ABSTRACT

Refugees and displaced people who have been affected by disaster or political instability (uprooted from their homes in search of safety) are an interesting group of citizens when we consider e-government services since they face extra challenges of access to such government services. The chapter explores challenges faced by e-service delivery to refugee and displaced people which are often characteristic of unstable societies. This chapter reports on a study of Syrian refugees and displaced people using a survey exploring the use of e-services for citizens inside and outside of Syria. The authors apply institutional theory as a theoretical lens using the dimensions of economic, political, technical, and social to understand the context and issues of providing e-government services within this very challenging domain. The results indicate six themes influencing sustainable and effective support for e-services for such groups of people, namely importance of e-services, connectivity, awareness, e-service availability, financial constraints, and digital literacy.
INTRODUCTION

Electronic Government (hereafter eGov) define as a transformative agent upon political and civic activity. It utilizes provision and use of information, services, and communications by citizens and governments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and transactions in the public sector (Alsaeed, Adams, & Boakes, 2014). Seo & Bernsen (2016) point out that eService developed in many ways which have enhanced by the citizens’ requirements. Alshehri, Drew & Alfarraj (2012) argue that Governments usually provide eServices to people within its authority, which depend on the people’s needs and thus provide the opportunity for better development, especially, in terms of the varieties of service provided and their availability. Therefore, many governments have put financial investment and effort into developing and enhancing eGov for better use of the eService across people’s categories (such as poor, old, young, displaced and settle ...etc.) (Chatfiel & Alhujran, 2009; Seo & Bernsen, 2016). In the race for successful eGov implementation, policymakers around the world are competing against each other for solutions to bridge the digital divide across societies. Although the digital divide element usually stands as a significant barrier to implementing eGov successfully, governments are trying to avoid excluding certain categories (for example elderly, disabled and vulnerable people) and are trying to include all people to adopt the eService (displaced people and refugees should not be exception), consequently, which lead to fill the gap of the digital divide. Helbig, Ramón Gil-García, & Ferro (2009) argue that using sophisticated information technologies in government has little social value if the people cannot use the service, or benefit from this innovation in a meaningful way. Otherwise, the negative impact would be an inevitable consequence if, however, a segment of the society left behind where everyone should be included (United Nations, 2012a). However, governments have not been so successful in providing eService to unstable societies or encouraging refugees to adopt or continuously use the eService provided, especially those people who are living in camps where they are isolated (Transtec S.A., 2015). The survey by the UNHCR (2016) reveals that the world is experiencing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War with 65 million refugees and displaced people. The report, also, shows that developing countries are hosting 86% of the world’s refugees. A recent survey from (Information Management Unit, 2016) states that the Syrian people have endured one of the most ferocious, barbarous and brutal conflicts of the 21st century which has lasted for five years and is still going. The survey reported over 250,000 people killed, over a million injured, 6.5 million displaced within Syria, 4.6 million refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries and the remaining population, which is about 13.5 million people are in an unbearable situation and much of them lack humanitarian support. Although some studies
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