

---

# DEMO-net: WP4 Workshop Minutes

## E-Participation Public Policies and Implications of e-Participation on the Decision Making Process

---

University of Bergamo- Faculty of Economics

*Monday, 12 March 2007*

### List of participants:

<b>Joachim Åström</b>	Örebro University	<a href="mailto:joakim.astrom@sam.oru.se">joakim.astrom@sam.oru.se</a>
<b>Mikael Granberg</b>	Örebro University	<a href="mailto:mikael.granberg@sam.oru.se">mikael.granberg@sam.oru.se</a>
<b>Mariella Berra</b>	University of Turin	<a href="mailto:mariella.berra@unito.it">mariella.berra@unito.it</a>
<b>Stephen Coleman</b>	University of Leeds	<a href="mailto:s.coleman@leeds.ac.uk">s.coleman@leeds.ac.uk</a>
<b>Agnes Schneeberger</b>	University of Leeds	<a href="mailto:a.i.schneeberger@leeds.ac.uk">a.i.schneeberger@leeds.ac.uk</a>
<b>Keith Culver</b>	University of New Brunswick and Oxford University	<a href="mailto:kculver@unb.ca">kculver@unb.ca</a>
<b>Fiorella De Cindio</b>	University of Milan	<a href="mailto:fiorella.de.cindio@rcm.dico.unimi.it">fiorella.de.cindio@rcm.dico.unimi.it</a>
<b>Arthur Edwards</b>	University of Rotterdam	<a href="mailto:edwards@fsw.eur.nl">edwards@fsw.eur.nl</a>
<b>Leopoldina Fortunati</b>	University of Udine	<a href="mailto:fortunati.deluca@tin.it">fortunati.deluca@tin.it</a>
<b>Anna Carola Freschi</b>	University of Bergamo	<a href="mailto:anna.freschi@unibg.it">anna.freschi@unibg.it</a>
<b>Michela Balocchi</b>	University of Bergamo	<a href="mailto:micbalo@yahoo.it">micbalo@yahoo.it</a>
<b>Luca Raffini</b>	University of Bergamo	<a href="mailto:lucaraffini@gmail.com">lucaraffini@gmail.com</a>
<b>Giovanna Tizzi</b>	University of Bergamo	<a href="mailto:giovanna.tizzi@unibg.it">giovanna.tizzi@unibg.it</a>
<b>Gianmarco Bei</b>	University of Bergamo	<a href="mailto:gianmarcobei@virgilio.it">gianmarcobei@virgilio.it</a>
<b>Claudia Padovani</b>	University of Pavia	<a href="mailto:claudia.padovani@unipd.it">claudia.padovani@unipd.it</a>
<b>Laura Sartori</b>	University of Bologna	<a href="mailto:l.sartori@unibo.it">l.sartori@unibo.it</a>
<b>Christian Schneider</b>	University of Koblenz	<a href="mailto:cschneid@uni-koblenz.de">cschneid@uni-koblenz.de</a>
<b>John Shaddock</b>	Yorkshire and Humber Information Society Unit, eRegion Adviser	<a href="mailto:John.Shaddock@YHAssembly.gov.uk">John.Shaddock@YHAssembly.gov.uk</a>
<b>Thierry Vedel</b>	Fondation National de Sciences Politiques	<a href="mailto:thierry.vedel@sciences-po.fr">thierry.vedel@sciences-po.fr</a>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>WORKSHOP AGENDA .....</u>
<u>GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW.....</u>
<u>MORNING SESSIONS: QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS TO BE ADDRESSED.....</u>
<u>AFTERNOON SESSION: GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE EMERGED ISSUES.....</u>
<u>ACTION PLAN:.....</u>

---

## **Workshop Agenda**

- 1. Welcome by Anna Carola Freschi**
- 2. Introduction of participants** : Name, University, main area of research, role as public policy advisors
- 3. General introduction and overview by Stephen Coleman**
  - a) eGov policy (theoretical questions)
  - b) Research context of eParticipation research
  - c) 2 conceptual issues
    - a) what is the role of the public
    - b) what is the role of interactivity
  - d) 2 questions for workshop participants
    - a) what is the key question of policy research that researchers haven't addressed so far
    - b) how might we approach these questions in the discussion today?
- 4. Planned output:**
  - 1) Report, deadline June
  - 2) Discussion forum
  - 3) Individual collaboration

---

## **General introduction and overview**

*Chair: Stephen Coleman*

**WP4 survey** among DEMO-net partners and the international eParticipation research community showed the following dominant themes:

**a) Interdisciplinary translation** (e.g. among sociologists, communication scholars, economists and computer scientists)

There is a need to redefine the questions about policy research:

- 1) Problematization of eGovernance
- 2) Outline of research questions (to demonstrate the context of the eParticipation research)
- 3) Who is/are the public
- 4) What is the key question that are still unanswered? How do we approach these questions?

**Difference between 1) eGovernance and 2) eGovernment:**

- 1) eGovernance as a messy form of power (not hierarchical)
- 2) eGovernment as a centralised top-down form of ruling (missing complexity)

Reference: Rose, N. & Miller, P. (1992) 'Political power beyond the State', British Journal of Sociology, 43(2): 173- 205

## **The dependence of government on technology:**

### Digital governance:

- a) Representation of social actors
- b) Public services
- c) Circulation of information

**Features:** information abundance, interactive, digitisation of organisational behaviour, agency, accessing digital info creates opportunities and causes change

**Role of policy:** authoritative allocation of values → asymmetric allocation of authority

### Issues:

- 1) why are some items on the policy agenda and others are not? E.g. eProtest is off the agenda (networking is dangerous) while eVoting is on the agenda.
- 2) Why are some actors involved in the process and some are not? → who is entitled to speak (who are the mouthpieces of eParticipation policy)?  
Reference to UK/YouGov survey: eParticipation reflects both digital and political divide (e.g. marginalisation of groups)
- 3) What defines the patterns of interaction? How do people interact?

## **3 tensions at the heart of policy**

- 1) Institutional/ situated logic of politics → framed conceptions (e.g. Weber)  
→ institutions are resistant to change  
→ institutional voids – areas where governments cannot cope with decisions and where they depend on the public to answer  
Situated logic: strategies of every-day life → people are interested in issues/ immediate environments  
Contrast to institutional framework: institutions have rigid memory functions  
eParticipation would best out of improvisation → eParticipation is ruined by institutionalising it
- 2) Instrumental/ cultural logic:
  - a) goal driven process
  - b) identity and effect → people need to feel respected and good in taking part in itReference: Ulrich Beck → sub-politisation of politics away from centres to areas of the non-political (e.g. family, TV)
- 3) Participatory in- and output
  - tension between process and performance
  - procedural fairness
  - emphasis on performance not on process
  - problem: consensual & agonistic output

Fear (of politicians): eParticipation will eliminate consensus

Public: politics is agonistic -> who gets what; who is respected and who is not?  
Tensions have to be apprehended as both subjective (notions of efficacy) and objective (notions of fairness)

### **Public**

- Discursive construction → imagine the public (sphere)
- Few people trust the public
- Demos is too differentiated for empowerment → who should participate?
  - a) General public/national public/who is in?
  - b) Interested public (e.g. stakeholders in outcome) → exclusion of lots of participants in the public sphere
  - c) Marginalised publics (excluded groups of the public, e.g. ethnic minorities)
  - d) Self-elected public (whoever gets involved in projects)

**Q:** To whom are we speaking when we speak to the public? To what extent are we accountable to gender/ethnic minority?

### **Interactivity**

- the soul of eParticipation
- lack of meaning
- what is interactivity?
- Use and definitions of interactivity:
  - a) interface – activity in DEMO-net context; capacity to interact with digital content; restricted
  - b) Raffaelli: message exchange (3 messages); limited notion
  - c) subjective interactivity: it occurs when you think you are interacting; interactivity is due to perception of people

We need to think about what we mean by eGovernance → need for theoretical clarity

**Aim:** stronger/more inclusive deliberative democracy

---

## ***Morning sessions: questions and discussions to be addressed***

- a) *What are the questions we don't know about/ need to address?*
- b) *How can we discuss/ approach these questions in today's session?*

### **Discussion:**

#### ***Anna Carola Freschi***

- Problem of new location of power in the context of new governance
- Shift from politics to administration(routine)

- What are the new locations and sources of political power?
- Interactivity: reduction of asymmetry in the control of communications flow/information
- Asymmetrical position of civic actors (different kinds) and institutions/political actors (different intensity of power)
- Flow of interactivity → very complex, non-linear nature
- Different 'autonomy' of the different levels of governance
- Symbolic power of technology and technocracy – 'de-politicization'

***Agnes Schneeberger:***

- Empowerment – how do citizens get empowered if eDiscussions have no political consequences? Is this a threat to future eParticipation? Are elites more empowered by ICTs than citizens?
- Platforms of expressions – are online forums more than platforms of expressions?
- Direct democracy – what is the politicians' stance?
- Tracability of arguments – where do contributions go? What kind of knowledge management and archiving is planned for the future?

***Mariella Berra:***

- Will of participation from the government agenda → why it is not used?
- Performance → what is the government agenda; how we can evaluate adequately?
- How the common knowledge created in the communication can be used?
- Create experience of cooperation fostering social capital in the communities
- Why politicians are not interested in using technology?

**Stephen Coleman:**

- Because it (politics) is a monopoly?

**Mariella Berra:**

- The rebuilding of community should be an opportunity → to build social capital (networks among people, private actors, self organization of society)

***Joachim Åström:***

- What eParticipation really means for different actors and in different contexts
- Government use it as problem-solving but not so much for power-sharing (administration theory)
- Everyone approves participation
- Use of 'old' frameworks of power-sharing
- Are we limiting the overall scope by what we are doing through the exclusive use of the term eParticipation for this area of research?

**Stephen Coleman:**

- Power sharing? eDemocracy ↔ eParticipation
- Different contexts: e.g. the Chinese government is interested in eParticipation

**Mikael Granberg:**

- Missing connections between talking jobs and decision → decision making processes
- Long history of participation offline in DK → what about eParticipation without the “e”? What is the difference? What are the specifics of eParticipation?

**Thierry Vedel:**

- 2 dimensions of the problem:
  - a) how to promote participation of citizens
  - b) how can citizens participate in the improvement of public policy
- Digital divide includes several other divides (e.g. civic divides, knowledge gap, social divide)  
→ different political cultures with a) active and b) passive citizens

**H: All divides overlap! How can we overcome the different divides?**

Information technology will not resolve these divides but increase them

**Stephen Coleman:**

- Solving the problem of inequality in society
- How can we address this in policy terms?
- Ways: better communications; orchestrated measures to bring disadvantaged people to be represented even more than advantaged

**Thierry Vedel:**

- Enlarge or deepen democracy?
- Research concentrated on new application services, but they are biased
- Existing fundamental inequalities
- There is no development to create technologies for the less advantaged

**Arthur Edwards:**

- Politicians continue to do things relevant, to decide, even if citizens do not participate
- Concept of politics:
  - a) domain of the de-political (family, ethnicity)
  - b) domain of politics and politicians  
→ we know too little about the domain of politicians

**Stephen Coleman:**

- Jens Hoff study: younger politicians are better with email than their older colleagues
- Politicians are worried to lose power to bureaucrats who are technocrats doing technological exercises

- Worry that demands go beyond technological competences

**Arthur Edwards:**

- Different types of local councillors /styles of representation
- Some are reaching out to the public but there is a lack of translation into approachable issues
  - a) types of politicians
  - b) use of new media
- **Dualisation:**
  - a) making local policies more interesting for citizens
  - b) restore power
- How councillors 'tap' resources from citizens
- Strategies of local councillors → how to make alliances (inquiry)
- Triangle: council ↔ citizen ↔ administration

**Keith Culver:**

- What differences does eParticipation make?
- What categories of knowledge?
- View of Europe: diverse flow of eParticipation → conceptual unity on top but a diverse body
- Autonomous human personalities with interests
- Artificial personalities (e.g. Dutch animal party, Bill of rights for robots on South Korea)
- 'real' democracy on local level → not true, national and international levels are very relevant
- Problem of international participation as a main problem in Europe
- Focus on local level limits the problem
- What is the role of the private actors?

**Laura Sartori:**

- Who are the actors on institutional and individual level?
- How to identify them? How to include the excluded?
- Stratification of differences

**Stephen Coleman:**

- What are the policy consequences?
- Generic publics in the future but for now we have segregated stakeholders
- Do self-selected groups have a democratic dimension/representative potential?

**Christian Schneider:**

- Technical view
- Interactive platform for eParticipation

- If people are not interested in regular participation, how can we make them participate in eParticipation
- Is technical participation 'easier' and more direct?

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- Concept of eParticipation → historicising it
- Historical specificity of involvement
- eParticipation out of crisis/ lack of political theory
- How to express needs/ how to communicate
- Kinds of instruments showed limitations when new media entered the field; new media only posed other questions but not answering the pending 'old' ones
- How can we carry out old questions in the context of new media?
- Looking at eParticipation in terms of resources: time, work, actors  
→ who does what? What is the cost of eParticipation? Who makes money with eParticipation (business model bias → economic factor)?
- Debate about eParticipation: money to fund e-participation projects comes from all classes but they don't benefit equally from eParticipation benefits → what is the justification for eParticipation to those citizens who are NOT benefiting from it?
- eParticipation is made from the workplace (spare/robbed time from the work)  
→ most people use work facilities to make of eParticipation  
→ people don't want to spent money or time to participate privately
- Issue: role of time and financial constraints
- Concept of immaterial work
- Working class were engaged in conventional political participation → eParticipation cuts them off
- Collapse of digital cities (e.g. Amsterdam)

**Stephen Coleman:**

- Crisis – eParticipation as a panic reaction?
- Present: what does the public sphere need?
- How to think about added- value?

***Claudia Padovani:***

- Tracability of issues → use of tools to allow participation of vocabularies
- eDemocracy use in Europe
- conception of eDemocracy: allows visualisation in semantic spaces
- Institutional/situational eParticipation:  
e.g. EU communication strategy: willingness but cluelessness on reality
- Is being exposed to knowledge enough?
- Engagement in networks

- Vague idea of decision makers on how to use technology
  - Tensions between on- and offline dimensions:
    - there are similar tensions both in the on- and offline dimensions
    - the challenge is to merge dimensions because they have similar tensions
  - Learning effect in the local space to be transferred to transnational level
    - connection to offline- participation research
- Stephen Coleman:**
- EU communication strategy approach: they want consensus
  - You cannot have a democratic discussion when only ONE result will be accepted!

***John Shaddock:***

- 2 way communication/participation
  - Debating and selling solutions
  - Time scales of political processes in the past have changed: nowadays politicians face short time scales with demands for quick solutions
  - Politicians are lonely → lack of support of institutions for their representatives
  - How to fit timing of eParticipation with decision- making process?
- Stephen Coleman:**
- Do we need fast participation? Can this still be deliberative?

***Keith Culver:***

- Example of citizen juries
- Stephen Coleman:**
- De- institutionalisation of everything is needed
  - Ad-hoc principle
  - Innovation cannot co- exist within institutional logic

***Fiorella De Cindio:***

- Risks – opportunity tension
  - Feeling to do something
  - Second life
  - Technology always runs
  - Technological change shapes society
  - What is the balance between sides of technological change and social change?
- Stephen Coleman:**
- The consciousness of a risk diminishes the risk
  - DEMO-net is too enthusiastic about technological potential
  - We don't RUN eParticipation – we have to understand it
    - research should be interventionist before things collapse/fail

***Luca Raffini:***

- Risk and opportunity of eParticipation and participatory/deliberative democracy
- Link of social change to old and new forms of participation
- Dualisation/ fragmentation of society
- Political parties as instruments of participation to link citizens with institutions and the public
- Dalton: mobilisation of parties
- Now the individual is alone (no party representation) facing the institutions
- Empowerment: how do new forms of eParticipation empower the powerless citizens?
- How to de- power the yet powerful?
- Transformation of power relations in society

***Stephen:***

- Do you need to be a social- democrat to be interested in eParticipation?
- Would the right have anything to say about eParticipation?
- Is eParticipation a political reading? → political aspiration  
e.g. is the outcome of eParticipation to freely complain about migration? Is this desirable or do we have a more normative (or even moral) approach?

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Empowerment of social actors
- Reconstruction of a social link (reference to social capital)
- Why politics is less central in individual interests/values
- Maybe the liberal model has destroyed this aspect of social relationship/society?
- Where is politics
- **New questions:**
  - is there a process of normalisation of politics?
  - marginalisation of those who want to participate by the presence of politicians → e.g. small, active groups without voices in the public sphere

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- Participation and knowledge management
- What decision- making processes among citizens?
- What is their knowledge and opinion?
- Process of sophistication → eParticipation competences
- How can people decide?

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Knowledge itself is constructed
- Problem of vulgar knowledge

***Arthur Edwards:***

- e.g. speed ramp discussion – who holds professional knowledge?

***Stephen Coleman:***

- non- institutional dimension
- DEMO-net has almost exclusively looked at institutions → what about blogs, wikis etc?
- Why haven't we had a discussion about public spaces involving the public?
- What is the added- value for democracy?

***Fiorella De Cindio:***

- Indicators for eParticipation are weak ; better start with indicators for participation (without the “e”); e.g. user activity via log files
- There is a need to compare on- and offline participation
- Goal: extend and deepen participation

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Are the on- and offline dimension really separated spheres of participation?
- How/why can we distinguish between on- and offline participation?

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Historical approach → what has changed?
- A comparison on the present is not possible BUT a historical comparison is

***Claudia Padovani:***

- Participation is not an ended value. There are 3 different aspects included:
  - legitimacy
  - efficiency (politically contested term)
  - justice (politically contested term)

***Thierry Vedel:***

- What is the value of participation in comparison to eParticipation?

***Keith Culver:***

- There is a need for an ongoing dialogue between legal theory and democratic theory

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- Connections between talking and decision- making are hard to investigate (e.g.

Beppe Grillo blog in Italy)

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Agenda- setting: empirical evidence that the public can raise issues
- Can you measure influence?
  - what would happen if these things would not happen at all?
  - a questions that goes around the questions of influence
- Public service broadcasting: Andrew Graham, e.g. BBC Test “public value”
  - how do you define a public value test outside economic externalities?

***Mariella Berra:***

- Different interactions between disciplines (e.g. European view, local view/ different levels and scales)

***Thierry Vedel:***

- Difficulty to define set of criteria of evaluation of eParticipation
- What was before the Internet?
- The visibility of discussion is more present → before the Internet most discussion took place in the private sphere

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- We should look to measure something
  - importance for politics
  - need for evidence

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Instrumental measurement limits the potential (e.g. no need to that for music etc.)
- Why do we need measurement? → institutions force an instrumental approach on it

***Mariella Berra:***

- Participation is not constant nor equal or a stable value
- In order to enlarge participation you need to measure it

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Participation is binding for politicians → a source of legitimacy
- E.g. UK ePetition on road pricing got the attention of 1.9 million participants
- Politicians approach: we want to know who the people are who disagree with us → finding out what tools will tame them
- Why does a politician have a website? → they want to collect data about users
- Politicians are interested actors in the same way as citizens are

- It is a source of power to be used against citizens

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- In the rhetoric of the political consultants participation is needed to prevent conflict

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- Policy needs to measure public opinion (e.g. German project on innovation → link between innovation and decision- making)

***Afternoon session: General discussion on the emerged issues***

***Chair: Anna Carola Freschi***

**Summary of main points**

1. Different levels of public policies on eParticipation/ multilevel governance of eParticipation
  - specifics of eParticipation policy
  - institutional specifics
  - comparison/ comparative analysis on ePolicy
  - communicational aspect
2. Community and Cooperation
  - self- organising effect of civil society
3. Relationship of conflict between problem- solving and power- sharing
4. Problems of political, social and civil divide, with digital divide:
  - who are the users of eParticipation tools in a non- institutional context?
  - who are participants in general?
  - what is their relationship with the new media?
5. Politicians:
  - expectations to eDemocracy
  - representation styles
  - styles of participation
6. Change in public sphere and mass media systems that communication technologies have implied
7. Main traits of the policy arena on eDemocracy and eParticipation
  - private sector/industries
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> sector actors
8. Different rhythms between decision- making process and social/economic/technological change
  - pressure on the policy- making
9. Relationship between online- offline participation
10. Regulation of the Internet
  - implication of social divide, civil rights, citizenship
11. Methodologies/ research instruments

- reflection
- gathering

***John Shaddock:***

- Opportunity emphasis – rather than the reductionist view of what is

***Fiorella De Cindio:***

- Difference in participation on different levels (local, national, EU, international)
  - the dimension of the local level is relevant for the impact evaluation on politics
  - scale and issues

***Mariella Berra:***

- Best practice of eParticipation → examples
- What are the factors affecting/improving participation levels?

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- 2 levels of the discussion: the level at which e-democracy public policies are defined, the level of experimentation/implementation in practise. They can differ (e.g. in Italy national policy to support local initiatives)

***Claudia Padovani:***

- Scale: EU communication strategy with the aim to create a policy on communication
- Consciousness to interlink eParticipation and communication levels

***Stephen Coleman:***

- National activities: eConsultation on policies in the UK → 1 month periods
- E.g. “Domestic violence” eConsultation in 2000 with over 1000 contributions; from 2000- 2006 legislation was using forum evidence for policy making
  - eConsultation made it possible to reach “hard to reach” groups
  - the eConsultation generated an output that would not have been with a survey
- E.g. Stem cell research eConsultation (1 month) results in the participation of an unexpected third group apart from the expected opposing groups of a) scientists and b) moralists which were c) chronically disabled people
- Surpassing the barriers of local/national and having something to say or not
- These examples have nothing to do with local or national level but the issue itself has a unifying effect
  - consultations pushed politicians to consider evidence
- This kind of consultation would not be possible on the Iraq war

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Politicians seem more interested in hearing from the public where peculiar themes are at stake

***Keith Culver:***

- Scale in purely technical context is wrong  
→ e.g. translation mechanisms
- The problem of scale is a cross-cutting issue and cannot be reduced to technological issues
- Process of evolution in the development of policies

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Technocrats have no power but politicians don't know
- People who run websites are junior in an institutions of government  
→ political battle: you need senior politicians who want this as well in order to ensure sustainability

***Laura Sartori:***

- Qualitative analysis is important
- Need for quantitative data basis
- EU level data bases on: 1) individuals, 2) institutions and 3) 3<sup>rd</sup> actors
- Institutional side is known → we need to go to the individual side (survey design on an individual level)
- We must design specific/targeted policies for smaller groups → multi-targeted policies
- Digital divide: supply and demand policies
- Why/ reason for participation
- Supply means regulation of telecommunication sector
- Access to broadband Internet (infrastructure)
- Different models of eSociety and eParticipation → differences between Europe, U.S., South America; how to recognise this?
- How do we cope with diversity within eParticipation?  
→ e.g. Estonia (Russian population)
- How is social capital related/connected to the Internet? → problem to find out what are the causes and what is correlation
- What is the connection between the Internet, community, political participation?

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Attention of companies to develop large-scale application for large amounts of participants
- The future of software development is to process large-scale content contributions
- The scale of active participation tends to be the small group

- Instead of large scale e-arena, connections among different small arenas
- Power is not evenly distributed among levels
- If we look at participation only at local level, what is if the power is not there?

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Companies will solve problems in their own economic logic
  - public cannot demand particularity
  - public only exists when mediated
- Whether we need to think in public space online → regulatory debate/ public service
- Blumler/Coleman, 1999: “Civic Space of Commons” model
- I don’t believe in private corporations creating this space
- Why can’t DEMO-net say that to the European Commission? → why can’t we YOU (the EC) create a Civic Commons

***Mariella Berra:***

- I agree. This is a big opportunity but does the EU WANT to create a civic eCommons?

***Anna Carola Freschi***

- Need of institutional/political consolidation is a good reason

***Leopoldina Fortunati:***

- Multilevel governance of eParticipation → all levels are connected through the Internet
- Relevant unexpected effects (e.g. immigrants and online newspapers)
- Business sector is more active than public institutions to survey the users, in the perspective of co-design services.
- Who are the actors on the web? → mapping

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Trend to apply business related practices on eParticipation

***Mariella Berra:***

- Mobile phones as important instrument
- Debate on spectrum

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Any process of social self-organisation studied in current research → any existing case study that would illustrate new forms of cooperation?
- Examples of social networks in Italy that make use of Internet forums (e.g. Val di Susa, No-TAV movement), but they face a wall in the attitude of politicians → politicians don't answer to citizens claims

- Strong contrast between institutional and civic sphere

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Lack of ‘good’ evaluations of projects → non- biased by researchers who are involved in the leading of the same project.
- Set of quality criteria
- Tip: new media – new democracy: e.g. Estonia; no one wants to tell you about wasted money
- Researchers are detectives → where are the good case studies?
- Empowerment happens through institutional cracks → it is not happening along institutional lines

***John Shaddock:***

- Evaluation of success of eParticipation?
- Need to consider also the effect of the civic pressure on politics

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Process dimension; social mobilization and strong pressure on politics may modify the general framing;

***Mariella Berra:***

- Protest has no direct effect on government but consequences in the long run
- Democratic politics as negotiation, search for compromises
- Arrogance of many politicians

***Laura Sartori:***

- It depends on political traditions → if politicians didn’t listen before, they won’t listen now

***Stephen Coleman:***

- What happens if the generation of politicians changes to younger generations who are more in touch and more technologically knowledgeable? → is this an issue of ‘catching up’?

***Arthur Edwards:***

- A new generation of politicians WILL come but it is about to see how they make use of the Internet in seeking dialogue with citizens
- Citizens want to know how colleagues do and deal with the Internet
- Which are the ways of politicians to manage political strategies
- Most politicians WANT to be responsive → behavioural patterns
- Inquire the conception of political reality and connections to accountability to voters

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Why should politicians exploit ICTs?
- New plebiscitarian wave or a rethinking of their own political role?
- Prevailing resistance of politicians to participation or effort to manage/control participation

***Keith Culver:***

- Create competition situation among politicians to cause a pulling effect
- Cross Boundaries program in Canada, interesting case

***Fiorella De Cindio:***

- Electoral system and level of the election are relevant variable related to the politicians behaviour

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Politicians are caught in institutional frame
- Levels of trust differ but critique is the same in all political systems
- Representative democracy is NOT working → proposing new technologies
  1. the shaping/ re- shaping of the policy process is at the core
  2. boosting under- represented groups
  3. re- designing political institutions
    - a) space
    - b) inequality
    - c) institutional reform
- Can we go back to the EC and tell them:
  - a) establish an online public space
  - b) social inclusion implementation
  - c) turn EP into a digitally friendly and meaningful institution
- Writing of a proposal that will cause some serious thinking in the European Commission

***Thierry Vedel:***

- Put together case studies and evaluations (both good AND bad examples) → creation of an assessment database

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- UN conference → they are selecting best practice eParticipation examples

***Thierry Vedel:***

- Term of mediation
  - democracy as a system of mediation; also the traditional ways are relevant
  - eParticipation as a new means of mediation
  - e.g. S. Royale website, over 1 million hits → high numbers of participants
- How to condense variety of contributions? → by use of human practice, not by

digital agents

- Make use of MA/PhD studies

***Stephen Coleman:***

- Getting people from one country to evaluate other countries → possible operationalisation
- Critical case studies

***Anna Carola Freschi:***

- Need for a shift of attention from institutional online sphere to a more general online sphere (independent from institutions)
- Innovation is more diffused on the non- institutional side
- Learn from success and failure of (e)participation
- Need for a contextualization of the case- studies

***Keith Culver:***

- Bi-national inspection groups/teams
- Virtual eParticipation observatory operated by governments (do it before the Americans come)
- If there isn't a strong European voice, we'll face U.S. dominance in technology

***Claudia Padovani:***

- Situation on logic/open space on intelligent discussion and inequality issue
- Non- institutional eParticipation

***Stephen Coleman:***

- We need to communicate coherently the work done today
- We need agreement on what is useful in measurements

***Action Plan:***

- Send invitations to eDeliberation Google mailing list of Demo- Net
- Position paper by June 2007 (Deadline)
- → institutional inclusion
  - re- design of institutions according to principles
  - eCommons/public space in Europe (as a new e- public sphere)
  - fight inequality and digital divide
  - re- design of institutions according to principles
- Contact: Paul Timmons → EC support
- mutual evaluation of case studies
- Further political support