



## Editorial

*First issue of the international, peer-reviewed Open Access eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government (JeDEM)*

**Stefan Blachfellner, Noella Edelman, Peter Parycek, Walter Seböck**

*Managing Editors and Chief Editors of JeDEM*

**W**elcome to the first issue of the international, peer-reviewed Open Access eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government (JeDEM). The eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government addresses the theory and practice in eDemocracy and Open Government as well as eGovernment, eParticipation and eDeliberation.

eDemocracy has come away from being purely theoretical, an utopian dream: it is now increasingly real political practice. To continue these advances we need to continue understanding, working and researching in all those fields which can support eDemocracy. We have to involve various disciplines to contribute to the advancement of eDemocracy: to look at society, the individuals, the citizens, their roles and needs whilst not forgetting the institutions and IT developments which help sustain the basis. We need to look at the technology available and how it is used, how it changes procedures and behaviours. We have to know the legislations and the law, but we also have to be aware that changes are constantly happening, that we cannot choose to ignore but rather have to seek how we can support change and direct it in a way which supports society.

Complexity is increasing; simplistic solutions are not the way forward: rather, we have to find creative solutions and novel approaches! Having said that though, it is interesting to note that it is now, in the first decade of the 21st Century that the visions and dreams from the 60s and 70s are being implemented, applied and used – what then seemed so far off, so impossible, so off-limits is now being tested, implemented, used and in some cases has become part of life without us even realising it (and everything is being improved: Jakob Nielsen is currently conducting usability studies on how to write tweets<sup>1</sup>). But more about changing social norms and values which impact eDemocracy will be presented at the next EDem conference in 2010.

With JeDEM we wanted to create a tool which aims to fulfil more than one function: publishing up-to-date research and work; a platform to connect all those working and researching in those fields; providing a space for communication and networking. JeDEM is to be a tool which reflects democratic principles at its best: as eDemocracy is about removing barriers, we believe that the guiding principles of Open Access can best support our vision.

Open Access (OA), in a nutshell, is about “putting peer-reviewed scientific and scholarly literature on the internet. Making it available free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Removing the barriers to serious research.” (Peter Suber<sup>2</sup>). It intuitively makes sense to have a Journal of eDemocracy and Open Government which is Open Access: they go hand-in-hands. The Open Access movement endorses and supports the guiding principles of democracy and eDemocracy. As an Open Access journal, JeDEM provides content which is available for free for readers on the Internet under a creative commons license and where authors will not be charged a processing fee. We have opted for OA as it not only has social and economic benefits,

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/twitter-iterations.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/fosblog.html>

but also serves the interests of the authors whilst at the same time being compatible with peer review, copyright, and career advancement.

“Knowledge is an international public good, and barriers (...) accessing information should be minimized” (Final Report to the RCUK, 2008<sup>3</sup>). With the eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government we want to impact the quality, visibility, efficiency and use of research and work in the fields of and related to eDemocracy and Open Government. We would like you to join us in our efforts to support and carry the JeDEM’s vision:

- to achieve a high-ranking journal status within the next 5 years;
- to reach and maintain high quality standards and reputation;
- to support the dissemination of the eJournal in the scientific community.

Participate as a reader, author or reviewer and engage with us to carry the **eJournal of eDemocracy and Open Government’s vision**.

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/cmsweb/downloads/rcuk/news/oareport.pdf>