



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to JeDEM issue 10(2)!

The annual JeDEM conference issue has taken on a new avatar! In the past, this issue would include some of the best papers from the CeDEM Conference, but there is change this year: we showcase some of the best research papers from the international EGOV-CeDEM-EPart conference. This joint conference represents the merger of the Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government Conference (CeDEM) with the IFIP WG 8.5 Electronic Government (EGOV) and the IFIP WG 8.5 IFIP Electronic Participation (ePart). In this issue, we are able to present both some of the keynotes as well as some of the best papers from this conference. As we always welcome submissions made to the journal's open call, the current issue consists of six papers: two invited keynotes, two conference papers from authors nominated for the EGOV-CeDEM-EPart 2018 Best Paper Prize, and two research papers from JeDEM's general open call.

Two keynotes from the EGOV-CeDEM-ePart 2018 are included here. At the conference, Wolfgang Drechsler, Professor of Governance at Tallinn University of Technology and Associate at Harvard University's Davis Center, presented his view of Estonia: "Pathfinder: e-Estonia as the  $\beta$ -version". Whilst Estonia is often presented as the leading Digital Governance country globally, Drechsler argues that this is not backed up by any of the standard rankings. While the official communications strategy of the Estonian Government emphasizes the country's role as a pathfinder, he argues that this actually represents a global media demand for and a push by "local protagonists" for a "perfection narrative". The true extent and direction of Estonian achievement in the field of e-government hence warrants further investigation. However, even if the narrative of e-Estonia is overhyped, Drechsler questions if this is really a problem, or whether it instead presents the young country with exciting new opportunities to innovate using modern technologies.

Sabine Junginger from the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, and Fellow at the Hertie School of Governance (Germany), is an internationally recognized expert in human-centered design and its role in innovating private and public organizations. Her keynote at the EGOV-CeDEM-ePart conference, titled "Inquiring, Inventing, And Integrating: Applying Human-Centered Design to the Challenges of Future Government", explores the challenges and opportunities associated with the application of human-centred design principles to the conception, planning, and delivery of new government services. In her paper, Junginger argues for a greater focus on human experience and interaction during the design of public services, and demonstrates how human-centred design practices and methods can promote innovation, lead to inventions and contribute to the creation of public value. She also highlights the role played by human-centered design principles in the development of future forms of governance. By doing so, Junginger challenges conventional attitudes and approaches to public service development and policy creation

which often overlook the behavioural, sociological and cultural elements of service and product design.

The four research articles in this issue are concerned with two overarching themes, namely, the role of new media technologies in facilitating effective political engagement, and critical studies of the processes underlying the effective deployment of digital technologies for innovative public service delivery. The first two articles are prize-winning research papers: Nili Steinfeld and Azi Lev-On (Runner-up, Category 2 - The most compelling, critical research reflection) for their work on Israeli MPs' social media pages during emergencies, and Tarmo Kalvet, Henrik Karlzén, Amund Hunstad, and Marek Tiits (Runner-up, Category 3 - The most promising practical concept) for their critical look at live enrolment processes for identity documents in Europe.

Through a mixed-method study of all posts made on the Facebook pages of Israeli members of parliament (MPs) during the 2014 Israel-Gaza war, Steinfeld and Lev-On critically explore how social media channels function as vehicles of e-participation during emergencies. The authors argue that, as these platforms are already considered significant spaces for public engagement and communication, it has become important to understand the role played by social media in situations when public interaction with elected representatives becomes especially critical. They show that during times of national emergency in Israel, not only are there an increased number of posts on MPs' Facebook pages, but there is also significantly more engagement with these posts than with those published in so-called "ordinary times". Further, posts published by MPs during the emergency period are more emotional, less personal, and more focused on the emergency situation at hand.

Kalvet, Karlzén, Hunstad, and Tiits state the case for the adoption of live enrolment for identity documents in Europe as an important measure to counteract identity fraud or theft by limiting the possibility of malicious digital image alterations. Through an examination of four countries – Sweden, Norway, Kosovo, and Estonia – that have successfully switched to live enrolment, the authors map the main barriers and drivers of the process. Increased security emerges as the main driver for live enrolment, and proper risk management is identified as being the key to successful implementation. Based on data collected from a series of field interviews with high-ranking passport officials from the case study countries, this paper highlights the numerous experiences, obstacles, cultural differences and trade-offs involved in live enrolment, and emphasizes the need to understand identified barriers and drivers in a contextualised manner.

The final two research articles published in this issue were submitted to JeDEM through the ongoing call for papers and selected by our double-blind peer review process. Abdulsalam Mustafa and Mahammad Sharifov investigate the contents of official parliamentary websites of the 36 State Houses of Assembly in Nigeria to determine how they facilitate effective engagement between citizens and their elected representatives. They argue that legislatures fulfil a critical representational function within national and federal democratic architecture, one that involves ensuring active citizen participation in the policy-making process. At a time when political disengagement is considered to be very high, and parliaments in some countries are still considered weak and ineffectual, identifying the optimal mix of online communication tools used by these institutions is of paramount importance. The paper concludes that to enhance civic participation, the websites of

state legislatures in Nigeria need to be open, responsive, interactive and extend the integration of social media tools.

Improving the public's experience of government through the use of e-participation technologies is also a concern for Emily Shaw, who examines whether five US cities which have adopted civic technology tools benefit from higher quality interactions between public officials and citizens. Shaw also looks critically at whether reordering the process of government digitization to focus on interaction elements first contributes to e-government development. Interviews reveal that improving service delivery through the use of civic technology tools is only the tip of the conceptual iceberg; in particular, the adoption of these tools results in meaningful two-way interactions between governments and citizens, which in turn more firmly integrate technology at the heart of the policy-making process. New challenges and problems arising from the use of these tools are also discussed.

The research articles that make up this special conference issue cover a range of topics, methodologies, and perspectives within the disciplines of e-government and e-participation that are not only relevant today but have significant ramifications for the society of tomorrow. We hope that you will find the ideas, arguments, opportunities and concerns raised by our authors at once compelling, interesting and thought-provoking. Enjoy reading!

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