Foreword

This book is a milestone in a 20-year journey toward understanding e-government success and measures and using that understanding to ensure that government information technologies lead to more democratic, transparent, efficient, and effective public administration. The journey is not a solo one for J. Ramon Gil-Garcia, the editor of this unique and important volume. A growing global community of scholars, practitioners, and students are joining him on this journey. They join him for many reasons, but overall, they strive to make a difference with their work by producing theoretical insights and empirical findings and translating that new knowledge into improvements in the practices of government.

The early days of the e-government journey were characterized by small numbers of scholars and practitioners and few models and methods. This nascent community, as Melvyn Ciment, formerly with the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), points out in his personal history (Ciment, 2003) of the development of the digital government research program at the NSF, was focused on making an argument that the government context was different from the business context and required its own focused research program. The small but growing community met resistance to this argument by focusing on the explosion of the Web as a likely game changer in terms of the relationship between government officials and academics. Ciment, and others like him, knew that the demand for new knowledge about technologies, such as the Web, in the governmental context would be needed. This view carried the day and through the efforts of computer and social scientists, including Dr. Sharon Dawes at the Center for Technology in Government, lead author of "Some Assembly Required: Building a Digital Government for the 21st Century," the NSF Digital Government Research Program was launched. This story, in general terms, has played out in many countries around the world. In many cases, like in the US, a formal e-government research funding program was created; in others, pockets of funding and steely determination fueled development of experts, insights, and communities.

Twenty years later, a truly global community of scholars and practitioners is thriving and realizing the objectives set so many years ago; generating new knowledge about digital government and contributing to improvements in practice. In my role as Director of the Center for Technology in Government and President-elect of the Digital Government Society (DGS) (www.dgsna.org). I have seen this community work together in creative and innovative ways, striving to fill gaps in what is known about e-government and to use that new knowledge to inform practice. Gil-Garcia is at the center of this community, gaining continued recognition for his research and working as a leader in building quality research venues, forming innovative research collaborations, and educating the next generation of scholars and practitioners. In 2009, he was identified as the most prolific among over 900 researchers publishing in digital government; some of his publications have been recognized as among the top-cited articles in leading journals such as *Government Information Quarterly* and among the most read in e-journals such as *Noticide Ciencias*.

Sociales. In his work and through this book he encourages the e-government community to invest, along with him, in the development of a more comprehensive view of the "different socio-technical elements and aspects" of e-government. Gil-Garcia's stature as a global leader in e-government research and his ability to be one moment conceptualizing, the next theorizing, and the one after that an innovative and skilled methodologist, uniquely position him to compile this set of chapters, which brings together some of the best thinking on e-government theories, concepts, and methods.

This who's who of e-government research brought together by Gil-Garcia provides readers, scholars, and practitioners alike with the most current efforts to theorize and conceptualize e-government success, and new models and methods to test those ideas and measure the impact of newly informed practices. Gil-Garcia's most recent and acclaimed book, Enacting Electronic Government Success: An Integrative Study of Government-Wide Websites, Organizational Capabilities, and Institutions can be seen as setting the stage for this edited book on e-government success factors and measures. Dawes (2012), in her foreword to Enacting Electronic Government Success: An Integrative Study of Government-Wide Websites, Organizational Capabilities, and Instutions, identifies the strength of Gil-Garcia's work as stemming from "the way it integrates policy, organizational, and technological factors within a larger institutional and societal environment. The empirical, multi-method study offers important contributions to the emerging field of digital government research as well as to more fundamental aspects of organization studies, public administration, and public policy." The chapters presented here in E-Government Success Factors and Measures continue to support the argument that Ciment, Dawes, and Gil-Garcia, and other pioneers in this community have persistently made: if we are to realize the full potential of technology in government, new knowledge about the socio-technical elements of e-government must be created through research and used in practice.

Wherever I go in the world I see governments striving to meet their commitment to citizens through the use of technology. Their efforts are focused on adapting new and emerging technologies as well as leveraging their investments in legacy systems. Regardless of the nature of the technology and the extent of organizational and institutional transformation required to deliver value to citizens, the same questions arise: how can we avoid failure? How can we be sure that the investments we are making are the right ones? How do we know if we have the right policies, procedures, and people in place to ensure that we can successfully meet our commitment to citizens? How do we measure the impact of our efforts? Whether investing in new social media strategies to engage citizens on a very specific issue such as a new park or a new bus line or implementing a new government-wide procurement system, the overriding question is the same: How can we know? We can only know if we continue to invest, as a community, in the development of related theories and concepts and by refining the skills and tools needed to hold ourselves and others accountable for the ideas they offer and the models they prescribe.

The carefully selected chapters of *E-Government Success Factors and Measures: Theories, Concepts, and Methodologies* provide students, practitioners, and researchers with a comprehensive look at the current state of understanding about e-government success factors and measures and lays the foundation for their future individual and collective efforts. The work of Luna-Reyes and Andersen in the opening chapter of the theory section sets the tone immediately for the book by raising a question about the relative utility of a factor approach to understanding success and failure in e-government. Their work, which uses causal mapping in the creation of a generic theory of interorganizational cross-boundary electronic government projects, they claim, suggests that such mapping, which relies on recursive structures, might be an appropriate alternative to the factor approach. Similarly, Dawes, in her chapter in the concepts section, takes us beyond success measures for e-government per se and calls for a thorough consideration

of the enabling conditions in the larger environment. The final section of the book draws our attention to the methodological issues and challenges of e-government research, and Bouaziz and Chaabouni, in particular, draw our attention to the challenges of "exploring the dynamic nature of citizen response to e-government." Their chapter introduces how recent advances in Internet search technology may offer new opportunities to answer these questions. These three chapters and the 14 that complete the volume meet the mark set for this work by Gil-Garcia; they provide the reader with some of the latest work in the area of e-government success and provide a foundation for the reader to begin to imagine the next phase of development of the digital government research and practice community worldwide.

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