Call for Extended Abstracts for a Special Issue on

Political Online Participation and its Effects: Theory, Measurement & Results

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ABOUT THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

The area of interest of this special issue is public participation that utilizes digital information and communication technologies. By public participation we are referring to participation that is implemented by state authorities to provide citizens with opportunities to influence political and administrative decision-making. This covers a wide variety of participation formats including both formal (i.e. legally required as in planning processes) and informal (i.e. voluntarily offered such as citizen budgeting) procedures. With the widespread availability of the Internet, many variants of public participation can now be realized with the help of online tools. Some of these are already established formats that have been successfully embedded in the new information environment. These include ePetitions, online participatory budgeting or online consultation and deliberation processes. Some forms of participation are innovative as, for example, eVoting or CrowdLaw as they are enabled only by new digital instruments.

In this special issue the interest is primarily focused on the effects of such innovative forms of online participation, in particular on the questions:

- What kind of effects could be expected and what causal mechanisms can be modelled?

- How do these effects compare to the effects expected of offline participation?

- How can potential effects be operationalized, measured and evaluated in practice?

- What effects have already been observed empirically?

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[1] http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/(ISSN)1944-2866

The possible effects of online participation processes are often related to normative arguments about the value of these processes and are regularly used in the debate for and against online participation. These include process-related effects such as i) the number of people participating, ii) the inclusiveness of participants, iii) the transparency or iv) deliberativeness of the process, as well as result-related effects such as v) the quality and vi) the acceptance of decisions based on participatory processes or vii) the skills and values participants might acquire through participation.

So far, the field of online participation research has been marked by a lack of theory about possible effects and their underlying social mechanisms, a diversity of approaches to evaluate effects and an emphasis on single case studies that have produced only few findings which can be generalized. Therefore, this special issue aims to include approaches from different academic disciplines and different methods of measurement to apply them to different forms of participation.

We invite contributions from all disciplines that deal with the questions outlined above, e.g. Computer Science, Communication Studies, Law, Political Science, and Sociology. Contributions should lay out a theoretical argument referring to the underlying mechanisms of certain effects, provide a discussion of how these mechanisms and effects could be measured and evaluated and ideally present results of empirical studies. Each contribution should discuss if and how the investigated online forms of participation differ in their effects from offline forms of similar or related participation processes. The list of topics is not exhaustive, and other questions related to the topic are welcome and will be taken into consideration. If you are unsure, please get in touch with the guest editors to discuss details.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

There is a two-stage process: First, we ask for submissions of extended abstracts of 1,000 words (plus references) that outline the general idea of the paper. Based on these abstracts, authors will be chosen to be invited by the guest editors to present a short paper at a joint workshop in Duesseldorf (Germany) in November 2018 (travel and accommodation costs will be covered). At the workshop, the short papers will be discussed and the profile of the special issue will be developed cooperatively.

At the second stage, the full papers of the workshop participants as well as other submissions from an open call will be subjected to the usual double-blind peer review of the journal.

For the first stage, please submit your abstract by 27 August to diid@hhu.de. No formal requirements are in place but please observe the word limit for the extended abstracts of 1,000 words (plus tables & references). Submissions should not have been previously

published in academic journals or article collections. However, papers may be elaborations of ideas previously developed in earlier publications, as long as they represent a new, original approach. The abstracts will be subject to an internal review by the guest editors. Based on the review we invite potential contributors to the workshop in Duesseldorf, taking place on (19 – 20 November 2018. Invitations will be communicated by 10 September).

For any further information about this special issue, please contact the guest editors:

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ABOUT POLICY & INTERNET

Policy & Internet aims to be the premier venue for scholars and researchers to set the public policy agenda in the digital era. The journal is edited by the Oxford Internet Institute (University of Oxford) for the Policy Studies Organization (PSO), and published by Wiley-Blackwell. It was established in 2009 as the first, major peer-reviewed journal investigating the implications of the Internet and associated technologies for public policy. The journal is fully multidisciplinary in scope. Perspectives from any academic discipline are welcomed, including but not limited to anthropology, computer science, economics, geography, information science, legal studies, media and communication studies, philosophy, political studies, psychology, and sociology.

TIMETABLE

2018	
27 August	Deadline for submission of extended abstracts
10 September	Decision on acceptance of abstract for workshop
12 November	Deadline for short paper as basis for workshop discussion
19 – 20 November 2018	Workshop in Duesseldorf, Germany
2019	
15 March	Deadline for papers
15 May	Reviewer feedback
1 July	Deadline for revised papers
1 August	Final decisions
15 September	Issue submitted to publishers
15 December	Issue published