In this issue of the IJEGR we feature three research papers and a research note. The research papers include a mix of works – an international assessment of municipal Web sites, an examination of user help and service navigation features in government Web sites, and an analysis of articles about e-government published in refereed journals during the early years of e-government research. The research note compares aspects of e-government impacts in Catalonia, Spain and Ontario, Canada.

The first research article, by Tony Carrazales (Marist College, USA), Marc Holzer, Rutgers University-Newark (USA), and Sheang-Tae Kim and Chan-Gon Kim, (Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea), reports the findings of a survey of 81 municipalities’ Web sites that was conducted in the fall of 2005. The survey focused particularly on the security, usability, content types of services offered and citizen participation on these Web sites. The paper also compares these findings to those of a similar survey conducted in 2003. The study’s principal findings are that the official Web sites of the cities of Seoul, New York, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Sydney outperform all others surveyed. Further, the rankings of the top cities changed only slightly over 2003. And, finally, there remains a considerable digital divide between developed and developing nations.

The second research article, by Genie N. L. Stowers, San Francisco State University, examines help and navigation features on governmental Web sites. Stowers argues that these features are critical for easy access within and successful use of Web sites by end-user citizens without technical skills. Through her research, she found similar patterns of help and navigation features across governments and concluded that such features are diffusing in the public sector Web development field. Stowers recommends that Web developers work to overcome a potentially serious problem with governmental Web sites, namely, lack of knowledge of Web site organization and government structure by end-users by enhancing help and navigation features. She also argues that end-users need to be actively assisted to find information by Web developers.

The final research article, by this author and Benjamin A. Lloyd (University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA), reviews the empirical research on e-government that was published in peer reviewed articles between 1999 when the very first two such articles appeared and the end of 2004. We identified only 57 empirical articles from over
100 articles about e-government published in refereed journals in this period. Our principal findings were that most authors of empirical e-government works are from institutions in the United States and are from the social sciences. More importantly, we found that few of these articles achieved a high level of scholarly rigor. For example, few adequately reviewed the literatures available about either IT and government or e-government; and few created or tested theory or hypotheses. Many of the articles employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, but many also contained conclusions that were not supported by their data or analyses. Perhaps as this nascent field further develops it will produce quantitatively more empirical works and also gain in quality and rigor.

Finally, Mila Gasco (International Institute on Governance of Catalonia, Spain) and Jeffrey Roy (Dalhousie University, Canada) provide a research note that examines in a comparative frame the impacts of e-government on both administration and democracy in what the authors refer to as a “multi-level governance environment.” Their purpose, among other things, was to ascertain whether and the extent to which the pursuit of e-government by a sub-national (state or provincial) government is “intertwined with or separate from federalist structures.” After describing the e-government efforts of Catalonia (Spain) and Ontario (Canada), they observe that e-government plays out differently in different countries due to unique national traditions, cultures and structures. They also found in their research that e-government in both Catalonia and Ontario had centralizing tendencies (from the state governments down to local governments), but were decidedly de-decentralist when it came to state-federal e-government relations. They also found little evidence (though slightly more in Ontario) of real efforts to support e-democracy and a much stronger e-service orientation in both states.

This issue concludes the second year of publication of the International Journal of Electronic Government Research. We hope that our readers have benefited from the works that we have published. We also hope that they will continue to submit solid research articles for us to consider for publication and will also recommend IJEGR as a publication outlet to their colleagues.

Continuing an annual tradition that was started with Volume 1 of IJEGR, I want to thank the members of the growing community of e-government researchers for taking time out of their busy schedules to review manuscripts that were submitted for consideration in for Volume 2 of IJEGR. Without their assistance, the journal could not have succeeded in publishing such high quality papers.

**REVIEWS FOR VOLUME 2**

- Nick Adams, Napier University, UK
- Barbara Allen, University of Birmingham, UK
- Paul Bake, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA
- Frank Bannister, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
- Suzanne Beaumaster, University of La Verne, USA
- Francesco Bolici, Luiss University, Italy
- Stuart Bretschneider, Syracuse University, USA
- Mary Maureen Brown, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA
- Jeffrey Brudney, University of Georgia, USA
- Heidi Bruecher, University for Applied Sciences, Switzerland
- Yu-Che Chen, Iowa State University, USA
- Stephen Coleman, University of Leeds, UK
- James Danziger, University of California, Irvine, USA
Sharon Dawes, University of Albany, SUNY, USA
Lois Delcambre, Portland State University, USA
Dave Delcorde, University of Ottawa, Canada
Marco DeMarco, Catholic University of Milan, Italy
William Dutton, Oxford Internet University, UK
Sara Eriksen, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden
Kevin Esterling, University of California, Riverside, USA
Patricia Fariselli, NOMISMA, Italy
Paul Ferber, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA
Pattee Fletcher, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA
Jon Gant, Syracuse University, USA
David Garson, North Carolina State University, USA
Mila Gasco, International Institute on Governance of Catalonia, Spain
Wilpen Gorr, Carnegie Mellon University, USA
Gerald Grant, Carleton University, Canada
Ake Gronlund, Orebro University, Sweden
Matthias Guenter, Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property, Switzerland
Richard Heeks, University of Manchester, UK
Helle Zinner Henriksen, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark
Paul Herrnson, University of Maryland, College Park, USA
Alfred Tat-Kei Ho, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, USA
Stephen Holden, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA
Vincent Homburg, Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Eduard Hovy, University of Southern California, USA
Cosmo Howard, University of Victoria, Canada
Charles Kaylor, The PSI Group, USA
John King, University of Michigan, USA
Zlatko Kovacic, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, New Zealand
Helmut Krcmar, Technical University Munich, Germany
John Langford, University of Victoria, Canada
Virpi Lyytikainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Harold Mahrer, Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration, Austria
David McClure, Gartner, USA
James Melitski, Marist College, USA
M. Jae Moon, Texas A&M University, USA
Alana Northrop, California State University, Fullerton, USA
John O’Looney, University of Georgia, USA
Theresa Pardo, University of Albany, SUNY, USA
Lise Prefontaine, University of Quebec, Canada
Marian Quigley, Monash University, Australia
Chris Reddick, The University of Texas at San Antonio, USA
Harold Relyea, Congressional Research Service, USA
Reinhard Riedl, University of Zurich, Switzerland
Bruce Rocheleau, Northern Illinois University, USA
Juan D. Rogers, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA
Jeffrey Roy, Dalhousie University, Canada
Carmine Scavo, East Carolina University, USA
Jochen Scholl, University of Washington, USA
EDITORIAL TRANSITION

With the completion of Volume 2(4) of IJEGR, I have announced to the Editorial Board and the publisher that I am stepping down as editor-in-chief. Having been with IJEGR since its inception, I resigned with decidedly mixed feelings. I also did so with the knowledge that in selecting papers for publication in the journal’s first two volumes (eight issues), we aimed for and, I believe, largely succeeded in achieving the highest standards of quality for research papers in the nascent field of e-government research. To achieve high standards of quality has been a function, in part, of the screening process in the editorial office (editorial assistant, Tonya Zimmerman, and myself) and, more importantly, of the thoughtful consideration that our peer reviewers gave to papers we asked to them review and their own high standards.

The editorial responsibilities for IJEGR will now transition to Professor Mehdi Khosrow-Pour, DBA, editor-in-chief of the Information Resources Management Journal, the Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations, the Journal of Cases on Information Technology and the International Journal of Cases on Electronic Commerce. Researchers seeking to publish in IJEGR should communicate directly with Dr. Khosrow-Pour at ijegr@idea-group.com.

Best regards,

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