What is 'e-democracy' ?

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Q: What does 'e-democracy' mean?

A: I recognize this concept as realization of democratic philosophy by using internet.

Q: Why did you come up with the idea of 'e-democracy?'

A: I beleive that realization of democracy or democratic philosophy by using internet has come to be thought of by not only a part of people but by considarable portion of population because of access to internet.

Q: How do you think 'e-democracy' in local level, ie. Tochigi Prefecture, should be promoted?

A: On many situations, promotion of 'e-democracy' with internet can be led into Tochigi Prefecture. With internet, 'to open information' will be promoted drastically. If you take opening the contents of the council, for example. In Tochigi, the contents of some councils of rebuilding the prefectural office, the administrative reform project, and Prefectural NPO etc. have been opened on the homepage within a month, triggered by opening the proceedings of Prefectural IT Economic Strategic Conference started in April this year on the homepage. The citizens of Tochigi can get information about the contents of the councils directly by internet because they offer us presentation and discussion in detail and we can have the more suitable right to know than before. I believe that all the proceedings of the couoncils should be opened perfectly on the homepage within a month and that they should aim at perfect transparency.

Q: How about the prefectural official documents?

A: I insist that the target documents should be opened completely and that the citizens' right to know should be promoted.

Q: Is it technically possible?

A: Yes, it's possible. If they think that the target prefectural official documents must be opened completely on the homepage and if the citizens' right to know must be gaurded through increasing transparency, they will write the documents with homepage builder in computers from the beginning with the intention of opening them.

Q: I see. This is useful for 'administrative evaluation', isn't it?

A: Yes. As I am a member of 'Japan Evaluation Society,' I suppose that administrative information should be opened thoroughly with the intention of administrative evaluation. Furthermore, I insist that from the beginning they should tackle 'adminstrative evaluation to prefectural adminstration with IT' when they make up the cyber-prefectural office. From now on, I predict that administrative evaluation items will be clarified beforehand so they should process the data in a computer and that they should continue to show them to us. As it is certain that tax revenues will decrese dramatically due to the awful depression and deflation, I think it important from now on to improve the less evaluated work in a lage scale based on adminstrative evaluation by IT and to quit it earlier or to distribute the tax to another necessary work. From this point of view, administrative evaluation with IT is inevitable in this time when we should not waste 1 yen. The way of

spending the budget for IT must be the object of administrative evaluation without exception. I propose that the persons in charge should try to put the administrative evaluation on the coming budget for IT as practice.

Q: What do you think of cyber-bids?

A: It goes without saying that cyber-bids without bid-rigging will be introduced soon. As a precondition, however, it is inevitable that the related information should be opened moreover and that it will be opened perfectly on internet without visiting the office to see the data. To realize the prefectural IT-founded infrastructure, I understand that they should be responsible for citizens' trust by thoroughly fair cyber-bids, at the same time, by opening the information completely.

Q: How do you think e-democracy in the prefectural government should be promoted?

A: I suppose that from now on all the prefectural documents which are determined to be opened should be opened on the homepage. This means that all the documents on every field, which are decided to be opened by some committee as well as the assembly, should be opened on the homepage. The more they promote to open the prefectural level information on internet, the better the degree of transparecy of the prefectural government will increase, and the citizens' right to know will be proceeded in a large scale. At last, the prefectural government would be responsible for its accountability toword the prefectural citizens.

Q: what do you think about public comments?

A: To carry out 'the public hearing system' with using internet, in which the administrative leader has an opportunity to hear 'public comments' or citizens opinion actively, might be one of phases to promote e-democracy, I understand. Let me take some examples here. NO.1:'cllecting public comments as general forms' like they request citizens' opinion on their homepage of the Prefectural IT Economic Strategy Conference may be one of the ways. NO.2:requesting citizens' opinion of the Governor's comments about a certain policy through internet by the fixed day is one of the ways. NO.3:holding a meeting to state his comments on internet after requesting public opinion of a certain theme, which is called 'internet conference', is one of the ways. As instances of NO.2, we see Naoki Tanaka's opinion on his homepage who is the chief of '21st century Institute' which is the think tank of KEIDANREN, and public comment on the homepage toword the Tadashi Nakamae's opinion who is the chief of Nakamae International Economic Institute. As an instance of NO.3, we see the internet conferece on worldwide Businiess Ethics of World Bank held the other day.

Q: How about the relations with parliamentary democracy?

A: I believe that e-democracy should be promoted positively in the field of expressing the opinion, exchanging the opinion, and administrative evaluation. On the other hand, I also believe that parliamentary democracy is the center of all as a political measure and that e-democracy must be supplement to it. In addition, I foresee that an influence on direct democracy occurred by promoting e-democracy in the process of determination by the representatives of parliamentary democracy will increae little by little.

Q: How about e-vote or e-election?

A: I suggest that they should start researching on e-vote here in Tochigi because we have come to the spot

where we cannot avoid ignoring the amount of personnel expenses on each election. I also suggest that they should start finding problems of a campaign by internet and that they should prepare for the day when internet will be the center of a campaign. In the prefectural government, they should make up a special committee on e-vote and should start researching how to manage in addition to administrative evaluation by IT.

Q: What do you think of promoting the cyber-prefectural office and an IT-founded infrastructure?

A: I insist that they should decide to build up the cyber-prefectural office to carry out administrative reform by introducing N.P.M. or new public management because it is clear also in Tochigi that tax revenue will decrease tragically due to deflation and depression. Cyber-prefectural office should be managed by a measure of PFI. In addition, all the IT-founded infrastructure which will be built or planned should be managed by a measure of PFI. I also predict if most of the public service including IT-related service should be sold to private ownership as they are carrying out in Europe and the prefectural government should be reduced with use of NPO, Tochigi Prefecture itself, in which amount of tax revenue is decreasing because of deflation and depression, must come to a standstill. I propose that they should make up a research team under a direct control of the Governor which will research how to promote 'PFI for big project' and 'privatization of public service'

Q: What do you think of e-democracy at the level of the towns in Tochigi?

A: I suggest that the way I have mentioned before should be translated into the towns' version. I also expect that the Governor will take on the leadership as the CEO in order that he will gather persons in charge or researchers of e-democracy and citizens who are interested in it all over Tochigi to make new groups to discuss the theme.

Q: Would you have something to add?

A: Yes, I have some. I propose that Tochigi should become an advanced prefecture on the field of e-democracy while it will become an advanced one on the field of IT. From now on, I think it important to make up the 'system' based on the 'mission,' thinking of promotion of e-democracy earnestly. An important point here is that proportion of e-democracy does not require lots of budget like other IT projects because it demands brain storming and discussion only. It will just cost the budget for homepage builders for the people concerned because most of the administrative and parliamental information has been already inputted. Though I understand their real intention that they want the information to be kept or they do not become an object of administrative evaluaion or citizens' criticizm, I believe that promotion of e-democracy is inevitable in order to destribute the budget correctly because now we face decrease of tax due to deflation and depression. In addition, I suppose that the citizens themselves should avoid the abuse of their e-democracy. We must prevent ourselves from laughing at the confusion of the adminisry with blaming them for making a small mistake. Furthermore, the budget for the prefectural police should be increased to obtain the required number of people because they must build up the investigation system with which they will investigate computer crimes like virus invasion. Finally, I believe the citizens should impose 'ethics as citizens' on themselves and they must avoid 'the abuse of their right' on e-democracy.