Preface

Citizens’ expectations in getting effective e-government services have been amplified with the increased awareness and use of Web-based applications. Although, governments all over the world are putting their best to satisfy citizens, still, there are problems, which are the basis of distress and waste of valuable resources.

The major reasons responsible for causing distress among e-government initiatives include adoption of non-integrated and technology-oriented approaches for the design and development of e-government models, obsolete processes, insufficient infrastructure, mismanagement, non-participative style, knowledge management chaos, and security related issues. Therefore, there is a need to reorient e-government initiatives professionally to achieve superior performances.

The governments can achieve best results by being unique in their offer and delivery of e-government services. They should do something that no other institution does, using ways that no other institution can duplicate. When a business model is oriented for providing services to citizens, and is difficult to replicate, such a model offers unique advantages for the governments and the society.

In the present dynamic environment, the use of e-business models can help in orienting e-government initiatives towards customers and generate greater value for them. Incorporating experiences of effective e-business models into government applications can be an ideal strategy in providing citizen-centric services.

The objective of this book is to examine issues and promote research initiatives in the area of effectiveness in e-government by suggesting integrated e-business models for government solutions, through citizen-centric service-oriented methodologies and processes.

The book is useful for policy makers, consultants, software vendors, researchers, scholars, and academicians all over the world. The policy makers will get unique e-business models to provide citizen-centric e-government services and the consultants and software vendors can visualize innovative solutions to design and implement e-government solutions. The researchers, scholars, and academicians will be able to examine current issues and promote research initiatives pertaining to bringing effectiveness in e-government services.

The call for chapters was sent to 700 research institutions, consultants, academicians, and industry experts all over the world, that attracted enormous interest in addressing various e-government issues. After a stringent blind refereeing process and coupled with well-focused persuasive, qualitative IGI Global’s book editing style, 15 contributions were selected for publication in this book.

The book is logically sequenced into three sections to examine major e-government themes: Section I proposes E-Business Models for Government Solutions, Section II suggests methods of Delivering Citizen-Centric Services, and Section III makes a journey toward E-Government: Methodologies and Processes.
SECTION I. INTEGRATED E-BUSINESS MODELS FOR GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

Society is gearing-up to meet the changing requirements of people. Therefore, the governments can no longer remain mute spectators towards providing services to citizens in this dynamic and challenging environment. There is a need of integrated e-business models for government solutions in order to provide citizen-centric services. Hai Thi Thanh Nguyen, and Toshio Obi, Japan, starts off in “Government Transformation: The First Step to Integrate E-Business into E-Government” with a dialogue on incorporate e-business models into e-government applications in order to bring transformation in government and building an integrated citizen-centric strategy. Nguyen and Obi have used a value chain analysis model to prove that this approach can overcome the weaknesses of the current approaches such as the one-stop service centers and customer relationship management. They have suggested the E-Serve Value Chain Model for citizen-centric services, a model that helps to find effective e-government solutions to bring specialization into a single or group of related e-government services. The authors have felt the need to bring commercialization in e-government initiatives to allow for the participation of the private sector in order to create the sufficient pre-conditions for integration of e-business models.

The communities of developers and users of e-government services remain estranged due to governments’ bureaucratic procedures. There is a strong need to bring synchronization and integration between citizens’ requirements and efforts of developers in generating value of e-government initiatives. Vasiliki Mounizi, Marios Chatzidimitriou, and Adamantios Koumpis, Greece, in their contribution on “Collaborative E-Gov networks: The Case of the Semantic-Gov Project,” have proposed a unique tool called “Miranda” as a possible solution for leveraging both types of the interactive elements between the communities of developers on the one hand, and the communities of the users on the other hand, in the context of the European IST Project SemanticGov (www.semantic-gov.org). They have suggested a unique e-business model, which mobilizes citizens to participate in value creation, and empowers them to synthesize composite products. According to authors, the framework is expected to bring a subjective richness to decision-making problems often faced by the public administrators.

The prediction of future stages of growth helps policy makers to design effective e-business models for government solutions. S. Siddharth, Rajat K. Baisya, and M. P. Gupta, India, in “Treasury Computerization in India: A Case Study” have examined stages of growth in e-government in the financial treasuries of Faridabad District Treasury in Haryana State of India. The basic objective of this research study was to identify points of convergence among various stages of growth in a Treasury. The growth has been mapped onto two models, namely the Nolan’s Model and the Laynee & Lee model. The study highlights that these models of growth converge at various points. Another important point brought into light by this research is that technology life cycle as an important factor in predicting this growth. The chapter also throws up other issues for research as to what factors other than the technology could be the factors of growth.

Interoperability of e-government systems and services has become an imperative research agenda for the conceptualization of effective e-government initiatives. Interoperability helps to integrate government information resources and processes to enable interoperability of government institutions. Petter Gottschalk & Hans Solli-Sæther, Norway, in “Interoperability in E-Government: Stages of Growth,” have suggested a stage model for e-government interoperability. According to authors, the success of interoperability projects depends on meeting the needs of stakeholders. These projects need to be guided by a direction to achieve better performances. The desired benefits can be expected by systematically developing interoperability in terms of work process, knowledge sharing, value creation, and ultimately strategy alignment.
There is an urgent requirement of managing e-government projects professionally to design integrated e-business models for government solutions. Especially, in developing countries, many e-government projects are being approached differently in accordance with the organizational and managerial dimensions that derive the entire public service administration. Tagelsir Mohamed Gasmelseid, Sudan, in “Towards an Organizationally Enabled E-Government Enterprise Architecture,” has emphasized the need for thorough understanding of organizational ecosystem of the entire e-government projects as well as its components, to improve the organization structure, and for addressing the determinants of citizen service accesses. Gasmelseid has suggested organizationally-enabled enterprise architecture through a case study of Sudan. The author has also felt the importance of enriching the entire e-government architecture with organizational dimensions in pursuit of improving the potential of success of e-government initiatives.

SECTION II. TOWARDS CITIZEN-CENTRIC SERVICES FOR GOVERNMENT

The existing approach of providing citizen-centric services for government, needs re-examination in order to provide real value for citizens. This task can become easy, if governments can first understand citizens’ e-readiness for building responsive government. Tuyen Thanh Nguyen, Vietnam, and Don Elkin Schauder, Australia, in “Understanding Citizens’ E-Readiness as a Precondition to Building a Responsive E-Government: A Case Study of Vietnam” have expressed the need to “careful thinking” as a precondition for successful development of e-government in a country, particularly the e-readiness of the population. Nguyen & Schauder, in their thought provoking contribution, have highlighted the results of in-depth interviews of citizens in various regions of Vietnam to examine the capacity of citizens to become effective users of e-government services. The study indicates that Internet users and non-users are not identical in their needs and capacities; e-government approaches should not be the same for everyone but rather be customized to take account of the special needs of groups of citizens.

To be sensitive towards the needs of citizens, use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) in e-government has become the order of the day. CRM helps in understanding customer needs by customizing e-government services on a one-to-one basis. Kalpana Chauhan and K. B. C. Saxena, India, in “CRM in E-Government: Issues and Challenges” have identified critical aspects of relationship management with citizens and suggested a conceptual framework for CRM in e-government. According to the authors, CRM has become strategically significant in promoting e-government acceptance in which citizens can better express their requirements. Further, there is a need to assemble user-related information to develop insights about the characteristics, needs, and preferences of services in order to achieve these objectives. Using these insights, governments can configure their services that reflect the needs and preferences of clearly identifiable groups of citizens.

It has become strategically important to search for innovative ways to enhance the user’s experience when it comes to navigation, exploration, and finding information on the Internet. The Web site is considered to be the preferred resource to seek e-government services by the citizens. Susana Berenice Vidrio Barón, México, in “Human-Computer Interaction: National Culture and Electronic Government Web site Usability” has expressed the need to consider the value of “culture” that plays a key role when it comes to user acceptance of e-government services. The user interface development process in the Web site should focus on understanding users, and their individual differences. According to the author, users’ profile and perspectives should be considered throughout the process of Web site design. The best approach suggested in this chapter is to incorporate a model of “pervasive usability” into the Web site design and production processes.
Effective management of Human Resource, especially performance management in the public sector, has become critical to improve e-delivery service mechanisms. Shefali Nandan, India, in “E-Government: Good Deliverance through Effective Performance Management” has suggested a model of achieving good deliverance in e-government through performance management. According to the author, the current challenge of governments is to create a system of good governance that promotes, supports, and sustains human development, especially for the poor and the marginalized. Thus, effective performance management leads to good deliverance which in turn leads to citizen-centric services. Good governance is participatory, transparent, and accountable. Nandan has expressed the need to design a comprehensive program for planning, implementing, and sustaining e-government, of which performance management can be considered as a key component for success.

Web-enabled service delivery system for government requires close coordination with vertical & horizontal integration of internal as well as external stakeholders. Jeffrey Roy, Canada, in “The Governance of Integrated Service Delivery in Canada: An Examination of Service Canada’s New Business Model”, has given a critical assessment of both the Canadian federal government’s experience to date, and the prospects of success for Service Canada in a multi-channel environment. The citizen-centered business model suggested is based on the premise that in order to optimally create service value and better outcomes for the public, government organizations must adapt accordingly. According to Roy, Service Canada is engaging all stakeholders, both internally and externally, in order to foster greater awareness, dialogue, and innovation in terms of how decisions are made, how authority and responsibilities are parceled out and shared, and thus how best to achieve more effective policy outcomes and efficient services.

SECTION III. SERVICE ORIENTED METHODOLOGIES AND PROCESSES

The technological proliferations have facilitated the penetration into individuals' psyche; if utilized properly can set the right direction to build a balanced society. The mind inertia refers to the lethargic state of minds of commercial people where they do not think beyond the context of materialism. This inertia needs to be broken before molding the mindsets of people in e-government for developing successful service-oriented methodologies and processes. Sangeeta Sharma, India, in her chapter on “Breaking Mind Inertia for Humane Business Through E-Governance” has highlighted three important issues to understand the mechanics of breaking mind inertia at three different levels viz., at cognition level; at activity level, and at business level. The author has examined the possibilities of penetrating the mind of individual’s psyche to facilitate shift of his focus from excessive materialism to humane business by suggesting a “Neo-Ethical Business Framework”.

E-participation in decision-making reflects the actual desire of citizens to expect value-added services from government. E-participation as a service-oriented methodology has a great potential in e-government in which citizens individually and collectively are able to use their knowledge and capabilities to shape their lives and communities. Peter Demediuk, Australia, and Rolf Solli, Sweden, in “E-Participation in Local Government Decision Making: Swedish and Australian Case Studies,” have outlined the nature and effect of e-participation activities that occur as a part of local government initiatives to involve citizens in council decision making. The research presents a contextual analysis of e-participation within an Australian and a Swedish local government reform initiative. According to the authors, governments must find new ways of listening to the voice of people, as there is a gap in the knowledge about what works, what does not work, and why, so closer study of practices is required in order to inform future policy and action.
The knowledge management and security requirements in e-government have gained wider implication in today’s information-based society. Hence, the requirement of a framework to manage these processes becomes imperative in order to design citizen-centric services. Pauline Ratnasingam, USA, in “The Role of Knowledge Management Security Requirements for E-Government,” drawing upon the theory of knowledge management, and security requirements, has suggested an integrated framework. The author has expressed the need to have a common shared understanding of all e-government stakeholders as to the knowledge management and security expectations. This will provide the availability of technical support from e-government security officers and managing up to date public records.

Efforts to develop enterprise level e-government systems spanning large number of transactions have met with limited success. Therefore, there is a need to suggest a service-oriented methodology in a larger setup to provide a context for the development of e-government systems. Sanjay Nayyar, Vinayshil Gautam, and M. P. Gupta in “A Study of Information Systems in Indian Railways with Specific Reference to Konkan Railway Application Package,” have developed a framework for identification of suitable methodologies and processes for the development of information systems in a larger e-government set-up. Further, specific reference is given to the Konkan Railways enterprise systems which led to learning for development and implementation of large information systems in the railroads. According to the authors, the learning could be of substantial value in developing a sound theoretical framework for information technology management practices in the government services sector in the developing countries.

In the final contribution on “Security Aware Development of E-Government Systems”, Daniel Serrano and Antonio Maña, Spain, and Gimena Pujol, David Donnan, and Joseph Latanicki, France, have suggested IMPRESS, a tool which supports integrated framework for security-aware software engineering, further supported by automated transformations and validations. According to authors, IMPRESS is based on semantic description mechanisms and formal methods resulted from the research in the SERENITY Project, and it centers on the precise description of reusable security and dependability solutions (S&D solutions) stored in the form of S&D patterns. The authors have also explained an e-government scenario and how its development could be done using the proposed development process. Using this tool, it is possible to access e-government services in a secure and trusted way, and through multiple channels.

The need for making e-government initiatives more effective and efficient cannot be over-emphasized. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of standard e-business models and techniques that can be suggested for such initiatives and there is hardly any experience to fall back upon while planning for such initiatives. Integrating e-business models with the conception, design, and implementation of e-government solutions can go a long way in discovering alternative strategies for achieving the objectives of such initiatives.

The book has made a modest attempt to suggest e-business models that can be used in various e-government applications for citizen-centric service-oriented methodologies and processes. Some of the important e-government issues addressed in this book include breaking mind inertia, e-participation, citizen’s e-readiness, government transformation, interoperability, collaborative networks, integrated service delivery mechanisms, use of CRM in e-government, human-computer interaction, effective performance management, role of knowledge management security requirements for e-government, and organizationally enabled architecture.

While the craze of e-government continues among governments, one needs to have a critical view of alternative e-business models that can be integrated into e-government solutions and evolve methodologies and processes that can help in making these projects more citizen centric, transparent, and improve accountability of government.
We hope the readers will find this book informative, thought provoking, theoretically challenging, and practically useful. We welcome any comments, feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticisms.

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