

IST Network of Excellence Project

FP6-2004-IST-4-027219

Thematic Priority 2: Information Society Technologies

Report of the eParticipation Stakeholder Dialogue in Prague (CZ) on 20th of April 2006

Editors of Report : L. Diedrich, M.Wimmer
Date : 2nd of May 2006
Dissemination Level : Confidential
Author(s) of Minutes : M. Wimmer
Start date of project : 01 January 2006
Duration : 4 years
WP no.: 1
Organisation name compiling the report: University of Koblenz (DE) - report, no deliverable!

Location of Meeting:

Panel discussion at the Parliament's day of the Eastern European eGov days 2006, Parliament of the Czech Republic, Senat, Valdestejnska, Prague 1- Mala -Strana

Duration:

13:30 – 14:40 hrs

Participants at the panel debate:

Name	Institution
Ann Macintosh	Napier
Oliver Märker	AIS
John Shaddock	YH
Thierry Vedel	CNRS
Irina Zalisova	EPMA
Maria A. Wimmer (moderating)	IWVI

1 Introduction of participants

Maria Wimmer introduced the participants of the panel discussion.

2 Introduction to DEMO_net

Ann Macintosh gave a brief introduction to the DEMO_net project. She reported that eParticipation has become an important topic of governments and academia. Some important aspects are:

- to connect citizens with one another and with politicians and governments.
- to perceive eParticipation not only as technology; likewise important challenges to be addressed are of political and social nature to strengthen eParticipation.
- integrating fragmented research is key in DEMO_net, thereby securing lasting integration.

Ann Macintosh also announced a dialogue with external stakeholders of DEMO_net on 14th June in Edinburgh and invited the audience to attend that workshop. The topic of discussion is to address and elicit key challenges and barriers of eParticipation and to bring researchers and practitioners together to discuss these challenges and barriers of eParticipation.

Finally, Ann Macintosh stressed that the project has two main dimensions: integration activities and joint research activities.

3 Question 1: Which are the main research topics in eParticipation [from the view of research institutions | seen from government bodies]?

From the view of research institutions:

Thierry Vedel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in politics, public participation in public politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o use of ICT changes political participation o e.g. eVoting, electoral campaign, electronic discusses, role of blogs - is it possible to broaden and deepen public participation in politics and decision making?
Oliver Märker:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of large scale eDemocracy socio-technical systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o how to involve citizens (and specific target groups) in public debates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ what technology is appropriate ▪ what processes are needed to participate online ▪ what methods are needed to facilitate participation online ▪ which media-mix (intelligent combination with 'conventional' means) - how to embed eParticipation processes in traditional planning and decision-making processes - institutionalisation
Ann Macintosh:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conducting eParticipation (e.g. large-scale project ePetitioner working with the German Bundestag) - studying and observing eParticipation (e.g. evaluation of the UK national eDemocracy project) - using qualitative methods (e.g. ethnography) to evaluate how people understand eParticipation

Seen from government bodies

John Shaddock:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - realise the most effective knowledge based economy in 2010 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o some reports quote that 80% of GDP growth is due
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	<p>to the application of ICT and broadband infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ innovate more and faster ○ research output is too slow to take up in practice <p>– work of academia and practitioners need to be brought together more closely</p>
Irina Zalisova:	<p>– how to bring research to practice?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ practical side of investigation of research <p>– activate organisations for more engagement in politics</p>

4 Question 2: From your point of view, which are the main challenges and barriers to be addressed in order to implement eParticipation

- **from a research point of view? How to bring research results successfully and effectively into implementation and application?**
- **from government organisations? How can governments take up results from research effectively and in which way can they benefit from research?**

From a research point of view? How to bring research results into implementation and application?

Participant	Statements	Challenges	Barriers
Oliver Märker:	<p>scalability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The scalability potential of eParticipation is still limited in a double sense: eParticipation offers still do not attract enough citizens. And if so, they do not offer sufficiently support to both the facilitators to manage and moderate the discussion in a goal and results-oriented manner and citizens to find their way through hundreds of contributions. This limits also the level of attracting new participants, the probability of holding active participants, and the quality of deliberation and outcomes. – The challenge of scalability targets at three main user groups: citizens (understanding the state of discussion; retracing contributions), facilitators (managing the discourse), and public authorities (getting results for decision making). – Scalability concerns the development of 	X	X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tools for large scale public participation (e.g. for discourse monitoring and discourse analysis and visualization) ○ concepts / methods: designing new participation procedures (e.g. self-regulating) and online-moderation methods for goal-oriented large scale process facilitation <p>Pilots are very useful means to reflect the challenges and barriers and to learn more about eParticipation as well as to transfer knowledge into different application domains. They are precondition for later standardisation and cost reduction.</p>		
Ann Macintosh:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – experience from 2 main projects that provide information on challenges and barriers: the OECD study on ICT to support citizen engagement and the UK national eDemocracy project – issue of scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can an individual voice be heard above the masses? ○ How can governments and politicians respond? – capacity and active citizenship Are we ready / willing and able to debate? – ensuring cohesion how to manage evolving policy information – ensuring commitment What processes need to be changed? – how to involve elected representatives – evaluation - how do we know that we have been successful? 	<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p>	
Thierry Vedel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cognitive obstacle We are logged in a cognitive frame in conceiving and interpreting things As an example, the “suitcase case” was introduced: for long time, the technologies were known as well for the suitcase as a carrier for personal belongings when travelling. Also, the technology of wheels was known for long time. Yet, to combine both to bring to bear the trolley took over a hundred years where both technologies had co-existed without bringing them together. – representative democracy 		<p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">X</p>

	– turnout in eParticipation is very complex to calculate		
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From government organisations? How can government take up results from research and benefit from research? (Irina, John)

Participant	Statements	Challenges	Barriers
Irina Zalisova:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – commitment of all stakeholders – Interoperable processes – Introduction of new processes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X X
John Shaddock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – importance of using the new channels to reduce costs of government – this means live engagement and meaningful participation, not one-way communication – economic issue that needs to be promoted – in eGovernment, Inclusion is of benefit to all – eParticipation matters – as regards ourselves as citizens, governments make decisions in our name =>we need more active participation – promote the dialogue between citizens and governments – this will be difficult as our organisations and institutions change shape (and ways of working) using the new technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X X X X X 	

5 Question 3: It has been acknowledged that we need to strengthen the dialogue between research and governments in order to bring forward eParticipation. Which means should be used to facilitate and motivate such a dialogue? What would be the benefits of such a dialogue for research, governments, politicians and citizens respectively the general public, and the ICT industry?

John Shaddock:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DEMO_net as a knowledge base and a network repository - setting out some time scales (means and benefit) <p>Benefits would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - break cognitive and cultural barriers - EC funded project as a key initiative to establish dialogues among fragmented research in different disciplines and with experts in various fields
Irina Zalizova:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exchange of experience - take best experiences across Europe to learn from each other - share knowledge

<i>Ann Macintosh:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- technology transfer of results- ensuring relevance of the results- piloting methods and techniques and learn from experiments- exchanges, practitioners and researchers in common projects
<i>Thierry Vedel:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- applied research is not always fully recognised
<i>Oliver Märker:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- projects and pilots- visions, new technologies

6 Summary

Was given by Maria Wimmer