Editorial

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Welcome to a summer issue that presents the most recent "ongoing submissions" to the Journal of E-Democracy and Open Government. The authors have not submitted to a particular call for papers, but have responded to the journal's open invitation to submit a paper to JeDEM's main topics. The papers in this issue analyse current strengths and weaknesses in Open Data, Public Sector Information (PSI) and E-Government, present results, suggest methodologies as well as ideas for yet more research and work in these areas.

Assessment is an important aspect of any initiative, especially when there are many occurring all over the world. They also show the value of continued assessment and indices to consider the development of policy, initiatives and strategies in these areas. Critical approaches and highlighting aspects that had not been previously considered help in the continued development and tools for assessing such a development. Both E-Government and Open Data initiatives are often evaluated to establish the benefits, value and their contribution to society. Because initiatives are often unique and set in a specific context, there is no standard way to evaluate them. Yet such evaluations are important, so as to see whether goals have been met, changes and improvements made, to assess and measure the impact. Assessment methods and tools are important as they provide guidelines for future evaluations.

Chan, Johnson and Shooker, evaluate an Open Government Data (OGD) programme that ran 2005-2015 in a Canadian Province. The "Community Counts" programme in Nova Scotia provided statistical data at the community-level. The programme used by several user groups, including government, business, universities and the public, who reported that the programme was used for asset mapping, communicating information, cross-referencing and accessing information. The goal of their research is to assess and reflect on the impact of ten years of government provision of public information. This paper shows both the value of Open Data in terms of economic benefits and improved public services and cross-organisational support, but also social benefits such as community outreach, collaboration, engagement and improved data literacy. For example, the Nova Scotia Community Counts program was successful in fostering a collaborative culture with users and building capacity through cross-organizational support and providing free statistics training.

An increasing number of Open Government Data initiatives and policies have been developed, and research shows that Open Data can provide benefits, but that often the financial side is not considered in the evaluations. Successful implementation requires business models that ensure that such initiatives be able to generate enough revenue to cover the costs. Welle Donker and van Loenen analyse and discuss different business models to help government agencies implement an Open Data policy and make high quality data available that is sustainable and able to fund itself in the long-term. The identified business models lay emphasis on self-funding government agencies considering adopting open data policies. The authors analysed three government agencies from The Netherlands, and one each from the United Kingdom and Australia to study the effects that Open Data has on their business models.

Beside presenting an overview of business models used, they also show the different types of users of Open Data (in terms of how the data is used, e.g. as "aggregators","enablers", or "enrichers") and the relation to the business model. The results of their research show that there is not only a business model that ensures that government agency costs are covered, but that business models may be adapted over time so that there are no losses in revenue whilst providing high-quality data. In addition the implementation of Open Data policies has also influenced government agencies' role in the information value chain, often moving from a simple "aggregator" of information toward acting as an "enabler". The case studies have shown that providing (raw) Open Data will not necessarily lead to losses in revenue in the long term. Where organisations have implemented Open Data in addition to fee-based services, there have been no negative effects on the fee-based services. From interviews and business analytics it emerged that Open Data has led to internal efficiency gains and reported decreases in internal and external transaction costs. These findings are in line with other research. The authors make it clear that Open Data does not mean "free data" or "free services", but that providers need to invest in the provision of Open Data as well as consider the different users.

E-Government aims to make government operation more effective, more transparent, cheaper, faster and to encourage interaction between the government, institutions, citizens and businesses. The many aspects to E-Government require assessment as to whether the goals are being reached, what services are offered, where change is needed, and regarding the impact of such changes. Machova and Lnenicka consider the development and improvement of E-Government in the European Members States for the years 2008 to 2014, also taking into consideration the impact of the global financial crisis in 2007 and the European Debt crisis in 2009. Their results indicate that a decline in e-government development can be found in 2010 and in 2014, when the decrease was more significant in the "new" Member States. It is concluded that the continuing stagnation has affected mainly the Member States in Southern Europe. This research does not only present an overview of E-Government development and the areas affected by the crises, but shows that analysing the indicators can contribute to a more efficient measurement and stronger benchmarking framework. Such a framework can also be used as a tool to help governments set realistic E-Government targets and to assess whether they have been reached.

E-Government also includes Public Sector Information (PSI), and one aspect of it is the re-use and commercial use of Public Sector Information for businesses and governments to provide new

information-based services, to be more efficient, to coordinate the use of resources as well as to increase the confidence of citizens in government. However, there is a potential conflict of interest between those who own the data and businesses that would like to use available data. In his paper titled " The Path Dependent Power of a Single Word ", Kallberg focuses on PSI in the context of the European Union, the late implementation of the European Commission's directive in Sweden's national legislation and the reasons for Sweden's reluctance and bureaucratic resistance to adopt this directive. Generally one can constitute a resistance to transparency and to the release of large aggregations of bulk data if the political elite assumes a political risk. In the case of Sweden, the English word 'document' was most likely erroneously translated to 'handling', which triggered a path dependency of older freedom-of-information legislation.

The factors that impact E-Government may be different in other parts of the world. The project description of Siddique provides an extensive review of E-Government implementation in Pakistan, and the factors that can inhibit the implementation of an E-Government policy. The government in Pakistan is interested in E-Government and prepared to invest the financial resources to support the implementation of E-Government policies. Using a survey and interviews, Siddique analyses the organisational factors, process and human variables necessary for successful E-Government, and shows (with reference to Pakistan) the necessity of setting clear guidelines for the stakeholders involved. Their study help with identifying how and if government policy gets translated into practice, with determining the factors that help or hinder policy implementation processes, and with identifying criteria that lead to success or failure.

We carefully prepared this issue of JeDEM through our rigorous review process and hope you find this issue as inspiring and interesting as we do. Maybe you would like to submit a paper to JeDEM too? We look forward to hearing from you!

About the Authors

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Noella Edelmann is a researcher at the Center for E-Governance at the Danube University, her main research interests are the psychological aspects of behaviour and communication on the internet, e-participation and Open Access. Besides conducting research, Noella is Co-chair of the Conference for E-democracy and Open Government (CeDEM) and Managing Editor of the international Open Access eJournal for E-Democracy and Open Government (JeDEM). She completed her Psychology and English Literature Degree at the University of Strathclyde and Master's Degrees at the University of London and the Danube University Krems.

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