

DEMO-net

The eParticipation Network

Year: 2007, Period Covered: Jul 07-Dec 07

DEMO-NET NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the third newsletter of DEMO-net Network of Excellence! This issue is dedicated to presenting two partner organisations of the DEMO-net Consortium, some results of the research conducted so far, several key events and finally DEMO-net publications and activities. Further information on the DEMO-net project can be found on the last page.

DEMO-net Results so far

Over the past six months DEMO-net has been focusing on the challenges and barriers to eParticipation. We have identified immediate challenges for conducting research and to eParticipation in practice. Achieving more sophisticated, multi-disciplinary research is a key challenge requiring more dialogue between researchers and between researchers and practitioners.

The main recommendations that arose from this research relate to: studying of practice cases and research studies, installation of an accessible to all stakeholders database, update of existing data and information about cases in the database and take-up of lessons based on this framework.

Moreover, DEMO-net has focused its attention on developing an overall framework for sustainable engagement and integration of eParticipation practitioners, the eParticipation Community of Practice (ePCoP). The idea of an ePCoP is related to practice alliances of people, who work together in a network and have to solve similar responsibilities. Members of the ePCoP are expected to learn from one another, and to contribute with the specific expertise of every individual.

The approach to reach sustainable engagement and integration in eParticipation is to establish different eParticipation Specific Interest Groups (SIGs), which collaborate in this eParticipation community. Four SIGs cover the main areas in which interaction is sought: Industry, Government/Executives, Politicians and Elected Representatives, and Community Interest Groups. The two former SIGs have already been established, while the latter ones will be established within 2008.

The general approach for how the Specific Interest Groups' activities will be performed individually and in their collaboration is described in terms of an overall Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The number of practitioners joining the DEMO-net network is encouraging but this is only an initial membership. Interest in eParticipation is growing very strongly amongst practitioners (as amongst academics) and the Specific Interest Groups will need to move rapidly to accommodate this growth.

Finally, DEMO-net Network of Excellence has produced a PhD book "Understanding eParticipation" as a part of integration strategy and the PhD training program. It presents contemporary European research in matters pertinent to eParticipation and includes a collection of 13 chapters each describing a PhD research project.



Upcoming DEMO-net Events

3-days DEMO-net conference on eParticipation, summer 2008, Greece

The conference will constitute an international meeting point for eParticipation experts and practitioners to hold an interdisciplinary and open discussion of all issues in the eParticipation field. The DEMO-net website will be soon updated with specific information regarding this major event.

For more information on the conference and other events, refer regularly to the corresponding section of the website (www.demo-net.org).

Other Interesting Upcoming Events

6th Eastern European eGov Days, April 23-25, 2008 in Prague, Czech Republic

The 3rd international conference on electronic voting 2008 August 6-9, 2008 in Bregenz, Austria

9th Annual International Conference on Digital Government Research dg.o 2008, May 18-21, 2008 in Montreal, Canada, www.dgo2008.org

21st Bled eConference 2008, eCollaboration: Overcoming Boundaries Through Multi-Channel Interaction, June 15-18, 2008 in Bled, Slovenia, <http://bledconference.org>

7th International EGOV2008 Conference, August 31 - September 5, 2008, in Torino, Italy, <http://www.demo-net.org/demo/news-on-demo-net/cfp-egov2008>

e2008 eChallenges 22-24 October, 2008 in Stockholm, Sweden, <http://www.echallenges.org/e2008>

DEMO-net Dissemination activities

Several presentations were performed by DEMO-net partners in conferences and events, namely:

- Democracy Deficit meeting in Regensburg, - Regensburg, Germany, 5 September 2007
- eDemocracy 07 - London, 8 November 2007
- Fourth Meeting of the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on E Democracy (CAHDE) Informal Working Group- Vienna, Austria - 13-14 December 2007
- International Conference on Electronic Governance (ICEGOV) - Macao, China - 13 December 2007
- Interoperability eGovernment Campus'07 - France, Paris - 9 October 2007
- Third Meeting of the Council of Europe Ad hoc Committee on E Democracy (CAHDE) Informal Working Group" - Sofia, Bulgaria 2/3 July 2007
- 3rd International Conference on e-Government - University of Montreal, Canada - 26/28 September 2007
- Development in democracy at the community level - Reykjavík, University of Iceland - 30 November 2007

A number of conference sessions, workshops and seminars were organised by DEMO-net partners, specifically:

- eChallenges e-2007 Conference, eDemocracy Session, "eVoting/eParticipation" - The Hague, The Netherlands - 26th October 2007



- ESF-LiU Conference, "Electronic Democracy: Achievements and challenges" - Klosterhotel, Vadstena, Sweden - 21/25 November 2007
- "Freedom of Information / Access to Public Information" at the ESF-LiU/DEMO-net Research Conference "Electronic Democracy: Achievements and Challenges" - Vadstena, Sweden - 21 - 25 November 2007
- Frameworks and Methods for evaluating eParticipation - Bremen, Germany - October 2007
- Pilot course of Mafidis project, "On-line communication with Government" Trebic city and Jihlava city - 30/31 October 2007

In parallel, DEMO-net has seen many publications in scientific papers, conferences and journals. Most of the publications are included in proceedings of eChallenges 2007 and International Conference on Electronic Governance (ICEGOV).

DEMO-net past events

2nd DEMO-net PhD Colloquium

On September the 2nd and 3rd, the 2nd DEMO-net PhD Colloquium took place in Regensburg, Germany in conjunction with EGOV'07, 3-7 September. Papers were submitted, reviewed, and discussed by other PhD students and senior researchers in the eParticipation field. The colloquium also included tutorials on various aspects of eParticipation by senior DEMO-net researchers. The event was chaired by Åke Grönlund from Örebro University, Maria Wimmer from the University of Koblenz-Landau and Kim Andersen from Copenhagen Business School.

Profiles of DEMO-net Partner Organisations



The region of Yorkshire and Humber (comprising five million people) is a focus for eParticipation activity in England. **Yorkshire and Humber Assembly** is the body representing civil society in the region including voluntary and community organisations, the churches, the Environment Agency, the police and the 22 local authorities. The local authorities themselves (along with the four fire services) operate together and collaborate on issues of common purpose as Local Government Yorkshire and Humber. LGYH is the regional democratic voice for Yorkshire and Humber, provides a regional strategic vision for local government, achieves improvements in services through collaboration and acts as the employers' organisation for the region.

'Yorkshire and Humber Connects' is the LGYH branding of the region's Information Society activity, bringing together strategic ICT etc. activity in the public sector, SMEs and third sectors and working closely with the Regional Development Agency. After London and Birmingham, Yorkshire and Humber has the third, fourth and fifth largest local authorities in England and these have shown the capacity to develop applications which are both professionally excellent, but also of a scale to allow widespread replicability.

The dimensions of eParticipation are well covered with infrastructure, technology, information management, strategic partnership, community development, etc., all being the subject of leading edge developments by YHA members. The basic platform for eParticipation is a good communications infrastructure; the region has 100% ADSL coverage and is currently implementing large-scale second generation broadband projects. Examples of specialism within the region are Leeds (serving a population of 0.75m people) combining mobile technology and knowledge management, with an Innovation Unit focusing on the introduction of new technology applications in public sector organisations; Sheffield, named as one of the ten leading organisations (alongside the BBC and the White House) in contributing to eDemocracy, chosen as a pilot in national eVoting trials, with a range of local and international eParticipation projects;



e@syConnects www.easyconnects.org.uk, the grouping of South Yorkshire public sector organisations has won many national and international awards for its work on citizen engagement; 'Patient Opinion' www.patientopinion.org.uk is recognised as a Europe-leading health application; Wakefield with a 25-year Community Strategy 'Developing Knowledge Communities', East Riding of Yorkshire combining citizen focus with extensive information management expertise (GIS, system integration, rural video-conferencing facilities etc.). There are many other leading-edge applications for citizen engagement in both rural and urban settings.

The key current emphasis in the region is on neighbourhoods. The development of Local Strategic Partnerships gives an organisational infrastructure bringing many public, private and community interests together. This is being supported by ground-breaking activity on neighbourhood data management drawing together police, local authority, health, etc., information to allow and encourage local residents to understand - at the very local level - what is happening in their area. With well-developed applications in Sheffield and East Riding, complemented by the Wakefield Futures Programme which provides the global context, local citizens are increasingly well-equipped to use the technologies to participate in deciding the future of their areas - 'Place-Shaping'.



The Centre for Social informatics (CSI) at **Napier University** is located in the School of Computing, in the Faculty of Engineering, Computing and the Creative Industries. The CSI consists of two subgroups: The International Teledemocracy Centre (ITC) and the Social Informatics (SI) group. The aim of the Centre for Social Informatics is to develop a distinctive body of work that reflects a shared interest in socio-technical interaction at different levels of organisation, and at different stages in the system life cycle, as well as in methods to support research in these areas.

Research in the domain of eParticipation is undertaken in the International Teledemocracy Centre. The remit of the ITC is to research and apply information and communication technologies to enhance and support the democratic decision-making processes. Achievements include the development of ground-breaking applications for eParticipation such as e-Petitioner which is currently used by the Scottish Parliament, the German Bundestag and a number of English local authorities. Recent research in the ITC has included investigative work on argument visualisation, conversational knowledge management, and the development of interfaces for citizens and government officials. Critical evaluation of such applications is an important component of the group's research portfolio.

Current EU funded research projects include eRepresentative which explores the extent to which a novel combination of information management, mobile technologies and security systems can be designed to enable information sharing by elected representatives; and, WEB-DEP which aims to establish a platform where journalists, politicians and citizens in the Western Balkans can engage in discussion about current issues of national and regional importance. In DEMO-net the CSI is now mainly involved in the evaluation of the network through the use of Social Network Analysis techniques and in work on categorising eParticipation tools.



The latest information about the CSI can be found at <http://www.csi.soc.napier.ac.uk/> and the ITC at <http://itc.napier.ac.uk/default.asp>.



Recent DEMO-net Publications

The most important DEMO-net recent publications are:

- Andersen, K. V., Henriksen, H. Z., Secher, C., & Medaglia, R. (2007). Cost of eParticipation: The Management Challenges. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy*, 1(1), 29-43.
- Andersen, K. V. and Henriksen, H. Z. (2006). Transfer of e-Participation Management: Budget Restrictions and Preferences. In Traunmüller (ed.). *Knowledge Transfer for eGovernment - Seeking Better eGovernment Solutions*, Linz, Trauner Verlag, pp. 133-144.
- Andersen, K. V. (2006). E-Participation Behind Closed Doors: Online Evaluation of Teaching Performance. In: Wimmer, M., Scholl, H. J., Grönlund, Å., & Andersen, K. V.. (eds.), *Electronic Government. Proceedings of the 5th International EGOV Conference 2006* (pp. 119-127). September 4-8, 2006. Krakow, Poland. Linz. Lecture Notes in Computer Science LNCS 4084. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. ISBN 3-540-37686-0.
- Andersen, K. V. (2006). e-Participation Management: Policy-input from DEMO-Net. In P. Cunningham & Miriam Cunningham (Eds.), *Exploiting the Knowledge Economy: Issues, Applications, Case Studies. Volume 3, Part I*, pp. 370-374. Amsterdam: IOS Press.
- Andersen, K. V., Norbjerg Jacob, Secher Christine, Wimmer Maria. (2007). Coach Class or Red Carpet Treatment: New Approaches for eParticipation in Local Government. In Cunningham, Paul, and Cunningham, Miriam. *Expanding the Knowledge Society: Issues, Applications, Case Studies. Part 1*. IOS Press: Amsterdam et al., 2007, pp. 442 - 448, URL: <http://www.echallenges.org/e2007>
- Christine Secher, K. V. Andersen (2007). E-participation: Transforming decision-making processes in the post-NPM era. 23rd EGOS. Sub-theme 35 Doing the 'Two-Step': New Forms of Organizing and Professional Identity in Post-NPM Organizations. URL: http://www.egosnet.org/conferences/collo23/sub_program_35.shtml
- Hilmar Westholm (2007): Plea for distinguished purposes of consultation and deliberation - offline and online. Paper for ESF-research conference „e-democracy“ in Vadstena (Sweden), URL: http://www.docs.ifib.de/esfconference07/papers/Westholm-Paper_DEMO-net-ESF_vs_0_2.pdf
- Macintosh, A. (2007). 'eParticipation and eDemocracy Research in Europe'. In Chen, H., Brandt, L., Gregg, V., Traunmuller R., Dawes, S., Hovy, E., Macintosh, A. & Larson, C. A. (Eds), (2007). *Digital Government: eGovernment Research, Case Studies, and Implementation* (pp. 85-102). USA: Springer. ISBN-13: 978-0-387-71610-7.
- Medaglia, R. (2007). 'The Challenged Identity of a Field: the State of the Art of eParticipation Research', *Information Polity. An International Journal of Government and Democracy in the Information Age*, vol. 12, no. 3, 169-181.
- Vedel T. et Koc Michalska K. (2007). "Political participation and the internet: evidence from the 2007 French presidential election". Communication presented at the International Conference on Electronic Government, Montreal, 26-28 September.
- Wimmer A. Maria. Ontology for an e-participation virtual resource centre. In Janowski, Tomasz and Pardo, Theresa A. ICEGOV 2007, Macao, Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance, ACM Press: New York, 2007, pp. 89 - 98.
- Wimmer A. Maria, Schneider Christian, Shaddock John (2007). Framework and methodology to turn barriers and challenges of eParticipation into research themes and actions. In Cunningham, Paul, and Cunningham, Miriam. *Expanding the Knowledge Society: Issues, Applications, Case Studies. Part 1*. IOS Press: Amsterdam et al., 2007, pp. 189-196 URL: <http://www.echallenges.org/e2007>
- Winkler, Roman., 2007, e-Participation in Comparison and Contrast: Online debates at the EU's platform 'Your Voice in Europe', in: D. Remenyi (ed.), *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on e-Government*, University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, 26-28 September 2007. Dublin: Academic Conferences International, pp. 238-248.



- Winkler, Roman, 2007, Online deliberation: Towards a research framework for the assessment of online debates. In: Avdic, A., Hedström, K., Rose, J., Grönlund, A. (Eds.) Understanding eParticipation, Contemporary PhD eParticipation Studies in Europe, Örebro: University Library, 183-201.
- Zalisova Irina, Regional eGovernment hip-ho, experiences of eris@ regions, paper for the conference eGovernment Interoperability Campus'07, Paris, October 9, 2007.

DEMO-net Consortium

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DEMO-net Fact Sheet

Project Acronym: DEMO-net

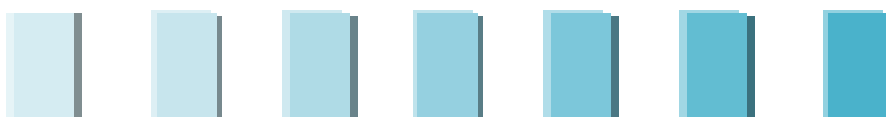
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