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European ePractice Newsletter

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Breaking News:

European Observatories Network

The European Commission is interested in creating a network of organisations interested in the analysis, measurement and spread of good practice in Europe, particularly in the field of eGovernment. The initiative is part of the new epractice.eu portal, the successor of the eGovernment Observatory.

The objective of the observatories network is to ensure that any organisation involved in these activities is in contact with related partners.

If you are interested in becoming part of such a network, please fill in the survey under <http://epractice.eu/index.php?page=fix&p=27>.

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DE/PL: eGovernment tackles regional problems

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Germany/Poland – Regional and Local

How can eGovernment help regions with structural problems? And what role can cross-border co-operation play? A series of joint German and Polish events is looking at these issues.

Launched in Potsdam at the end of 2003, the Polish-German discussion series 'Across borders – eGovernment in structurally weak regions' will continue until the summer of 2008. The aim is to promote dialogue on eGovernment within the two countries' border areas, where the future depends on cross-frontier co-operation.

Organising the events is an Alcatel foundation for communications research, together with its eGovernment college, as well as German forums and foundations and Poland's 'Cities on the internet' association.

Just like their closest Polish neighbours, the rural, structurally weak areas of the German state of Brandenburg have been hit by a major exodus. A brain drain has sucked the region's young talent away to the cities, where the jobs and investment are. The result is an ageing population, poor infrastructure and scant access to information technology.

Expert speakers at the German-Polish events have been stressing the urgent need to introduce eGovernment into the region, so as to stimulate local government initiatives and citizen involvement. Greater transparency within local administrations should, they say, be promoted at the same time.

eGovernment is also seen as a means of avoiding difficult journeys to not-so-local administrations in remote, sparsely populated areas. Right from the start, the focus should be on barrier-free, multilingual eGovernment, the campaigners argue. That way, the looming digital divide between town and country can be bridged.

Further information:

- <http://www.politik-digital.de/egovernment/bund/struktur.shtml>

AT: eGovernment census

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Austria – eGovernment Services for Citizens

The Austrian Federal Chancery is about to launch a census of federal, state and local eGovernment services. Part of the survey itself will be electronic and automated.

The census is seen as a way both of improving eGovernment services and of providing more support for them. For local authorities, the survey will be carried out through their eGovernment network, www.kommunalnet.at, which has promised to keep the work involved to a minimum. It will simply make an inventory of all the forms available from each local authority's homepage.

On about a thousand local government websites, this information can be harvested automatically. The local administration will be informed as soon as this process has been completed and will be asked to check the results. For all the other authorities, about five to ten minutes' work will be needed to fill in the survey.

By listing the electronic forms, the census will also be highlighting the range of eGovernment services available – for instance, on-line planning permission applications, kindergarten reservations or changes to the population register.

Further information:

- <http://letter.eyepin.com/include/ctr2.php?ID=148OO6066O10614>
 - <https://www.kommunalnet.at/>
-

ES: New law makes eGovernment a right

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Spain – Policy and Strategy/eDemocracy/Legal aspects

Spain has adopted a Law on Citizens' Electronic Access to Public Services, which officially recognises the right of citizens to communicate electronically with public administrations.

A key clause requires administrations to “use information technologies” while “ensuring the availability, accessibility, integrity, authenticity, confidentiality and conservation of the data, information and services that they manage in the exercise of their competences”. Citizens have a right to “communicate with the Public Administrations by electronic means”. All administrations must respect this ‘right’ from 2009 onwards. The law also applies to relations between administrations.

As well as greater efficiency, the legislation aims to promote “closeness to the citizen and administrative transparency”. It introduces a principle of “technological neutrality” which gives both citizens and administrations the right to choose between technological alternatives. Data security guarantees must be “at least at the same level” as in non-electronic administrative procedures.

A principle of proportionality lays down both that the security level should be “appropriate to the nature and circumstances of the different transactions and proceedings” and that “only such data shall be required of the citizens as are strictly necessary to the purpose for which they are requested”. There are also detailed provisions on electronic identity, accreditation, registers and archiving, as well as the electronic publication of official gazettes.

The newly created Office for the Defence of User Rights will function as a type of eGovernment ombudsman, ensuring that citizens' rights are respected.

Further information:

- <http://www.map.es/iniciativas.html>
-

BE/FR: Cross-border open source project wins 'Lutèce d'Or'

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Belgium/France – Open Source Software

A Belgian-French collaboration has won a top prize at the prestigious French 'Lutèce d'Or' awards for Open Source Software (OSS).

These annual awards aim to be the European reference for projects in the OSS field. They recognise the best Open Source schemes in France and across Europe in several categories: public, private, community-based and political programmes.

The PloneGov project received the jury's 'Grand Prix' for its cross-border efforts to improve collaboration between public administrations in the use of OSS, thus affirming the European vocation of the 'Lutèce d'Or'.

Originally, a French-Belgian collaboration, PloneGov brought together communes from both sides of the Belgian-French border who wanted to improve their use of OSS through collaboration and the sharing of ideas. Plone is a content management system which allows people with little or no technical expertise to update the content of web pages.

The original project has since been extended to include Swiss, Spanish and Argentinean groups following the same ethos. The objective of this international collaboration was to develop, through co-operation, websites and computer applications by and for public bodies.

Further information:

- <http://easi.wallonie.be/xml/page.html?IDD=20162&LANG=fr>
 - <http://plonegov.org/>
 - <http://plone.org/>
 - http://en.paris-libre.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=44
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IT: On-line language courses prove popular

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Italy - eGovernment Services for Citizens

The Italian government is offering free on-line language courses for its citizens through its central portal Italia.gov.it (eltalia).

The recently introduced on-line language course for Arabic has met with particular success. The course is available, free of charge, through the eltalia portal, in the 'On-line Training' section. This section already includes on-line courses in English, Spanish and Chinese, courses on the European Computer Driving Licence, as well as a range of ICT courses (web publishing, PowerPoint, etc.).

In order to benefit from these courses, citizens must register on the eltalia site. Once they have registered and filled in their personal details, they can simply select a course by clicking on the relevant box in the on-line catalogue.

The language courses are aimed at providing a basic introduction to the language for persons with little or no previous experience.

Further information:

- <http://www.italia.gov.it/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=e-Italia/HomeHttp>
-

IT: Pavia launched new citizens' portal – ePavia

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Italy – eGovernment Services for Citizens / Regional and Local

The Italian city of Pavia has recently launched a new portal for its citizens. ePavia, as it is called, will provide information and allow for the on-line payment of various city taxes and duties.

The Communal authorities of Pavia have launched the new portal with the aim of facilitating relations with its citizens and simplifying on-line payment of taxes and other duties. ePavia

allows the user access to their own 'Client File' which provides personalised and secure access to a range of eGovernment services.

In order to set up a 'Client File', the user must register on the ePavia site. Part of the 'Pavia Digitale' plan, ePavia offers a single portal through which the user can access a whole new range of on-line services, including access to personal and fiscal data, calculation of local property tax, on-line payments and communication of payment deadlines.

Thanks to collaboration with the 'egov@pay' project, coordinated by the city of Milan, it is now possible to make all official payment on-line. The Pavia local authorities have foreseen two levels of security: identification through a user name and password registered in the central database; or identification through a Smart Card or combination of user name, password and pin number.

Further information:

- <http://www.comune.pv.it/atp/url/home/index.html>
- http://www.crcitalia.it/news/epavia_servizi_on_line.html

INT: Launch of the <NO>OOXML campaign

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – International Organisations – Open Source Software

The '<NO>OOXML' campaign has been recently launched by the Foundation for a Free Information Infrastructure (FFII). The FFII is a non-profit organisation dedicated to establishing a free market in information technology. The objective of the '<NO>OOXML' campaign is to prevent the preparation of the ECMA 376 standard (Office Open XML File Formats) as an ISO/IEC standard by Joint Technical Committee 1 ("JTC-1") and to obtain the removal of ECMA 376 from the fast-track processing it is currently undergoing.

The work to standardise OpenXML has been carried out by Ecma International as part of an open, cross-industry collaboration via Technical Committee 45 (Ecma TC45). On December 7, 2006, the Ecma General Assembly approved both adopting Office Open XML as an Ecma standard (ECMA-376) and submitting it for adoption under the ISO/IEC JTC 1 fast-track process.

The FFII and the '<NO>OOXML' campaign's supporters put forward several reasons for opposing the acceptance of Microsoft's Office Open XML File Formats as an ISO Standard. Among their motives are the following:

- An ISO standard for XML based office file formats already exists: ODF (Open Document Format – ISO/IEC 26300:2006). Having a dual standard adds cost to industry, government and citizens;
- The OOXML specification is protected by multiple patents;
- The idea of one standard should be clear, easy to implement by any party, with the smallest specification possible, which is not the case of OOXML;
- This standard proposal conflicts with other ISO standards, such as ISO 8601 (Representation of dates and times), ISO 639 (Codes for the Representation of Names and Languages) or ISO/IEC 10118-3 (cryptographic hash);
- To date, the standard has not been implemented by its vendor or the competition;
- The OOXML contains binary data for backwards compatibility of previous office standards and older application-specific documents. No standard can be backwards compatible. Backwards-compatibility is an application feature which can support different versions of one standard;

- The OOXML specification is written to be fully implementable only on a single operating system platform, which means other existing platforms cannot implement or use the standard;
- The OOXML specification in its full version is clearly not implementable by anyone but the specification's vendor;

The campaign leaders call on their supporters to contact and express their views to their national standardisation bodies which are to take a decision on the issue during the summer months.

For the time being, the <NO>OOXML activists are specifically asking for ECMA 376 to be diverted from its present fast-track processing and to be remanded to Ecma International for: (1) harmonization with ISO/IEC 26300:2006, the OpenDocument standard, and with numerous other standards they consider ECMA 376 is in contradiction with; (2) developing of more suitable licensing documents that would grant rights to implement the specification.

Further information:

- <http://www.nooxml.org/>
 - <http://www.ffii.org/>
 - <http://www.ecma-international.org/>
-

UK: Calculate your carbon footprint on-line

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – United Kingdom - eGovernment Services for Citizens

The UK Department of the Environment has launched an on-line calculator to help people cut their carbon emissions.

The Act on CO2 calculator helps people to calculate how much energy they are using to power their appliances and to travel around, and then develops a personalised action plan with steps to take to cut back on emissions.

"Around two-thirds of people are already taking action to try to limit climate change – but there is a lot of confusion about what people can do and how effective those changes actually are," said Environment Secretary David Miliband.

"We want to cut through that confusion. This carbon calculator will help people decide what they can do – and be sure it will make a difference. As the calculator improves and develops, I want it to become the gold standard for calculating CO2 emissions from individuals and families."

The calculator makes use of open source software, freely available to anyone wanting to power their own calculators with their own branding.

Further information:

- <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/index.html>
-

EU: EuroPriSe to improve data privacy with Privacy Seal

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – EU Institutions – Legal aspects

A consortium of eight European organisations and enterprises, led by the Independent Centre for Privacy Protection Schleswig-Holstein (ICPP/ULD), has combined forces to produce a European Privacy Seal.

Thilo Weichert, head of ICPP/ULD, explains: "We experienced that there is an international demand and a need for privacy-examined products. In view of the opacity of data processing, consumers need comprehensible examinations by trustworthy and competent independent institutions according to recognised standards. This is to be offered by the Privacy Seal."

The project is based on the Privacy Seal (Datenschutz-Guetesiegel) Schleswig-Holstein. This legally based privacy certificate has successfully been used in Germany since 2000 and has been awarded to around 40 different products.

The European Privacy Seal will be used to certify that IT products and services comply with European legislation, and in particular with the 1998 Data Protection Directive. The idea is that citizen-friendly, data-minimising and technically secure products, for example within Internet services, the health sector, or during customer data processing, gain a competitive advantage over unexamined competitors.

The seal will be developed in close co-operation with the privacy and data protection authorities in Europe. The project will support the establishment of the Privacy Seal instrument both in European legislation and within national privacy and data protection acts.

Further information:

- http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/eten/library/news_release/index_en.htm
-

EU: New on-line legal resource

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – EU Institutions – Other

Europe's first internet-based case law exchange service has been launched, linking national and European court cases to EU law.

Caselex began life as pilot project, developed with funding from the European Commission's eContent programme. It has now been launched, with a mission to provide an information service for European case law. It is designed to be a practical tool for legal professionals in need of solutions to national and international legal issues and should become a useful reference for judges and court staff, barristers and solicitors, in-house legal counsel, public prosecutors, policy-makers, legal information managers, paralegals, legal researchers, academics and law students.

Initially, Caselex will cover intellectual property, labour, competition and company law. Eleven other legal areas are due to be added over the course of the next year. Its cases cover the Supreme Courts of the EU Member States and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. The European Court of Justice, the European Court of First Instance and the EFTA Court of Justice should follow.

Further information:

- http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/eten/library/news_release/index_en.htm
 - <http://www.caselex.com/>
-

DE: eInclusion study call

eGovernment News – 02 July 2007 – Germany – Policy and Strategy/eInclusion

The German Ministry for the Interior has published a call for proposals for two studies on eParticipation and eInclusion.

One of the studies will be entitled 'eParticipation – electronic participation by the population and the economy in eGovernment'. The other will be on 'eInclusion – digital integration through eGovernment'. Further details on the call will be made available on the federal government's eTendering site www.evergabe-online.de.

The declared aim of the two studies is to take stock of current eParticipation and eInclusion efforts in Germany and map out the future prospects. The successful bidders will be expected to provide recommendations for action, concrete project proposals and suggested measures to implement the federal government's plan, known as eGovernment 2.0. In addition to project proposals for fields within the legal remit of the federal government, suggestions can be made for action that cuts across several levels of government and even for measures that extend beyond the public administration.

The eGovernment 2.0 plan lists eParticipation as one of the major targets for all eGovernment services, while eInclusion is seen as countering the threat of a digital divide within society.

Further information:

- http://www.egovcom.de/srvinclude/4/1/inews_daily.asp?opt=archiv&red_nr=17958
 - <http://www.evergabe-online.de/>
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Upcoming eGovernment Events

[FR: eBSN workshop on e-business for SMEs](#) [05 July 2007]

[UK: Building the Perfect Council Website](#) [12 July 2007]

[DE: 6th International EGOV Conference 2007](#) [3 September 2007]

FR: eBSN workshop on e-business for SMEs

5-6 July 2007, Paris, France

Sectoral policy initiatives in support of e-business for SMEs

e-BSN stands for 'European e-Business Support Network for SMEs'. This support network was established by the European Commission with the aim to federate e-business experts in Europe and to share experience and good practice in support of e-business for SMEs.

The e-BSN workshop on "Sectoral policy initiatives in support of e-business for SMEs" is co-organised by IDATE and the European Commission. The two days event will analyse and compare the impacts of sectoral policy initiatives promoting e-business for SMEs in the EU-27, in North America and some Asian countries (China, South Korea).

The following topics will be addressed during this workshop:

- Sectoral policy initiatives promoting e-business for SMEs at Europe and international level;
- Main impacts and lessons learnt from the implementation of the sectoral policy initiatives;
- Synthesis and outlook for the promotion of exchange of best practices and means of replicating elements of a good policy throughout Europe.

The event is designed for policy makers promoting the uptake of innovative e-business solutions by SMEs, at national, regional and local level, to SMEs and representatives of the SMEs Community, such as Chambers of Commerce, Trade associations, sectoral associations, ICT solutions and services providers, e-business facilitators, academics, etc. European Commission representatives will intervene as speakers during the workshop.

Event website:

<http://www.idate.org/pages/index.php?rubrique=news&idr=20&idp=425&idl=7>

UK: Building the Perfect Council Website

12 July 2007, London, United Kingdom

Building the Perfect Council Website

A wide range of leading experts and practitioners will offer their view of how to create the perfect council website: easy to use, working first time, compelling and engaging.

A partnership between E-Government Bulletin and the Socitm Insight Programme, the event will draw on the collected wisdom of eight years of Socitm's annual 'Better Connected' review of all UK council websites and feature the Better Connected reviewers' own insights, plaudits and brickbats.

Interactive workshops will cover issues in detail including usability and key navigation techniques, search engines and the use of third party software.

Event website:

<http://headstar-events.com/council07/>

DE: 6th International EGOV Conference 2007

3-7 September 2006, Regensburg, Germany

EGOV 2007 - the International Conference of the EGOV-Society

The 6th edition of the international EGOV conference series will take place from 3 to 7 September in Regensburg, Germany. Bringing together numerous leading academics and eGovernment professionals from across the world, it will assess the state of the art in the fast-moving field of eGovernment and eGovernance and provide guidance for future research and development.

The call for papers for this year's conference has been published. The deadline for the submission of research papers and communications is 15 February 2007, while the deadline for the submission of workshop and panel proposals is 15 April 2007.

The EGOV conference is looking for four distinct types of contribution: completed research and ongoing research scientific papers, workshops, and panel discussions. They encourage scientific rigor and discussions on state of the art in the field, but also welcome innovative research work in progress, and studies on practical eGovernment projects and systems implementation.

The series also includes a PhD student colloquium (2-3 September) which provides doctoral students with a forum for presenting their work and for networking with students working in other disciplines.

The list of topics to be addressed at EGOV 2007 includes the following:

- Strategies and frameworks, motivators, contextual biases
- eDemocracy and eParticipation challenges
- Assessment of eGovernment and eParticipation
- eGovernment and development (ICT4D)
- eGovernment research
- Training courses and teaching eGovernment
- Conceptual design and frames
- Implementation aspects
- mGovernment and emerging technologies for eGovernment and eParticipation

Event website:

<http://www.egov-society.org/>

Latest Cases

The latest eGovernment case studies are available under:

<http://epractice.eu/cases>

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