The background to electronic government (e-government) lies in the wider debate about technology and its contribution to social, economic, and political processes. In the last few years the focus and implementation of e-government has moved from offering basic government information towards providing more interactive services to citizens. Most developed countries have now implemented e-government portals that offer a single point of access to selected key public services. These portals offer an on-line-real-time environment that facilitates two-way, transaction level services. While the initial stages of e-government targeted changing customer facing processes, more recent initiatives are aimed at transforming back office processes in public agencies. These initiatives are commonly referred to as transformational government (or t-government for short). T-government aims to place information and communication technology (ICT) at the heart of the e-government agenda to improve services by leveraging the benefits from technological and people investment through imaginative process redesign. The current transformational agenda is seen by many as the next phase of e-government, which focuses upon cost savings and service improvements.

Research on early e-government indicates that many countries have faced major challenges in implementing services that balance the institutional and citizen perspectives. It is further complicated by the fact that citizens are not only consumers of services with an interest in added-value, but also tax payers with a concern for cost effectiveness. Transformational government, with its emphasis on integrated and seamless transactions with agencies, is fundamentally more complex. The task facing public institutions to innovate, educate, and enthuse is formidable. Likewise the accompanying technical and organizational changes will exceed those experienced in the private sector.

In this context, the Handbook of Research on “ICT-Enabled Transformational Government: A Global Perspective” is timely. The global perspective is especially welcome. In their 2007 report the World Bank singled out the potential of government agencies’ use of ICT to transform relations with citizens, business and other arms of government. This book, through comprehensive coverage of the most important issues, concepts, trends, and technologies within t-government implementations, offers crucial insights. It provides researchers, scholars, students, and practitioners with the most recent knowledge relating to the conceptual, technical, and organizational challenges in the implementation of transformational government. As one of the first books solely dedicated to covering the topic of t-government it fills an important role in mapping out the theoretical and practical agendas. Many contributions are from leading e-government scholars worldwide. The potential advantage of a collected work, over the lone researcher, is the scope of the research which is possible and the different perspectives and disciplines
which can deepen the insights. The task of the editors is to realize that potential. I believe they have achieved this and have produced a book that significantly furthers our understanding as researchers and as practitioners.

I am delighted to recommend this book.

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