Preface

Despite its pursuit as a platform aimed at mitigating corruption levels and process inefficiencies in the public sector, e-Government has emerged as an information-sharing platform between government entities and the general citizenry. Thus, access to information by the would-be e-Government consumers is cardinal to the success of any e-Government interventions, as it centers on e-Inclusion and e-Exclusion of the citizens in the governance value chains. Access to government information faces many roadblocks in developing and emerging economies due to lack of appropriate legal frameworks and other requisite information laws. However, there is hope that many countries are now recognizing the importance of providing access to public information resources. While many nations are developing e-Government initiatives and some also enacting access to information laws, little or no thought is given to the relationship or the impact of e-access on overall e-Government development. Therefore, there is need to engage on how heterogeneous access platforms can be aligned to e-Government.

Many e-Government research endeavours informing practice of utilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have focused on technical aspect at the expense of socio-economic issues. This has resulted into many e-Government projects failing. A critical analysis of e-Government development reports (such as UNDESA or WASEDA) have reported less on softer e-Government factors such as the e-Participation Index (recently introduced), which underpins access to e-Government solutions by the general citizenry and businesses. The e-Government factor attributes largely considered in various studies have been indices such as Human Development Index, Infrastructure Index, ICT index, etc., which are global attributes but not the core and/or only factors influencing e-Government development. This book, therefore, intends to bring out inherent local factors that impact on e-Government growth and aims to accentuate the global perception of e-Government being a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In order to achieve that, the book looks at digital access as the hallmark of e-Government success and therefore presents multi-dimensional studies investigating digital access and its impact on the proliferation of e-Government implementation in heterogeneous environments.

This book explores the relationships that exist between access to information laws and e-Government. It further traces the key institutions that facilitate desired access to public information and shares the strategies used in encouraging access to information in a variety of jurisdictions and environments. It is anticipated that this book will be used as a resource to researchers in the subject area, e-Government designers and practitioners, policymakers, and university professors. Apart from some initiatives being ignited (http://www.access-egov.info/), there are no titles dedicated to investigate the impact of digital access to e-Government content and how this can result in e-Inclusion or e-Exclusion of technology-disadvantaged citizens and businesses. In this regard, we view this publication as timely and believe it
will go a long way in acting as a premier reference source for governments in planning and implementing their e-Government roadmaps.

This book aims to provide relevant theoretical frameworks and the latest empirical research findings in the area and valuable lessons regarding both the design and implementation of e-Government solutions and interventions. It is written for professionals who want to improve their understanding of the relationship between digital access and e-Government.

As researchers and academics in the field of information science and information systems, we have realized that there are limited publications that explore issues of information access and how this has an impact on e-Government development the world over. We realize that access to information provided on digital platforms presents a major impediment to citizens’ access to requisite information because of the digital divide.

Essentially, the book has two parts: the first part discusses issues of access (digital access) to e-Government content and provides some policy frameworks and directions on how to prioritize e-Government interventions aiming to encourage access paradigms. This part also provides pointers on how digital access should be approached from a practical perspective. The second part devotes to delving deeper into the concept of e-Government by unleashing contemporary experiences in e-Government practice and design of interventions in heterogeneous environments. The specific chapters in the book are as detailed below:

Chapter 1 by Bwalya attempts to highlight the asymmetry brought about by the digital divide on information access and correspondingly highlights the exclusion of individuals and business entities from the global knowledge value chains. This chapter unpacks the “digital divide,” especially as espoused in the developing world contexts and provides a departure from looking at the digital divide only from the “information access” perspective.

In Chapter 2, Mbata unearths the potential obstacles that might be met in migrating to digital television in South Africa using a qualitative approach. The chapter emphasizes that emerging digital television platforms have a lot of potential to be used as a vehicle for e-Government applications.

In Chapter 3, Mnjama discusses the evolution of archival legislation and archival services in Africa. This chapter provides conceptual underpinnings and experience of archival legislation and archival services in Africa. General perspectives of archival legislation and the development of archival services in Africa are outlined.

Chapter 4 by Chipembele explores the future of library services in the emerging digital economy. This chapter reviews the trajectory taken by libraries, especially considering the emerging pervasive digital environments ably brought about by cloud computing platforms. The study uses the Copperbelt University in Zambia as a case to understand the inherent intricacies of libraries in the digital economy.

Chapter 5 by Ochara Mungara provides thought-challenging metaphoric discussions of the ecological view towards a regional ontology for emancipating e-Participation in the e-Government realm. The chapter aims to provide a rationale for a transformational government vision for developing nations, rooted in an ecological perspective, particularly taking into account the socio-cultural context and developing a regional ontology for enhanced e-Participation.

In Chapter 6, Alcaide Muñoz, Lopez Hernandez, and Bolivar provide experiences from regional governments in Spain of approaches utilized for drawing e-Inclusion strategies. The chapter presents scenarios defining e-Inclusion strategies in public administration entities by providing clear experiences from the local government in Spain.
Chapter 7 by Sebina and Grand explores the relationships that exist between freedom of information and records management and how they could aid in the development of an effective e-Governemnt accountability paradigm in Africa.

Chapter 8 by Jain and Akakandelwa examines the adoption and usage contours of e-Government in Africa. The chapter reviews the theoretical underpinning of e-Government as a tool for modernizing public administration, examines the present state of e-government in Africa, highlights the challenges and barriers African countries encounter in their quest to develop e-government, reviews the role of public libraries in e-government, and finally, makes recommendations for e-Government adoption in Africa and other developing countries.

Chapter 9 by Ubena provides a critical analysis of the legal framework for access to information, particularly information held by government in Tanzania. The analysis intends to establish whether the existing Right To Information (RTI) legal framework and ICT development in Tanzania facilitates access to government information.

In Chapter 10, Sethibe and Bwalya explore the development of e-Government in Botswana’s local government. The chapter highlights Botswana’s e-Government interventions at the local authority level, how this is intertwined with the national efforts, and discusses what strategies are in place to encourage global citizen and businesses’ utilization of e-Government applications. Further, the chapter posits that there is a huge chance that e-Government will succeed in Botswana if concerted efforts are amalgamated towards its development.

In Chapter 11, Burçak Şentürk examines the different e-Government processes in Turkey with a bid to understand the general impact of e-Government in the Turkish context. Specifically, e-Guidelines in the e-Government process are examined. By emphasizing the importance of developing e-Guidelines, the characteristics, usage areas, and importance of e-Guidelines are examined. A total of 562 different services from 70 different institutions are examined in this chapter.

In Chapter 12, Ozgur Kulcu analyses the existing conditions of knowledge and communication systems in 118 organizations that take part in different service sectors in Turkey depending on the InterPARES Project methodology. The chapter presents an outlook of the status of e-Government development and impact in Turkey.

Chapter 13 by Arslan Aykut uses an exploratory analysis to analyze the slow up-take of e-Government in Europe and attempts to explain the imbalance between the supply and the demand sides of e-Government.

In Chapter 14, Sebina and Zulu present multi-stakeholder e-Trust model for Botswana’s e-Government programme, which could ensure that there are clear collaborations leading to effective uptake.

In Chapter 15, Olefihile, Mutshewa, and Bwalya present a case study of back-end information system implementation geared towards encouraging e-Government development in Botswana. The case is an in-depth analysis of the implementation of the Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI). This chapter culminates from a pilot that was done prior to an on-going study hinged on unison objectives.

Chapter 16 by Kgomo Moahi presents a conceptual chapter that highlights the major interventions in place to encourage development of e-Government. Specifically, the chapter explores the role of libraries in cementing the use and growth of e-Government in Botswana. The chapter posits that libraries have a cardinal role to play in successful implementation of e-Government, and must therefore be taken into serious account.

In Chapter 17, Hikwa and Maisiri explore the existence of enabling instruments towards implementation of e-Government in Zimbabwe. The chapter attempts to contextualize digital access and e-Government,
outlines e-Government policy objectives and constraints, explains the e-Government framework, including “Zimconnect” and others, and concludes with a section on strategies for enabling digital access and e-Government with a special focus on the possible role of library and information services.

In Chapter 18, Yassir, Majid, and Tabassum explore ICT adoption by virtual organizations in the developing countries taking the case of small and medium enterprise clusters in Pakistan. Virtual organizations consist of the internally independent parties linked by ICTs to collaborate toward the accomplishment of common objectives. The chapter explains ICT adoption by virtual organizations in the developing countries that would directly be influenced by lack of advanced ICTs, strong inclination of organizations toward face-to-face communication, strength of social system, and the weakness of legal system in these societies.

Finally, Chapter 19 by Mutula and Olasina highlights the strategies that could guide e-Government implementation in sub-Saharan Africa and their implications for good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, accountability, integrity, and transparency.

We are confident that the book accentuates the multi-dimensionality of e-Government and therefore emphasizes the need to have multi-dimensional approaches in its practice and design of interventions. The issue of digital access is cardinal to e-Government because it centers on e-Participation and therefore defines the overall usefulness of e-Government solutions. This book may appropriately ignite and drive research on the correlation between e-Participation and e-Government and therefore assess e-Government as a value proposition in the realm of innovative public services.

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