

Digital enabler example: Blockchain

Although still in its early days, blockchain may have a huge impact on daily life and subsequent services from government.

The characteristics of blockchain are registration, authentication and verification of transactions. These are all key elements of what governments exist to do. Applying this new technology drastically changes the landscape of typically bureaucratic handling of public bodies. For example, if socially-vulnerable families lack the financial resources for their children to be able to swim in the local pool or pay the fees for the local library/ gym, with blockchain, communities can themselves set up a credit system where selected families receive credit points that enable them to go to the pool or borrow a book. This avoids the need to ask for subsistence from government, which takes time, waiting, filling in forms, waiting for budgets and finally the pool or library as well needing declaration forms to receive the adequate funding. In other words, red tape.

A bigger impact will be when blockchain is used to determine citizens' identity (as a resident, as a taxpayer, as an entrepreneur, as a husband, as a father and so on). If blockchain replaces that (digital or paper) process with a ledger that is secure and resilient, the result is truly transformative. We are not there yet - but reshaping our public space and reinventing the way public bodies deliver citizen-centric services is at a tipping point.