Trust Dimensions and the Adoption of E-Government in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

E-government project utilization depends on users’ adoption of the system, where trust is a crucial factor in forcing the intentions to use such systems. This research utilized 105 usable responses from citizens who used and explored e-government services. It was hypothesized that trust in e-government and trust in the Internet, along with perceived risk, will significantly influence trust in E-government, and further intention to use the system. Using path analysis, results supported trust in government and the Internet and did not support perceived risk. Also, trust in e-government significantly influenced intention to use the system. Finally, path analysis indicated a significant mediation of trust in E-government, where direct and indirect effects were estimated. Conclusions and future work are stated at the end.

Keywords: E-Government Adoption, Jordan, Path Analysis, Perceived Risk, Trust in Government, Trust in Internet

1. INTRODUCTION

Trusting an e-government Website is a crucial step towards the adoption of such paradigm. It is important to build this cumulative trust in e-government to facilitate and encourage the interaction between government and their customers (citizens and business). E-government can be defined as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and particularly the Internet to deliver information and services by the government to its customers (citizens and businesses). E-government gained popularity in the last few years and adoption in the last years (Papadopoulou, Nikolaidou, & Martakos, 2010). Such increase in adoption came as a result of the gains to government, citizens and businesses. But despite these gains, e-government didn’t reach its full potential yet. Factors like trust are still overlooked.

E-government is an open domain that can be accessed by anybody in the world, which leads to a high level of uncertainty and risk in the services it delivers to citizens. Horst, Kutscher, and Gutteling (2007) argue that the risk of e-government services comes from the information sent and stored electronically. Such information can be easily copied, modified, de-
stroyed, or accessed by others without citizen’s approval. Alsaghi, Ford, Nguyen, and Hexel (2009) argue that trust plays an important role in the adoption of e-commerce and specially e-government by improving confidence between citizens and government. Many factors can influence trust of citizens in e-government such as: trust in technology, trust in government, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, risk perception, privacy concerns, security, information provided by governments, and demographics of citizens using e-government. Trust in e-government is an important factor in the adoption of e-government initiatives, lower trust in e-government leads to lower interaction with e-government portals and less satisfaction with e-government services.

The main objective of this research is to explore the dimensions of trust as an important factor to build confidence and satisfaction between citizens and e-government, and to build a framework of trust in e-government. The paper will review previous work related to trust in e-government, followed by a description of research method and sample used. Finally, the paper will end with recommendations and future work related.

2. BACKGROUND OF E-GOVERNMENT

E-government is a discipline that comes from many areas of research like information technology, political science, public and business administration. Such issue influenced the definition of e-government, where many definitions where proposed based on the view of the research domains they belong to. The literature indicates some similarities and differences between e-government and e-commerce field. Carter and Belanger (2004) argue that both e-government and e-commerce depend on the Internet technology in delivering their services. Differences between e-government and e-commerce are the following: citizens interact with government in a much richer set of different contexts and life episodes than with a single e-commerce vendor. Second, citizens have no choice to choose between service providers while e-commerce customers have many services providers. Third, citizens have stronger trust in e-government and in the technology used than in e-commerce (Riedl, 2011).

Evans and Yen (2006, p. 209) defined the e-government as “e-government means the communication between the government and its citizens via computers and a web-enabled presence. The advantages in timeliness, responsiveness, and cost containment are outstanding”. Bhatnagar (2004, p. 22) defined e-government as “a process of reform in the way government works, shares information and delivers services to external and internal clients. Specifically, e-government harnesses information technologies (such as wide area networks, the Internet and mobile computing) to transform relations with citizens, businesses and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of ends: better delivery of government services to citizens; improved interactions with business and industry; citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth and/or cost reductions”. Also, Yildiz (2007, p. 650) defines e-government “as the relationships between governments, their customers (businesses, other governments, and citizens), and their suppliers (again, businesses, other governments, and citizens) by the use of electronic means”.

In this paper we define e-government as the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and particularly the Internet to deliver information and services by the government to its customers (citizens and businesses).

E-government efforts are categorized into Government to Citizens (G2C), where citizens can access services from home. Information that citizens need to carry out their transactions is available on the government web site. They can pay bills for telephone and electricity and other utilities. The second category is Government to Business (G2B), where governments serve busi-
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