

## Foreword

E-government has got into the political agenda of several countries, with its promise of bringing-in efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and convenience in the functioning of the governments. E-government makes a unique appeal to the leaders, administrators, and citizens alike. The essence of e-government is to enhance the value of governance to the citizens through transforming the basic relationships between the government and the citizens. While the concept of e-government is about a decade old, we have yet to see an example of the realization of its full potential in any country. The theory and practice of e-government is still evolving, though at a fast pace in the recent years. This publication on e-government which is a compilation of the works of eminent researchers across the globe, has come at an opportune time when several countries are enhancing their e-government budgets significantly.

It is now well recognized and accepted that e-government is not about technology but about the transformation it can bring about in the quality of public services. The principles of e-government can be applied with benefit in all the sectors and geographies, where governance is relevant. To create the desired impact, e-government has to be conceptualized, designed, developed, and implemented in a holistic manner that has at least four dimensions, namely – people, process, technology, and resources, which are like the four pillars of the e-government. Interestingly, this compilation provides useful and thought-provoking ideas in all these four areas.

Process transformation, which is critical to success in the e-government space, has to do with enhancing or creating value for the citizens. The most important step in valuecreation is identifying and defining what the value is to the citizen. Most often, e-government initiatives that have ignored defining “what” precisely has failed. Next in the sequence are the questions relating to “how” and “who”. It is necessary for the e-government policy makers and planners to be clear on how to convert their vision and objectives into tangible outcomes through a step-by-step procedure which could be tedious, time consuming, and hence, avoided at times. “Value creation, Consultation, Voice of customer, and Participative development” are the concepts which have been treated in this book.

Deployment of technology, as an essential component of e-government brings with it, a host of concerns like technology management, information security, privacy, confidentiality and strategic control of the government and over critical and sensitive information assets. In the rapidly expanding world of e-government where multiple agencies are adopting rapid implementation methodologies to contract the “time-to-benefit”, lack of focus on interoperability, will definitely lead to creation of islands in the medium and long run. While adoption of standards is the generic solution, the issue of interoperability in Chapter IV of the compilation addresses is deeper. In the technology dimension, concepts such as knowledge management, security-aware software engineering, and usability, are extremely relevant in developing the e-government projects.

The sustainability of an e-government initiative is directly linked to the business model or implementation model adopted. Some of the chapters in the book touch upon the need to adopt the models

prevalent in the corporate world for achieving cost effectiveness and customer centricity. The need for looking at Public Private Partnerships as a viable option for delivering the public services has been widely recognized widely recently. We have examples of the PPP model being deployed enterprise wide for delivery of public services online.

I am sure that this compilation of research works of researchers, consultants, administrators, developers, and eminent academicians will be an extremely valuable addition to the library of knowledge on e-government and would be useful to practitioners, consultants, and academicians alike.

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