Guest Editorial Preface

Special Issue on e-Government in the English Speaking Caribbean

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The English Speaking Caribbean consists of small island developing economies that share a history as former British colonies. The British legacy is reflected in Caribbean societies such as their laws, conventions, institutional frameworks, bureaucracies and cultural practices. This special issue provides a unique opportunity to explore e-government within this small region in the Caribbean.

Governments within this region have recognised the significance of technology and how the Internet has revolutionised the world since 1969. Developed countries and information rich societies such as Canada, the United States and Singapore provide the English speaking Caribbean with benchmarks for best practices on different levels of analyses. On the governance level there have been government-to-government relationships where developed countries serve roles as policy advisors. At the organizational level, foreign consultants have been hired to provide their professional expertise on different initiatives such as creating government websites, portals or purchasing information systems or databases. On the human resource level foreign consultants have also partnered and collaborated with public organizations in having their employees trained and developed, with even opportunities for overseas coordination and mentorships where single island e-government projects are launched, re-organized, and/or expanded.

Additionally, empirical studies have shown how public bureaucracies in the developed world are using e-government initiatives as a technological innovation to enhance public bureaucracies' operations, processes and service delivery systems to citizens. As a consequence, governments within the English speaking Caribbean have adopted strategic vision statements with the implementation of macro and micro policies that include e-government as a way forward to circumvent an increasing digital divide that may be possible if they stagger in their adoption strategies compared with information rich societies. E-government is also projected as a compelling strategy to propel these islands to attain the level of "developed nations" status.

Therefore, this special issue highlights a range of themes. From an exploratory phase, it provides a snapshot of conceptual issues that administrators and educators have articulated in regard to the role and significance of the phenomena of e-government and e-governance as tools for national development. It identifies and analyses comparative evaluations of local agencies' practices with global benchmarks in e-government. It also examines and critiques the use e-government and ICTs within the spheres of public bureaucracies in multifaceted areas such as human resource management within the public service, occupational health and safety and university libraries. In essence, this special issue presents exploratory and participatory stages of discussions about e-government within

this small region of the world. It allows the authors a platform for analysis, comparative evaluation, reflection and praxis. These are relevant policy tools for the field of public administration in the digital age. As guest editor, I hope this will be a first in many special issues that will be published within the *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age* about e-government within this region.

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