

Preface

While the focus and purpose of e-government globally remains the same, the implementation and successes of digital governance vary widely from country to country. A common sentiment of the implementation of e-government was voiced by D. M. West, who stated, “In general, we find that e-government has fallen short of its potential. Governments are not making full use of available technology, and there are problems in terms of access and democratic outreach” (West, 2000).

In the previous decade, the concept of e-government was typically seen as a new process with unlimited potential in the rapidly expanding global environment. “Electronic governance involves new styles of leadership, new ways of debating and deciding policy and investment, new ways of accessing education, new ways of listening to the citizens and new ways of organizing and delivering information and services” (Ferguson, 1999). Now, just a few years later, although e-government is still concerned with these focuses, the processes are no longer new and we find ourselves in the phase of refining and redeveloping the foundation upon which e-government first appeared: to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

To learn more about the true potential of e-government, a re-evaluation of the processes is necessary in order for e-government to continue to be accepted in the mainstream and be a more efficient system of government with access by all. If the models that were first introduced continue to be improved upon, e-government in our knowledge society will be an open and transparent institution that provides a maximum of services with a minimum of intrusion in the lives of the users.

Overall, while the basic goals of e-government have not shifted, the vision and responsiveness of the system have been forced to adapt globally in order to fulfill the public’s need. Instead of a broad-based program to seamlessly interweave government

workings with information technology, nations around the world now are struggling to implement Internet access, e-government interests and most importantly, safe and effective programs that serve society more efficiently.

In 2002, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), based in Cedex France, hosted three international seminars on e-government. Government officials responsible for development, implementation and coordination of e-government initiatives joined others such as university educators and executives with expertise in this field in an open forum, to discuss ideas, innovations and solutions on ways to incorporate new information and communications technology into the changing government structures.

These seminars produced a wealth of information on this topic, most notably, “The e-Government Imperative” published by OECD in June 2003. However, with so many ideas and so much material available in excess of the report, OECD approached Idea Group Inc., a U.S.-based international publishing company, and through a cooperative effort the idea for this book was developed. In an effort to provide the most comprehensive and practical coverage of e-government issues, challenges and opportunities, the original expert participants of the OECD seminars on e-government were invited to contribute their latest work in this area for possible inclusion in this important book.

Practicing E-Government: A Global Perspective presents a variety of chapters covering many of the important topics in e-government, and is intended to elicit comments, raise concerns and open dialogue as we continue to implement e-government programs for mainstream society. Further, the book responds to e-government’s present shortcomings, while exploring a renewed understanding of e-government’s visions and responsiveness. The issues covered in this book are summarized:

In **Chapter 1**, *E-Government as Collaborative Governance: Structural, Accountability and Cultural Reform*, Barbara Ann Allen, Luc Juillet, Gilles Paquet, and Jeffrey Roy discuss the necessity for e-government to place an emphasis on collaboration as never before. This point of view of national governments and their organizational regimes creates a new focus on performance that, in turn, drives the need for collaboration internally. The authors remind readers of the need for a shift of viewpoint to focusing on performance rather than the typical focus on process. How national governments re-organize their own managerial regimes and organizational architectures for this new environment will determine the success of e-governance.

Chapter 2, *Performance Measurement and Evaluation of E-Government and E-Governance Programmes and Initiatives* by Tony Bovaird is based on the premise that e-government has the potential to be a major enabler in the adoption of good governance practices. This chapter focuses on the need for performance measurement and evaluation in e-government and e-governance, and is intended to help in the design of an evaluative framework. By exploring some key issues in performance measurement of e-government and e-governance, this chapter presents possible frameworks by which such evaluation might be undertaken and sets out some interim conclusions and recommendations.

In **Chapter 3**, *E-Government and E-Governance: Organizational Implications, Options, and Dilemmas*, Tony Bovaird suggests that e-government and e-governance initiatives can potentially have major organizational impacts through three major mechanisms: improved decision-making, more intensive and productive use of data bases, and better communications. These mechanisms impact on both the internal organisation

of public agencies and their configuration of networks and partnerships. E-enablement therefore makes many existing organizational structures and processes obsolete and offers the prospect of transformation in both service delivery and public governance arrangements. While it seems likely that existing organizational configurations in the public sector will not be sustainable, the most appropriate ways forward will only be uncovered through much experimentation within e-government and e-governance programmes. In the nature of experimentation, many of these initiatives will turn out to be unproductive or cost-ineffective - but that is, perhaps, the necessary price to pay for the level of public sector transformation which now appears to be in prospect.

In **Chapter 4**, *Confidence in E-Government: The Outlook for a Legal Framework for Personal Data and Privacy*, Georges Chatillon writes that most users approach online services with an apprehension stemming from a lack of familiarity with government computer procedures and legal issues. Similarly, government officials' "objective" knowledge of the information technology mechanisms used by e-government is highly relative, as is their legal training in the realm of personal data protection. While the public does not really wish to know about the mysterious workings of government, electronic or otherwise, government employees are sometimes reluctant to change their work habits and adapt to new e-procedures when time-proven solutions can be found in the context of traditional government. Governments' hesitation to implement new legal status for the personal e-data processed by electronic public services has also had a detrimental effect on e-government.

In **Chapter 5**, *E-Government and Organizational Change*, Stuart Culbertson examines key aspects of organizational change required by governments to make their e-government strategies successful. The change imperative entails a hard look at many of the structures, processes, cultural issues and management practices prevailing within the public sector. This chapter identifies government success factors for several organizational entities involved in e-government and assesses the implications for organizational change on government structures, work practices and culture.

In **Chapter 6**, *Transformed Government: Case Studies on the Impact of E-Government in Public Administration*, Stuart Culbertson follows up his previous chapter with practical examples where he examines several promising trends and developments, lessons learned and key factors that have contributed to the success of e-government initiatives examined to date.

In **Chapter 7**, *Measuring E-Government in Italy*, by Marcella Corsi, the author describes her experience in establishing an observatory for the measurement of the impact of e-government policies on the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Italian public sector. Using a definition of "e-government" slightly different than the usual one, the chapter takes into account not only the mere providing of e-services, but also the whole impact of ICT in terms of transformation of public administrations. It is the hope of the author to develop a standard, transparent system, which, while it takes into account the overall level of e-government, the type and number of online services, and their ease of access and quality in the public sector.

In **Chapter 8**, *The E-mancipation of the Citizen and the Future of E-Government: Reflections on ICT and Citizens' Partnership*, by Valerie A.J. Frissen, the author considers the notion of the e-mancipated citizen against the background of current trends in social and political participation of citizens. The role of ICTs in shaping these new

forms of civic engagement is discussed and the implications of these developments for e-government and e-governance.

In **Chapter 9**, *Measuring and Evaluating E-Government: Building Blocks and Recommendations for a Standardized Measuring Tool*, Christiaan Holland, Frank Bongers, Rens Vandeberg, Wouter Keller and Robbin te Velde describe research the authors have conducted on measuring e-government in The Netherlands. This research was commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior in The Netherlands. The authors developed a new concept and measuring tool for e-government and describe the methodological aspects of their approach in this chapter with the hope that they can create discussion on new ways to measure and evaluate e-government in an international perspective.

In **Chapter 10**, *Drop the 'e': Marketing E-Government to Skeptical and Web-Wearry Decision-Makers*, Douglas Holmes addresses the risk of low public awareness and declining political interest as barriers to e-government, and considers ways governments can develop better marketing techniques to “sell” online services and the e-government concept to both groups. The term “marketing” is used loosely to mean both the presentation and promotion of actual online services to encourage people to use them, and the presentation and promotion of the theory and concept of e-government to ensure political understanding of its benefits to society.

In **Chapter 11**, *E-Government: Trick or Treat?*, author Alison Hopkins uses a consumer perspective to look at some of the principal challenges for governments in developing not just e-government but *responsive* e-government. While e-government is not a new concept, on the whole e-government services are passive — consumers can find information and download forms, but there is limited interactivity. The challenge is how to engage effectively and appropriately with consumers in an ongoing two-way process.

In **Chapter 12**, *Realigning Governance: From E-Government to E-Democracy*, Donald G. Lenihan acknowledges that over the last few decades, information and communications technologies (ICTs) have progressed at a remarkable pace. By the mid-1990s, the new technology had been used to engineer a major transformation of the private sector, reshaping markets and the basic building block of the modern economy: the corporation. Likewise, enthusiasts predicted that the public sector was about to go through a similar transformation. A new era in government was said to be dawning. For some, electronic- or e-government promised to transform government operations leading to major “efficiency gains” in service delivery. But e-government is proving more difficult and costly than first thought and the expected benefits have been slow to materialize. With some notable exceptions, the efficiency gains have been mixed. The boom in e-commerce was short-circuited by the dot-com bust. Is the bloom coming off the e-government rose? This chapter tries to shed more light on the pertinent issues and reflect a broader vision that e-government is about the transformation of government. A firm commitment from decision makers to think through the issues and steer the right course is critical or e-government could easily lose momentum or veer off course.

In **Chapter 13**, *Paradigm and Practice: The Innovative Organization to Deal with E-Government*, Valentina Mele presents a model that can be considered to be of the “transformist school,” that emphasizes that leadership must play a key role in interpreting user needs before the implementation of new technology. She states that

there are inherent risks in innovation and that only through strong management will failures be recognized early in the process and stopped before escalating the commitment to a doomed process.

In **Chapter 14**, *Skills for Electronic Service Delivery in Public Agencies*, Salvador Parrado deals with the needed skills to implement an e-government strategy. Although competencies and skills are used in the text interchangeably, competencies have a broader meaning. They are characteristics of an individual which underline performance or behavior at work. Competency is an observable, measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities and behaviors. In this chapter, the emphasis is placed on ICT-related skills for top managers of public bureaucracies that deliver services electronically.

In **Chapter 15**, *Identifying Effective Funding Models for E-Government*, Franklin S. Reeder and Susan M. Pandey examine the central budgetary rules and processes and how they are being or could be adapted to finance investments in e-government. In particular, the paper looks at three countries (New Zealand, the UK and the U.S.) and examines the techniques and models that they are using to secure and manage funding for high priority e-government projects.

Chapter 16, *E-Government and Private-Public Partnerships: Relational Challenges and Strategic Directions*, by Barbara Allen, Luc Juillet, Gilles Paquet and Jeffrey Roy, acknowledges that there is now a growing recognition that e-government is less about electronic government in a purely technical sense and more about renewing public sector institutions for a new, more knowledge- and network-driven era. As governments formulate their own integrative strategies for moving online, coordination challenges both within and across governments are likely to grow — as will the potential for healthy competition. The new governance challenge of an effective and online public sector reside in defining the requisite mix of competitive and collaborative forces needed to realize the full potential of an online world — *one that is both digital and democratic*.

In **Chapter 17**, *What Skills are Needed in an E-World: E-Government Skills and Training Programs for the Public Sector*, Alexander Settles writes that the transition to e-government applications for public service delivery and management involves significant changes to the traditional systems of public management. The use of ICTs in combination with significant policy changes and systems of operation, has the potential to provide greater transparency and democracy. By reducing information transaction, storage, and dissemination costs, ICTs allow for greater access to information and records. In addition, the evolution of interactive communication technologies has opened additional channels for the public to access public sector information, comment on public decisions, and interact with their elected officials.

Chapter 18, *Citizen Participation in Public Administration: The Impact of Citizen Oriented Public Services on Government and Citizen* (Hein van Duivenboden), discusses electronic government services from the perspective of both government and citizens. The chapter focuses on the changing relationship between government and citizens by examining theory and practice of electronic public service delivery initiatives. Basic end-user skills will be needed of all public-sector agencies if governments intend to open e-government channels for a significant percent of government services. These employees will need the basic skills to use e-government effectively with project management and organizational skills becoming increasingly important. The quality and availability of appropriate educational and training opportunities for

managers, staff, and, perhaps, even the public, provide a critical mass for potential change.

The collaboration of this book between so many experts from around the world bodes well for the future of e-government, as professionals collaborate and share best practices in an effort to take the basic concept of digital government and continue to enhance the frameworks that encourage innovation and adoption, moving e-government toward its goal of easy access for the masses. My hope is that this valuable collection of contributions in this vital emerging technology area will be instrumental in broadening our understanding of e-government technologies and potential.

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