The major focus of most of the countries of the World is on Asia, whether be it infrastructure, energy, IT, e-governance or any other. E-governance has revolutionized the development in Asia and it has engaged the citizens with the government. The present book on Trends, Prospects and Challenges in Asian e-Governance is a maiden effort to throw light on how far development of e-government has taken place in various regions/countries of Asia. The book is being divided into six sections—General and Asia (chapters first to second), East Asia (chapters third to fourth), West Asia (chapters fifth to seventh), South Asia (chapters eighth to fourteenth), South-East Asia (chapter fifteenth) and Central & Northern Asia (chapter sixteenth). Most of the chapters focused on Western Asia and South Asia where the government, public institutions and the people are very much active in applying and utilizing the IT as well as there are effective laws, rules and policies for the implementation of e-government. The authors have evaluated the status and position of e-government in Asia and the related issues, challenges and prospects. A number of researchers, academicians and administrators contributed well-written papers for this august publication which are being discussed briefly.

The first chapter, “Challenges En-Route towards E-Governance in Small Developing Island Nations of the South Pacific: The Case of Papua New Guinea” by Dr Rafia Naz is one of the important studies taken in context of South Pacific Island countries and the status of e-governance in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The author believes that e-governance which is seen and valued as a new mantra that has the potential of solving immense problems arising from service delivery, is still many a times constrained in its capacity yield many benefits and further writes that what are the barriers that Papua New Guinea faces given its contextual setting is the main research objective of this paper. This objective is achieved through a quantitative methodological framework using structured questionnaires in which a sample of 189 respondents was interviewed. The findings of this research highlight that in PNG the barriers lack of project management inadequate technological infrastructure, inadequate data infrastructure and difficulty in change management were cited. Inadequate legal infrastructure was next, followed by insufficient time and money,
lack of requisite competencies, improper communication environment, lack of internal will and finally external pressure dominating. Change management which was pervasive for PNG and so was insufficient time and money. Asymmetries of information present citizens as principals with insuperable challenges and lot of issues of service delivery ineffectiveness, inefficiency and inequity arise. It is very important for small developing nations like PNG to actively pursue and formulate national policies and strategies that will promote the information economy which eventually will benefit the country.

Inderjeet Singh Sodhi, in chapter two discusses “E-Government in China: Status, Challenges and Progress.” Chinese e-government has developed rapidly and has a good infrastructure in place. Its importance is increasing rapidly. People need all kinds of assistance and education in understanding, searching, accessing, and using this new type of online information resources and services. China in realizing the importance of e-government started its move tangibly when it promoted the year 2002 as “E-Government Year of China”. Since then the central government has played a leading role and all levels of governments have joined hands in the process of e-government development of China. E-government in China started with a serial of “Informatization (Xinxihua)” plans. The State Council launched the “National Informatization plan in 1997, which aimed to spur industrialization and modernization by adopting information technology. In 2006, China’s National Informatization Steering Group issued the “Overall Framework of National e-government,” which aims at establishing a uniformed national e-government network, to achieve interoperability across key applications, information sharing and business collaboration, to reduce the cost of e-government construction and maintenance, and to improve the project quality and the returns on investment. Author believes that in order to suit the international situation and the requirements of China’s economic construction and social development, it is necessary to integrate development of e-government administration with the transformation of government functions, and quicken the pace of reforming the administrative examination and approval system in a bid to create conditions for the practice of e-government administration.

Chapter Three, “Digital Governance: A Usability Study of Omani E-Government Websites” focuses on a digital governance study conducted by Abdelmajid Bouazza and Huda Chebli. This study aimed to evaluate the usability of Omani ministry websites (OMW). The researchers organized the dimensions of website usability into six dimensions, which were:

1. Online services,
2. User-help,
3. Navigation,
4. Legitimacy,
5. Information Architecture, and
6. Accessibility accommodations.

Oman took the preliminary steps necessary for this large scale project in 1998 and launched its e-government portal in 2009. The main purpose of this study was to evaluate Omani ministry websites with regard to usability criteria. Depending on the findings of the study, the researchers considered it relevant to report the issues that were necessary to be addressed, whether by the ministries or by their websites developers in order to achieve the e-government objectives. A major finding of this study was that the majority of websites had over 30 accessibility errors. Hence, it is important to pay more attention to the accessibility of disabled people to this category of website. Authors are of the view that Government websites should be designed according to the user’s needs and not according to government agency staff needs. Consequently, graphics and animation that are not functional should be avoided as much as possible because they can slow down the browsing of the website. Accordingly, the designers of e-government websites should achieve a balance between content and services.

Chapter four, entitled “Impact of E-Government on Transparency and Corruption in Iran,” by Esmaeil Shahsavandi, Ghassem Mayah, and Hesamaddin Rahbari attempts to give details the extent to which corruption and transparency have been impacted in implemented on corruption in Iran. Enhancing transparency and reducing corruption are identified. Evidence shows that E-government has had a significant impact on broader government goals where political leadership and a commitment to reform have been present. In this work the authors try to distinguish the main obstacles such like legal, social and cultural and some other obstacles concerned. The paper presented some background information of Iran and discusses the importance of IT discuses. Moreover, this article attempted to give details the extent to which corruption and transparency have been impacted in the project that have been implemented on wide scale in Iran. Evidence shows that E-government has had a significant impact on broader government goals where political leadership and a commitment to reform have been present. Authors believes that Iran need to urgently develop a culturally appropriate national strategy if they wish information and communication technology (ICT) to have a positive impact on their overall socio-economic development. Iran needs to decide what they want from the global technology marketplace and then work out how they are going to achieve it and further writes that it seems that the successful use of IT in Iran depends mainly on changing the existing vision about the concept of IT in society.

One of the aims of chapter five: “The Impact of Culture on E-Readiness for E-Government in Yemen” contributed by Arwa Yahia Al-Eryani, and Abdullah Rasheed, is to find a suitable model to measure the impact of the culture on the
e-readiness for e-government in Yemen which has achieved a lot to pave the road towards creating informatics society as first step towards e-government. These are done through establishing the e-government project in early 2003, introducing e-services through a number of corporations, and running computer training courses targeting employees and students. The cultural elements that have been adopted by the discussion such as gender, age, education, income, occupation level, computer experience and Internet experience. The authors carried out a comparative study between the well-known models. Besides to that the chapter investigates applying this model on the Yemen society to measure the impact of the cultural elements on the e-readiness for e-government in Yemen. The researchers applied a quantitative research based on a survey method using questionnaires as a data collection technique. The findings showed that there are positive indicators for e-readiness in Yemen where the level of e-readiness scored 63.5%. The findings also showed the impact of the culture on the e-readiness for e-government in Yemen. Age does not affect the e-readiness in this study. Trust affects the e-readiness in Yemen and the facilities. The positive finding from this study is the high belief in e-government as an era requirement. The researcher recommends starting building award society and increase the information culture.

“E-Government Services in India: A Critical Analysis of Aadhaar UID” by Santhosh Menon and Jaspreet Singh Sethi in chapter six focuses on technological components of the Indian Aadhaar program which tries to give every resident of the country a digital ID. The paper provides the architectural and implementation features of the program. Aadhaar program is only 40% implemented to date as mandated by the Government of India.

Aadhaar is mostly based on Free Open Source Software (FOSS) and its processes are International Standards Organization (ISO) compliant. The paper would do a critical analysis of the architectures of the ID programs. One cannot deny the fact that technology has to drive the way for Aadhaar card to be of any use and not end up becoming just another document as revealed by the authors. The need to digitalize information in government departments and a move towards a more electronic form of governments will allow for smart cards like Aadhaar to be usable. Probably the most serious of these is the connectivity between various ministries and departments.

Chapter seven, entitled “E-Government Approaches to Facilitate the Process of Democracy in the Administration of Bangladesh: Rhetoric or Reality,” by Musleh Uddin Ahmed and Md. Abir Hasan Khan highlights the relevance of e-government in a democratic country like Bangladesh. The authors believe that in order to expedite the process of democracy, through the openness the functions of government’s
administration, multifarious initiatives have been taken by almost every government in the world. The most recent and viable one is the initiative of e-government. The main aim of e-government is to make the administration ready to endow accountability, transparency, and to ease the communication process between the government and the citizens. Bangladesh has initiated a massive program to introduce the e-government application through the different administrative levels. Moreover, the special emphasis has been given in the field administration of Bangladesh where from almost 70% citizens directly benefited and take part into the administrative process. However, the gap is yet not up to mark to promote the actual level of democracy. This chapter elaborates different initiatives of e-government taken by the government of Bangladesh for endorsing the process of democracy. Moreover, the actual present situation of government has also been outlined. It has been seen that to endorse the most basic criterion of democracy is the e-participation. However, for e-participation, organization and process related to e-government must be promoted. Moreover, different devices of ICTs could, at the same time, be useful to have government’s information.

The study on “Public Value of E-Government: The Case of Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in Sri Lanka” as discussed in chapter eight by Noor Sufna and R. Lalitha S. Fernando examines the level of Public Value of e-government in Sri Lanka. In this regard, a website of “www.pubad.gov.lk” of the Ministry of Public Administration and Home Affairs in Sri Lanka was selected. Data was gathered from a systematic random as sample of Sri Lanka Administrative service (SLAS) officers who are considered as main operators as well as users of this website as the respondent of the study. Other objective of this study is to identify e-government maturity level of the selected website. In order to achieve these two objectives, this research was conducted in two steps. The qualitative data collection was done using a structured questionnaire. Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that if the level of e-government is higher (as per the ASPA Model) that will lead to a higher level of public value. Both situations will enhance the performance of the public service delivery.

Dr. M. Tariq Banday in chapter nine entitled “Social Media in E-Governance: Challenges and Opportunities” highlights the prospectus of social media and its current usage in e-Governance in India. It discusses potential issues especially issues related to security and privacy of individuals, employees, infrastructure and data that may limit its benefits in e-Governance. It examines and compares social media policy of government of India with similar guidelines of some other nations in terms of employee’s access, account management, acceptable use, employee conduct, content, security, legal issues and citizen conduct besides discussing emerging mobility and mobile social media policy of government of India and enumerates their merits, demerits and scope for further improvements. Social media being an
interactive and collaborative instrument of communication has extensively empowered citizens in social media enabled e-Governance system as it brings politicians, administrators, government agencies, information, workflow and citizens together to create a corruption free and accountable society. However, several risks including those related to behavior, ergonomic configuration, regulation and technology are involved in successful integration of social media in e-Governance. Social media poses risks of isolation, exclusion, violation of privacy, misuse of information and multiple security threats when used in e-Governance.

Dr. Kavita Gidwani in chapter ten: “E-Governance: Changing Scenario of Public Services” delves into e-governance in India. She writes that in the earlier phase, it was expected from citizens to do each and everything manually to avail any government service, which causes long waiting time and even it was impossible for citizen to know the whole process and status of that activity but in the present scenario, most of the services are available on e-governance portals for e.g. online application for passport, PAN card, Voter-ID, Aadhar Card, online payment of public utility bills, etc. Indian Government has a strong vision for delivery of citizen services through NeGP (National e-Governance Plan) but at the same time, inequality is exists in public access to internet services, unreliability on web, cyber attacks, etc. which causes high cost and unsecure & improper utilization of service. The ultimate objective of implementation of IT is to be able to increase the portfolio of public service delivery system in secured and cost effective manner. To overcome the drawbacks of e-governance, Indian IT sector must adopt certain strong standards and strategy for data and workflow, privacy, reliability, cyber security, etc. Implementation of e-governance across the various departments of government at the national, state and local levels is the benchmark for utilization of IT services. To achieve better and paper-free governance, Central and State Government of India, both need complete equipped, secure and reliable automation system for each and every public utility, which involves elimination of errors, transparency and speedy transaction. A value-neutral perspective may interpret it as a new mode of governance that extensively uses advanced forms of ICT in pursuing public policies, maintaining organizational relations, interacting with customers and delivering services. Political representatives need to develop a structured framework in collaboration with organization providers to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services.

Chapter eleven by Zulfiqar Haider and Chen Shuwen focuses on “Electronic Government Adoption in Pakistan: Supply and Demand Perspectives.” Pakistan first took the initiative to incorporate e-government in 2002. The analysis of e-government in Pakistan should be conducted through perspective of both parties. The supply-side perspective of the government is one side of the depiction that includes infrastructure, policies etc. And, the demand-side depiction is the people’s perspective regarding the deployment of ICT. The UTAUT model will provide the
most preeminent insight in the demand side of e-government in Pakistan. The government of Pakistan can incorporate the demand side factors highlighted by UTAUT model in the supply side of e-government services in order to better achieve the goal. However, this requires the mitigation of the significant constraint on demand and supply side of e-government services. The initiative taken by the Pakistani government for the enhancement of ICT infrastructure to support e-government services have resulted into several projects that includes cellular village connections, NADRA kiosk, Sahulat, National Rabta information portal and the most important of all is e-Pakistan vision 2020. The analysis of this study was based on mix method that included secondary qualitative data collection and primary quantitative data collection. The findings of this study determined the relationship of the various factors of supply and demand side of e-government. It was concluded that the relationship between these variables can be identified by collaborating the UTAUT model and the supply side factors of e-government.

Shefali Virkar, in the twelfth chapter “Designing and Implementing E-Government Projects in India: Actors, Behaviours, Influences, and Fields of Play,” writes that globalisation and information technology have been rapidly dismantling traditional barriers to trade, travel, and communication; fueling great promise for progress towards greater global equity and prosperity. Questions related to the balancing of investment in ICTs with the need to give priority to other basic infrastructural requirements still need to be answered, and there is apprehension in some quarters that money used for e-government will absorb scarce developmental resources whilst not delivering on potential benefits. Further, it is still unclear whether administrative reforms stimulated by e-government will in the long run feed into a country’s other economic, societal, and development goals, or simply divert resources away from areas where they are needed into already cash-rich sectors and industries such as those related to software design and development. Only time and further research will be able to tell. Author suggested that there needs to be a constant assessment and reassessment of workplace values and current practices, eliminating those which result in behaviours that are detrimental to the functioning of the organisation and encouraging those that promote positive interactions.

Ngo Tan Vu Khanh, Van Hung Trong, Gwangyong Gim, while discussing in chapter thirteen about “E-Government in Vietnam: Situation, Prospects, Trends and Challenges,” conclude that electronic government (e-government) has established as an effective mechanism for increasing government productivity and efficiency and a key enabler of citizen-centric services. Despite the considerable investment of the Government of Vietnam in e-government, the outcomes of it are still far below the expectation. This paper aims also to assess the current situation of e-government in Vietnam and to investigate the reasons for the modest results of it. Different indicator groups for the measurement of e-government will be applied to access the status of
each dimension of e-government as well as the overall performance of e-government in general. The challenges and issues of implementing e-Government systems will also be relevant to implementing ICTs to build systems to support e-governance. In depth analysis of e-government implementation organizations in Vietnam and foreign nations shows that if the final decision maker is involved deeply, then the formation of agenda, distribution of human and material resources are done in the order from authority group to controlling interest group and downwards but if the implementation organization is government bureaucracy, then it tends to have characteristics of having difficulties in gaining cooperation among departments and fierce competitiveness in obtaining resources. From this perspective, the success of e-government is the result of organizing human, material and technical resources through the backing by the strong determination and leadership of the president, which were efficiently utilized to achieve the objective of administrative efficiency, improve service to mass public, improve administrative process transparency, and citizens participation and applied the advancing information technologies.

Nurdin Nurdin, Rosemary Stockdale and Helana Scheepers in chapter fourteen entitled “Influence of Organizational Factors in the Sustainability of E-Government: A Case Study of Local E-Government in Indonesia” discuss the study of e-government in Indonesia which is an attempt to understand how organizational factors shape the sustainability of e-government implementation within a local government context. A case study of local e-government implementation is presented and then analyzed from perspective of organizational view. The construct is based on organizational factors that are commonly found to influence information systems implementation. Our findings show that organizational factors such as organizational and employees’ professionalism, commitment, coordination and cooperation, and responsibility sharing among local government institutions have influenced the sustainability of e-government implementation within the local government. The findings also show that e-government is a complex project that requires coordination and cooperation among actors as well as the need to share responsibility among the actors to support the sustainability of the project. This study was carried out within a local government in Indonesia and the findings may provide a new perspective on internal organizational factors influence on e-government adoption and implementation within local government levels. Authors believe that future research needs to explore other internal organizational factors, such as culture, to provide a broader perspective of internal organizational factors on e-government adoption and implementation within local government organizations.

Chapter fifteen by Fakhredin Maroofi and Khodadad Kalhori while assessing “Value and Risk in Business to Business E-Banking,” has suggested a direct relationship between e-service quality and three types of risk (i.e., performance, financial and psycho rational) and benefits and sacrifices, which signify the two
components of perceived customer value. In turn, the two components of perceived
customer value are create a theory to affect satisfaction and to impact both directly
and indirectly on goal to change and likelihood to provide personal word-of-mouth
suggestion. The argument for studying the behavior of value at its ingredient level
rather than at an accumulate level together with decisions goes to the planning of
unique hypotheses have been presented. The aim of this study was to examine the
role of risk in the creating of comprehensions of value in b2b e-banking; in summa-
rization it donate to the limited argue concerning the mediating role of satisfaction
between comprehensions of value and behavioral results. The authors reported that
e-service quality is the major contributor in variance explained in benefits.