

Preface

The study of electronic government, known as e-government, in local governments was the first level of analysis of this type of application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to public sector organizations (Moon, 1999; Stowers, 1999; Ho 2002; Deakin and Dillon, 2002). Some of the reasons for this are local governments are so numerous and, therefore, make a good test case of the application of ICT diffusion. In addition, local governments are the first line of contact with citizens for simple things such as retrieving information to more complicated tasks like paying taxes online. Therefore, there is a natural tendency for researchers to want to study e-government adoption at the local level.

The growth of research on e-government has rapidly expanded, especially since the commercialization of the Internet in the 1990s. This is most noticeably in terms of the number of publications that address important e-government issues that cut across many areas of public administration research. E-government adoption and implementation are critical to study, especially with local governments, given the nature of what they provide to citizens. Many of the major transformational benefits often cited about e-government are examined through studies of local governments. Most of the books in this field have broadly studied the impact of e-government on all levels of government; this study is different in that it focuses on local governments, which have a very direct line of contact with citizens, given their intensive service delivery role.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LOCAL E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION

There are five sections in this book, which examine different dimensions of e-government adoption and implementation at the local level. The first section examines theoretical perspectives on the adoption of e-government. The Chapters in this section provide a theoretical lens for which to consider other Chapters in this book. There is an examination of the how e-government fits into the stages of e-government growth and how it has changed, or has the potential to change, the nature of municipal operations. One important aspect in the study of local e-government is its impact on the public sector organizations. In Chapter I, Weerakkody and Dhillon make the argument that scholars need to study transformational e-government, or what they label “t-government,” as one of the most important stages of adoption. The second Chapter by Schuppan, examines the idea and application of Informatized Public Service Networks (IPSN) in local e-government, examining the potential of changing the size or possibly eliminating levels of government through information networks. King, in Chapter III, examines citizen-centric e-government in the United Kingdom using the stages of e-government growth models. Paskaleva, in Chapter IV, examines a theoretical framework of e-governance through an integrated city e-governance policy framework as a way of examining e-readiness in European cities. Deakin, Chapter V, examines the idea of intelligent cities and how e-government can potentially increase citizen-initiated contacts

with government and Cotterill in Chapter VI delves into the impact of local e-government partnerships in the United Kingdom. McLoughlin, in Chapter VII, examines the “joining up of services” in the United Kingdom through greater information sharing due to e-government. Reece and Andreasson, in Chapter VIII, explore through an institutional analysis of e-government and found that many social economic variables did not explain e-government quality in cities. Jukić, Kunstelj, Dečman, and Vintar in Chapter IX, take a holistic view to e-government implementation and examine both the supply from local governments and the demand by citizens for e-government. This last Chapter in the section leads particularly well into the next section of the book.

DEMAND-SIDE PERSPECTIVES ON E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The second section of this book examines the demand-side explanations of e-government adoption and implementation. The Chapters in this section delve into the role of citizens in local e-government, examining issues of accountability and participation. One of the ways that local e-government is said to benefit a democratic society is through enabling participation of its citizens in governance. Along these lines, in Chapter X, Torres, Pina, Acerete, and Royo examine transparency, openness, and accountability in public administration through the lens of local European Union e-government. Aikins' Chapter XI findings reveal that city population size and officials' beliefs in traditional and Internet-based citizen participation influences the deployment of resources and the use of the Internet for citizen participation. In Chapter XII, Stuart and Hooper explore the sociological factors that affect voter participation in Internet voting. Knapp, Chen, Hamilton, and Coors in Chapter XIII examine citizen participation in urban planning through interactive 3-D visualization. In Chapter XIV Evans-Cowley and Conroy also examine urban planning through a survey of municipal planning departments and the role of citizen participation in the planning process. Jensen's Chapter XV survey of elected local government officials suggests that there is little political will to use the Internet to facilitate greater levels of participation. Chen and Dorsey, in Chapter XVI, use both the e-government and gerontology literatures to develop a list of factors affecting the demand for e-government among current and future seniors in a small U.S. city. Chen, Huang, Hsiao, Lin, and Lee, authors of Chapter XVII, use experimental design of two citizen conferences in Taiwan (one face-to-face and the other online) to examine the impact of citizen participation in local e-government. As previously noted, the demand-side perspective argues that citizens and their participation is a critical dimension for local e-government adoption; many chapters in this section of the book demonstrate this important finding.

SUPPLY-SIDE PERSPECTIVES ON E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The third section of this book examines the supply-side perspectives on the adoption and implementation of local e-government. The supply-side studies examine issues such as the role of e-government on institutions and their performance. This perspective explores whether e-government has transformed local government in areas such as local service delivery. Greg and Navarro, in Chapter XVIII, examine e-government development from what types of knowledge and skills public managers need to develop and guide e-government initiatives. Huang, in Chapter XIX, conducted a content analysis of county government Web sites, and found that adoption of e-government was significantly correlated with so-

cioeconomics factors such as population, ethnicity, and education. Piotrowski and Borry, Chapter XX, found that the extent to which Web sites increase municipal transparency varied considerably in their content analysis of municipal governments in New Jersey. Holzer and Manoharan (Chapter XXI) in a content analysis of Asian municipal Web sites found that the capacity to provide public services online was largely related to the economy of the nation and financial capacity of the government. Yildiz in Chapter XXII shows that local e-government development is still in its infancy in Turkey. Parlak and Sobaci, in another study of Turkey, evaluated e-government practices in metropolitan municipalities and found that they were inadequate in the provision of Web site-based e-government services (Chapter XXIII). Chapter XXIV by Lombardi, Cooper, Paskaleva-Shapira, and Deakin examined a city eGovernance framework and showed how the content of cities' existing Web sites did not completely satisfy the expectations of the European Union. Freeman (Chapter XXV) found empirical evidence on the existence of various high-yield e-government projects using financial analysis tools such as payback method. Jauhiainen and Inkinen in Chapter XXVI examined quality of life issues as a result of e-government and found that there was much rhetoric in national strategies, however not much in terms of actual reality in local practice. The following section examines some of the e-government technologies that local governments are using in order to increase citizen participation and enhance local service delivery.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND LOCAL E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION

Section four of the book examines the emerging technologies the adoption and implementation of local e-government. In Chapter XXVII, Bossinger provides a summary of what open source software is, what is so special about it, and offers several compelling reasons why local governments should be taking a closer look at its abilities. In Chapter XXVIII, Cassell draws on a comparative case study of four European cities and open source software adoption; this author found evidence that migration was driven by a strong desire to maintain control over a municipality's IT infrastructure. Ganapati and Schoepp (Chapter XXIX) argue that wireless broadband is a basic communications tool that is important for digital inclusion, economic development, public safety, better public services, and education. Municipal governments have an important role to play in its adoption. Baker, Bell, and Moon, in Chapter XXX, found that basic municipal wireless networks in U.S. cities accessibility compliance agreements are often overlooked components of the "digital divide" within their communities. Cole, Cole, and Kurtz in Chapter XXXI made the argument that the potential benefit of residential broadband for delivering e-government services to entities outside government – in particular, individuals, households, or small organizations – is at least equal to the benefits of performing government-to-government processes electronically. Viitanen and Kingston (Chapter XXXII) demonstrate how improvements in local communities could be delivered through the integration of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) with a range of public services. In Chapter XXXIII, Murphy reviews emerging GIS economic development applications as a way to encourage economic development in local communities. Jaeger, in Chapter XXXIV, indicates that as residents, communities, and governments rely on public libraries as a main access point to e-government, it is essential to understand the connection and education roles of public libraries to improve the delivery of local e-government. In Chapter XXXV, Kamal and Themistocleous express the need to understand the adoption of enterprise application integration in local government authorities to addresses organizational integration problems from both technical and business perspectives.

CASE STUDIES ON LOCAL E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION

In the last section of this book, there is a presentation of several case studies of e-government adoption and implementation. These case studies present successes and challenges to the adoption of e-government at the local level. In Chapter XXXVI, Roy notes that Canada faces greater challenges in collaborating across jurisdictional boundaries than Denmark and that weaker municipal capacity within the Canada are a major reason for this author's finding. In Chapter XXXVII, Stowers argues that a small U.S. city such as San Carlos, Calif., is an e-government innovator because of factors such as location, that allow the creation of resources through networking with knowledge individuals supporting the development of regional agency/community collaborations. In Chapter XXXVIII, Frank believes that in Florida, Miami-Dade's county government experience with performance management software implementation is consistent with that found elsewhere in the private and public sectors; clear benchmarks for successful implementation were not carefully articulated prior to rollout. In Chapter XXXIX, Nasi examines e-government in Italian local governments and found that these governments have not established an organization-wide strategy for e-government that aligns organizational priorities with adequate resource commitment. Ask, Hatakka, and Grönlund (Chapter XL) examine e-government in Örebro City, Sweden, and found that the lessons learned are the needs for practical ways of acting strategically to reduce the risk level and increase the ability to implement policy. Chung (Chapter XLI) reviewed local e-government adoption in rural South Korea, which was designed as a way of reducing the digital divide and improving local economies. In Chapter XLII, Sarosa and Lestari found that Jogjakarta's local governments only used their Web sites to publish necessary information, thus, few interactions between local government and citizens really existed. Chapter XLIII, Kaliannan, Abdullah, and Raman show that local governments in Malaysia are still at the broadcast or publication stage of e-government development. In Chapter XLIV Lubbe and Singh, when investigating local educational institutions in South Africa, found that users' perception of information systems usefulness has an impact on the views of the quality of the system. Filho and dos Santos Junior in Chapter XLV show that ICT in municipal government in Brazil were designed in such a way that they resemble the traditional political structures; maintaining politics as usual and avoiding new forms of interaction and participation. Chapter XLVI, Mitra, Gupta, and Sahu found that in provincial and local police systems in India, there was an acute problem of training, funding, and technical manpower issues. Finally, in Chapter XLVII, Juntunen investigates e-services in Finnish police and found that there were unclear roles and responsibilities in different cooperation networks, which can hinder the development in joint e-service projects.

CONCLUSION

This book addresses issues faced by local governments in e-government, addressing both its impact on citizens and government operations and performance. Exploring major technologies that are used and providing case studies of successes and challenges in adoption in local governments, some of the lessons that can be extrapolated from this book are that more citizen involvement in e-government at the local level enhances democracy and transparency in governments. Furthermore, e-government as envisaged by early studies about claims concerning its revolutionary properties has largely not materialized. However, there is hope in e-government adoption and implementation according to many scholars in this book, that it can potentially radically transform government and many facets of our information society.

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