

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: A TYPOLOGICAL APPROACH

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This poster proposes a typology to analyze the impact of digital government on civic engagement by distinguishing characteristics of target clients and models of information technology use.

TARGET CLIENTS

- **Membership** with strong commonality and feelings of belonging
- **Homogeneous public** with similar purposes and attitudes to use information technology applications
- **Heterogeneous public** may come and go freely

MODELS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USE

- **Economy model:** efficiency and material incentive; lowly committed consumers
- **Solidarity model:** solidarity and mutual benefits; supporters and advocacy
- **Action model:** self-empowerment; highly committed and self-governing activists

	ECONOMY MODEL	SOLIDARITY MODEL	ACTION MODEL
MEMBERSHIP	E-payroll E-procurement	Minority groups (races, diseases)	Closed activist groups (Ku Klux Klan)
HOMOGENEOUS PUBLIC	Tax filing Vehicle registration renewal	Major political parties Political interest groups	Minor political parties Issue-based groups
HETEROGENEOUS PUBLIC	E-government portals (online forums, chat rooms)	N/A	Activists groups specializing in public affairs

ECONOMY MODEL FOR THE PUBLIC: DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

- Digital government for the homogeneous has indirect influences on civic engagement by improving trust, responsiveness, and transparency.
- Digital government for the heterogeneous public has potential to reach out to citizens for participatory democracy.
- Providers, if not encouraged, tend to be less willing to disclose sufficient information and contact citizens.
- Two-way communications may degrade rather than improve deliberation if poorly managed and misused ("flaming")
- Provision of sufficient information and proper management are key issues for effective use of digital government.

SOLIDARITY MODEL FOR THE HOMOGENEOUS PUBLIC: MAJOR PARTIES

- Political parties tend to use information technology for disseminating information, fundraising, and mobilizing volunteers.
- Not to mobilize uninterested constituents and persuade adversaries, but to organize engaged supporters.
- Solidarity model as the equilibrium where providers and consumers (supporters) are satisfied.
- One-way communications are preferred, while two-way channels are not fully used to be rhetoric.
- Solidarity model for the heterogeneous public by definition is not likely to exist.

ACTION MODEL FOR THE PUBLIC

- Minority parties and issue-based groups use information technology to overcome barriers of material resources.
- Activists with specialty in public affairs provide non-partisan information to the heterogeneous public.
- Collective action problems may degrade deliberative discussions and endanger self-governing.
- Even if frustrated, activists are less likely to leave and tend to strategically go back and forth online and offline. (this strategic switching may result in bogus online activities)

CONCLUSION

- Information technology is neither a panacea nor a threat to society.
- Current e-government does not succeed in reaching out to citizens despite its potential, leaving managerial issues.
- Solidarity model tends to reinforce supporters by exchanging favorable information, resources (money), and policies.