Editorial

The Necessity of Digital Citizenship and Participation

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Many recent developments justify how social and political participation through new media and information and communication technology is an urgent matter for many developed countries. The nurturing of digital citizenship, the promotion of social and political participation with better information dissemination and deliberation among citizens are vital elements for a healthy democratic system. Overturning cynicism towards governments and building trust in the political processes are necessary steps in developing digital citizenship.

This Special Issue explores how different digital platforms in various contexts can provide more engagement and more accessibility for greater political and social participation. The final collection of the papers in this issue were quite international, as the studies covered the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea and Japan. The wide variety and scope provide an opportunity to view the many different and unique contexts of exploring the necessity of digital citizenship and participation among these nations.

Taewoo Nam's paper titled "Government-Driven Participation and Collective Intelligence: A Case of the Government 3.0 Initiative in Korea" [1] discusses the initiative of South Korea to influence participatory democracy and it also explores the meaning of collective intelligence. The paper carefully examines the activities that need to be taken by a government and provides a path into what kind of a role governments should have in a participatory democracy.

The paper by Uta Russmann and Jakob Svensson "Studying Organizations on Instagram" [2] develops a set of variables and methodology to explore visual social media, in their case, Instagram accounts. Based on their experience in studying Swedish political parties during the 2014 election campaign and in-between elections in 2016, they introduce a new methodological framework to study image-sharing on Instagram by organizations.

In "Reaching Citizens' Engagement by Services: Swiss Use Case" [3], Maria Sokhn, Florian Evequoz and Arnaud Zuffrey look into service-based citizens' engagement and focused on enhancing the transparency and efficiency of Swiss public authorities through the reinvention of services by combining top–down and bottom–up methods. They employ four different cases in Switzerland.

In our paper "Who Leads Advocacy through Social Media in Japan? Evidence from the "Tsukuba Civic Activities Cyber-Square" Facebook Page" [4], my co-author Sae Okura and I found usage of social networking services by civil society organizations can lead to: (1) more political opportunities to advocate; (2) more chances to connect with the local government; and (3) more opportunities to exert greater presence.

Muhammad Yusuf, Carl Adams and Kate Dingley investigated digital citizenship in their paper "Digital Citizen Participation within Schools in the United Kingdom and Indonesia: An Actor–Network Theory (ANT) Perspective" [5] and compared case studies of different schools and school systems in the U.K. and Indonesia. The paper illustrates the complexity of e-participation in an educational context and the importance of empowerment among stakeholders.

Wei-Ning Wu's paper titled "Citizen Relationship Management System Users' Contact Channel Choices: Digital Approach or Call Approach?" [6] examines the 311 number that provides access to

non-emergency municipal services, focusing on channel expansion in the San Francisco area. The study makes an academic contribution to the literature of citizen contact channel choices and the potential for enhancing digital citizenship.

References

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