

Preface

Electronic Government, or E-Government, is about harnessing the information revolution to improve the efficiency of government processes and the lives of citizens. If appropriately implemented, it promotes transparency and effectiveness of a government's processes as well as citizens' participation (e-participation) in the affairs of the government. An effective E-Government aims at a citizen-oriented user-centred approach to governance through the effective deployment of information, communication and social media technologies. After all, a government works for the benefit of its citizens.

E-government projects require solid commitment of the political leadership as well as effective planning and availability of financial resources. Whereas provision of effective E-Government is a government's responsibility, it is important that citizens have the knowledge and skills to consume the available technology to exercise positive commitment to affect the governments' strategies. Thus, a government's responsibility also extends to ensuring the availability and accessibility of necessary technological infrastructure and the training demands from the general public.

Developing countries are often at the initial stages of E-Government development, where they offer a portal providing 'one-way' Government-to-Citizen information via a website; however, the technologically developed nations have successfully progressed to the 'interactive' stages of open governments, sometimes, also referred to as Government 2.0 or Connected Government. Whereas the benefits of transparent and user-centric Connected Government, or C-Government, are tremendous, there are numerous inherent issues that hinder the satisfactory adoption and provision of E-Government. These include lack of a number of necessarily required factors including will and commitment of political leaders; clear vision and long-term workable strategy; political stability of the nation and its government; economic and governmental structures; financial resources and support; regulatory and legal frameworks and procedural controls; easy availability of ICT technologies to general public; as well as technical expertise. Additionally, there is often a lack of technological familiarity that may result in the unwillingness of the citizens to engage with the governments using innovative technologies and methodologies.

In this context, this book, *User Centric E-Government: Challenges and Opportunities*, considers the various dimensions of the Connected E-Governance and presents the prevailing situation in the form of status reports, development methodologies, practical examples, best practices, case studies and the latest research. The present volume is a collection of 13 chapters authored by academics of international fame and reputed industry practitioners from around the world. Hopefully, the book will serve as a reference text in the subject areas of E-Government and electronic governance for the provision of an open and transparent government.

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