Guest Editor's Introduction: Delivering electronic government

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Biographical notes: G.P. Sahu is an Assistant Professor at M N National Institute of Technology, Allahabad, India. He received his PhD in Management from the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India. His research interests are in the areas of MIS and e-government. He has published several research papers in journals. He has coordinated several international conferences. He has also edited five books in the area of e-government. He has acted as a reviewer for several reputed international journals. He has been on the jury for the CSI-Nihilent e-governance National Awards, India.

E-government is enabling governments to serve and facilitate the citizen in ways that one could not have imagined in the past. It is also helping to usher in a process of reform in the working of local and central governments, so that the governments are more aligned to the aspirations of citizens and government staff. The scope of applying e-government is really vast and the future holds abundant promises. The extent to which the promise of e-government is realised, depends on the efficacy of e-government delivery. However, delivering e-government remains a challenging task. Problems in delivering e-government services are mostly organisational and political rather than technical. Therefore, if e-government initiatives are to prove successful, then the challenges involved in dealing with the mindset, culture and politics of public organisations cannot be ignored.

The focus of this special issue is the effective delivery of e-government and its impact. Authors from various countries such as Canada, India, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam have contributed their research and success stories of e-government across the globe.

This special issue starts with the first paper titled 'Electronic procurement: a case study of Malaysia's e-Perolehan (e-procurement) initiative' by Kaliannan et al. The authors have presented a case study on Malaysia's e-procurement initiative, which is locally known as e-Perolehan. They have proposed that this initiative will become an important management tool to enhance the performance of supply chain especially in the public sector within developing nations such as Malaysia. The paper highlights some preliminary information about e-procurement and the overall procurement process, the key issues/challenges faced within the e-Perolehan initiative in Malaysia. The authors also discuss the guiding principles pertaining to e-Procurement implementation that can be used by governments of developing countries, based on their findings from the Malaysian case study.

In the next paper titled 'Process evaluation of award of work contracts in a government department', authors Padhi and Mohapatra have highlighted the importance of e-procurement over traditional purchasing methods and possible improvements in its successful adoption. The paper also examines the tender-awarding process of a Government body in India and suggests improvements to it.

The third paper, titled 'Does e-governance facilitate citizen empowerment in democracies? A critical discourse analysis' by Fraunholz and Unnithan, discusses e-governance as a facilitator of citizen empowerment in countries. This is empowerment through information and knowledge. The authors in this paper also focus on electoral process as a catalyst in e-governance.

The next paper, titled 'Decision making of agrarian communities: exploring the impact of e-governance initiatives in India' by Kumar and Ali, gives an empirical outlook of e-governance and agriculture. E-governance improves the decision-making quality. It has been proved by using a case study of two such initiatives namely ITC e-choupals and UPBSN e-choupals. The authors find significant difference in the quality of decisions made by user group farmers, when compared with non-user group.

The paper titled 'An e-governance framework for Vietnam' by Shepherdson et al. focuses on the position of Vietnam in implementing e-government. It also emphasises a holistic approach in analysing existing performance gaps and identifying e-government opportunities for Vietnam. The authors have effectively highlighted the current situation of e-government and challenges faced in developing countries.

In the sixth paper titled 'Development of Knowledge Model for Administrative Procedures based on behavioural trait analysis: the case of Japan', authors Kawaguchi and Komiya present the Knowledge Model for Administrative Procedures (KMAP). Further, they have quantitatively evaluated and verified the effectiveness of the model.

The seventh paper, titled 'A typology of e-governance operational Information Systems tasks' by Prasad et al., has developed a typology of information systems tasks. This typology allows one to classify foundations for technologies/methods. It also provides a prescriptive element in designing current and future e-governance information systems. The framework provides an approach for government officials in accessing and managing the risk associated with developing, implementing and managing future e-governance projects.

In the eighth paper titled 'E-government and integrated service delivery in Canada: the Province of Nova Scotia as a case study', author Roy provides a critical assessment of the Province of Nova Scotia's efforts in achieving more integrated service delivery within a multi-channel delivery framework. The author has highlighted the conception and implementation of such initiatives in other areas.

This issue ends with a paper titled 'Creating comparative advantage for Micro-Enterprises through e-governance' by Gosen and Prasad, which emphasises that e-governance can help micro-business enterprises to survive and thrive. E-governance can provide micro-entrepreneurs with a technological infrastructure and a skill set to remain competitive in the market. The paper is an attempt to find the link between technology and competitiveness.

All nine papers presented in this special issue of the *International Journal of Electronic Governance* illustrate effective delivery of e-government, its impact and related issues. I hope the readers will find this special issue informative, thought provoking, theoretically challenging and practically useful.

Enjoy reading.