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Electronic Government

5th International Conference, EGOV 2006
Kraków, Poland, September 4-8, 2006
Proceedings

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2006931355

CR Subject Classification (1998): K.4, K.6.5, K.5, K.3, C.2, H.5, H.4

LNCS Sublibrary: SL 3 – Information Systems and Application, incl. Internet/Web and HCI

ISSN	0302-9743
ISBN-10	3-540-37686-0 Springer Berlin Heidelberg New York
ISBN-13	978-3-540-37686-6 Springer Berlin Heidelberg New York

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Springer is a part of Springer Science+Business Media
springer.com

© Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2006
Printed in Germany

Typesetting: Camera-ready by author, data conversion by Scientific Publishing Services, Chennai, India
Printed on acid-free paper SPIN: 11823100 06/3142 5 4 3 2 1 0

Preface

Over the years the international EGOV conferences have gained the reputation of presenting and representing the current status of e-Government research. In a sense, the EGOV conference series provides a log for the unfolding of this particular domain of study and practice. This fifth EGOV conference promises to be as special and as unique a milestone as its four predecessors. Every past conference marked a specific major accomplishment: The first conference at Aix-en-Provence, France, established the conference and its format within the DEXA cluster of conferences. The second conference in Prague, the Czech Republic, saw a drastically increased number of submissions, and many more scholars became involved in a decentralized paper review process. The third conference in Zaragoza, Spain, witnessed another increase in submissions from around the world (among which were also a higher number of contributions from North America) leading to an increased attention to the many different flavors of governance and e-Government around the world. The 2005 conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, with an increased volume (again) established a rigorous double-blind review process and also introduced the distinction between full (and finished) research papers (published in Springer's *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*), on the one hand, and posters, work in progress, as well as workshops (published by Trauner Druck, Linz, Austria), on the other hand. Also, a pre-conference PhD colloquium was added to the schedule.

The Copenhagen conference was instrumental in greatly furthering the research collaboration between Europe-based researchers and scholars from other parts of the world. Along with the International Conference on Digital Government Research (dg.o) and the e-Government Track at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), the EGOV series of conferences has firmly established itself as one of three leading annual conferences on e-Governance and e-Government with a global reach. Unlike in other fields, the organizers of these three annual conferences collaborate rather than compete against each other. This has had many positive impacts on the study domain of e-Governance and e-Government, which none of the three conferences could have ever achieved alone. Some of these impacts are:

1. The community of professionals and scholars meets on a regular four-month basis (January: HICSS; May: dg.o; and September: EGOV) with ample opportunity for face-to-face exchanges.
2. The four-month interval provides sufficient time for progressing in research endeavors.
3. As a consequence, work initiatives and collaborative projects are carried forward in a timely fashion providing participating professionals and scholars with a predictable short-term schedule for reunion.

4. Professionals and scholars develop an intimate knowledge of each others' projects fostering tremendous cross-pollination and collaboration.
5. Both a global and a multi-local perspective of, and in, the study domain are unfolding (for example, scholars from around the world collaborate on the European Union's Roadmap 2020 project eGovRTD2020, www.egovrtd2020.org).
6. The three conferences provide a research and publishing rhythm that reinforces the intensity and diversity of research.
7. A shared research culture and a sense of a global scholarly and practice community is developing.

As a result of this collaboration, in the summer and fall of 2005 the global e-Gov community of practitioners and researchers discussed and voted on the mission statement of a future professional Digital Government Society. Late in the fall of 2005 and in early winter 2005/2006, the global community also voted on both the North American and Global Digital / E-Government Society constitutions. In May 2006 at dgo2006 the Digital Government Society of North America was formed, and its elected officers met for the first time in their new capacity.

The 2006 EGOV conference, EGOV – The Digital Government Society of Europe was formed, and its elected board was presented to the public. Soon, an Asian Digital Government Society will appear. In other words, the global community of e-Government practitioners and researchers will have professional societies, which equip “its members with a professional support network focused on both scholarship and effective practices that nurture technical, social, and organizational transformation in the public sector” (cf. Mission Statement of the Digital Government Society, www.dgrs.org).

So far, e-Government research appears to be multi- and interdisciplinary in nature. The 2006 EGOV conference underlined and exposed this nature of the study domain. However, there is a lively debate on whether or not e-Government research should develop into a discipline or rather stay away from disciplinary organization. The future will tell whether or not we remain a study domain or develop into the disciplinary direction.

In the Call for Papers of EGOV 2006, seven topical threads were highlighted, which attracted a large number of paper submissions:

- The e-Government environment
- E-Government implementation
- Conceptual design and frame for e-Government
- Assessment of e-Government
- Emerging technologies in e-Government
- E-Government and development
- E-Government research and learning

Thirty-one full research papers (empirical and conceptual) were accepted for the conference and cover those topical threads. According to the reviewers' assessments, the overall quality of papers has risen again. For better readability, the papers have been clustered under the following headings:

- Research Review and Outlook
- Participation and Democracy
- Designing Government Services
- Legal Dimensions in E-Government
- Procurement and Governance Issues in Networked Governments
- Evaluation and Assessment

As in the previous years, many people made this conference happen by reviewing and by preparing both the program and the proceedings. Gabriela Wagner for the DEXA organization as well as the members of the Program Committee deserve special thanks. Gerti Orthofer of the University of Linz, Austria, was a cornerstone of support and organization in preparing the review process, the program and proceedings.

Finally, this year's conference provided a great opportunity for honoring our great mentor, inspirer, communicator, founder of the EGOV conferences and wonderful colleague, Roland Traummüller, who has been leading the community with advice, vision, and practical initiatives for many years. Without him, the community would not have developed the same spirit, productivity, and sense of shared meaning that it has developed on a global scale. Roland Traummüller has truly carried the Prometheus torch enlightening the e-Government community for longer than anybody else. We are greatly indebted to him and hope that he may continue leading us for many years to come!

Koblenz, Seattle, Ørebrø, Copenhagen
September 2006

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