Electronic Enabled Citizens-Parliament Interaction: Imperative for Democratic Governance in African States

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Abstract: Pivotal to democratic governance is the legislature which provides a veritable interactive, participatory and consultative platform for citizens’ input in the decision-making process. In an era of public disenchantment on democratic institutions, modern democratic parliaments utilize Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to enhance their accessibility and interaction with citizens for inclusive decision making process. In spite of the unprecedented growth, diffusion, acceptance and usage of ICTs in Africa, legislative assemblies of most African countries are inaccessible and lack adequate meeting facilities to regularly interact meaningfully with the public. This research paper therefore, employs a combination of descriptive statistics of website survey and updated literature search to evaluate the extents of the usefulness of African parliamentary websites to engage citizens in legislative decision-making process. The research findings reveal the capacity of African parliamentary websites to enhance democratic governance such as required by modern democratic parliaments.

Keywords: parliament, legislative assembly, decision-making, democratic governance, Africa, citizens interaction

Electronic Petition and Democratic Participation in Nigeria

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Abstract: Citizen’s participation in decisions on how the country is governed is crucial in a democratic polity. In Nigeria however, credible platform for citizens input in major policy decisions that affect their lives hardly exist. The Nigerian State is faced with the crisis of democratic legitimacy and accountability. Governance in Nigeria is characterized by corruption, display of contempt and disregard for the people, deteriorating political institutions, disrespect for human dignity and state-society disconnect. Hence, a growing sense of public cynicism and disenchantment towards the government. It is on this premise that this paper proposes e-petition as a simple, convenience, effective, affordable mechanism for citizens’ democratic engagement. Using case study design and literature search, this paper reviews e-petition system and practice in advance democracies and develops an e-petition framework for integrating citizens input into public decision making across all levels of government in Nigeria. With the growing acceptance and usage of Internet and mobile technology in Nigeria, this paper ar-