Editorial

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Welcome to an autumn issue that presents the most recent "ongoing submissions" to the Journal of E-Democracy and Open Government. Most authors in this issue responded to the journal's open invitation to submit a paper to JeDEM's main topics.

The papers in this issue comprise *research papers*, *project descriptions* and *reflections*. Research papers are published after our rigorous double-blind peer review system, done by experts in the field. They can be completed or ongoing research. Project descriptions have a more practical focus: they describe the learnings of a project, which may help others that are working on similar subjects in the field, and are reviewed by the editors. Reflections are for literature reviews, comments, discussions or interviews and are also reviewed by the editors. We encourage authors to submit specifically to this category, particularly for literature reviews that will lead to data collection or innovative ideas and thoughts based on scientific grounding.

We also have some new features: Articles on JeDEM are now identifiable via DOIs, the Digital Object Identifier System. You find the respective URL[1] under the link to the full text, when clicking directly on the article's headline. And did you know that the first part of this mysterious number identifies the assigning body, while the second one refers to the publisher? And that this always stays the same, no matter who owns it? This is called the principle of persistence.

Persistent is also the publishing frequency of JeDEM: At least two issues per year. If you want to browse previous issues, please have a look in our archives.

This special issue's research papers focus on three major research areas: Open Data, design for democracy, and Open Government.

At the start of this issue, the research paper of Mila Gasco-Hernandez & J. Ramon Gil-Garcia opens an organizational blackbox: it investigates *The Role of Management in Open Data Initiatives in Local Governments in Spain*. Clearly, there are complex relationships between open government data

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[1] Strictly speaking, the system is not limited to URLs only, but we refer to it here as the most common application.

(OGD) characteristics and the institutions in which they are embedded. This contribution systematically compares the OGD inception and implementation processes, as well as their main results. The model they present acknowledges both the significant role of management as well as organisational level and confirms that organizational forms affect how open data portals are designed, implemented, and used. It seems that clear implementation guidelines and goals as well as influential regulations like the Spanish Transparency Law are helpful, whereas a specific organizational culture characterized by a lack of transparency can hinder the process. However, because a new law does not automatically influence organizational structures and processes, understanding the role of management is vital. This article will help us on the way.

In an era of digital transformation affecting many aspects of the society, it becomes even more important for public administration to understand the needs of citizens and engage with them in this dynamic scenario. The research paper from Montathar Faraon discusses a *Concept-driven design for democracy: Advancing co-creative media to support citizen participation and democratic engagement*. By using the framework of actor-network theory, combined with empirical investigations, the study proposed a co-creative media that provides citizens with an alternative approach to democracy, along with the ability to contribute to the collective intelligence and expertise in society. The main idea is that the democratic engagement of citizens can me increased by creating virtual spaces for exchange of ideas and new solutions.

The research article by J. Ignacio Criado, Edgar Alejandro Ruvalcaba-Gómez, Rafael Valenzuela-Mendoza focuses on important aspects of *Revisiting the Open Government Phenomenon. A Meta-Analysis of the International Literature*. It describes a systematic review or meta-evaluation of the literature on Open Government (OG) for 5 years. Based on 189 papers, this study aimed at understanding how and where is the OG analyzed and what are the most analyzed topics and the most prominent concepts in the study of OG. The paper concludes that OG can add democratic values, open data and social inclusion to the government system, stimulating active citizenship to generate synergies with government institutions in a collaborative and transparent manner.

The project description by Pavlina Fragkou presents *The Greek Interoperability Center* (GIC) as common and uniform framework for web services. Although presenting a set strong aspects such as a secure data exchange, efficient monitoring of the whole life cycle of a web service operation, different infrastructure environments for pilot and production phase as well as service orchestration provision, the GIC presents some open issues, for instance related to the General Data Protection Regulation or hosting Public Sector Authorities into G-Cloud, that can be explored in future. The contribution from a European perspective includes playing leading role on establishing a framework for Interoperability between EU information systems.

With the two reflections in this issue, we present a literature review concerning the *Usability and Sociability of Direct Democracy Projects* and an Azerbaijan perspective: *Methodology and Criteria for Evaluating E-Services*.

The reflection of Andrea Hrčková focuses on examples of successful e-democracy initiatives in Brazil, Germany and Slovakia. Have you also thought about the reasons for active or passive partic-

ipation in e-democracy projects? This contribution explores the psychological, sociological and technological factors influencing participation in virtual communities. The article touches on important concepts like echo chambers and selective exposure as phenomena that cannot be neglected in the discussion about whether social networks are appropriate tools for e-democracy. This can form specific hindrances of e-democracy implementations, but there is also a democratic potential, if design and context are right. Looking at the examples in different countries, the article looks at the factors that influence the engagement of online group members.

The reflection of Rasim Alguliyev, Farhad Yusifov and Aynur Gurbanli is describing the Azerbaijan case in the field of e-service evaluation, while also exploring the international practice. This area presently focuses strongly on the development of citizen-centered services, and the importance of opinions of citizens in the evaluation process cannot be denied. This assessment is conducted by considering three criteria: the level of digitalization and relevance, the level of information openness and accessibility, and the level of convenience of use. Maybe you work in the field of e-services and are thinking of criteria for evaluation? Then this article will certainly be interesting for you.

We hope you find this issue of JeDEM inspiring. Maybe you would like to submit a paper to JeDEM in the future? Or have some unpublished insights that would fit the *reflection* paper category? You can always drop us an email, or leave a comment directly after the articles. We look forward to hearing from you!

About the Authors

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