

Chapter 81

Assessing Jordan's e-Government Maturity Level: Citizen's Perspective on Awareness, Acceptability and Usage of e-Government Services

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ABSTRACT

Similar to other developing countries, Jordan started a national e-government initiative aiming to streamline government procedures and make information and government services available to business and citizens online. This paper presents the results of a study that assessed factors which could influence the awareness level, acceptance and use of e-government services in Jordan. It investigated issues such as: accessibility of e-government, citizen's attitude toward various privacy and security, the required services and costs. A survey has been distributed in one of the largest governorates of Jordan. The results of this preliminary study suggest that awareness of e-government has not reached the required level. These findings are hoped to be useful for researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic government (e-government) is often seen as the transformation of government services using Information and Communication Technolo-

gies (ICTs) in developed and developing countries (Borras, 2004). This transformation referred to as: e-government, e-gov., digital government, online government, or transformational government (Gupta et al., 2008; Guangwei Hu et al., 2009).

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E-Government, which is the term used in this paper, can be described as the use of any type of information and communication technologies to improve services and operations provided to different parties such as: citizens, businesses, and other government agencies (Grant & Chau, 2005; Gronlund & Horan, 2005; Adeshara et al., 2004; Arif, 2008; Alsaghier et al., 2009). E-government has been classified, according to the interaction channels, into four main categories: government-to-citizen (G2C), government-to-business (G2B), government-to-government (G2G), and finally government-to-employees (G2E) (MoICT, 2006).

A number of studies have focused on many issues related to e-government such as: e-government strategies (Beynon-Davies, 2004; Williams & Beynon-Davies, 2004); e-government program challenges (Barc & Cordella, 2004); e-government technical issues (Cottam et al., 2004); e-government usability websites (Mosse & Whitley, 2004); e-government adoption (Ciborra & Navarra, 2005; Elsheikh et al., 2008; Dwivedi & Williams., 2008; Mofleh et al., 2008b). The nature of e-government adoption decision depends on the degree of the engagement of several parties including: citizens, businesses, and other government agencies. Therefore, the applications of e-government are categorized according to users' needs and the capacity of ICT. The different users and beneficiaries of e-government shape the characteristic of e-government applications. They can determine the level of maturity of e-government websites and applications. This is important since e-government adoption behaviour can differ based on the service maturity levels as Shareef et al. (2011) have shown in their e-government Adoption Model (GAM).

A previous research has evaluated the Jordanian e-government websites and concluded that the Jordanian e-government websites are subject to a lack of consistency in terms of standards and features due to the absence of different features that could improve interaction with the user, the paper claimed that this is most likely due to a lack

of consideration for the citizens' expectations and needs (AL-Soud & Nakata, 2010). Nonetheless, Al Shibly and Tadros (2010) have examined factors which have an impact on e-government acceptance by Jordanian employees. They found that system quality, information quality, and perceived ease of use, all have significant effect on e-government acceptance in Jordan. However, when assessing the maturity level of the Jordanian e-government services, it is important to determine whether these factors are valid when it comes to Jordanian citizens and other e-government users.

Even though there seems to be a substantial growth in the development of e-government services in Jordan (UNPAN, 2010) it is unclear whether citizens will make use of such services. Doubtlessly, the success and acceptance of e-government initiatives are subject to citizens' acceptance, willingness and intention to use these newly offered services.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: the second section briefly provides a background of the e-government initiative in Jordan; the third section identifies the research problem and opportunity; the fourth section describes the research approach; the fourth section explains the research phases; the sixth section presents the theoretical background for this research; the seventh section presents the results and analysis; the eighth section discusses the research and its results; followed by the conclusion and future work.

E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE IN JORDAN

The dramatic development of the Internet brought with it a significant push towards e-government in most of the countries around the world; Jordan was no exception. As part of modernisation and reformation of government organisations and processes, Jordan introduced new regulations, rules and legislations that liberate some services from government control in order to regulate the

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