Foreword

The seventh annual update (see State and Federal Government Report, 2007, Taubman Center for Public Policy, Brown University) on the features that are available online through American state and federal government websites indicates that considerable progress has been made in placing services and information online but many websites are still poorly organized while some outlying sites, like the Ethics Commission, Elections, or Consumer Protection, do not receive the same attention and suffer structurally and from a dearth of information. Other areas of concern include lack of effective search engines, lack of explicit privacy policies, poor navigation protocols etc. Also only about 50% of the web sites comply with the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C) disability guidelines.

This book which is a collection of refereed papers authored by researchers from around the world is aimed at highlighting and explaining many of the factors and situations that lead to some of the above limitations in E-Government Website development. The papers are forward looking and a timely addition to the literature as they provide a framework for policy makers, at the state and federal level, who are involved in developing information dissemination policies. They also afford valuable insights to web site developers who can utilize them in designing sites that avoid clutter and do not overwhelm the citizens as they navigate the web sites. More importantly since government web sites cater to a variety of stakeholders, the papers provide, in an easy to read format, different perspectives one should keep in mind as the web sites are developed. Of special interest are papers by authors from South Asian countries that provide an emerging country perspective of E-Government web sites.

The papers are especially useful to researchers in E-Government as they identify future trends that could influence the growth and development of government web sites. Specifically the areas that could see more attention include judicious use of multimedia tools, mainly audio and video clips, along with intellectual games for several age levels and Web 2.0 technologies. It is reasonable to assume that these sites would offer Personalization and Customization tools which would allow citizens and other users to customize and tailor their web accounts specifically to their needs and interests. Clearly these developments would engender many opportunities for researchers to assess and evaluate the efficacy of these features and technologies.

In the final analysis it is my opinion and hope that this book would be a great read for the practitioner and the policy maker alike while being a good reference to the E-Government researcher.

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