Welcome to the fourth and final issue of volume five of the International Journal of Electronic Government Research. The final issue of volume five brings us to an important milestone for IJEGR. As a journal solely dedicated to e-government research, with this issue IJEGR completes half a decade of reporting and debating high quality electronic government research. The focus of this issue is very much on organisational, managerial, policy related and technology themes that shape the panorama of e-government from the government or ‘service provider’ perspective. Although the focus of e-government research has been slanting towards user adoption of services or the citizens’ perspective in recent times (see for example IJEGR Volume 5, Issues 1 and 2), the papers in the current issue clearly illustrate that there are still many organisational, managerial, policy related and technical issues that impact e-government implementation, which need attention from both research and practitioner perspectives. As the five papers presented here explain, this is particularly important for developing and emerging economies.

The first paper in this issue of IJEGR by Abdullah AL-Shehry, Simon Rogerson, Ben Fairweather and Mary Prior, is entitled ‘The Key Organisational Issues Affecting E-government Adoption in Saudi Arabia’. The authors highlight the impact that e-government is having in the Middle East region through a study of the national e-government project in Saudi Arabia. The authors debate the radical nature of change introduced by e-government within the Saudi public sector and how this impacts the relationship between the government and its stakeholders. The paper contributes by outlining a myriad of technological, managerial and organisational issues that must be considered during and after e-government implementation projects in the Saudi national context. This is achieved by using an empirical study that captures the national and agency level challenges faced by Saudi Arabia in their e-government implementation efforts.

The second paper is by Petter Gottschalk and is entitled ‘Interoperability in Electronic Government: The Case of Police Investigations’. In this paper the author uses the example of ‘police investigation’ to demonstrate the need for interoperability in an e-government context. The intensity of the information and different agencies involved in this example make this an ideal case to highlight the importance of interoperability and integration issues in the public sector. The author states that police investigations are information intensive work processes, where information, intelligence and knowledge are important resources in solving crime cases. Often, information is needed from other police districts, customs authorities, hospitals, tax authorities, and other public as well as private organisations. In this respect, interoperability between electronic information systems plays a major role in improving the efficiency and success of police investigations. This paper presents the case of police investigations in terms of their value configuration and knowledge management technologies, and in doing so, the paper shows how geographic information systems play
an important role to facilitate improved public sector services.

The third paper, ‘Leaders as Mediators of Global Megatrends: A Diagnostic Framework’ is written by Katarina Giritli-Nygren and Katarina Lindblad-Gidlund. The authors discuss how e-government is moving rapidly within supra-national, national and local institutions. This paper examines, how, at every level of government, leaders are interpreting the idea of e-government, attempting to grasp either the next step or indeed the very essence of the idea itself. The paper outlines a diagnostic framework, resting on three different dimensions; translation, interpretative frames and sensemaking, in order to create knowledge about translation processes and by doing so, emphasize enactment rather than vision. The diagnostic framework is then empirically examined to explore its possible contribution to the understanding of the complexity of leaders translating and mediating the idea of e-government in their local context. The authors conclude by noting how the diagnostic framework reveals a logic of appropriateness between local mediators, e-government, different areas of interest and appropriate organisational practices.

The fourth paper by Eva Sorensen and Karl Löfgren is entitled ‘How Do we Meta-govern Policy Networks in E-government?’ This paper examines the implications for realising joined-up services in an e-government context. The authors argue that the aim of joined-up services goes beyond the establishment of ‘single’ governmental websites, and calls for both horizontal, as well as vertical integration of otherwise separate public agencies and authorities that are supposed to collaborate towards ‘joint’ and ‘needs-based’ electronic solutions to benefit the citizens. Whilst many authors have described this implementation of a policy aim in purely technical interoperability terms, the authors of this paper frame this development as a policy process of metagoverning self-regulating networks. This paper is primarily a theoretical think piece in which the authors present a systematic framework for the analysis of meta-governing the policy process of electronic government. In addition to the value of framing the process as a metagovernance process, the authors discuss how the metagovernance approach also sheds light on whether or not the on-going process of vertical and horizontal integration leads to centralisation. The authors support their arguments with empirical illustrations that are drawn from Scandinavian research.

The fifth and final paper by Fabio Perez Marzullo and Jano Moreira de Souza is entitled ‘New Directions for IT Governance in the Brazilian Government’. This paper presents an IT Governance Framework and a Competency Model that is being developed to identify the intellectual capital and the strategic actions needed to implement an efficient IT Governance program in the Brazilian Government. This work in progress paper is driven by the premise that the human assets of an organisation should adhere to a set of core competencies in order to correctly prioritize and achieve business results that, with regard to government issues, relate to public resources administration. The authors highlight how, through effective investment policies and correct IT decisions the organisation can align business needs with IT resources in order to achieve highly integrated business services.

The aforementioned papers discuss a number of organisational, managerial, policy related and technical issues impacting electronic government in five different national contexts. Yet, these papers show that irrespective of geographic differences lessons can be drawn that benefit e-government in general; this will help prevent the repetition of bad practice and/or ‘reinventing the wheel’. Therefore, the message that I would like the readers to draw from this issue of IJEGR is the thought that while e-government has the potential to fundamentally transform how public services are offered, successful implementation efforts will require governments to consider and tackle a myriad of themes from a service provider’s perspective. In particular, for e-government to succeed in different national contexts, these themes that emerge from wider global e-government implementation efforts will need to be comprehended in terms of evaluating their influence on specific local and national government agencies.
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