
News and Briefs

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EU: Study on E-Government and the Reduction of Administrative Burden

The final report of this study refers to administrative burden reduction (ABR) and how it can be achieved through the integration of e-government tools. The study had three tasks: to identify, map into categories and illustrate existing initiatives, policies or programmes concerning the ABR, to carry out an in-depth quantitative and qualitative cost benefit analysis for each of the identified best practice countries and to provide a long-term roadmap, at EU and country level, outlining possible policy actions and implementation measures. According to the study, more than 70% of EU countries have undertaken initiatives to put into practice the so-called 'once only' principle. This principle ensures that citizens and businesses supply certain standard information only once, since public administration offices take action to internally share this data. The study is available online for free.

Sources:

- European Commission Digital Agenda for Europe website
[<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/final-report-study-egovernment-and-reduction-administrative-burden-smart-20120061>]

EU: E-Policy: Engineering the POLicy-making LIfe Cycle

The e-policy EU-funded research project is aimed at helping policy makers arrive at decisions through a multi-disciplinary research effort covering multiple parts of the policy-making lifecycle. The project focuses on regional planning and promotes the assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts during policy-making at multiple levels. As far as individual aspects are concerned, e-policy aims at deriving social impacts through opinion mining on e-participation data extracted from the web. To aid policy makers, citizens and stakeholders, e-policy relies on visualisation tools providing easier access to data, impacts and political choices. The e-policy project is expected to deliver a number of outcomes, such as a flexible tool for policy-making optimisation and decision support, an agent-based simulation approach for identifying the best policy implementation strategies at the level of individuals, a game-theoretical approach for the interaction between global and individual levels, as well as an open source tool integrating the above components.

Sources:

- e-Policy project website
[<http://www.epolicy-project.eu>]
- e-Policy project case, ePractice
[<http://www.epractice.eu/en/cases/epolicy>]

Book Publication: The Civic Web. Young People, the Internet, and Civic Participation

Shakuntala Banaji and David Buckingham, The MIT Press Publications, 240 pages, publication date: October 2013, <http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/civic-web>

As the publishers' overview of this book mentions, contemporary Western societies have seen the rise of widespread concerns about declining engagement in civic life; people are less inclined to vote, to join political parties, to campaign for social causes or to trust political processes. Young people, in particular, are frequently described as alienated or apathetic. Some have looked optimistically to new media – and particularly the internet – as a means of revitalising civic life and democracy. Governments, political parties, charities, NGOs, activists, religious and ethnic groups, and grassroots organisations have created a range of youth-oriented websites that encourage widely divergent forms of civic engagement and use varying degrees of interactivity. But then questions arise as to whether young people are really apathetic and lacking in motivation, as well as to whether the internet has the power to re-engage those disenchanted with politics and civic life.

On the basis of a major research project funded by the European Commission, this book attempts to understand the role of the internet in promoting young people's participation. Examples are drawn from Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the UK – countries offering contrasting political systems and cultural contexts. The book also addresses broader questions about the meaning of civic engagement, the nature of new forms of participation, and their implications for the future of civic life.

Sources:

- The MIT Press
[<http://mitpress.mit.edu/books>]