

Call for papers to special edition of International Journal of Public Information Systems (IJPIS)

The non-government and voluntary sector, ICT, and democracy

Deadline for extended abstracts: March 1st 2014

The recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons* has again focused international public attention on the role and importance of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in social and political life. NGOs, together with other groups which rely to a greater or lesser extent on volunteers such as Local Voluntary Organisations (LVOs) often provide services to the community and undertake tasks which government cannot or will not do. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the governance and activities of such organisations is a topic of growing interest.

The nature, scale and activities of NGOs and LVOs vary enormously both within countries and across countries. In countries with highly developed and extensive welfare states, which include many European countries, the role of NGOs and voluntary or part voluntary organisations will be different than it will be in, say, countries like the USA or in the developing world. Such organisations range from well-funded, well-resourced and formally structured international organisations such as the *Red Cross* or the *World Wildlife Fund* to small local, even *ad hoc*, loose networks of individuals organised around anything from fund raising for the local school to community gardening or even crowdsourcing.

The field of Community Informatics is one in which the use of ICT by LVOs and similar organisations is studied, but there has been little research to date on how and to what extent organisations across this spectrum use ICT for member or citizen engagement and the promotion of internal democratic governance. A particularly interesting question is whether, and if so how, NGOs and LVOs use ICTs internally and externally? For example, are there instances of such organisations making extremely effective use of ICT for (say) lobbying whilst failing to use it effectively for internal engagement or *vice versa*? Are such organisations better at using ICT to promote their values externally than they are at practicing them internally?

For this special issue we are seeking contributions from interdisciplinary research that examines, in different ways, *how volunteer spheres use the tools of e-democracy, i.e. how they use ICT to strengthen the organisation's internal democratic structures*. We are also calling for applied studies such as usability or design studies of the development of tools for e-democracy for non-governmental organisations. A majority of research in this area is carried out in English-speaking countries and in urban settings, which is why we welcome studies from other perspectives. As the field of Community Informatics and E-democracy continues to be an emerging field we especially welcome studies that show engagement with theory and method.

POSSIBLE TOPICS

Possible themes included (but are not limited to):

- Studies of the use of e-democracy tools in NGOs and LVOs;
- Evaluations of commonly used open-source systems in NGOs and citizen engagement, from a democracy perspective;
- Technology-enhanced cooperation in NGOs and LVOs;
- Use of technology for lobbying and mobilizing campaigns;

- ICT support for knowledge management in NGOs and LVOs;
- On-line democratic culture;
- Processes of inclusion and exclusion in e-participation;
- ICT and gender equality in NGOs and LVOs;
- ICT supported organization of global democratic movements;
- Security issues in tools and practices for e-democracy in NGOs and LVOs;
- The use of or potential for e-voting in NGOs and LVOs;
- Use of pseudonyms in e-citizen engagement;
- Anonymity and e-democracy;
- The sociology of ICT use in such organizations;
- ICT impacts on the internal democratic processes in NGOs and LVOs;
- Comparative studies of NGOs ICT supported communication practices;
- ICT supported interaction between NGOs;
- NGOs internal democratic norms and practices in relation to ICT;
- Case studies of models and prototypes in e-democracy/e-engagement projects in NGOs and LVOs.

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IMPORTANT DATES

2014

March 1 st	Submission deadline for extended abstracts
April 1 st	Notification of acceptance of extended abstract
May 1 st	Submission of full paper
July 1 st	Submission of final versions

September 1st

Planned publication date

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Extended abstracts should be no more than 2-3 pages.
- Full Papers should be in the range 6000-8000 words. Longer submissions may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Authors are asked to follow the format guidelines at:
<http://www.ijpis.net/ojs/index.php/IJPIS/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

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