

The Wheat and the Chaff - Finding real value in e-participation initiatives



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The EU promotes engagement...

- [Art. 11 EU Treaty](#)
- Europe 2020 – Flagship Digital Agenda for Europe
- E-Government Action Plan 2015
- Member States adopted national action plans

Art. 11 Lisbon Treaty

The institutions shall

- give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to **make known and publicly exchange their views** in all areas of Union action
- maintain an **open, transparent and regular dialogue** with representative associations and civil society

The European Commission

- shall carry out **broad consultations** with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent.

ECI (European citizens' initiative)

The reality



Source: Der Spiegel 23.04.2012

The problem

Regierung scheitert am Bürgerdialog

Von *Sven Becker*



Getty Images

Ich Sender, du Empfänger: Die Koalition fordert Bürger im Internet zum Dialog auf. Doch die Plattformen, für die Millionen Euro ausgegeben werden, sind oft dilettantisch gemacht. Fast niemand macht bei den kostspieligen Angeboten mit - politische Diskussionen sind auch gar nicht erwünscht.

Source: Die Zeit, 02.09. 2011

Starting point for a methodological approach to measure success of e-participation projects

- No common understanding of e-participation
- Very low usage/impact
- Lack of continuity of initiatives
- No standard methodology (standard set of criteria) in place for evaluation of e-participation projects
- Guidance for decision-makers ('ex ante assessment')

Source: Leitner/Müller-Török 2011

Proposition 1:

Find a common understanding

- Campaigning (and petitioning), information provision,
- consultation, deliberation, discourse,
- mediation, voting,
- community building and spatial planning, etc.?

Source: Panopoulou et al 2009

e-Participation ...

...is not just about 'simple' information provision or political campaigning (exception: petitioning)

...requires bi-directional interaction and not just a one-to-multi-point relationship (such as broadcasting)

...excludes interaction and civic engagement which does not support policy making, legislative or executive action

...includes use of social media platforms (Facebook etc.)?

...is not just about 'citizens'

Proposition 2: **Define a set of criteria to measure success**

- Usage / data on users: ‘significant percentage of target group’
- Sustainability: ‘serial production’, ‘capacities’
- Public Value Added: ‘compared to off-line solution’, ‘common interest’
- Innovation?

Example: European e-Government Awards

2003	2005	2007	2009
Use of IST	Innovativeness and effective management	Evidence of impact	Relevance
Innovativeness	Real practical results and impact	Potential for sharing good practice	Impact
Managing eGovernment implementation	Relevance and transferability	Understanding of multi-channel aspects	Innovation
Real practical results and impact		Innovation and management efficiency	Potential for sharing good practice
Functionality		Communication capacity	Management approach
Visibility			Communication and dissemination approach
Valuable learning points and transferability			

Source: Leitner 2010

Proposition 3: Establish ground rules

- Project evaluation should be mandatory and performed by independent third parties
- Define case specific criteria before project start and publish them in advance
- Make the following core criteria compulsory (as a min. requirement): usage/users, sustainability, public value added
- Publish project documentation and evaluation results



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