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Chapter VI

A Comparative Analysis of E-Government in Latin America: Applied Findings from United Nations E-Government Readiness Reports

Gregory Curtin, University of Southern California, USA

Christopher Walker, Harvard University, USA

Abstract

This chapter introduces the United Nations global e-government readiness reports, for which we serve as primary researchers, with particular focus on Latin America. The UN reports provide useful composite scores and rankings on 191 countries worldwide with respect to e-government, e-readiness, and e-participation, as well as highlighting best practices that have been identified throughout the world. In particular, the UN reports provide meaningful insights into the development of e-government in Latin America—facilitating comparative analysis between regions, as well as country comparisons

within Latin America. Basing itself on the UN report, the chapter provides a comparative analysis of e-government in Latin America—both intra- and interregional comparisons—with the main objective of elevating e-government literature to a more quantitatively rigorous and sophisticated level. This chapter aims at introducing the UN report, outlining its main findings, and reporting how Latin America compares with the world in e-government readiness and development. It first outlines the background of the UN report, followed by the research methodology. Then it discusses the findings relevant to Latin America, with a brief conclusion on topics for future research and discussion.

Introduction

As researchers for the annual United Nations (UN) global e-government readiness survey, our purpose for this chapter is to expose Latin American public officials, policy makers, and scholars to the valuable resources and knowledge compiled in the annual United Nations global e-government readiness reports (*UN Benchmarking E-Government: A Global Perspective*, 2002; *UN Global E-Government Readiness Report 2004: Toward Access for Opportunity*, 2004; *UN Global E-Government Survey 2003*, 2003).¹

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While the book as a whole aims at identifying qualitative studies of best practices within Latin America online, this chapter takes a step back to contemplate how Latin America as a region is doing in comparison to the rest of the world, as well as how individual Latin American countries compare with their neighbors and the world. Much of the e-government literature and research have focused on anecdotal case studies (*The 2002 E-Readiness Rankings: A White Paper from the Economist Intelligence Unit*, 2002; Accenture, 2002, 2003; Siew & Leng, 2003), with researchers and policy makers describing practices that have been particularly successful or common pitfalls they have

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