

# Preface

The annual International IFIP Conference on Electronic Participation (ePart) aims to bring together researchers of distinct disciplines in order to present and discuss advances in eParticipation research. As the field of eParticipation is multidisciplinary in nature, ePart provides an excellent opportunity for researchers with backgrounds in different academic disciplines to share and discuss current research on foundations, theories, methods, tools, and innovative applications of eParticipation. In addition, ePart provides a fruitful ground for nurturing and planning future cooperation.

The 7<sup>th</sup> ePart conference was organized by members of IFIP Working Group 8.5 and was supported by a multidisciplinary Program Committee from around the globe. As always, the conference was organized along with the International Conference on Electronic Government (IFIP EGOV).

IFIP EGOV and ePart have established a reputation of successful high-quality conference organizations. At the same time, they continue innovating in an attempt to increase the value they provide to their attendees. In this respect, this year, for the first time, the conferences were organized around five tracks:

- The General E-Government Track
- The General eParticipation Track
- The Open Government and Open and Big Data Track
- The Policy Modelling and Policy Informatics Track
- The Smart Governance, Smart Government, and Smart Cities Track

The five tracks of the dual IFIP EGOV and ePart conference highlight core areas of importance for the domains of study. The overall objective of the dual conference remains to attract scholars coming from different academic disciplines to present and discuss their latest research and to shed light on advancements in the field from different, sometimes even diverse, perspectives. With the introduction of a new organizational model of the dual conference, we were also happy to have as co-chairs a number of distinguished scholars who provide fresh insights into the conferences and who attract new relevant communities.

These proceedings cover completed research accepted in the General eParticipation Track and in the Policy Modelling and Policy Informatics Track. The completed research papers accepted in the other three tracks are published in the LNCS proceeding of IFIP EGOV. Like last year, accepted contributions of ongoing research, innovative projects, and PhD papers as well as abstracts of posters and workshops of the dual IFIP EGOV and ePart conference are published in joint complimentary proceedings by IOS Press.

The call for papers of the eParticipation and Policy Modelling Tracks attracted a wide range of topics with 32 submissions, which included 12 accepted completed research papers (published in these proceedings) and 10 accepted ongoing research papers (published in the joint IFIP EGOV and ePart proceedings of ongoing research).

This volume includes completed research organized in four topical threads as follows:

- eParticipation and Social media
- Deliberation and Consultation
- Evaluation
- Policy Formulation and Modelling

All ePart submissions were blind peer reviewed by at least three reviewers (and in most cases by four reviewers) from the Program Committee. The quality of the conference is directly related to the quality of peer reviews and we would like to once again acknowledge the work that has been done.

The Paper Awards Committee of IFIP EGOV and IFIP ePart was again led by committee chair Olivier Glassey of IDHEAP, Lausanne/Switzerland. The Organizing Committee carefully reviewed the accepted papers and granted outstanding paper awards to the winning authors. The winners were awarded in the ceremony during the conference dinner, which has become a highlight of each year's conference. The names of the award winners can be found on the conference website: <http://www.egov-conference.org/egov-conf-history/egov-2015/>.

This year, EGOV and ePart were organized in Thessaloniki, Greece, under the aegis of the University of Macedonia. The University of Macedonia has long been active in research in the areas of eGovernment and eParticipation. However, the success of a conference takes much more. We would therefore like to thank the team of the University of Macedonia and particularly Eleni Panopoulou but also Maria Zotou, Elina Nanopoulou, and Eleni Kamateri for their efforts in the excellent organization of the dual conference.

The University of Macedonia is a relatively new and small university. Its departments of Applied Informatics and Business Administration have worked together for these conferences. The University of Macedonia is located in Thessaloniki, Greece; a city with 2,500 years of history and at the same time a lively, artistic city and one of the largest student centers in South-Eastern Europe. The conference dinner was held at the Byzantine Museum and was preceded by an exclusive museum tour especially organized for conference participants. It could not have been more appropriate!

It was a real pleasure to have the conferences in such a suitable location and we are looking forward to IFIP EGOV 2016.

August/September 2015

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Electronic Participation

7th IFIP 8.5 International Conference, ePart 2015,  
Thessaloniki, Greece, August 30 -- September 2, 2015,  
Proceedings

Tambouris, E.; Panagiotopoulos, P.; Sæbø, Ø.;  
Tarabanis, K.; Wimmer, M.A.; Milano, M.; Pardo, T. (Eds.)  
2015, X, 161 p. 33 illus., Softcover  
ISBN: 978-3-319-22499-2