

Transforming Government: People, Process, and Policy

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the fourth issue of the tenth volume of *Transforming Government: People, Process, and Policy*. Over the years, the constant update of the journal's scope to advocate theoretical as well as empirical research has led to an increase in the quality of submissions and citations. The papers in this issue of *TGPPP* provide a rich contextual background in the area of digital divide, response of inter-organisational networks on crises like World Trade Center, e-voting, use of social media, for example, Facebook in local government, e-democracy, inter-organisational and cross-sector collaborations in e-Government initiatives and use of e-services.

This issue commences with a viewpoint by Yogesh Dwivedi, Ganesh Sahu, Nripendra Rana, Monika Singh and Rajesh Chandwani, titled "*Common Services Centres (CSCs) as an Approach to Bridge Digital Divide: Reflecting on Challenges and Obstacles*". In this viewpoint, the authors argue that regardless of the ever-increasing technological advancements and accessibility, a significant proportion of a developing nation's population still lacks the resources to own basic information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as computer and internet. The latter indicates the presence of a clear "digital divide" that is becoming more and more prevalent due to heterogeneous diffusion of internet access to end users. This is mainly noticeable in developing countries with resource constraints and where a majority of the population lives in remote and/or rural areas (Freeman and Park, 2015; Walterova and Tveit, 2012). To reduce a widening digital divide, India has, for instance, innovated common services centres (CSCs) as a means to deliver public services electronically to citizens at village level. The viewpoint identified a number of key issues relevant for effective implementation and sustainable operation of CSCs that consist of examples:

- connectivity problems;
- lack of or delayed rollout of G2C services;
- low computer literacy;
- lack of awareness about services and facilities; and
- lack of adequate training, etc.

The article has provided several recommendations that would be valuable for various agencies (both from private and public sectors) as well as policymakers for an effective implementation and long-term sustainability of CSCs. The approach offered in this article can also serve as an effective way to diffuse electronic applications and services (including e-Government services) in rural and remote areas of other developing countries (particularly resource-constraint nations from Africa, Asia and Latin America).

Following the aforementioned viewpoint, we have a research paper by J. Ramon Gil-Garcia, Theresa Pardo and Djoko Sayogo, titled "From bureaucratic machines to inter-organizational networks: characterizing the response to the world trade centre crisis". Disaster and emergency response increasingly involves coordination of multiple organisations across different levels of Government, as they handle incidents that are

beyond the normal capability and jurisdiction of any single organisation (Curnin *et al.*, 2015). In line with the latter, the authors argue that the structure of the response to the World Trade Center (WTC) crisis can be characterised as an inter-organisational network, and a majority of the activities can be identified as network management. Using a mixed-method research approach, encompassing in-depth interviews and a socio-metric survey, the authors characterise the response as an inter-organisational network and describe significant factors that facilitate the effective functioning and management of an emergency response. The results provide empirical support for the claim that *the management of the WTC response was very different from normal Government operations in many respects*. However, the findings also indicate that complete detachment of the network form of organisation from bureaucratic hierarchy is not always possible in emergency response, particularly in terms of leadership and the availability of resources. The authors further argue that bureaucratic leadership exists across political layers and is sometimes needed to provide social value to the general public and promote their engagement. Finally, the authors also present that the effectiveness of networks in emergency response is influenced by certain enabling conditions, such as the severity of events, and suggest some implications for government operations.

We then have Mohammad Alomari presenting his research, titled “E-voting adoption in a developing country”. E-Voting, as with some other technological innovations, has been implemented throughout many developed countries. It has been implemented to suit the social cohesion of western communities. This study has shown the necessity to address the factors that, from social and cultural perspectives, would influence the adoption of an e-Voting system when such a system is implemented in developing region, such as Jordan. Attempts have been made to study the adoption and implementation of e-Voting in Jordan; however, the system has not yet been fully implemented (Khasawneh *et al.*, 2008; Nu'man, 2012). This research paper therefore has sought to extend these attempts by exploring the adoption of e-Voting in the Middle East and in Jordan in particular. As a result, 11 hypotheses are proposed. To validate the conceptual findings and test the hypothesis, the author made use of questionnaires to collect information on the perceptions of 267 Jordanian citizens (with 65.2 per cent respondents as female users), who had regular access to the internet and who engaged in e-Voting. This research found that *trust in Government, attitudes, complexity and perceived usefulness* are the main factors that would influence e-Voting adoption by voters in Jordan. The Jordanian government can sustain the trust of people in different ways – one way is through its websites, by providing them with up-to-date information, such as information about elections and voting procedures, laws and regulations.

Then we have Peter Bellström, Monika Magnusson, John Sören Pettersson, Claes Thorén presenting their research, titled “Facebook usage in a local government – a content analysis of page owner posts and user posts”. In this research, the authors report that the use of social media within governments has emerged as a way to increase openness and transparency, with Bertot *et al.* (2010) highlighting the four major potential strengths of social media, such as collaboration, participation, empowerment and time. To fully understand the potential of using social media, especially focusing on Facebook in local government, the authors argue that there is a need to study both – what governments are communicating with and through their page posts and what the citizens are communicating with through their user posts on the government Facebook

page. There is a dearth of research-analysing information from both the government and the citizen perspective on social media. This research gap allows us to formulate three research questions:

- RQ1.* What type of information does a local government send through its Facebook page?
- RQ2.* What type of information does a local government receive through its Facebook page?
- RQ3.* What does the type of information communicated on Facebook reveal about government-citizen communication?

This study uses a case study approach (Yin, 2009) – which is particularly suitable for understanding complex and contemporary social phenomena – to perform a content analysis of the Facebook usage of the city and municipality of Karlstad (Sweden), an interesting municipality because of its highly developed and deliberate social media presence. The content categories identified in the paper provide novel and detailed insights on what types of information exchange occur on social media between a local government and citizens but also highlight the need to distinguish organisations from citizens among the visitors on the Government’s Facebook page.

Following this case study-based paper, we have a paper by Andreas Jørgensen and Kim Normann Andersen, titled “Navigating troubled waters: bringing the E-democratic ship into safe harbour?”. This paper proposes a framework for studying and understanding power in relation to e-Democracy. Drawing on a line of reasoning developed by Foucault and adapted by successive governmentality studies, the authors argue that power is an integrated dimension and source of dynamics in an e-Democracy and that attention needs to be directed at the mechanisms by which power is exerted. The paper then moves beyond discussions of beneficiaries and the magnitude of payoffs from e-Democracy. Using this line of reasoning, this paper explores four mechanisms – monitoring, inclusion/exclusion, moderation and exposure (MIME) – that correspond with the contradictory trends noted above and which structure various incarnations of online political participation such as deliberation (Coleman, 2004), petitioning (Cruickshank and Smith, 2010), consultation (Coleman and Shane, 2012) and voting (Schaupp and Carter, 2005). The exploration of the mechanisms results in the MIME framework for understanding the conditions of possibilities for e-Democracy. The paper derives a theoretical model of power from Foucault and affiliated governmentality studies, which constructs power as the mechanisms and logics that structure the field of possible actions. This model is grounded in research literature on e-Democracy and applied in a study of the mechanisms that structure e-Democracy. The findings indicate that power is an integrated part of e-Democracy and direct the analytical attention towards the mechanisms by which power is exerted.

Then, we have another study by Sofie Pilemalm, Ida Lindgren and Elina Ramsell, titled “Emerging forms of inter-organizational and cross-sector collaborations in e-government initiatives – implications for participative development of information systems (IS)”. In this paper, Sofie, Ida and Elina explore the recent most public sector trends, inter-organisational and cross-sector collaborations, and analyse them in terms of implications for participative development of IS. These trends are understood as being a part of emerging forms of e-Government. This study contributes by exploring three on-going cases of

inter-organisational collaboration and cross-sector collaboration taking place in the Swedish ERS. Specifically, the research objectives include:

- to identify general and IS development-specific challenges in each case;
- to compare and contrast the cases as regards the identified challenges;
- to identify corresponding implications and needs for adaption of user participative IS development approaches; and
- to provide some initial suggestions on how the adaptations can be achieved.

The study uses data from the three case studies undertaken in the Swedish ERS that relate to different IS supported collaborations of professional response organisations with other societal resources. It is argued that the results point towards a current emerging form of e-Government initiatives directed towards certain demarcated groups of citizens actually carrying out certain tasks for their co-citizens and society rather than the broad masses, having far-reaching practical implications and complicating the issue of IS development.

Finally, we have a paper by Torsten Gerpott and Nima Ahmadi, titled “Use levels of electronic government services among German citizens: an empirical analysis of objective household and personal predictors”. This paper addresses the scholarly challenge, which is to simultaneously explore a broader range of readily observable factors predicting e-Government use levels in large random samples of citizens stemming from a country that has rarely been taken into account in prior work. Against this background, the purpose of this study is to empirically explore associations between household and individual characteristics and e-Government use intensity in a sample of more than 17,000 citizens living in an industrialised country (Germany). This analysis supports public bodies and ICT

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Yogesh Dwivedi, Ganesh Sahu, Nripendra Rana, Monika Singh and Rajesh Chandwani (TG-01-2016-0006)	23/01/2016	–	–	–	–	06/03/2016
J. Ramon Gil-Garcia, Theresa Pardo and Djoko Sayogo (TG-02-2016-0011.R1)	13/02/2016	13/05/2016	–	–	–	30/08/2016
Mohammad Alomari (TG-11-2015-0046.R3)	30/11/2015	12/03/2016	13/05/2016	05/06/2016	–	09/06/2016
Peter Bellström, Monika Magnusson, John Sören Pettersson, Claes Thorén (TG-12-2015-0061.R4)	22/12/2015	08/04/2016	04/05/2016	15/06/2016	30/06/2016	05/07/2016
Andreas Jørgensen and Kim Normann Andersen (TG-01-2016-0005.R3)	22/01/2016	28/04/2016	07/07/2016	18/08/2016	–	30/08/2016
Sofie Pilemalm, Ida Lindgren and Elina Ramsell (TG-12-2015-0055.R2)	27/12/2015	21/04/2016	18/08/2016	–	–	30/08/2016
Torsten Gerpott and Nima Ahmadi	18/05/2016	21/07/2016	09/09/2016	–	–	12/09/2016

Table I.
Schedule

corporations in gaining a better understanding of the characteristics of target groups that are currently hesitant in adopting e-Government offerings and of measures which might increase citizens' attraction to public e-service platforms. The findings imply that public institutions may find it difficult to rapidly raise e-Government acceptance by just distributing "technocratic" information explaining various service options. The contribution of this paper results from the analysis of a set of objective predictors of e-Government service use in a large random sample of citizens residing in Germany, whereas most prior studies are based on surveys of small convenience samples in other countries.

We hope you will find this issue interesting and though provoking, and hope to receive your valuable contributions for the forthcoming issue (Table I).

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Brunel University, Uxbridge, UK

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Corresponding author

Muhammad Kamal can be contacted at: Muhammad.Kamal@brunel.ac.uk