1. Describe the capabilities of a digital firm. Why are digital firms so powerful?

A digital firm is one in which nearly all of the organization’s significant business relationships with customers, suppliers, and employees are digitally enabled and mediated. Capabilities of a digital firm include: Core business processes are accomplished through digital networks spanning the entire organization or linking multiple organizations. Key corporate assets – intellectual property, core competencies, and financial and human assets – are managed through digital means. Digital firms sense and respond to their environments far more rapidly than traditional firms, giving them more flexibility to survive in turbulent times. Digital firms offer extraordinary opportunities for more flexible and global organization and management. In digital firms, both time shifting and space shifting are the norm. Digital firms are powerful because they extensively use Internet technology for electronic commerce and electronic business to manage their internal processes and relationships with customers, suppliers, and other external entities. Because a digital firm relies heavily on information technology to enable, mediate, and streamline its internal and external operations, the firm is more flexible, profitable, competitive, and efficient than a traditional firm.

2. System Development Life Cycle

The system development process is initiated when it is realized that a particular business process of the organization needs computerization or improvement. The system development life cycle is a set of six activities which are closely related with each other. These activities after a certain stage can be done parallel to each other. For example, the development can be started for some components (sub-systems), which are at the advanced stage of designing. The systems development life cycle method consists of the following activities:

(i) Preliminary investigation
(ii) Requirements analysis or systems analysis
(iii) Design of system
(iv) Development of software
(v) Systems testing
(vi) Implementation and maintenance
The activities are briefly explained below:

(i) Preliminary investigation: When the user comes across a problem in the existing system or a totally new requirement for computerization, a formal request has to be submitted for system development. It consists of three parts: request classification, feasibility study, and request approval. Generally, the request submitted is not stated clearly hence requires detailed study. On receipt of the request and identification of needs, the feasibility study is conducted which includes the aspects related to technical, economic, and operational feasibility and is normally conducted by a third party depending upon the quantum and size of the requirements. The approval is sought from top management to initiate the system development.

(ii) Requirements analysis or systems analysis: Once the request of the system development is approved, the detailed requirement study is conducted in close interaction with the concerned employees and managers to understand the detailed functioning, shortcomings, bottlenecks, and to determine the features to be included in the system catering to the needs and requirements of the users. This process is termed as “System Requirement Study (SRS) or System analysis.

(iii) Design of the system: This activity evolves the methodology and steps to be included in the system to meet the identified needs and requirements of the system. The analyst designs the various procedures, report, inputs, files, and database structures and prepares the comprehensive system design. These specifications are then passed on to the Development Team for program coding and testing.

(iv) Acquisition and development of software: Once the system design details are resolved and SRS is accepted by the user, the hardware and software details along with services requirements are determined and procured choosing the best fit options. Subsequently, choices are made regarding which products to buy or lease from which vendors. The choice depends on many factors such as time, cost, and availability of programmers. In case of in-house development, the analyst works closely with the programmers. The analyst also works with users to develop documentation for software and various procedure manuals.

(v) Systems testing: Once all the programs comprising the system have been developed and tested, the system needs to be tested as a whole. System testing is conducted with various probable options and conditions to ensure that it does not fail in any condition. The system is
expected to run as per the specifications made in the SRS and users’ expectations. Live test data are input for processing, and results are examined. If it is found satisfactory, it is eventually tested with actual data from the current system.

(vi) Implementation and maintenance-: By the time of accomplishment of the above activities, it is ensured that the requisite hardware and software are installed and the users are trained on the new system to carry out operations independently. For some time, hand-holding may be done by the system development team. The operations are monitored closely to ensure the users satisfaction. The system is maintained and modified to adapt to the changing needs of the users and business to ensure long-term acceptance of the system.

3. State the meaning of this term: PAPA and briefly describe each of its four elements.

Privacy: “the right to be left alone”. Managers must be aware of regulations that are in place regarding the authorized collection, disclosure and use of personal information. Those who possess the “best” information and know how to use it, win. What information must a person reveal about one’s self to others? What information should others be able to access about you – with or without your permission? What safeguards exist for your protection?

Accuracy: Managers must establish controls to insure that information is accurate. Data entry errors must be controlled and managed carefully. Data must also be kept up to date. Who is responsible for the reliability and accuracy of information? Who will be accountable for errors?

Property: Who owns information? Who owns the channels of distribution, and how should they be regulated?

Accessibility: Access to information systems and the data that they hold is paramount. What information does a person or an organization have a right to obtain, under what conditions, and with what safeguards? Users must be able to access this data from any location (if it can be properly secured and does not violate any laws or regulations).

4. Define e-Government and its forms give examples applicable to your country.

“E-Government” refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a
variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions. In Zimbabwe an e-government Blueprint entitled Zimconnect: E-Government Framework and Implementation Strategy (2011 – 2015) was produced and adopted in October 2010 and this blueprint was aimed at providing clear direction, strategy and focus on the implementation of the e-government, There are four domains of e-government which are : (a) governance (G), (b) information and communication technology (ICT), (c) business process Re-engineering (BPR), and (d) e-citizen. Where these four domains intersect is the domain of e-government. Analogous to e-commerce, which allows businesses to transact with each other more efficiently (B2B) and brings customers closer to businesses (B2C), e-government aims to make the interaction between government and citizens (G2C), government and business enterprises (G2B), and inter-agency relationships (G2G) more friendly, convenient, transparent, and inexpensive. (Government-to-Government (G2G) involves sharing data and conducting electronic exchanges between governmental actors. This involves both intra-and inter-agency exchanges at the national level, as well as exchanges among the national, provincial and local levels. Government-to-Business (G2B) involves business-specific transactions (e.g., payments with regard to sale and purchase of goods and services) as well as provision on line of business-focused services. Government-to-Consumer/Citizen (G2C) involves initiatives designed to facilitate people’s interaction with government as consumers of public services and as citizens. This includes interactions related to the delivery of public services as well as to participation in the consultation and decision-making process.)

Benefits of E-government;

To Citizens- Round-the-clock service (always available). Economical (no need for physical visit to an office.) Fast and efficient service (electronic). Transparent (no speed money). Equitable (any one can access it), and Convenience (can be accessed while on move or at home). There is alleviation of the queuing system and reduction in processing times at the major birth, death, national identity and passport collection centers, pension offices, among others. For example Thinking of taking a passport is only one of the nightmares that most Zimbabweans would not
want to hear of. It might take about eight or more hours for the whole application process yet this whole process can be done in less than 30 minutes online.

To Business: It benefits businesses in a number of ways: Reduced time in setting up new business (reduced red tape). Conducting e-business and e-commerce (online business). Better conformity to government rules and regulations for running business. More convenient and transparent way of doing business with government through e-procurement. Better control over movement of goods through online monitoring of clearances, and Conducting monetary transactions online (e-banking, e-payment).


Limitations of e-government: It is not a panacea for the ills confronting the government. It has serious limitations which must be realized for a proper understanding of e-government. First, e-government is costly. It requires investment in information and communication technology (ICT) manpower and infrastructure. Secondly, e-government takes time to design and implement. Any hurried attempt will give unsatisfactory results. Thirdly e-government is risky. It does not have any fail-safe strategies. Fourthly, though e-government may be widely subscribed but it has a number of people too who do not have faith in new technology. Fifthly, e-government requires e-inclusion, that is, access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) but this may not be the case in most of developing countries. Sixthly, e-government requires e-literacy, that is, a certain minimum level of knowledge and skills on the part of citizens to access it.

Empowered citizens can and will make a difference, and the government can take full advantage of those same citizens to change the way they work from the inside out.
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