Chapter V
Predicting the Adoption of Mobile Government Services

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ABSTRACT

Mobile government transform many of the traditional governance practices. The citizens’ adoption of M-Government services (e.g. voting, tax services, health services, etc.), however, is determined by a series of factors (e.g. ease of use, image, compatibility, etc.). This chapter investigates the predicting power of these factors towards contributing to theory building and providing direct implications that are useful for the diffusion and adoption of mobile government services in Greece. The study reviews the available literature on adoption and diffusion of innovation as well as the available relevant research insights on the mobile commerce landscape. Then, the study empirically tests the predicting power of a series of critical variables that are theoretically related to the Greek citizens’ intention to adopt mobile government services. The findings imply that compatibility and ease of use have significant predicting power on citizens’ intention to adopt M-Government services. Direct implications and further research directions are provided at the end.
INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Electronic Government (e-government) attracts the attention of governments, worldwide. It is quite common for such evolutions to be linked to broader economic and social initiatives like the Information Society or the New or Knowledge Economy (Martin & Byrne 2003). Information Society programs in the e-government field are driven by technological, economic and social factors. However, improving the customer satisfaction with online government services is one of the leading factors driving e-government initiatives around the world.

Like e-commerce or e-business, e-government refers to the use of Information and Communications technologies (ICT) in the interaction process between the citizens and the government (voting, tax services, health services, etc.). These technologies could be the Internet, the Web, the mobile phone, the Interactive Digital TV, etc. Similarly, mobile government (M-Government) refers to the use of mobile devices (i.e. mobile phones, palmtops, PDAs) from citizens to interact with government. Therefore, among others, the major difference between e- and M-Government is the mobility that the latter offers to users (Turban et al. 2008).

Despite its infancy, M-Government is a growing and important set of complex strategies and tools that will completely change the roles and functioning of traditional governance. In advocating the existence and importance of M-Government, there are two basic facts to be considered:

- There are more people who have a mobile phone than there are people who have access to a desktop or portable computer and to Internet (Durlacher Research 2001), which will make government services available more to mobile subscribers than to PC users, even though M-Government is considered a subset of e-government. Especially in Greece the above argument is quite applicable. Specifically, 24 per cent of the Greek population owns a desktop or a portable computer and also Greece has 3.8 million Internet users which corresponds to a 33.9 per cent penetration rate while the average Internet penetration rate in European Union member states is 48.1 per cent. On the other hand, Greece has 10.03 million mobile subscribers which corresponds to 92.8 per cent penetration rate.

- M-Government provides instant availability. Specifically, it helps people to access government services and useful information without the limitations of time and location.

Three interrelated evolutions accelerate the development of M-Government. These are: (1) advancements in mobile technology, (2) the wider acceptance of these technologies by the public, and (3) the development of government applications and services. Technological developments spawned by R&D initiatives in the private sector in concert with increasing consumer demand for improvements in e-government efforts are the foundation for M-Government (Kushchu & Boricki 2004). The above arguments emphasize the fact that mobile phones, and mobile messaging (mainly text messaging) in particular, can be one of the most appropriate mediums for the delivery of government services and public information. M-Government, especially in the case of Greece, can act as the introductory phase of e-government services, and help towards increasing the use of e-government services, with the optimum goal being the introduction and the wide use of ubiquitous e-government services.

Once citizens begin to use e-government services, they tend to continue using e-government (Council for Excellence in Government and Accenture 2003). However, in almost every E.U. member state more progress has been made during the last years concerning online services for businesses than concerning those for citizens (Cap