Introduction to the Open, Participatory and Anticipatory Government Minitrack

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Open government is an approach that purposefully emphasizes and re-invigorates the basic principle of a “government of the people, for the people, and by the people.” Through information technology, open data, committed administrative leadership, international initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership, and policies, countries around the world have now entered an era of unprecedented transparency of government operations and decision-making intended to lead to more responsibility, accountability, collaborative, participatory, and anticipatory government, and integrity of public officials. Additionally, involvement of citizens in the iterative design and evaluation of e-Government systems leads to more effective digital tools for civic engagement and participation in the long run.

This minitrack focuses on the interactions between citizens and governments. As e-Government becomes more ubiquitous, many questions arise about what it means to develop and maintain an open and transparent government, engage in participatory government, encourage governance through transparency initiatives, support co-design of open and collaborative government, allow data (“Big Data”) release and use for policy- and decision-making, develop open data and open-data applications, study how governments/governmental institutions might be influenced through openness and transparency efforts, and explore how open and Big Data efforts can lead to anticipatory government. This minitrack includes research on and studies of how the public’s involvement in the development, use, and evaluation of e-Government and participatory government dynamics, initiatives, and systems, including research that develops and explores open and transparent government frameworks, theories, evaluation, practice. The minitrack further includes research into how governments, policymakers, and researchers can leverage open data to create e-government that is responsive rather than reactive.

This year the Open and Participatory Government minitrack consists of three papers that explore the use and success of open data. The papers include one showing the responsiveness of government agencies to open data directives, another examining the public’s motivations for using open data, and a third proposing a system for organizing data for easier use.

In “Data Ships: An Empirical Examination of Open (Closed) Government Data,” Karine Nahon and Alon Peled explore the reality of the open data movement in contrast to the hype. The authors examine the status of efforts within the U.S. government in response to open data policies. They find that all is not well.

In “An International Survey of the Factors Influencing the Intention to Use Open Government,” Marlen Christin Jurisch, Markus Kautz, Petra Wolf, and Helmut Krcmar examine citizens’ motivations for using open data. They find that trust and risk are not as important as perceived advantage, ease of use, geography, and political activity.

Finally, in “Automatic Content Analysis of Legislative Documents by Text Mining Techniques,” Fu-ren Lin, Shih-Yao Chou, Dachi Liao, and Hao De demonstrate a text-mining solution that enables people to better monitor legislators and track their performance in a variety of categories.