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Transparency Ranking of the Legislative Electronic Portals of the largest Brazilian Municipalities

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to structure a transparency ranking of the legislative electronic portals of the largest Brazilian municipalities. This is a descriptive research, conducted through a survey study with a predominantly qualitative approach. Data were collected from recorded observations of the electronic portals through an observation protocol. The study findings regarding the goals of the study reveal the need to transform the practices of information management and organizational culture in the local legislatures surveyed. From the total of municipalities evaluated, 120 legislative electronic portals (90.22%) partially met the requirements imposed by the LAI (Law of Access to Information). Other 6 legislatures (4.51%) showed no instrument of transparency due to their absence in the World Wide Web (internet); and only 7 legislatures (5.26%) configured high capacity of transparency of public information, presenting, beside the requirements of the LAI, other transparency instruments that improve the visibility and the inferability of the public information. The amount of legislative electronic portals that attended less than half of the indicators of transparency instruments restricted to the requirements of the LAI also was significant, corresponding to 35 legislative electronic portals (26.31%). Regarding the set of indicators of transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements, 42 legislatures (31.59%) were identified as having less than half of the indicators of the category. It is concluded that the construction of the Virtual State does not depend only on the development of electronic portals with information and services available for citizens. It depends, mainly, on a strategic management model that focuses on democratic values and the role of citizens along with the government as co-producers of the public welfare (Yang, 2003; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007; Denhardt, 2012).

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INTRODUCTION

Regulatory instruments that discourse on the provision of information are important jurisdictions for changes in the management model of public bodies and government's means of communication with the various social actors. The Fiscal Responsibility Law (FRL) of 2000, the Law of Transparency of 2009, and the Law of Access to Information (LAI) of 2011 are examples of instruments that have emerged in response to the demands and pressures of the society towards the consolidation of democracy in Brazil. The basic principle of these laws is to grant to the society the access to the information of the State and all its organs and powers.

It is highlighted the need for a public strategy able to update the State laws in the phatic world, creating opportunities for social participation and control of actions and public spending (Bobbio, 2007; Denhardt, 2012). In order to have an effective social participation, public information must be accessible and reliable, allowing the society to know and use the information, and to be aware of the expenses and the amount of resources available in their cities and the allocation of such resources. Thus, the society is likely to become more present and able to objectively require from the public administration the accountability of their choices and actions, and even influence the adoption of new public policies (Campos, 1990; Schedler, Diamond, Plattner, 1999; Pinho and Sacramento, 2009; Michener and Bersch, 2011; Rocha, 2011). The right to information as a

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rule is a minimum condition for social engagement in the political life, i.e., more citizens aware of their rights and duties tend to be more proactive and committed to civic duties along with the government, acting as co-producers and inspectors of the public actions. Enabling the engagement of the society in the political world is a multidirectional process that requires restructuring public organizations and their administrative practices, so that they can be configured as transparent and open to participation (Denhardt, 2012).

It is essential for the consolidation of the "culture of access" in the management of public organizations to use the instruments of e-government, that make use of the Internet and modern information and communication technologies (ICT) to expand services and instantly disseminate public information. These instruments, according to Vaz (2002), also enable the promotion of virtual spaces for debate and mobilization of answers. The influence and importance of the contributions of the ICT to the public administration is a fact once they facilitate processes for the transparency of information and social control over acts and expenditures of public actors, which can prevent patronage and corruption practices. It is worth considering the possibilities and potential impacts of the electronic portals as instruments to enhance transparency, accountability and a more optimistic perspective for promoting social participation.

In this context, the objective of the research was to design a ranking of transparency of the legislative electronic portals of the largest Brazilian municipalities, having as object of study the legislative electronic portals of Brazilian municipalities with more than two hundred thousand inhabitants. It is assumed that cities with such population size have greater technical and financial conditions for the development and structuring of more functional and transparent electronic portals. It is also assumed that the larger the population, the greater is the need for this instrument in communication between government and society, as contact with parliamentarians in larger cities is more digital than in person, and the information that would be presented to citizens in person are transmitted through electronic portals, constituting the virtual environment as an indispensable channel to collect suggestions, have discussions, disclose the accountability and answer questions (Pinho and Raupp, 2013). Styles and Tennyson (2007) find that larger and more populous municipalities tend to publish more information of the municipal management to the society due to greater influence and social pressure on the public administration to disclose their actions and choices. Another reason stems from the determination of the Law of Access to Information, which requires that all municipalities with such population size use the Internet as a mean of communication and dissemination of public information.

The focus on the sphere of municipal legislative results from the concern on the importance of the municipalities in the Brazilian political-administrative organization, and the relevance of the e-government potential to improve these institutions towards the electronic legislature. I.e., promoting the use of ICT as management instruments for the transparency of public interest information, citizen engagement in political life and providing online legislative services. Another reason for targeting the municipal legislative sphere stems from the lack of studies in this area and the importance of municipalities in a democracy and federation as Brazil (Raupp, 2011). This scenario provides an opportunity to conduct research to examine the dimension of transparency within the electronic municipal legislature. The expected result of the research is the production of relevant information and comparisons to contribute to the academic debate and the promotion of the "culture of access."

Construction of the Theoretical Framework:

New Public Service, accountability and transparency:

The concept of accountability is fundamental to the development of this study once talking about democracy, State and New Public Service (NPS) necessarily involves such concept and all its complexity. The model of NPS - inspired by the democratic political theory, especially by the concern with the connection between citizens and their governments - has as one of its premises the recognition that building accountability is not something simple (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007). The NPS and the work of fostering accountability necessarily involve rights such as access to public information and citizens' participation in political affairs, relations which today cannot be separated from the electronic government. I.e., the institutionalization of ICT is a process of technical and social order with the purpose of providing public transparency and social engagement (Ruediger, 2002; Pinho, 2008). In general, the study of public management with emphasis on the model of NPS refers to an administration based on transparency and co-production of public welfare (Denhardt, Denhardt, 2007; Salm and Menegasso, 2009) and can be understood as an alternative to the rigid and impersonal structures, appropriate in a hierarchical management of command and control (Kissler and Heidemann, 2006).

Given the complexity of these new relationships between governments and societies and the need for administrative reforms in the State is that the proposed NPS of Denhardt and Denhardt arises at the beginning of the 2000s. This is a new practical and conceptual model of public governance that is oriented to overcome the interference of the state as co-producer of the common welfare. The authors argue that the model seeks to lay the foundations for more autonomy and responsibility, both within the bureaucracy and in their interactions with other stakeholders (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007).

By placing the public interest as a central issue, the accountability in the NPS is recognized as a multidimensional process and a challenge for public managers nowadays. The accountability in the NPS is a key principle that recognizes the complexity and difficulty involved in the processes of transparency of public information, and accountability of public managers. It is a challenge that involves equating competing standards and responsibilities within a complicated network of external controls; institutionalized patterns; citizen preferences; morality; public law and the public interest itself (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007). The challenge also arises from the difficulty that involves an objective definition for the concept. The academic literature itself reveals a multiplicity of connotations for accountability, i.e., in some articles has the meaning of bureaucracy control, in other articles the meaning of transparency. Also, it is often understood as synonym of respect and adherence to the laws, or even as responsiveness to the demands of the society (Koppell, 2005).

In the Brazilian context, it is as a result of Campos' study (1990) that the debate on accountability arises, especially addressing the complexity and difficulty to conceptualize and translate the word into Portuguese. Two decades after Campos' study (1990), Pinho and Sacramento (2009 p.1333-1334) took as a challenge the same question, wondering if it was possible to have a translation and semantic definition for the word accountability in the Brazilian scenario. The concern of Campos (1990) and Pinho and Sacramento (2009) to seek a translation and understanding for the word accountability is a result of the socio-political reality and the need for mechanisms of control of the political power in the recent democratization of Brazil, now a young democratic country which still marked with patrimonial traits. This leads Pinho and Sacramento (2009, p.1348) to state that "there is no single term in Portuguese that defines the word accountability, having to work with a compound form". The authors present a general definition of accountability as "responsibility, obligation and responsabilization of those who occupy a position in disclosing information within the parameters of the law, involving the possibility of onus, which would be the penalty for the non-compliance with this policy".

According to Denhardt (2012), accountability is not, and cannot be, something simple in the public service; after all, it requires a balance between the competing standards and responsibilities within a system of democratic governance, consisting of a complex network of external controls, and professional standards, common interest of citizens, moral and public right. Therefore, it is important to highlight the need of the role of the citizen as co-producer of the social control along with the democratic State to promote accountability. I.e., individually, the citizen goes from mere consumer of public services and object of public decisions to a proactive individual along with the State (Kissler and Heidemann, 2006; Denhardt and Denhardt 2007; Salm and Menegasso, 2009; Rocha, Spaniol and Schommer et. al).

In regulatory terms, the LAI is particularly understood as a mechanism of accountability that has as its primary function the expansion and standardization of the State's transparency. Given the statement of Schedler, Diamond, Plattner (1999), the LAI can be associated with the theoretical framework of the author by covering both answerability and enforcement dimensions. The informational dimension of the LAI under Article 8, in paragraph 1, requires the disclosure of a set of information and data, such as: the record of the competences and organizational structure, addresses and telephone numbers of their respective units and hours of service to the public; records of any allocations or transfers of funds; records of expenditure; information regarding bidding procedures, including the respective notices and results, as well as all contracts; general data for monitoring programs, activities, projects and works of agencies and entities; and answers to society's frequently asked questions. Another requirement of this law is the disclosure of information on the official sites of the World Wide Web (internet) as well as the public's right to receive an explanation of the content of the decision of denial to access a particular request for information, as mentioned in art. 14 of the statute: "It is the right of the applicant to obtain the entire content of the decision of denial to access, through certificate or copy." These are the elements that compose the dimension of answerability (information and justification) as proposed by Schedler, Diamond, Plattner (1999).

The dimension of enforcement is also essential to characterize an instrument or process of accountability. The LAI, in order to promote the replacement of the "culture of secrecy" by a "culture of service", provides in its articles 32, 33 and 34 on illicit behaviors that lead to liability of public official, such as the application of suspension of the public servant who does not meet the law; and, in extreme cases, the public servant can be penalized for administrative misconduct and even prosecuted. It is necessary that the operational processes of the enforcement dimension be institutionalized and effective in public organizations so that the accountability is not just a speech without concrete effects. If the requests for information are not met, and if the responsible servants are not punished, the LAI will not have the desired practical benefit.

The monitoring of the power stems directly from the right of access to public sources of information, one of the conditions that need to be sustained for the consolidation of accountability, i.e., "permanent process of evaluation and responsabilization of public servants" (Rocha, 2011, p.27). Given the territorial and populational dimension of modern States and the complexity involved in political affairs, the public information should be considered source of power, and the transparency and access to information a necessary condition for the development of accountability instruments (Rocha, 2011). Therefore, the transparency of information as a prerequisite for citizen's supervision and control of power is an issue that cannot be conceived and planned

without considering the adoption of information and communication technologies for the creation of instant and interactive information and communication flows between the State and the society (Fountain, 2005).

Visibility of the information is important. However, only the visibility is not enough. The quality of the information also depends on an accurate inferability of their contents. The information must be available in an objective way and of easily cognition (Bersch and Michener, 2011). However, the necessary conditions of visibility and inferability for effective transparency of relations between society and government are frequently not met, which limits the capacity of transparency and involvement of the society in public affairs (Michener and Bersch, 2011; Denhardt, 2012).

Due to the dependence of the transparency quality on the visibility and inferability, the existence of validity certifiers of the data made available by the government is crucial so the groups and external developers can build mashups, dashboards and other Web 2.0 instruments in order to monitor and evaluate public administration. So as not to compromise the online access it is essential that the digital information is exactly the same that is physically available in the archives of the public organizations.

Another issue that often ends up neglected in discussions and research on transparency is highlighted in the articles of Swartz (2010) and Fung and Weil (2010). They argue that more useful than providing government documents and information online is the possibility of accessing the records of corporations and nonprofit organizations, as there are many political actions that occur out of the formal boundaries of the government and, therefore, out of the scope of the existing transparency laws, an open society is necessary. According to these authors, the increasing government investments of millions of dollars in creating the database are not enough.

Fung and Weil (2010) and Bass and Molton (2010) also defend the idea that transparency should not be concentrated solely on disclosure systems that produce accountability. Also, it is necessary to develop communication systems that enable citizens to evaluate the government activities, making these assessments transparent and rewarding the best services and performances. Creating new processes of review that provide feedback of transparency to the public administration is a way to encourage the behavior of public servants and institutionalize the transparency as part of the work that must be done.

Electronic government:

The virtual State can be described as the redefinition of public administration institutions for the construction of a government articulated in virtual agencies networks and public-private networks, whose structure and operation capacity depend on the use of the internet and the web (Fountain, 2001). Lévy (1999, p.92) defines the virtual space or cyberspace as "the space of communication open by the worldwide interconnection of computers and computer memories", is the reality of virtualization of information and communication in which all individuals involved in the management and encouragement of local communities have been confronted for a few years.

It is important to highlight that the reorganization of the State to incorporate adequate technical infrastructure and promote electronic government making efficient use of their attributes does not pay attention to institutional elements that regulate the behavior of public managers (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Selznick, 1996; Scott, 1995, Scott, 2001). Information technologies are not simply acquired and connected, are in fact driven by a drawing process of its use in the environment of organizations, meaning that the ICT needs to be integrated to the processes of work, to the channels of communication, to the means of coordination, to the culture, to the hierarchical structures and to all the basic elements that constitute public organizations (Fountain, 2001).

The reorganization of the Brazilian government in terms of ICT and the Internet highlights the need for a structural transformation of the public administration and also a socio-cultural process of institutionalization of the electronic government (Chanlat, 1996, Yang, 2003). Their sustained relationships and practices can be understood in three ways: web applications with a focus on government to business (or G2B); web applications directed to the government-citizen relationships (or G2C); and web applications directed to government to government relationships (or G2G). The electronic government in its various relationships must be strategically driven with the knowledge that "more than a provider of online services may be, mainly, an instrument of political empowerment of the society" (Ruediger, 2002, p.30). As a result, e-government is not simply the incorporation of web-based technologies.

The evolution of e-government is a process of institutionalization of the government learning to govern in online mode, which increases the importance of a model of strategic public management. "The challenge is that we need a different type of strategic management" to achieve the great transformation made possible by ICT (Yang, 2003, p.438). This institutionalization stems not only from the presence of laws and regulations. It is also crucial to take into consideration the process adopted to give effectiveness to the laws. New management practices are embedded in public administration not simply as responses to the legislation, but are also adopted as a reflex of the current systems of norms and values (Scott, 2001). This is the system of normative elements that can be understood as the values and social norms that define ethics and moral behavior.

E-Government should not be considered only in terms of availability of online services, it should, mainly, be considered by its possibilities of establishing new channels of transparency and communication between government and society. In fact the e-government has "an enormous democratic potential, provided there is political definition in the sense of popular participation and transparency, since the government can no longer offer what it doesn't want to disclose, not to even mention what it wants to hide" (Pinho, 2008, p.475).

The online provision of services and interaction between government and citizen is emphasized by Belanger and Hiller (2006), as well as the transformative potential provided by the projects of electronic legislative. The services and the integration made possible by the electronic legislative portals when centered in the citizen as a partner and not as client "can increase citizen participation and transparency of public administration" (Pacheco, Kern, Steil, 2007, p. 74). The construction of legislative electronic portals able to reach that potential requires an approach of "development with systemic, comprehensive overview, covering processes throughout the entire cycle of knowledge construction" without disregarding the technological and political barriers to their achievement (Pacheco, Kern, Steil, 2007, p. 76).

However, in general, it is possible to observe that the legislative electronic portals do not make use of information and communication technologies "to promote interactivity with the society, being the idea of interactivity and exploration of the communications potential still virtually nonexistent" (Raupp, 2011, p.80). The transparency of information and the openness to social participation with the use of electronic portals is still something very expressive to the Brazilian reality. The government websites are official electronic portals that need to be configured into instruments of accountability. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate in which stage of evolution the electronic portals are, i.e., if they meet the legal requirements and standards, if they offer to citizens the instruments to find and communicate with authorities and if it is possible to get information and other means of interaction.

Methodological Procedures:

The survey carried out is classified as descriptive in nature and has as main objective the description of the characteristics of a given population and its variables. Moreover, it can be characterized as a survey, a procedure that seeks to describe and explain the characteristics of a population, using a representative sample. With respect to addressing the problem, this study adopts qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The populational configuration was obtained by consulting the Demographic Census of 2010 conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the respective addresses of the electronic portals of the City councils were accessed and cataloged by two queries to the search engine Google, held on January 22nd and 23rd, 2013 and on April 18th, 2014. Within the universe of five thousand five hundred and seventy Brazilian municipalities, there are one hundred thirty three municipalities which have a populational configuration over two hundred thousand inhabitants, which qualifies for this research a population of one hundred thirty-three City Council electronic portals. They are: Americana – SP, Ananindeua – PA, Anápolis – GO, Aparecida de Goiânia – GO, Aracaju – SE, Arapiraca – AL, Araraquara – SP, Barueri – SP, Bauru – SP, Belém – PA, Belford Roxo – RJ, Belo Horizonte – MG, Betim – MG, Blumenau – SC, Boa Vista – RR, Brasília – DF, Camaçari – BA, Campina Grande – PB, Campinas – SP, Campo Grande – MS, Campos dos Goytacazes – RJ, Canoas – RS, Carapicuíba – SP, Cariacica – ES, Caruaru – PE, Cascavel – PR, Caucaia – CE, Caxias do Sul – RS, Colombo – PR, Contagem – MG, Cotia – SP, Cuiabá – MT, Curitiba – PR, Diadema – SP, Divinópolis – MG, Duque de Caxias – RJ, Embu – SP, Feira de Santana – BA, Florianópolis – SC, Fortaleza – CE, Foz do Iguaçu – PR, Franca – SP, Goiânia – GO, Governador Valadares – MG, Gravataí – RS, Guarujá – SP, Guarulhos – SP, Imperatriz – MA, Indaiatuba – SP, Ipatinga – MG, Itaboraí – RJ, Itabuna – BA, Itapevi – SP, Itaquaquecetuba – SP, Jaboaão dos Guararapes – PE, Jacareí – SP, João Pessoa – PB, Joinville – SC, Juazeiro do Norte – CE, Juiz de Fora – MG, Jundiá – SP, Limeira – SP, Londrina – PR, Macaé – RJ, Macapá – AP, Maceió – AL, Magé – RJ, Manaus – AM, Marabá – PA, Maracanaú – CE, Marília – SP, Maringá – PR, Mauá – SP, Mogi das Cruzes – SP, Montes Claros – MG, Mossoró – RN, Natal – RN, Niterói – RJ, Nova Iguaçu – RJ, Novo Hamburgo – RS, Olinda – PE, Osasco – SP, Palmas – TO, Parnamirim – RN, Paulista – PE, Pelotas – RS, Petrolina – PE, Petrópolis – RJ, Piracicaba – SP, Ponta Grossa – PR, Porto Alegre – RS, Porto Velho – RO, Praia Grande – SP, Presidente Prudente – SP, Recife – PE, Ribeirão das Neves – MG, Ribeirão Preto – SP, Rio Branco – AC; Rio de Janeiro – RJ, Salvador – BA, Santa Luzia – MG, Santa Maria – RS, Santarém – PA, Santo André – SP, Santos – SP, São Bernardo do Campo – SP, São Carlos – SP, São Gonçalo – RJ, São João de Meriti – RJ, São José – SC, São José do Rio Preto – SP, São José dos Campos – SP, São José dos Pinhais – PR, São Leopoldo – RS, São Luís – MA, São Paulo – SP, São Vicente – SP, Serra – ES, Sete Lagoas – MG, Sorocaba – SP, Sumaré – SP, Suzano – SP, Taboão da Serra – SP, Taubaté – SP, Teresina – PI, Uberaba – MG, Uberlândia – MG, Várzea Grande – MT, Viamão – RS, Vila Velha – ES, Vitória – ES, Vitória da Conquista – BA, Volta Redonda – RJ.

According to Creswell (2007), when a study involves multiple observations, an observational protocol is recommended as instrument for recording information, which can be used to point the descriptive notes (such as describing a physical scenario) and also point out the reflective notes (personal considerations of the researcher,

for example). Thus, an observation protocol that grouped two sets of indicators was elaborated, one prepared based on the guidelines of the LAI, and the other to check transparency instruments not restricted to legal requirements. These indicators were applied to diagnose the extent of transparency of the City Councils electronic portals of Brazilian cities with more than two hundred thousand inhabitants. To this end, guided visits to the electronic portals of the selected population so as to identify the presence or absence of indicators established in the observation protocol - detailed in the next section - so as to describe the empirical situation of the objects analyzed and also to enable the transcription of reflective notes and considerations that are relevant. The data collected through the observation protocol were analyzed through descriptive analysis techniques.

The observation protocol included the elements of the analysis model developed based on Raupp's (2011) proposal to assess the adequacy of electronic portals to the requirements of the Law of Access to Information and also to evaluate transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements. Raupp's (2011) model was adopted in this research because it is an instrument developed from the empirical observation of electronic portals and of other models of analysis of research on portals (Diniz, 2000; Akutsu and Pinho, 2002; Moraes, 2004; Prado, 2004 Pinho, 2008) with the objective of evaluating the construction of accountability.

The ability of the portals according to the result of the analysis of the indicators could classify them as: (1) null capacity, when the portal has no web presence or do not have any instruments of transparency required by the LAI; (2) low capacity, in cases of partial compliance to the legal transparency requirements imposed by the LAI; (3) median capacity, in situations that the portal presents complete observance to the transparency requirements indicated in the LAI; and (4) high capacity, when the portal presents transparency instruments required by the LAI and other transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements. To this end, it was used the model of analysis as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Analysis model.

Capacity	Indicators
Null	Lack of transparency instruments and / or impossibility to locate
Low	Partial compliance to the legal requirements of transparency
Median	Compliance to the legal requirements of transparency
High	Availability, beyond legal requirements, of instruments not restricted to the legal requirements

Source: Adapted from Raupp (2011)

Two categories of indicators were considered, the first category consists of indicators to verify whether the City Councils electronic portals meet the legal requirements of the LAI, and the second category consists of indicators to verify transparent instruments not restricted to the LAI, as Table 2. Such indicators were developed based on the LAI, Decree No. 7724 of 2012 and on Raupp's (2011) model.

Table 2: Indicators of transparency.

1. Legal requirements	1.1 Record of competence and organizational structure, addresses and telephone numbers of their units and hours of service to the public (LAI, Art. 8º, § 1º).
	1.2 Records of any allocations or transfers of funds (LAI, Art. 8º, § 1º, II).
	1.3 Records of expenditures (LAI, Art. 8º, § 1º, III).
	1.4 Information regarding the bidding procedures, including the respective notices and results, as well as all contracts (LAI Art. 8º, § 1º, IV).
	1.5 Record of general data for the monitoring of programs, actions, projects and works (news link) (LAI, Art. 8º, § 1º, V).
	1.6 Record of answers to frequently asked questions (LAI, Art. 8º, § 1º, VI).
	1.7 Enables any interested party to submit request for information via an electronic form (LAI, Art. 10, §2º).
	1.8 Specific link of transparency that will provide access to information of public interest (Art. 7º, § 2º, I, Decree Nº 7.724 of 2012).
	1.9 Remuneration and aids (of municipal councilors, servers and commissioned employees) (Art. 7º, § 3º, VI, Decree Nº 7.724 of 2012).
	1.10 Upload of reports in several electronic formats, including the open ones, such as spreadsheets and text, in order to facilitate the analysis of information (LAI, Art. 8º, § 3º, II).
2. Not restricted to legal requirements	2.1 Upload of videos of the legislative sessions or programs (<i>TV Câmara</i>)
	2.2 Home Page, Facebook or twitter of the municipal councilors (link)
	2.3 E-mail or telephone of the municipal councilors
	2.4 Provision of municipal legislation
	2.5 Details of legislative sessions
	2.6 Possibility of finding the Bills proposed by the municipal councilors
	2.7 Possibility to follow the Bills on their processing stages
	2.8 Existing committees

Source: Elaborated from the LAI, Decree No. 7724 of 2012 and Raupp's (2011) model.

The proposed analysis model involve many empirical and theoretical elements to be able to relate the existence, or not, of theoretical elements into practice. Thus, the City Councils electronic portals of municipalities with more than two hundred thousand inhabitants were visited, as explained earlier, in order to observe the indicators and empirically verify the adequacy of these portals to the legislation, and whether there are transparency initiatives not restricted to the law.

Results and Analysis of the Empirical Research:**Indicators of transparency restricted to legal requirements:**

The requirement of the LAI, Art. 8, § 1, I, are represented by the indicator 1.1 and implies the need for the presence of the record of the organizational structure, addresses and telephone numbers of the departments and opening hours to the public on the electronic portals of the City Councils. They are basic requirements that do not require large technical and financial efforts to be incorporated; after all, once the information are inserted into the portals they hardly ever need updates. However, the disrespect to the rule is significant, according to the number of legislatives that do not have this indicator in their electronic portals: 58 legislatives (43.61%). This indicator is present in 75 legislatives (56.39%).

Indicators 1.2 and 1.3 represent, respectively, the requirement of recording transfers of financial resources and of expenditure in the electronic portals of public bodies. They are commandments stated in the LAI, respectively in sections II and III of the art. 8, § 1. According to the survey data, 67 electronic portals (50.37%) meet the indicator 1.2, and 92 electronic portals (69.17%) meet the indicator 1.3. These legal requirements are guarantees to the publication of the performance of public organizations and an essential requirement for the development of social control (Schedler, Diamond, Plattner, 1999; Pinho, 2008; Rock, 2011). However, there are 66 electronic portals of City Councils (49.63%) which do not disclose the records of allocations and financial transfers and 41 electronic portals (30.83%) without the presence of the record of expenditures incurred. When the revenues and expenses become actually transparent and individuals seek to be familiar with the expenses, the amount of available resources and the allocation of these resources, the society may become able to demand accountability from the public management (Campos, 1990; Schedler, Diamond, Plattner, 1999; Pinho and Sacramento, 2009; Michener and Bersch, 2011; Rocha, 2011).

The information regarding the bidding procedures, including the record of the notices and of the contracts is contained in the indicator 1.4 of the analysis model and represents the requirement of the LAI, Art. 8, § 1, IV. This provision aims at exploring the potential of the internet as an instrument that allows the legislative bodies to distribute information directly and simultaneously to a large community of users with efficiency and equity, favoring competition of suppliers and avoiding patronage and corruption practices (Norris, 2001). This indicator of transparency is contained in 83 electronic portals (62.40%) and absent from 50 electronic portals (37.60%).

The record of general data for the monitoring of programs, actions, projects and works of the City Councils is represented by the indicator 1.5. Consists of a commandment of the LAI, Art. 8, § 1, V, that seeks to inform the daily activities of these bodies to the society. This legal requirement is present in 117 electronic portals (87.96%) and absent from 16 portals (12.04%).

The indicator 1.6 represents the legal requirement of recording the answers to the frequently asked questions, as established in the LAI, Art. 8, § 1, VI. The presence of this indicator is intended to make it easier to the user to find specific information and complete tasks on the portal. In other words, consists in publishing information with architecture able to make them available with a higher degree of transparency and inferability (MICHENER and BERSCH, 2011). Only 39 electronic portals (29.32%) meet this requirement and 94 portals (70.68%) are not in compliance with the legal requirement of the LAI, Art. 8, § 1, VI.

The possibility of the citizen present information requests through electronic forms in the City Councils electronic portals is a legal requirement of the LAI, Art. 10, §2. This requirement is represented by the indicator 1.7 of the analysis model and seeks to optimize the virtual interaction between government and citizen. It is a strategic instrument to increase the efficiency and transparency of public administration, having relevance only if the requests for information from citizens are answered. (Fountain, 2001; Zugman, 2006). There are 96 legislative electronic portals (72.18%) that are in compliance with this legal provision and 37 (27.82%) that are not.

The indicator 1.8 represents the need of the portals to present on their main page a specific link of transparency that will provide access to public information. This determination is the result of the Art. 7, § 2, I, of the Decree No 7724 of 2012, which regulates the LAI. The compliance with this provision increases the quality of the transparency in terms of visibility, one of the central issues related to the concept of transparency with regard to the presence or absence of content and the ease of finding specific information (Michener and Bersch, 2011). There are 121 electronic portals (90.98%) analyzed that comply with the legal provision and 12 (9.02%) that do not.

The record of the remuneration of servants and employees and councilors' subsidy is a legal requirement of Art. 7, § 3, VI, Decree No. 7724 of 2012, which is represented in the indicator 1.9 of the analysis model. The transparency of these information enables better control of the representatives, elected the by society, and public servants, for example, by allowing to infer whether there is remuneration superior to the constitutional maximum. The legal determination of the mentioned device is present in 70 legislatives (52.63%), while the remaining 63 legislatives (47.37%) do not meet the requirement.

The obligation of the public electronic portals of making documents, tax and accounting reports, bidding documents and contracts available in electronic files in an open format is a legal determination, as provided in the LAI, Art. 8, § 3, II (indicator 1.10). Only 35 legislative electronic portals (26.31%) meet this legal

requirement and 98 legislative electronic portals (73.69%) do not meet the determination. The absence of the possibility to access open data in public electronic portals inhibits the emergence of new ways to control and supervise the public administration on the internet, for example, that groups of programmers - and citizens - develop applications to facilitate the interpretation of financial and budgetary data, in addition to many other innovations involving web 2.0 instruments.

The results of the application of these indicators show evidence of a public administration unable to give effectiveness to the laws of transparency in the phatic world, inhibiting the construction of concrete possibilities of accountability (Bobbio, 2007; Denhardt, 2012). Within this category of indicators, the amount of electronic portals that meet less than half of the indicators is significant, corresponding to 35 electronic portals out of the total investigated (26.31%). They are the municipalities of Teresina (PI), Nova Iguaçu (RJ), Cuiabá (MT), Anantapur (AP), Campos dos Goytacazes (RJ), Aparecida de Goiânia (GO), Porto Velho (RO), Campina Grande (PB), Betim (MG), Anapolis (GO), Caruaru (PE), Boa Vista (RR), Camaçari (BA), Embu (SP), Itaboraí (RJ), Presidente Prudente (SP), Melbourne (RN), Itapevi (SP), Belém (PA), Jaboatão Guararapes (PE), Contagem (MG), Olinda (PE), Rio Branco (AC), Imperatriz (MA), Sete Lagoas (MG), São João de Meriti (RJ), Carapicuíba (SP), Cotia (SP), Indaiatuba (SP), São Gonçalo (RJ), Belford Roxo (RJ), Macapá (AP), São Paulo (SP), Mossoró (RN) and Magé (RJ). Only seven cities (5.26%) fully meet the indicators that represent the legal requirements of transparency: Brasília (DF), Curitiba (PR), Feira de Santana (BA), Caxias do Sul (RS), Jundiá (SP), Gravataí (RS) and Novo Hamburgo (RS).

Another result of the research shows that the relationship of the electronic portals of the City Councils of São Paulo (SP), Salvador (BA), Goiânia (GO), Santo André (SP), Serra (ES), São José do Rio Preto (SP), Bauru (SP), Itaquaquecetuba (SP), Divinópolis (SP), Americana (SP), São José (SC) and Araraquara (SP) met 9 of the 10 indicators of transparency instruments restricted to legal requirements. Simple measures are sufficient so as these electronic portals can fully meet the LAI and present a high capacity of transparency. If these measures are taken by these legislatures, the total of electronic portals with high potential for transparency would increase from 7 (5.26%) to 19 (14.28%). In the electronic portals of São Paulo (SP), Itaquaquecetuba (SP) and São José (SC), for example, it was not possible to find the indicator of records of allocation or transfers made throughout the year by the City Councils (LAI, Art. 8, § 1, II). The legislative electronic portals of Salvador (BA), Serra (ES), and São José do Rio Preto (SP) did not comply with the indicator of recording the answers to frequently asked questions of the society (LAI, Art. 8, § 1, VI). The cities of Bauru (SP) and Americana (SP) did not comply with the indicator of the record of the skills and organizational structure (LAI, Art. 8, § 1, I). The electronic portal of Santo André (SP) did not provide the possibility of requests for information via an electronic form (LAI, Art. 10, §2). And the cities of Goiânia (GO), Divinópolis (MG), and Araraquara (SP) did not provide the possibility of writing files in an open format (LAI, Art. 8, § 3, II).

The technological infrastructure of support and the architecture of the electronic portals investigated are resources already acquired by these City Councils, and the work and efforts that involve the reprogramming and maintenance of the electronic portals to comply with the requirements are not of high complexity. The absence of these indicators that are legal requirements can be easily solved by these legislatures without the need of many financial and human investments. It is not enough the increasing government investment of millions of dollars in the creation of e-government projects, because the problem with the creation of electronic portals and databases does not lie on the difficulty of accessing the information; it consists in the lack of investigation and enforcement power to check them and adjust them to the legal requirements (Swartz, 2010). It was noticed that the adequacy of the electronic portals also depends on the government to sanction their own bodies and to hold accountable public servants who are not complying with the legal commandments.

Another important result of the research is the case of the electronic portal of the city of Joinville (SC), an empirical example of the institutionalization of the LAI. The Board of Councilors of Joinville signed a Term of Adjustment of Conduct (TAC) with the 13th D.A. of Defense of Administrative Morality so the portal can meet the transparency requirements of the LAI within a stipulated schedule. The municipality needs to correct the portal according to the steps and deadlines set in that document. It is clear, based on this case, that technological adoption and the development of the Virtual State in the public administration, in large amounts, is a direct result of the society pressures guided by a system of norms and values that become regulations and laws, in this case, the Term of Adjustment of Conduct (Scott, 2001). Stakeholders are setting standards and values and a common legal environment influencing the behavior and the structure of the City Council of Joinville (Scott, 2001; Dimaggio and Powell, 2007). However, as the results of applying this set of indicators, there are 126 local legislatures (94.73%) not in compliance with the legal requirements for transparency of public information.

In order to achieve the effectiveness of the laws of access to information, "it is necessary a Web 2.0 revolution in the government, including new thinking and new instruments." In the era of the information society, public organizations need to be able to incorporate web technologies with the goal of stimulating creativity, information sharing and collaboration among users (Bass and Moulton, 2010, p.294).

Indicators of transparency not restricted to the legal requirements:

Likewise, the identification of indicators of transparency of instruments not restricted to the legal requirements in the electronic portals of the City Councils. The indicator 2.1 present in this category of the analysis model represents the viability for the citizen to access the videos of the legislative sessions or programs of the City Councils (*TV Câmara*). The indicator was considered as present only when available in the database of the legislative electronic portals having these files updated. The presence of pages with access to outdated legislative sessions and programs in the electronic portals were not considered sufficient to meet the indicator once they do not comply with the proposed relevance. There are 63 electronic portals (47.37%) that have this indicator, and 70 electronic portals (52.63%) that do not have the indicator.

The indicator 2.2 and 2.3 configure the existence, or not, of means of contact with political representatives of the local legislative. They represent, respectively, the presence, or not, of Home Page, Facebook or Twitter; and the record of electronic mail or telephone number. They are vehicles that give greater visibility to the work and actions performed by the councilors, which contribute, for example, for the voters to assess the degree of responsiveness of their representative (Denhardt, 2012). Among the portals researched, 65 legislative portals (48.87%) offer access to Home Page, Facebook or Twitter of the councilors (indicator 2.2) and 114 legislative portals (85.71%) have the e-mail or telephone number of the councilors (indicator 2.3).

The presence of the indicators 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 are also means of giving greater visibility to the work and actions performed by the councilors as, respectively, imply the possibility or not of: (1) following the agenda, a document that contains the bills and other propositions of the parliamentarians and the executive branch, which will be voted on at regular or special session that may also include the Mayor vetoes; (2) accessing the texts of the projects of laws proposed by the councilors; and (3) following the Bills on their process stages. There are 71 electronic portals of City Councils (53.38%) that make the agenda available; 68 legislative electronic portals (51.12%) that enable the citizen to access the texts of Bills authored by councilors; and 47 legislatives (35.34%) that offer to the citizens the possibility to follow the Bills on their process stages. The indicator 2.8 represents, or not, the information of the parliamentary committees in the electronic portals of the City Councils. This information allows greater transparency of the structure and organization of these bodies. There are 111 electronic portals (83,46%) that meet the indicator, and 22 electronic portals (16.54%) that don't.

Another result observed is the amount of 19 electronic portals (14.28%) that meet all the indicators of transparency instruments not restricted to the requirements of the LAI: São Paulo (SP), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), Brasília (DF), Fortaleza (CE), Belo Horizonte (MG), Osasco (SP), Juiz de Fora (MG), Londrina (PR), Santos (SP), Serra (ES), Jundiá (SP), Piracicaba (SP), Maringá (PR), Vitória (ES), Limeira (SP), Gravataí (RS), Ipatinga (MG), Americana (SP) and São José (SC). In spite of these portals presenting all indicators of transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements - contributing to the improvement of the quality of information in terms of visibility and inferability - the electronic portals do not fully comply with the legal requirements of information transparency. The City Council electronic portal of Fortaleza (CE), for example, complies with all indicators of this category (not restricted to the legal requirements) and is classified as presenting low capacity of transparency once it does not present 5 transparency instruments of the set of indicators restricted to the legal requirements, that are: record of competences and organizational structure, addresses and phone numbers of their units and hours open to the public (LAI, Art. 8, §1, I); information concerning bidding procedures, including the respective notices, results and contracts (LAI, Art. 8, § 1, IV); the record of answers to frequently asked questions of society (LAI, Art. 8, §1, VI); the remuneration and subsidies of councilors, servants and commissioned officers (Art. 7, §3, VI, Decree No. 7724 of 2012.); and the possibility to download reports in different formats, including the open format, in order to facilitate the analysis of the information (LAI, Art. 8, §3, II).

The number of electronic portals of the City Councils surveyed that do not meet half of the indicators of transparency instruments not restricted to legal requirements are also significant: there are 42 legislatives (31.59%) that meet 3 or fewer indicators. Among these electronic portals, none offer the possibility to follow the Bills in their process stages (indicator 2.7); only 2 legislatives make the texts of the Bills available (indicator 2.6) in spite of not being able to follow its progress; only 3 legislatives offer the possibility for the citizen to access videos of the legislative sessions or programs of the *TV Câmara* (indicator 2.1); 6 electronic portals present the details of the legislative sessions, making available the updated agenda (indicator 2.5); 7 legislative provide the access to the link of the Home Page, Facebook or Twitter of the councilors (indicator 2.2); 15 legislatives provide access to the municipal legislation (indicator 2.4); 24 electronic portals have the information of parliamentary committees (indicator 2.8); and 25 legislatives provide the e-mail address or telephone number of the councilors (indicator 2.3).

It is also noticed that, based on the results, the indicator with the smallest presence in the electronic portals surveyed was the possibility for the citizens to monitor the Bills in their process stages (indicator 2.7): there are 86 legislatives (64.66%) that do not provide access to this information. The indicator with the largest presence in the electronic portals verified was the information of the electronic address (e-mail) or phone number of the councilors (indicator 2.3): 114 legislative electronic portals (85.71%).

The result of applying this set of indicators to the electronic portals of the City Council of the largest Brazilian cities highlights the existence of a gap between the civil and political spheres. Reducing the gap between political representatives and the society is a challenge for public administration which necessarily involves the development of online instruments supported by the logic of a strategic management model (Yang, 2003). The City Councils should recognize and make efforts to improve the mechanisms that enable the participation and supervision of citizens in political life (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2012). The key feature of the web instruments that promote the participation is to offer new possibilities for the exchange of information among various stakeholders, so that everybody has opportunities to make, question and justify positionings (Marques and Miola, 2007).

Diagnosis of transparency:

The analysis of legislative electronic portals of the largest Brazilian municipalities reveals that most of them partially meet the legal requirements for transparency of public information. The results show that only 7 legislatures (5.26%) showed a high capacity of transparency of the public information, besides of what is required in the LAI, other transparency instruments that improve the visibility and the inferability of public information. They are the legislative of Brasília (DF), Curitiba (PR), Feira de Santana (BA), Caxias do Sul (RS), Jundiá (SP), Gravataí (RS) and Novo Hamburgo (RS). The electronic portals of these cities meet all the 10 indicators of transparency instruments restricted to the legal requirements (100%). The cities of Brasília (DF), Jundiá (SP) and Gravataí (RS) meet the total of 8 indicators (100%) of the category of transparency instruments not restricted to legal requirements. The cities of Curitiba (PR) and Novo Hamburgo (RS) meet seven of the eight indicators (87.5%) of the category; and the municipalities of Feira de Santana (BA) and Caxias do Sul (RS), meet 4 of the 8 indicators (50%) of transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements. The legislative electronic portals of Brasília (DF), Curitiba (PR), Feira de Santana (BA), Caxias do Sul (RS), Jundiá (SP), Gravataí (RS) and Novo Hamburgo (RS) presented the highest levels of transparency.

After analyzing the results of the application of the indicators of transparency in the electronic portals of the City Councils of the Brazilian largest cities, a ranking of the most transparent legislatures in terms of compliance to the Law of Access to Information was developed. The municipalities were classified into two levels. First, the municipalities were ranked in descending order regarding the total of the indicators of transparency required by the LAI. Second, the municipalities were classified in descending order according to the total of indicators of the other category of indicators (not restricted to the legal requirements). Table 3 shows the ranking of legislative electronic portals of municipalities with population of more than 200,000 in terms of transparency.

Table 3: Ranking of legislative electronic portals.

N.	Municipalities	Amount of Indicators	
		Restricted to legal requirements	Not restricted to legal requirements
1	Brasília - DF; Jundiá - SP and Gravataí - RS	10	8
2	Curitiba - PR and Novo Hamburgo - RS	10	7
3	Feira de Santana - BA and Caxias do Sul - RS	10	4
4	São Paulo - SP; Serra - ES; Americana - SP and São José - SC	9	8
5	Bauru - SP; Divinópolis - MG and Araraquara - SP	9	7
6	Salvador - BA; Goiânia - GO; Santo André - SP and São José do Rio Preto - SP	9	6
7	Itaquaquecetuba - SP	9	3
8	Rio de Janeiro - RJ; Juiz de Fora - MG; Piracicaba - SP; Vitória - ES and Limeira - SP	8	8
9	Campo Grande - MS; Ribeirão Preto - SP and Sorocaba - SP	8	7
10	Florianópolis - SC; Vila Velha - ES and São Carlos - SP	8	6
11	São José dos Campos - SP; Praia Grande - SP and Foz do Iguaçu - PR	8	5
12	Campinas - SP; Uberaba - MG and Guarujá - SP	8	4
13	Taboão da Serra - SP; Palmas - TO; São Leopoldo - RS and Maracanaú - CE	8	3
14	Belo Horizonte - MG; Londrina - PR and Ipatinga - MG	7	8
15	Manaus - AM; Uberlândia - MG; Mauá - SP; Marabá - PA and Colombo - PR	7	7
16	São José dos Pinhais - PR and Santa Maria - RS	7	6
17	São Bernardo do Campo - SP and Cascavel - PR	7	5
18	Maceió - AL and Suzano - SP	7	4
19	Natal - RN and Juazeiro do Norte - CE	7	3
20	Itabuna - BA	7	1
21	Osasco - SP; Santos - SP and Maringá - PR	6	8
22	Mogi das Cruzes - SP; Pelotas - RS; Franca - SP; Taubaté - SP and Marília - SP	6	7
23	Porto Alegre - RS; Aracaju - SE and Cariacica - ES	6	6
24	Canoas - RS and Viamão - RS	6	5
25	Duque de Caxias - RJ; Petrópolis - RJ; Governador Valadares - MG and Barueri - SP	6	4
26	João Pessoa - PB; Sumaré - SP and Santa Luzia - MG	6	3
27	Joinville - SC; Santarém - PA and Várzea Grande - MT	6	2

28	Caucaia - CE and Volta Redonda - RJ	6	1
29	Fortaleza - CE	5	8
30	Blumenau - SC	5	7
31	Recife - PE; Guarulhos - SP; Niterói - RJ and Jacareí - SP	5	6
32	Diadema - SP and São Vicente - SP	5	5
33	Ribeirão das Neves - MG; Petrolina - PE and Macaé - RJ	5	4
34	Montes Claros - MG; Ponta Grossa - PR and Vitória da Conquista - BA	5	3
35	São Luís - MA and Arapiraca - AL	5	0
36	Cuiabá - MT and Anápolis - GO	4	7
37	Aparecida de Goiânia - GO; Betim - MG and Presidente Prudente - SP	4	6
38	Campos dos Goytacazes - RJ; Campina Grande - PB and Itapevi - SP	4	5
39	Teresina - PI; Embu - SP and Parnamirim - RN	4	4
40	Ananindeua - PA; Boa Vista - RR; Camaçari - BA and Itaboraí - RJ	4	3
41	Nova Iguaçu - RJ and Porto Velho - RO	4	2
42	Caruaru - PE	4	1
43	Sete Lagoas - MG	3	6
44	Imperatriz - MA	3	3
45	Belém - PA; Jaboatão dos Guararapes - PE; Contagem - MG and Rio Branco - AC	3	2
46	Olinda - PE	3	1
47	Cotia - SP	2	4
48	São João de Meriti - RJ	2	1
49	Carapicuíba - SP	2	1
50	Indaiatuba - SP	1	5
51	Magé - RJ	0	3
52	São Gonçalo - RJ; Belford Roxo - RJ; Macapá - AP; Paulista - PE and Mossoró - RN	0	0

Source: Survey data (2014).

In the first positions of the ranking are the electronic portals of the municipalities that had the highest total of indicators of transparency required by the LAI. Then, as a tiebreaker for the portals with the same total of these indicators, the municipalities were ranked based on the total of the second category of indicators of transparency of public information (not restricted to legal requirements). Thus, the ranking resulted in the classification of municipalities in 52 positions, being the most transparent legislative electronic portals those that complied with all the legal requirements and presented the largest number of indicators of transparency of the second set (not restricted to legal requirements). The most transparent legislative electronic portals ended up classified as follows: in the first place the cities of Brasília (DF), Jundiaí (SP) and Gravataí (RS); in the second place the cities of Curitiba (PR) and Novo Hamburgo (RS); and in third place the cities of Feira de Santana (BA) and Caxias do Sul (RS). The least transparent legislative electronic portals were the municipalities of Magé (RJ) (51st place) and the municipalities of Belford Roxo (RJ), Macapá (AP), Paulista (PE) and Mossoró (RN).

The situational diagnosis of the City Councils reflects, in general, the need to transform the practices of information management and organizational culture of the City Councils investigated. The majority of the electronic portals analyzed partially meet the requirements of the LAI. The quality of the transparency in terms of visibility and inferability is low in these instruments. They are electronic portals with support in visual aids that often give a false sense of transparency for the citizen: built with elegant layouts, excessive links to access information of public interest, numerous graphics, search systems with possibilities for standardization of research, but that do not comply with the LAI. Failure to comply with legal requirements in the electronic portals investigated shows a disregard from these City Councils to the principle of transparency and portrays the low effectiveness of the LAI. The "culture of access" in the management of the public organizations investigated has not become a reality yet. There are obstacles that still need to be overcome so that the portals of the City Councils surveyed are effectively transparent.

Relevance of the results, suggestions and possible actions:

The goal of this subsection is to describe the relevance of research's results and propose recommendations for the practices of information management in the City Councils of the cities investigated. To this end, from the analysis of data and research information, were identified relevant factors, recommendations to these factors and some possible actions in order to comply with the recommendations suggested. Scientific research must produce and disseminate relevant knowledge to the society, i.e., have an impact on society in practical terms.

The data and information resulting from this study served as input to outline a situational picture (diagnosis) of the electronic portals of the largest Brazilian City Councils. This diagnosis was used for the purpose of inferring recommendations of compliance with the requirements of the LAI that had not been met. In addition, recommendations were outlined for overcoming the low effectiveness of the LAI, especially in its dimension of enforcement - key aspect to characterize as objective an instrument or accountability process. Also, the suggestions of measures aimed at the development of other instruments that enhance the quality of transparency of public information in the legislative electronic portals investigated are significant. Table 4 illustrates the

relevance factors drawn from the analysis of the research data, recommendations to the relevant factors mapped and possible actions to comply with the suggestions.

Table 4: Relevance, suggestions and possible actions

Relevance of Results	Suggestions	Possible Actions
Empirically demonstrate the adequacy of the electronic portals in relation to the provisions of the LAI.	Enable the City Councils to have access to the results, which will facilitate the adequacy of the information management practices in these institutions to comply with the requirements of the LAI.	1 E-mail the president of the City Councils reporting the results; 2 Contact the Federal Senate's Interlegis Program once it has the adherence of at least 4,200 City Councils and a model electronic portal - which can be changed based on the analysis model; 3 Contact the organizations of the civil society which work in the modernization and strengthening of the municipalities management.
Provide identification of instruments not restricted to the legal requirements in terms of ease of location (visibility) and understanding (inferability) of the information.	Enable the City Councils to have access to the results, which will facilitate the development of information management initiatives with the scope of expanding the quality of the transparency.	1. E-mail the president of the City Councils reporting the results; 2. Contact the Federal Senate's Interlegis Program to verify the possibilities of considering such indicators in the model electronic portal; 3. Contact the organizations of the civil society which work in the modernization and strengthening of the municipalities management.
Demonstrate the low effectiveness of the LAI, especially in its dimension of enforcement.	Follow the example of municipalities that represent empirical examples of institutionalization of the LAI in the local legislative.	1. Contact bodies with the power to impose sanctions to the public actors - or powerholders - that are not fulfilling their obligations and duties, taking in consideration the significant amount of 126 local legislative (94.73%) not in compliance with the legal requirements of transparency.
The "culture of access" in the management of the public organizations investigated has not become a reality yet.	Transparency should not be concentrated solely on disclosure systems that produce accountability. It is necessary to reward top performers, providing feedback as a way to encourage the behavior of public servants and to institutionalize the "culture of access."	1. Create a system of certification of the City Councils that meet the criteria of transparency. The City Councils that meet the criteria required for certification receive a digital stamp that will be visible on their main page. 2. Disclosure of the ranking of the City Councils that have the most transparent electronic portals and benefits, awards for the best ranked. This is an action to institutionalize a system of norms and values that introduce a prescriptive, evaluative and obligatory dimension in the Legislative (Scott, 2001).

Source: Prepared by the author (2014).

The suggestions of this study are to implement actions that primarily seek to consolidate the practices of transparency in the electronic portals of the City Councils, especially those that are not in compliance with the law. Failure to comply with the legal requirements in the portals investigated is a socio-cultural and institutional obstacle that must be overcome so as to improve the State model which is not in accordance with the democratic values. Overcoming the low adherence of the electronic legislatures to the transparency laws needs a model of strategic public management that focuses on democratic values and the role of citizens along with the government as co-producers of the public welfare. The institutionalization of the accountability in the public administration is not a simple task and necessarily involves efforts to achieve a cultural and structural transformation.

Conclusions:

The objective of this research was to determine to what extent the electronic portals of City Councils located in Brazilian Municipalities with more than two hundred thousand inhabitants promote the transparency in the light of the Law of Access to Information. The study findings regarding the goals of the research reveal the need to transform the practices of information management and organizational culture in the local legislatures surveyed. Among the total City Councils evaluated 120, legislative electronic portals (90.22%) partially met the obligations imposed by the LAI. Other 6 legislatures (4.51%) showed no instruments of transparency due to the lack of presence on the world wide web (internet); and only 7 legislatures (5.26%) configured high capacity of transparency of public information disclosing, besides the requirements of the LAI, other transparency instruments that improve the visibility and the inferability of public information. The amount of legislative electronic portals that attended less than half of the indicators of transparency instruments restricted to the requirements of the LAI also was significant, accounting for 35 legislative portals (26.31%). Regarding all indicators of transparency instruments not restricted to the legal requirements, it was highlighted the amount of 42 legislatures (31.59%) with less than half of the indicators.

The non-compliance with the legal requirements and the low presence of other instruments of transparency in most of the electronic portals investigated suggests negligence, intentional or not, of the local legislatures with the principle of transparency, and reflects the low effectiveness of the LAI, especially in its enforcement dimension. The public administration should be responsible for making the information available to the public and also hold accountable and subject to sanctions agencies that do not comply with the requirements of transparency laws. Only when the public administration proceeds with rigor regarding the non-compliance with

the LAI appropriate conditions for the institutionalization of objective processes of accountability in the City Councils will take place.

As a result of the empirical analysis carried out, the research presented a situational diagnosis of the electronic portals regarding the adequacy, or not, of these instruments to the LAI, as well as the presence of other indicators of transparency that make it easier to find and understand the information of social interest. Based on the diagnosis of the City Councils, factors of relevance were identified and recommendations for changes and possible actions to achieve the suggested recommendations were made. In summary, actions were proposed for the adequacy of the electronic portals regarding the requirements of the LAI that had not been met and for the development of other instruments that enhance the transparency quality of the public information, such as sending an e-mail to the President of each City Council reporting the results of applying the analysis model.

It is concluded that the construction of the Virtual State depends not only on developing electronic portals with information and services for citizens. It depends, mainly, on a strategic management model that focuses on democratic values and the role of citizens along with the government as co-producers of the public welfare (Yang, 2003; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007; Denhardt, 2012). Meeting the legal requirements and improving the quality of the transparency of the information are prerequisites for the emergence of new relationships between the government and the civil society, in which political actions and public expenditures are made clearer and strengthen the possibilities of accountability.

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