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Participation in
Democratic Processes**

Trend report I

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Abstract:

This trend report evaluates policy requirements and describes the current trends relevant for development methodology and tools in the areas of smart government, web-based democracy, teledemocracy, and web technologies. It also gives a short introduction to teledemocracy and presents the definitions to the terms and concepts related to. This report will be used in on-going evaluation of the project objectives.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper, Trend Report I, evaluates policy requirements and describes the current trends relevant for development methodology and tools in the areas of smart government, web-based democracy, teledemocracy, and web technologies. It also gives an introduction to teledemocracy and presents the definitions to the terms and concepts related to. This report will be used in on-going evaluation of the project objectives.

Each chapter of this report is focusing on different areas of the Webocracy project scope. The focus is in current systems, success and failure stories as well as the latest research results. However, we will also examine the current public discussion about the teledemocracy and record the current public opinions.

This report will be updated regularly during the Webocracy project and there will be three official revisions available after the project. This is the first one and the second revision, Trend Report II, is planned to be available in M23. the final revision, Trend Report III, will be available in M34.

2. INTRODUCTION TO TELEDEMOCRACY

In this chapter, we describe the concepts of democracy and teledemocracy, and report the current trends as well as the different views of teledemocracy. In this chapter, we also give a short introduction to the history, development, current situation and some future visions of teledemocracy.

Two M.A. students, Kleemola and Terävä, from the University of Vaasa have written a seminar work where they examine and analyse the field of teledemocracy. The purpose of the seminar is to explore the most important concepts of the field and examine how they are defined in different studies and research papers. The seminar work is used as a reference in this report.

2.1. Models of Democracy

The different models of democracy are discussed here according to Savolainen & Anttiroiko (1999) by considering how the models relate to various aspects of teledemocracy. In particular, the interest is emphasized in the communicative aspects of the democracy models, because these aspects define the basic qualities of teledemocracy. The major features of the models of democracy are summarised in figure 1.

	Representative democracy	Corporatism	Direct democracy	Participatory democracy
<i>Main mechanisms Of democracy</i>	Representative system of government	Representation of interests through interest groups and associations	Referendums, recall and town meetings	Public discussions, deliberative and active participation in political process
<i>Potentials of different forms of teledemocracy</i>	Responsive representative teledemocracy	Virtual corporatism as an intermediary element in the information society	Plebiscitary model of teledemocracy (esp. televoting)	Deliberative model of teledemocracy based on authentic citizenship and participation
<i>Main actors in the political process</i>	Political representatives	Representatives of institutions and interest groups	Televoters	Active citizens
<i>Agenda setting</i>	Politicians (representatives) and officials	Interest groups, politicians and state bureaucracy	Politicians and officials	Citizens, politicians and officials
<i>Participation</i>	Low	Low	Low/High	High
<i>Underlying theories</i>	Liberal democracy, pluralism and institutionalism (Dahl, etc.)	Corporatist theory and elite theories (Michels, Offe, Schmitter, Cawson etc.)	Conceptions of direct and liberal democracy and some aspects of the public choice theory (New Right & liberal thinkers)	Participatory and grass-roots democracy (Arendt, Barber, Becker, Slaton, etc.)

Figure 1. Four ideal types of democracy (Savolainen & Anttiroiko 1999:15).

Representative democracy refers to a democratic form of government where citizens do not directly participate in decision-making, but power is given to the representatives of the people. On the contrary, in **direct democracy** citizens themselves can prescribe laws and make political decisions. Between representative and direct democracy there can be found a third form of democracy: **participatory democracy**. Participatory democracy refers to a system where governmental body does not entirely disappear, but citizens are given a notably bigger amount of power in decision-making. (Savolainen & Anttiroiko 1999: 20.)

An outline of the nature of issues and the democratic mechanisms and techniques behind the different aspects of the democratic processes is presented in figure 2.

Aspect of democratic process	Nature of issues	Democratic mechanisms and techniques
1. Special strategic decisions	Major historical take-it-or-leave-it issues with long-term impacts: amalgamation of municipalities, membership in supranational communities etc.	Direct mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - popular referenda - legislative referenda - local consultative referenda
2. General policy decisions and political leadership	Interdependent policy and allocation issues: budget decisions, taxation, recruitment of top management etc.	Representative, direct and participatory mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - enabling councils - recalls - citizens panels, deliberative polls etc.
3. Civic “legal control”	Direct and indirect citizen control based on constitutional and political rights and institutional control mechanisms	Legal control mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legal system (appeals) - administrative procedures including petitions for rectification
4. Citizens economic rights and interest representation	Interests and issues concerning livelihood, employment, work and work conditions	Industrial or workplace democracy and interest group politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - forms of private or group interest mediation
5. Welfare services	Public service provision bringing direct benefits to service users: social welfare, health care, education etc.	Mechanisms used in user and participatory democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feedback systems and hearings - e-vouchers - citizen panels, focus groups etc.
6. Services related to environment and living conditions	Housing, land use, environment, infrastructure, technology and security issues	Participatory mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participatory planning - citizen panels - consensus conferencing
7. Neighbourhoods and residential areas	Neighbourhood issues concerning local traffic, parks, buss stops etc.	Associative and participatory mechanism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - neighbourhood associations - local public hearings - participatory planning

Figure 2. An outline of the institutional design of democratic processes (Anttiroiko 2001)

2.2. 'Teledemocracy' vs. 'Electronic Democracy'

The "electrification" of the implementation of democracy has been called **teledemocracy** since 1980's (Keskinen 1995: 10). Alongside the term teledemocracy a wide group of other terms have risen to refer to this concept. Nowadays a more general term to designate the concept is **electronic democracy (e-democracy)**. However, in this paper also the term **electronic democratisation** is used to refer to the concept. This term refers to the pursuit of a stronger democracy through information- and communication technology, which is the main aspect of this whole phenomenon. Primarily the goals of electronic democratisation are aiming towards more participatory democracy. Citizens are enabled to influence more directly political decisions by means of the new information technologies.

The term *teledemocracy* refers to "remote voting" and through that to direct democracy. This leads us to technological tools such as e-mail by which the acts of direct democracy are realised. Savolainen and Anttiroiko think that some alternative expressions, for example *electronic democracy* do not seem to imply so much the possibility of direct democracy. Rather, the starting point is representative democracy, and computer-mediated communication is considered no more than instruments supporting representative democracy. (Savolainen and Anttiroiko 1999:11.)

Indeed the term *teledemocracy* is usually more closely related to the possibility of direct democracy, whereas the term *electronic democracy* is mainly seen as a way of supporting the current representative system (see examples in Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 32).

It is important to understand, that in spite of these definitions, teledemocracy does not automatically mean direct democracy. Additionally, most often there can be seen the idea of more participate democracy behind the concept of 'electronic democracy'. Usually both of these two points of view exist side by side, no matter which term is being used. It is also important to notice that quite often when talking about direct democracy the term *direct democracy* does not directly imply that representative administration should be completely replaced. Usually it means that some methods of direct democracy would only be used to support the representative administration (e.g. Keskinen 1999: 19).

According to Kleemola and Terävä (2001) the concepts 'electronic democracy' and 'teledemocracy' can be placed on a continuum running from the representative democracy in the other end towards direct democracy in the other end (see figure 3).

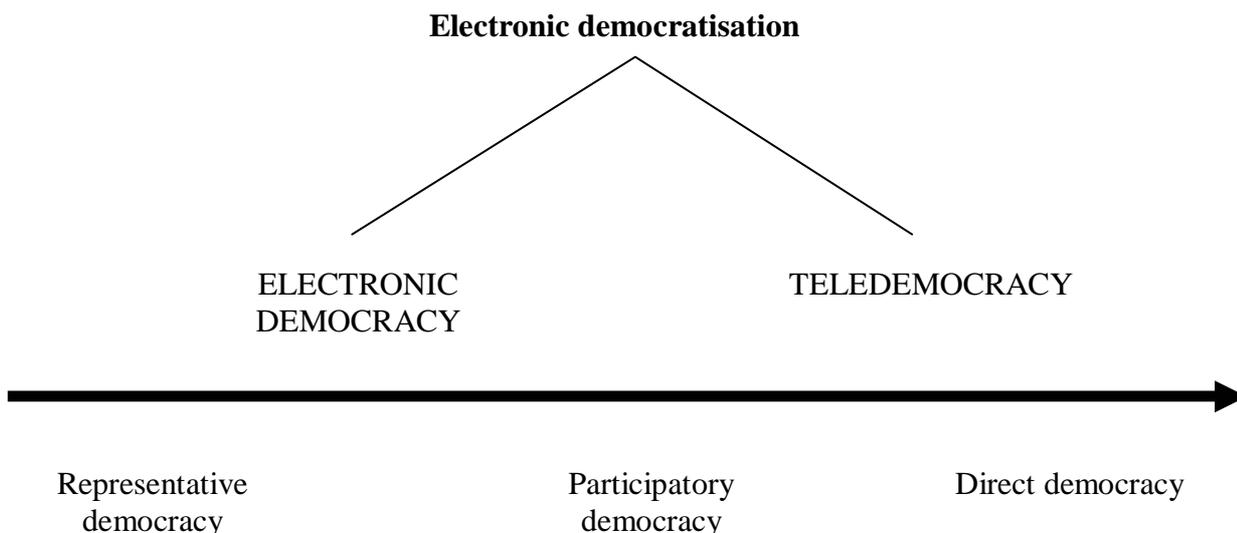


Figure 3. Electronic democratisation

As can be seen, both concepts ‘electronic democracy’ and ‘teledemocracy’ are in the middle of the continuum. There is not any clear line between them and as mentioned, in practice, they are usually considered as the same. (Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 33.)

2.3. Early Visions

The first person who foresaw the connection between direct democracy and 20th century telecommunications was a Canadian scientist, seer and poet R. Buckminster Fuller. Already in the 1940’s he had ideas of modernized democracy. According to Becker and Slayton (2000: 12) “Fuller believed that democracy has potential within it to fulfil the satisfaction of every individual’s need.” That potential could be realized by a mechanical implementation of democracy; by a system called “electrified voting”. That system would “certify spontaneous popular co-operation in the carrying out of each decision.” Becker and Slayton (2000: 12) state: “The beauty of such a system, in Fuller’s mind, was the overwhelming power of such a collective decision-making process.”

The next visions came about ten years later, in the 1950’s, from a political psychoanalyst, Erich Fromm. He believed that new telecommunication equipment could help treating the collective insanity. According to Becker and Slayton (2000: 13), “from Fromm’s point of view, the vast army of common people was so regimented that they were entirely divorced from the most important decisions in their daily lives.” Cure for this would be a coast-to-coast network of face-to-face town meetings that met regularly to discuss and vote with the help of technical devices upon important national and local issues. As Becker and Slayton (2000: 13) put it “this electronically connected set of face-to-face town meetings was a true House of Commons”.

In 1970 Hazel Henderson had same kind of views as Fuller and Fromm earlier. She also saw that devices for an instant electronic vote – a TV-set and a telephone – were already available almost in every home ready for use. She thought people would get information from “citizen terminals”, computer centres placed nearby in each voting district. (Becker & Slayton 2000: 14-15.)

A Swedish visionary Tomas Ohlin went even further. In his future visions every home had their own computer terminal connected to databases. Ohlin also developed an idea where randomly selected people would stay in touch with government by using a linked computer system. (Becker & Slayton 2000: 15.)

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 18-19.)

2.4. The First Experiments

New communication practices were taken into use in 1970's by private and public sector organizations. This was enabled by the rapid development of telecommunications. There were high expectations of every experiment. It was believed that interactive cable-TV connections might be able to offer new ways to strengthen local democracy. According to Savolainen and Anttiroiko (1999: 45) "direct democracy based on the use of cable-TV would culminate in the development of wired cities". Anyway, cable-TV connections enabled home voting and asking for further information on the arguments set by the decision-makers. (Savolainen & Anttiroiko 1999: 45.)

The concept 'teledemocracy' was introduced by the political philosopher Benjamin Barber and developed in the 1970's at about the same time with the introduction of cable-TV. A professor of political science Ted Becker, who was the first to use the term *teledemocracy* in print in 1981, experimented with the use of cable-TV for political decision-making in the late 1970's. Cable-TV with its broad content and localized information first sparked the hopes of teledemocrats. By the mid 1980's it became clear that cable-TV had not led to more forms of direct democracy or to more political participation on the side of the general public. Scepticism towards the experiments in electronic democracy remained widespread. Yet some successful experiments with cable-TV led the advocates of Teledemocracy to maintain a more optimistic view. (Hagen 1997: URL: <http://www.uni-giessen.de/fb03/vinci/labore/netz/hag_en.htm>.)

More seriously considered experiments in electronic democratisation were started to conduct after the beginning of the 1970's mostly in the US and on a non-profit basis. In 1974 Dr. Vincent Campbell designed and tested a televoting system in San Jose, California. He was the one who first used the word *televoting*. In the project, a selected group of people were sent an information packet by mail and after studying the information for one-week people had to cast their votes by telephone to the main computer. After Campbell's experiments the term *televoting* was extended to cover a wider concept. (Keskinen 1995: 44.)

One of the first *Electronic Town Meeting*-experiments was called MINERVA, conducted by Amatai Etzioni in the early 1970's. According to Gerard Brunick (<URL: <http://www.chem.vt.edu/chem-dept/dessy/honors/papers/brunick.html>>) "MINERVA was an attempt to broaden participation in the regular meetings of a New York apartment while preserving the quality of participation." Panelists discussed issues and residents could participate through the use of a special room with a video camera. (Brunick: <URL: <http://www.chem.vt.edu/chem-dept/dessy/honors/papers/brunick.html>>.) Etzioni's team found the results of the experiments excellent. Several useful conclusions were made about electronic deliberation vs. face-to-face meetings. For example, electronic meetings - although they were not so effective - seemed to help people change their own minds. (Becker & Slayton 2000: 196.)

One of the more radical and interactive formats of *Electronic Town Meeting* - a reference to the town hall meetings of seventeenth and eighteenth-century New England - was the Qube project in Columbus, Ohio in the later 1970s. The Qube system consisted of a Set-top Box with a computer chip and some memory. The project's purpose was to operate as an interactive information service through which subscribers could do their shopping and banking, answer public opinion polls, and send e-mail. Such a service also provided the capabilities for a more interactive form of Electronic Town Meeting, which was staged later in a Columbus suburb. At various times viewers could respond to questions through a box of push buttons. The results of each polling were instantly tabulated and displayed upon the screen. However, despite the immediacy of viewer response, the public officials paid little attention to the votes, and the meeting was deemed a failure. (Brunick <URL: <http://www.chem.vt.edu/chem-dept/dessy/honors/papers/brunick.html>>.)

In the late seventies Ted Becker, one of the foremost 'teledemocrats' in the world, initiated a project in Hawaii - the Hawaii Televote. This enterprise was actually a series of different efforts that were designed to aid the constitutional convention of 1978 and the state legislature from 1978 to 1980. In the Hawaii Televote a random sample of citizens were asked to participate in a telephone opinion survey. This was not an ordinary poll, however, since the participants were mailed a brochure presenting different issues and perspectives on which they were supposed to reflect for a certain length of time before responding. They were also encouraged to deliberate with their families and neighbours on the issues before calling in to cast their votes. (London 1994: <URL: <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/ed.html>>.)

During the eighties Ted Becker continued initiating experiments on televoting with another professor of political science, Christa Slaton. From 1981 to 1989 the Honolulu Electronic Town Meeting project from the University of Hawaii made a set of ETM experiments in Hawaii, New Zealand and Los Angeles. The goal was to design and implement ETMs from the most basic forms to the most complex. (Becker & Slaton 2000: 82.) The Honolulu Electronic Town Meeting and the Los Angeles Televote combined over-the-air TV, cable-TV, radio programming, televote random sample polling, computer conferencing, school programs and newspaper coverage to tempt citizen input on major policy issues. (Becker & Slaton 2000: 83.) Self-selected citizens could debate issues of local and national significance. Afterwards, citizens could register their opinions by calling in or filling out ballots in the local papers. (Brunick <URL: <http://www.chem.vt.edu/chem-dept/dessy/honors/papers/brunick.html>>.)

During the eight years 12 televote-experiments were made in Hawaii. The results according to Christa Slaton (1992: <URL: <http://www.auburn.edu/tann/tann2/cdslaton.html>>) showed that "the televote method not only serves a mediational role between citizens and their representatives, but also increases citizen awareness and promotes interaction among citizens. If used on a wider scale, televotes would enable a more representative, knowledgeable, enthusiastic citizenry to shape public policy."

In North Carolina the OPEN-net-network (The Open Public Events Network) has been conducting Electronic Town Meetings since 1983. A satellite/cable television service offers state residents access to public officials and state government services with follow-up viewer call-in sessions. The night-time OPEN-net programs, broadcast live on cable television via

satellite, offer one hour of coverage of a state government event, followed by an hour long viewer call in session with state officials and policy makers handling the calls. Programs have provided viewers with information on more than eighty different topics. They have also given citizens the opportunity to express their concerns to public officials. (Harvard University: <URL: <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/innovat/winner/onnc87.htm>>.)

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 19-23.)

2.5. The 1990's and Current Experiments

The technological advancement in new communications media was the reason for the renaissance of teledemocracy in the beginning of 1990's. Renewed hope in channel-multiplication, new media formats and of course the explosive growth of computer networks, especially the World Wide Web, mailing lists and discussion groups all have helped to reactivate the debate on teledemocracy. Still, while many activists now see the computer networks as the central tool for the establishment of Electronic Democratisation, some activists and theoreticians believe that the central tool is the television-based communication technology. (Hagen 1997: <URL: http://www.uni-giessen.de/fb03/vinci/labore/netz/hag_en.htm>.)

The interactive system of Public Electronic Network (PEN) in Santa Monica, California is one of the longest-running experiments in electronic democracy. Since 1989, this network has allowed users to participate in any of 300 online discussion groups as well as communicate directly with city officials. According to the web site of Santa Monica City "a user of PEN can obtain information about city services and events, to send and receive Internet e-mail, communicate with city departments, or to join public discussions on various city issues, and on other, more light-hearted topics." (2001: <URL: <http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/cm/residents/choc/CityGov't/350-PEN.htm>>.)

In 1992, as a part of his campaign platform, the US presidential candidate Ross Perot put the idea of televised Electronic Town Meetings on the top of the media's, politicians' and social scientists' agenda. The idea was appealing: to recreate the lively gatherings of New England townspeople on a national scale through the medium of interactive technology. Every week a single major issue would be taken to the people with comments and then the Congress would get a response from the people and analyse it to find out what people want. (London 1994: <URL: <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/ed.html>>.)

According to Scott London, "many wondered whether Perot was serious about his electronic town hall, or merely appealing to disenfranchised voters." Perot himself was also doubtful at first, until 1993 the issue rose to the headlines again: the volunteer organization that supported his presidential candidacy had a plan among their priorities for implementing electronic town halls. (London 1994: <URL: <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/ed.html>>.)

In Becker and Slayton's (2000: 103) opinion the entire Perot-ETM process was "lopsided and distorted". They note that, "it allowed no time for extensive lateral discussion among citizens or any face-to-face deliberation. There was no hint of scientific random sample polling to determine in-depth, informed views of representative samples of the populace. It included no political views or options others than his own. Thus, the public's warm embrace of Perot's attractive but false Electronic Town Meeting proposition was the idealistic yearning of an

uninformed citizenry.” Although Perot’s idea of the Electronic Town Meeting was not a success in practice he very much succeeded to popularize the term. (Becker & Slayton 2000: 103.)

In Canada, the Liberal Party of Nova Scotia conducted an important televote-experiment in 1992. They pioneered, for the first time in the history of representative democracy in the world, a direct vote by party members from their homes, using the telephone, to select their party leadership in an upcoming election. The project was a co-operation with a private company Maritime Telephone and Telegraph (MT&T), which was trying to pioneer the technology of direct democracy for the present and the future. Despite one setback, a major computer crash, the experiment was highly successful. (Becker 2001: <URL: <http://www.acm.org/pubs/articles/journals/cacm/2001-44-1/p39-becker/p39becker.html>>.)

One of the oldest Internet-based community networks in the US is *BEV, the Blackburg Electronic Village* (<http://www.bev.net>) in Virginia. The project, established in 1993, is a public-private partnership with the town and a research university and it includes citizens, government, and businesses. Local residents are actively engaged in a wide variety of network activities, such as contributing to the BEV Web site, using email to keep in touch with friends and family, discussing local issues online, and publishing information about themselves, their work, and their personal interests. (2001: <URL: <http://www.bev.net/>>.)

The first election-oriented WWW-site in the world, *Minnesota E-Democracy*, (<URL: <http://www.e-democracy.org/>>), was established in Minneapolis in 1994 by a 24-year-old student Steven Clift. The mission of this non-partisan volunteer and citizen-based organization is to improve citizen participation in elections and public discourse in Minnesota through the use of information and communication technologies. (<URL: <http://www.e-democracy.org/about.html>>.) In this popular electronic meeting space candidates can answer public questions and criticize their opponents. Citizens can find detailed information on Minnesota politics (MN-Politics), comments on the candidates, and discuss the democratic process in two separate e-mail lists - one for announcements and one for active discussion. National and international public policy and political issues are discussed in MN-Politics-national. (<URL: <http://www.e-democracy.org/mn-politics/>>.)

Although most of the experiments in the field of electronic democratisation have been carried out in the US, there can also be found an increasing number of examples of teledemocracy and electronic democracy projects in the European countries, e.g. the UK, Italy, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands. Famous cases include the Digital City of Amsterdam (<URL: <http://home.dds.nl/>>), Metropolitan Area Network Antwerp (MANAP) (<URL: <http://www.dma.be/MIDA/>>), Virtual Bologna (IPERBOLE) (<URL: <http://www.comune.bologna.it/>>), the Information City initiative of Manchester (<URL: <http://www.magictouch.org.uk/>>), Ennis of Ireland (<http://www.ennis.ie/>) and many others. (Savolainen & Anttiroiko 1999: 45.)

In Finland there are several projects and initiatives. The City of Tampere (<URL: <http://www.tampere.fi/>>) was among the first Finnish cities to establish a web site for municipal services in 1994. From the start, the idea was to create digital versions for as many municipal services and offices as possible, for the convenience of townspeople, companies and visitors alike. Digital services include information, notices, applications and other forms

as well as a forum for dialogue. (Seppälä <URL: http://www.e-democracy.lcc.ufmg.br/e-democracy.nsf/papers_ing_sepala.html?OpenPage>.)

In the discussion forum, citizens can exchange opinions on current affairs and projects in Tampere. They may also ask anything about the municipality via form on a website and an official will reply on the same site as soon as possible. Citizens are e.g. asked to contribute their opinions to the budget draft for the next year, before any plans or decisions on the political level are made. Another interesting feature of the web site is the town planning game. According to Seppälä “the game is about plan presentation, dialogue and lobbying, combined with the visual and functional opportunities provided by new media.” The game enables everyone to roughly design and construct their own neighbourhood. (Seppälä <URL: http://www.e-democracy.lcc.ufmg.br/e-democracy.nsf/papers_ing_sepala.html?OpenPage>.) (See also notes about eTampere in Appendix A.)

One interesting project in the field is NuvaNet (<URL: <http://www.nettiparlamenti.fi/nuvanet/>>), which was initiated in 1997 by the City Council of Espoo Finland and built by Nettiparlamenti Ltd. The project aims at involving young people in participatory democracy. It is a channel for young citizens to submit their ideas and proposals to municipalities. (Savolainen & Anttiroiko 1999: 45.)

Ota kantaa - valtionhallinnon keskustelufoorumi (“Take a stance – discussion forum of the government”) in the web-address <URL: <http://www.euro.fi/vm-keskustelu/>> is an official public online-forum of the Finnish government since the year 2000. The forum is conducted by each department in turn and on their own round they can raise a topic they think is essential for citizens. Later the discussions are summarised and utilised in further preparations of the topic. (2001: <URL: <http://www.euro.fi/vm-keskustelu/tietoa.html>>.)

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 23-27.)

2.6. The Future Visions of Electronic Democratisation

The use of new information and communication technologies is growing almost everywhere in the world. People are more and more adapting new ways to do or solve everyday tasks. Mails are sent via Internet, bills are paid via Internet, holidays are booked via Internet, goods are bought from Internet and the list goes on. ICT and specially the computer networks are already offering a lot to us, but they can offer more.

A society based on direct democracy hardly exists. It is argued that the mere vision of such society is a utopia. But if we have the will and suitable techniques, why not try to get closer? So far several excellent results have been gained from the experiments of citizen participation in municipal decision-making. With a proper and secure technique and a sufficient guidance for the use of that technique, people will be willing to discuss and make decisions on issues close to them. There just has to be someone to offer the new possibilities to them.

Scott London (1994) has pointed out: "The future of electronic democracy seems fairly certain: the question is not *whether* but *how* to combine communications technology and democratic practices." (London 1994: <URL: <http://www.scottlondon.com/reports/ed.html>>.) Most visions are made in the field of deliberative polling. In the future citizens are getting more and more information from the World Wide Web, newsgroups and mailing lists. The

development of technology gives more and more opportunities to get that information: besides computers people can also use digital-televisions and mobile phones. Also deliberation is done through those channels.

Because of the decrease of voting records, the Internet is seen in the key position in the future. At least, in theory the Internet is giving opportunity to all different kinds of polling in all levels. Elections can be organised in the local, state, national, transnational and global levels. Citizens will be more willing to vote, because time and place are no more barriers. People can also get more information from the Internet about the different issues that affect how they will vote. E.g. when the next elections are coming they can find out from the Internet what each candidate think about different subjects and they can vote according to the information and impression they get from the Internet. Therefore, the net will be not just the media where citizens only express they opinions, but also a media where they can get the information.

There are many optimistic visions about the electronic future of democracy. But not all agree with those. As Fernandez (1996) claims, "based in historic perspective, it is not strongly realistic to expect that on-line services would improve the political participation (nor quantitatively, neither qualitatively)." By historic perspective she means the great promises what the cable-TV was suppose to bring in the 1970's. She points out, that if television did not fulfil its great promise, neither will do the World Wide Web. As Internet will become more massive, it will become also more trivial. TV showed that marvellous innovations would not necessarily produce marvellous and dramatic changes. People do not always use the entire potential of those extraordinary innovations. Instead, innovations are mostly used for increasing the opportunities of recreation. More educational levels have not raised the level of political awareness. (Fernandez 1996: <URL: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/4821/conclusions.html?42,49>>.) However, it also good to remember, that all innovations produce impacts that we cannot predict.

Electronic democratisation as an exciting and fashionable way of participation, however, matches well to this world and values of society. Electronic democratisation has got a growing role in filling the black spots, which might be the centralizing of power and the shortage of possibility to participate. Representative democracy, which is the most common form of democracy, can be fine-tuned to fit in the present and future society with the help of electronic democratisation. (Kuisma: <URL: <http://www.nettiparlamenti.fi/fin/teledem2.htm>>.)

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 27-29.)

3. THE CONCEPTS AND TERMS IN THE FIELD OF TELEDEMOCRACY

The main purpose of this chapter is to give a clear picture what is meant today by the terms 'teledemocracy', 'web democracy', 'e-democracy', 'e-voting' etc. Material concerning teledemocracy and other related concepts is gathered from several various media, e.g. literature, articles from various publications and from the Web. The terminology study and glossary (see chapter 7.1) are performed as a part of the seminar work by the M.A. students Kleemola and Terävä from the University of Vaasa.

3.1. Methodology

The handling of the concepts and terms in the field of teledemocracy is partly based on a terminological concept analysis, which is a method for analyzing concept systems and concept relations. The method is introduced by Anita Nuopponen (1994: <URL: <http://www.uwasa.fi/~atn/research/disse/atnsumma.html>>).

In this chapter we discuss the basics of the concept analysis and the most essential concepts as far as they are relevant when studying concepts of some special field. We start with discussing languages for special purposes and carry on with the concept of a concept, a concept system and a term.

3.1.1. *Language for Special Purposes*

Facile teamwork in every field requires a coherent understanding of concepts, definitions and terms. In the field of electronic democratisation people are fairly different from their backgrounds and professions, so finding the common language is significant. The language among people in a certain field is called *Language for Special Purposes (LSP)* (Haarala 1981: 9).

LSP is a (form of) language in a specific context, which is understood by the scientific, professional or hobby community and which has terminology that has differentiated from the common language (Haarala 1981: 9). The language of electronic democratisation has a special position, because at the same time it is basically an LSP, strongly connected to a particular field but also a common language, language for all citizens. If the role of citizens in political decision-making and discussion is wanted to be improved, first it has to be made sure that citizens know what they are talking about. Unfamiliar terms and complex concepts are likely to make people to drift away from the new possibilities to influence.

Although LSP is primarily considered as an own language of people in some specific field, there can be also distinguished different usage levels. One of the most formal ways of using LSP is a situation where researchers from the same field are communicating with each other. In the other end there is a communication between ordinary citizens who know the field. The language of electronic democratisation settles somewhere in the middle of these two edges. The same language is going to be used among researchers and developers as well as among these professionals and common people.

The standard of LSP is usually stricter than the standard of the common language. One of the most important requirements of LSP is that the concepts have accurate definitions. Another important aim is that each concept is equivalent to one term and each term equivalent to one concept. (Haarala 1983: 39.) Although the language used in the field of electronic

democratisation does not fulfil all the features of LSP, it should fulfil at least the most important requirements.

(Kleemola Terävä 2001: 12-13.)

3.1.2. Concept

According to ISO/R 1087 –standard concept is any unit of thought, generally expressed by a term, a word or a symbol. Concepts are not only mental representations of concrete beings or things, but also abstract thoughts e.g. qualities, actions, situations and relations. (Picht & Draskau 1985: 37.)

Concepts always have got properties, i.e. characteristics of the concept, which constitute them (Picht & Draskau 1985: 44). The characteristics have substantial meaning when searching the concept definitions and terminology of some field. With the help of the characteristics found from the concept, the concept can be proportioned to other concepts of the field. Also, when choosing the terms, the most essential characteristics of the concept must be recognized. (Haarala 1981: 21.)

In the common language the words are very often polysemous and inaccurate. In LSP the concepts must have strict definitions. Definitions, i.e. verbal descriptions of concepts, are needed so that communication could get on without misunderstandings. The definition specifies and defines the concept, when meaning and denotation can be agreed on. The definition also ties up the concept and its designation, and creates norms for the usage of the concept. (Picht & Draskau 1985).

(Kleemola Terävä 2001: 13-14.)

3.1.3. Concept System

Concept system according to Nuopponen (1994: 237) is a “system of related concepts which form a coherent whole”. Individual concept can never be studied as an isolated unit in terminology, but in its own conceptual context in relation to other concepts (Picht & Draskau 1985: 62). In doing this, concepts can be compiled into different kind of concept systems depending on what kind of relations there are between the concepts.

The basis of all concept systems is a *satellite system* (mind-mapping). The idea of a satellite system is that the most important concept is placed at a node and its different aspects are arranged around it. These "satellites" in their turn take their own satellites until the whole subject field is covered. (Nuopponen 1994: 226.) The satellite system is very helpful when compiling terms and concepts. It also helps to see the possible concept relations and to create the first preliminary concept systems.

Concept relations can be strict logical connections or freer associations between one concept and another. Relations between the concepts can be categorised and classified in many different ways. Nuopponen (1994: 239) distinguishes between three different points of view from which concept relations can be classified: qualitative, quantitative and systemic relations. In this paper we deal with logical and functional concept relations that belong to the branch of qualitative relations.

Logical relation between concepts is either a super ordinate concept - subordinate concept – relation or a relation between coordinate concepts. The superordinate concept and the subordinate concept have all the same characteristics, except that the subordinate concept has one or more extra characteristics. The coordinate concepts have the same superordinate concept, but each coordinate concept has its own distinguishing characteristic. (Haarala 1981: 21-22.) For example, in our paper (see figure 4) the democracy concept has got three subordinate concepts: direct, participatory and representative democracy. Logical relations are often represented with a linear tree diagram (see e.g. Haarala 1981: 22).

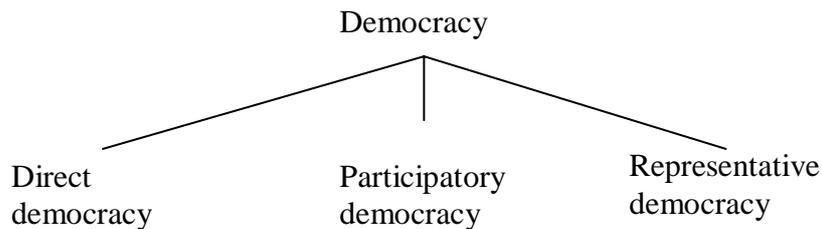


Figure 4. Logical concept system

Logical concept relations are usually based on concepts related to material objects, whereas functional relations occur mostly between abstract concepts. In the functional concept relation there are no clear superordinate and subordinate concepts or other hierarchical relations. The primary concept in a functional concept system constitutes the point from which the other concepts are viewed. (Haarala 1981: 25.) For example democracy concept can be presented with relations of activity; here the active parties are government and citizens (see figure 5). In this paper functional relations are represented with linear arrows.

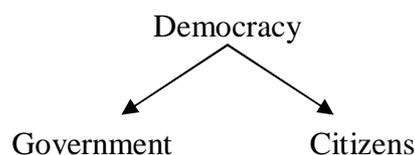


Figure 5. Functional concept system

Logical and functional concept systems are very useful, when relations of one specific concept to other neighbour concepts are under clarification. Often, however more comprehensive picture of the whole wide field of concepts is needed. The flexibility of the system can be increased by *mixed systems*. The mixed systems are concept systems in which two or more types of concept relations are combined. So there can be e.g. logical and functional relations in the same concept system. (Picht and Draskau 1985: 85.)

Often when compiling the concept systems, the starting point is considered to be the one where concepts have to be able to be defined accurately, so that the relations to neighbour concepts can be clarified (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997: 148). Clear, unambiguous definition is not always possible with all concepts. For example the most of the concepts discussed in this paper, are so abstract, that comprehensive definitions are almost impossible to make. Although sometimes in concept examinations it is useful to study also complex and unclear

concepts. The definitions of these kinds of concepts can be seen inexplicit, but as Tamminen (1993: 147) points out, highly "significance-intensive and expressive in the intuitive level". When coming across with these kind of concepts, it would be more useful to talk about 'describing the content' or 'giving the meaning' than 'defining the concept' (Tamminen 1993:147).

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 14-16.)

3.1.4. Term

According to ISO/R 1087 -standard a term is "any conventional symbol (a word or a phrase) for a concept which consists of articulated sounds or their written representation (Picht & Draskau 1985: 96). There are several common rules and norms that can be used when creating, analysing or evaluating a term. The ideal term is as short as possible and still clear. It should not contain any superfluous elements, but still the motivation of a term should be self-evident; the term should be logical and to a high degree self-explanatory. Naturally the formation of the term must be in accordance with the syntactic rules of the language. (Picht & Draskau 1985: 114-117.)

In LSP a situation where one term refers to one concept is aspired after (Picht & Draskau 1985: 98). However, in practice this kind of situation is uncommon mostly among new, developing fields. Usually in languages there are different term-concept relation types, such as monosemy, polysemy, synonymy, equivalence and homonymy. From the point of view of this paper the most important is the synonymy, which refers to a situation where two or more different words are designating the same concept. (Haarala 1983: 39.)

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 17.)

3.2. Glossary of the Terms Related to 'Teledemocracy'

The glossary (see chapter 8.1) contains the most often used terms and their definitions in the field of 'teledemocracy'. The terms in the glossary are collected from the literature, articles and WWW -sites handling e.g. teledemocracy, e-democracy, e-government etc.

4. ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT

In this chapter, we first describe and define the concept of ‘electronic government’ and discuss the current trends concerning it with the help of examples. A case on ‘candidate selector’ system and three new research reports from the field will also be presented.

4.1. Definition of the E-government

One of the main purposes of electronic democracy is to make political information more open and accessible to citizens. This can be achieved with **e-government**. E-government, (sometimes called **online government**, **wired government** or **smart government**) refers to a government’s use of technology as an enabling strategy in improving service to the public and offers the government an opportunity to transform service delivery. (<URL: <http://www.geocities.com/halbeda/virtualcityhall/>>).

It is predicted that e-government will cause major changes to the government’s functioning. It involves changes to the internal organizational structure of the government, and changes in its relationship with citizens and the practice of democracy (<URL: <http://www.crossingboundaries2.com/cb2v2/booklet.pdf>>). Von Hoffman, for example, (<URL: http://www.cio.com/archive/enterprise/111599_egov.html>) sees that the transformation of how e-government operates is the most direct benefit for business. Because in this paper we have concentrated more on the citizens’ point of view, the internal changes of the government and changes between the government and business are only briefly mentioned.

One can fully understand how wide the concept of e-government is, when talking about all the levels it works on. E-government as a concept covers all governmental action. The same term *e-government* is used whether talking about local, regional, national or transnational levels. It is certain that conditions in different levels of the administrative ladder vary a lot. Governments’ possibilities to offer their services and also the needs of the citizens of course differ depending of the level of the government in question.

4.2. The Goals of the E-government

Even if the concept e-government is multidimensional and therefore hard to define unambiguously, we can find quite consistent opinions about the main goals of e-governments:

- 1) E-government should offer governmental information more effectively to citizens,
- 2) Governmental services should be more accessible,
- 3) E-government should improve communication between government and citizens. For example The Council for Excellence in the government of the United States defines e-government’s aims as follows (Example 1):

Example 1.

Firstly, there is the use of ICT to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the ‘executive functions’ of government including the delivery of public services. Secondly, ICT opens up new possibilities for governments to be more transparent to citizens and businesses, giving access to a greater range of the information collected and generated by government. Thirdly, the adaptation to ICTs may enable fundamental changes in the relationships between the citizen and the state, and between nation states, with implications for the democratic process

and structures of government. (<URL: <http://www.excelgov.org/techcon/egovex/ebluprint.htm>>

Citizens' bigger role in democratic decision-making is often considered to be the fourth goal of e-government. Some people believe that, in the long run, remote Internet voting and different opinion polls could enable citizens to involve more directly in the decisions of the government. On the other hand, others see that these kinds of methods will not make democracy anyhow better. For example in the Crossing Boundaries -conference, most participants felt that complex public policy issues require a more deliberative approach. Asking people to provide a simple yes or no on many issues would be unlikely to lead to good governance (<URL: <http://www.crossingboundaries2.com/cb2v2/booklet.pdf>>).

Up to a certain point differences can be seen between governmental and citizens' points of view. Usually governmental sources see that it is enough that citizens can take part in policy discussion in government sponsored Internet chat rooms and discussion forums (e.g. <URL: <http://www.crossingboundaries2.com/cb2v2/booklet.pdf>>), while many citizen-based organizations want more than just an opportunity to talk.

4.2.1. Information and Services

E-government is often considered more democratic than an old government, because it makes information more accessible to ordinary citizens. Full access to legally public information is often considered as the most important aspect of the e-government. The increased availability of governmental information is seen as a key aspect when trying to achieve a smarter and more democratic government. For example Ecclestone (1988: 45) thinks that an easy access for people to governmental information, will be essential if we are going to start to rebuild our trust in government and, by extension, the political process. Citizens need information so that they can take part in political discussion. As Rheingold (1995: 91) remarks, the ability of groups of citizens to debate political issues is amplified enormously by instant, widespread access to facts that could support or refute assertions made in those debates.

The Internet facilitates an effective and economical way to offer governmental information and services to numerous people at the same time. Many consider the www-sites as a useful tool to make the information and services more accessible to citizens. A lot of governmental information and services have been already transferred to Internet, but as Hoffman (<URL: http://www.cio.com/archive/enterprise/111599_egov.html>) points out, the citizens have not known what and where to search it. As seen in examples 2 and 3 many parties emphasize that e-government objective is that governmental information and services should be available through a single point of access on the Internet (often called *single window government* or *one-stop government*).

Example 2.

It [e-government] is a way of making the delivery of government services more efficient by "integrating" or perhaps "clustering" them, and making them available through a single point of access on the Internet: so-called "single window" that provides links to all the services.

Example 3.

Government online users do want quick efficient government online service from a well-

organized public portal (<URL: <http://www.publicus.net/ebook/edemebook.html>>).

Several numbers of this kind of government portal have been launched for example in Singapore (<URL: http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/index_low.html>), Australia (<URL: <http://www.maxi.com.au/>>) and in the U.S (<URL: <http://www.first.gov/>>). These government portals are designed to allow users to find all essential information and services at the one place.

One of the significant parts of the e-government is also its ability to improve the administration's inner organizational structure and inside communications and through that also to improve the government's actions. Quite often the term e-government is used to signify the transfer from the traditional hierarchical administration to a network-like organizational structure. This internal networking involves connecting all governmental information and databases. The purpose is to use network technologies to connect the internal parts of government so that information can be delivered easily.

Example 4.

Modern government is organized into a system of departments and agencies with well-defined boundaries. By contrast, e-government is a system of information networks. (<URL: <http://www.crossingboundaries2.com/cb2v2/booklet.pdf>>).

Example 5.

This integrated approach envisages the use of a government-wide electronic information infrastructure to simplify service delivery, reduce duplication, and improve the level and speed of service to clients at a lower cost to the taxpayers. (<URL: <http://www.open.gov.uk/govoline/golintro.htm>>).

4.2.2. Communication between Citizens and Politicians

In addition to services and information, the third important change of the e-government is its ability to improve the possibility of the communication between citizens and politicians. On the whole, it is seen important that citizens can contact their representatives directly. It is believed (e.g. examples 6 & 7) that the e-government will change the whole relationship between citizens and government much closer.

Example 6.

E-government will eventually come to pass and that it will result in not just a more efficient, less expensive administration but also a profoundly different relationship between citizens and their government. (<URL: http://www.cio.com/archive/enterprise/111599_egov.html>).

Example 7.

My hope and expectation is that e-government will help foster a closer relationship between government and its customers. A more responsive and efficient government will be valued more highly by its citizens, and in turn they will be more supportive and involved. (<URL: http://www.cio.com/archive/110100_expert.html>).

The most useful tool the e-government can use to make communication between government and citizens and also inside governmental organizations more effective, is e-mail. For example Clift (<URL: <http://www.e-democracy.org/do>>) mentions that in e-government,

citizens should have ability to contact the government organization directly through e-mail. Also governmental parties consider that e-mail is an important element of e-government. As announcement of White House electronic mail access says "Electronic mail will bring the Presidency and this Administration closer and make it more accessible to the people". (Rheingold 1995: 91.)

E-mail is usually considered more suitable for inside communication of government while newsgroups are more suitable to government-to-citizen communication. Often, it is mentioned that beside that newsgroups offer excellent way to reach numerous people at the same time, it also offers the citizens a tool to express their views to the information providers. Ecclestone (1999: 57) sees that besides providing a forum for discussion newsgroups can also be used to collect feedback from the public on policy issues. Through that way different government agencies would know better what citizens want. The benefits of newsgroups are also that they allow users to choose precisely what information is broadcast to them, while e.g. in an email list all messages come to your own message box.

Newsgroups are also seen as an excellent way to organize different kinds of conferences. These conferences might last from a few days to a few months for the purposes of discussing specific issues. As The International GovNews -seminar planned the possible ways to use Internet: "A series of newsgroups in the governmental hierarchy will be dedicated as virtual conference rooms which will be available for short term use. Unlike other Internet "chat rooms", all the participants need not be online simultaneously since newsgroup discussions take place over many days rather than in real time" (<URL: <http://www.govnews.org/govnews/info/govnews-faq.html#11>>). One example of this kind of online conference is "Ota kantaa" discussion centre organized by the government of Finland (see chapter 2.5).

Quite often it is considered that written communication is not enough, and that e-government should include also some interactive online conferencing or hearings via Internet. For example Clift (<URL: <http://www.publicus.net/ebook/edemebook.html>>) thinks that decision-making bodies should host online interactive hearings and events to complement their in-person public hearings. Citizens should be able to participate live via Internet to in-person meetings. He also believes that whenever there is a legal requirement for an audio or a video record in a public meeting, it should be done digitally and placed online for public access.

4.2.3. Citizens Participation

As mentioned, it is also possible that e-government will strengthen democracy by allowing citizens to participate more in decision making. There are variety of Internet-based deliberative ways of involving the public in policy debate, e.g. direct voting on issues and deliberative polling. However, at this moment the only widely used ways for government to improve citizens' participation are Governmental Political online forums.

Kleemola and Terävä (2201) present the goals of e-governments in the following mixed concept system (figure 6).

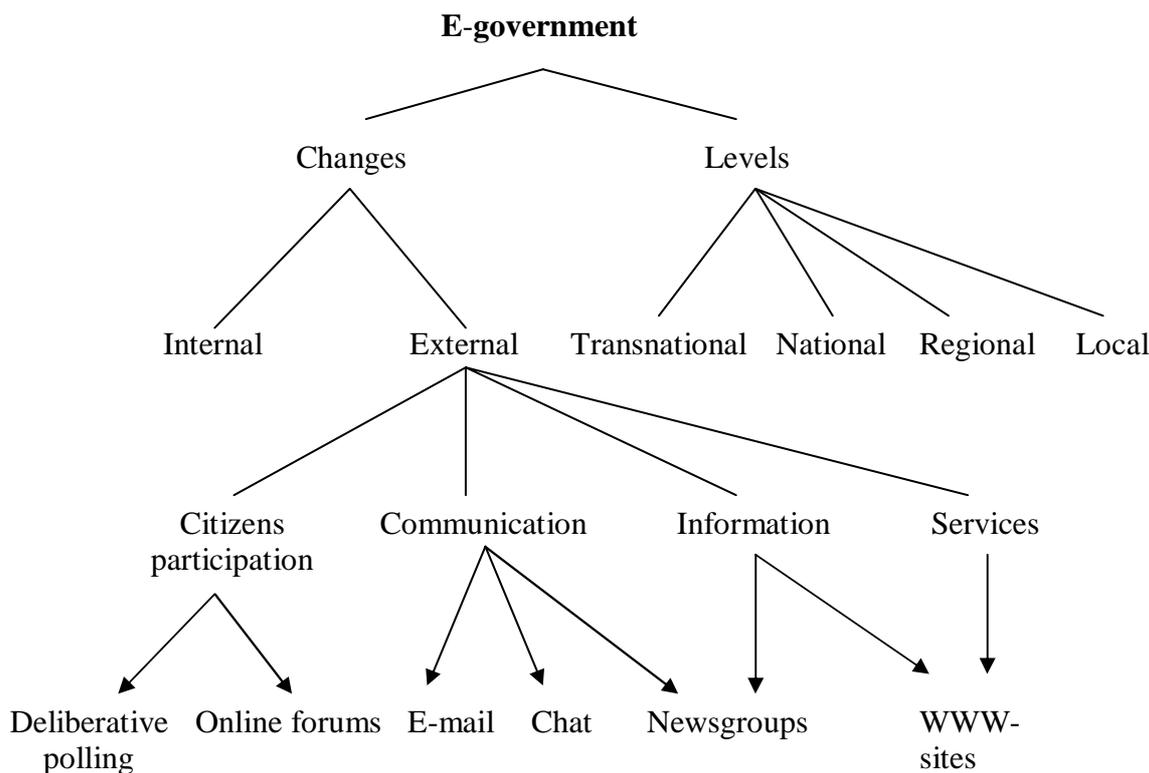


Figure 6. Mixed concept system of e-government

This mixed concept system includes the aspects that are going to change in e-government. These changes will affect both internal and external function of government. As a functional relationship, there are also the tools that can be used when trying to achieve these objectives. When we look at the concept of the e-government, it is also useful to separate different levels where it operates.

(Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 38-45.)

4.3. Case: ‘Candidate Selectors’ in the Finnish Elections in 2000

The ‘Candidate Selectors’ are one of the implementations of e-government. Candidate Selectors can be seen for example as an external WWW-service provided by local authorities or state level authorities before elections. Through selectors it is also possible to get information about candidates and their opinions, because citizens can usually compare the answers candidates have given with their own.

The election of the municipal councils in Finland was held in October 2000. The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE (Yleisradio), which is the national public service broadcaster, offered a ‘candidate selector’ on their website. With help of the candidate selector, it was possible for the citizens to find a candidate whose opinions on political issues were nearest of citizen’s own opinions. The candidate selector ‘YLEn Kunnallisvaalikone’ was located at <URL: <http://vaali.yle.fi/>>. Unfortunately, this selector is no longer available in 9/2001, but on the web there is offered other candidate selectors as well which still are available, for example the ‘Kunnallisvaalikone 2000’ at <<http://www.vaalikone.net/etusivu.jsp>>, which

offers a selector for the inhabitants in 15 different municipalities. Further, there is available the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat's selector for the Finnish presidential elections in 2000, which is located at <URL: <http://www2.helsinginsanomat.fi/vaalikone2000/kysymykset.jsp>>.

4.4. The Latest E-Government Research Reports

Here we introduce shortly the results of three recently published researches from the field of e-government. The referred research reports handle the use of Internet in the UK election in 2001, the State and Federal E-government in the United States in 2001 and the Qualitative Comparison of the Web Sites (spring 2001) of the Finnish Municipalities.

4.4.1. 2001 Cyber Space Odyssey – The Internet in the UK Election

The Hansard Society is an independent educational charity, which brings together MPs, Peers, academics, journalists, parliamentary staff, corporate affairs managers and others with an interest in the political process from across the political spectrum to promote effective parliamentary democracy. The Hansard Society published in July 2001 a report, edited by Stephen Coleman, of the use of Internet in the UK Election in 2001 (<URL: <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/cyberodyssey.htm>>). The purpose of the report is to provide an analysis of the expectations and context of the 2001 e-election, examine the innovations and value-added features that the net brought to election campaigning and coverage in the 2001 election and offer some recommendations for the future of e-politics.

In the report were following conclusions and recommendations presented (by Stephen Coleman):

- 1) The 2001 election was not fought out on the Internet. The Internet played a peripheral, but significant, role - especially for younger voters.
- 2) 18% voters with Internet access used the net as an information resource in the 2001 election. 21% of online 18-24 year-olds used the net to find out what the parties stood for.
- 3) By the time of the next general election, many more people will be connected to the Internet. It will by then be a much more sophisticated medium; the lessons from 2001 will be crucial in setting an e-politics agenda for the future, including the hotly-contested euro referendum in which the battle to supply trusted information will be highly significant.
- 4) The party web sites in 2001 made use of the unmediated nature of the Internet and its multimedia functionalities. They did not exploit the net's capacity for interactivity and personalisation. Next time, they should.
- 5) Candidate web sites were generally dull and uninspiring. Next time, they should make efforts to brand their web sites throughout their campaign material (as happened in the US 2000 election), relate their sites more to their constituencies and provide more targeted information for groups of electors, such as young people, the elderly, women.
- 6) Tactical voter sites helped to raise the profile of voters' power in ousting least-favoured candidates and probably changed the results in two constituencies. Online tactical voting will not go away in future elections. The Electoral Commission needs to monitor it.
- 7) Humour and games web sites mushroomed in 2001. They caught the mood of the electorate, particularly the young. The messages from these sites should not be missed; they are saying something about how people view politics and particularly

- politicians.
- 8) The media rose to the occasion in 2001 and provided some excellent online resources. One in 10 people with Internet access went to these sites for election information, especially after the polls closed. Next time, they will play an even bigger role; there are lessons to be learned from the inventiveness of BBC News Online and Guardian Politics.
 - 9) There was plenty of scope for online discussion in 2001, but a few people - overwhelmingly males, remarkably dominated it. The absence of women from the national online dialogue tells much about the state of political discourse in the UK. Next time, special efforts should be made to include women and the less opinionated.
 - 10) E-politics in 2001 was primarily an extension of political marketing. E democracy is about more than that. In the period between now and the next election the Internet should be used much more to connect citizens to their representatives and to the policy-making process. People will take elections more seriously if they are voting for something that takes them seriously. The Internet offers important opportunities to involve citizens in a strengthened form of representative democracy.
 - 11) The Internet will not go away, but it will evolve into new forms. Analogue switch-off and the growth of digital TV present possibilities for taking the net into the more traditional information environments of people's homes.

(Hansard Society 2001: <URL: <http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/cyberodyssey.htm>>.)

4.4.2. State and Federal E-Government in the United States 2001

In September 2001, Darrell M. West from the Brown University published a report about the federal and state e-government in US (<URL: <http://www.insidepolitics.org/egovt01us.html>>). In this paper he reports how they studied the features that are available online at state and federal government websites, compared the progress between 2000 and 2001, and examined the differences that exist across the 50 states and between the state and federal governments. Using a detailed analysis of 1,680 state and federal government websites, they measured the information and services that are on-line, the kinds of variation that exist across the country as well as between state and national government sites, and how e-government sites respond to citizen requests for information. They compared the results of this analysis undertaken during summer, 2001 with a comparable study completed in summer, 2000 of 1,813 state and federal government websites.

In general, it was founded that e-government has made good progress over the past year. Comparing 2000 and 2001, it was founded that more information, services, and interactive features are available online this year, and that governments have made excellent progress on developing "one-stop" portals that integrate web service delivery. While there remain problems in the areas of privacy, security, and special needs populations such as the handicapped, the last year has seen notable progress. Also some practical suggestions for improving the delivery of government information and services over the Internet, and enhancing accountability and responsiveness are made.

Among the more important findings of this research are:

- 1) There were big improvements in access to publications (93 percent in 2001 versus 74 percent in 2000) and databases (54 percent in 2001 compared to 42 percent in 2000)

- 2) Of the websites examined this year, 25 percent offered services that were fully executable online, up slightly from the 22 percent that had online services last year
- 3) The most frequent service was the ability to file taxes online, being able to order publications online, filing complaints, registering vehicle registrations, and ordering hunting licenses
- 4) A growing number of sites are offering privacy and security policy statements. This year, 28 percent have some form of privacy policy on their site, up from 7 percent in 2000. Eighteen percent now have a visible security policy, up from 5 percent last year
- 5) Twenty-seven percent of government websites have some form of disability access, up from 15 percent last year
- 6) Only six percent of sites offered any sort of foreign language translation feature, up slightly from the 4 percent we found last year
- 7) States vary enormously in their overall ranking based on our analysis. Indiana, Michigan, Texas, Tennessee, Washington, California, New York, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Ohio ranked highly while Wyoming, Alabama, New Hampshire, and New Mexico did more poorly
- 8) In terms of federal agencies, top-rated websites included those by the Food and Drug Administration, Department of Agriculture, Federal Communications Commission, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Defence, Department of Education, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Department of Health and Human Services, and Small Business Administration. At the low end of the ratings were various judicial sites
- 9) In general, federal government websites did a better job of offering information and services to citizens than did state government websites
- 10) Government officials were not as responsive this year as was the case last year in terms of responding to email queries. Whereas 91 answered the sample query last year, only 80 percent did this year.

To summarize, it was found that considerable progress had been made in e-government information and services over the past year. There have been big improvements in access to publications and databases, and in the creation of portals. More websites are offering online services. A growing number of sites are offering privacy and security policy statements. Nearly twice as many government websites have some form of disability access. Each of these advances improves citizen access to government information, and puts the average citizen in a stronger position to hold leaders accountable.

Despite the potential of e-government, there remain major challenges. Most government websites need to make progress at incorporating services and interactive technologies into e-government. As it stands right now, there are problems in terms of access and democratic outreach that need to be addressed. While there have been improvements, a relatively small proportion of sites, for example, offer access to the disabled or non-English speakers. Many do not have visible security or privacy policies. More efforts need to be devoted to serving populations with special needs so that all have access to online material.

One of the virtues of the web is the capacity for interactivity. While the private sector has gained expertise in allowing consumers to tailor commercial websites to their particular interests, most government agencies have not yet managed to do this. Few sites use push technology to provide information to citizens with particular interests or needs. Most do not

allow for website personalization.

Progress has been made in state and federal governments creating websites that have more uniform, integrated, and standardized navigational features. This is crucial because Internet information and service delivery often has had weak consistency across websites. Government agencies guard their autonomy very carefully, and it has taken a while to get agencies to work together to make the task of citizens easier to undertake. Common navigational systems help the average citizen make use of the wealth of material that is online. It is desirable that as the e-government revolution evolves and new technology emerges, the citizens will have an easier time navigating government websites.

Governments need to figure out how to take advantage of features that enhance democratic accountability. Simple tools such as website search engines are important because such technologies give citizens the power to find the information they want on a particular site. Right now, only half of government websites are searchable, which limits the ability of ordinary citizens to find information that is relevant to them.

The same logic applies in regard to features that allow citizens to post comments or otherwise provide feedback about a government agency. Citizens bring diverse perspectives and experiences to e-government, and agencies benefit from citizen suggestions, complaints, and feedback. Even a simple feature such as a comment form empowers citizens and gives them an opportunity to voice their opinion about government service delivery.

The issue of how to pay for portals and other e-government costs remains a pressing challenge in the public sector. While a few sites employ commercial advertising and user fees, there are risks either in commercialising e-government or relying on user fees. The former creates potential conflicts of interest for government agencies if their websites become dependent on commercial revenue. The latter disenfranchises people of more limited means and widens the digital divide between rich and poor in the United States. Our view, according to West, is that e-government is a valuable part of the public sector and needs to be supported with tax dollars. In the long run, a flourishing e-government offers the potential of improved service delivery with enhanced democratic accountability.

(West 2001: <URL: <http://www.insidepolitics.org/egovt01us.html>>.)

4.4.3. Qualitative Comparison of the Web Sites of the Finnish Municipalities

The Development Project for e-Government in Finland, JUNA, published in September 2001 a report of the qualitative assessment of the web sites of the Finnish municipalities (<URL: <http://www.intermin.fi/suom/juna/julkaisut/Palveleeko.pdf>>). The study is based on the master's thesis made by Matti Ruusula for the Department of political science of the University of Helsinki. The study concentrates on clarifying how well the web sites of municipalities serve and engage people. Confidentiality and usability factors, such as visual effects, have mainly been ignored (Ruusula 2001: 14).

In this study, two quality factors were considered in the assessment of the web sites. *Ability to serve* comprises the comprehensiveness of the web services, level of service, accuracy of the information (up-to-date or not), and the informative content. *Engaging ability* is used to

describe what possibilities the municipal residents have to participate in planning, providing, assessing and developing the services.

The web sites were also examined regarding two aspects based on the needs of the municipal residents. From the *service-based* point of view, the web sites can be seen as a municipal service system for the municipal residents and other customers. In this case, a municipal resident is a user, a potential user or an object of the municipal services. From the *democracy-based* point of view, the web sites can be used as a channel for informing and influencing. A citizen acts as the owner or host, and has the right to know what is happening in the municipal administration. (Ruusula 2001: 1.)

The quality of municipalities' web sites can be concretized adapting a classification method introduced by Matti Mälkiä¹ and developed by Timo Ojala. The classification method of municipal administration's web services is introduced in figure 7.

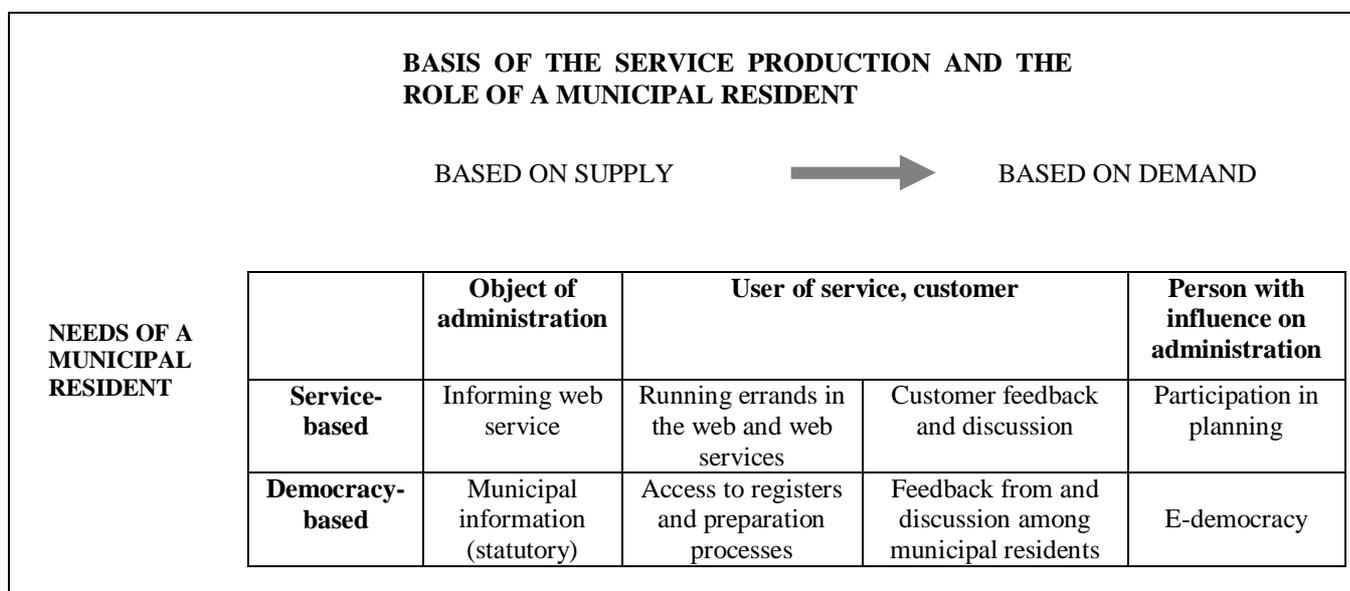


Figure 7. The classification of the municipal web services

The role of a municipal resident varies depending on if he/she is an object or a customer of the administration or if he/she can influence the administration. The basis of the service production changes from supply-based towards demand-based the more the customers themselves can influence the contents of the services. Another division is made according to the service-based and democracy-based needs of the municipal residents. (Ruusula 2001: 10)

Although, on the whole, municipalities' web sites were evaluated as only satisfactory in their ability to serve municipal residents, the best web sites were already good in this respect. Instead, the ability to engage is still modest. Only one of ten municipalities reaches even a satisfactory level with their web sites in respect to engaging ability. The size and wealth of the

¹ Mälkiä, Kansalaiset ja hallinto tietoyhteiskunnassa, Kunnallistieteellinen Aikakauskirja 4/1996, pages 413-415.

municipality has correlation with its web sites' ability to serve customers, but even small municipalities did well in the comparison. The engaging ability of the web sites, on the other hand, was more dependent on incidental factors, not on the size and economic situation of the municipality.

Municipalities have clearly put effort into transferring their traditional services and functions onto web. However, there is still very little supply of "creative" services enabled by new technology. To be able to offer services for running errands on the web, a municipality would often have to invest quite a lot money in its IT administration. Thus, it is understandable that they do not want to take this kind of risks. Requirements for web services are hard. The services have to be much more useful to their users than the traditional services. It is also essential how easily the customers find the public services and how easy it is to use the services, run errands, on the web. (Ruusula 2001: 28-29.)

5. WEB TECHNOLOGIES

Here we will examine the latest Web technologies associated to Webocrat-like systems. We will also describe the current web development using a historical timeline. The main categories for technologies are: web publishing, virtual communities and discussion forums, organizational memories, content-based search and retrieval, DMS (Document Management Systems) for Internet and WIS (Web-based Information Systems), data mining, and knowledge modeling.

5.1. Web Publishing

Current trends in the document publishing reflect several major demands. One is to address the sheer amount of processed documents and their availability for all members within an organization. Existing web technologies are remedies for many issues from the past (distributed content, rich vertical and horizontal structure of a document), but still there are many drawbacks. For example, there exist data the users cannot make a link to; therefore, only a limited amount of information is made accessible. A 'semantic web' is based on the ideas of universality and common document description and the idea was first introduced by Tim Berners-Lee. A single format (called RDF, Resource Description Framework) for expressing different types of knowledge about a document (e.g. privacy information, annotation and catalogue information) has been suggested. The Extensible Markup Language (XML) as an application of RDF is able to separate not only the content and presentation style of a document (like HTML, Hypertext Markup Language) but also a meaning (semantics) for different software components. XML indicates a shift from the content-oriented publishing towards data and meta-data publishing (meta-data expressing the context of a document).

XML can also be seen as a subset of SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) – a powerful markup standard that has been implemented mainly in manufacturing industry but also in other areas (defense, insurance, government). The main problem with SGML has been the complexity. SGML provides powerful tools and methods to manage structured information, but on the other hand, it is hard to implement and the costs of implementation are often too high for small organizations and companies. XML is a simplified subset of SGML, and web enabled and web oriented. The implementation of XML environments does not necessary demand large investments or long training periods, and yet it provides very powerful methods for managing structured information in traditional office environments, and in new web and mobile environments too.

From the publishing point of view both SGML and XML provide a very powerful tools (or platforms) for single sourcing. Single sourcing means that the owner of the content can use the same content module to produce several publications in different media and for different purposes. From the government point of view this means that in effective E-government one can produce publications for web, intranet and traditional media (newspaper, newsletter).

The move from the presentation oriented publishing (i.e. MS Word "thinking") to content based publishing is a big change in how the organisation functions. Usually this change is a long process and requires a lot of resources and therefore many organisations are afraid to move to that direction. However, the E-government requires effective content management and many see the structured information management as an one and only solution for that.

5.2. Virtual Communities and Discussion Forums

Communities play important roles in the development of civic society. Recently, a new breed of virtual community has appeared; sometimes referred to also as electronic or on-line community (it is a group of people who have something significant in common but lack the opportunity to interact face-to-face on a regular basis). To provide an opportunity to interact, many different computer-mediated 'meeting sites' have been developed for these communities. A typical site of a virtual community cannot be complete without a complementary discussion forum. To make the discussion more meaningful a new approach is emerging. Rather than abstractly discussing some matters, discussion is stimulated and kept around significant documents that are made available to all community members. In any case, it is necessary to emphasize that such a virtual discussion and presentation forum is not intended to replace the traditional face-to-face meetings where participants are present 'in-flesh'!

5.3. Organizational Memories

Organizational memories are motivated by the desire to preserve and share the tacit knowledge and experiences that reside in an organization. Most systems focus on capturing the knowledge, storing it and making it accessible, but they deal also with issues such as security, knowledge integrity, access rights etc. There are many approaches to the design of organizational memories, from approaches based on formal knowledge modeling, to those supporting informal communication repositories. Organizational memories are an important (but insufficient) step towards organizational learning. Although a shared memory is important, of crucial importance for supporting learning is also the maintenance of the contextual dependence of information to aid the interpretation process.

5.4. Content Based Search and Retrieval

As mentioned before, the knowledge and information can be properly interpreted only when we have access to both the content (data) and context (meta data). A successful approach to the representation of both types of data is realised through knowledge modelling techniques. The key entity is typically a hierarchy of ontologies that represents a particular part of the underlying world and enables users to relate any knowledge that is available to such a world. Documents and particular sections within them may be linked to relevant concepts from the world description. This connection is extremely useful in the intelligent document retrieval or discussion based upon a document. It enables to use a lot of implicit, background knowledge for a richer communication, which is essentially inaccessible to traditional engines.

5.5. Document Management Systems for the Internet

As web technologies develop they demand more efficient means of document management. Document versioning, document tracking system, or semi-automatic indexing are only a few important features of a viable document management system to serve the needs of Internet. Other technologies discussed briefly above are applied to this area thus giving a birth to new, powerful, hybrid approaches. Document management is often coupled with knowledge and data management systems; data mining and knowledge discovery techniques gain on their importance as the number of documents increases rapidly.

5.6. Data Mining

Although most data mining systems handle structured data, they can be successfully used to process information in the form of more or less unstructured text as well. Basically, there are two possible ways of their application. The first represents text clustering. It is possible to use clustering methods to draw clusters of documents with subsequent labelling of these clusters. In this way it is possible to create thematic overviews of textual documents. The second approach is represented by discovery of associations (patterns of co-occurrence) amongst items. It can be applied on keywords that label the items in a collection of textual documents or any information attached to these documents (e.g. date, author, address, etc.) in order to carry out analysis of various sorts.

5.7. Knowledge Modelling

This technology enables to develop knowledge models in order to provide common “semantic” platform for multilateral discussion, for distribution and retrieval of information (in the form of contextually related documents), for definition of user’s specific views of shared information, etc. Several technologies for knowledge modelling are available e.g. conceptual graphs, problem-solving methods, various formal languages for knowledge modelling, etc. Very popular is the approach based on ontological modelling. Ontology represents basically a list of terms and relationships among them. This allows developing various conceptual models from very general (e.g. model of causality or time relations) to quite specific ones (domain oriented models). At present, several ontology editors and browsers are currently available as commercial or as research products.

6. USABILITY

The World Wide Web has encountered an enormous growth within the last six years. The number of Internet users in the western countries has been growing faster than estimated, and this has been the case in the third world too. However, the development has been more or less technology driven and therefore many important issues have not been taken in account. One of the most important issues that have been ignored in many cases is the usability (e.g. how to make the service or software user-friendly).

Nielsen (1995: 4-5) points out that the “look and feel” of the system is often more important than the special characteristics or features of the (hypertext) system. Users often ignore feature-rich systems if the user interface is too technology oriented or does not attract the user. Therefore, the usability issues should be considered already in the development phase of the Webocrat system.

6.1. User Interface

The Graphical User Interface (GUI) is an essential part of a World Wide Web environment. According to Nielsen (1995: 179) the graphical web browser is for many people the only interface to whole Internet, even though it enables access to only few Internet services. However, with the latest web browsers the integration of Internet services has been taken to another level. Email, newsgroups, on-line discussion, file transfers and web browsing have been integrated so that user does not need several tools for these actions, instead the user can access all these services with one single tool.

An efficient democracy requires that citizens care that the system works and actively participate in the decision process and this is the case with the electronic democracy too. However, with a mass of information, participation is problematic and time-consuming. Furthermore, citizens' concerns differ in their priority. Customization will enable citizens to finely focus on personally critical issues.

New web tools and standards provide new methods for developing user-friendly interfaces and services. Most of these new ideas are supported by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which provides an open and neutral discussion forum for web development.

6.1.1. X-Forms

Information about the XML (The W3C's XForms language is an attempt to improve the state of interfaces on the web. Using XML, XForms provide a flexible set of user interface components and reduce the need for scripting. This week's main feature, "What are XForms?", provides a detailed introduction to XForms technology. Find out more about this exciting direction for the Web at <<http://xml.com/pub/a/2001/09/05/xforms.html>>.)

6.1.2. XUL

XUL (XML-based User Interface Language) was introduced by Mozilla Open Source Project (<URL: <http://www.mozilla.org/>>) and it has been implemented in Mozilla and Netscape 6 browsers. The main purpose of the XUL was that the user interface is not hard-coded into the browser. Instead, the user interface has its own layer and it can be represented and modified using a special XML-based language XUL.

XUL approach has many advantages and is in line with the idea of separating **content** and

presentation. In addition to that XUL also separated the **behaviour** of user interface from content and presentation. This separation gives the service provider a possibility to modularize the user interface, change the outlook and functionality of the user interface “on-the-fly” and re-use user interface modules in different environments (cf. single-sourcing). One concrete example of effective use of XUL is multi-lingual user interface. The service provider can offer the same information in two different languages and provide a user interface which has common presentation and common functionality but different content (language). This way the provider does not have to create the whole user interface for different language groups.

Another major advantage of using XUL-based approach in user interface design is that since XUL is mainly based on web standards it is also a platform independent solution. One can easily modify the functionality and presentation of the user interface to adapt the requirements of different platforms (e.g. Windows vs. Unix).

XUL itself is not supported by the W3C but is based on W3C recommendations (e.g. XML, XML Namespaces and CSS) and industry standards (ECMAScript).

7. CONCLUSION

One of the goals of the Trend Report I was to examine and clarify the most essential concepts of teledemocracy and electronic democracy and to study how they are usually defined. The first impression was the vast amount of different concepts. When studying closer it anyhow came clear that there are not that many different concepts but different terms designating the concepts.

As expected, the use of terms turned out to be fairly multiple, unorganised and even misleading in different texts of the field. Most of the terms did not fulfil the requirements of a good term. Usually terms were too long and not transparent like required. Also many “trendy” terms or words were used wrongly, like *virtual* and the prefix ‘*e*’, which is often considered as a synonym to terms *online* and *Internet*.

Large amount of synonyms is one of the biggest problems for language in the field. There are no agreements about using terms. Everybody is designating concepts with a term which she or he likes the best. This shows that the position of the language of electronic democratisation is somewhere between LSP and standard language.

Due to the abstract and wide nature of the concepts (except the concept of Internet-voting), unambiguous classifications and definitions were sometimes impossible to make. Already the concept of democracy is so wide and emotional that there are almost as many definitions as definers.

When concepts were defined that was not done clearly: the definitions were often too narrow or even incorrect. For example, the term *electronic* is often defined to refer wrongly only one certain electronic device, e.g. computer or network. However, this phenomenon is already so widely spread to other fields that it is too late and almost impossible to remove from language.

Also one reason for this disorder of concepts is the users of the Internet who do not easily change their speaking and writing habits to what is recommended. Internet users are a huge mixed group of people who do not feel same close professional identity, which would persuade them to use a same language. The Internet is also not considered as official language environment as professional or hobby groups.

Typical for LSPs, the vocabulary of electronic democratisation is growing continuously and terms of it are diverging from the vocabulary of the standard language. Fluent communication requires terms to have unambiguous definitions so that everybody can understand them similarly. Characteristic for standard language, terms of electronic democratisation are often highly emotionally tinged and they get various meanings depending on the user.

It is indeed difficult to create a comprehensive general picture of the concepts because they are still in the beginning of their development. In this point it is still too early to define extensively how the concepts are taking shape in the future. For example, for now the ‘e-government’ -concept is impossible to define strictly and unambiguously because its coming development depends on so many factors. Affecting matters are e.g. the development of technique and solution of different security issues as well as how much citizens are using the services and communication possibilities. Another matter affecting to development is

naturally governmental parties and how they come along. Finally, the most significant factor is anyway going to be the opportunity to use the needed equipment. If all citizens cannot be offered technical devices and the Internet connection how can we ever talk about democracy coming true.

Electronic democratisation phenomenon is expected to improve opportunities and willingness of citizens to participate political discussion. Although, so far there have been only two kind of groups concentrating in conversations of electronic democratisation - governmental levels and citizen activists. Like Savolainen and Anttiroiko (1999: 63) point out, needs and expectations of an ordinary citizen are not considered – also not in any researches of the field. There should be done a research that examines what citizens expect from e.g. services of e-government and how much they are willing to sacrifice their time to political discussion and decision-making. (Kleemola & Terävä 2001: 68-70.)

8. GLOSSARY

8.1. Terms and Definitions

Citizen-based online forum

Non-partisan public online forum maintained by private persons. Forums are places where people can come together to discuss issues, and by using different tools (e.g. voting, petitioners) they try to influence agenda setting and political decisions.

Computerized voting

A voting system that uses any computer device

Cyberspace

Cyberspace is the interconnectedness of human beings through computers and telecommunication without regard to physical geography. William Gibson is sometimes credited with inventing or popularising the term by using it in his novel of 1984, *Neuromancer*.

Deliberative polling

A voting method where a random group of citizens is selected to discuss and vote on some specific issue. There are several ways to organize deliberative polling, for example *televoting*.

E-citizen

1. A citizen who uses the Internet as a way to participate in political society (for example, exchanging views, providing information, and voting).

2. An Internet user who is trying to contribute to the Internet's use and growth. As a powerful Communication medium, the Internet seems to offer great possibilities for a social change. It also creates a new culture and its own special issues, such as who has access to it. The implication is that the Internet's users, who use and know most about it, have a responsibility to ensure that it is used constructively while also fostering free speech and open access. (Whatis.com)

Also called: netizen; cybercitizen

Electronic democracy

The use of ICT (information and communication technology) to strengthen the representative democracy

Electronic democratisation

A method of making democracy more effective by using the ICT. The purpose is that citizens can have a participatorier role in agenda setting and political decision-making. Two different points of view distinguished when talking about electronic democratisation. One refers more to supporting representative democracy, and another to possibility of direct democracy. Usually the first one is called electronic democracy while the latter is called teledemocracy.

Also called: teledemocracy; e-democracy; electronic democracy; cyberdemocracy; online democracy; wired democracy; digital democracy; web democracy

E-government

The term refers to governments' use of information networks and especially the Internet to make internal and external communication and the transmission of services and information more effective. The linking up of citizens, stakeholders and elected representatives to participate in the governance of communities by electronic means. E-government incorporates e-democracy. (Martin Ferguson)

Also called: electronic government; online government; wired government; smart government

E-government portal

A World Wide Web site, that integrates information and services from various government agencies. The portal contains navigation links and search possibilities to all public services services.

Also called: single-window government; one stop portal

Electronic Town Meeting (ETM)

A meeting of citizens and representatives where participants are informed widely of a particular issue. After certain time of deliberation, participants vote on the issue usually by some electronic equipment. Meetings do not necessarily need to have any face-to-face interaction, because different electronic media (e.g. TV, radio, telephone, computer networks) can be used to transmit information.

Facts + Opinions + Deliberation + Voting + Use of Electronic Media = ETM. (TAN+N)

Electronic voting

A voting method where a ballot is transmitted through some electronic device, e.g. by phone or by computer.

Also called: e-voting

Governmental online forum

A *Political online forum* maintained by the government

Internet voting

A method of *electronic voting* where the Internet is used to transfer ballots from a voting machine to tallying centres.

Also called: online voting; i-voting

Mailing list; distribution list

A mailing list is a list of people who subscribe to a periodic mailing distribution on a particular topic. On the Internet, mailing lists include each person's e-mail address rather than a postal address. Mailing lists have become a popular way for Internet users to keep up with topics they are interested in. Many software producers and other vendors are now using them as a way to keep in touch with customers. (Whatis.com)

Network

In information technology, a network is a series of points or nodes interconnected by communication paths. Networks can interconnect with other networks and contain sub-networks. (Whatis.com)

Newsgroup; discussion group

A newsgroup is a discussion about a particular subject consisting of notes written to a central Internet site and redistributed through the Usenet, a world-wide network of news discussion groups. The Usenet uses the Network News Transfer Protocol (NNTP). (Whatis.com)

Political online forum

An Internet-based discussion centre where citizens can become informed about political issues and take part in political discussion.

Polling place voting

The use of Internet voting machines at traditional polling places staffed by election officials who assist in the authentication of voters before ballots are cast. (California Internet Voting Task Force)

Public opinion polling

The most common polling technique is to select a representative sample of people, ask them carefully worded questions, and report on their responses. Every respondent from the eligible area has to have an equal chance to be included, and the results of the survey must be generalized to the entire population of eligible respondents. We can group public opinion polling into two categories:

1. Polling that concern attitudes about social and political issues. For example Euro-parameter public opinion surveys are conducted at least twice a year in all member nations of the European Union, and they provide regular monitoring of social and political attitudes in the European publics.
2. Polling that concern elections and voting behaviour.

Remote Internet voting

The unsupervised use of an Internet Voting Machine to cast a ballot over the Internet using a computer not necessarily owned and operated by the election personnel. Authentication of the voter would rely on procedures outlined later in this report, but must include some form of identity verification that is at least as secure as the existing voting procedures. (California Internet Voting Task Force)

Smart community

A vision of a community that involves the use of information and communication technologies in new and innovative ways to empower its residents, institutions and regions as a whole.

Teledemocracy

Teledemocracy means the enhancing of the democratic process where citizens are empowered with the enabling technologies of computer networking and all of the associated hardware, software, services, and techniques. This term, introduced and developed in the 1970's, usually refers to more participatory democracy.

The use of a modern information and communication technology (ICT) as an instrument to empower the people of a democracy to help set agendas, establish priorities, make important policies and participate in their implementation in a deliberative way. Put one way, 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 and deliberative strong democracies. (Auli Keskinen, URL: <<http://www.open.gov.uk/govoline/finland.htm>>)

See also: electronic democratisation

Televoting

1. A method of scientific deliberative polling, see televote process.
2. Voting by telecommunications, e.g. a telephone or a computer.

Televote process

A method of deliberative polling where the deliberation takes place at home.

- A. Representative sample of citizens are chosen usually by random digit.
- B. They receive a televote information brochure that provides a basic level of information, a variety of expert opinion, and a wide array of alternatives to a major public issue.
- C. They read the brochure and deliberate this issue with their family and other people
- D. They answer the questions on the brochure and transmit their opinions to the televote staff either by phone or computer networks.

An innovative political communications device created to serve a mediational role between citizens and their representatives and to increase citizen awareness, knowledge on issues, lateral citizen interaction, and direct public participation in governance." (Christa Slaton: Televote, Expanding Citizen Participation in the Quantum Age)

Town meeting (New England Town Meeting)

The town hall meeting of seventeenth and eighteenth century New England (today a geographical name for the part of the US which comprises the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, & Connecticut). At such meetings, voters gathered to discuss and debate town issues as well as to vote on courses of action." (The Electronic Town Hall: <URL: <http://www.chem.vt.edu/chem-dept/dessy/honors/papers/brunick.html>>)

Virtual city; digital city; cyber city

A virtual community is a community of people sharing common interests, ideas, and feelings over the Internet or other collaborative networks. A possible inventor of this term and one of its first proponents was Howard Rheingold, who created one of the first major Internet communities, called "The Well." In his book, *The Virtual Community*, Rheingold defines virtual communities as social aggregations that emerge from the Internet when enough people carry on public discussions long enough and with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in the cyberspace. (Whatis.com)

Voting kiosk

An Internet voting terminal, which is under the control of election officials but located outside the official polling place (e.g. school, library).

Web democracy

A method of making democracy more effective by using the Internet and specially the World Wide Web.

See also electronic democratisation

Voting machine

Computer hardware, that allows an electronic ballot to be cast over the Internet.

8.2. Abbreviations

<i>ACM</i>	<i>Association for Computing Machinery</i>
<i>DMS</i>	<i>Document Management System</i>
<i>GUI</i>	<i>Graphical User Interface</i>
<i>HTML</i>	<i>Hypertext Markup Language</i>
<i>ICT</i>	<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>
<i>LSP</i>	<i>Language for Special Purposes</i>
<i>RDF</i>	<i>Resource Description Framework</i>
<i>SGML</i>	<i>Standard Generalized Markup Language</i>
<i>W3C</i>	<i>World Wide Web Consortium</i>
<i>WIS</i>	<i>Web-based Information Systems</i>
<i>XML</i>	<i>Extensible Markup Language</i>
<i>XUL</i>	<i>XML-based User Interface Language</i>
<i>YLE</i>	<i>Finnish Broadcasting Company</i>

9. APPENDICES

9.1. Appendix A. A memo from the seminar “Municipal Services to the Net – Information Network as a Tool” by Tarja Vuorela

The seminar was held in Tampere, Finland 22. – 23.5.2001.

To get material and references for the Trend Report, I participated on “Municipal services to the net – Information network as a tool” -seminar. Here different Finnish towns, municipals and federations of municipalities introduced their views about public services on the net and introduced their implementations already available on the Internet. In this memo I will concentrate on issues, which could be useful from the Webocracy project point of view. In spite of that many cases in this memo reflect the situation in Finland, I believe this information is worth interest in the Webocracy project, as well.

In addition to the seminar presentations there was also an exhibition where several Finnish commercial companies introduced their tools developed especially for the public administration to publish and distribute information.

The seminar was arranged by Kuntakoulutus Oy which is a part of the Finnish Local and Regional Authorities <http://www.kuntaliitto.fi/english/indexeng.htm>, and the JUNA project which aims to co-ordinate and support the development of electronic services. The JUNA project covers all sectors of public administration that is both the State and local level, as well as indirect State administration. The JUNA project is introduced at <http://www.intermin.fi/suom/juna/english/index.html>.

In the following chapters I give a summary of the seminar presentations.

9.1.1. *Public Services in the Core of the Information Society – Case eTampere, by Jari Seppälä, Communications Manager in the City of Tampere*

Jari Seppälä introduced first the concept of the information society. In this introduction he referred to the information society strategy by Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (SITRA 1998, http://www.sitra.fi/english/index_front.html). According to this strategy, it is among other things important to

- develop easy to use and safe electronic services and contents
- develop and manage the knowledge and know-how of individuals and society
- develop and apply the network business operations model to working life and business
- improve the action models and service processes in the public administration.

By these actions it is ensured that the regional and local development towards the information society will happen balanced.

Jari Seppälä also introduced a study on the use of the Internet among Finnish citizens. According to this study 63 % of the Finnish people has used the Internet and 65 % of the inhabitants in Tampere has an Internet connection. (Taloustutkimus 1-2/2001.) 90 % of them

use the Internet at least once a week. Municipal services are used by 38 %. (Taloustutkimus 11/2000.) It is also seen that municipal services benefit from the facilities of the Finnish people to use e-mail and banking services, eLearning and distance work, mobile services, and to play games.

It was also confirmed that the inhabitants of Tampere who have access to the Internet use the public services to retrieve information e.g. about different happenings, business services and entertainment services, decisions and experiences. They also look for chances to participate.

Finally, Jari Seppälä introduced eTampere, which is an information society programme of the city of Tampere. The goal of the eTampere programme is to develop the public online services and make them available for all residents. Also, the knowledge base of research and training will be strengthened and the new business related to the information society will be generated and applied in practice. In the eTampere project it is also seen that the content and technology will integrate and serve the citizens by taking their needs into consideration. eTampere is also seen as a network of many actors and as a chain to the future. eTampere project is located at <http://www.etampere.fi/tausta/eindex.htm>. On this page there is also the eTampere programme plan available as a pdf-document.

According to Jari Seppälä it is also important to provide the services offline beside the online services. The technological level of the services is not allowed to cross over the skills of the citizens. Finally, it is stated that by the online services 'nothing changes, but everything will change': the service culture will turn fast and debating, and technology and money will be also needed.

9.1.2. The Lines of the Information Society by the Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, by Specialist Simo Tanner

Simo Tanner gave an introduction about the use of the information technology in Finnish local administration, the role of the local authorities in the information society and the main focuses of the future and some practical issues concerning this.

According to his presentation the amount of personal computers has increased in the public administration during the 1990's from less than 50 000 to almost 250 000. At present in the local administration in Finland the costs of information technology are almost 3 milliards (FIM) per year. Investments take about 1 milliard (FIM) a year. Every year about 130 million (FIM) is dedicated to information society related projects.

The role of the municipality and town in the information society is seen as a producer of services containing local information. The regional development is also seen important in this context. Telecommunications and know-how are seen as the basis for these in the information society. Relevant questions concerning this are e.g. the cost-effectiveness of the local online services and the economical resources of the respective municipalities. Concerning online services it was also reminded that net democracy does not mean the same as voting via Internet.

Tanner presented also a "plan for electronic services". Implementing such services sets requirements on several different stages. These stages are for example

1. Technical requirements: XML data structure, authentication, wireless data communication, exploitation of the digital television and the follow-up of

- technological development
2. Functional solutions: Electronic invoicing, added value of authentication, shared services and participation systems.
 3. The functional requirements of electronic services: Cooperation chains between the municipalities, cooperation with other organizations, and the quality of the services on the Internet.
 4. Supporting plans: Purchase of information technology equipment, systems which are based on browsers, guidance on data security issues, evaluation- and follow-up systems and knowledge base.

After the presentation there a short discussion arose about the economical resources in different municipalities and its effects on development of electronic services. The conclusion was that small and economically weak municipalities must unite and do these things together.

9.1.3. eStrategy of the City of Oulu, by Katriina Määttä, Development Manager of the City of Oulu

Katriina Määttä introduced the strategy of developing the local information services in the city of Oulu and its regions. Almost 200.000 inhabitants live in Oulu and its regions, and the population is still growing.

According to the “Vision of Oulu 2011” the city of Oulu and its regions are the center of knowledge and businesses in the northern Europe. This is possible because Oulu is a successful and financially stable city and according to this vision it can offer a good environment for living and the most developed local services in the country. Moreover, Oulu is a collaborative, nationally and internationally strong agent. This vision will be achieved by

- ensuring together with the university, polytechnic institute, industry and commerce that competent and capable supply of labour is available and that research and product development is possible
- developing a regional service system which is based on the needs of the residents
- creating conditions where residents are offered a possibility to participate and influence the local decision making.

Katriina Määttä also introduced “The Vision of the Services on the Net” where it is predicted that

- Oulu will be a pioneer in the field of producing and using local services on the net
- the local net services in Oulu are innovative and made from the customers’ point of view
- with the local net services the competitiveness of the northern Finland will increase
- the interactive net communities will with their own actions improve knowledge and influence the development of the city and the local services
- political decision makers, the city mayor and other local authorities will commit to the change of the action and administration culture.

The city of Oulu has a short introduction about its local services in English at <http://www.ouka.fi/palvelut/services/index.html>. The Oulu region is well known for its technology. There are two science parks in the region; Technopolis Plc, the first in Scandinavia, and Medipolis Ltd., plus a technology centre, Ii Micropolis Ltd. There are many

research institutes, for instance the Technical Research Centre of Finland. The Oulu Region is the home of many hi-tech companies like Nokia, and there are currently over 10,000 people employed by the hi-tech sector.

At the end of her presentation, Katriina Määttä told that the 2nd Science & Cyber Community Conference on “Excellence in Mobile Services” will be arranged in Oulu on 25-26 April 2002. Among the key topics of this conference will be a city workshop “Wireless applications for public service production; e-democracy and e-government”. More information on this conference is available at <http://www.technopolis.fi/ems/>.

9.1.4. Strategy of eKuusamo, by Pekka Kantola, Technical Leader of City of Kuusamo

Pekka Kantola introduced the strategy towards information society in the City of Kuusamo. Kuusamo is located in north-eastern Finland and it is the center of a region with 35.000 inhabitants, 17.700 of whom live in Kuusamo. The City of Kuusamo provides information about local services and agendas and protocols of the city executive board, city council and different city boards on the Internet at <http://www.kuusamo.fi/> (only in Finnish). Kuusamo provides only general and tourist information in English on the web.

Pekka Kantola mentioned that the Kuusamo region has been involved in the Locregis (Local and Regional Information Society) project, whose aim was to make an inventory and analysis about Information society projects that are or may be implemented under programmes co-financed by the European Union. The project was co-ordinated by the Association of the Finnish Local Authorities. More information about the Locregis project is located at <http://www.locregis.net/index.html>.

Many efforts have been going on towards the information society in the Kuusamo region. A detailed “Description of the Development of Local Telematics Know-how and Information Society in the municipality of Kuusamo, first ten years”, is located at <http://www.locregis.net/Doc1/KUUSAMOEN.htm>.

In this presentation Pekka Kantola also introduced the principles of developing and using the online services:

- Unrestraint use, possible to use even by disabled persons
- Affordability
- Participation in service process and decision making
- Utility, users receive some added value by using these services
- Safety, services are safe and reliable to use
- Awareness, information about services is available for all.

Among the strategic areas where the online services are directed are e.g. participation, know-how, health, and living environment of the citizens.

9.1.5. Usability and Requirements for Unrestraint Use of the Online Services, by Researcher Hannele Hyppönen, STAKES, the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health in Finland

The main issues of Hannele Hyppönen’s presentation concerned the equitability and the usability of online services. The basis for these requirements is for example that the users

become older and the technology is becoming wider. To guarantee the equitable online services for all users, it is important to make the services unrestrained, so that for example also disabled and older people can use them.

To achieve these features already from the beginning as a part of the quality of the online services, the producers of the services should

- be able to analyse their own services, e.g. which part of the services are suitable to be offered on the net
- know what kind of possibilities the technologies offer
- require quality from the developers with a language they understand.

The developer in his turn should

- be able to listen to the customers and their needs
- help the customers analyse their services and develop them from their own and from the users' point of view
- do the design iterative, completing the solutions little by little.

More information about designing for the disabled and older people can be found on the homepage of the INCLUDE project, <http://www.stakes.fi/include/>, which is a 4 year cooperation between the main European experts on the issues of telematics applications and elderly/disabled people, and on the homepage of the PROMISE project, <http://www.stakes.fi/promise/>, which aims to encourage the inclusion of older people and disabled people in the emerging Information Society in Europe by means of exchanging experience and examples of good practice in this area. INCLUDE offers a "Handbook on Inclusive Design of Telematics Applications" edited by Hannele Hyppönen at <http://www.stakes.fi/include/handbook.pdf>. PROMISE offers also a book "Good Practice in Using the Information Society for the Benefit of Older People and Disabled People" located at <http://www.stakes.fi/promise/book/pr00main.htm>.

9.1.6. Citizen Participation and eDemocracy, by Professor Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko, University of Tampere

Professor Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko, from the University of Tampere Department of Local Government Studies, introduced first in his presentation shortly the different types of democracy. Democracy is divided into different types, which for example are representative, direct and participatory democracy. For participatory democracy it is characteristic that the inhabitants participate in planning, preparation and decision-making.

According to Anttiroiko's opinion, in the beginning of the 21st century the knowledge about teledemocracy and e-democracy and the exploitation of net applications is still very small. Even the practical experiences have been minor so far. The new teledemocracy will be achieved in practice first after computer mediated communication has become a part of the democratic system. As a new form of democracy, teledemocracy referred in the beginning to direct democracy, which was carried out by information and communication technology. This is the traditional meaning of the concept 'teledemocracy'. However, teledemocracy is not seen as a basic mode of democracy such as, for example, representative or participatory democracy, but as one of the attributes or qualities of democracy.

According to Anttiroiko, the following issues are characteristic for 'eDemocracy':

- Contextual changes:
 - ➔ Economical and technological development
 - ➔ Political culture
- Institutional arrangements
 - ➔ Models of democracy
- Technological tools
- People's orientation and attitudes

Anttiroiko presented also examples of different models of citizen participation:

- Original televote experiment
- Electronic voting
- Scientific deliberative polling
- Citizen juries and citizen panels
- Standing panels (research panels)
- Consensus conferences
- Planning cells
- Community issue groups
- Planning for real
- Special groups: children, young people, senior citizens.

Even the potential of the abovementioned participation forms has been used in a very limited scope, they offer some information about what kind of practises will evidently be applied in the democratic processes in the future. They will not replace the representative system, but they will complement it. Three factors, which are citizenship, institutions and technology, unite at the local level in the new democracy. It should be capable to combine these versatile in the different phases of the political process (preparation, decision making, hearing, service production and control) from the basis of the hybrid model of democracy.

Anttiroiko has more information about his research work on his homepage, located at <http://www.uta.fi/~kuaran/>.

9.1.7. *Quarter Portal as a Tool for Inhabitants' Participation, by Architect Heli Rantanen, Helsinki University of Technology/Department of Architecture/ Urban Planning and Design*

Heli Rantanen introduced the Home Street Project, which is a digital neighbourhood forum developed in Helsinki: <http://www.kaupunginosat.net/kotikatu/frontpage.htm>.

The background of the project:

The initiator of the Home Street Project was Helka, The Federation of the Associations for Helsinki City Quarters. Helka has been active in developing new channels of participation and obtaining information from the municipalities for common citizens. Together with another citizen organization in Finland, The Association for Local Culture, and with the Helsinki University of Technology Helka launched the idea of a digital neighbourhood forum. The financing of the project comes from several public sources: The city of Helsinki: Culture Capital of Europe 2000 Project, Neighbourhood Renewal Project, The city of Vantaa, The

city of Espoo, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of the Interior.

The goal of the project: Towards communicative planning and administration

The main goal of the Home Street Project is to increase the inhabitant empowerment in urban planning and design. Being architects, the authors of the project in the Helsinki University of Technology are especially interested in the changes of the built environment and their impact on the everyday life of the inhabitants. The financing authorities are also aware of the growing need for interaction between the municipality and the citizens. This first pilot project (Case Pihlajisto) develops and tests one very modern instrument, Internet, for the need of the communicative planning process and city administration.

Feeling at home in the city

"Lets draw the map together". The Home Street Project approaches the city as a network of different city quarters. By structuring the large variety of information and the knowledge of the city from the local perspective and gathering together the stakeholders of the city quarters it is a try to strengthen the grassroot local culture and urban identity.

Heli Rantanen also gave a list of the stumbling stones that local government Internet projects often meet:

- The material is usually not in a right format for publishing it on the Internet. This requires knowledge, resources and money, because maps, illustrations, photos, quotations of the city plan and different sketches of planning is first wanted in the local government sites.
- Lack of a common forum where citizens themselves can effectively share information about their everyday life, and where designers can share their special knowledge.
- Interactivity and the two-way functionality of the Internet are yet unfamiliar for many people. Participation in a public discussion in a discussion forum requires crossing a threshold. It is difficult to step out with an own name, place oneself liable to criticism and take a risk for having to answer difficult questions in public.
- Even if the discussion forum on the Internet is fine and the technical part is working, it is not guaranteed that citizens are interested in it. It might result to a situation, where only few active citizens participate in the discussion. Moreover, the discussion topics given from the government side are often too large, and sometimes they do not activate any discussion at all. Citizens may feel like they are controlled and offered only some carefully chosen information and issues they can influence.
- WWW sites are often confusing and difficult to use and citizens are not motivated enough to learn to use them. Usually people do not behave like it is desired in the eGovernment strategies.

9.1.8. Experiences of Interactive Services in Tampere, by Päivi Kuusisto, Internet Chief Editor in the City of Tampere

Päivi Kuusisto introduced the interactive services the City of Tampere offers to its inhabitants.

“Zoning game” is a system where people can try how the quarter is affected if e.g 1.700 more inhabitants are placed there. It is modeled different buildings that are equivalent to selected amount of inhabitants in the system. With the help of the Zoning game, the user can get a concrete conception of how the increase of inhabitants affects the quarter. Also information on what kind of influences this increase means to the quarter (services, traffic, nature) is offered. “Zoning game” (only in Finnish) is located at <http://www.tampere.fi/tiedotus/tohloppi/>.

“Discussion Columns” were launched in Tampere in 1996. The conversations in the discussion columns are moderated and the opinions, which occur during discussions, are delivered to the parties concerned. Although moderating and maintaining the conversations is seen as laborious, the application is simple and it is easy to participate in the discussion. The most popular discussion topics in the discussion columns have been the economy, services, traffic and the future of the city. The discussion about selecting an animal symbol for the city has also been popular (the animal symbol of the city of Tampere became a wagtail...). “The Discussion Columns” (only in Finnish) are located at <http://www.tampere.fi/mielipid/>.

“Citizen’s Kiosk” was launched in 1999 as an experiment. Citizens can ask the kiosk whatever which concerns the functions in the city. The questions are published immediately, and the answers to the questions will be obtained in a few days. It is not possible to run a discussion in the kiosk, the discussion is directed to the Discussion Columns. In the year 2000, the kiosk was asked 230 questions. The most popular topics among the questions posed to the kiosk concerned the street- and road plans, traffic planning, building and inhabitation, culture and leisure. The Citizen’s Kiosk (only in Finnish) is located at <http://www.tampere.fi/mielipid/kioski/index.htm>.

On “The Municipal Elections in 2000” web pages the inhabitants of Tampere were able to leave in initiatives for the elections. Within two weeks, 107 proposals were left in 5 of which were voted to be presented to the local council. This was a simple application, which arose lots of discussion. Regardless of this, none of the initiatives did led to an implementation. The initiatives were collected at <http://www.tampere.fi/vaalit/00/aloite/index.htm> (only in Finnish).

Finally, Päivi Kuusisto listed the challenges concerning the local government online services:

- Ensuring that access to the net is available
- Interest in common issues / democracy
- Administration and discussion cultures
- Official procedures
- Usage of services via e-mail / electronic identity
- Personal service -> electronic authentication -> net services
- Technical security / data security / data protection.

9.2. Appendix B. Trend news. List of e-democracy related sites and services in the World Wide Web

9.2.1. Trend news, part I, 30.5.2001

Opinion polling sites:

Vote.com is a fully interactive web site designed to give Internet users a voice on important public issues and many other topics. When you vote on a topic listed on this site, an immediate e-mail is sent to significant decision makers like congressional representatives, senators, and the president telling them how the voter feels. All active votes are listed under topic lists. When the voting time is closed, the results are moved to a searchable archive. Vote.com provides also a discussion forum around the topics in the polling list. However, this discussion forum is not a real-time discussion but a system, where people can send their comments and wait others to comment it later.

<http://www.vote.com/>

SelectSmart, the purpose of SelectSmart.com is to provide visitors with an informative and enjoyable interactive experience. The selectors, which is the leading product of SelectSmart, provide users with decision making information based on their preferences. This system reminds the web-based rating system ("vaalikone") of candidates in elections in Finland. (Unfortunately on this page pop up many annoying adverts as well...)

<http://www.selectsmart.com/>

Internet Voting Companies (with software):

GNU.FREE is a free e-democracy project dedicated to creating the GNU.FREE Internet Voting system and also advocating Free Software in e-democracy

<http://www.free-project.org/>

election.com announces a delivery of a complete end-to-end election management solution for private organizations and political jurisdictions around the world. Election Systems Manager™ is designed to provide election professionals with a unified solution for comprehensive management of the complete election process.

<http://www.election.com/>

SecurePoll is a comprehensive collection of electronic voting information on the Web. It was created with the goal of promoting the concept that every individual, in every corner of the world should have equal access to information and the opportunity to participate in the democratic process. Under 'Issue Papers' you can find many articles about Internet Voting.

<http://securepoll.com/>

VoteHere is an industry leader in developing secure electronic and online voting systems. VoteHere offers complete voting solutions capable of efficiently handling every type of election, from general elections using electronic voting stations set up at polling places to remotely-conducted elections for associations, unions and universities. VoteHere offers voters and election officials a voting system, which is secure, private, accurate and verifiable. You can even test e-voting on this page.

<http://www.votehere.net/>

Hart InterCivic is providing products and services that help redefine the relationship between state and local governments and the citizens they serve. Hart InterCivic is working in more than a dozen states to bring governments closer to citizens through complete election management solutions and electronic (digital) government solutions.

<http://www.internetvoting.com/>

Safevote is an Internet-based software company with proprietary technology for Private and Secure Internet voting, fulfilling the necessary conditions for election integrity. It targets diverse markets in private, government and Internet workgroup sectors – with a specific plan for each sector. Here you can even try the 2000 Presidential Election Demo.

<http://www.safevote.com/>

The International Teledemocracy Centre aims to develop and apply advanced information and communication technology to enhance and support the democratic decision-making process. ITC provides an e-democracy toolkit, which allows you to participate directly in the democratic process.

<http://www.e-voter.org.uk/>

Other interesting tools:

Capitol Advantage is a publisher of Congressional directories. “The largest provider of citizen-to-legislator communications services on the Internet.”

<http://capitoladvantage.com/h/>

GOVT.com has been a provider of integrated technology solutions to local governments since 1989, delivering the first eGovernment package in 1995.

<http://www.govt.com/>

<http://e-government.org/>

GOVT.com provides also an interesting product OurTown2000, “online city service desk”

http://www.govt.com/new/html/our_town_2000.html

The e-Citizen module of the OurTown2000 government management software

<http://e-citizen.org/>

Virtual City Hall, This web site is designed to show citizens what is possible and to present to government officials a simple, yet comprehensive solution called e-CityHall. All of the Citizen-Government interactive components of the Electronic City Hall web site are controlled by the OurTown2000 software package

<http://www.e-cityhall.com/>

Grassroots Enterprise, Inc., a non-partisan technology and services company, provides Internet-based communications and mobilization products serving the political marketplace.

<http://www.grassroots.com/>

9.2.2. *Trend news, part II, 1.6.2001*

Opinion polling / Voting / Selectors:

SpeakOut.com is an online opinion research company that allows people to tell it like it is. SpeakOut.com takes the traditional market research focus group and political polls and put them online while inviting people to tell politicians, political parties, corporations, marketers and special interest groups how they feel and why. You can make your voice heard with SpeakOut.com's interactive polls. SpeakOut.com's mission is to make activism as easy as possible. By connecting people who want to be heard with their political and business leaders, SpeakOut.com promote important dialogue, and create a more informed, better organized public. The insight SpeakOut.com gain from those collective opinions allows it to provide the leaders a better understanding of the will of the people.

<http://www.speakout.com/>

SpeakOut.com also helps people to find a perfect candidate with "Selectors". Just answer the questions in the quiz to determine which candidate most closely matches your political views. You can try for example **VoteMatch** or **SenateMatch**. These selectors remind a lot the Finnish "vaalikone" system (see below).

<http://www.speakout.com/activism/selectors.asp>

DemocracyToday.com provides a way for their members to communicate with politicians, advocacy groups and the media in a way that these political players respect and take seriously. Members have an easy and effective way to directly influence the politicians who make public policy at the local, state and federal levels, and to track how often their own elected officials vote in their interests. DemocracyToday.com gives their members a direct line to their elected officials through the "political switchboard", as well as opportunities to learn about and chat with other members who are working on issues around the country. DemocracyToday.com offers online voting for members and debates and discussion groups on different issues.

<http://www.democracytoday.com/>

PollingReport.com provides information about important trends in public opinion in politics, business and society. PollingReport.com collects the results of different opinion polls and is updated when new polls are released.

<http://www.pollingreport.com/>

Finnish "vaalikone" selectors:

These links are unfortunately only in Finnish, but here you can see how these selectors look like:

Presidential Election in Finland 2000, Newspaper Helsingin Sanomat offered a selector, which helps people to find a candidate whose opinions match best with their own.
<http://www2.helsinginsanomat.fi/vaalikone2000/kysymykset.jsp>

Kunnallisvaalikone 2000 is a selector for a candidate in the Municipal Elections 2000 in Finland. This selector system is shared with the municipalities, which participate in **The Participation Project in Finland**.

<http://www.vaalikone.net/etusivu.jsp>

<http://www.intermin.fi/suom/osallisuus/eng/>

Search engines and portals:

Political Information .com is a targeted non-partisan search engine for politics, policy and political news.

<http://politicalinformation.com/>

Politics.com "is the one essential site, since its enormous database of links and resources will eventually lead you to everything else".

Politics.com Directory is a portal containing links to other related sites.

Politics.com Forum is an online community where citizens, political activists, candidates, unions, and others can discuss issues, conduct polls, plan events, and map strategy. Forums are Web-based discussions that allow everybody to see what everyone else has to say. You can even meet for real-time discussions in the Forum chat room.

<http://www.politics.com/>

Discussion forums:

Quorum is a public forum for democratic and deliberative discussion. The conversations on Quorum explore the political issues seen in the news. Quorum is built in a way that allows members to have maximum control over the topics and frames for discussion; it's an attempt at a citizen-driven town hall. Quorum is operated by The Democracy Project, a nonprofit organization aimed at creating of citizen-centric public spaces on the Internet.

<http://www.quorum.org/>

<http://www.democracyproject.org/>

Delphi.com Forum is an activated community, where friends, family members, teammates, workgroups and thousands of other people share their common interests. Better than phone calls or e-mail, a Delphi.com Forum lets the whole group participate in discussions where everyone sees what the others have to say, all at the same time. Here you can discuss, inform, debate and converse. It is possible even to post pictures and attach files.

<http://www.delphi.com/dir-delphi/>

For example, **OnPolitics Talk** is an online forum for discussing stories and issues reported in Washingtonpost.com's OnPolitics area.

<http://www.delphi.com/wppolitics/start/>

9.2.3. *Trend news, part III, 6.6.2001*

eDemocracy related projects:

Project Vote Smart is a national library of factual information on over 13,000 elected offices and candidates for public office --- President, Governors, Congress and State Legislatures (USA). Vote Smart cover them in five basic areas: backgrounds, issue positions, voting records, campaign finances and the performance evaluations made on them by over 100 conservative to liberal special interests.

<http://vote-smart.org/index.phtml/>

The Democracy Project has set standards for an online public space. The goal of this project

is to ensure that these standards are driven by positive civic values rather than strictly commercial or partisan ones. The Democracy Project is the sponsor of Quorum.org, which offers the public forum for a new democracy conversation.

E-The People is a non-profit and non-partisan organization site working with over 400 online newspapers, television stations and Internet portals to bring government closer to the people. E-The People has teamed up with The Democracy Project. E-The People site offers for example online petitions, political search and discussion forums based on Quorum-technology.

<http://www.democracyproject.org/>

<http://www.quorum.org/>

<http://www.e-thepeople.com/>

The Democracy Online Project's mission is to promote the development of U.S. online politics in a manner, which upholds democratic values. This project has three principal goals:

1. The establishment of a research base for the study of online politics, especially with respect to American campaigns and elections.
2. The design, testing, refinement, and promotion of an appreciation statement regarding appropriate standards of practice for the conduct of online campaigning.
3. The creation and public promotion of an online public space where good campaign practices and democratic values may thrive.

<http://democracyonline.org/>

DemocracyNet - DNet - is the premier site for non-partisan election information. A project of the League of Women Voters Education Fund, DNet allows candidates to post unedited information about themselves, their positions and their campaigns. Participation in DNet is free and gives you access to the millions of voters who use DNet to make their election decisions, thus providing an invaluable voter service.

<http://www.dnet.org/>

<http://www.lwv.org/>

Smart Voter provides voters with comprehensive non-partisan information about the contests on their ballot in an easy-to-use presentation. Smart Voter also provides a means for candidates to publish information about themselves and their candidacy directly to voters. Smart Voter is produced by the League of Women Voters of California. The League is an organization of women and men who want to make a difference in the political future of our country. They are a diversified, non-partisan, political group with a long-standing tradition of educating voters. The League works at the local, regional, state and national levels, paralleling the levels of government. We have over 70 local League organizations within California and are growing.

<http://www.smartvoter.org/>

<http://ca.lwv.org/>

JUNA Project is a Development Project for e-Government in Finland. It coordinates and supports the development of electronic public services. The project is one of the measures taken to transfer public services to the electronic environment. The JUNA Project covers all levels of public administration from State and local to indirect State administration. The project will last until the end of 2002.

<http://www.intermin.fi/suom/juna/english/index.html>

Locregis Project, The aim of this project was to make an inventory and analyse Information society projects that are or may be implemented under programmes co-financed by the European Union, especially the Structural Funds, in the three new Member States, to organise contacts and exchange of experience about best practice between those directly involved in these and other IS, and between project organisers and those with wider responsibilities for structural development in the regional and national administrations, and to establish and consolidate a self-sustaining network of practitioners in the IS field in the three Member States and other parts of the Union, which could serve as a launch pad for a constant process of generation of ideas and projects in the IS field, especially in sparsely populated and less development areas.

<http://www.locregis.net/>

The Participation Project in Finland is about developing citizens' direct forms of participation and influencing, interaction between different actors in the municipal community and practices of representative decision-making. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for co-ordinating the Project, its follow-up and evaluation. It supports municipalities as they implement their local projects, it forwards information and experiences nationally and internationally. The municipalities are responsible for implementation of the local participation projects.

<http://www.intermin.fi/suom/osallisuus/eng/>

NetElection.org is a resource for journalists, campaign professionals and citizens interested in exploring and understanding the role of the Internet in American political campaigns. NetElection.org's focus for the current year is Campaign 2000. NetElection.org is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, in cooperation with the Center for Governmental Studies and the Center for Public Integrity.

<http://netelection.org/>

The Voting Integrity Project ("VIP") is a national non-partisan voter rights organization dedicated to protecting free and fair elections in America. The Voting Integrity Project educates Americans on the importance of full participation in the political process. In addition, VIP identifies emerging threats to voter rights and election integrity, studies and reports on potential new threats and litigates to protect voter rights.

<http://www.voting-integrity.org/>

The Congress Online Project is a two-year program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and conducted jointly by the George Washington University and the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) to examine the use of Web sites and other forms of online communications by congressional offices. The goal of the project is to improve electronic communication between Members of Congress and the public. The Congress Online Project offers for example online publications, training programs and conferences.

<http://www.congressonlineproject.org/>

Digital State is a Turkish project which aim is for example to offer debates, panels and "A Different Approach to Public Informatics Projects".

http://www.dijitaldevlet.com/english/index_ing.htm

The Servicedialogue Project is one of the recent initiatives in the "Public administration in

the Service of Democracy - An Action Programme” in Sweden. About 20 Swedish government agencies have been assigned to participate in this pilot project. Each agency must develop and publish a Citizens Charter, a service declaration, which gives clear, relevant and binding information about the range of services and the level of service and conduct a continuous and systematic service dialogue with the citizens and businesses. Furthermore, they must establish internal processes for dealing with complaints, external use of customer surveys, citizen’s consultations, use modern ICT for these purposes, and integrate the views of the citizens and businesses in the business development.

<http://www.servicedialog.nu/english/>

Portals and search engines:

SOCITM E-Government index contains links to the political sites in the UK: The use of information and communications technology to improve the services provided by both central and local government is now a key element of the policies of all the major political parties in the United Kingdom. The links provide information on these policies at an overall strategic level. Policies relating to particular aspects, such as Social Inclusion, will be found under the appropriate topics.

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/egovindex/policy.htm>

Documents over one year old are held in the Archive unless their continuing relevance suggests that they should be retained here. **SOCITM** provides also links to some of the many e-Government sites, research reports and policy documents around the world at

<http://www.socitm.gov.uk/egovindex/policy-abroad.htm>

Local Government Web Sites by Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko. The list of links collected to this site gives you an overall view of the information World Wide Web can offer in the field of local government. Because of the great number of local government authorities and wide range of their activities, Anttiroiko has concentrated mainly on the "metalinks", i.e. the links, which collect the information and provide easy access to several institutional and communal web sites. You should be able to find most of the web sites of local authorities by using these metalinks.

<http://www.uta.fi/valogos/links.html>

The Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG) aims to provide a trusted source of selected, high quality Internet information for researchers and practitioners in the social sciences, business and law. SOSIG is part of the UK Resource Discovery Network. This portal contains under “political communication” many e-democracy related links. The SOSIG Internet Catalogue is an online database of high quality Internet resources. Social Science Search Engine is a database of over 50,000 Social Science Web pages whereas the resources found in the SOSIG Internet Catalogue have been selected by subject experts, those in the Social Science Search Engine have been collected by software called a 'harvester', a similar mechanisms may be referred to as 'robots' or 'Web crawlers'.

<http://www.sosig.org/>

Political / E-democracy Interest Sites:

The California Voter Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization applying new technologies to provide the public with access to the information needed to participate in

public life in a meaningful way.

<http://www.calvoter.org/>

Minnesota E-Democracy is a non-partisan citizen-based organization whose mission is to improve participation in democracy in Minnesota through the use of information networks. It seeks to increase citizen participation in elections and public discourse through the use of information and communication technologies.

<http://www.e-democracy.org/>

DO-WIRE is a primary source for what's important and happening with the convergence of democracy and the Internet around the world. DO-WIRE is a free, low volume, moderated e-mail announcement list. Each week, well-known e-democracy expert and speaker Steven Clift forwards, with occasional analysis, no more than seven carefully selected messages. Posts include news, article, and report web links, event and conference announcements, calls for papers, and often uncover important "primary source" online resources, projects, and initiatives of significance.

<http://www.e-democracy.org/do/>

Web White & Blue is a non-partisan consortium of 17 of the largest Internet sites and news organizations who have come together to highlight the potential of the Internet to expand citizen participation in democracy. Web White & Blue offers for example an online format of the Rolling Cyber Debate, which allows for a broad array of questions to numerous candidates, with text, voice or audio submissions as responses.

<http://www.webwhiteblue.org/>

Debate America provides a forum for citizens to raise and discuss issues that are important in their cities and towns. Most news coverage we see on television and even on the Internet provides an endless flow of information about "national issues" without connecting their interpretations to the specifics of the communities in which we live. Debate America provides citizens with space and easy-to-use tools to raise, think about, and discuss issues in terms that reflect the concerns of their communities.

<http://www.debateamerica.org/>

The Democracy Forum is an online public space provided by The Hansard Society for the debate of issues concerning parliamentary democracy in the UK. The Hansard Society promotes effective parliamentary democracy. It is an independent, non-partisan educational charity. There are many issues concerning parliament, legislation and democratic citizenship, which call for intelligent public debate. This web site is intended as one forum for that debate to take place. It is open to all citizens, but there are rules of debate, which we ask all participants to follow. This is a monitored debate.

<http://www.democracyforum.org.uk/>

The Politeia Network for citizenship and democracy in Europe is a virtual organization of more than 1000 persons and institutions that are active in the field of citizenship and political education and wishing to cooperate at European level. The goal of the network is to promote the social and political participation of the European citizens.

<http://www.politeia.net/>

National Election Studies (NES). The mission of the NES is to produce high quality data on voting, public opinion, and political participation that serve the research needs of social scientists, teachers, students, policy makers and journalists concerned with the theoretical and empirical foundations of mass politics in a democratic society. Central to this mission is the active involvement of the NES research community in all phases of the project from study planning through data analysis.

<http://www.umich.edu/~nes/>

The Election Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, preserving, and improving democracy. Its members are government employees whose profession is to serve in voter registration and elections administration, i.e., voter registrars, elections supervisors, elections directors, city clerk/city secretary, county clerk, county recorder, state election director and Secretary of State for each of the individual states, territories, and the District of Columbia.

<http://www.electioncenter.net/>

Pippa Norris is a political scientist focusing on comparative political behavior in elections, political communications and gender politics. She has written interesting articles about Political Communications (for example about Online democracy), Elections and Voting Behavior, Comparative Politics and Gender Politics.

<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris.shorenstein.ksg/articles.htm>

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) is an international organization, which promotes and advances sustainable democracy and improves and consolidates electoral processes worldwide. It provides a forum for discussion and action among individuals and organizations involved in democracy promotion. Global in ownership and scope, independent of specific national interests, and flexible and quick in its responses, International IDEA is the only international organization with this unique mandate. On 27-29 June 2001 IDEA is organizing a Democracy Forum 2001 "Democracy and the Information Revolution" in Stockholm, Sweden. Unfortunately, participation is by invitation only...

<http://www.idea.int/index.htm>

Government Online's aim is to ensure that the lives, work and well being of Australians are enriched, jobs are created, and the national wealth is enhanced, through the participation of all Australians in the growing information economy. The Government Online is part of the National Office for the Information Economy, with a mission to get Commonwealth government services online.

<http://www.govonline.gov.au/>

9.2.4. Trend news, part IV, 16.6.2001

Tools:

EzGov provides a complete technology solution for governments that want to make e-government a reality for their constituents, both individuals and businesses. EzGov builds software that helps local authorities and national agencies become more efficient. Utilising EzGov's software platform and e-transactional software, governments can bring services online quickly and efficiently. EzGov can help define a modernisation strategy or implement

a single online service. EzGov provides a comprehensive foundation for e-government in all its aspects.

http://www.ezgov.com/index_flash.jsp

<http://www.ezgov.com/uk/>

Vivarto Technologies (VT) is a Swedish company, which offers a possibility to create a communication and decision-making system. The primary innovations are the so-called Vivarto Representative System, and the Vivarto NetConference Plus Conferences, a new, easy to use, communication structure based upon the adoption of different rating scales, multi-level conferences, statistical analysis and intelligent display of results. NetConference Plus can be used in businesses and politics, for media as well as all sorts of associations and organizations, on the Internet or intranet.

<http://www.vivarto.com/>

Standards:

UK GovTalk is part of the implementation strategy for the e-Government Interoperability Framework aimed at achieving seamless electronic government. The purpose of this site is to enable the Public Sector, Industry and other interested parties to work together in developing and agreeing policies and standards for e-government. The site also provides repositories for draft and agreed schemas, toolkits, best practice and relevant information for the running of the e-GIF programme.

<http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/>

E-government sites:

Open.gov.uk maintains an organisational listing of UK public sector bodies on the Internet arranged in alphabetical order. Open.gov services are though moving to Ukonline.gov.uk, the new entry point to UK government information and services online. The features available on open.gov.uk will continue and they can be accessed through this page. It is planned to develop these services following the discussion with users. The www.open.gov.uk address will be kept. If preferred, in future it is possible to go directly to the main ukonline website at www.ukonline.gov.uk.

<http://www.open.gov.uk/>

<http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/online/ukonline/home>

The Government Gateway is a centralised registration service for e-Government services in the UK. Registering with the Government Gateway enables to sign up for any of the UK Government's services that are available over the Internet. When the registration process is completed, it is possible to use a single User ID or digital certificate to send and receive forms, such as Tax returns and VAT returns. Forms can be sent using appropriate Government web sites, portals or third party software packages.

<http://www.gateway.gov.uk/>

Discussion forum:

Politalk is a nonpartisan forum for moderated e-mail discussions on important social and political topics of the day. Politalk discussions include policy makers and "special guest

commentators" who bring their knowledge and experiences to the discussions. Politalk was founded in early 1999 as a response to the often shallow ranting that seems to dominate so many Internet discussions. Politalk hoped to distinguish itself in three ways. 1. By focusing on only one topic at a time for a limited period of time (2 weeks). 2. By having an active moderator to keep the discussion on topic and limit personal attacks and name-calling. 3. By inviting guest commentators with specific experience or knowledge of a particular issue to add depth to the discussions.

Politalk currently maintains several mailing lists with their own list of participants. All of the groups discuss the same topic at the same time, however by dividing the discussion into smaller groups, it is hoped to encourage broader participation. The moderator, to stimulate discussion in a particular group and to maintain some communication between the groups, often forwards messages from one list to another.

<http://www.politalk.com/>

A "voter matching" game:

Votemonkey is a game offered by The Times of London that helps a voter learn which candidate in the British elections is closest to the user's beliefs. The game, displayed in a user-friendly, fun style, is the latest version of voter matching sites that cropped up in 2000 in the U.S.

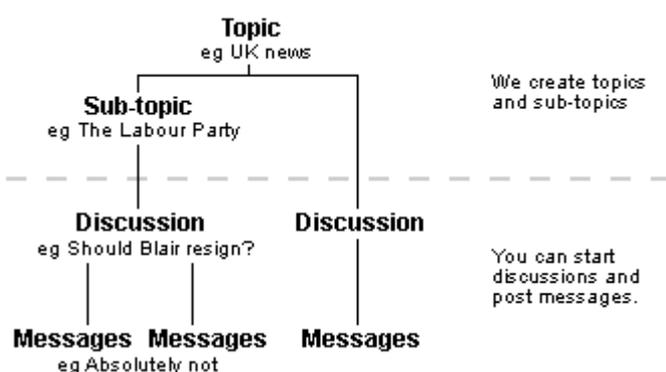
<http://www.votemonkey.com/>

9.2.5. Trend news, part V, 7.9.2001

Discussion forums:

Politics Talk is a discussion forum offered by the Guardian Newspaper website Guardian Unlimited. You can read the talk areas without registering, but to post messages there you have to be registered for Guardian Unlimited.

This diagram shows how the talk boards are structured:



<http://politicstalk.guardian.co.uk/>

SavvyVoter.org is a nonpartisan election forum and information resource for New York City voters. It covers every election pertaining to New York City residents and gives all candidates an equal opportunity to communicate their positions, regardless of financing. By providing clear and accessible information to the public and a platform for open and fair communication

amongst candidates, SavvyVoter.org is rebuilding the connection between citizens and government.

<http://www.savvyvoter.org/>

EU Projects:

DEMOS (Delphi Mediation Online System) is an EU research and development project designed to support and encourage 'on-line democracy'. The project is funded by the European Commission as a shared-cost project in the context of the IST programme (IST-1999-20530). This website gives you detailed project information (background, objectives, techniques), an introduction to the project partners, news, and announcements of forthcoming activities.

<http://www.demos.nexus.org/>

EURO-CITI, EUROpean CITIes, is a project developing platform for on-line transaction services. The main objective is to develop and demonstrate a set of new public transaction services, namely tele-voting, electronic submission of forms and tele-consulting, that can be accessed via the Internet and GSM. The aim of these services is to improve the efficiency of local authority, reinforce the concept of direct democracy and foster collaboration between local authorities at all levels (regional, national, European).

<http://www.euro-citi.org/>

The EDEN project will help to stimulate and support citizens' participation in the decision-making process, specifically in the area of urban planning, through the development of Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools designed to make communication between citizens and public administrations easier and more effective. The aim of the project is to improve communication between public administrations and citizens in decision-making processes, and reduce the cost of individual citizens' actions; the EDEN project will combine several technical approaches using urban planning as the pilot application target. The EDEN project will develop a set of NLP tools and methodologies, based on user requirements analysis, that will be integrated into city planning tools (e.g., geographical navigation, informal discussion fora, GroupWare applications, polling service) using a UMS (unified messaging systems) approach.

<http://www.edentool.org/>

The AGORA 2000 project's aim is to design a new paradigm of democratic regional/urban planning process that envisages a full involvement of citizens in the decision process. The objective is to try to bridge the gap between citizens and regional/urban decision makers in order to get common, enhanced solutions to territory planning issues. Indeed, democratic decision-making requires easy interaction between private citizens, elected representatives and those who are charged with advising on, and implementing decisions. Based on an analysis of the user requirements, the AGORA 2000 project will define, specify and develop a networked, interactive and open AGORA Platform supporting regional/urban decision makers in the territory planning process with monitored involvement of the citizens.

<http://www.agora2000.org/>

The PRISMA research project aims to provide a systematic analysis and synthesis of the current and future impacts of new information and communication technologies on

government services in Europe. PRISMA is funded by the European Commission's Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme from September 2000 to February 2002. PRISMA's analysis of services and cross-cutting themes involves identifying current best practice within the European Union. Using this analysis as a platform, PRISMA is developing long-term visions, building scenarios of likely or desirable future trends and specifying future-oriented best practice models. These models can be applied by PRISMA users (including service providers and decision-makers) using the PRISMA toolbox. Work is being carried out in close consultation with a large number of selected test beds of e-government in practice around Europe, and with experts working through service and thematic panels.
<http://www.prisma-eu.net/>

News service:

KableNET.com is the free and independent e-government news service which gives users access to the top stories as they unfold throughout the day - accessible via a dynamic Home page with links to other current stories and international news (*Electronic Government International*). The service is intended for the professionals delivering information age government as well as public interest advocates.
<http://www.kablenet.com>

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