

Introduction

Electronic infrastructure and network functionality are being utilised by governments around the world. The history of how and why ICTs (information and communications technologies) came into government use is an important part of the story of their success to date and their prospects for the future. There have been three parallel trends that account for the current circumstances with regard to the decisions by developing countries to adopt e-government. The first trend involves the origins of widespread network processing, which began with business applications and received the name **e-commerce** from its users. The success of these ventures (credit card processing, online catalogues and sales etc.) impressed those in government, and inspired the public to ask their governments to move in the same direction.

The second trend concerns the sequence of locations where e-government operations were implemented. As would be expected, those countries initially possessing the most electronic and network infrastructure for public and business use were also the first to adopt these technologies for government use. The success of e-government in developed countries served as **demonstration projects** for the less developed countries. They began to buy equipment and build their own systems, often with assistance from countries and organisations that already had e-government and could share their experiences and lessons learned.

The third trend entails the broadening of the concept of using electronic infrastructure and network functionality for government operations. All countries started out with the term **electronic government** to describe their use of email and the Internet for both internal and external communications. However, expectations subsequently increased to include the possibility of electronic consultation (with the public), electronic transactions (paying taxes and user fees) and electronic voting. As a result of the inclusion of all of these forms of interaction, the general process involved in mediating them is now referred to as **electronic governance**.

This book begins with three chapters, one for each of the trends identified above, so that the social, political and technological context of e-government and e-governance in developing countries can be clearly understood. The fourth chapter is devoted to some of the considerations involved for implementing e-governance and e-government. These contextual chapters are followed by chapters that report on the contents and conclusions of a workshop on the use of ICTs for improving public service delivery that was developed by the Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat and supported by the Government of the

Cayman Islands, with participation by the countries of the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. This workshop was held in Grand Cayman between 4 and 8 June 2007. The concluding chapter considers some of the issues relating to privacy and information technology security that arise in pursuing an e-government/e-governance agenda.

Dr Albert Tan of Singapore, Mr Devindra Ramnarine of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Mr David Spiteri Gingell of Malta presented the main case materials at the workshop. The following officials also addressed the workshop: Dr RoseMarie-Rita Endeley of the Commonwealth Secretariat; Mr Peter Gough, Deputy Head of the Civil Service, Government of the Cayman Islands; the Hon. D Kurt Tibbetts, JP, Leader of Government Business, Cayman Islands; Mr John Wilkins of the Commonwealth Secretariat; and Dr Hassan Syes, President, University College Cayman Islands (UCCI). The countries with representatives participating in the workshop and whose inputs are incorporated into this book, include: Anguilla, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cayman Islands, Cyprus, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

Chapter 1 traces the progression of the application of electronic operations **From e-Commerce to e-Government**. This trend is particularly relevant because the materials presented in the workshop by Dr Tan rely heavily on the World Bank perspective on electronic government, which in turn is premised on the importance of the transfer of electronic commerce methods to design and implement electronic government.

Chapter 2: **From Developed to Developing Countries**, outlines how electronic government was initially designed and deployed in developed countries, whereupon, through the demonstration effect, developing countries could see the results and chose to adopt similar methods for their own governments. It is appropriate to review this trend because the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Commonwealth Secretariat and a number of other international organisations that have guidelines on the acquisition and operation of electronic government, base much of their advice on the experiences gained and lessons learned from developed countries.

Chapter 3 explores the transition **From e-Government to e-Governance**, from the initial strategy of information dissemination to the later advancements towards electronic transactions (between and within governments, between governments and citizens, and between governments and businesses) and e-democracy (electronic voting and electronic participation in consultation with governments).

Chapter 4, on **Implementing e-Governance and e-Government**, reviews the conditions that are involved in assessing readiness for e-governance and e-government, and the challenges encountered when implementing citizen-centric government in response to the desires the public has consistently expressed in a variety of surveys.

The content of chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 is largely based on materials from the Commonwealth Secretariat workshop (entitled the 'Regional Workshop on e-Government Readiness for Effective Public Service Delivery'), which took place 4-8 June 2007 in the

Cayman Islands. Chapter 5 presents an overview of the current state of **Electronic Government in Barbados and the Cayman Islands**. Some examples are used to illustrate notable instances of success with government service delivery, or to show the plans that have been developed to adopt e-government in the foreseeable future. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the themes and conclusions of the materials presented at the workshop itself, while chapter 7 develops a comparative analysis of the plans of, and prospects for, **Electronic Government** in the countries participating in the workshop. Finally, chapter 8 presents an international survey on **Privacy and Information Technology Security**.

