It is our great pleasure and privilege to welcome you to this special issue of the *International Journal of Electronic Government Research (IJEGR)*. The central focus of this special issue is to address the “Scope, Objectives, and Achievements of E-government: E-government to E-governance.”

Having addressed the issues and set a long-term political vision to provide cost-effective and efficient services to citizens by reforming the public sector, President Clinton created the National Performance Review (NPR) in 1993. Different government agencies, consultants, private organizations, and policy makers worked together to set long term policies and strategies that would address this major reform. This resulted in the first phase of implementation of this revolutionary government system which we now call E-government (EG). After this first phase, national, state, and local governments from many developed countries – like Canada, Finland, Singapore, and the United Kingdom – also started to reform their administrative structures, processes, and regulatory frameworks by using modern ICT to set forth the preliminary phases of EG. EG can now be seen as a powerful, dynamic, and revolutionary approach for government administration, policy, strategy, and long-term state vision.

In the early stages of EG development, the gap between a government’s target and the actual country context was often very high. Governments in different countries might adopt an overly ambitious vision with little consideration of the complexity involved in bringing that vision to reality. EG is related to good governance, democracy, transparency, collaboration with the private sector, accountability, and increased citizen participation in public decision making. Therefore, because of the significant and far-reaching changes to the way governments deliver services in EG, successful implementation of EG must begin with an explicit vision, mission, and objectives. While many countries have begun to realize the benefits of launching EG, different countries have adopted their own different strategies to solve the problems associated with implementing EG.

EG is, in general, a more citizen-focused and public-private version of government. On the other hand, E-governance can evolve into participatory governance if it is supported by the appropriate principles, objectives, programs, and architectures associated with EG. Some researchers have argued that, according to epistemological and ontological paradigms, E-governance reflects the broader dimension of
the state-society relationship, which essentially includes the EG theme. A broader approach to EG embraces the whole range of governance and administrative projects. These need attention from a range of stakeholders, including researchers and policy makers. The aim of this special issue is to provide a common platform for discussion and presentation of original research highlighting issues related to scope, boundary, objectives, implementation, performance, barriers, and achievements of EG.

This special issue contains six papers which focus on different issues related to developing EG, its diffusion and adoption, the technological novelty of EG development, and the scope and challenges of user participation in E-government and E-governance. Integrating these concepts, this issue ultimately presents a comprehensive view of the mission, vision, and scope of EG development, socio-economic and technological refinement required for EG implementation, barriers to the achievement of EG objectives, strategies and scope for adopting EG, and the interoperability needed if seamless government service is to be enabled by EG applications.

The first paper by Kostas Ergazakis, Kostas Metaxiotis, and Tassos Tsitsanis “A State-of-the-Art Review of Applied Forms and Areas, Tools and Technologies for e-Participation” provides a good introduction to the notion of e-Participation and gives an overview of the different definitions of the term “e-Participation”. It also nicely summarizes the correlation between e-Participation and different tools and technologies. This paper presents a comprehensive overview of the e-Participation landscape, which it conceptualizes in a coherent and comprehensive way through a state-of-the-art review of the tools, technologies, and areas of e-Participation. This summary serves as a good one-stop kiosk for anyone who wishes to become acquainted with modern e-Participation tools.

The second paper by Teta Stamati and Drakoulis Martakos “Electronic Transformation of Local Government: An Exploratory Study” analyzes and identifies the critical success factors that enabled the employees of the central union of municipalities and communities of Greece to adopt the unified Local Government Access Framework (LGAF). In order to design appropriate EG systems, it is important to understand the many different issues related to the different levels of government (federal/national, provincial/state, and local/municipal). Other scholarly articles have confirmed that issues related to successful EG implementation, including institutional strengths and weaknesses, human resources, funding arrangements, local environments, technology absorption, and citizen acceptance and/or interest vary significantly, based on differences in the functions, objectives, and strategies of the various levels of government. This paper concentrates on the identification of the critical factors of EG adoption at the local level. The paper primarily uses the technology adoption model (TAM); however it also reviews behavioral, cognitive, and organizational issues in adopting EG, by integrating both concepts of technology adoption and adoption behavior. Consequently, a new conceptual framework for EG adoption by government employees at the local level extends TAM by offering additional factors critical for adoption. The framework can be used as a conceptual framework to determine the roadmap for adoption of an EG initiative.

The third paper “City E-Government: Scope and Its Realization” by Hanuv Mann, Gerald Grant, and Inder Jit Singh Mann aims to corroborate the presence of theoretical constructs of EG elements and services of major cities. The study involves analyzing EG initiatives taken by different local governments of different countries, with potential variance in EG scores. It is observed that different local governments develop their EG features based on local culture, organizational practice, and technological reformation. It reveals that the inherent scope of service provision by local government EG initiatives is unique. This finding gives rise to the understanding that customizing EG initiatives should ideally be oriented to the local needs of constituents.

The fourth paper “Organizational Development in Electronic Government Adoption: A
Process Development Perspective” by Bahar Movahedi, Ren-Xiang (Paul) Tan, and Kayvan Miri Lavassani addresses the development concepts of E-government from an organizational perspective. This paper utilizes the stage model and proposes a process based framework for analyzing EG adoption. The proposed EG development model can be employed for analyzing the practices and plans of future EG developments.

The fifth paper “Identifying Factors of Integration for an Interoperable Government Portal: A Study in Indian Context” by Rakhi Tripathi, M. P. Gupta and Jaijit Bhattacharya describes a very important issue in advanced EG development, which is the interoperability of EG. This is an important pre-condition for offering mature services and further ensuring integrated one stop government service. The integrated level of mature services refers to the situation in which government services are fully integrated (both vertically and horizontally). In this situation, different organizational structures, as well as their services and websites, are integrated. Citizens have access to a variety of services through a single portal, using a unique ID and password. All services can be accessed from the same web page and any transactions can be paid through a consolidated bill. In this mature stage, governments can undertake institutional and administrative reforms and develop a comprehensive view of service that fully employs the potential of ICT. The authors of this study, using evolutionary theory and different growth, stage, or maturity models, reveal necessary perspectives for the successful implementation of an interoperable technology based on process, communication, and data integration.

The sixth paper “The RFID Technology Adoption in E-Government: Issues and Challenges” by Ramaraj Palanisamy and Bhasker Mukerji illustrates some technological aspects articulated by modern EG services. This is an advanced study of EG reformation based on RFID technology, its applications, its technical issues and some related challenges. The paper is a comprehensive document on RFID concepts. It provides a general view of RFID applications and a review of related issues in EG and E-governance. It illustrates potential cases that developed countries should carefully consider in order to increase administrative effectiveness and efficiency in internal government operations. This paper represents an important advance for research on RFID applications in EG. More specifically, initiatives that reveal the factors influencing the adoption of RFID technology for public administration have the potential for successful development and proliferation of EG. This is because many different projects in the public sector currently use RFID technology to acquire information regarding the location and properties of entities that can be physically tagged.

It is our earnest hope that you will enjoy reading this special issue as much as we did during our review of the papers for this issue.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Professor Vishanth Weerakkody, editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Electronic Government for giving us the opportunity and support to conduct the successful editing of this issue. We, the guest editors, have been impressed by the many scholarly articles we received in response to the call for papers for this special issue. All submissions were reviewed by at least two referees. Before responding with our final acceptance, we asked for two revisions. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the referees who reviewed the manuscripts and provided thoughtful suggestions for improving the quality of the papers.

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