internet infrastructure, the introduction of cloud technologies and the creation of modern data centers will help to equalize conditions and provide all residents of the country with the same opportunities [12. P. 120–121].

In addition to social aspects, digitalization has a significant impact on the economy. It promotes the development of public-private partnership, which plays a key role in creating a sustainable digital infrastructure [13. P. 123–124]. Joint government and business projects, such as the development of 5G networks, the introduction of cloud technologies, and the construction of data centers, allow for large-scale initiatives, ensuring technological progress.

Digital technologies also help to fight corruption and increase the transparency of financial processes [14. P. 46–47]. Real-time data analysis, automation of tax administration and improvement of budget planning mechanisms make it possible to manage public finances more effectively, minimizing corruption risks.

But digitalization is not only about convenient services and economic efficiency. This is also a new level of interaction between citizens and the state. Electronic platforms allow people to participate in the discussion of draft laws, submit petitions, monitor the work of the authorities and vote in elections. The development of such tools

makes public administration more open and accountable to society, strengthening trust in government institutions. Ultimately, the success of digital transformation depends not only on technology, but also on the level of digital culture in society. Without the proper level of knowledge and skills of citizens and government officials, even the most advanced solutions may prove ineffective. Therefore, special attention should be paid to educational initiatives aimed at teaching the use of digital tools, the basics of data analysis and cybersecurity. Only an integrated approach to the development of e-government will make it possible to create an effective, transparent and sustainable digital state system capable of meeting the challenges of the future.

### **Conclusion**

The development of e-government in the Russian Federation has gone from the first initiatives of digitalization of public services to integrated digital public administration. An important achievement was the creation of the Gosuslugi platform and interagency interaction systems, but the digitalization process faces a number of challenges.

The main problems include fragmented legislation, regional digital inequality, and a shortage of qualified personnel. Digital services are actively developing in large cities, while access to the Internet and digital public services is still limited in rural areas. The outflow of information technology (IT) specialists and the insufficient adaptation of the education system to new requirements, as well as external sanctions, slow down the introduction of technology.

Cybersecurity also remains a critical challenge. As the volume of data increases, the threat of cyber-attacks increases, which significantly undermines citizens' trust in electronic services. It is necessary to modernize information security standards and develop domestic cybersecurity technologies, limit and control crypto transactions. Despite these difficulties, successful digitalization of public administration will bring significant benefits. Automation of processes will reduce bureaucracy, increase transparency of government work and minimize corruption risks. The introduction of artificial intelligence and big data technologies ensures the personalization of services and increases the accuracy of forecasting.

The sustainable development of digital governance requires an integrated approach: improving legislation, developing infrastructure, strengthening cybersecurity measures, and increasing digital literacy among the population. If the government can effectively solve these tasks, Russia will take a leading position in the field of e-government, making the interaction of citizens, business and the state more convenient, transparent and effective.

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