

## Social acceptability and e-voting.

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# Social acceptability as a precondition

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- ▶ Bottom-up
- ▶ Trust in technology
- ▶ Early-stage adaptors





## E-participation pyramid

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- ▶ 1st level: Electronic government services to inform → **eGovernmental portals** and administrative applications
- ▶ 2nd level Data data transfer technologies → enable citizens to **communicate or interact** with the government
- ▶ 3rd level: applications enable citizens to access government services, transactions between citizen and governmental institutions → **eParticipation**
- ▶ 4th level: information, interaction und transaction are combined to connect citizens and government
- ▶ 5th level: promote political participation, such as polling and other democratic participation procedures → **eVoting** and **eElections**

## Bottom-up

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- ▶ e-Voting requires a higher demand of social acceptability than all other levels of eGovernance
- ▶ Linkage between personal involvement and processes of social acceptability
- ▶ The establishment of lower levels of eGovernance is necessary *before* introducing further technical solutions, which are higher demanding in terms of citizens' involvement

# Trust in technologies

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- ▶ Acceptability presupposes trust in technology. Lower levels of eGovernment take trust for granted.
- ▶ Trust is mainly driven by communicative acts: communication between humans and personal trust is the basis for the evolvement of trust.
- ▶ Credibility is part of trust
  - ▶ A technical solution has to be credible solutions for democratic participation.
- ▶ The evolution of credibility requires a powerful group of early-stage adapters, who can communicate the profit and reliability performance of eGovernmental services.

# Early-stage adopters

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- ▶ Early-stage adapters could figure as persons in a position of trust.
- ▶ Trust is an emergent social property based on interactions between actors and for this reason, an eGovernment procedure could, in principle, be established, if and only if, actors are convinced that it complies with certain trust properties.
- ▶ Trust and satisfaction are driven by the citizens' experience: information, personal control in ones life and influence.
  - ▶ People need to feel well informed about a public service, what to expect of it, and how to engage with it.
  - ▶ People need to feel that engagement with the service fits in with the way they juggle the diverse demands made upon their time by work, family care and social life.
  - ▶ People need a sense of influence in relation to any institution of public service.
- ▶ Raising the levels of the e-participation pyramid requires users, which are common with lower levels procedures
  - ▶ Early adapters therefore are advocating change in the behaviour status quo.

## What do we have in a students environment?

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- ▶ eGovernmental portals → university webpage
- ▶ eDiscussions → online communication, E-Mail
- ▶ eParticipation → registering for classes
- ▶ eIntegration → registering for exams, elearning
- ▶ eVoting and eElection → *voting student council*

## eVoting: a consequence sequel of eParticipation

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### ▶ Direct

- ▶ A major part of students life is a virtual life, students show high levels of internet use
- ▶ Students are not as critical as the wider public regarding online applications and online shopping
- ▶ High technical affinity

### ▶ Indirect

- ▶ Discourses on the breach of general voting rights and general principles of democracy, but not about the technique
- ▶ Low level of awareness regarding technical encounters

- ▶ In general almost no individual distrust in the eVoting system, but on the group level, distrust is evolving quite quickly

# Conclusion

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- ▶ Democracy is more than technical transparency – social acceptability
  - ▶ Why innovation for something, which works?
- ▶ Stimulate the public discourse and keep it technical
- ▶ Use the e-participation pyramide for analysing the relevant factors for raising the level of e-participation.



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