This GOL and Democracy publication is a "release 2" of a report called **G7 Government Online and Democracy White Paper**. It represents a one year effort to solicit and present important Government Online and Democracy experiences and ideas from a governmental perspective. These chapters and the important bibliography add to the wide discourse on the broad area often referred to as "electronic democracy."

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- Probably the Largest Collection of Articles, Papers, Books, and Online Resources

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The content of the chapters are the responsibility of the specific authors and do not necessarily represent the official or unofficial position of their respective institutions nor the participating countries in the G8 Government Online initiative.

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Countries active in the G8 GOL Project and others are encouraged to print copies for local distribution.

Democracy and Government On-Line Services - Contributions from Public Administrations Around the World - a G8 GOL publication.
Comments and questions?
Let us know, email us at gol-democracy@ mailinglist.statskontoret.se

1999-01-04
Foreword

Paul Bird, Chairman
On behalf of the members of the
G8 Government On-Line Steering Group.
This G8 Government On-line publication is the result of global co-operation by over 15 leading thinkers and practitioners in the field of government on-line services. They have given freely of their time and inspiration to share ideas and thoughts about the relation between government on-line services and democracy.

In relating government on-line services to democracy, the G8 GOL project wishes to put emphasis on the importance of democratic issues in the ways governments around the world are propagating and promoting the "brave new, on-line world". When governments utilise on-line services, many issues and perspectives need be taken into account. Technical, economic and legal issues are often focused upon on their own rights, but rarely are they all combined into a "broader" perspective of democratisation.

It should be stressed that this is not a report on how information technology might be employed for electronic voting or other concepts of electronic democracy. The focus is rather on how public authorities in-between elections at some relevant level (federal, state, regional, municipal) in the name of democracy interact with citizens through the use of information technology. As a corollary, all the chapters emanate directly from public administration organisations.

The issues covered range from how governments are trying to raise awareness of the democratic process and the system of government, over making information and services available for electronic delivery, to enhancing public participation in the process of government and administration and giving direct, governmental support for citizen based democratic processes.

**Raising awareness of the democratic process/system of government.** This aspect of technology utilisation covers the provision of information on the system of government, administration, representatives, mandate, individual rights, etc. That is, information about government itself, rather than about the specific services provided. It is the kind of information seen on many parliamentary web sites. Delivery is usually "push" and the mechanisms may include both electronic (Internet; TV; telephone; radio) and non-electronic (newspaper; printed word; posters).

**Making information available/delivering information.** Here the basic delivery and availability of information on the services provided by the administration and information dealing with the operation of government (e.g. which department/level of government/representative do I go to for particular information?) is addressed. Examples include departmental web sites; government directories; municipal web sites and activity noticeboards; emergency notices; information on and about public utilities, etc. The information may be available on request ("pull" technology) or, particularly in the case of announcements, may be presented unsolicited to the citizen ("push" technology). Delivery mechanisms include both electronic (Internet; TV; telephone; radio) and non-electronic (newspaper; printed word; posters).

**Facilitating feedback.** Feedback channels may be provided to an individual (e.g. to an elected representative) or to a department administration. They may be general (e.g. sending an e-mail complaining about some local or personal concern) or topic specific (e.g. when the public is invited to comment on a particular issue). Delivery channels may be "push" or "pull" but must be bi-directional. Electronic channels include e-mail and the telephone (voice and touch-tone response units); traditional channels include mail-in surveys.

**Enabling participation in the process of government and administration.** This goes beyond just providing feedback and comment and invite more direct
Introduction

Statskontoret, Sweden
Author: Olov Ostberg
1. The G7/G8 Government On-Line Initiative
In September 1995, Sweden proposed that a G7 GOL project should be started on issues related to the provision of online services to the public in support of the democratic process. The proposed Online support for democracy was more precisely seen to concern the area of dialogue between the citizens and government. Another project area would be how to tailor and provide technology and human resources when citizens meet the public authorities in one-stop shops (neighbourhood offices, citizens offices, etc.). A concern that should be stressed is that IT support for democracy should be tailored so as to reach and be attractive to all citizens, and not just a few.

The proposal had been born out of the general Swedish view that the development of democracy had not kept pace with societal developments regarding for example internationalization, information technology, media, and the definition of public sector engagement. These issues are now being dealt with in a Government commission on the Swedish democracy facing the 21st century.

2 International Call for Contributions
International support gradually grew for a democracy theme within the G7 GOL family of projects. At the March 1997 steering group meeting of the G7 GOL, it was decided that a report should be compiled on how public authorities are, or ought to be, pro-actively approaching democracy issues in-between elections. That is, the report should deal with how public authorities at some relevant level (federal, state, regional, municipal) in the name of democracy interact with citizens through the use of information technology.

Views and opinions expressed should be the responsibility of the contributing (co-)authors. Unless otherwise stated, they were not to be viewed as the official positions of either the G7 GOL initiative or the employer of an individual contributor. An International call to this effect was announced within the G8 GOL community, as well as via several e-mail lists.

The Call for Proposal Abstracts was an open invitation to participate in an international co-operative effort to compile a white paper on democracy and public authorities. At least one author per proposal should be an employee of a public administration organization. Authors wishing to participate should submit a short 100 word chapter proposal by April 25, 1997.

Selection of chapter proposals would be announced three weeks later. The deadline for delivery of final chapters was to be in late August. For an example of a possible chapter, potential authors were referred to The Citizens Advice Bureau in the UK: Working for Human Rights (on a public good if not a public administration organization).

3. The Chapter Finalization Process
Several researchers and 'activists' offered to submit material for the report. They were, however, asked first to team up with one or more co-authors more centrally positioned with reference to the government sector. Authors asking for financial support were also not accepted.

Some 25 abstracts of potential white paper chapters were received. This was two times the number of contributions initially planned for. It was no easy task to select contributions based on the short abstracts, so they were all invited to be turned into tentative contributions.
The following 17 chapters make up the G8 Democracy and Government Online Services Publication. This summary includes the chapter titles, a short description, and basic author credits. Detailed information on the authors is included at the end of each full chapter. (In alphabetical order.)

1. "A ma santé": to Promote Citizen Participation in the Evolution of the Quebec Health and Social Services Sector - Province of Quebec, Canada

Research shows a need for a significant improvement in the relationships between governments and their citizens. This chapter discusses ways in which technology could support integrated relationships, not only between governments and citizens, but among the various stakeholders involved in the delivery of health products and services.

Authors: Guy Bertrand, Raymond Dugre, and Gilles Trempe

2. Beyond Information Online - Using the Internet to Strengthen Democracy - State of Kansas, United States

The assumption of the information age that simply improving citizen access to government information will inevitably lead to strengthening democracy may, in fact, mask the complexity of adapting the technology to make a meaningful contribution to making democracy work better. Working from analysis in this area as a starting point, we ask "How can the Internet be used to support effective citizen participation in government, the cornerstone of democracy?"

Author: Phil Wallack

3. Bologna "Civic Network": Telematics for Citizens, Businesses, Third Sector - City of Bologna, Italy

The Bologna City Council has developed a two-way communications strategy with specific goals, services, and expected benefits. The Iperbole/Internet "civic network" involves telematics, electronic citizenship, a role for local public administrations in providing access to global connectivity, and efforts related to social and economic development, education, literacy, and promotion of critical mass "information society."

Author: Leda Guidi

4. Citizen’s Participation through Internet - City of Barcelona, Spain

Citizen participation groups encourage people to give their opinion about City Council projects. People who participate should choose the ways in which they prefer to participate (voting, offering ideas and suggestions or sharing opinions about the themes under discussion.)

Authors: Ernest Maragall, Àngels Pont, Teresa Serra, Joan Carreras

5. Democracy and Technology – Iceland

The policy of the Icelandic government is to use information technology to enhance democracy. Questions and problems can arise from such a policy. Possible remedies are explored.

Authors: Tomas Ingi Olrich, Adalsteinn J. Magnusson, Gudmundur, Thor Gudmundsson, Gudbjorg Sigurdardottir

6. Building Accessible Information Technology in Wisconsin - State of Wisconsin, United States

The State of Wisconsin's "Technology Access Project" intends to develop its programs and public offerings so that these are readily accessible through technology by the largest number of citizens, including citizens who have disabilities. This project addresses the issues of access to technology; it identifies barriers to participation and develops strategies to overcome these barriers. The project encompasses computer systems, telephone applications and other forms of technology.

Author: Bill Braham

7. Electronic Democracy in the Republic of Korea - Republic of Korea

Government institutions and public organizations in Korea are actively undertaking electronic democracy projects in many forms. In this chapter, recent activities to implement electronic democracy through the use of information technology are surveyed and briefly introduced.

Author: Suk-Jae Lee


The International GovNews Project has organized a new gov hierarchy within the Internet news system (UseNet). News complements the WWW with a common Internet-wide system for discussion or information exchange organized by topic. The distributed global broadcast of news over many servers supports very large audiences, and can be used with satellite or modem dialup for rural, low income, and developing areas. Push technology provides immediate delivery into local distributed archives.
G8 Government Online County Comments
A selection of brief public comments and reactions from official representatives of the participating countries in the G8 GOL initiative.

**Frank Mcdonough**, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

With the rapid growth of Internet and the World Wide Web, governments at all levels see the possibilities. A new form of governance is emerging. One term for it is "electronic democracy."

Every national, state, and local government has made a major commitment to the possibilities offered by Internet and the Web. The G8 Government On-Line program sponsored a one year effort to solicit and present important Government On-Line and Democracy experiences and ideas. The 17 papers in the new publication coupled with the important bibliography will add to the wide discourse on the broad area often referred to as "electronic democracy."

Olov Östberg of the Statskontoret in Sweden and Steven Clift of the State of Minnesota in the United States led the project. The studies represent work in 17 different city, state, or national governments. The European Union providing a cross-nation perspective did an additional study.

The information in the 17 papers generally falls into two categories summarized in this introduction. The complete report is available for inspection at: http://www.statskontoret.se/gol-democracy/.

**Participation by All People is a Key Goal in Most Governments**

A few years ago, electronic democracy emphasized access to the information held by government, and the ability to vote on the decisions of government. Today the goal is to allow citizens to choose from one of seven levels of participation.

1. Access the information held by the government
2. On-line interaction with the government on service programs available to the public
3. On-line discussion of the issues with other citizens
4. On-line discussion of the issues with subject matter experts
5. On-line discussion of the issues with government officials
6. Contribution of ideas relative to the issues undertaken by the government
7. Voting on the issues

At the access level, governments are concluding that there are two types of information.

1. That which is required to allow all people to live successfully in a society. This must be provided at no charge by the government.
2. That which is provided specific to the needs of a single person or organization. This information will be provided for a fee.

The Republic of Korea provides a level four facility through a web service. "Cyberparty" enables the public to freely discuss policy issues and to engage in the formulation of policies. In an electronic democracy, we often tend to concentrate on the government/citizen relationship. In reality, there are four sectors to be considered.

1. Citizens
2. Private sector organizations
3. Non profit organizations
4. Employees in the government organizations and institutions

Three years ago, providing access was considered sufficient. Today the requirement is seen as being more complex. A simple "memory dump" from the government's computers is not satisfactory in an electronic democracy. Governments now recognize that the data must be of high quality to be useful. Secondly, it must be organized in a manner that can be accessed.

...
Closing Comments

These chapters represent experiences and ideas from government online activities across the world. Much of what has been written about the Internet, democracy, and how the combination of both might change the relationships among government and citizens is speculative. This white paper represents the first set of writings primarily from governments to the broader world. The chapter authors deserve extensive credit for contributing the substance of this white paper project.

This is the start of discussions among governments and the public about how the Internet and information technology can be used in democracy. In some sense this is more a paper to the member countries of the G7 Government Online initiative than some grand proclamation. And so it should be. Each country will bring the Internet into their democracy based on their own legal structures, culture and society. While some see government as a reactive to the impact of the Internet on their operations, these chapters show that government can and will take an active role in the use of the Internet to support the ideals of their democracies. Government is very much a user of the Internet as are all other organizations, businesses, and individuals.

This is just the beginning of a transformation. While different countries and indeed different locales with those countries will come to use the Internet in unique ways, no activity will take place in a vacuum. Whether you work in government or are approaching this transformation as a citizen it is important to build connections over time. Three important things you can do to stay connected is to visit the What's New section of the G7 GOL web site frequently and join the independent GOVPUB - Government Online e-mail discussion list or sign up to receive the Democracies Online newsletter and newswire service.

Along with thanks to the chapter authors, special thanks go to the Office of Technology, State of Minnesota (where I worked when this project started) for use of their online facilities in the preparation of this report. Thank you to Olov Ostberg, Sweden's G7 leader on this project for making this paper possible, John Gotze for all his work on the format and design of the chapters as well and the bibliography and Gretchen Logan for help with bibliography. Thanks to Elisabeth Richard, Government of Canada, for not only a chapter but editing assistance as well.

Thank you for your interest in the G8 Democracy and Government Online Services Publication. Be sure to send in your comments and let us know what you think. Please also join our email newsletter, where we will keep you informed about updates to the publication and new additions to our resource centre.
Chapter 1
"A ma sante": to Promote Citizen Participation in the Evolution of the Quebec Health and Social Services Sector

Authors: Guy Bertrand, Raymond Dugre, and Gilles Trempe
In Quebec, the health and social service plan that is currently available was set up in 1970 to help protect all citizens, regardless of income, against illness and social problems, and to improve their health and well-being.

The health and social service sector thus draws on some 600 public and private establishments, almost 1000 private medical clinics and over 2000 community agencies. The Government of Quebec manages these organizations through the Department of Health and Social Services and 17 regional boards - and one regional council - located in 18 regions. The recommended management model is based on the participation of citizens as well as on the regionalization and the complementarity of health care and social services provided by these organizations.

In order to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of available services, the health care and social service sector, including the resources it comprises, is currently being reorganized.

**Projects Designed for Experts**

New information and communication technologies are playing a major role in this reorganization. Indeed, over 100 major computerization projects are now under way. The systems they produce support the duties and activities performed by health care and social service providers, establishments and agencies. They are primarily designed to support health care and social service professionals, specialists and managers through the use of information technologies in providing care and services as required, assessing needs and allocating resources.

The first steps in building an information highway devoted to health and social services have been adopted, in particular through a telecommunications network connecting all organizations in this area of activity. The introduction of this highway will help create a virtual "patient file," electronically link care and service providers concerned, as well as facilitate the establishment and retrieval of data and facts required for managing health and social services. This will be especially important in light of the large number of Quebec health and social service organizations and professionals distributed across a wide territory and on which the general population has become so dependent.

In addition to lower costs for accessing and exchanging user information, the use of new technologies will help introduce new forms of organization and methods of providing services. It will also make it easier to achieve the main objective of the health and social service plan as set out in the health and social services Act: "to help maintain and improve the physical, mental and social capacity of citizens so that they can accomplish the role they wish to undertake in a way that is satisfactory to themselves and the group of which they are part" (translation).

**Focus on Citizens**

Furthermore, the results of research into the role of citizens in public-service reorganizations encourage a convergence between, on the one hand, civic and community values and, on the other, vision and leadership in public administrations influenced by public management techniques available in combination with new technologies. Authorities seek to benefit from health and social service opportunities available through information highways in order to enhance the links that bind citizens and states together. They also aim to maintain citizens and community groups at the heart of the changes that public service is undergoing.

Through a measure of autonomy, coupled with an ability to make decisions with respect to prevention, the satisfaction of needs and the selection of available services, client-citizens will serve as a key factor in the reorganization of health and social services. The "paternalist" approach, which is based on cumbersome local structures...
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Chapter 2
Beyond Information Online - Using the Internet to Strengthen Democracy

State of Kansas
Author: Philip Wallack
Abstract
It seems to be an assumption of the information age we are in that improving citizen access to government information will inevitably lead to strengthening democracy. That assumption may, in fact, mask the complexity of adapting the technology to make a meaningful contribution to making democracy work better. Taking the work of the National Citizen Participation Project as reported in "Kernels of Democracy," by Ken Thompson, Jeffrey M. Berry and Kent E. Portney as a starting point, we ask "How can the Internet be used to support effective citizen participation in government, the cornerstone of democracy?" Can we design Web-based programs that will mirror or enhance the effects of the strong participation efforts studied that relied on "face-to-face deliberations by citizens, extensive outreach to all parts of the community, an extensive two-way flow of information, and multiple organizational forms"? (Kernels p22)

Introduction
"The Federal and state governments act as enormous repositories of information that they collect and generate. Tradition and law mandate the availability of this wealth of data and electronic access is coming to offer the most versatile, logical and cost-effective means of delivery."

State of Arizona Telecommunications Study
In "The Hobbit", after a long and exciting journey, Bilbo Baggins, magic ring on his finger, Sting, his elvin sword in his belt, makes his way into the dark frightening recesses of Lonely Maoutain to survey the dragon Smaug in his lair. He spies out the terrible beast, as it lies half-asleep on its huge pile of treasure, its ill-gotten gains. How many elves, dwarves and men will perish to free that hoard. How many goblins, wolves and evil creatures will be slain defending it. After engaging Smaug in conversation, Bilbo withdraws, the secret of the dragon’s overcoming stolen in the encounter.

There is the dragon, government, half asleep on its pile of treasure, data. Here comes the stealthy web page master, eager to reclaim the gold and jewels in the treasure hoard of data. How many web pages will perish to free that data. How many bureaucrats will be lost defending their rules limiting access. After a short dialog with the dragon, our web master withdraws, the secret which guarantees success revealed: "Access to government information on the Internet strengthens democracy."

Not necessarily, and certainly not automatically.

To defend that possibly outrageous position, one needs to confront other dragons. Democracy is an old dragon. What it is and what its features should be are hidden in a thick cloud of scholarly debate and political conflict. To the uninvolved, but not uninterested, all that is visible is a continual tumult punctuated by flashes of lightning and claps of thunder. On the fringe of the melee over definitions, democracy’s weakened state and how to strengthen it are argued over in a raucous debate further confusing the observer.

Communications technology is a young dragon. It seems bent on swallowing up everything in sight. Inventive, glittery, it offers itself, messiah-like, to solve age-old problems with a flick of its bright sword. But the world we see mirrored in its shining surface appears distorted, almost unrecognizable, but somehow unchanged from what we have already or possibly worse.

The message: Watch out for definitions of democracy. People have been disagreeing about that for centuries and one always has the feeling that there are political agendas behind the doctrinal disputes. Beware of technology. It has a way of reformulating the world in its own image while leaving fundamental problems unsolved. So much for...
Chapter 3
Bologna "civic network" service: telematics for citizens, businesses, and the third sector
Bologna City, Italy
Author: Leda Guidi
Two-Way Communication: A general strategy

Bologna is the seventh city in Italy for the number of inhabitants; the sixth in economic importance; the administrative capital and main city of Emilia-Romagna; the most important node of communications of Italy (railways, roadways and telecommunications). The city benefits from an experienced and developed educational system (University funded in 1088).

The Municipality of Bologna has traditionally (since 1965) devoted strong efforts to improve relationships and communications between citizens, associations, non-profit bodies, local Authorities, other Public Administrations, public interest groups, companies, etc. as one of the most important conditions, to promote and strengthen democracy and to develop the quality of life.

In order to fulfill - with new technologies - this objective the Bologna City Council is now creating an interconnected and interactive metropolitan information/communication system - the gathering point of collective knowledge - based on the principles of integration, coordination, subsidiarity, and exchange of resources.

Goals, services and expected benefits/results from Iperbole/Internet "civic network"

This is the background which made possible the realisation of the Iperbole/Internet "civic network", a project already in full operation, using the Internet as a "public doorway" to universal connectivity and to emphasize the leading role of local Public Administration in the creation of "information society" and in the promotion of a "critical mass".

The main goals are:

- "two way" communication
- participation in the decision making process,
- administrative transparency and openness,
- employment of telematics and new technologies for the governance and the sustainable development of the territory,
- the citizens' right to information even through telematic channels and network resources,
- rationalization of offices' and sectors' activities and actions,
- integration and delivery, via internet, of information and services at a metropolitan level,
- focus on the user requirements, needs and validation.

Innovative and efficient communication systems - both actual and "virtual" - are definitely a basic element of desirability, attractiveness and quality of life for a city, in particular for an urban area - like Bologna - that has a metropolitan vocation.

Started in January 1995, the Iperbole municipal/metropolitan system was designed to create a free-of-charge "civic network" on the Internet, a real opportunity as a public service to guarantee the "new right of citizenship", along with economic and cultural advantages. The Iperbole/Internet services - offered free of charge by the Municipality of Bologna - to all city residents, associations, institutions, P.A.s, public and private organizations with no-profit purposes are:

- an e-mail (internet electronic mail) address for private, non-commercial, correspondence and for sending to the municipality requests, suggestions, claims and complaints (more than 1300 municipal offices (including the ones connected via intranet) have already been connected to the Iperbole network and Internet)
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Chapter 4
Citizen’s Participation through Internet
City of Barcelona, Spain
Authors: Ernest Maragall, Àngels Pont, Teresa Serra, Joan Carreras
Ever since the democratic transition, one of the chief concerns of the Barcelona municipal government has been to discover, survey and listen to the opinions of the citizens on important issues in the city. That is why the City Council has long maintained a number of mechanisms for communicating with the residents which disseminate, receive and exchange information. These mechanisms include the 010 Barcelona Information telephone service, suggestion and complaint boxes, the sociological studies programme and public hearings, among others. At the same time, one of the aims of the City Council has been to develop different ways and means of communicating that offer each individual the most convenient access to the government. In this line of action, the Barcelona City Council has incorporated the new information technologies as an additional instrument to facilitate the citizens' relations with the administration. The ultimate purpose is not only to open up new channels, but also to make access easy for everyone.

In this context the Barcelona City Council has undertaken a project which is intended to involve the citizens / cybernauts in the important events going on in the city. Furthermore, the entire municipal organisation is participating in the project, rather than just a single department.

1. OBJECTIVES
The general objective is to use the new information technologies to facilitate the transmission (sending, receiving and exchanging) of information, opinions and knowledge between the citizens and the administration regarding issues which are (or are defined as being) important to the city of Barcelona.

"The aim is to provide a channel for all the citizens who want to express their opinions on everything undertaken by the City Council, capitalising on the vast potential for participation afforded by the new technologies."

Pere Alcober, City Councillor in charge of Civic Participation

Furthermore, there is a whole series of goals, which may be secondary but still absolutely necessary for the smooth operation, the effective organisation and the credibility of this project.

- Participation by the entire municipal organisation. This means that all the departments of the City Council are involved, as are their political officials and specialised personnel. This way citizens can deal directly with the politicians and specialists responsible for the projects.
- The citizen chooses the extent to which he or she wishes to participate. That is, the citizen / cybernaut decides how deeply he/she wants to become involved in each subject of discussion.
- The contributions are not binding in terms of the decisions, but they are taken into consideration for the final draft of the proposals.

It is very important to bear in mind that the source of the opinions compiled from the Internet is a special sector of the population, and the data must be evaluated on this basis.

2. PARTICIPATION BY THE MUNICIPAL ORGANISATION
All the management areas of the City Council take part. The following are defined as the management areas:
Social Welfare and Education
Friendly City and Youth
Business and Consumers
Territorial Balance and City Planning
Environment
Author Information

**Ernest Maragall**
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Chapter 5
Democracy and Technology
Iceland
Authors: Adalsteinn Magnusson, Tomas Ingi Olrich, Gudmundur Thor Gudmundsson, and Gudbjorg Sigurdardottir
The authorities of a democratic state must ensure that democracy works. For democracy to function properly, citizens must have access to information. Information in the field of law, for instance, the law code and government regulations, is of vital importance to the citizen. Other information, e.g., on rights and obligations concerning health and education, are also important. The authorities must guarantee that the information is available and accessible. Information technology gives the authorities a very powerful tool to strengthen the rule of law. New technology can - and will - affect democratic states. Information technology, however, does not change fundamental principles of law and ethics.

Information technology offers vast new possibilities in the gathering, editing, publishing and distribution of information in an electronic format as well as new possibilities in communications. The advantages of the new technology are numerous:

- Information can be accessed from almost anywhere.
- Updating of information is faster and easier than before.
- Information can be made more accessible by providing the user with search facilities, i.e., searches by words or categories.
- Appropriate interfaces make information retrieval much more user-friendly than before.
- Communications between citizens and their government can be made easier.
- Both citizens and the government can enjoy cost advantages if the new technology is employed correctly.

More extensive use of government information is possible, without limiting benefits to any one member of society.

However, it is important to note that the benefits of information technology in reinforcing democracy depend, to a great extent, on what facilities citizens have, i.e., computer literacy and access to computers. An increased amount of governmental information available through the new media will not reinforce democracy if there is neither common computer literacy nor easy access to computers for each and every citizen. Instead, the gap between those who have and those who do not have good access to information will increase. Authorities must guard against this in an effort to provide Government On-line.

Information technology should give citizens a better chance to exercise their rights as information provides the basis for decision-making, i.e., voting. New technology will enable citizens to get closer to the ideal of an informed choice. If the above statements are accepted as true, then a democratic state should attempt to guarantee all citizens full and equal access to such technology and the options it offers.

**The Policy of the Icelandic Government**

The policy of the Government of Iceland embraces neither of the two extremes, that deployment of information technology is a self-governing process, or that the Government should hold the reins tightly. It is central to the Government's vision that information technology can support democracy in its widest sense. This includes both information dissemination and citizen participation. Importance is placed on ensuring that all citizens can utilise new possibilities and are not handicapped by a lack of skills or access to infrastructure. This calls for balancing, where active Government participation is required, but at the same time, great importance is placed on the private sector. The private sector is expected and trusted to bring needed innovation and resources in exchange for great latitude and incentives to act. Healthy competition is expected to increase the quality of services and lower prices.
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Chapter 6
Building Accessible Information Technology in Wisconsin
Wisconsin Department of Administration
Author: Bill Braham
A. INTRODUCTION
The State of Wisconsin provides a wide range of services to its citizens. The state, for example, ensures a clean and healthful environment, supports some of the highest quality public schooling in the nation and offers a world-class university system, sustains a skilled labor force, provides an excellent transportation system, and fosters safe and secure communities.

While the word "democracy" does not appear in the United States or the Wisconsin constitution, it is generally understood to mean "government by the people - government carried on by the people in general - as opposed to government being carried on by an elite class." Elite could be defined in terms of privilege granted by virtue of one's parents or family, socio-economic level, racial or ethnic group, or in terms of abilities. In order to provide good government and to maintain the high quality of life outlined in the opening paragraph, all citizens must have the opportunity to participate in the work of government, regardless of the abilities or disabilities which may be part of their experience.

The State of Wisconsin initiated the Technology Access Project to "address the issue of access to technology in government by persons who have disabilities." The mandate of the project was to identify barriers to the use of information technology in doing government's work and to develop strategies to overcome those barriers.

Providing access to technology for persons with disabilities is not just the law, it is the right thing to do. A significant number of citizens can benefit from technology which is designed to be accessible. The 1990 census indicates that the state's population is about 5,123,000. We estimate that 200,000 citizens have limited use of their hands or fingers, 30,000 have speech difficulty, 500,000 are deaf or hard of hearing, and over 100,000 have limited vision. Technology offers a remarkable opportunity for persons with disabilities to participate in the work of government to a degree unheard of in the past. Persons using adaptive technology can gain access to information never before available.

Federal law requires access to technology. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted by the federal government in 1990, "prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, programs and services provided by state and local governments, goods and services provided by private companies, and in commercial facilities." The ADA contains requirements for new construction of buildings or other facilities, for alterations or renovations of these facilities, and also covers effective communication with people with disabilities. The ADA prohibits excluding persons with disabilities from services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or subjection to discrimination by any such entity. It requires that "reasonable accommodation" be provided for government employees who have a disability. Another federal law, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended), also requires that federally funded agencies provide access to computers for all employees with disabilities and specifies the types of access required: input and output accessibility, telecommunications accessibility and technical support.

In order to overcome access barriers, persons with disabilities can use a wide range of hardware and software solutions. Screen readers can be used by persons who are blind or who have vision problems. These readers convert information typically viewed on the computer screen to input for a voice synthesizer. The user then listens to the information. Persons with low vision can also use magnification systems: these can consist of computer hardware and software or closed circuit television systems. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing can use speech to text technology which converts spoken words to text files which can then be read. Persons with limited movement of
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Chapter 7
Electronic Democracy in the Republic of Korea
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I. Introduction
Since 1995 the Korean government has strongly pushed the construction of a National Information Superhighway and is putting its utmost efforts toward moving to an information society. With a wide provision of personal computers which plausibly can be connected to online services or the Internet in Korea, people are getting plenty of domestic and international information. Information technology has enhanced the possibility that people can communicate with unknown person around the world, exchange their ideas and experiences, and even develop their own curiosity about new information. The advancement of information technology also led people to wish better services and quality of life, and enjoy the rights of free expression.

Information technology and services augment the opportunities for developing public participation in, and awareness of, the political process. The online services played an important role in promoting openness of government. On the basis of nation-wide information infrastructure, the Korean government at both central and local levels has been actively experimenting with electronic democracy to hear citizen's views on government policy and planning, government activities, and social issues. Public organizations have been also launching electronic democracy projects in many forms. Most of the projects are still at their infant stages of development. However, much attention must be consistently given to the creation of an enhanced information system which will enable the public to engage in an online dialogue with politicians and government officials and participate in government decision making process. In this paper, recent activities to test and implement electronic democracy through the use of information online services are surveyed and briefly introduced. Additionally, limited government online efforts are addressed.

II. Projects of Electronic Democracy on Government Level
As shown in Table 1, Korean central and local governments independently offered several types of online services to facilitate the dissemination and accessibility of government information and to hear the public's voices. People can access to these services via internet or online systems supplied by information service providers, including Chollian and Hitel. They can raise questions about recent political issues and discuss with other service users, or engage in dialogue with some politicians. The major features of individual services were as follows:

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<th>Table 1. Government Online Services</th>
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<td>Services</td>
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<td>Internet</td>
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<td>Central Government</td>
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<td>Allim Madang, Cyberparty</td>
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<td>Seoul Focus</td>
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<td>PC on-line services</td>
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1. Allim Madang
In 1995, this web service was designed to directly provide the public with information and electronically manage information from 47 central government agencies. Two major roles of this service are to introduce people to governmental activities and policies and to hear their opinions on them. People used to indirectly get information about government policy by print or TV and radio. In those traditional ways of publicizing government policy, some people are open to the information, but others not. Thus, chances of people misunderstanding still remain. Thus, the Ministry of Government Administration initiated this service as a pilot project in the line of "open government" policy which was intended to directly inform people of governmental activities and policies. The Ministry of Government Administration is consistently seeking ways to encourage people to express their opinions and participate in this project. The services covered in this system are today's headlines, weekly news, data searching, public discussion, policy enquiry and so on.

2. Cyberparty
This web service was generated in 1996 as a unique teledemocracy forum of the National Assembly. Cyberparty aims to give both lay people and experts opportunities to freely discuss policy issues and engage in the process of policy making, provide supporting system of legislative activities through critical review of parliamentary activities, and enforce the effectiveness of direct democracy through information technology. The services covered in this forum are information concerning presidential candidates, political suggestions, BBS (open forum on policy and law, electronic meeting, and public opinion), newsletter.

3. Yeolrin Jeongbu
In 1996, this PC online service was designed to liaise government with the public, publicize major national policies and current issues, encourage lay people to participate in the decision making process, gather public opinions, and advance the system of information gathering, distribution and usage. Yeolrin Jeongbu provided an online site with: (a) a "Public DB" containing a range of public documents, economic and law information that could be used by online users; (b) a "Publics Advice" in which people can consult government officials about their questions and problems in the area of social security and other benefits, housing, legal matters, taxes and so on; (c) a "Dialogue" where online users could express their political concerns and opinions on selected topics and suggestions on government activities. In May 1997-August 1997, online users brought up less than 40 opinions. Most criticisms about the low level of public participation in "Dialogue" were given about the lack of experts who monitor the service and late response to the questions issued by the public.

4. Local government services
Seoul Focus is a web homepage of the Seoul metropolitan government and provides a web site with documents on government administration and public discussion area. Unfortunately, a number of criticisms have caused the public to disregard the public discussion area. One of the critical criticisms was the lack of feedback to the public's requests or enquiries. In Chollian online service, central government offered news on individual government agencies' activities. There was no common interface area between government staff and the public. Local governments are also merely introducing their unique and traditional customs, special events and schedules, and attractions. Hitel online service has two sites, one is for the introduction to central government, the other is for the introduction to administrative agencies. In the latter two services, there was no way for the public to participate in open debate with.
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Chapter 8
GovNews National Science Foundation
Authors: Carl Hage and Preston Rich
A group of volunteers from many countries, within governments and the private sector, has contributed to an effort known as the "International GovNews Project", with the purpose of organizing a new part of the Internet News system (Usenet) to cover government and public policy related topics. News is one of the major types of communication services available on the Internet, which provides announcement and discussion forums on more than 10,000 topics, mostly in the scientific, educational, recreational, and social areas. Previously, very few were related to government or public policy topics, mainly because a top level "government" category had not been organized and defined.

In March 1997, the gov.* hierarchy and an initial set of newsgroups was created, which is currently being carried by most major Internet providers. The "hierarchy" is a means to organize communications into "newsgroups" according to a logical subject hierarchy and by regional divisions. A portion is available for topics and organizations with world wide interest, plus a portion is reserved for each country, which in turn can be subdivided for state and provincial specific communications. Within each region of interest, information is organized primarily by topic, common across all government agencies and interest groups.

Some newsgroups are intended only to hold announcements, but the majority are intended to include public discussions related to government or public policy. Discussion groups can provide a forum for individual members of the public, industry, interest groups, and people within governments to disseminate information, exchange ideas, and ask questions.

**What the Gov Newsgroups Provide**
The gov newsgroups provide an important new means of communications that complement other electronic services of the Internet:
- Provides a means to track updates, i.e. "what's new" on a topic.
- Provides a common topic based organization across organizations.
- Supports two way communications-- users can read and write.
- Enables conferencing with very large numbers of participants.
- High/Low tech access, including rural, low income, and developing areas.
- Non-proprietary push technology with immediate delivery.
- Delivery to local archives gives fast access and historical collections.

**The Newspaper of the Internet**
The gov news system complements government use of the WWW in much the same manner as a newspaper complements a library. Like a newspaper, NetNews is delivered to a home or office PC/LAN, and contains only new information, i.e. news or comments written since the last issue. Just as a newspaper is organized into sections forming topics, NetNews is organized into "newsgroups".

By a daily scan of articles within a few newsgroups on topics of interest, one can keep abreast of all activity in those areas of interest. For example, a fisherman, environmentalist, and a person in a state fish and game agency might browse newsgroups related to marine resources, the environment, etc., and see articles contributed by a dozen federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, public policy researchers, as well as comments from individuals. To access the same information via the usual WWW, one would need to connect to dozens of WWW sites each day, then search them for new information added since the prior day. In many cases, it can be very difficult to find new information added to a site.

Since news information can be delivered to a home PC, LAN, or local ISP, access to...
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GovNews National Science Foundation
Chapter 9
HUD Reinvention Creates Online Opportunities for Public Housing Residents
City of Simi Valley, California
Author: James G. Purtee
None of the opinions expressed herein should be construed to necessarily reflect those of the City of Simi Valley.

**Abstract**
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed pilot programs to help residents of HUD-assisted housing develop local computer centers and participate online. These programs are introducing low income and minority groups to computer enhanced telecommunications technology in communities across the country.

**Introduction**
Information technology is widening the gap between those with access to information and the marginalized populations that lack such access. The growing presence of the Internet affects not only the way we do business, but how we conduct our lives. Governments are examining the social implications of this technology and their role in influencing its distribution. At the core of their inquiry is the issue of equity - the growing social, economic and cultural divide between the technological haves and have-nots. Here we investigate HUD's role in developing programs and resources that will promote wider access to this technology. Will HUD's participation in the electronic democracy experiment promote the self-sufficiency of the marginalized populations that are receiving housing assistance?

**The Need for Universal Access to Computer Enhanced Communications Technology**
The explosion of computer enhanced telecommunications during the past five years underscores the importance of the issues raised regarding access to this technology. The number of Internet users currently number between 30 and 100 million. However, the total number of people communicating online is still less than two percent of the world's population. Internet users are currently an elite group, with the majority of these users living in the United States (7 percent of the U.S. population had online access in 1995; Hall, 1996). Internet access is tightly distributed among economic, racial, and educational lines. The current status of the Internet as an elite club, with social and economic obstacles to be overcome by the user to achieve membership, is creating barriers to access and advancing a form of technological and informational elitism (Hall, Kapor, Marx and Mitchell, 1996).

The differences between the online population and those who lack the capital, time, education, or interest to participate in this group are becoming more pronounced as information access becomes an increasingly important factor for success in our society. Society's traditionally underserved groups: low income; minorities; the elderly; and the under-educated are not well represented online. The average yearly income of a household with a computer, at $52,306, is nearly twice that of households without computers (U.S. Census, Current Population Survey, 1993). Minority status remains a significant indicator of networked information service usage. Education is also a strong predictor of home computer ownership and network usage. The 1998 Census Report on computer use will likely reveal expansive growth in computer and network users and a wider economic and social disparity between the technology haves and have-nots.

**The concepts of a level playing field and the expansion of global democratic ideals**
Technological elitism must be addressed if the Internet is to have a democratizing influence in today's society. Expanded access to this technology may serve to strengthen the links between individuals and their communities and expand the concept of community to a accommodate a more global perspective and promote a democratizing influence (Civille, 1993). A 1995 Rand Report on Universal E-Mail analyzed the potential democratizing influence of universal access to electronic mail.
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Chapter 10
The Impact of Government Online Initiatives on Democratic Participation
Multimedia Victoria
Authors: Bridget Bainbridge and Martin Doddrell
Introduction
If everyone is - at least nominally - in favour of something called "democracy", there is often little if no agreement as to what the word means, let alone the best ways of achieving it. "Democracy" was, after all, once famously dismissed by the English philosopher J L Austin as "notoriously useless". Useless but nevertheless indispensable: we can provisionally offer three main definitions of democracy along the lines of "by the people, for the people, of the people". In the first two definitions the key references are to the institutions and procedures of government; in the third the reference is to a broad concept of social equality.(Note1)

2. The first definition of democracy, "by the people", assesses democracy in terms of whether the government expresses the will of the people governed. For example, whether the "people" can at pre-established periods of time vote the ruling party out of office. (What Tom Stoppard neatly encapsulated in the quote: "It's not the voting that's democracy: it's the counting.")

3. The second definition of democracy, "for the people", is informed by a sense of the elected government ruling in the interests of the people it represents.

3. The third definition of democracy, "of the people", is also the most far-reaching. It suggests that a democracy favours social equality, participation and tolerance.

It is amongst these definitions that the general topic "government online and democracy" must be thought through. The "and" suggests that there is some possible connection between online government and democracy, although just what this connection might consist of still remains unclear. What can government online and democracy mean? How can it be conceived? What are the best ways of ensuring its success?

This chapter will argue that there may well be an inherent democratic impetus in the new online environment, and that the provision of government services online might also enhance democracy. However, any such democratic "tendency" needs to be elaborated, its potential determined, and appropriate strategies implemented for ensuring that this potential is fulfilled. In particular, questions need to be asked about what definition of "democracy" ought to be employed here. It is our contention that the third form of democracy outlined above ("for the people") is not only the type most appropriate for the online environment, but will prove to be the hardest ask. In particular, can the provision of such government online inform, and be informed by, a greater sense of social equality and democratic participation?

Potential Benefits of Online Initiatives for Democratic Participation
It is commonplace to assume that the Internet, for example, exhibits huge democratic potential as an "enabler" and a "connector". So too, it is said that the Internet "permits inexpensive, global, interactive, and mass computer communication, as well as access to a previously unimaginable range of information." (2) Here, the provision of "information" is being cast as a kind of democratic leveller. Along these lines some optimistic commentators have proclaimed that "[i]nstead of a small number of groups having privileged positions as speakers - broadcast networks and powerful newspapers - we are entering an era of communication of the many to the many ... the nature of the technology itself has opened up a space of much greater democratic possibility." (3)

And yet history would tell us that each "new technology" that has arrived has quickly been accommodated and/or co-opted by the status quo. In retrospect, there was nothing inherently democratic about the telephone, the radio or television, for example. Indeed, the directions taken by such technologies are crucially influenced by the interactions between government and business, and how government chooses to intervene and regulate these spheres. In addition, the online environment poses a number of difficult challenges...
For example,
- access to information will enable a more informed citizenry but how accessible, how easy is it to use and how much does it cost?
- easier and less formal interaction with elected officials but do they read their email?

The presumption that the online environment facilitates greater democratic participation (by the people, for the people and of the people) therefore requires further discussion. The impact of government online initiatives on democratic participation is perhaps more problematic in Australia than in other countries because of its compulsory voting system and tradition of making available free basic services.

The next section describes the context of the development of the Victorian Government's online initiatives. The final section of the paper briefly outlines a number of the Government's online initiatives and their "democratic potential" is assessed.

The Context of Victorian Online Initiatives
Victoria is the second largest state in the Commonwealth of Australia. Unlike other Australian states which have relatively stronger agricultural and mining industries, the Victorian economy developed and retains a strong manufacturing and industrial base.

In the past two decades the Victorian economy has therefore been subject to many of the forces of globalisation and problems characterised by the "rust belt" states of the US - loss of industry and employment to the low cost economies of neighbouring countries as forms of protection have been removed; and an outflow of labour and capital to the Australian "sun belt" states as the comparative advantages of the "old manufacturing economy" have diminished.

Victoria 21 is the Victorian Government's strategy to develop an enhanced and internationally competitive networked information economy and society. The objectives of Victoria 21 are listed below.

Objectives of Victoria 21 (4)
- Victoria becomes internationally recognised in the productive and efficient use of new and innovative computing, communications and multimedia products and services, providing equitable and widespread access to citizens, business and Government.
- There is rapid and sustained growth in the value and output from Victoria's computing, multimedia and communications industries, facilitated by high levels of growth in international investment, exports and jobs creation.
- Victoria's achievements and opportunities in multimedia and information technologies are communicated internationally so to position the state as a centre of excellence in the new global information economy by 2001.
Whilst this strategy embraces a strong industry development flavour in its endeavour to
create a more knowledge-based, networked information economy, the strategy
recognises implicitly that this goal is not isolated from, and is in fact dependent upon
the development of an information society. As noted in the previous section, the
promotion of an informed and participative citizenry via online technologies must
resolve questions of access, cost and ease of use.

For the purposes of this chapter three online initiatives of the Victorian Government are
outlined.(5)

Government Information
Victorian Legislation, Parliamentary Papers and Daily Hansard (the daily record of
parliamentary debates and proceedings) are available through a Government-
maintained web site, (http://www.vic.gov.au/). Whilst this information has always been
freely available, as an Internet-based resource it now has a potentially wider and more
convenient distribution. Archived information is also available. A citizen may now
follow the progress of a Bill through Parliament, monitor its debate and votes and
proceedings.

Another site gives access to Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents,
(http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au) and in particular, access to consolidated principle acts
and statutory rules in operation in the state.

Government Services
The Victorian Government has announced its intention to make all Government
services available through electronic means by the year 2001.

Initially access to government services will be available through multimedia kiosks at
popular locations such as shopping malls; through the Internet via computers at home
or at work; or through the telephone via Interactive Voice Response, and later through
cable to the home.
The initial offerings will be related to "life events" - if I move house I will be able to
notify all relevant government agencies, utilities, etc., through one process.

Community Skills
Community skills development is being approached through the funding of
community-based computer and Internet facilities that provide access and training,
provide on-line services, run workshops, develop local web sites and generally aim to
raise community awareness of the benefits of new ICTs.

Another avenue to promote community access and awareness is the library system. The
Victorian Public Library system has traditionally provided free services to the Victorian
community. The State Library is now the home of VICNET, a state-wide electronic
information resource, linking public libraries and other communities of interest.

Summary
The Victorian Government's online initiatives straddle a number of broad objectives:
• give electronic access to Government information;
• give electronic access to Government services; and
• improving community awareness, skills and access to new ICTs.

Although these objectives are not specifically aimed at improving democratic
participation, they either indirectly do so or have a neutral effect.
### Objectives of Victoria 21

1. **Development of an information society and economy.**
   - **Policies For Example:** Hansard,
2. **Industry development.**
   - **Parliamentary Papers, Legislation**
3. **The Victorian information economy/society be internationally competitive**

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<th>Democratic participation</th>
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**Notes:**

- Negative impact: X
- Positive impact: 4

The table presented is a suggested methodology for benchmarking government online initiatives against a democratic participatory objective.

In the case at hand illustrated above, there is little conflict between the objectives listed above, policies being pursued and the additional objective of enabling/improving "democratic participation". Some online initiatives are clearly neutral in their effect. Whilst this may be a happy coincidence for the moment, and it is far too early to judge long-term trends, experience suggests government vigilance will be necessary.

**Notes**

7. Other initiatives may be found at the above web address.
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Chapter 11
INFOCID - A single window for citizenship in Portugal
Secretariat for Administrative Modernisation, Portugal

Author: Luis Vidigal
Daily life for the ordinary person in the street is often frustrated by public service bureaucracy and public administration is itself often held back by its heavy structure. Our aim is to make the State more accessible for citizens and cut through the complexity of its thousand services and numerous products, procedures and formalities.

Citizens' problems in their relationship with the Public Administration usually concern different agencies. Generally there is a mismatch between the way public administration is organized in terms of its institutions and the problems faced by citizens. Administrative organization involves many units when dealing with a single and one dimensional problem, causing confusion for the citizen and turning rather simple issues into complex ones.

Usually incomplete answers are provided and the citizen is forced to collect the pieces of the puzzle from different services, for it is difficult to obtain accurate and full information from one only.

INFOCID is the Portuguese Interdepartmental Information System for the citizen, created and maintained by all State organizations, which deal with citizens. It is a public network that offers all Portuguese citizens an easier way of dealing with the Public Administration, irrespective of their social and economic status.

It is an integrated database sponsored by the Secretary of State for Public Administration in the Prime Minister area, coordinated by a steering committee and it is an inter-departmental and co-operative system which has more than 50 different partners from all the ministries. The system uses multimedia technology and allows easy and free access to information through kiosks in the street, as well as through other generally used technological media, such as computer or Internet.

The aim is to make the citizen's life easier by finding, in a single source, the answer to all his or her needs. INFOCID does this through a common technological platform, shared by any public entity. The strategy is to optimize resources and allow for the creation of large economies of scale for the information producers and distributors.

INFOCID's users have varying needs - the solution has been to use different products depending on their needs and circumstances. Multimedia Kiosks, diskettes, Internet, CD-ROM, paper guides, amongst others. And in the future? interactive television? ... Who knows? Certainly, INFOCID is constantly growing and adapting to new technological opportunities. By being flexible it overcomes change and avoids obsolescence, the ghost that haunts all information technologies nowadays.

At present, INFOCID covers more than 100 Portuguese municipalities and soon will be in every local authority. In the near future it will be available in more than 5000 places, including a national wide bank network called Multibanco.

INFOCID is also available in diskette with all the informative texts, menus and images in the format of the Windows' Help. It has been available on the Internet since August 1995 where many hundreds of hyper-links to national and foreign places related to INFOCID subjects have been created. Through the Internet we have been able to take this important flow of information, organized by specialists from all sectors of the Portuguese public administration, to homes and companies throughout the country and the planet.

The main menu of INFOCID includes 15 different information areas related or not to present ministries. A list of information sub-systems necessarily independent of...
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Chapter 12
Language-Enhanced Telematic Services; European Actions, Developments and Future Requirements Toward Democracy within the Information Society

European Commission
Authors: N K Simpkins, L Pola, J Diver, M Zanotelli and E Morino
Abstract
The development of the information society requires that access to, and presentation of, information, knowledge and services is acceptable and usable for the (professional) target audience. To support a democratic process it is essential that this idea is extended to everyone, that we all have equal access to information concerning our government and an equal opportunity to participate. At the same time, policy makers cannot themselves be loaded with providing this service. Crucial to realising online support for democracy are:

- support for government in producing, managing and making available information and in consultation and collaboration,
- comprehensive and comfortable access to desired information and services (policy, legislation etc.) both for governments and citizens,
- support to participate (review, vote, support) in agenda setting and selection of representatives for citizens.

In this chapter the necessity for human language technologies to support an effective, widely dispersed and democratic process is explained, together with some current examples and future requirements for a better realisation of the potential.

Introduction
The diversity of cultures and languages, an increasingly open approach to government and subsidiarity, a complex hierarchy of administrations (local, regional, national, European Union), means that the EU is an especially difficult area in which to develop Government On-Line. However, GOL has been recognised by the EU as an important contributor, both to democracy and the functioning of administrations\(^{(1)}\). EU policy aimed at developing the information society\(^{(2,3,4,5)}\) incorporates specific initiatives and programmes for administrations. Much more of the technology is being developed in the private sector, but has equal applicability and greater potential, for serving administrations.

The changes brought about by information technology in the last two decades have seemed revolutionary but, in reality, this is only the threshold of the new information age. There are many new ways in which the application of telematics and the use of language technologies will benefit our way of life. Although these changes are generally seen as beneficial, it is important to anticipate difficulties which may arise, and develop ways to overcome them. Two major examples of problems impacting direct government are:

- access to much information may be available only to the computer literate and those who understand English, leading to information 'haves' and 'have nots'
- a surfeit of information from which it is impossible to identify and select what is really wanted, i.e. 'information overload'.

Language is the most powerful communication tool we have. Language engineering has important social and political benefits in enabling us to:

- extend its use to communicate with machines and automatic services;
- enhance its use in dealing with each other
- provide us with information in a form we understand and in quantities we can handle
- give us all an opportunity to participate and influence events.

Human language technologies will make an indispensable contribution to the success of the information revolution. The availability, accessibility, and usability of new telematics services will depend to a significant extent on developments in language engineering.

Recent and ongoing developments in language engineering\(^{(6,7)}\) are providing solutions which can greatly assist in the interaction of government and citizens. Administrations are recognising and facing the most severe language processing problems, including those of providing effective access to the right information and an opportunity to interact. Despite the power and effectiveness of language technologies, there is little
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Chapter 13
Operating Government in an On-line World: Balancing Access with the Needs to Govern Effectively
State of Ohio
Authors: Peter J. McGeoch and Jeffrey B. Ritter
Abstract
Democracy embraces public access to the functions of government, and to its records, as one of the fundamental principles for assuring an informed, participatory electorate. But increased public access through the network, transforming virtually any operating records of government—even as they are created—into public records accessible to citizens, can undermine the primary service functions of government and risks disabling the capability of public officials to have intelligent debate and appropriate discretion in policy development.

Access is potentially threatening the public sector's enthusiasm for technology. This chapter surveys the policy priorities and strategies ahead for assuring that assuring public access does not disable the effectiveness of government in governing.

The Right of Public Access
Democracy embraces as one of its strongest values the rights of citizens to have access to their government. In the United States, our history reflects a strong commitment, even before the formation of the nation, toward assuring citizens the ability to examine what government is doing, evaluate how those functions are being performed, and to determine, at the ballot box, the continued suitability of the job being done. Time and again, the courts and the legislatures in this nation have affirmed the right of public access to government as an essential tool in meeting the expectation that America functions best with an informed, participatory electorate.

In the early 1960's, the State of Ohio confirmed that public access to government includes public access to the records, reports and work product of the government itself. Following a decision by the Ohio Supreme Court in which it was declared that "in Ohio, the public records are the people's records", the General Assembly enacted the Ohio Public Records Act. Those actions provided a foundation for a state policy supporting public access that is considered one of the most dynamic in the United States.

Despite the changes in technology that have occurred—from photocopying machines to computers to interconnected networks—Ohio continues to strongly favor policies and practices which allow citizens access to inspect nearly any physical or electronic materials held by government and the opportunity to obtain copies of those materials at the lowest possible calculation of the costs of duplication. Only certain classes of information expressly excluded by statute are exempted from the public right of access; only by legislative authorization may an agency or department charge a duplication rate for specific records that may exceed "actual cost".

Our courts have also affirmed that the right of public access evolves with changes in the technology used to create and store public records. As governments adopt computers and networks into their own operations, the public's rights also adapt. In Ohio, government may not refuse to provide citizens access to electronic records, nor may they satisfy requests for computer records by delivering boxes of printed reports. As technology evolves, government serves the expectations of the citizens by providing a quality of public access that is contemporary with the technology. As a result, Ohio has joined many of the states and the U.S. Government in beginning to use the Internet as a mechanism for providing public access to the information assets of government.

The Impact of Technology
But the evolution of technology that has had transforming impacts upon every aspect of our lives has similarly impacted government. Technology has changed public expectations regarding the ease of accessing, duplicating and delivering public records; as a result, agencies and departments are receiving increasing numbers of requests for
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Chapter 14
Public Dialogue and Citizens' Bureaux in Sweden
Ministry of the Interior, Sweden
Authors: Berndt Lindholm and Tomas Ohlin
Background
Like many other industrialized countries, Sweden is entering into a new society where the emphasis is increasingly put on the importance of knowledge for development. This has created a new climate for public administration.

As a result of the general rise in levels of education and civic consciousness, many citizens are now demanding greater influence and participation possibilities. They want greater influence over their lives in their neighbourhoods, at work and in the community at large. A meaningful democratic dialogue is only possible if citizens are well informed and can find their way in the public system, if they know where to turn to obtain more information about public functions and services, and about their rights and obligations.

Different types of citizens' bureaux
In Sweden, and in the other Nordic countries, a number of measures have been taken over the years to facilitate increased contacts between citizens and authorities. In recent years, citizens' bureaux have been set up in a number of municipalities as a result of a new approach to the organization of public administration at the local level.

There are today (mid 1997) about ninety citizens' bureaux in Sweden, started or planned, which may be divided into the following three main categories:

Coordinated information bureaux, which may include an information desk, for example at the public library, where officers representing the municipality, the local social insurance offices, the county council and other authorities can inform the public about their activities.

Joint service bureaux, where both municipal departments, local social insurance offices and central government authorities may be represented.

The staff are authorized to deal with matters within their remit at all levels. The local and central government departments have a joint reception, where they can inform the public about their activities, issue forms etc.

Non-sectoral front offices, where various municipal departments collaborate in the provision of integrated services, i.e. where "generalists" deal with matters involving several different departments up to a certain level of responsibility.

The purpose of citizens' bureaux
The main activities of citizens' bureaux consist of providing information and administrative services and processing routine on administratively uncomplicated matters, and matters subject to specific well-defined rules. The creation of citizens' bureaux may be regarded as a response to the problems caused by the strict division into sectors and spheres of responsibility in central and local government. The division was based on public government concerns, and many citizens find this division artificial and hard to understand.

Therefore, by applying an intersectoral approach, citizens' bureaux may help to improve functions and make them more efficient. This could lead to an institutional renewal of public administration, offering citizens better and more accessible services, guaranteeing services in sparsely populated areas and in the suburbs of the large towns, increasing the efficiency of services in socio-economic terms, and also to a strengthening of local democracy.

The view that citizens' bureaux could help to improve the performance of local...
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Chapter 15
Sustainable Interactivity For Government Web Sites
Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services, Public Works and Government Services Canada
Author: Elisabeth Richard
Through its role as manager of the Government of Canada Primary Internet Site, the Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services is in daily contact with citizens and interest groups who demand to participate in this new on-line society. By providing Internet services to departments, GTIS observes how this new networked environment has an effect on public servants' workflow. This viewpoint allows to observe the impact on governance of the growing networked environment.

A standard pattern of questions awaits departments and agencies, as they open their storefront on the information highway. Should they plan for two-way traffic? Are there tools that allow for public participation without hijacking resources? Can departments avoid having their Web sites become soapboxes for organized interest groups? Which procedures should be put in place for on-going management, and how many resources will they entail?

Applications provide many-to-one forms of communication, or many-to-many. Some allow for different time communications, others facilitate same time communications. Some are e-mail based, Web based, or a mix of different platforms. Experiences with these applications are multiplying at various levels of government.

However it is still unclear how public service procedures developed in the post-war era should be adapted. Key issues need to be addressed and models developed in order that correspondence, communication, consultation and program management processes may function in this environment. Only then may government agencies around the world use the information highway to harness the general public's opinions in a dynamic policy process.

**Chorus of Voices or Tower of Babble?**
The vision of leaders and their governments actively working in collaboration with citizens and interest groups towards measurable goals is prominent in Internaut imagery. This fantasy comes from the fact that all the technical elements are present in the very nature of the medium. We yet have to see them orchestrated in reality. Some issues tamper the development of these applications as instruments of governance.

**Pseudo-use**
The Internet blends tools for public participation in a unique way. The medium is like a library, a newswire, a radio open line and a voting booth, all meshed together in a dynamic process. The public can easily browse or search through the documentation put forward by the government. Discussions can take place, fact sheets can be published as needed and opinions recorded, more fact sheets, more opinion polls, along the lines of the iterative consultation model. The process of preparation, documentation, education, deliberation, vote, first round, second round, analysis and so on, can happen in front of our very screens. This raises the public’s expectations.

In most instances, applications are used one at a time: a discussion without measurable goals, a document without feedback links, survey without automation of answers, feedback forms without methods to collate the comments. The richness of the many combinations has yet to be explored and documented. Until reliable models are proposed, the traditional information gathering methods - opinion polls and focus groups - will prevail. Even though distribution of government information, news releases, annual reports is now accomplished through a direct channel to the population, the channel is still mostly one-way and uses a very limited range of its rich functionalities.

**Synthesizing comments**
The Internet has opened up the consultation process by allowing interested parties to
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Chapter 16
Teledemocracy
Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Author: Auli Keskinen
Abstract
Teledemocracy means the use of modern information and communications technology (ICT) as instruments to empower the people of a democracy to help set agendas, establish priorities, make important policies and participate in their implementation. In a word, true teledemocracy is the use of ICT to give the public leverage in self-governance. Put another way, it is the use of ICT to help transform modern representative democracies into more participatory democracies. New values and ideologies will challenge the scientific paradigm of democracy itself. How then information networks can contribute to transforming societal decision making systems and democracy utilizing deliberative and direct methods in paving the way to citizen steered society will be discussed.

Development of democracy
Various points of view to the current global social transition period and the coming of the information age, both of which are characterized by an unprecedented global telecommunications and information networks explosion will be discussed. Our position is that the rapid diffusion of computers and connected networks of electronic means, the information and communications technology (ICT) will have even more profound impact than before on various social phenomena such as work, entertainment, business, education and, most important of all, democracy - how it is understood, exercised and developed. What is ready to be born, then, is "teledemocracy" - a new form of direct democracy promoted by the ICT and Information Networks. So far, information networks, as one part of "the Information Society," have mainly been dealt with by governments and enterprises from the technological point of view.

Representative democracy is in crisis. Indeed, a growing number of observers agree that this few hundred year old idea and practice of democracy does not work so well any more in societies where an increasing number of people can gain more and more information on various social and political issues by having access to the ICT and vast amount of information. Thus large segments of the population are now and more so, in the future able to form personal educated opinions on common issues.

Many people have grown impatient with their governments which they see minding only narrow interests rather than fulfilling the major task of representative democracy, which is taking care of the citizens' common good. In modern societies, many people want to shift from being "the governed" into having "self government." They want to become actors in society instead of being mere subordinates. They want to have more power and control to conduct their own life as they want. The ubiquitous information networks and ICT of the future will be a readily available tool by which people can easily empower themselves, but only if they grasp the opportunity.

Public discussion on teledemocracy and the societal perspective of ICT is gradually gaining momentum. Information networks can and should be used for societal dialogue. Networks can be the new tool to enhance and reformulate the ways and ideas how democracy will be developed and executed in societies. The continued public discourse on the democratic potential of the information society must be encouraged - for example, on whose terms it will be developed and what effect the networking of people can have on their lives.
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Chapter 17
UK CITIZENS ONLINE DEMOCRACY: An experiment in government-supported online public space
The Hansard Society for Parliamentary Government
Author: Stephen Coleman
I. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The amorphously uncodified and quintessentially evolutionary constitutional system in the United Kingdom is currently undergoing something of a quiet revolution. Amongst the policies now being considered and reforms in the process of being enacted are a comprehensive reform of the way that Parliament operates. The Select Committee on the Modernisation of The House of Commons has so far produced two lengthy reports, the proposals within containing some of the most far-ranging changes in procedure and practice in twentieth-century British parliamentary history.

The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) has produced a report, Electronic Government: Information Technologies and the Citizen, containing a groundbreaking survey of ways in which the Westminster parliament can utilise new communication technologies, both as a means of reducing bureaucracy and connecting citizens more directly to MPs and the parliamentary process. At least some of the vision of this report is based upon the techno-constitutionally innovative thinking which has occurred in preparation for the establishment of the new Scottish parliament in Edinburgh; serving a population much of which is rurally dispersed, and unencumbered by the parliamentary customs of Westminster, Scotland's new parliament may well become the most ICT-friendly legislative assembly in the world.

The forthcoming White Paper on 'Better Government', to be published in early 1998, is heralded as laying the foundation for a greater degree of transparency in government than Britain has ever known. Linked to this is the Government's Right To Know White Paper, the first proposal for Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation in UK history; until now a pervasive culture of secrecy has characterised British government, embodied in the 1911 Official Secrets Act which ensured that British citizens (constitutionally, subjects) the least informed in the democratic world.

The Government's enthusiastic embrace of new communication technologies. The new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, elected in May 1997 heading a party with the biggest parliamentary majority in Britain's history of the democratic franchise, has announced that all schools in the UK are to be connected to the Internet, and every school student provided with their own email address by the year 2002. In his first speech to his party's conference after taking office, he committed the Government to ensuring that by 2002 1 in 4 transactions between citizens and government will be conducted electronically.

The Cabinet Office has given its support to an unprecedented experiment in online consultation between citizens and government. The UK is the first national government to endorse such a process of pre-legislative discussion, debate and consultation via the Internet.

The purpose of this paper is to outline and examine the last-mentioned experiment, with a view to assessing the degree to which new communication technologies might be used in the future, in the UK and elsewhere, to break down the virtual Berlin Wall which has traditionally existed in constitutional democracies between the represented and their representatives.

In political communication historical context is paramount. Radio, for example, spread as it did in the first decades of this century not simply because of developments in wireless telegraphy, but because of widespread urbanisation (providing a social context for the provision of services to mass publics) and a sense by the political elite of the value of there existing a single Voice of the Nation in the form of the BBC. Similarly, on the eve of the new century and millenium, a number of factors have combined to make the UK particularly responsive to the need to transform political communication:
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THE END