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Knowledge Management in Electronic Government

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Preface

“We know more than we can tell and we can know nothing without relying upon those things which we may not be able to tell”

(Michael Polanyi)

The importance of knowledge management (KM) is increasingly recognized in the public sector and in relation with e-government implementations. Because governments and public administrations deal with information and knowledge on a large scale, this domain is particularly predestined to actively practice KM: much of the work of public authorities refers to the elaboration of data, information and knowledge on citizens, businesses, society, the markets, the environment, laws, politics, etc.

Even many “products” of public administration and government are delivered in the shape of information and knowledge themselves. This aspect especially applies to the policies, management, regulation and monitoring of society, markets and the environment. With the recent evolution of e-government projects, high expectations are linked. As a consequence, efficient support from adequate KM concepts and tools to exploit the huge knowledge and information resources dealt with in e-government is expected.

Not only the trend towards a knowledge society calls for KM solutions. Current e-government developments significantly influence the public sector. These require the rethinking of knowledge distribution and management: Citizen- and business- oriented service delivery, including one-stop service provision, inter-organizational co-operation between government agencies and cross-border support for complex administrative decision making call for largely opened-up access to remote information and knowledge resources. E-government – and specifically the concept of online one-stop government – integrates dislocated information and knowledge sources into a global virtual knowledge fabric.

Modernization and reorganization of government work and responsibilities imply significant redistribution of knowledge resources. Even when introducing new IT into a specific administration, project knowledge on which decisions have been made, why, and how problems have been solved is a valuable knowledge resource for future changes. Support for the collection of, elaboration of and access to such domains and project knowledge needs to be designed properly.

E-government implies a fundamental knowledge redistribution and requires a careful rethinking of the management of valuable project knowhow, domain expertise, information resources and knowledge bases. At the same time, the specific problems of public administration and governance (e.g., data protection, security, trustworthiness, etc.) need to be taken into account.

The annual international working conferences on “Knowledge Management in Electronic Government” (KMGov) bring together academics and practitio-

ners to discuss and disseminate ideas, concepts and experiences on the many perspectives and issues that deserve attention when developing e-government systems and KM solutions for the public sector. The proceedings cover contributions on theoretical, methodological and practical aspects of knowledge and KM in the public sector, such as: strategies for KM introduction in the public sector; concepts of KM and knowledge engineering; KM methodologies and tools for the public sector; analysis of knowledge in public sector environments; knowledge transfer in e-democracies; technical aspects of knowledge flow and KM in e-government; and experiences and examples of knowledge maintenance.

KM in the public sector involves various disciplines. The authors contributing to this volume come from distinct backgrounds and reflect insights from distinct fields. Also, the joint organization of the working conference by the IFIP Working Group 8.3, the IFIP Working Group 8.5, the German Society for Informatics (GI) Working Group 6.2, the University of Linz (Institute of Informatics in Business and Government), and the Danube University in Krems, together with the organizing and program committee members involved a team of people with distinct research backgrounds.

This year, KMGov celebrated its fifth anniversary as an IFIP working conference. KMGov started small with a workshop held in Schärding, Austria in 2000. Since the workshops in 2001 (Siena, Italy) and 2002 (Copenhagen, Denmark) the interest has grown tremendously and the event turned into an IFIP working conference in 2003 (held in Rhodes, Greece).

Many people worked to form the conference and to prepare the program and the proceedings. Special credit goes to the members of the Program Committee and the additional reviewers. In particular, the editor expresses thanks to Vera Himmelbauer for assisting in the review management and compilation of the proceedings.

May 2004

Maria A. Wimmer

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