E-Government and the Rise of the Fifth Estate

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Technologically Inspired Visions

- Interactive Computing -- the ‘public information utility’ of the 1970s
- Two-way Cable Videotext -- tele-democracy of the 1980s
- The Internet and Web -- e-Democracy, e-Government from the 1990s
- Web 2.0 Social Networking -- Daily MyGovernment
- Grid Computing -- the 21st Century Internet as a World Wide Wide Computer -- a Public Information Utility
Enduring Issues

- Telocracy or Point and Click Democracy
- Equity: Digital Divides
- Privacy and Surveillance
- Limited Participation or the Mob -- Rules of Order
Oxford Internet Surveys (OxIS)

- 2003, 2005 and 2007 (next in 2009)
- Cross-sectional Surveys versus Panels
- Multi-Stage Probability Sample
- England, Scotland & Wales
- Respondents: 14 year olds and older
- Face-to-face Interviews
- Sponsorship from Hefce, AOL, BT, British Library, Cisco, Ofcom, Wanadoo (Orange), Talisma
- World Internet Project – over 2 dozen nations
Sample Sizes and Response Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fielded in</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>February-March</td>
<td>March - April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>2,030</td>
<td>2,185</td>
<td>2,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>77%</td>
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Diffusion of the Internet in Britain 2003-2007

% of participants

Yes, current user 59 60 67
No, but used it in the past 6 8 5
Never used 35 32 28

2003 2005 2007
Digital Divides: Income and Internet Use

OxIS 2005: N=2,185; OxIS 2007: N=2,350
The diagram shows a scatter plot comparing the percentage of households having access to the internet against the percentage of GDP as EU25. The equation of the trend line is $y = 0.8084x^{0.8998}$. The countries are represented as data points on the graph.
Increasing Concerns over Privacy

- People should be concerned about protection of credit cards
- People who go on the Internet put their privacy at risk
- People should be able to express their opinion anonymously
- The present use of public CCTV, webcams and security cameras is a threat to personal privacy
- Personal information is being kept somewhere without me knowing
- The present use of computers is a threat to personal privacy
- Everyone in Britain should be required to carry an ID card

% that agree or strongly agree:

- 2005:
  - 88
  - 70
  - 60
  - 39
  - 66
  - 49
  - 59
  - 84
  - 66
  - 59

- 2007:
  - 88
  - 70
  - 60
  - 39
  - 66
  - 49
  - 59
  - 84
  - 66
  - 51
Persistent Digital Divides
Growing Concerns over Privacy
Limits on e-Participation

- 25% Britons signed a petition, 7% online
- Less than 3% went online to contact a politician, party, or to donate money or join a civic organization
The Internet in Everyday Life:
Key Themes and Issues

- Limits on Political Participation
- Growing Concerns over Privacy
- Persistent Digital Divides

BUT
Broadband access all households

2003: 11%
2005: 36%
2007: 56%

Broadband access in internet access households

2003: 19%
2005: 59%
2007: 85%
Evolving Levels of e-Participation: Britain

- Contacted a politician or government official online: 2 (2005), 3 (2007)
- Email an MP: 5 (2005), 11 (2007)
- Email a councillor: 6 (2005), 12 (2007)
- Pay local council tax, fine, service: 16 (2005), 29 (2007)
- Information about MP, local councillor, politician: 8 (2005), 11 (2007)
- Information about schools: 19 (2005), 23 (2007)
- Information about Central Government services: 21 (2005), 26 (2007)
- Information about local council services: 19 (2005), 29 (2007)
Reconfiguring Access
Trust in Media, UK, 2007

(Reliability of Information)

Level of accuracy of information

Newspapers
Television
Internet

Non user
Ex-Users
User
Where people go for information:

Ways to Look for Information Online (QC23)

- Mainly go to specific pages
- Both about the same
- Mainly use a search engine such as Google

2005:
- Mainly use a search engine: 62%
- Both about the same: 19%
- Mainly go to specific pages: 19%

2007:
- Mainly use a search engine: 57%
- Both about the same: 10%
- Mainly go to specific pages: 33%

Current users. OxIS 2005: N=1,309; OxIS 2007: N=1,578
Figure 1-3: Reconfiguring Access

TECHNOLOGIES
• What know-how you require
• How you do what you do

PEOPLE
• Who you know
• How you communicate

SERVICES
• How you obtain services
• From whom and from where you obtain services

INFORMATION
• How you get information
• What you know
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BUT

- Centrality of the Internet: Reconfiguring Access
- New, Growing, Trusted Resource
- New Means for Social Accountability
The Fifth Estate

- Press in the 18th Century -- the Fourth Estate
- Internet in the 21st -- enabling a Fifth Estate

Enabling people to network with other individuals and with information, services and technical resources in ways that support social accountability in government, politics, and other sectors.
Networked Institutions v Networked Individuals of the Fifth Estate

- Networked Institutions of e-Democracy: e-Consultation, e-Voting
- Networked Individuals of the Fifth Estate: political movements, such as aftermath of 2004 Madrid train bombing, Moveon.org
- Boundary Spanning: e-Petitions (Road Pricing in Britain)
Networked Institutions v Networked Individuals of the Fifth Estate

- Networked Institutions of e-Government: such as in e-Health

- Networked Individuals of the Fifth Estate:
  - going to the Internet for health and medical information
  - networking physicians via Sermo
Going to the Web for Information

% of current users

- Making travel plans: 77% (2005), 84% (2007)
- Getting information about local events: 66% (2005), 77% (2007)
- Looking for news: 61% (2005), 69% (2007)
- Finding information about health or medical care: 37% (2005), 68% (2007)
- Looking for sports information: 54% (2005), 56% (2007)
- To get humorous content (jokes etc): 36% (2005), 50% (2007)
- Looking for jobs/work: 42% (2005), 48% (2007)
Arenas Shaped by 5th Estate

- Governance and Democracy
- Press and Media
- Business and Commerce
- Work and the Organization
- Education
- Research
Accountability Despite Divides

Infrastructure that Enables Accountability

How can governments rethink their role?

What information and services should government provide, share, let others provide?

How can governments protect the Fifth Estate?
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