Emerging Topics in Electronic Government Minitrack

(Introduction)

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The e-Government Emerging Topics minitrack provides a home for incubating new topics and trends in e-Government research. E-Government as an academic field is evolving; new directions of research and practice are emerging while others are becoming accepted as foundational. However, the foundations of the field still need to be spelled out more explicitly and rigorously. This HICSS E-government Emerging Topics minitrack brings together streams of research which contribute to this foundation build effort, while simultaneously offering a platform for emerging and innovative research in this subject. The 2015 offering of the E-Government Emerging Topics minitrack contains three papers representing different conceptualizations indicating different emerging paths of e-government research and research.

In the first paper “Inter-Organizational Information System Digital Government Change in Justice Agencies: The Complexity of Stakeholder Identification” Kimberly Stoltzfus searches for models on stakeholder identification in U.S. justice agencies. The study applies a broad approach to stakeholders and their needs are emphasized across a wide range of organizational change literature. The main conclusions of the study confirm the complexity of identifying, agreeing upon, and taking into account the needs of salient public sector Inter-Organizational Information System stakeholders.

The second paper of this minitrack is authored by Loni Hagen, Özlem Uzuner, Christopher Kotfila, Teresa Harrison, and Dan LaManna, all at the State University of New York at Albany, Albany, New York, U.S. The paper titled “Understanding Citizens’ Direct Policy Suggestions to the Federal Government: A Natural Language Processing and Topic Modeling Approach” presents their initial efforts to make sense of e-petitions as policy suggestions by using the NLP technique of “topic modeling” to identify the “topics” that emerge in e-petitions. Based upon qualitative investigation, all but one of the topics identified through the use of topics modeling with NLP were determined to have a coherent theme. The results imply that topic modeling has the potential to enable the interpretation of large quantities of citizen generated policy suggestions through a largely automated process, with potential application to research on e-participation and policy informatics.

The final paper of the Emerging Topics minitrack, “Does E-Government education meet competency requirements?” by Sirko Hunnius, Benedikt Paulowitz, and Tino Schuppan, provides an analysis of e-government education in the German university system. The article analyzes which fundamental conceptualizations of e-government underlie study programs for public administration in Germany and which e-government- and IT-related topics are taught. Against the background of two international study programs in e-government, the article discloses a parallelism of IT-related and non-IT-related topics within study programs, a technical bias in e-government programs, and outlines essentials for e-government education.

These papers all contribute to the track’s goal by helping to build our understanding of the foundations of digital government as a study area and as a practice priority. Through the efforts to better understand stakeholders and their needs and to build and test of new computational tools and techniques to inform policy development, the first two papers contribute to the goal of the minitrack. The third paper also contributes to the goal of the track by providing a reflection of how, as our foundations emerge, can we best educate the next generation to ensure future generations have the education necessary to fully and effectively leverage innovations in policy, management, and technology in the interest of citizens and society. Taken together they combine and contribute both on analytical and practical developments and trends.