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The main goal is to enhance the quality and quantity of intellectual exchange among researchers, educators, scholars and practitioners dealing with major issues of public administration and public policy in the Central and East European regions.

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e-Governance: Paradigms for Public Policy and Administration

The importance of e-governance in current public administration and policy, both in theory and practice, can hardly be overrated. In the framework of the NISP Acee Annual Conference, this topic is therefore covered by a special working group. The current issue of the *Occasional Papers* series presents three of the best papers from this working group, which for one or the other technical reason were not included in the selected papers edition (*Enhancing the Capacities to Govern: Challenges Facing the CEE Countries*, Selected Papers from the 11th NISP Acee Annual Conference, Bucharest, Romania, 2003, Bryane Michaels, Rainer Kattel, and Wolfgang Drechsler, eds., Bratislava: NISP Acee, 2004), but which nevertheless are relevant for, and of great potential interest to, the Central and Eastern European e-governance discourse. What makes these three papers special is that all of them, albeit from different angles, attempt to be *paradigmatic*, i.e., they try to supply a matrix, model, or perspective how e-governance can be conceptualized.

Vassilis Peristeras and **Theodore Tsekos**, formerly from the United Nations Thessaloniki Center, Greece, who coordinated the working group until now, attempt in their essay, “e-Governance as a Public Policy Framework,”

to combine in a relatively simple model the entire phenomenon of e-governance as process, integrating all the different actors as much as possible. Marcin Sakowicz, of the Warsaw School of Economics, Poland, in “How to Evaluate e-Government? Different Methodologies and Methods,” delivers a brief but clear description of the different aspects and elements of e-governance that allows comparison and evaluation. And finally, Wolfgang Drechsler, of the University of Tartu, Estonia, in “The Estonian e-Voting Laws Discourse: Paradigmatic Benchmarking for Central and Eastern Europe,” analyzes the Estonian e-voting law, the one in Europe that is actually passed, in order to see what lessons other countries, in Central and Eastern Europe, can draw from this experience.

Studies of e-governance are a matter particularly prone to rapid change, again both in theory and practice, and thus much information about it quickly becomes outdated. Essays on the topic are therefore necessarily snapshots. However, the current articles contain an interesting set of perspectives on e-governance as paradigms for Public Policy and Administration in any case, and so they are presented herewith.

e-Governance as a Public Policy Framework

Vassilis Peristeras *, Theodore Tsekos **

1. IN SEARCH OF COHERENT POLICY MAKING MODELS

Public action, in order to be effective and efficient, has to be conceived and developed as a coherent and integrated system.

In practice, however, a dichotomy concerning policymaking occurs affecting all dimensions of public policy: collective and individual actors, designing and implementing processes, etc.

The reasons for this dichotomy, termed “policy breach”¹, reside in the fact that design and implementation are two quasi-independent and loosely linked sub-processes.

More specifically, the policy analysis and design stage constitutes a top-down process involving political – or highly politicized – personnel. It is outcome oriented and operated on the basis of general criteria such as mission and vision concepts, organizational and environmental values and strategies, political priorities, etc.

On the other hand, policy implementation is mainly a bottom-up process involving P.A. professionals: middle management and low-level personnel. Therefore, implementation activities are guided by intra-organizational priorities and day-to-day management requirements and restrictions. They are short-term and output oriented with only vague references to the “big picture” and loose links to the organization’s long-term objectives and strategic priorities and goals.

The unsuitable connection and mismatching of two complementary steps of a process supposed to be linear leads to the disinte-

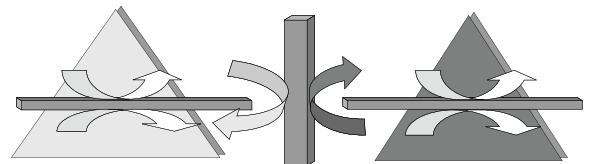
gration of the overall rational policy making framework and produces incoherent, ineffective and inefficient applied policies.

Public policies become even less effective insofar as the vertical breach couples with a horizontal one, as is usually the case. Policy outcomes are mostly the conjunction of distinctive processes in different policy fields. Full employment, for example, can only be ensured through the joint efforts of economic, industrial, educational, vocational training, regional development, and social and labor market regulation policies.

The inability of full communication and cooperation between all these distinctive policy constituencies and networks often results in poor policy outcomes. Loose and ineffective horizontal communications is a very common and widespread defect of contemporary policymaking and administrative systems. Public agencies entrench themselves with institutional, procedural and communicational fortifications, erected throughout their historical development.

Therefore, a bi-dimensional isolation occurs in the public policy sphere (fig 1): not only a vertical, intra-organizational “breach” impedes field integration but also a horizontal – trans-organizational – gap jeopardizes field connection and completion.

Figure 1
The Policy Breach



The problematic situation described above creates an urgent need for a bi-dimensional integrative interface bridging both the vertical and the horizontal policy gaps and linking all policy field actors to a cooperating “policy community.” this kind of interface can be built through extensive use of modern in-

* United Nations Thessaloniki Centre for Public Service Professionalism, Thessaloniki, Greece

** United Nations Thessaloniki Centre for Public Service Professionalism, Thessaloniki, Greece

¹ Tsekos, T. (2003), “Towards Integrated Policy Making: Remediating the Public Action Dichotomy through Information and Communication Technologies and Learning”, Rosenbaum, Allan, Gajdosova Ludmila (Editors), *State Modernization and Decentralization. Implications for Education and Training in Public Administration: Selected Central European and Global Perspectives*, NISPAcee, 2003.

formational and communication technologies applied at each and every stage of the overall policy making process.

One facet of this process must be associated with the transcription of current policy making procedures in ICT applications, in order to standardize, simplify and accelerate vertical coordination and horizontal networking and, thus, facilitate policy integration.

Generic process and data structures, a high level model for strategic planning to provide common definitions, vocabulary and a conceptual framework for policy making within broader policy field-based sub-categories of public agencies and a unifying “enterprise architecture” on which all public administration processing and information systems should be based in order to become interoperable are some critical prerequisites for integrated public policies.

Currently, the public administration (PA) domain lacks commonly agreed generic policy making models linked to content standards, definitions and vocabularies, not only at the global level among the administrative systems worldwide, but even inside each country².

2. PROPOSING A MODEL

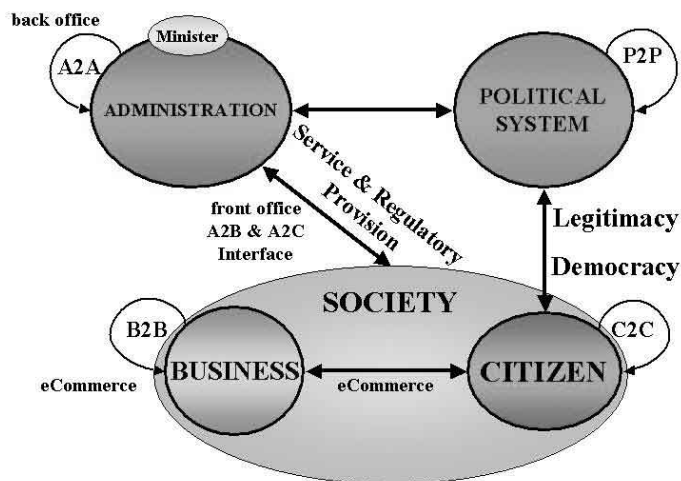
In this paper, we propose a generic model of the policy making process. In order to design this model, we must first sketch a general delineation of the overall governance system focusing on the main actors and the primary interactions amongst them. Based on this outline, we then present a more detailed diagrammatic representation of the policy making stages, as a complex transformation process of the society’s needs (input) for services and regulations (output) through the governance system.

2.1. The Governance System.

The purpose of this schema (fig. 2) is to outline the domain of the Governance System in broad terms, presenting the main **actors** and **relationships** that exist amongst them. There are three main actors inside the Governance System: the Political System, Public Administration (or Administrative System)³ and Society divided into two sub-categories (businesses and citizens).

The Governance System is defined as the composition of these three sub-systems.

Figure 2
Governance System



Although the separation between the political and administrative systems has been fiercely criticized by PA scholars for the “technical” separation it introduces, its analytical power should not be underestimated.

Additionally, this schema depicts the primary **relationships** among the various actors. Some of these are considered out of scope with regard to our work (e.g., business-to-citizens).

A very interesting relationship exists between **citizens and the political system**. In democratic regimes, citizens enjoy the privilege of electing their representatives and formulating the political system in this way. The relationship and information flow between the citizen and the political system in this area has usually been addressed by the IT industry using the term “e-democracy.” In addition to

² Tarabanis, K., V. Peristeras and G. Frigidis (2001), Building an Enterprise Architecture for Public Administration: A High Level Data Model for Strategic Planning, 9th European Conference on Information Systems, Vol. pp.: June 2001, Bled, Slovenia.

Inter-Agency Benchmarking & Best Practices Council (1996), government Process Classification Scheme, available at <http://www.va.gov/fedsbest/index.htm>,

³ Chevallier, J. (1986), *Science Administrative*, Presses Universitaires de France.

this, citizens can directly address their needs to the political system. More details on the latter process will be discussed below.

Looking at the relationship between the **administrative system and society (A2S)**, we could mention that this area has been loosely specified as that of “public service provision.” It is important to mention that the majority of the so-called e-government initiatives address this area. This has been done, at an initial stage, through the development of Administration to Citizens (A2C) and Administration to Business (A2B) front office applications. However, e-government system designers soon realized the limitations of such approaches that left the back-office of the administrative production intact. Recently, developing Administration to Administration (A2A) (or back-office) systems and applications has become a prerequisite for realizing electronic services for citizens and businesses. The common use of the term e-government just for “public service provision” may be misleading, as the other two relationships (political-administrative and political system-society) are left out of the e-government scope. In order to clarify the term, we have two alternatives: either we must generalize the e-government notion to include all the existing relationships (political-administrative, society-political system and service & regulation provision), or we must leave the term with its usual connotation (just electronic service provision) and coin a new word for expressing a super-class to which e-government, e-democracy and politico-administrative IT support are subclasses.

In the figure, the following relationships can also be found:

- Citizen to Citizen (C2C): This relation constitutes the basis of what has been called “Civil Society”⁴ and although they belong to the governance system, this will not be addressed here.
- Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Citizens (B2C): As already mentioned, these relationships are out-of-scope in our work.
- Political System to Administrative System: At this point, some very interesting relation-

ships exist and a critical flow of information takes place. Later in the presentation of the *policy making* model, we will address only those parts of these flows that are connected with service & regulation provision.

- Political to Political (P2P). In this category, we could include various “interior” political system relationships (e.g., between the parliament and the government, the president and the prime minister, amongst the various political parties, etc.). Although these relationships are crucial to the functioning of the governance system, they have attracted only the marginal interest of the IT community. These relationships interest us a lot but they are left out for the purpose of this paper.

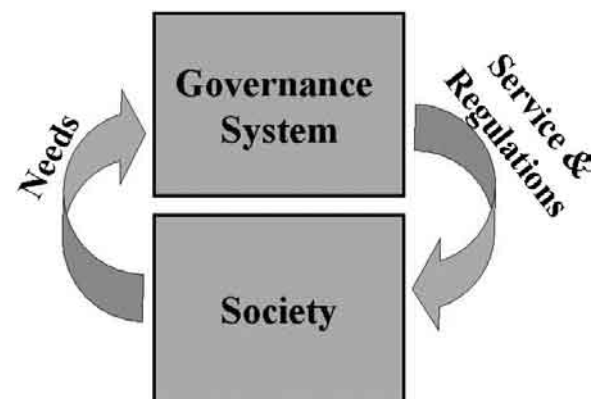
2.2. The Policy Making Process.

The two representations that follow below model the process that describes a generic policy making process.

2.2.1 Administration to Society interaction schema.

The first representation, (Fig. 3), is quite simple as it presents a macroscopic, high-level and generic representation:

Figure 3
A2S interaction black-box



The governance system (political and administrative system plus interaction interface with the society, including collective representative bodies, consultation institutions and processes as well as formal and informal communication channels) receives as input the needs of the society and after processing

⁴ Bridges, T. (1994), *The Culture of Citizenship: Inventing Postmodern Civic Culture*. NY, State Univ of New York Press.

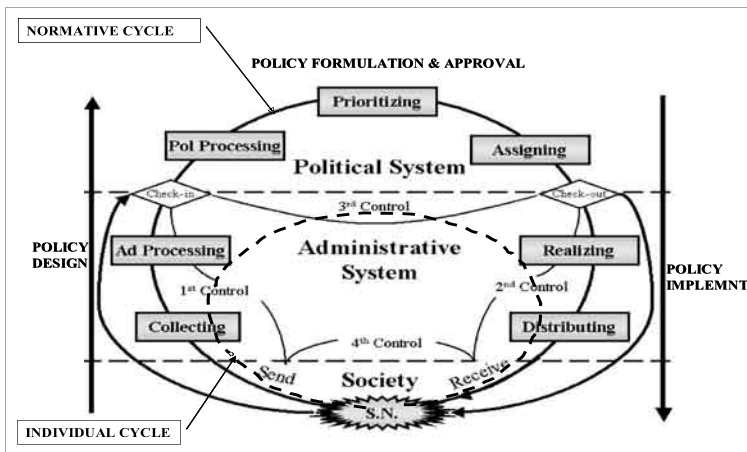
them, produces services and regulations to address these needs.

This black-box view is useful for a better understanding of a system's purpose and telos.

2.2.2 The Integrated Policymaking Model

The second schema goes into more detail and decomposes the previous black-box approach into various phases (fig. 4). The generic description upon which *this* model is based, secures the applicability of the latter to all different public policy fields (e.g., urban planning, security, public health, education, development, etc.).

Figure 4
The Integrated Policymaking Model



As already mentioned, the *Integrated Policymaking Model* represents in more detail the transformation process of social needs to service & regulatory provision. There are three main sub-systems involved in the *Integrated Policymaking Model*: society (from where everything starts and ends), the administrative and the political sub-systems.

Actually, society is the ultimate “client” that must be served. For this reason, society has delegated power to the political sub-system, acknowledging to the latter functions of a primary “server” towards the society. In democratic regimes, through the election process, society decides whether a specific server (political party) has successfully offered its services or if there is a need to test another type of server claiming to offer either something different or the same but more efficiently.

In between the primary client and the primary server, though, lies the administrative system. How does this system gain its legitimacy? Who assigned it executive powers? Its role, presumed by its position, is that of a broker. Its specific functions as a broker are analyzed separately in the two different parts of the model it is involved in.

During the service & regulation provision process the political-administrative interactions become activated. More specifically, the following interaction and information flow occurs between the three sub-systems:

- From political to administrative, decisions made by the former and imposed through a legitimated dominance afterwards to

the latter. This dominance in democracy gains its legitimacy through the electorate and is practically implemented with the physical presence and the executive power of the ministers inside the administrative structure they head.

- From administrative to political, during the first stage (upwards movement of information) information gathered by the administrative system describing the societal needs and at a later stage (downwards movement of information), expertise and administrative knowledge regarding how to realize political decisions.

The model is presented as a circle starting from the bottom where the social need for collective action triggers and activates the whole system. In fact, it is this need that legitimates the necessity of building a governance system and entrusts it with the monopoly of exercising physical violence⁵. The schema is divided into three broader *activity phases*: a bottom-up *Policy Design* input phase, a horizontal *Policy Formulation & Approval* phase and a *Policy Implementation* output top-down phase.

Before starting the detailed description of the model, it is interesting to map the upper part of it as represented in fig.3 (political sys-

⁵ Weber M., (1958), “Politics as a Vocation”, in C. Wright Mills, (Ed), (1958), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 490 p

tem zone) with the “formulate public policy” major public administration process⁶. Accordingly, the middle part (administrative system zone) where the service provision occurs corresponds to the “provide service” major process.

2.2.2.1 The Policymaking Steps

Let’s take a closer look at what happens during each phase:

Everything starts, as already mentioned, with a societal need for collective action. Generally, the society has two ways to communicate a need to the political system: the formal, bureaucratic channel through the administration and a number of alternative channels which bypass bureaucracy in order to reach the political system. These channels may vary from a formal political party or NGO to the political appointee having an informal coffee downtown with “ordinary citizens.”

Returning to the formal administrative channel which is of interest in this paper, the first role of the administrative system becomes apparent: it has to develop methods to determine societal needs. Unlike the flexibility inherited by the non-administrative channels, the administration has to set up a system capable of gathering information from the general public. In order to make this system operate effectively, the capacity for not only collecting the declaratively expressed societal needs but also to “sense” needs, thus acting in a proactive way, must be included in this system.

After this first step, “administrative processing” follows. This processing is a first attempt by the administrative system to organize the unstructured information that comes in from the “gathering” phase. Categorizing, translating to administrative language and summarizing are some aspects of this processing.

However, at this stage there is always a controversial point. The administrative system has no right to choose or evaluate the incoming needs. Bureaucracy has to be completely neutral, a blind instrument that acts only with logic and professional expertise. Evaluation

means judgment and judgment requires a set of values different from the set of values upon which bureaucracy has built its legitimacy (neutrality and professionalism). Therefore, a political question arises: Is it possible for the administrative system to process the addressed or forwarded demands neutrally? Or is there always an indirect intervention of the latter to the flow of information from the primary client to the primary server, acting as a filter based on values and criteria non-explicitly expressed? Of course, these questions will not be addressed in this paper.

Keeping in mind the controversial legitimacy that characterizes the administrative processing step, we reach the “check-in” point as can be seen in the figure. This is the point where the administrative flow meets the alternative root mentioned previously. From the organizational point of view, it is here that we usually find the offices of the political personnel. They do the hard work of trying to balance and transfer all the information they feel is critical to the key person. Overflow at this point is very usual. The office is bombarded by controversial pressures and additional processing becomes indispensable before the information reaches its target in the political system. Processing by the political layer, though, is something completely different than the previous type of processing. At this point, neutrality is not accepted. Since we have entered the realm of the political sub-system, political choice based on a set of political criteria has to be realized. Society has delegated to them the power to exercise this privilege. So the office excludes some of the needs as inappropriate (e.g., as not compatible with the supported political agenda) and presents a final list of issues to be addressed by the political system.

At this point, we have reached the phase of prioritizing. This phase is perhaps the central function of the political system in all regimes. In democracy more specifically, different political approaches are evaluated by the electorate depending on how political personnel prioritize the society needs that address them, after the afore-described phases. For a citizen, being a member of a specific party means acceptance of one proposed prioritization and rejection of another. The

⁶ Tabanis, K. and V. Peristeras (2000), “Towards an Enterprise Architecture for Public Administration: A Top Down Approach.” *European Journal of Information Systems*. Vol. 9 (Dec. 2000): 252-260.

positioning of “Prioritizing” at the head of the model emphasizes the prominent importance that this operation has over the whole system. Being a political leader and having a clear political position practically means having explicitly presented your set of values and criteria upon which you (as political leader) will judge all emerging issues and accordingly place them, hierarchically ordered, in your political agenda. The main output of this step should be a hierarchically ranked list of political To-Dos, or in other words, a political plan.

With the political decision occurring at the prioritizing phase, we start moving downwards in the model. The upward movement was the flow of the society needs towards the decision-makers (or primary servers); the downward movement is the flow of the political decisions (or orders) to the ultimate client.

The prioritizing phase is followed by the “assigning” phase. If the former clearly expresses political ideology, the second deals with political organization and practicality. In this phase, the political subsystem delegates its legitimacy to the administrative actor to realize the political system’s ideas and priorities. However, as can be seen in the Figs. 3&4, there exists an alternative channel for realizing political ideas: the private sector can act as an alternative provider of public services to society. Through its legislative power, the parliament assigns duties to organizational entities (either public or private) to realize the agreed – or imposed by the majority – political agenda. The ideas and visions become concrete political plans, with actors, budgets, accountability and management. Amongst other things, the specific administrative level (e.g., central, regional or local administration) for the realization phase is decided.

The “check-out” point that follows is where the decision leaves the political subsystem and through the ministers (acting as the main actors) returns to the administrative subsystem (or the private sector). What PA people usually receive from this stage is a law that they have to enforce. Enforcement, of course, can mean a number of different things: impose and check for compliance, provide a new service to the society, build a new organization, etc. Now the administrative system, with the help of the political appoint-

ee (minister), has to organize and practically execute what was requested. What is the role of the minister now? Is the minister still acting as a political personage during this realization phase? Basically, no! The political decisions were made during the previous steps (e.g., when the minister/government /parliament prioritized the needs of the society to be covered by the ministry). Now the minister plays the role of the trustee agent appointed by the political system to manage the realization operation that will be executed by the administrative system. The minister becomes a manager responsible for the practical realization of a political agenda. And as the political system wants a politically dedicated manager, the minister is preferred to a technocrat. Together with the experts of realization (public administration professionals), the minister tries to realize the political decisions and to produce concrete results.

So the “realization” phase constitutes the main area for administrative action. The framework and rules have been decided and implementation starts. All activities related to the administrative production of services are linked to the “realization” phase. Building or operating a hospital, safeguarding security in the cities, providing services to entrepreneurs, preventing or reimbursing victims of natural disasters; the production of all these services clearly belongs to this “realization” stage.

What follows next is the delete distribution. We have intentionally separated the production phase (realization) from the distribution phase, proposing a technical but useful separation between what has been called the front and the back-office. This separation, although very common in other industries (e.g., food, banking & insurance, etc.), has only recently started to attract interest in public administration, where production and distribution was supposed to be an integrated part of a unique function. Since the end of the 90’s, there have been several initiatives from administrations worldwide to exploit the apparent advantages of dealing separately with production and distribution in public administration. The interesting “shopping mall” concept for public services or the idea of establishing citizen centers and kiosks

to integrate complex administrative processes at the front-end and provide services from a single point according to the one-stop-shop administrative paradigm, are examples of this trend. Of course, here once again, the area pertains to the administrative actor.

Obviously, with the “distribution” phase, the whole governance system hands its output to the society. The circle started from this same point and ends again in society. Society asked for collective action to solve inconsistencies that had emerged, and finally society gets an output conceptualized by the political system and realized by the administrative system. This output is supposed to constitute the “solution” to the initial societal need. But is it really so? What type of controls and feedback mechanisms are needed to secure compliance between what was requested and what was received?

2.2.2.2 Normative and individual policymaking cycles

The steps described above, placed on the outer cycle of figure 4 (**normative cycle**), constitute the *normative stage* of the overall process. During this stage output, outcome and process standards are set generating a *policy making system*.

The internal **individual cycle** represents the treatment of individual applications and demands throughout the administrative machinery producing and distributing concrete deliverables to communities, citizens and businesses, within the normative framework produced and installed through the external, normative, and policy making cycle.

2.2.2.3 Controls and Feedbacks

In addition to the system’s input-output descriptions, we propose four **feedback loops** in order to control several system characteristics that could be perceived as being critical success factors (CSFs) for the delete overall system operation. We envision four types of primary controls to be applied to the system. Each control aims at providing feedback and checks internal system (and sub-system) capacity at different stages. A short description follows:

1st Control – **Political Awareness**: Checks the divergence between what *society needs* and what the *political system thinks society needs* (effectiveness of the communication between political system and society).

2nd Control – **Administrative Accountability**: Checks the divergence between what the *political system wants to provide* to society and what *society finally gets* out of the administrative system (quality of communication between political-administrative system, administrative capacity, etc.)

3rd Control – **Political Accountability**: Checks the divergence between the *received demand* from the society by the political system and the *final political plan* which is communicated by the former to the administrative system for addressing this demand (political liability, capacity for policy making)

4th Control – **Governance Responsiveness**: Checks the divergence between what *society has asked for* and *what society receives* by the governance system (system capacity, entropy, effectiveness, efficiency, etc.).

The Estonian e-Voting Laws Discourse: Paradigmatic Benchmarking for Central and Eastern Europe

Wolfgang Drechsler *

1. Introduction

The Republic of Estonia has been, and still is, widely credited as being a pioneer in e-governance and especially e-democracy, with headlines such as “Estonia: 10 Years from Communism to Advanced e-Democracy!”¹ It had frequently been expected, too, that Estonia would be the leading country for e-voting, having already introduced it for the national elections this year.² However, in the very last changes of the respective laws, the Estonian Parliament voted for e-voting, but not for the immediate future; rather only with a delay of implementation until the year 2005. Still, the Estonian case is the first case world-wide of a country that has actually passed overall e-voting laws.

This primacy, by virtue of some variant of “the normative power of the factual,” therefore sets the scene for all e-voting laws considered anywhere – but especially so for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), if we believe at all in any form of regional characteristics and therefore similarity and comparability. The Estonian e-voting laws, but also the discourse through which they emerged, therefore serve as a paradigmatic benchmark – broadly understood here as a benchmark both in a positive as well as possibly in a negative sense as well – for all e-

voting law discourses to occur in all the other CEE countries.

This paper therefore sets out to, first, follow the process – interesting as such, it has only been documented and analyzed once before (Drechsler and Madise 2002), and the current piece presents a very short but also updated account of that story.³ The question of discourse will then be addressed, and an interpretation offered. As the benchmarking will indeed be seen to entail an inverted, i.e., negative, quality as well (the dog that did *not* bark during the night), a final segment will also briefly discuss these aspects.

2. E-voting in Estonia: a narrative

The plan to introduce e-voting in Estonia was first publicly announced by the Minister of Justice, Märt Rask, a member of *Reformierakond* (“Reform Party”, eng.reform.ee), the neo-liberal (indeed, market-radical) “transition winners” party, at the beginning of 2001. Given the general fashion of e-related matters, which is particularly strong in Estonia, and swift developments in such fields as e-banking (see e.g., www.hanza.net), paperless government (see www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/ukvote/stories/epolitics/estonia.html), and broadcasting of parliamentary sessions (see www.riigikogu.ee/news.html), this was a likely step to take.⁴ Developing Estonian leadership in e-related fields was and is also seen as a key part of “branding Estonia” and overall of making Estonia better known globally.

* University of Tartu, Estonia.

¹ In the article at <http://www.e-smartransaction.com/asp/application.asp?cle=80&cat=Government>.

Statements, state of legislation, and web-links in this paper are generally valid as of February 15, 2003. I am grateful to Rainer Kattel and Ülle Madise for comments on this paper.

² See, e.g., http://www.time.com/time/interactive/stories/society/e_politics.html; <http://www.newsbytes.com/news/01/160092.html>; <http://www.imagemedia.co.uk/newsletter/apr2001.htm>: “You can’t stop progress though and it looks as though Estonia will be the world’s first nation to provide e-voting at its next General Election in 2003.”

³ I would like to thank the co-author of that essay, Ülle Madise, without whom the current paper would not exist, for her very kind permission to use materials from the earlier piece, unmarked, in the current one. The paper by Drechsler and Madise 2002 also contains extensive references and technical as well as legislative details.

⁴ See generally, e.g., the Estonian Agenda 21, www.agenda21.ee/english/EA21/3_4.html.

The idea of e-voting was thus strongly promoted by Prime Minister Laar, who during the Parliamentary question period of January 17, 2001, proposed the idea of testing e-voting during the same year and of deciding then whether to introduce it for the 2002 local elections. (See www.riigikogu.ee/ems/index.html)

To get an overview of the possible methods and risks of remote Internet voting, the Ministry of Justice ordered an analysis from two scholars in the field. (Lipmaa and Mürk 2001). The report by the Internet Policy Institute published in the USA at the same time⁵ was also used as a basis of study. The commissioned analysis recommended preparing some experiments or pilot-projects first and to forego introduction of e-voting until 2007, because an earlier date would be technically, and therefore also socially, too risky. (1, 28-30) In the fall of 2001, another analysis was ordered from a mathematician by the Estonian Ministry of Transport and Communication, which was to focus especially on technical questions and costs. In this analysis, concrete recommendations concerning the voting process were given and a provisional budget of e-elections was drawn up. (IT Meedia 2001)

Taking into account the reason for introducing public remote Internet voting and some of the recommendations given by the experts, but not the one by its own experts as regarded postponement until 2007, e-voting provisions were drafted by the Ministry of Justice and sent to the parliament. There, they were not generally discussed, but as part of four different new election laws: The Local Communities Election Act, the Referendum Act, the European Parliament Election Act, and the *Riigikogu* Election Act. The discussions in the *Riigikogu*, as far as the e-voting feature was concerned, were more or less seamless and not really closely connected with what Act it actually was. However, since local elections were scheduled for 2002, it was this Act that drew more attention than the others, followed by the Referendum Act because of its implications for European Union accession. When discussing specific features (which in the end were the same for all four Acts), I will therefore refer below to the devel-

opment of the provisions of the Local Communities Election Act.⁶

As was to be expected, old and new government coalition parties – until January 2002, Right-Libertarian-Moderate, from then Libertarian-Populist – were principally in favour of e-voting in the very first stage of developing the e-voting idea, while the opposition parties *Rahvaliid* and *Ühendatud Rahvapartei* factions were against it. In order to understand this, it is important to briefly sketch out the Estonian party structure. The first government coalition mentioned here (“Laar II,” the government headed, for the second time, by Mart Laar) included, in addition to the aforementioned “libertarian” *Reformierakond*,

- the “right” *Isamaaliit* (“Pro Patria Union”, www.isamaaliit.ee/isamaa2/index_eng.html; cf. also Laar 2002), a generally nationalist but for the most part also market-radical party that in a slightly different composition formed the government right after the regaining of independence; and
- the ‘moderate’ *Möödukad* (“Moderates”, www.moodukad.ee/), who by their own definition are Social Democrats but by “Western” standards quite to the right of that field.

The second government coalition (“Kallas” – headed by Siim Kallas) includes *Reformierakond* and

- the “populist” *Keskerakond* (“Centre Party”, www.keskerakond.ee/), the main “transition losers” party, with a semi-charismatic leader, Edgar Savisaar, currently the Mayor of Tallinn, but without a genuine post-Socialist ideology.

The two opposition parties mentioned are

- *Eestimaa Rahvaliid* (“Estonian Peoples Union”, www.erl.ee/), a party similar to *Keskerakond* but with a strong and explicit rural orientation; and
- *Eestimaa Ühendatud Rahvapartei* (“Estonian United Peoples Party”, www.eurp.ee/eng/), the most clearly post-Socialist party with a special appeal for that part of the Russian-speaking population of Estonia that is actually allowed to vote.

⁵ See www.riik.ee/evalimised/ylदानalyysid/e_voting_report.pdf.

⁶ The initial draft of the Local Communities Election Act can be found at www.riigikogu.ee/ems/index.html: Täiskogul menetletud eelnõu nr 747. Menetlusetaapid. Algtekst.

The governing coalition Kallas does not command a majority in the *Riigikogu* – rather, only 47 of the 101 votes. The missing votes are usually delivered by the *Rahvaliid* (which is also the party of the President), so this party cannot be ignored.⁷

E-voting provisions were always supported in plenary session.⁸ It should be noted that pilot projects were perhaps occasionally considered, as in the beginning by Laar himself, but they were never seriously put on the agenda. In some sense, the entire draft and then law would be its own pilot project – not a rare *modus operandi* in Estonia. In the end, as a form of compromise, in all laws or drafts,⁹ it was explicitly stated that e-voting should not be applied before the year 2005 (§ 74 (5) in the Local Communities Election Act). This was apparently in deference to the *Rahvaliid* faction – as was mentioned, the government commands at best a minority of 47 out of 101 votes, and their *Rahvaliid* votes are therefore usually important (although not in this special case), which is why their opinion is taken into consideration.

3. The discourse

3.1. Ministry

The discourse to be analyzed starts at the Ministerial level. According to § 60 of the Estonian Constitution, “Members of the *Riigikogu* shall be elected in free elections based on the

principle of proportionality. Elections shall be general, uniform and direct. Voting shall be secret.” Since the original drafting of the Constitution in 1992, these principles have not been the subject of juridical discussion, so they are ill-defined. (See Annus 2001, 64-70) As to whether e-voting would influence these principles, the Minister and Ministry based themselves on two basic decisions:

1. To use a *teleological* approach to Constitutional interpretation means to say that Constitutional problems should be understood through the problems the given principles were meant to solve. As an example, in the current case of e-voting, the principle of secrecy (raised most strongly in Parliament later on) was said to protect an individual from any pressure or influence against her or his free expression of the political preference, i.e., that it is a means, not an end. This includes the threat that the state or a public official can check who voted for whom. But it was said that, if privacy is guaranteed in the polling station and if all those who have voted via the Internet have the right (which was proposed) to go to the polling station on election day and replace their electronically recorded, transferred and counted vote with a new paper-ballot (see § 55 of the initial draft of the Local Communities Election law), then the aim of the principle of secrecy, the end, is actually achieved.
2. To start from the assumption that the State must “trust the people” and not interfere, if at all possible, in any of their decisions. The *Reformierakond* ideology informs this approach. As an example in our context, the problem that e-voting would facilitate some families, friends or colleagues voting together, i.e., practice collective voting, as well as the buying and selling of votes, was said to hinge on the question of whether the State would have to protect an individual only from other individuals or also from his/herself. It was not seen that collective voting could be a problem for the state as well and not only a problem for the individual.

⁷ According to the descriptions given above, this means that the current governing coalition consists of “transition winners” and “transition losers.” However, in Estonia this is not necessarily a contradiction, because *Reformierakond* indeed does promulgate an ideology appropriate for its clientele, but *Keskerakond* does not; rather, it hardly has any ideology at all. It is, therefore, a classic populist party. They are, furthermore, not unlikely coalition partners at all. Voting is scheduled for March, 2003, i.e., the elections fall between the deadline for this paper and the Bucharest conference, so there might easily be a new coalition in place once this paper is discussed.

⁸ See the debate and voting results according to the minutes as cited below (FN 10). About the voting process, see the *Riigikogu* Internal Rules Act, www.riigikogu.ee/legislation.html.

⁹ The Local Communities Election Act was adopted by Parliament on March 27, 2002 and entered into force on May 6, 2002. RT I 2002, 36, 220. The Referendum Act was adopted on March 13, 2002 and entered into force on April 6, 2002. RT I 2002, 30, 176. The *Riigikogu* Election Act was adopted on June 12, 2002 and entered into force on July 18, 2002. RT I 2002, 57, 355. The European Parliament Election Act was adopted by Parliament on December 18, 2002 and entered into force on January 23, 2003. RT I 2003, 4, 22.

3.2 Parliament

Parliamentary debate on e-voting was long and lively. In the plenary session, e-voting was discussed within all readings of all four drafts.¹⁰ We can draw up the following tables of discussion points of problems of e-voting:

1.	Equality of citizens in political life unfair towards non - connected citizens / digital gap
2.	Detriment to democracy (going to the polling station would be a valuable action in itself)
3.	Unconstitutionality of e-voting (secrecy, generality, and uniformity)
4.	Privacy and secrecy of voting not guaranteed
5.	Security of electronic voting systems not sure
6.	Proneness to fraud
7.	Negative or absent experiences in other countries
8.	The weakness of technical preparations
9.	The problem of hackers

It may generally be noted that a large majority of Members shared the Ministry's attitude towards a teleological interpretation of the Constitution, as well as the assumption that

1. e-voting increases voter turnout; and that this
2. *automatically* has a positive effect on "Democracy."

3.3. Public

There was hardly any accompanying discussion of e-voting in media or society (with the exception of a few newspaper articles and simple and emotional anonymous comments to them in online-newspapers and info-portals);¹¹ likewise, neither were there any significant public comments by social scientists or lawyers. In January 2001, the editorial of the business daily *Äripäev* was devoted to the idea of the Minister of Justice introducing a system of e-voting in Estonia. ("Miks oodata aastani 2003" 2001) The editor asked why Estonia should wait until 2003; rather,

Internet voting should be introduced for the local elections of 2002. This had then been discussed. (See *Äripäev* Online, January 5, 2001, www.aripaev.ee/1836/arv_kysitlus_183601.html.)

4. Discussion

One can safely say that the e-voting initiative came from the political elite, and that it was and is largely detached from "the people" whose participation it is supposed to increase. One could certainly diagnose for Estonia an attitude towards the right to vote, and democratic decision-making in general, that one might describe variously as pragmatic, relaxed, detached, or cynical. Anecdotally, as regards e.g., possibilities of fraud, one could often hear people saying that if they trusted the net with their banking, why should they not in such a much less important field as political elections?

Still, while Estonia could easily have been the world leader in e-voting by introducing this as a regular feature for the local elections of 2002, probably genuine worries that technical problems would not be solved by the Fall of that year, as well as the scepticism of individual members of parties generally in favour of e-voting, all of them reasonable and appropriate, were among the reasons that prevented such an outcome. Nonetheless, the resistance of the rural opposition party, which – likewise reasonably and appropriately – feared that such a feature would increase the vote of its competitor parties, and which therefore would have very rightly and properly fought against it in Parliament, at least contributed significantly to the postponement of actual e-voting in Estonia until 2005.

¹⁰ See the minutes at www.riigikogu.ee/ems/index.html. The draft of the Local Communities Election was discussed on June 14, 2001; and on January 23, February 27, and March 27, 2002; the draft of the *Riigikogu* Election Act on June 14, 2001; and on January 30, March 27, May 15 and May 22, 2002; the draft of the Referendum Act on September 19, 2001; and on January 30 and March 13, 2002; the draft of the European Parliament Election Act on January 23, 2002.

¹¹ See, e.g., www.postimees.ee; www.delfi.ee. As all comments are anonymous, their level is indeed exceedingly low, and they often do not connect with the subject at hand.

However, many of the to-be-expected points of discourse (Will 2002 and Buchstein and Neymanns 2002 provide very good surveys) were hardly considered, and are missing from the Estonian discourse. Without claiming completeness, I want to single out the following five points, two general and three Estonia-specific:

vote on-line are highly e-literate people *who are politically interested already*. (See Kersting and Baldersheim forthcoming) Darin Barney has noticed, correctly, that “recent research indicates that network technologies tend to reinforce existing patterns of democratic behaviour rather than mobilizing new actors and practices.” (2001, 264) But even if it were

1.	Are the effects of e-voting really beneficial for Democracy?
2.	Will e-voting increase voter turnout?
3.	How high are the costs really?
4.	Are there possibly adverse effects of the e-voting provisions for joining the European Union?
5.	Are there dangers of a lawsuit on the basis of the European Human Rights Convention?

4. and 5. came as a great surprise to many Estonian experts when mentioned; as regards 3., out of all people, the “internet guru” of the Laar administration, Linnar Viik, cautioned that, compared to a traditional one, “It’ll cost ten times as much to have an e-election,”¹² but this fact hardly entered the discourse.

otherwise, one might also consider theories such as the “Crispin Curve” argument positing that overly high voter turnout is a sign of problems, not of a healthy democracy (1948, 160-165).

More interesting for this paper, however, are the more fundamental questions of point 1 and also of point 2 because they are so often badly considered. Regarding these, results are not really “in” yet, but naturally, in such a key matter as democracy, if there is reason for a cautionary approach, this should be mentioned very clearly, and also discussed and taken into consideration *before* laws are passed. Estonia is noticeable for its strong proclivities of anything e-related among its politico-economic elite, as well as for an extremely low level of resistance against, and indeed discourse about, any “progressive” developments that might have unwanted side-effects (biotechnology is another example; see Weber 2001), which is perhaps why these matters were comparatively unaddressed. However, probably not many CEE countries are doing much better in this respect. Thus, the following points might serve as a general reminder:

Laar’s continuous touting of e-voting as a possibility to increase voter turnout and (partially, therefore) develop democracy (see Laar 2002, 244-246 *et passim*) is therefore without any rational basis.

4.2. Digital gap

That the Digital Divide or Gap is a real threat that will in all likelihood widen various already-existing gaps in society is, I think, clear for anyone who has studied the subject, and it has certainly been demonstrated for Estonia. (Kalkun and Kalvet 2002) And if democracy is about representing people, then *Rahvaliid* is right: The studies we have indicate that internet voting can substantially change the result. (Cf., e.g., Tolbert and McNeal 2001, for the influence of Internet access (without e-voting) on voter turnout). One of the most recent thorough studies we have, of a German county commissioner election with model e-voting, shows that the result via e-voting would have brought another candidate to power (the more left one, incidentally). (See Meuren 2001). It is somehow difficult to reconcile this with the basic principles of participatory democracy.

4.1. Voter turnout

We have no good reason to think that e-voting will necessarily increase voter turnout. Rather, it seems that those people who will

4.3. e-matters and Democracy

But there is also a very general problem which I will address only briefly, and by way of some quotes, here (see Drechsler 2002 for

¹² Quoted in <http://www.thefeature.com/index.jsp?url=article.jsp?pageid=12832>; on Viik, see <http://noweurope.com/CitybyCity.asp?ArticleNo=292>.

a more extensive argument). Hubert Dreyfus' excellent critique of "virtual community" and "electronic republic" advocates, who suffer from a deep deficiency of thought on what a *polis* is about and what pure incidentals or mechanisms are (2001, 103-106), should be mandatory reading for all dealing with e-governance. As he says, "The Athenian agora is precisely the opposite of the public sphere, where anonymous electronic kibitzers from all over the world, who risk nothing, come together to announce and defend their opinions. As an extension to the deracinated public sphere, the electronic agora is a grave danger to real political community. ... it is ... a nowhere place for anonymous nowhere people." (104)

On virtual communities, Darin Barney makes the similar general point: "Though they might *feel* like it, the fact remains that computer networks are not real places, and while their virtuality might present certain benefits for community formation, these same attributes compromise the rootedness of those communities once they are established." (2001, 214) "The network digital computer is often presented to contemporary individuals as the final technology of their ultimate self-creation ... in so far as they reduce the world – human beings included – to a standing-reserve of bits, networks culminate the distinctly modern technological conditions described by Martin Heidegger: a condition characterized by rootlessness, calculation, and the denial of mystery." (195) Barney cites a 1998 study from Calgary in which it was found that membership in network associations had "corrosive effects" on civility: "Respondents who were most engaged online tended to be relatively disengaged with (and distrusting of) the "real" community. It appears that these online associations could be damaging to civil society." (216)

5. Conclusions

It is well known that cyberspace, information and communication technologies (ICT), the internet, the web, network technology, whatever you call it, makes our lives better, easier, and safer; flattens hierarchies and thus makes people more independent; fosters democracy; improves social capital and the sense of community; allows for greater freedom for the

individual person because of the possibility of re-defining oneself again and again, and so on. This is the basis of the desirability of e-voting as well as e-governance; unfortunately, as a basic assumption of an automatism, it is also exactly as wrong as it is well-known. Yet, it can hardly be doubted that, technology-driven as our time is, this is the "train into the future." What the Estonian case shows, and why this is an excellent paradigmatic benchmark for Central and Eastern Europe, is that one should consider the problems of e-voting thoroughly before passing respective laws; and the discourse analysis has shown that one can simply not rely on the assumption that a nice conversation among all stakeholders will happen. That the detachment of the discourse from scientific approaches and study results in just such a science- and progress-charged field is particularly curious. All this presents a challenge precisely to social scientists in the area to push for a higher, and therefore more responsible, level of discourse.

On the most basic level, "When societal consideration of a new technology is limited to identifying technical problems and technical solutions, the general condition in which technology holds sway is reinforced rather than challenged. This, by and large, has been the case with network technology." (Barney 2001, 233) Worse, it has become part of the general paradigm of today, and even modest critics of the net easily appear as luddites. The most appropriate counter for this is to take a step back and look at the issue from the perspective of what the human person can and should be, and then consider what network technology generally, and e-voting specifically, does.

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How Should e-Government Be Evaluated? Different Methodologies and Methods

Marcin Sakowicz¹

1. Introduction

The driving objective of this paper is to identify different approaches to measuring the development of e-government and propose some indicators appropriate to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The first question taken into consideration is how e-government should be understood. The second area of examination focuses on e-government evaluation methods adopted in leading information technology advanced countries like the USA and the European Union. My argument is that in many cases our perception of e-government is limited or simplified and thus is evaluated improperly. The third vital issue to ponder is whether we should apply the same criteria of evaluation in post-socialistic countries or employ a different set of criteria.

Firstly, I would like to point out the need to define the concept of e-government. In 2001, Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) undertook a major global study focused on the impact of the Internet on government². E-government was defined as any usage of government online at all levels (federal, state, local). But I doubt if this survey brought a clear message about state of art in the field of e-government in countries analysed.

2. E-government or e-governance?

The interpretation of e-Government is quite broad and divergent. The general definition describes e-government as the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to transform government by making it more accessible, effective and accountable³. We usually identify four or five stages of e-government development described as:

- information available on-line;
- one-way interaction;
- two-way interaction; and
- full online transaction, including delivery and payment.

In a more detailed view, realisation of ICT projects may refer to narrow and broad areas of e-Government. In the first case, “e-Government in small” is associated with implementation of administrative processes, within the domain of e-Administration. Broadly defined, electronic government can include all information and communication technology (ICT) to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services. Therefore, this is a broader approach embracing the whole range of governance and administrative projects including e-services, e-democracy, e-voting, e-justice and in some way even e-education or e-healthcare. Clearly, e-government is much more than gathering information, downloading files or making online transactions.

Furthermore, the set of concepts related to the use of ICT has been enriched by the notion of e-governance as a result of a new approach to public problem solving⁴. We are witnessing the transition from a consolidated model of “big government” – centralised, hierarchical and operating in closed networks – to a new model of governance based on self-organising inter-organisational networks exchanging local and global knowledge in the digital economy. In today’s world, neither politicians nor civil servants and administration staff are exclusively responsible for shaping the strategies and policies of a given country or local community. A narrow approach to e-government may lead to technocratic government or the transformation of bureaucracy into infocracy. On the contrary, e-governance

¹ Warsaw School of Economics, Department of Public Administration, Warsaw, Poland

² Government Online, an International Perspective, 2001 Benchmarking Research Study, TNS

³ E-Government Handbook, <http://www.cdt.org/egov/handbook/>, 04-03-2003

⁴ The tools of government, A Guide to the New Governance, Lester M. Salomon (ed.), Oxford University Press 2002, p. 9-18

assumes online engagement of many stakeholders in the process of shaping, debating and implementing public policies. Within this broad definition we can identify four dimensions of e-governance⁵:

- E-services – This term describes the use of electronic delivery for government information, programs, strategies and services. These services are available on-line “24/7.” It also refers to Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) and such expressions as “one-stop service centres.” The latter describes a situation in which citizen needs are met through a single contact with the government. In many cases it assumes a modernised front-office but not necessarily a redesigned back office capacity. At the same time, e-services emphasise innovative forms of citizen involvement and offer services that demonstrate serious valuation of citizens as customer of administration. The strategic challenge is to deliver services to members of the public along with dimensions such as quality, convenience and cost.
- E-management – While e-Services focus on extra-organisational relations, e-management (e-administration) refers to the behind-the-scenes information systems supporting the management and administrative functions of public institutions, including data and information management, electronic records maintenance and the cross-departmental flow of information. E-governance initiatives within this domain deal particularly with improving management of government, from streamlining business processes to improving the cross-departmental flow of information. Effective usage of ICT requires a new organisational culture in addition to new staff teams focused on performance, customer services and response to citizen input. The solutions to the problems for e-management lie in the implementation of services designed around possible life events or the “life-epi-

sode” approach and the adaptation and integration of back-office processes⁶.

- E-democracy – This is the most difficult feature of e-Governance to generate and sustain. Within the framework of e-democracy, ICT is used as an instrument to help set agendas, establish priorities, make important policies and participate in their implementation in a deliberative way. It refers to activities that increase citizen involvement including virtual town meetings, open meetings, cyber campaigns, feedback polls, public surveys and community forums (such as through e-consultation and e-voting)⁷. In short, if e-government is successfully implemented, new empowered citizens may emerge. They will be able to form an Internet biased alliance to respond to various issues and achieve economic and social objectives.
- E-commerce – This concept is linked to the business side of government interaction. In e-commerce, the exchange of money for goods and services is conducted over the Internet. For example, citizens paying taxes and utility bills, renewing vehicle registrations and paying for recreation programs, or government buying offices supplies and auctioning surplus equipment (through online purchasing, e-procurement).

3. Measuring the e-Government, examination of various frameworks

3.1. Methodologies remarks

As exemplified in Table 1, there are various approaches to measuring the development of e-Government. If you refer to the concept of e-governance, it is possible to analyse different maturity levels of e-services, e-management, e-democracy and e-commerce. Most of e-Government appraisals try to cover all these issues but the scope of analysis is very often narrow and limited.

⁶ M.Vintar, M. Kunstelj, A. Leben *Delivering Better Quality Public Services through Life-Event Portals*, <http://www.vus.uni-lj.si/nispa/>, <http://www.nispa.sk/news/papers/wg2/Vintar.doc> (April 2002)

⁷ S. Coleman, J.Gotze, *Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation*, London: Hansard Society, 2002

⁵ M. Sakowicz, *Electronic Promise for Local and Regional Communities*, LGB Brief, Winter 2003, p. 24-28

Table 1
Selected example of evaluation/benchmarking of e-government

Project name (organisation)	Methodology of collecting and analysing data. The scope of analysis	Character features of evaluation - criteria, primary goal and result
e-Europe, EU	In the field of information society, national statistics offices, all tiers of government	E-government is measured by comparison of on-line development of 20 key public services
UNPAN (The United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance)	Website evaluation along with questionnaire sent to public sector professionals, national e-government programs; e-government is defined as: utilising the Internet and the world-wide-web for delivering government information and services to citizens.	The study's primary goal is to objectively present facts and conclusions that define a country's e-government environment and demonstrate its capacity (or lack thereof) to sustain online development. Comparative analysis of fundamental information technology (IT) indicators and critical human capital measures for each UN Member State.
e-Government Benchmarking Electronic Service Delivery (July 2001, e-Envoy)	interviews, targeted questionnaires worldwide, selected advanced countries	The 2001 study has focused on a range of back-office and wider e-government issues, such as accessibility and interoperability.
KEeLAN	Local and regional level web scanning of 700 websites and then thorough examination along with interviews in the 50 Case Studies	To elaborate road-maps for e-government development at the local level, to find top websites on the basis of: Request/Application; Handling; Help; Modality of appearance Analysed issues: business model adopted, transformation of workflow, responsibilities and work processes and financial, legal, social and cultural considerations
Eforum	National, regional and local range questionnaires addressed primary to civil servants, face to face interviews in order to collect information helping to assess broad trends in e-government development in Europe.	ICT means, e-government perceived expectations and fears from the point of view of the citizens, businesses, civil servants, government, barriers and drivers in the process of e-Government implementation
Momentum Research Group	interviews from the public and business sectors	Main criteria are: Application and service relevance; citizens and business satisfaction; preservation of public trust
The Government Online Study (GO), Taylor Nelson Sofres	The report is designed to measure the impact of the Internet on government globally and nationally. The study is a result of telephone interviews with over 29,000 individuals across 27 countries.	Key questions answered: What are the levels of e-government usage? How is e-government being used? Is the safety issue a barrier to e-government uptake? How does e-government uptake compare to internet use globally?
E-public services in Poland, CAP GEMINI ERNST&YOUNG (2002, 2003)	Front-office, in Poland 2002, 388 institutions analysed, 74 % of them have their own web site, average is 21%	Web-based survey on Electronic Public Services
Balanced E-Government - Connecting Efficient Administration and Responsive Democracy	12 services were the subject of closer analysis along with more than 50 individual conversations were conducted	Various dimensions of e-democracy and e-government services, 49 criteria in five areas: benefits, efficiency, participation, transparency, and change management were analysed
Infoville	focus groups and large -scale postal or face-to-face questionnaires to citizen end users in 8 municipalities	Focus on end users, main question : how do people use local websites?

As far as methodology is concerned, assessment is carried out by combining several techniques including web surveys, questionnaires, and face to face interviews. Research is usually divided into stages. For example, the KEeLAN evaluation framework consisted of two stages⁸. In the first phase of study, 700 web sites of EU municipalities were scanned with the help of a web-scanning tool. This tool is composed of a list of questions which assess the level of service delivery for a pre-defined selection of services. With the help of this tool, the level of maturity of the local authority in implementing e-government was computed. As a result of scanning, 50 municipalities were singled out as study cases based on the quality of front-office performance (usability, accessibility, level of interactivity and services, and level of response to external demands for service delivery).

The second phase consisted of an online benchmark and site visits to the 50 selected municipalities. The online benchmark assessed a set of criteria with respect to the organisation and technology behind the front-office. The results from the benchmark formed the basis of the site visit, during which a series of interviews were held with key persons within the organisation in order to examine their key factors of success. Having evaluated 50 top local authorities, the final phase of the study concerned the drafting of different models and roadmaps for European Union municipalities to implement e-Government service delivery, based on the organisational characteristics (front and back-office).

In the case of UNPAN, two methodologies were used in a research study on e-government. First, national government websites were analysed for the content and services available that the average citizen would most likely use. The presence or absence of specific features contributed to determining a country's level of progress. The stages present a straightforward benchmark which objectively assesses a country's online sophistication. Second, a statistical analysis was done com-

paring the information and communication technology infrastructure and human capital capacity for 144 UN Member States.

Most of the studies aim to assess overall and general e-government status and therefore take into consideration the whole country, i.e., administrations and government at all levels: federal, regional and local. Only 2 out of 10 examples shown in Table 1 exclusively focus on regional or local communities (Infoville and KEeLAN projects). However, the local and regional level seems to be essential as most services are provided by the territorial self-government units and also participation in the public life should be higher at the local than at the national level.

3.2 Misleading e-government indicators

Issues analysed by different evaluations leads to different outcomes and give only part of the answer as to what the level of e-government in a given country or local community is. Firstly, most evaluations focus on the subject how given countries are prepared for the era of e-Government. Analysed questions are as follows: do web-sites allow for the sending of on-line forms, are citizens able to contact elected representatives by means of new technologies, do countries have enough capability to develop e-Government? These kinds of research studies are technologically driven approaches designed to primarily show the level of technological advancement. This remark refers to such analysis within the EU framework. During the program entitled "eEurope 2002," e-government was analysed at the level of providing the 20 key government public services online that are measured using a four stage framework (Table 2). Use of on-line public services by the public constitutes a less important factor. Furthermore, if we consider the whole eEurope report on building an information society, we can notice that much consideration is devoted to technological aspects⁹. Most EU targets were stipulated as follows: (by the end of 2001) all schools should have access to the Internet

⁸ The KEeLAN project (Key Elements for Electronic Local Authorities' Networks) was launched in February 2002 as part of the European fifth Framework Program and Development and is supported by the European Commission, <http://www.keelan.elanet.org/egovernment/benchmarking.asp>

⁹ B. Jung, Tworzenie społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Unii Europejskiej I w krajach kandydackich – próba oceny kryteriów in: Polska w przededniu członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej. Nadzieje i obawy, SGH-KES Warszawa 2002, p. 263 - 277

and multimedia resources, (by the end of 2003), all pupils should be “digitally literate” by the time they leave school¹⁰.

mentary indicators to be the subject of pilot studies with a view to examining their feasibility at the mid-term review like the number of

Table 2

List of public services analysed in the course of e-Europe as the basis of e-government development

Services for the Citizens	Services for Businesses
1. Income taxes	1. Social contribution for employees
2. Job search	2. Corporate tax
3. Social security benefits	3. VAT
4. Personal documents	4. Registration of a new company
5. Car registration	5. Submission of statistical data
6. Application for building permits	6. Customs declarations
7. Declaration to the police	7. Environment-related permits
8. Public libraries	8. Public Procurement
9. Birth and marriage certificates	
10. Enrolment in higher education	
11. Announcement of change of residence	
12. Health-related services	

Source: eEurope 2002; Impact and Priorities, COM 2001 140 final, Brussels 13.3 2001

Lessons from benchmarking eEurope 2002 led to the amendment of employed indicators. According to the new framework, eEurope should have a limited number of policy indicators. These should be easy to read and understand. The eEurope 2005 Commission proposes 14 policy indicators and 22 supplementary indicators. The new benchmarking criteria are more focused on how Internet related technologies are used: firms to use e-commerce, schools not only connected but also making full use of the Internet in class; Internet usage in the health sector. The new approach is clearly visible if we compare 23 e-Europe 2002 indicators with 14 policy benchmarking indicators for 2005 (Table 3)¹¹.

With reference to e-Government issues, the policy indicator is the number of basic public services fully available on-line. Supplementary statistical indicators are the percentage of individuals and enterprises using the Internet to interact with public authorities broken down by purpose (purposes: obtaining information, obtaining forms, returning filled in forms). There also additional supple-

available basic public on-line services with integrated digital back-office processes; public procurement processes that are fully carried out online in % (value) of overall public procurement, and the percentage of public authorities using open source software.

¹⁰ eEurope, An Information Society for All, Communication on a Commission Initiative for the Special European Council of Lisbon, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/

¹¹ eEurope 2005: Benchmarking indicators, COM (2002) 655 final, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/news_library/documents/benchmarking05_en.pdf

Table 3
List of eEurope Benchmarking indicators

Europe 2002	Europe 2005 policy indicators (14)
1. Percentage of population who regularly use the Internet 2. Percentage of households with Internet access at home 3. Internet access costs	A Citizen access to and use of the Internet A1. Percentage of households or individuals with internet access at home A2. Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet
4. Speed of interconnections and services available between and within national research and education networks (NRENs) within EU and world-wide	B Business access to and use of ICTs B1. Percentage of persons employed using computers connected to the Internet, in their normal work routine
5. Number of secure servers per million inhabitants	Internet access costs C.1 Costs of Internet access broken down by different frequency of use: 20, 30, 40 hrs/month, unlimited access
6. Percentage of Internet-using public that have experienced security problems	D. e-government D1. No. of basic public services fully available on-line
7. Number of computers per 100 pupils in primary/secondary/higher levels	E e-learning E.1 Number of pupils with Internet connections (broadband/not broadband)
8. Number of computers connected to the Internet per 100 pupils in primary/secondary/higher levels	F. e-health F1. Percentage of Population (aged 16 and over) using the Internet to seek health information whether for themselves or others. F.2. Percentage of general practitioners using electronic patients records
9. Number of computers with high speed connections to the Internet per 100 pupils in primary/secondary/higher levels	G. Buying and selling on-line G.1 Percentage of a business' total turnover from e-commerce
10. Percentage of teachers using the Internet for non-computing teaching on a regular basis	H. e-business readiness H1 e-business index (composite indicator)
11. Percentage of workforce with (at least) basic IT training 12. Number of places and graduates in ICT related higher level education	I Internet users experience and usage regarding ICT-security I1 Percentage of individuals with Internet access having encountered security problems I2 Percentage of enterprises with Internet access having encountered security problems
13. Percentage of workforce telecommuting 14. Number of Public Internet Points (PIP) per 1000 inhabitants	J Broadband penetration J1. Percentage of businesses with broadband access J2. Percentage of households and individuals with broadband access J3. Percentage of public administrations with broadband access
15. Percentage of central government websites that conform to the WAI accessibility guidelines at level A 16. Percentage of companies that buy and sell over the Internet 17. Percentage of basic public services available on-line 18. Public use of government on-line services for information/ for submission of forms 19. Percentage of public procurement which can be carried out on-line 20. Percentage of health professionals with Internet access 21. Use of different categories of web content by health professionals 22. Percentage of EU web sites in the national top 50 visited 23. Percentage of motorway network (vs. total length of network) equipped with congestion information and management systems	

Source: List of eEurope Benchmarking indicators, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/benchmarking/indicator_list.pdf;

eEurope2005: benchmarking indicators; http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/news_library/documents/benchmarking05_en.pdf

Whereas EU, UNPAN and CAP GEMINI, Poland's survey, focus only on front-office, the KEE LAN framework explores front-office as well as back-office aspects of e-government. All of them focus on the supply side of e-government and not necessarily on the needs and expectations of end users. In the case of KEE LAN, you simply measure the quality of a given website by measuring the following aspects:

- Request/Application: covers level of interactivity of the local authority website by addressing issues related to uploading and downloading information /application forms, availability of information and modalities of interaction, etc.;
- Handling: covers response to external demands by addressing issues related to reply time and modality of reply to a request, accessibility of databases (editing and monitoring of data);
- Help: covers level of interactivity and modalities of support; and
- Modality of appearance: user-interface features of the website supporting service delivery.

The question of citizen voice and needs is partly answered by the Government Online – TNS study. It provides global and national benchmarks relating to the use of government services online and perceptions of safety when providing personal information to the government. But this study solely concentrates on citizens/users and their experience in using ICT with the government. In turn, the eForum survey brings a message of e-government uptake from the perspective of public servants.

Therefore, as a result of methodology adopted, most e-Government developments are assessed from only one perspective of citizens, businesses or public officials.

3.3 The necessity of a holistic approach to evaluating e-government

Certainly, e-Government is not eBusiness. It is much more. e-Government is about our relationships with our civic institutions and the foundation of our next-generation of states and communities. Understanding what citizens and businesses want and how government, private sector and the third sector

measure the return on government's Internet investment is the challenge. Benchmarking the revolution requires new thinking about policy issues and political realities and their impact on citizen and business satisfaction. An essential step toward further usage of ICT is to look for an integrated model of evaluation of e-government development which will associate benefits and all costs and funds earmarked for implementation of new technologies in the public domain. The very important and difficult question to answer is: does ICT usage provide benefits commensurate with its costs? Therefore, a necessary evaluation of government should include four domains of e-governance: e-services, e-management, e-commerce and e-democracy compared with expectations and needs of all stakeholders involved, but especially the end users, i.e., citizens, businesses and NGOs. In further consideration two approaches are worth mentioned.

In the first one, authors of the report entitled "Benchmarking the eGovernment Revolution" propose the indicator of Experimental Return on Investment (ROI) to measure the effectiveness of e-government¹². ROI is a function of three critical variables:

- Application and service relevance;
- Citizens and business satisfaction; and
- Preservation of public trust.

Application and service relevance lies in its value proposition. The questions are as follows: Does the promise of e-Government meet the needs and improve the lives of citizens? Do ICT solutions help citizens and businesses operate more efficiently and foster better relationships with local authorities? Are local governments more capable of reaching their self-declared objectives?

Citizen and business satisfaction index is a measure of effectiveness of ICT usage versus experience of different users. This measure refers to the ability of government to address local demands. In order for citizens and businesses to believe that an investment in Internet technologies is worthwhile, they need to be satisfied with Internet based services.

¹² Benchmarking the e-Government Revolution (2000), Year 2000 report on Citizens and Business, Momentum Research Group

Preservation of public trust is one of the most critical issues facing the development of the Internet today. While the transition toward electronic democracy and electronic delivery of some government services has already begun, it will be a long and difficult process to achieve true e-government without paying more attention to on-line privacy and security issues and strengthening the level of trust between local authorities and citizens.

The second integrated approach is the concept of "Balanced eGovernment" designed by the Bertelsman Foundation. This study combines areas of administrative online services for both citizens and other "customers" with the notion of eDemocracy which encompasses the net's potential for civic participation and better information for citizens. On the basis of the "Balanced eGovernment Scorecard," authors analyze the international good practises in different countries by means of desk research and in-depth interviews.

However, the problem still persists in the case of e-democracy appraisal. e-Democracy means different things to different people and in particular cases it refers to a wide-ranging definition of the topic and issues which impact upon it. Themes include: citizen consultation of government policy documents, transparency of government procedures and e-voting. Different studies confirm that e-Democracy is in a very early stage of development. On the other hand, use of the Internet and other communication technologies offer the potential to increase citizen participation in the democratic process between elections (citizen participation in the Government's policy process, parliament's policy and citizen to citizen interaction). The e-democracy challenge is very promising but there is also a question how far new ICT may change people attitudes to political life and strengthen their involvement in policy making. This is rather more complex issue of changing the mindset of human beings. E-democracy as the whole topic of e-government is not the implementation of technology but transformation of government: politicians, public officials and citizens. Changing the mindset of citizens from a traditional bureaucratic thinking into a partnership and approach focused more participation requires the effort of every citizen. The role of ICT in

supporting democratic governance, policy making and citizen involvement is still debatable.

4. Conclusions

The correct evaluation of e-government should focus on 4 domains of e-government: e-services, e-management, e-democracy and e-commerce. Unfortunately, many decision-makers and researchers still concentrate one-sidedly on the provision of electronic services and regard participation as an unnecessary complexity cost factor.

Another critical issue for better understanding of e-governance is approach, which focuses less on technology and more on users' actual needs. Therefore core consideration should be devoted to effectively measuring the use of Internet enabled technologies. E-government appraisals should explain how people use the Internet not only for their private tasks but also as a means of involving them in public affairs.

Democracy is still not consolidated in CEE countries. Implementation of ICT will not guarantee stable democratic governance but may be perceived as tool for upgrading operations of public administration. Private, public and NGO's efforts should be linked in order to build truly effective, responsive and accountable governments. The most important aspect of this is a mental shift, a building-up of trust and a transformation of joint relations into co-operation based on partnership in achieving common goals.

Last but not least, e-government appraisals must present criteria against with outcomes that are weighed. All CEE and FSU countries face budgetary constraints. Thus, a concern whether public money is wisely and efficiently spent is essential.

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Information for Contributors

The *Occasional Papers* are devoted to public administration and public policy issues based on empirical research carried out in Central and Eastern Europe.

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Decisions about the publication of a manuscript are based on the recommendation of the main editor and an additional review process conducted by two appropriate specialists from a relevant field. The main editor and/or deputy editor selects these specialists.

Submissions should not have been published previously and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Papers presented at a professional conference qualify for consideration. The submission of manuscripts that have undergone substantial revision after having been presented at a professional meeting is encouraged.

Components of a Policy Paper

Presentation of the Issue

What is the problem that requires action?

Scope of the Problem

What is the history and current context of the issue? How did it become an issue? Who is affected and how severely?

Consultations

What are the views or positions of groups who will be significantly affected? What are the concerns of other ministries/agencies who will be affected?

Options for Consideration

What three or four distinct options should be considered? What are their implications? What are their advantages and disadvantages?

Additional Issues:

Consistency with the government's priorities; the effectiveness of available options in addressing the issue; the economic cost-benefit; the effects on taxpayers; the impact on the private sector; environmental impacts; the fiscal impact on the government; the disproportionate impact on various groups or regions; the complexity and timing of implementation; public perception; and constraints raised by legal, trade, or jurisdictional issues.

Recommendation (s)

What is the proposed course of action? Why was it chosen over other possibilities?

Implementation Issues

What are the financial impacts of the proposed course of action? What are the implications for government operations? Will the proposal require regulatory or legislative changes? What is the proposed means of evaluation?

Communications Analysis

What is the current public environment? What are the key issues of contention, and how can they be addressed? What is the position of key stakeholders, both inside and outside the government, on the proposal, and what communication vehicles should be used for each? How does the proposal relate to government reform priorities? What is the objective of communication on this issue? What is the key message?

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The title should be a brief phrase adequately describing the content of the paper.

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An abstract is a summary of the information in a document. The abstract should not exceed 250 words. It should be designed to clearly define the contents of the paper. The abstract should: (i) state the principal objectives and scope of the research; (ii) describe the methodology employed; (iii) summarise results and findings; and (iv) state the principal conclusions. References to literature, bibliographic information, figures or tables should not be included in the abstract.

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The introduction should supply sufficient background information on the topic and also provide the rationale for the present study. Suggested guidelines are as follows: (i) the introduction should first clearly present the nature and scope of the problem that was researched; (ii) it should provide an overview of the pertinent literature used; (iii) it should state the research methodology employed and, if necessary, the reasons for using a particular method; and (iv) the principal results of the investigation should be stated.

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This section presents principles, relationships, and generalisations indicated by the researcher's findings. This should not restate information present in the results section, but should: (i) point out any exceptions or lack of correlation; (ii) define unresolved issues; (iii) show how the results and interpretations agree (or contrast) with previously published work; (iv) discuss the theoretical implications of the work, and any possible practical applications; and (v) summarise the evidence for each conclusion. The primary purpose of the discussion section is to show the relationships among facts that have been observed during the course of research. The discussion section should end with a short summary or conclusion regarding the significance of the work.

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References

Only significant, published references should be cited. References to unpublished data, papers in press, abstracts, theses, and other secondary materials should not be listed in the references section. If such a reference is essential, it may be added parenthetically or as a footnote in the text. Secondly, authors should verify all references against the original publication prior to submitting the manuscript. Stylistically, authors should utilise the in-text parenthetical reference system with complete references alphabetised at the end of the text.

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Hanulova 5/B
P.O.Box 163
840 02 Bratislava 42
Slovak Republic
tel/fax: +421-2-6428 5357, 6428 5557
e-mail: nispa@nispa.sk
<http://www.nispa.sk>

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