Introduction to the 2006 E-Gov Emerging Topics Minitrack

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Since e-Government is a nascent academic field, its structure is still evolving. While initial emphases wither, new directions of practice and research are forming. Whereas some new trends in technology and management cut across existing perspectives, other new topics such as mobile Government may have the potential to become a subfield in their own right. Furthermore, the research foundations of the field still need to be spelled out more explicitly and rigorously. Many scholars propose multi-method designs in e-Government research, and also more multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, for which even beyond e-Government accepted standards and procedures still need initial grounding and further development. More new topics and trends are likely to emerge in e-Government, for which it may be difficult to locate a nurturing home at one of the existing minitracks within the e-Gov Track at HICSS. Therefore, this minitrack provides a home for incubating those new topics and trends. This year, we are launching the new minitrack with one session and three papers:

The first paper under the title of "Multi-Method Approaches to Digital Government Research: Value Lessons and Implementation," co-authored by J. Ramon Gil-Garcia and Theresa A. Pardo (University at Albany/SUNY), makes the case for multi-method designs when studying e-Government phenomena, which the authors argue are complex and multifaceted in nature. The high complexity defies single-method approaches rendering results from single-method research unsatisfactory at best. With two case studies the authors document a multi-method approach and the lessons learned from employing this approach. Gil-Garcia and Pardo illustrate the effectiveness of multi-method approaches in e-Government research and conclude that those designs hold the promise of a higher explanatory power of the research results.

In the second paper, entitled "Infusing an Architectural Framework with Neo-institutional Theory: Reports from recent change management initiatives within the Swedish Public Administration" co-authored by Johan Magnusson and Andreas Nilsson of the Gothenburg School of Business, Economics, and Commercial Law. The authors invoke neo-institutional theory as an analytical lens for understanding the governmental environment, in which organizational change is supposed to take place. Using that theoretical lens, they augment an already existing architectural framework used in technology-induced change management project with that theory. The study analyzes 13 cases in Swedish government. Although results were mixed, the authors found the use of neo-institutional theory informative and helpful within a governmental organizational setting.

The third paper, entitled "Can Government be a good eBayer? The Use of Online Auctions in the Sale of Surplus Property" by Enrico Ferro of the Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, Turin, Italy, and Lucy Dadyan of the College of Computing and Information at SUNY/Albany, presents the case and discusses the experiences of online auctions conducted by the State of New York over three years. The paper concludes that the online auctions observed were highly outcome and cost effective. Also, the employee incentive structure crafted after the private sector model was found instrumental in attaining high customer service and satisfaction levels.