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The African Journal of Information and Communication

- Call for Papers for the 2011 Thematic Issue -

*E-Governance Advances in Africa:
A Review of Progress in the First Decade of the 21st Century*

1. Introduction

The African Journal of Information and Communication (AJIC) aims to publish a thematic edition on the theme of “e-Governance Advances in Africa” in 2011. This edition will explore the significant social and institutional impact the diffusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in government has had in society. It aims to provide an appraisal of the *state of e-governance in Africa*, the *dynamics* driving the integration of ICTs into the processes of governing, and the *factors enabling or constraining* the increasing use of ICT by governments. In exploring this theme, this edition will provide novel *perspectives*, insightful *critiques*, and where possible *analyse examples and cases* to demonstrate *successful practices* and *failures* with a view to documenting *lessons learnt*. Authors from all regions in Africa will be encouraged to provide a continental perspective on e-governance on the continent. Articles reflecting on public policy analysis, as well as the regulatory dimensions of e-governance will be welcomed. In addition, articles which explore technological innovations in e-governance are encouraged.

The journal provides a platform for African academics and practitioners to communicate their on-going or completed research to an African audience which includes fellow academics based at African and international institutions; ministries and government

departments responsible for e-government policy formulation and implementation; practitioners involved in the implementation of e-governance projects; and citizens with an interest in this emerging field of enquiry. The publication seeks to enrich the state of knowledge on e-governance in Africa and to enrich the discourse on e-governance by imbuing it with an African perspective. Authors are encouraged to publish outcomes of completed research projects, on-going research projects and research work related to PhD studies.

2. Rationale and themes for article submission

The beginning of the second decade of the 21st century provides an ideal opportunity to pause and reflect on the advances made in introducing e-governance, and in some instances embedding the concept and practice of e-governance, in public management and development in Africa over the last ten years. There is little agreement among political office bearers, bureaucrats, academics and development practitioners about the precise meaning of the concept and the extent to which it has left an imprint on the day-to-day exercise of public authority in steering development in countries. There is however, broad consensus that the diffusion and proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in government and the process of governing have wrought about far-reaching changes to how government and governance are conceived and constituted. Moreover, the diffusion of ICTs have “placed the material means of information and cultural production in the hands of a significant fraction of the world’s population” (Benkler 2006, p.105) with the potential for significantly altering the political economy of relations between the state and citizens. Recent experience indicates that the Internet in Africa can be used very effectively as a channel for political expression and a powerful tool for mobilising citizens in asserting their political power.

In a region conventionally characterised as a consumer of ICTs and innovations produced elsewhere in the world, this edition of the AJIC is especially interested in documenting and analysing local initiatives that have led to changes in social organization, institutional designs, methodologies, and the practices of government-citizen interaction. For example, the adoption of mobile communication and computing technologies has outpaced other forms of communication technologies and can potentially revolutionise public service delivery. Successful practices are already emerging in this regard. The focus of this thematic edition is therefore, on exploring these and other innovations in the adoption of ICTs in government and to evaluate the impact thereof with reference to the following themes:

- **Digitisation of public services: e-health, e-learning, emergency services, other**

The digitisation of public services and the delivery of electronic services to citizens introduces a host of policy, managerial and technological innovations. On the policy and regulatory front, questions of privacy, identity management and security are crucial; on the technical front, infrastructure for storing huge amounts of data, interoperable architectures and infrastructure for communicating data are required; while questions about access, outreach, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability require attention on the managerial front. Moreover, the design and deployment of digital services demands a range of technical and skills competencies not readily available in many public sectors. The adoption of digital services by citizens through the deployment of innovative applications is of particular interest.
- **e-Society: levels of societal adoption of electronic technologies and services**

An interpretation of the level of evolution of societies with respect to the adoption and usage of electronic technologies and applications provides a necessary counterpoint to understanding electronic governance and electronic government. The more evolved the adoption of electronic media in society, the greater the opportunities for providing public services through electronic means. Hence, it is of interest to explore trends in the adoption of a wide range of mobile and Internet applications across African countries and regions, in an attempt to understand the opportunities and challenges for e-governance.
- **Institutional design**

ICTs facilitate information processing, communication and networking and thus, facilitate relations and transactions between government organisations. Through these technologies, increasing linkages are established between government organisations that bring about interdependencies and enhance inter-organisational influence and control. When government organisations share information and integrate operational and planning processes, this affects the organisational boundaries and raises issues related to where accountability and authority vests and where political and legal accountability rests. Innovations in institutional design and practices and associated organisational forms are emerging in response to these challenges.
- **Social organisation**

In some cases the introduction of ICTs in public services has had far reaching consequences, as citizens find new ways of accessing and using public services. New forms of social organisation are emerging in response to these changes as a result of the way the introduction of digital services impacts communities (both positively and negatively).

- **Measurement**

Performativity has increased commensurate with the influence of New Public Management (NPM) in the modernisation of governments and public services in many countries. Measuring the growth of e-governance and its impacts requires the development of new conceptual frameworks, methodologies and indicators.

3. Content and Structure

The structure of the journal edition will consist of three sections, each covering a combination of the themes listed above, based on article submissions.

- **Section 1: Continental Trends**

Articles analysing and describing meta-trends, raising issues of broad significance and cases with general applicability will feature in this section.

- **Section 2: Regional and Country Perspectives**

This section will cover perspectives and experiences from a regional perspective (north, west, east, and southern Africa), as well as lessons from individual countries.

- **Section 3: Initiatives and Book Reviews**

This section will provide brief reviews of major initiatives in the field of e-governance development on the continent and will provide a review of selected books.

4. Submission Deadlines

The time frames for publishing the journal are as follows:

Abstract submission deadline	30 May 2011
Full paper submission for review	30 July 2011
Notification of paper acceptance (with revisions)	30 September 2011
Final submission of paper	21 October 2011

5. Information about the editors

Managing Editor: Prof Tawana Kupe is Dean, Faculty of Humanities, and Associate Professor of Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He is a newspaper and magazine columnist and commentator for radio and television. He writes for City Press, Maverick and Empire. He obtained his PhD from the University of Oslo, Norway in 1997.

Guest Editor: Dr. Dorothy Okello lectures in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Makerere University, Uganda. She has more than 10 years of diverse

experience in teaching and research, in conducting projects and contributing to policies in the ICT sector at national and international levels. Dr. Okello is also an activist in getting more women, small-scale enterprises and rural communities engaged in the information society via policy advocacy, program implementation and monitoring & evaluation. She holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from McGill University, Montreal, Canada.

Co-Editor: Luci Abrahams has been Director of the LINK (Learning, Information, Networking, Knowledge) Centre, University of the Witwatersrand from 2002. She is engaged in post-graduate teaching and conducts research on 'institutions and economic sectors in the network, knowledge economy'. Luci has served in many public sector leadership positions, including on the boards of the Development Bank of Southern Africa, National Advisory Council on Innovation and the National Research Foundation.

6. Note to Authors and Article Submission

The academic journal is published by the LINK Centre, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand. It is a journal, accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training, which has been published for ten successive years. The following guidelines for the submission of articles apply:

- **Submissions**

Articles for this thematic issue of The African Journal of Information and Communication (AJIC) should be submitted to the publication coordinator, Mark Burke, at the LINK Centre, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg via the following email address: burkem@developmentwork.co.za

- **Length**

Articles should not exceed 8,000 words in length, including the Abstract and References. Book reviews, comments, reports or rejoinders to articles should be much shorter, usually 1,000 – 3,000 words. Contributions are received with the understanding that their contents are original, unpublished material and are not being submitted for publication elsewhere. Translated material that has not been published in English will also be considered. The Editors reserve the right to edit or otherwise alter contributions.

- **Format**

All submissions should be in 11-point Arial font, single-space, left-aligned Microsoft Word format (or compatible open source format) with minimal formatting / layout. Where necessary, footnotes rather than end notes should be used.

- **Refereeing**

All full-length articles submitted for publication will be reviewed "blind" by one or more referees selected from the AJIC Editorial Board, or by someone else identified as

suitable to the subject matter. Shorter articles and book reviews are refereed at the discretion of the Editors.

- **Presentation**

The first page of a submission should contain the title, author's name, affiliation, full postal address, and telephone, fax and email contacts. Affiliations and contact details of co-authors should also be listed. The second page should contain an abstract (summary of the article's contents) of 200-500 words. The article should begin on the third page.

- **References**

The list of references should contain only those references cited in the text, arranged in alphabetical order according to the surname of the author using standard APA format.

- **Tables and Figures**

These should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals followed by a caption. All graphs, diagrams and other drawings should be referred to as figures, which should also be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals. These should be in a high resolution format that can be easily manipulated for editing and printing purposes.

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