BOOK REVIEW

Transformational Government through eGov Practice: Socioeconomic, Cultural, and Technological Issues

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The Internet along with recent advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has facilitated public sector reform. The utilization of ICT tools and applications in the public sector has the potential to bring fundamental changes to the way services and information are provided to citizens and other government stakeholders. Such ICT utilization in government is generally referred to as transformational government or eGovernment which is the topic of this book. Many governments in both developed and developing countries are shifting towards eGovernment aiming to lessen corruption, bureaucracy, and centralization. Indeed, this can be accomplished by getting citizens more involved in government decision making practices, enhancing transparency, improving control and accountability, fostering participative democracy, communicating and providing access to government information, and delivering efficient and effective decentralized services to citizens and other stakeholders such as business organizations.

Notwithstanding, what we have learned so far from the experiences of various governments undertaking eGovernment initiatives shows the complexity of such a transformation. Indeed, moving into eGovernment is not straight forward as it is not all about the implementation of ICTs per se. Dealing with eGovernment programs or projects as IT projects is catastrophic. This is because eGovernment is in fact a new paradigm or philosophy that profoundly changes the relationship between governments and their stakeholders and the manner in which they interact with each other’s through the use of ICTs. Therefore; socioeconomic, political, cultural, behavioral, and technological perspectives are all essential when examining eGovernment initiatives. However and despite the noticeable efforts in this field, one cannot find one single reference examining this domain from a comprehensive standpoint the way this book does.

This book, “Transformational Government through eGov Practice: Socioeconomic, Cultural, and Technological Issues”, successfully fulfills the urgent and pertinent need to holistically examine transformational government through eGovernment practice. This book comprehensively discusses various significant aspects and views in this context and from different but related perspectives. It is therefore a complete unprecedented reference for both researchers and practitioners in the domain of transformational government and eGovernment which carefully links theory and practice including case studies with a multi-national focus. The solid theoretical foundation interlinked with the useful real-life case studies delivered through this book are very fruitful to advance our understanding.
into how to prepare, transform, and evaluate governments into eGovernment best practices.

This book is divided into seven fundamental divisions incorporating twenty-four chapters which cover different aspects related to transformation government and the use of ICTs in providing efficient and effective eGovernment information and services to citizens and other government stakeholders. The first division includes four chapters that advocate multi-methodological research in Information Systems (IS) and eGovernment. This division also discusses policy making in addition to strategic objectives and outcomes of the eGovernment practice. Some uses of ICTs within the public sector reform (e.g. Public Procurement) are also included in this division. Overall, the first division offers a suitable introduction to the field of eGovernment in general and to the research methods that are deemed useful in this context in particular. The second division of this book also has four chapters. It primarily focuses on eGovernment development from IS standpoints by discussing relevant and innovative concepts (e.g. public value) and frameworks for service design and delivery in the context of eGovernment. Technologies and IT-based solutions such as cloud computing, Web portals, and eProcurement along with their uses, challenges, and critical factors for successful transformational government are also deliberated in this division. This division provides useful material not only for academics, but also for practitioners as concepts and frameworks presented in this division can be utilized to fruitfully guide and inform the design, development, and delivery of eGovernment services and applications.

The third division of this book mainly discusses issues related to the use of Internet technologies, or otherwise referred to as the World Wide Web, to improve citizen-government interaction. The use of Web 2.0 technologies as a multichannel approach for eParticipation in addition to the benefits, risks, and adoption challenges for the Software as a Service (SaaS) model for public sector organizations are explained in this division. The third division also highlights citizen data privacy as a potential concern of the eGovernment practice. Indeed, online engagement and citizen participation in policy making activities and other practices related to eGovernment form an interesting and valuable field for academics, social, and practitioners. The fourth division comprises three chapters that examine and investigate issues related to citizen acceptance of transformation government initiatives through eGovernment services. This division identifies key factors influencing acceptance of various eGovernment services and applications from the perspective of citizens as users. It also illustrates drivers, inhibitors, and strategies of mobile government (mGovernment) diffusion in the public sector. The importance of this division stems from the fact that eGovernment services, tools, and applications have little or no value if they are not accepted and effectively used by their intended users (e.g. citizens and business organizations). In other words, the success of eGovernment initiatives is primarily determined by their rate of acceptance and adoption by citizens and other stakeholders. Currently, these issues related to acceptance are very significant given that many governments worldwide are still facing the problem of low-level adoption of eGovernment services.

The fifth division of this book includes four chapters that mainly address collaboration, participation, and involvement issues related to transformational government. It examines how social media platforms and other participative technologies can be utilized to
facilitate (i) collaboration amongst several agencies and organizations involved in developing and delivering public policy; and (ii) communication and interaction between governments and their citizens. This is indeed significant as little is known about the role that participative technologies and other platforms can play in fostering citizen engagement and involvement as well as facilitating collaboration amongst governmental agencies in addition to their impacts and consequences on work and decision-making practices. The sixth division has three chapters. This division examines the ability of government agencies and organizations to integrate business processes and share information by the use of common standards and work practices (i.e. interoperability). This inclusion of this issue in the book is significant as interoperability represents one of the key managerial, organizational, and technical challenges for academics and practitioners in the field of eGovernment. The division also highlights some economic benefits that be achieved due to the use of mobile services and applications in the context of transformational government. Finally, the seventh division of this book, which includes three chapters, promotes the implementation of transformational government as a postmodern organization. This division summarizes the reasons for which governments have undertaken eGovernment initiatives, the functions of eGovernment, and the expected outcomes. The division also highlights the role of power in sustaining eGovernment initiatives.

Overall, the seven divisions of this book cover the field of transformational government through eGovernment practice from a comprehensive standpoint. The book is therefore can be considered as a ‘one-stop’ reference source for both academics and practitioners interested in this domain. Concepts, models, frameworks, methods, and guidelines that are useful in preparing, transforming to, evaluating, and managing eGovernment initiatives are all offered in this book. The book also contributes to the existing body of knowledge by bringing together a valuable and coherent collection of high quality chapters that cover a broad range of subjects in the context transformational government and eGovernment practice. The Editors are successful in targeting contributors from different nations of the globe coming from various backgrounds and thus tackling eGovernment initiatives from different perspectives (i.e. socioeconomic, political, cultural, managerial, behavioral, and technological) with a multi-national focus.

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