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## Panel: E-Government: Are there Different Perspectives?

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# Panel: E-Government: Are there Different Perspectives?

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## ABSTRACT

The area of e-Government has rapidly become the focus of much attention amongst academics and practitioners. Led by the drive to streamline government services to citizens and increase participation in the governing and democratic process amongst citizens, government agencies and bodies at different levels are implementing information systems and undergoing process changes under the pervasive umbrella of "e-Government". Yet, what exactly the term means is unclear. Terms such as e-Democracy, e-Voting, e-Services and e-Procurement are used interchangeably and often confusedly. In addition, there seems to be as many perspectives of the term as there are implementations at least across national boundaries. To help us achieve conceptual clarity, we propose this panel. Members of our proposed panel will present their work and experiences in different regions of Europe and North America.

Specifically, we will address these questions:

- What exactly is meant by "e-Government"? Is it a distinct field within IS research?
- What are the key issues that e-Government researchers need to address?
- Is e-Government conceptualized and practiced differently in different parts of the world? Specifically, is there a "Scandinavian perspective" and a "North American perspective"?
- What have we, as e-Government researchers, done well so far? What have we not done well?

## Keywords

e-Government, cross-cultural issues, international perspectives, public sector.

## PANEL MEMBERS

### Moderator:

- Maung K. Sein, Agder University College, Kristiansand, Norway

### Panelists:

- Kim Viborg Andersen, Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, Denmark
- Ake Gronlund, Orebro University/Umea University, Orebro/Umea, Sweden
- Thomas Horan, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, USA
- Carl Erik Moe, Agder University College, Kristiansand, Norway

## BACKGROUND AND POSITION OF PANEL MEMBERS

### Maung K. Sein:

Maung Sein is Professor of Information Systems at Agder University College, Norway. His current research interest is in e-Government and ICT and national development. He has conducted research and published on e-Government issues and has worked on practical projects. He serves on the editorial boards of, among others, Electronic Journal of E-Government and E-Service Journal. As moderator, he will strive to facilitate a free flowing dialogue within the panel and between the panel and the audience. His position on e-Government is that it is indeed a distinct field within IS and currently generally neglected by mainstream IS. However, what exactly comprises e-Government is unclear and there is a need to have conceptual clarity.

**Kim Viborg Andersen:**

Kim Viborg Andersen is Professor of Informatics at the Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. His research concentrates on organizational and policy aspects of IT within the public sector domain. His recent publications include "The Past and Future of Information Systems" (Elsevier 2004) and "E-government and Public Sector Process Rebuilding" (Kluwer, 2004) and various journal contributions in for example The Information Society, European Journal of Information Systems, Social Science Computer Review, and Information, Communication and Society. He is vice-chair of the IFIP WG 8.4 on interdisciplinary e-business and in various editorial boards for journals (i.e., International Journal of Electronic Government Research and Information, Communication & Society). His position on e-Government is that most applications and research are dominated by traditional IS-legacy perspectives being ignorant of the public sector characteristics and customers.

**Ake Gronlund:**

Ake Grönlund is Professor of Informatics at Örebro University and also affiliated to Umeå University both in Sweden. He has worked as researcher and consultant in several European projects within the areas of electronic services and e-Government, such as public sector restructuring. His recent publications in the field include two international books, two special sections of leading academic journals, and three books in Swedish. His e-Government research incorporates his work in allied areas such as virtual organizations and networks, electronic service delivery, mobile technology, organizational redesign and electronic information infrastructures. He is Chair of AIS Special Interest Group on e-Government and IFIP WG 8.5 (Information systems in public sector), and founding faculty and scientific leader of the multidisciplinary DemocRIT research programme on ICT in democratic processes. His position is that e-Government as a field is currently dominated by practice led by consultants, vendors and government agencies. For the field to be a legitimate academic discipline we need more conceptual and theoretical development and it time to go beyond case studies and descriptions of implementations.

**Thomas Horan:**

Thomas Horan is Associate Professor of Information Science and Director of the Claremont Information and Technology Institute (CITI) at Claremont Graduate University, USA. For the last twenty years he has conducted research on impact of technology on public programs and policies. He has examined e-government issues in health care, transportation, and community development. His current work focuses on the use of Information Technology (IT) to enhance the delivery of "time-information critical" services, such as emergency medical response in rural regions. Recently, he organized a research forum to look at IT impacts across North America, including U.S., Canada, and Mexico. His position is that e-government represents an important opportunity to fashion timelier, effective and citizen-centric services, but doing so requires an in-depth knowledge of the policy, organizational and cultural dimensions embedded in programs and services.

**Carl Erik Moe:**

Carl Erik Moe is Associate Professor and Department Head of Information Systems at Agder University College. His research interests center around e-Government and adoption of e-procurement. He is involved in a number of initiatives in conjunction with the private and public sector in Norway, among them is the role as the leader of a national competence centre on e-Government. His position on e-Government is that it is a distinct field with certain characteristics that makes direct transfer of methods and learning from the private sector very difficult. It is also a field where most of the development has been from an inside-out perspective, ignoring the users or the citizens, hence the need for research on user needs and user accessibility