
Editorial Note

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Biographical notes: Dimitris Gouscos is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a Research Fellow at the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media. His research interests include digital communication, electronic governance, social media and digital games.



We welcome our readers to this opening issue of the *International Journal of Electronic Governance* Volume 15 for 2023, a year that starts with many ongoing crises around the world, of which the peace, climate, energy, health and food crises are not missing. In this context, our current issue features a set of research articles from the journal's topical and international coverage, which represent efforts of the electronic governance community all over the world to explore the potential of e-governance as an instrument for alleviating the consequences of these pressing global problems.

In the opening paper of our current issue, 'Improvement of e-government in Ukraine based on the experience of developed countries', Oliychenko, Ditkovska, Shabardina, Lashuk and Zhovtok engage in a comparative analysis of e-government systems in developed countries and Ukraine with a view to suggesting ways to improve the Ukrainian e-government. The authors' focus drills down to 3 European countries, UK, France, and Estonia to compare with Ukraine, taking stock of contextual factors such as GDP levels of these countries and exploring potential relationships to development levels of e-government and e-democracy. Based on this analysis, recommendations to improve development of e-government in Ukraine include public-private sector collaborations, outsourcing and crowdsourcing.

The manuscript that follows, ‘Applications for citizen e-participation and communication in the Czech Republic – current supply and content analysis of mobile apps’, by Fanta and Soběhart, embarks on a study of the level of e-participation in the Czech Republic, which falls below the EU average. In this context, the authors overview a sample of 84 municipal mobile apps currently used, categorised into universally and custom-designed products. Through content analysis of available functionalities and pilot evaluations, universally designed mobile apps are found to score significantly higher than custom designed apps for citizen interaction with local authorities.

Further moving on to issues from the e-participation and e-democracy agenda, in the context of India this time, Bandhu, Litoriya, Bagwala, Barwaniwala and Garg, in ‘Blockchain and smart contract enabled smart and secure electronic voting system’, discuss the need of an electronic voting system that is more cost-efficient, time-saving, and trusted compared to conventional voting systems. Based on blockchain technology along with smart contracts and the keccak256 encryption algorithm, the authors propose an e-voting system which performs at promising levels in terms of smart contract execution time, average voting time per user, and hidden and visible gas cost for smart contract deployment for voting.

Our next manuscript, ‘eTHOS: a web-based tax morale system’, by Fotiadis, Kiourt and Chatzoglou, shifts the discussion to more socio-technical issues from the electronic governance domain, focusing on the observation that tax morale, meant as citizens’ intrinsic motivation to pay taxes, albeit a vital component of tax compliance remains still largely unexploited in many countries. In this respect, the authors propose a cross-platform web-based information system, designed to allow citizens to report tax evasion complaints as well as highlight good tax behaviour practices. Via interactive maps providing geospatial financial factors to the general public, the system is meant to help understand the factors leading citizens to file complaint or reward reports based on their interaction with businesses. At the same time, a “Regional Ethical Indicator” on tax evasion is proposed, based on citizen-provided information, as an awareness aid for tax evasion practices per specific region, especially for regions with high seasonal tourism flows.

Last but not least, the manuscript concluding our current issue, ‘Governance mechanisms in vulnerable communities using a technology platform: a study case in 13 de noviembre, Colombia’, by Zuluaga, Lozano, Álvarez, Sánchez and Corrales, shifts the discussion to yet another geography, that of Latin America, to discuss how digital gaps may lead to governance limitations in urban neighbourhoods such as the case studied in Medellín, Colombia. With the objective to design and pilot-test a platform that provides online services to vulnerable population groups, in order to help social transformation and collective action on the longer term, the authors report on the implementation of a wireless public infrastructure for everyday interaction between citizens that allows multiple activities online, from accessing services and procedures, to informal education courses, promotion of local entrepreneurship as well as citizen participation.

During the months that follow, IJEG will continue with alternating regular and special issues, with respective calls for papers to be announced. In this respect, we invite our readers and contributors to check our call for papers page at <http://www.inderscience.com/info/ingeneral/cfplist.php?jcode=ijeg> for upcoming calls for submissions to IJEG.

Alongside these developments, in our ongoing quest to expand the subject coverage of the *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, and especially so across boundary-spanning interdisciplinary topics that reach out to bridge electronic governance with public value innovation and innovation for the sustainable development goals agenda, be it through digital government, open government, public participation, social solidarity, humanitarian technology, we are constantly looking out for regular contributions and special issues on such topics. Research submissions touching upon the open response to and open recovery of governments worldwide from the Covid-19 pandemic, to their adaptations to the Covid-19 shock, as well as to providing responses to the emerging global polycrisis, are especially welcome in this respect. The same applies to contributions at the crossroads of e-governance and open government with climate change and energy justice effects, e-governance efforts for the emerging climate-health-society-democracy nexus, as well as for the broader agenda of sustainable development, with a special focus on cities, territories and mobilities.

At the same time, we continue to provide our readership with a coverage of news and upcoming conferences of interest to the broader electronic governance constituency, in our News in Brief and Conference Calendar columns, respectively.

With our best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year 2023, to bring peace in the world, we welcome you to read on and peruse the research articles, news in brief and conference calendar that follow.