



*By Eurasia Review - Sabahudin Hadžialić*

**GLOBAL E-GOVERNMENT FORUM: DIGITAL NATIVES AS PRO-ACTIVE FOREIGNERS – INTERVIEWS**

*ON THE PATH OF GLOBAL E-GOVERNMENT FORUM:  
ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN, OCTOBER 2014*

We bring you parts of two interviews given to us on the side of some of the main key-speakers of the Global E-Government Forum (stay tuned for a complete recording of the main Press conference of the Forum and for the questions from Eurasia Review and answers from the key-speakers in behalf Republic of Kazakhstan and United Nations).

IMr. Ali bin Saleh Al-Soma, Director General of the e-Government Program YESSER, Saudi Arabia. As director general of the Saudi e-Government Program (Yesser), Mr. Al Soma is responsible for a national organization that enables and facilitates the Kingdom's advancements in e-government, including: operation of central infrastructure, development of national strategies and plans, consultative support for agency e-government needs, and e-government transformation measurements. He participated in developing both the first and second Saudi e-government strategy and action plans, and also serves an adviser to H.E. the Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

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Q: E-governance and future world of science and technology. Are we talking about human advantages and technological disadvantages or vice versa in a sense of creating a society of better tomorrow having in mind different political processes in different countries and cultures?

ASAS: E-Government is the new concept of life. The trends are going towards making people capable to manage their lives through their mobiles. Your government will be your mobile. Your school will be your mobile. Your doctor will be your mobile. Your bank will be your mobile. People will have better control of their lives and they will be able to get service on a click of fingers. That is the future. We will expect to reach that within the coming ten years. As you can see, the life is changing, the way of having life will be changing plus young generations are coming, internet generations. They are going as it becomes default. We should be prepared for that.

Q: To be served instead to be servant?

ASAS: Will be served according to our preferences, according to our convenience, choice. That is the concept of E-Government. The goal is to make it easier to people and their time and also to make it easier to the government. So, that would require a lot of changes – habits, patterns, government process, culture...everything.

Q: Revolution, but we will not call it revolution?

ASAS: Exactly- revolution. It is accumulated, gradual..because the people when they faced with something new they wonder around that and after a while they believe in that and it is becoming default. And it is not happening at once – it happens gradually. We do not feel that at the beginning, but this is the way how it is going to be.

IIMs. Jacqueline Poh has been the Managing Director of Singapore Infocomm Development Authority since June 10, 2013. Ms. Poh leads IDA's policy and regulatory functions, including developing infocomm policy, telecoms regulation and information security, as well as guide the strategic Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) function. She served as the Divisional Director, Workplace Policy and Strategy Division, Ministry of Manpower (MOM). Prior to MOM, Ms. Poh served in other ministries including the Ministry of Finance.

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Q: We already left behind a Gutenberg galaxy and we are entering Holographic galaxy. How the computer illiterate people as well as their souls and tradition feels related to the growth of E-Government public service on everyday manner.

JP: This is very interesting point that you raised in regards aging populations. That means a lot of people in Singapore were before the Internet. They are not digital natives and in the same time we have a lot of young people who are using their mobile phones. So we have actually to deal with both groups of people. Some of the things we have done in terms of our citizens connect centers are very similar to Kazakhstan citizens services centers. There are places where people who are not so comfortable going online can actually come and see familiar face and have a chance to learn. We also have things such as Silver Infocomm initiative which encouraged older Singaporeans, sixty – seventy years old to use technology more, to act within e-services.

We recently had Silver Infocomm Day and there were hundreds of them who came for courses, than even some of them gave presentations. We had a 76 year-old man who had no ICT information and he gave presentation on Google glass and cloud security and that is from nothing. So, I think in the same time we should not underestimate old people and I think that in the same time we should not underestimate the ability of applications that exists today to tap into the human soul. So, for example, many things that Apple design taps very deeply into human soul.

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