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## Editorial Note

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**Biographical notes:** Dimitris Gouscos is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a Research Fellow at the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media. His research interests include digital communication, electronic governance, social media and digital games.

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We are glad to introduce our readers to the fourth issue of the *International Journal of Electronic Governance* that closes our Volume 12 for 2020, featuring a number of research articles that extend across our subject coverage and span the journal's international reference.

In the opening paper of our current issue, 'Technology platforms for public participation: Blue Ocean and value innovation?', Martins et al., embark from the fact that, although an increasing number of technology platforms for interaction between governments and citizens aim to meet demands for greater openness of public management and participation, the concrete results obtained through these platforms remain largely under-researched. The authors explore whether adoption of these platforms may generate some disruptive value innovations in government-citizen interaction and conclude that legitimacy of public policies, perceived transparency of public management, and support for decision making are generated for the institutions

using the platforms. Still, this leaves room for citizen-side benefits to be sought further, and particularly so for seeking to generate more value for citizens, as well as better diffuse and absorb the knowledge generated on the platforms.

Approaching the agenda of participation in a different context, Duberry, in the following paper on 'E-participation on the international stage: a web content analysis of 10 international health organisations', studies the opportunities that digital technologies bring forward for international organisations to provide services to geographically dispersed actors and, more specifically, establish e-participation process that offer to stakeholders the capacity to make their voice heard. Drawing from methods used to analyse participation features of local government websites, the author conducts a comparative analysis of the websites of 10 international health organisations, and concludes that some results are similar to e-participation in a local context, after all: organisations use their website primarily to provide access to information rather than to engage with their audience. At the same time, some better practices identified are explained by two main factors: broader audiences, and more ample financial resources.

Moving on to address one more theme from the broader participation agenda, 'Cross-examining the effectiveness of e-advocacy as a tool for advancing women's rights in Nigeria', by Popoola et al., focuses on the gap that exists between increasing interest in practice for the capacity of electronic advocacy to translate to social change, and divided views in theory as to the actual effectiveness of such efforts. To further explore the commonly stated question whether electronic advocacy promotes social change or results in slacktivism, the authors survey residents of two states in Southwestern Nigeria, focusing on electronic advocacy on women-centred issues and on the extent to which social change is indeed brought forward. As this research finds, e-advocacy in this case presents a potential to promote women-centred issues in the perceptions of the public; still, it remains to prove helpful in the practical protection of women's issues, as well as in driving social change on a longer term.

In the following paper of our current issue, 'Innovation procurement as key to cross-border ITS pilots', Soe explores the innovation-generating potential of technologies in a different context. Working on smart mobility solutions, and in the especially demanding case of cross-border cities whose services inherently concern multiple and different regions, the author explores whether and how procurement of innovation can be used to fuel pilot implementations of intelligent transport system (ITS) pilots. Drawing from the transition from new public management to public value thinking, which is especially interesting for cross-border mobility trials, the author reports on empirical testing of PV and NPM models in joint ITS pilot projects in the cities of Helsinki, Tallinn and Vantaa. As this research finds, city governments can effectively improve design of mobility services, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as well as trust in institutions through PV approaches; at the same time, traditional NPM approaches do not seem to have a nice fit to ITS trials which are open, in terms of stakeholders, and experimental, in terms of the solutions tested.

Last but not least, our current issue's concluding paper, 'Towards mobile government readiness assessment: proposing a multidimensional framework and a potential tool as an illustrative example', by Gil-Garcia et al., reports a research effort to help public managers at all levels better understand potential uses and effects of mobile phones and applications in government, an issue which still remains, also due to the rapid advancements of mobile technology and capabilities, unsolved. Aiming at a holistic and multifaceted approach to informed mobile government project decisions, the authors

build on literature review and expert interviews to propose a framework for assessing an agency's mobile government readiness across a number of dimensions, as well as a companion tool that exemplifies how this framework can be used. As the authors note, the final aim of these contributions is to help public managers ask the right questions before starting a mobile government project.

During the months that follow, IJEG will continue with alternating regular and special issues, with respective calls for papers to be announced. In this respect, we are glad to announce a forthcoming special issue on *Safeguarding Democracy and Human Rights in the Digital Age*, guest edited by Professor Sokratis Katsikas, NTNU, Norway, and Dr. Vasilis Zorkadis, Hellenic Data Protection Authority, Greece.

At the same time, we invite all of our readers and contributors to check our call for papers page at <http://www.inderscience.com/info/ingeneral/cfplist.php?jcode=ijeg> for upcoming calls for submissions to IJEG.

Alongside these developments, in our ongoing quest to expand the subject coverage of the *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, and especially so across boundary-spanning interdisciplinary topics that reach out to bridge electronic governance with public value innovation, and so much so innovation for the sustainable development goals agenda, be it through digital government, open government, public participation, social solidarity, humanitarian technology and innovation, we are constantly looking out for regular contributions and special issues on emerging topics. And we continue to provide our readership with a coverage of news and upcoming conferences of interest to the broader Electronic Governance constituency, in our News in Brief and Conference Calendar columns, respectively.

Leaving the floor to our authors for their research contributions, we welcome you to read on and peruse the research articles, news in brief and conference calendar that follow.