

Editorial

Quality and variety in the pages of Information Polity

Information Polity aims to publish many of the best articles written in this field, and it can be confident that it does so. Our reviewing procedures are rigorous, with double blind reviewing the minimum standard we undertake. In some of our special issues in particular a further aspect strengthens our procedures as papers have already been ‘quality filtered’ by guest editors who have heard the original presentations upon which articles are based at conferences. Having heard these papers they then select papers *prima facie* as ones that come forward for full reviewing, amendment and in many cases publication.

One of the strengths of this journal comes from this additional layer of reviewing as we publish special issues and special sections of the journal. For readers, we are providing not only some of the best research there is but also doing so in a concentrated way in single or double issues of the journal. Special issues thus become a high quality research resource for scholars working in the fields covered by this journal. In taking forward this approach to publishing we are also establishing strong links to key conferences around the world such as the European Group on Public Administration [EGPA] with its specialist study group on ICTs in Public Administration. It is this conference that provides a focused set of papers for this issue of *Information Polity*. In our first edition of Volume 14 we plan to publish strong papers deriving from a specialist conference on ‘identity management in government’ in Wellington, New Zealand. These papers are authored both by practitioners and academics, with my colleague Professor Miriam Lips providing a further contribution and an editorial overview. Following that first edition of 2009 we expect to publish a double special issue on ‘Information Sharing and Integration in Public Administration’ edited by convenors at the Digital Government Society of North America conference.

We are thus bringing quality alongside variety to publish what in many cases we believe will become ‘base-line source editions’ that will underpin future research work as well as teaching.

My colleagues at the EGPA group, Frank Bannister and Albert Meijer, have provided an introduction below to four of the papers that we have included in this edition. Each of those papers bears down broadly on the theme of innovation. Before we arrive at that introduction and the papers it sets out we publish four further articles, the first from Professor Harald Baldersheim and Morten Ogard, respectively from the Universities of Oslo and Agder in Norway. This article is an excellent complement to those others published here. It too takes forward the theme of innovation and convincingly sets out the conditions that give rise to innovation in local government websites in Scandinavian countries. In the best tradition of good research it also confounds intuition in finding that the Danes, not the Finns, are pre-eminent in this form of innovation. Following on from that article, Miriam Lips and I have a paper that seeks to take further, arguments that have begun to emerge about the limitations of e-government research as generally undertaken. Paradigmatically, e-government as conventionally understood is unduly restrictive and we call for strong social scientific investigations of the techno-political milieu of government – a

new perspective that would place government and its management of information into the foreground rather than the technologies that have too often been given prominence by consultants and academics alike.

The next two articles in this double issue investigate ICT-mediated political participation from different perspectives. Amber Narro and her colleagues from Louisiana and Georgia examined the use and efficacy of legislators' home pages as elements in political communication. Taking a localist perspective these scholars show that some segments of the population in political districts are disadvantaged whilst others are favoured by the ways in which many of these legislator home pages are designed. Narro and her colleagues look at both sides of the communication relationship, legislators on one side and their constituents on the other. They show that the age, race and education of the legislator were likely to determine the type and quality of communication tools on their homepages. They also show that the race, income and education of constituents shape communication tools available on legislators' homepages.

Ovid Boyd from Orebro University, Sweden provides us with our fourth paper in this issue. Boyd offers us insights into a new form of political party that he styles 'e-democracy political parties', providing a typology and analytical scheme to capture these parties and, from this early in-depth study of four such parties, Boyd points up the diversity of citizen engagement in which they are involved.

J.A. Taylor

Editor-in-Chief, Information Polity

December, 2008