

Preface

The EGOV conference series intends to assess the state of the art in e-Government and to provide guidance for research and development in this fast-moving field. Thus EGOV 2004 in Zaragoza built on the achievements of the previous EGOV conferences in Aix-en-Provence and Prague. This year the interest increased once more; thus the EGOV conference series has become a reunion for professionals from all over the globe.

EGOV 2004 brought some changes in the outline and structure of the conference: i.e., centralizing the reviewing process through the support of an ensemble of Area Chairs, and incorporating a workshop aimed at regional developments. Defining areas has extended the coverage of topics: examples are strategies and policies, public-private partnerships, change management, interoperability and semantic standards, G2G co-operation, public information, teaching and empowering staff, and voting. Several issues already well covered in last year's conference have preserved their topicality: governance and democracy, research methods, services and processes, knowledge management, security and identity management, legal issues. An annual conference bears a message as well: "*e-Government: the Challenges Ahead*". This issue is treated as an introduction statement by the editor.

Rich was the set of themes covered in several streams. The following list of issues covered by the 3rd EGOV Conference gives an illustration:

- Frameworks and guidelines for e-Government and e-Governance
- e-Government policies, strategies and implementation
- Methods and tools for e-Government research
- e-Democracy and e-Voting
- One-stop government, electronic service delivery, mobile services
- International and regional projects, case studies and best practice
- Sustaining administrative processes, G2G cooperation
- Identity management and security: provisions and instruments, citizen cards, digital signatures
- Knowledge management, public information, GIS (geographical information systems)
- Interoperability and standards, semantic standardization
- Change management and new organizational arrangements: public-private partnerships, virtual teams
- Legal, societal and cultural aspects of e-Government
- International dimensions: cooperation, comparisons, networks
- Teaching e-Government

Networking is crucial, and thus to EGOV 2004 additional events were adjoined and in some way interlinked: the annual conference of "LEFIS" (Legal Framework for the Information Society), a workshop "Observatory on Interoperable e-Government Services", and a workshop "Metadata for Accessibility".

Several persons worked to form the conference and to prepare the program and the proceedings. The significance of the work of the Area Chairs is to be acknowledged; special recognition has to go to them as well as to the members of the Program Committee and some additional referees. The work of Gabriela Wagner, the scientific event manager in charge of the DEXA organization, deserves acknowledgment. In particular I thank Vera Himmelbauer, the coordinator for the program and of the proceedings of EGOV 2004; the editor expresses high appreciation for her extraordinary engagement.

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