

---

## Introduction

---

### Jyoti Choudrie

University of Hertfordshire,  
Business School,  
Systems Management Research Unit (SyMRU),  
DeHavilland Campus, Hatfield,  
Hertfordshire, AL10 9EU, UK  
E-mail: j.choudrie@herts.ac.uk  
E-mail: jyotichoudrie@gmail.com

### Bendik Bygstad

Norwegian School of IT,  
NITH, Schweigaardsgate 14,  
0185 Oslo, Norway  
E-mail: bygben@nith.no

### Gerald Grant

Eric Sprott School of Business,  
Carleton University,  
1125 Colonel By Drive,  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6 Canada  
E-mail: Gerald\_Grant@carleton.ca

**Biographical notes:** Jyoti Choudrie is currently Reader, Information Systems and Director of Systems Management research Unit (SyMRU) in University of Hertfordshire, Business School. She researches the social and organisational aspects of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), which has led to her co-editing a research monograph on Broadband. Her current research encompasses the social and organisational aspects of ICTs with emphasis on online social networks social inclusion, digital divides, usability of websites and diffusion and adoption of ICTs. She has written for peer reviewed journals such as the *European Journal of Information Systems (EJIS)*, *Information Systems Frontiers* and *Journal of Information Technology (JIT)*.

Bendik Bygstad holds a PhD in Computer Science from Aalborg University and a Master of sociology from the University of Oslo. He worked 15 years in the IT industry, mostly as a CIO. He is currently a Professor at the Norwegian School of Information Technology. His main research interest is ICT based service innovation and organisational change. Other research interests include research methods and SW development processes. He has published articles in such journal as *Information and Organization*, *Information Systems Journal*, *Journal of Information Technology* and *International Journal of Project Management*.

Gerald Grant is Associate Professor, Director of the Centre for Information Technology, Organizations and People (CITOP) at the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He serves as a Senior Associate Editor of the *European Journal of Information Systems*. He is also an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Global Information Management*. He received his PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK. His research focuses on the strategic management of information systems in organisations.

---

Welcome to this special issue emphasising the success and failure of e-government in developing and in developed countries. We are delighted to present this diverse special issue.

It has been almost a decade since e-government (generically known as the provision of online government products and services) emerged and became an issue of importance. Since that time, there have been immense findings from research cases in the area from which many lessons can be drawn. E-government research has also led to a distinction to be made between e-government and e-governance.

A majority of e-government and e-governance research is focused on policies, process changes, adoption, implementation, usage, usability and accessibility. The intention of this special issue is to examine the successes and failures of e-government and e-governance. Furthermore, a number of research papers are focused on developing countries and how e-government and e-governance are leading to 'physical world' citizens becoming 'online ones'. However, developed countries are also adopting and implementing e-government and e-governance initiatives. Using this as a basis of reasoning, we present a special issue that offers various theoretical and applied research papers that will assist readers to understand and grasp aspects of e-government success and failure in a better manner.

The first paper 'Towards a generalised approach for e-petitioning: a state-of-the-art review of best practices', by Ergzakais, K., Metaxiotis, K. and Tsitsanis, T. discusses the e-petitioning concept, which the authors describe as "an effective and efficient way of promoting citizens' e-participation to civic society". The authors' findings indicate that failure of e-petitioning can occur as there is no uniform standard platform for the provision of this service. This was confirmed using an intensive literature review of papers related to this service. An important finding that the larger majority of cases are concerned with local issues and the e-Petitioning process is hosted and supported mainly by local councils. This led the authors to propose a procedure for the development and 'running' of a generalised e-Petition service, thereby proposing potential success of this concept. To verify and validate the proposed procedure, a European-Union-funded project is used as an example.

The second paper 'Evaluating e-government initiatives: the role of formative assessment during implementation', by Sorrentino, M. and Passerini, K. investigates the process of evaluating e-government initiatives. The investigation begins with a review of the limitations of current methods based solely on metrics-based outcomes that leads to a proposal for the use of holistic and theory-driven approaches that also assess the implementation process and decision-making phases of e-government projects. The paper follows with the approaches and drivers of itinere evaluations inspired by Policy and

Organisation Studies being applied to an anti-pollution e-government initiative to confirm the relevance and potential of such an approach.

Success of e-government in a transitional economy is discussed in the third paper 'Innovation: a factor explaining e-government success in Estonia', by Kalvet, T., Estonia is seen as a remarkable success story in the context of e-government. Several studies that have mapped the major factors affecting the evolution of e-government in Estonia are mainly grounded in information systems theory; even if competencies of the private sector and public-private partnerships are examined, their treatment remains too general. This paper, based on interviews with experts and on the analysis of secondary sources, argues for the importance of the innovation system approach and public procurement for innovation – examining what has widely taken place, namely, the purchasing of e-government solutions that did not yet exist at the time but that were developed within a reasonable period. Several technological risks related to public procurement for innovation were avoided owing to the high competencies of local suppliers, a lack of legacy infrastructure and a supportive environment for 'ethical hackers'. The importance of the framework and the success factors is illustrated by a case study on e-voting.

In the fourth paper, 'Framework for e-government assessment in developing countries: case study from Sudan', by Abdalla, S. and Fan, I.S., e-government in an African country, Sudan, is discussed. For this, a framework for assessing e-government maturity in developing countries is presented. This framework combines elements from the E-governance Maturity Model and Design-Reality Gap Model, which is then, applied using a qualitative, case study approach involving interviews and reference to archival documents. The proposed framework is designed to assist in the decision-making process regarding the development of the technical infrastructure, management systems, values and strategies. An assessment of Sudan is employed to show how the framework can support e-government planning in a developing country. The snapshot picture shows that while the Sudan e-government programme is yet in its early stages, the main advance has been on technology. There are examples of success that has led to economic development and change of life style. Investment in the 'soft' areas should be given priority to enable better exploitation of the technology infrastructure.

South-East Asia contains thriving economies such as China and India. India is also undertaking many e-government projects. The fifth paper, which is the first of the papers focused on online government attempts in India, portrays a study of a conventional planning and implementation framework and examines its suitability for handling the dynamic context of e-governance. The paper is titled 'Planning and implementation of e-governance projects: a SAP-LAP based gap analysis', by Suri, P.K. and Sushil. A SAP-LAP framework is used to conduct the qualitative study. This involves surveys of government officials and intended beneficiaries regarding select agriculture-related e-governance projects in India. Learning issues have been synthesised to bring out strategic recommendations for refining the conventional framework to suit the context of e-governance. The gap analysis leads to the conceptualisation of two research frameworks that are validated empirically. Cross-case analysis of a few ongoing e-governance projects, based on interpretation of the validated frameworks, provide the necessary foundation for further research in evolving an adaptive strategic framework for improving the performance of e-governance projects.

The final paper of this special issue, 'M-government – a framework to investigate killer applications for developing countries: An Indian case study', by Kesavarapu, S. and

Choi, M. is the second of papers discussing India's initiatives and introduces another perspective to e-government in the form of m-government. There are large numbers of mobile phones in India, which has led to the government to consider a new and important development in e-government and m-government. The paper initially reviews the application of m-government in several countries and identifies countries that are pursuing the initiative. Then, a framework that is somewhat similar to Bozeman's multidimensional framework of publicness is developed. To confirm its practical application, questionnaires were used to elicit responses from approximately 30 experts. The framework is then further validated using several case studies on Indian m-government initiatives. An important lesson obtained from this paper is that for any country considering m-government development, initially, there is a need to identify the 'killer applications' that can be implemented. The implementation can occur in collaboration with the public sector, which will then improve the value of government from a citizens' perspective. In turn, this will lead to overall productivity of available information increasing for citizens and government.

It is hoped that these papers from diverse parts of the globe offer a different perspective to e-government success and failure. At this point, we would like to thank several people who assisted us with this special issue. First, thanks to all the authors who expressed an interest and submitted papers to this special issue. Second, thanks to the reviewers who assisted us in providing a timely and quality issue. Finally, our appreciation to the Editor-in-Chief, *Electronic Government, An International Journal*, Dr. June Wei to initially allow us to avail this opportunity and then for the support, guidance and directions this issue could be focused upon.