

# The ITP News

Official Newsletter of the Information Technology & Politics  
Organized Section of the American Political Science Association

Volume 2, Issue 1

Fall 2005

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## President's Welcome

Greetings fellow ITP colleagues! Welcome to the latest issue of *The ITP News*. My name is Jeffrey Seifert and I am the 2005-2006 ITP section President. For my day job, I am a Specialist in Information Science and Technology Policy at the Congressional Research Service in Washington, DC. I am also an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Tech, teaching in their Online Master of Arts (OLMA) in Political Science program. My e-mail inbox is always open (and often overflowing), so please do not hesitate to send any comments, questions, concerns, ideas, etc. to me at: <mailto:jseifert@crs.loc.gov>. Likewise, if you would prefer to call, my direct line is 202-707-0781. Voicemail picks up if I cannot. I usually respond to messages fairly quickly, but like everyone, I sometimes have crunch times when I cannot respond as promptly as I would prefer. So, if you do not hear back right away, please bear with me, I have not forgotten you.

One of the reasons you are receiving this newsletter is because of the efforts of past-President and current Newsletter Editor, Stuart Shulman. His proclivity for giving away iPods and fancy plaques resulted in a boost in the section's membership numbers, which had slipped well below APSA's 250 member minimum for 3 consecutive quarters (4 quarters and you are out!). While we are off the endangered section species list for now, the section could fall back into the danger zone if we do not collectively work to maintain and grow the herd. Remembering to renew your section membership (only \$5) when you renew your APSA membership, and encouraging colleagues to join the Section. Plus, with the holidays just around the corner, an ITP section membership makes a great gift for those political science holiday gift exchange occasions (see p. 20).

But seriously, one of the values of the ITP Section is that its members represent a research community of individuals interested in issues that intersect technology and politics, both in teaching and research. (continues on p.2)

## The ITP News is in Search of a Cartoonist Submitted by Jeffrey Seifert

Members of the ITP Section are a versatile group. They read. They research. They write. They own way too many computers. Some even draw! If you have drawing skills (or at least don't lack self confidence), *The ITP News* may have a space in its pages for you. It is not exactly a top-tier, peer-reviewed article, but it could win you the lasting admiration and good cheer of your colleagues. Your tasteful but comedic submissions can be sent to Stu Shulman at: <mailto:Shulman@pitt.edu>.

## President's Welcome (cont.)

(continued from p.1)

In my opinion, one of the attractions of ITP-related research is that it often crosses disciplinary boundaries and examines topics that do not always fit neatly into the recognized major subdivisions of the political science discipline. ITP-related research also tends to be very dynamic, reflecting changes in politics as well as technology. However, these same characteristics also pose some of our biggest challenges.

While the number of interdisciplinary majors/programs is on the rise, the major institutions of academia (i.e., jobs, tenure decisions, publication venues, etc.) still strongly favor individuals and research most closely aligned with the established disciplinary boundaries. This is not to say boundaries are necessarily bad. However, it does suggest that we sometimes need to make an extra effort to identify and engage colleagues with similar research interests and develop our professional networks.

To that end, one of the most important actions we can all take is to actively participate and contribute to ITP-related teaching and research activities, as well as create new opportunities. That includes proposing panels and papers for APSA conferences, collaborating with colleagues, offering to peer review colleagues' work, organizing workshops and symposia, creating new courses, and fostering publishing opportunities when possible. It also includes letters to *The ITP News* Editor. For example, in this issue, Rumel Mahmood begins a thoughtful discussion regarding the future of the ITP Section and ITP research, one which would be well worth continuing online or in the pages of *The ITP News*.

Last, but not least, I want to encourage everyone to take advantage of the section's online tools to share ideas, discuss research, debate section issues, post conference announcement/calls for papers, or whatever else might be of e-interest to our colleagues. Join the **ITP listserv** ([http://lists.hmdc.harvard.edu/index.cgi?info=apsa\\_itp](http://lists.hmdc.harvard.edu/index.cgi?info=apsa_itp)) and visit the **ITP web site** (<http://www.apsanet.org/~itp/>), maintained by ITP Webmaster Bob Brookshire. Members should check out, and then add to, the **ITP Research Database Wiki** (<http://www.hmdc.harvard.edu/itp/>), established by Micah Altman and maintained by you, the members of ITP.



ITP President Jeffrey Seifert

## Duke Hosts Workshop on Technology Policy

Submitted by Kenneth Rogerson

On September 30, 2005, the **DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy** at Duke University sponsored a day-long workshop entitled, "The American Footprint: The Impact of U.S. Technology and Technology Policy on the World."

Several members of the ITP section participated in the session, which had the goal of bringing together people from different disciplines and professional organizations who were doing related work.

Sessions included:

- "Technology Policy Trend-Setting: Who is Following, Who is Leading and How?"
- "The Digital Divide: Are We Bridging It or Is It Widening?"
- "Private Industry, International Organizations and Governments: Cooperation or Competition?", and "Technology and Democratic Process."

Participants included: Derrick Coghurn, Syracuse University; Richard Davis, Brigham Young University; Elisabeth Jay Friedman, University of San Francisco; Betty Hanson, University of Connecticut; Jeffrey Hart, Indiana University; Randy Kluver, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore; Nanette Levinson, American University; Kenneth Rogerson, Duke University; Laura Roselle, Elon University; Jeff Seifert, Congressional Research Service; JP Singh, Georgetown University; Tamara Small, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada; and Wouter Teepe, University of Groningen, The Netherlands. The papers will be available on the web at: <http://www.media.duke.edu/dewitt/research>.

**DeWitt Wallace Center  
for Media and  
Democracy** 

<http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/>

## New Book from an ITP Member

Roy G. Saltman, *The History and Politics of Voting Technology: In Quest of Integrity and Public Confidence*, Palgrave Macmillan (Available January 06)

"The History and Politics of Voting Technology: In Quest of Integrity and Public Confidence" follows the development of voting technology, discussing policy and its changes as time progresses, from the Declaration of Independence to July 2005.

***"His overall thesis is that the failure of federalism caused the Florida fiasco..."***

Hard technology arose in the late 19th century with the invention of the lever machine; computers started to be used with the first punch card and optical scan ballots in about 1961.

Precinct-located computers began to be used with the advent of minicomputers and, of course, we now have touchscreens with direct recording electronic voting systems.

Saltman discusses the controversy that led to adoption of the "Australian" ballot, allowing for true secrecy, beginning in the 1880s. The debacle of the Florida presidential election in 2000 is given a whole chapter, and the final chapter covers what has transpired since, including the Help America Vote Act and the disagreement over "voter-verified paper audit trails." He covers the brief flirtation with remote Internet voting, mostly citing the work of Alvarez and Hall.

His overall thesis is that the failure of federalism caused the Florida fiasco, and this issue goes back to how the U.S. decided to carry out federal elections, under the Election Clause, Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution.

Saltman believes that the book will serve as a valuable addition to studies of public policy concerning elections.

## New NSF-Funded ITP Research

David Lazer (Harvard University), Kevin Esterling (University of California, Riverside), Mike Neblo (Ohio State University), and the Congressional Management Foundation recently received a grant from the NSF Digital Government program entitled "Connecting to Congress: The Adoption and Use of Web Technologies among Congressional Offices." The project will study how Members of Congress use the Internet to provide information to their constituents.

There is a significant lag in Congress' use of innovative and interactive web technologies on their individual websites. Most sites offer basic information such as biographies, photographs, and e-mail links. However, to date, very few offices incorporate interactive features like message boards, blogs or e-townhalls. As citizens become increasingly Internet savvy, this lag in technology adoption significantly limits constituents' ability to participate in-creases the gap that exists between the

people and the legislative process. This research not only will test political science hypotheses deduced from institutional theory, the research also will contribute to the

practical knowledge within Congress on how best to use the Internet to engage, involve, and inform citizens by facilitating the adoption of innovative interactive Internet tools.

The project incorporates a two-pronged study: 1) a statistical analysis of how and why Members of Congress

choose one Internet tool over another and how these technologies diffuse within the Congress; and 2) in-depth studies of 20 offices to identify and understand the factors influencing adoption of tools, the impact of the adopted technologies, as well as the impact of decisions not to adopt, on congressional office routines and procedures.

The award provides over \$1 million spread over three years among the partnering

institutions. The study has received unprecedented support from Congress, with 20 Members committed to participate in the research.

***"...very few offices incorporate interactive features like message boards, blogs or e-townhalls. As citizens become increasingly Internet savvy, this lag in technology adoption significantly limits constituents' ability to participate increases the gap that exists between the people and the legislative process."***

# National Science Foundation Call for Proposals



## “Science and Society Program”

### Directorate for Social, Behavioral, & Economic Sciences National Science Foundation

Science and Society considers proposals that examine questions that arise in the interactions of engineering, science, technology, and society. There are four components:

- **Ethics and Values in Science, Engineering and Technology (EVS)**
- **History and Philosophy of Science, Engineering and Technology (HPS)**
- **Social Studies of Science, Engineering and Technology (SSS)**
- **Studies of Policy, Science, Engineering and Technology (SPS)**

The components overlap, but are distinguished by the different scientific and scholarly orientations they take to the subject matter, as well as by different focuses within the subject area. For complete details, see the S&S Program Solicitation (NSF 05-588) at: <http://www.nsf.gov>

This program solicitation covers the following modes of support:

- **Standard Research Grants and Grants for Collaborative Research** – proposals for research, infrastructure or education projects; not require full-time investigator support; may involve Co-PIs, post doc researchers, or grad/undergrad students. Maximum award, excluding indirect costs, is \$300,000 for two or three years.
- **Scholars Awards** – full-time support normally for only one year, up to \$70,000 for total direct costs.
- **Postdoctoral Fellowships** – to enhance the methodological skills and research competence of researchers; must have both a training and a research component; site must be different from where received PhD. Stipends range from \$36,000-\$42,000 a year for maximum of 2 years.
- **Professional Development Fellowships** – to improve and expand skills in areas different from that of PhD; must contain both a training and research component. Range from \$36,000 to \$60,000 plus \$3,000 for travel and research expenses.
- **Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants** – to provide funds for dissertation research expenses not normally available through the student’s university and in settings away from campus. Up to \$8,000 for research in North America and \$12,000 for international research.
- **Small Grants for Training and Research (SGTR)** (August submission only) – to provide sustained research opportunities for graduate students and post-docs. Maximum of \$100,000 per year for one post doc and up to three graduate students a year; generally for three years.
- **Conference and Workshop Awards** – to develop, evaluate, and share new research findings; need co-sponsor from national association or organization. Limit of \$25,000.

**Proposal Due Dates:** August 1 and February 1

**Contact:**

Ronald Rainger <mailto:rrainger@nsf.gov> (703) 292-7283 (HPS & SSS)

Priscilla Regan <mailto:pregan@nsf.gov> (703) 292-7318 (EVS & SPS)

John P. Perhoni <mailto:jperhoni@nsf.gov> (703) 292-7279 (Dissertations)

**Website:** <http://snipurl.com/jxjw>

# Letter to the Editor: "The Future of ITP"

[Editor's note: *The ITP News* welcomes and encourages thoughtful letters such as this one about the future of the section. Please consider using the ITP listserv to engage Rumel and the rest of the membership on this topic]

Dear Editor,

I would like to raise a few issues with you regarding the future of the ITP Section of APSA. I would like to see continued growth for the ITP section, but I think there are a few things ITP scholars could or should be doing to make this a reality. I think if we were doing eye-catching research, the rest of APSA would notice and this would lead to more growth and hopefully permanency in our status. Everyone working in ITP already does fantastic and very interesting research, but I think there are certain ways to make it more attractive to the non-ITP academic community. I hesitate to use the term "marketability," for that is not what I advocate. Rather, tying ITP issues in to the more buzzworthy research agendas should further our interests. I think there are three areas that ITP research should be more closely tied to.

First, it would be really interesting to see ITP scholarship consider institutional analysis more explicitly. I think I have seen some implicit references to institutions, but not much in terms of how different institutions--legislative, executive, or judicial--impact the way ITP is shaped. Institutional scholarship in general seems to be the interest of many in academic political science these days.

Second, I would like to see more ITP research on outcomes, of which I have two kinds in mind. I suspect it to be the case, though I have seen very little evidence for it, that economic development should improve with such interfaces as electronic government. That is, e-government should reduce transaction costs and thus lead to more economic growth. The evidence of this that I have seen has been anecdotal and usually in introductions to other detailed aspects of e-government, for instance.

Another kind of "outcome" is legitimacy or trust. This may actually be more of a process oriented variable than outcome oriented, but it is certainly a dependent variable for many scholars and an increasingly employed independent variable in explaining outcomes like growth. There have been some studies looking at e-government's impact on trust, or vice versa, with mixed findings. I have heard of others with more favorable results. These should be displayed more prominently in the mainstream political science journals.

The third area of interest that I have seen very little research on is in developing countries. I think more ITP scholars should consider the impact of ITP in poorer countries. I think ICTs have impacted such places substantially--through mobile telephony or increased internet connectivity. While teledensity is low in these countries, thus making internet connectivity tougher, mobile telephony has skyrocketed in many developing countries for this very reason. Surely, there are benefits to having such technologies with implications for ITP.

Lastly, I think ITP should be looking at the open source movement closely, especially with regard to e-government. (This last point does not deal with more mainstream political science, but something very IT specific. Of course, I suspect there are broader implications for this work.) I would be very interested to see a list, or database if you will, of which countries have begun using open source software to implement service delivery and information dissemination to their citizens. What are the determinants of these kinds of software implementation? More importantly, are there observable trends in witnessing migrations from proprietary software to free and open source?

Pursuing all of these research questions, especially the first three, are important and can contribute to the growth of ITP in the future.

Sincerely Yours,  
Rumel S. Mahmood  
Graduate Student  
Department of Political Science  
Washington University in St. Louis



# Romanian IT Organizations' Experiences Suggest Action Research of Technocracy in Developing Countries

Submitted by Ellen K. Sullivan

The political agenda of the government of Romania, a European Union (EU) accession candidate country, includes information technology implementation as a major reform tool. The National School for Political Science and Public Administration held an international conference October 20-21 at the Romanian Parliamentary Palace, where invited guests from nine countries presented their findings on contemporary concepts and approaches to European administration. One ITP member, Dr. Ellen K. Sullivan of George Mason University, highlighted national information technology uses that improved Romanian alignment with the European Union. José Martins França of Portugal's National Administration Institute presented the Portuguese model of training for public administrators, pointing to formal training and skills certifications as a common feature within European administrative space. The diffusion of technology skills among a widening group of individuals as in the Romanian case – from IT firms to IT workers in public administration and outward to the public administration corps – calls attention to the various social, economic, and political dimensions of IT on the national agenda, especially considerations of power, legitimacy, and efficiency of a technocratic elite in a developing democracy.

Information technology organizations' actions in the political arena improved Romanian-EU alignments in target areas of competitiveness, democratic institutions, and work force training. The national IT trade association (<http://www.ARIES.ro>) previously demonstrated policymaking expertise by drafting successful IT export policy and remains engaged in public-private partnerships that include designing software for public administration. More recently, Romanian public administrators working in information technology departments formed a professional association (<http://www.ANIAP.ro>) that also provides technical expertise in parliamentary deliberations over ICT. Finally, the government of Romania imposed a training requirement for public administrators to pursue a computer skills certification, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), which will ensure adequate workforce skills for adopting the automation presumed in EU public administration (<http://www.ecdl.org.ro> and <http://www.cpap.snspsa.ro>).

The formal ECDL skills certification for public administrators represents a gatekeeping requirement that distinguishes European public administration cadres from the American profession of public administrators. The governance implications of formal certifications of IT skills for professional mobility and for institutional capacity to deliberate on technology policy pose interesting topics for studying ICT in developing countries, especially in transitional countries such as Romania.



Photos: International Speakers at the October 2005 Bucharest Conference, "European Administration—Contemporary Concepts and Approaches."

# New Online *Journal of Public Deliberation*

Submitted by Peter Muhlberger

Members of the Information Technology and Politics Section may find the new online *Journal of Public Deliberation* (<http://services.bepress.com/jpd>) of interest both for its articles and for publishing their work. This free international journal focuses on the emerging multi-disciplinary field of "deliberative democracy" research and practice, broadly defined and including both online and face-to-face deliberation. Articles synthesize research, opinion, projects, experiments, and experiences of academics and practitioners. The current issue contains an article on e-rulemaking and an article describing the research design and preliminary results of a major NSF-funded online deliberation experiment. Articles are peer reviewed, the editorial board contains many prominent people in the field, and the journal has had a high download rate for articles since its inception. The journal editors welcome submissions from the full range of quantitative and qualitative approaches about any form of electronic deliberation. At the website, you can sign up for email updates.



## New Book from an ITP Member

**Andrew Chadwick, *Internet Politics: States, Citizens and New Communication Technologies* (Oxford University Press, "on the shelf" late January 2006). 390pp. ISBN 0195177738.**

### From the book cover:

In the developed world, there is no longer an issue of whether the Internet affects politics-but rather how, why, and with what consequences. With the Internet now spreading at a breathtaking rate in the developing world, the new medium is fraught with tensions, paradoxes, and contradictions. How do we make sense of these? In this major new work, Andrew Chadwick addresses such concerns, providing the first comprehensive overview of Internet politics.

Internet Politics examines the impact of new communication technologies on political parties and elections, pressure groups, social movements, local democracy, public bureaucracies, and global governance. It also analyzes persistent and controversial policy problems, including the digital divide; the governance of the Internet itself; the tensions between surveillance, privacy, and security; and the political economy of the Internet media sector. The approach is explicitly comparative, providing numerous examples from the U.S., Britain, and many other coun-

tries. Written in a clear and accessible style, this theoretically sophisticated and up-to-date text reveals the key difference the Internet makes in how we "do" politics and how we "think about" political life. A companion website, [www.andrewchadwick.com](http://www.andrewchadwick.com) offers dynamic, regularly updated material to supplement the book, along with PowerPoint slides for students and instructors, data spreadsheets, and additional case studies. Featuring numerous figures, tables, and text boxes, Internet Politics is ideal for undergraduate and graduate courses in political science, international relations, and communication studies.

### About the Author:

Andrew Chadwick is Senior Lecturer in Political Science in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway College, University of London. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford University, in 2004, and has written extensively on such topics as e-government, e-democracy, and Internet mobilization. His work has appeared in a wide range of academic journals, including Political Studies, Governance, The Journal of Political Ideologies, Information, Communication and Society, and Social Science Computer Review.

## ITP Grad Student in the Spotlight: David Bray

David Bray is a current PhD student studying Information Systems at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. David previously served for 5 years as IT Chief for the Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Right after he departed, the CDC Director named him for an award for his IT role and responsibilities with the CDC response to anthrax, West Nile, SARS, and other disease outbreaks. The CDC announced the award this way:



“The former information technology chief for the NCID Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Program (BPRP) has received two high awards over the past year. David Bray, MSPH, MCSD, received the CDC Director's Award for 2005 information services delivered to CDC. He managed the information technology aspects of the BPRP response during the 9/11 aftermath and the anthrax events of 2001, as well as the outbreaks of West Nile Virus in 2002, and sudden acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the first documented outbreak of monkeypox in the Northern Hemisphere in 2003. Bray also received the 2004 CDC agency-wide Information Services Award for his work with BPRP and shared in the SARS team's Information Services Award.”

David has always believed a key to success in government ventures, be they intra- or inter-agency in nature, is to identify common needs and work to share efforts as well as rewards. Another truism learned from learned from his role in emergency response is that we need to collaborate -- as witnessed by anthrax, SARS, and the latest emerging threat of avian influenza, these potential events are larger than any one agency or department. David argues you need to surround yourself with as many great partners as possible, and build a team that spans government agencies.

In August, 2005, David took leave from CDC to start a Ph.D. in Information Systems in the Goizueta Business School in Atlanta, GA. For his dissertation, David hopes to demonstrate that governments need to think across multiple partners to be successful. Technology that can help by encouraging inter-group collaboration and inter-governmental knowledge management is the key.

### Do your read or edit the Wikipedia?

**The ITP News wants to hear your story!**  
Please send us 100-500 words on what the Wikipedia means to you. In particular:

- Why is the Wikipedia on the rise?
- What politics does wiki technology bode?
- Who are the Wikipedians?
- How are wikis influencing academics?

If all this is “Greek” to you, then please visit:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)



# Opinion: Integrate Online and Offline Issue Advocacy Strategies



**First in a series submitted by Alan Rosenblatt, Ph.D., Executive Director Internet Advocacy Center, Washington, DC**

[Editor's note: Having invited Dr. Rosenblatt to submit a regular opinion column for *The ITP News*, it is only fair to encourage ITP members to submit regular comments, replies and rebuttals to be included in the next newsletter. Please, no mass e-mail campaigns, unless they go straight to: <mailto:alan@joemocracy.com>]

In 1904, Sir Charles Sherrington performed a series of experiments on dogs exploring their reflexive behavior. Sherrington observed that there were several pressure points on a dog's body where, if he scratched hard enough the dog would reflexively move its paw in a rapid "scratching" motion. He further observed that there was a minimum threshold for stimulation at each of these pressure points necessary to produce the reflexive behavior. More interestingly, he observed that by simultaneously stimulating two or more of these pressure points, each below the minimum threshold, he could elicit the reflexive behavior from the dog. He called this phenomenon additive summation.

If we apply this analysis metaphorically to Congress (no, I don't mean to suggest that Congress is a dog), Sherrington's model suggests that stimulating Congress with persuasive messaging via a variety of channels increases the likelihood that Congress will be persuaded, even if the persuasion coming through any individual channel is insufficient to have the effect. Thus, a campaign that sends constituent messages to Congress via email, fax, postal letter, phone calls, telegrams, and in-person visits, combined with visits from lobbyists and online/offline advertising is more likely to succeed than a campaign that employs only one channel, or perhaps even only a couple of channels.

Beyond this theoretical justification for an integrated strategy for communicating with Congress, recent developments make integrated strategies more desirable. Personnel in congressional offices have become increasingly suspicious, though perhaps only temporarily, of mass, form email campaigns.

Until a couple years ago, online-only advocacy campaigns achieved some remarkable successes. For example, in 2000, the Stop Family Violence campaign (<http://stopfamilyviolence.org>) not only saved the Violence Against Women's Act from being de-funded, it was able to double funding. At the local level, also in 2000, the Preservation Resource Center in New Orleans was able to save an historic building slated for demolition with only 70 emails to the State Senate President. And in 2002, the Environmental Working Group's (<http://www.ewg.org/farm>) farm subsidy database, dubbed simply "the website" in Congressional floor debate, shaped the 2002 Farm Bill by providing the amounts of farm subsidies given to every farm in America, all easily accessed via a search of the online database.

In recent years, however, we have seen declining effectiveness for mass, form email-only campaigns to Congress. According to the Congressional Management Foundation (<http://www.CMFweb.org>), part of the reason for this decline is increased skepticism among Congressional staffers of the authenticity of mass form email campaigns. CMF reports that 40 percent of Congressional staff does not believe form emails they get from mass campaigns come from real people. They believe the emails are generated off of lists, without the constituent's permission.

While it is true that a couple campaigns were caught generating email off of lists, these "astroturf" campaigns are the extremely rare exception. Virtually all of the mass, form email campaigns are generated by real constituents choosing to send email to Congress using prewritten letters provided by an advocacy organization that they have subscribed to. A large number of advocacy groups use grassroots advocacy software that allows them to pre-write messages and use email lists and websites to recruit citizens to send those messages. These grassroots software provide citizens with a single user interface for sending emails to both of their Senators and their Representative at the same time. These tools integrate the email address and information fields required on the respective Members' email web-form into one web-based form. (continues on p. 10)

## Online and Offline Strategies (cont.)

(continued from p. 9)

Among the most popular of the grassroots advocacy software services are Capwiz (<http://www.Capwiz.com>), which is used by about 1,500 organizations, GetActive (<http://www.GetActive.com>), which is used by about 800 organizations; and Democracy in Action (<http://www.DemocracyinAction.org>), which is used by about 200 organizations. These services provide advocacy groups with the ability to manage and grow an email list of activists and to create action alerts to mobilize activists to send messages to policymakers. These systems allow these groups the option to pre-write messages for emails and faxes and messages can be locked or unlocked for editing.

Citizens wanting to support an issue campaign are turning to advocacy groups to provide them with intelligence, since those groups monitor the issue as it develops in the legislature. Citizen activists also rely on these groups to provide draft letters that clearly identify the correct bill number and articulately state their position on the issue. While activists are generally free to edit or rewrite the email themselves, often times they do not. They prefer to send the messages unchanged, indicating that they agree with the message as it is written. As the great orators and scholars of rhetoric have recommended throughout history, why rewrite what has already been stated so well?

It is important to keep in mind that the Constitution guarantees the right of citizens to petition the government with grievances, and this right does not prohibit the use of form letters. And while there may be suspicion among Congressional staffers towards form email, that does not justify ignoring form emails. In the long run, citizens whose form letters are ignored often enough will take their frustrations to the voting booth. When that happens, we will likely see resurgence in the effectiveness of form email campaigns.

Regardless of what the future holds, the current slip in the effectiveness of form email campaigns makes it more important to vary the channels and forms of messages flowing into Congress on the issues of the day. Issue campaigns that use form emails combined with personal emails, phone calls, personal visits, faxes, and telegrams are harder for Congressional staff to dismiss than email only campaigns. This integrated approach will lead to more success, getting Congress to scratch out the problems facing the nation.

## Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics

Submitted by Alice Robbin

Rob Kling was a visionary and institution builder who tirelessly promoted a new area of research, Social Informatics. He passed away in May 2003.

Rob Kling spent his career formulating the grounds of a new research specialty that combined insights from computer science, engineering, information systems design, and the social sciences. His prodigious corpus of research is an extended exploration of the character of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

From the early 1970s he was a leading expert on the study of social informatics, which investigates aspects of computerization the roles of information technology (IT) in social and organizational change and the ways that the social organization of IT is influenced by social forces and social practices.



The Center of Social Informatics at Indiana University Bloomington has been renamed the Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics in his honor. The goal of the Center is to serve as a repository for activities, people, and opportunities related to the field of Social Informatics. We are at the very beginning of building a web site for the Center which can be found at: <http://rkcsi.indiana.edu>

The web site is intended for everyone interested in Social Informatics. Ideas and suggestions are welcomed. We encourage political scientists interested in politics and technology to join us in creating a rich source of work in the domain of Social Informatics.

Alice Robbin, Director  
Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics  
School of Library and Information Science  
Indiana University Bloomington  
<mailto:arobbin@indiana.edu>

## New Book from an ITP Member

Deborah L. Wheeler, *The Internet in the Middle East: Global Expectations and Local Imaginations in Kuwait* (Albany: SUNY, 2006)

From the book cover:

“Providing one of the first ethnographies of the Internet revolution in the Arab world, *The Internet in the Middle East* analyzes the ways in which the Internet affects public discourse and social practice in Islamic society. With a special focus on Kuwait, Deborah L. Wheeler offers an intimate journey through the lives of women, youths, and Islamist internet users, and through their testimonies shows what the Internet means in various Internet sub-cultures in the emirate.



The book includes a historical overview of the values and design principles embedded in the Internet by its inventors and early adaptors, and examines the major questions, debates assumptions and findings of the emerging field of Internet studies. Drawing on six years of research, including three years of fieldwork in Kuwait, Dubai, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, Wheeler provides a comparative overview of the meaning and manifestations of the Internet in the Middle East, giving careful attention to whether or not the Internet lives up to global expectations of promoting democracy, economic privatization and personal freedom.”

## From the Desk of Professor Richard Rose

**Language, Soft Power And Asymmetrical Internet Communication.** The starting point of Richard Rose's paper is Joe Nye's idea of the American language as a form of soft power attracting other nations to match American practices. Rose offers an alternative model, in which those who speak American (or English) as a foreign language are advantaged because they can understand where both partners in a dialogue are coming from, unlike those who are monoglots (e.g. solely able to speak the President's language). It then examines the home languages of Internet users. It points out that there are now more people who are bilingual with EFL (English as a foreign language) than there are native English-speakers--and that the number is growing, not least in countries such as China and India. The paper is Research Report No. 7 available from the Oxford Internet Institute, where Rose has been a visiting senior fellow (<http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk>). Richard Rose, trilingual in English, American and Ulster, can be communicated with at: <mailto:richard.rose@abdn.ac.uk>

**The Internet And Governance In A Global Context.** This is the subject of a special issue of the *JOURNAL OF PUBLIC POLICY*, 25, 1, (2005). The theme is that while the technology of the Internet is common around the globe, the national context varies greatly. The point is made by contributions from Ernest J Wilson III (and by Richard Heeks (developing countries); Randolph Kluwer (China); Hjalmar Westholm and Aare Zuurmond (European Union governments); Donatella della Porta and Lorenzo Mosca; and Laszlo Bruszt, Balazs Vedres and David Stark (NGOs) and by Richard Rose, the editor, in a long article setting out a Global Diffusion Model of e-Governance.

# New from The Haworth Press

## **Government Policy and Program Impacts on Technology Development, Transfer, and Commercialization: International Perspectives**

Edited by Kimball P. Marshall, William S. Piper, and Walter W. Wymer, Jr.

This first-of-its-kind book examines how access to technology is affected by government policies and government-sponsored programs. It provides an easy-to-read overview of the field and several studies serving as examples to guide government policymakers and private sector decision makers. This forward-looking book also forecasts the potential impacts of government regulation upon the field and presents provocative discussions of the ethical implications of the cross-cultural and cross-national challenges facing technologically developed nations in the global economy.

For more information on this book visit: <http://www.HaworthPress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5344>  
ITP members may receive a 20% discount on this book by using code BKD20 when ordering.

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## **The World of E-Government**

Edited by Gregory G. Curtin, Michael H. Sommer, and Veronika Vis-Sommer

The World of E-Government details how electronic communication is helping to revolutionize democracies across the globe, using case studies, cutting-edge research, and commentary from some of the world's foremost e-government researchers, practitioners, and industry leaders. Topics in this groundbreaking text range from the implementation of Singapore's e-government action plan to Canada's dual challenge experiences with e-government. This book will show you how to best plan for citizen use of e-government, how countries have avoided waste in unnecessary spending, and how e-government may move forward with optimal planning. This volume contains useful bibliographies, additional readings, tables, and figures to further your career or research studies in public administration, government, political science, law, education, or information technology.

For more information on this book visit: <http://www.HaworthPress.com/store/product.asp?sku=5024>



**Members of the Information Technology & Politics section of the American Political Science Association receive a 30% discount off of individual subscription rates to the *Journal of E-Government*. Please use code ITP30 when ordering or request a sample copy at: <http://snipurl.com/k4bs>.**

**Also, the first issue of the Journal of Women, Politics & Policy is now off press. To receive a free sample copy, please go to: <http://www.HaworthPress.com/web/JWPP/>.**

# Teaching Techways

## Google Earth as a Political Education Research Tool

Todd C. Patterson, University of South Carolina  
<mailto:pattertc@mailbox.sc.edu>

If you haven't yet seen one of Google's newest additions to its suite of technology tools, Google is worth your time to review Earth (<http://earth.google.com/>). Google Earth started earlier this year as Google expanded its spatially-related offerings as a supplement to its popular Google Maps product. Google Earth has a freeware tool with a set of pre-defined datasets that allow users to turn particular data of interest on and off – including performing virtual fly-throughs of physical features, such as the Grand Canyon, and urban landscapes, such as Washington, D.C.



Google Earth has the potential to be a powerful tool to support political education – for example, by facilitating understanding of the relationship between voting and socioeconomic characteristics, considering redistricting implications, and researching conflict studies along borderlands. Google Earth could also be a strong social empowerment tool by allowing users to consider their local landscape and potential impacts of proposed changes to it (such as in the Alaska oil wells debate). While there are not very many politically-oriented datasets available with the free version, there are, however, a wide variety of supplemental datasets available for Google Earth.

The Google Earth Community, Google's Keyhole Bulletin Board Service (BBS), features a variety of data layers – from National Geographic Society readings and supporting photos and videos, to transportation and travel-related information (<http://bbs.keyhole.com>). There are ever more services available to Google Earth with streaming media for near-real-time information, such as satellite locations and weather updates.

Keyhole BBS not only provides data, but it also serves as a collaborative discussion forum for users to interact and discuss data implications and evolution, as well as peripheral ideas. Another supplemental source of data and discussion is the Google "Maps Mania" blog, available at <http://googlemapsmania.blogspot.com/>. The blog features various datasets for Google Maps and Google Earth and protracted discussions about the utilization of Google's spatial tools.

Advanced versions of Google Earth, while not free, provide the ability to create spatial data and upload to the forums discussed above. The Google Earth data format is a customized eXtensible Markup Language (XML) text-based format that allows creating and editing data with a simple text editor, such as the Windows Notepad. The XML-based Keystone Markup Language (KML) specifications are publicly available to help users develop their own datasets and learn the particular technology. While the Professional version could be cost-prohibitive, there is tremendous potential for utilizing the freeware version of Google Earth to enhance student learning or undertake research and communicate related results.

Google  
Earth BETA



A 3D interface to the planet



# Teaching Techways

## Using NetLogo Simulations in the Political Science Classroom

Michael C. Gizzi, Mesa State College  
<mailto:mgizzi@gmail.com>

Members of the Information Technology and Politics section have long been innovators when it comes to using technology in the classroom, but I suspect few political scientists have ever had the opportunity or reason to use the NetLogo simulation modeling environment. NetLogo is well worth checking out!

What is NetLogo? First and foremost, it is a tool used by individuals interested in creating agent-based models. Agent-based modeling is an approach to simulating the behavior of a complex system in which agents—individuals or groups—interact with each other and with their environment using simple rules governing the agents behavior. It is gaining popularity in many disciplines including political science, economics, business, and the natural sciences. In the past year, two APSR articles have featured agent-based models.

NetLogo is unlike most other agent-based modeling programs in that models and simulations can be created by anyone without high-level programming skills. I teach it to undergraduates and high school students. NetLogo is loosely-based on the Logo programming language—a tool used to teach basic principles of geometry and logic to elementary age children. NetLogo shares the Logo language’s natural language syntax, and is easy to learn. Equally important, NetLogo is freely available, and runs on almost any operating system that supports java. There is also an active NetLogo user community, and many user-created models available for download. NetLogo models can also be configured to run as an applet from a web page.

As a simulation environment, NetLogo is a valuable teaching tool. By using a simulation to supplement a classroom presentation, students can “see” concepts in a way that often the best lecture cannot. I have found that using NetLogo models can be very productive in both lower-division and upper-division courses.

In an introductory course, I often make use of a model I created called “New Wealth Distribution” (see image on p. 15), which is a simulation of an “artificial society” of agents who live on a two-dimensional space. The model is inspired by Joshua Epstein and Robert Axtell’s model of the “sugarscape” from their book *Growing Artificial Societies: Social Science from the Bottom Up*.

In the model, each agent has a fixed vision and metabolism. For example, an agent with a vision of 3 and a metabolism of 4 can see 3 units out on their primary X, Y axes, and need to eat 4 units of food (in the Sugar-scape food is sugar) each time step. If the agent sees an empty space with 10 units of food, she can jump to it, eat the amount required for daily metabolism, and store the remainder.



As the simulation progresses, it is possible to see how wealth is distributed among agents, which is displayed with a Lorenz curve and gini index. By changing parameters of the model, the end-user can try to create a scenario where there is either more or less inequality between agents. The end-user can change the percent-best-land, raise or lower metabolism or vision, allow agents to inherit wealth from their parents, and allow agents with sufficient wealth to settle or farm a specific patch of land.

The Wealth Distribution model can be explored as a class, or it can be used as a homework assignment. When I do the latter, I give the students a list of questions to answer based on their “playing” with the model.

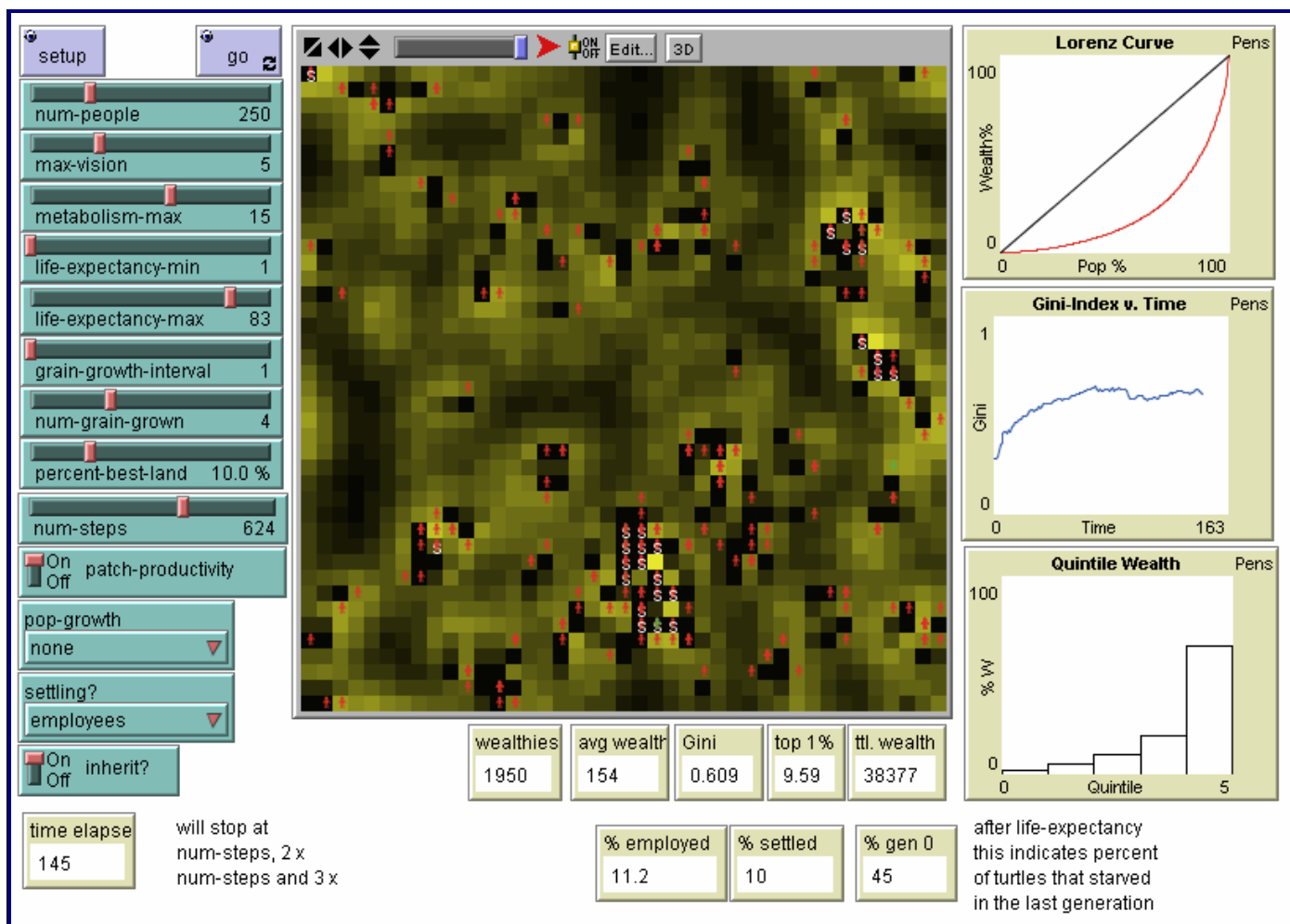
The possibilities with NetLogo as a teaching tool are only limited by the creativeness of the instructor. In addition to wealth distribution, I have models which explore segregation, a Hobbesian state of nature, faction, spread and control of the AIDS virus, plea bargaining, and judicial decision-making.

NetLogo can also be used in a research seminar, where students learn to program their own simulations which they use to explore their own research questions. This type of class requires a larger commitment on the part of the instructor than simply demonstrating models, but it can have good results. In the last seminar I taught using NetLogo, students created models expanding on wealth distribution, by adding in a second resource (gold) as well as such things as progressive and regressive taxes, and charity. Other students created models to explore the domino theory, plea bargaining, and incentives to work in a socialist system.

To learn more about NetLogo, please visit: <http://ccl.northwestern.edu/netlogo/> or visit my website at: <http://www.modelingcomplexity.net>.

# Teaching Techways

(continued from p. 14)



Above: NetLogo Wealth Distribution Simulation

The ITP section proudly counts some of the discipline’s most innovative teachers among its members. **Teaching Techways** is going to be a permanent feature in *The ITP News*, intended to highlight the teaching interests and activities of the section’s members. Whether it be in real space or virtual space, promoting active learning, teaching online, conducting interactive simulations, integrating new tools into the classroom, improving tried and true techniques, or something else altogether, *The ITP News* encourages your contributions. Stories detailing the trials, tribulations, and rewards of teaching the computer-savvy “Millennials” (Generation Y) are welcome as well. So, please send us your **Teaching Techways**!



You may “copy, print, distribute and display” this newsletter, and the editor very much hopes that you will do all that and more.

# Articles and Papers by ITP Members

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### Conference Papers

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Gil-García, J. Ramón, "Exploring the Success Factors of State Website Functionality: An Empirical Investigation" (paper presented at the National Conference on Digital Government Research, organized by the National Science Foundation, Atlanta, GA, USA, May 15-18, 2005).

Gil-García, J. Ramón and Ignacio Martinez-Moyano, "Exploring E-Government Evolution: The Influence of Systems of Rules on Organizational Action" (paper presented at the Pre-ICIS eGovernment Workshop, International Conference on Information Systems, Washington, DC, USA, December 12-15, 2004).

Helbig, Natalie, J. Ramón Gil-García, and Enrico Ferro, "Understanding the Complexity of Electronic Government: Implications from the Digital Divide Literature" (paper presented at the Americas Conference of Information Systems 2005, organized by the Association for Information Systems, Omaha, NE, USA, August 11-14, 2005).

Melcher, James P. and Richard P. Talbot, "Four More Years: How Maine's Legislative Candidate Websites Have Changed from 2000 to 2004" (Paper presented at the New England Political Science Association Convention, Portland, Maine, April 29-30, 2005).

Pardo, Theresa A. and J. Ramón Gil-García, "Understanding the Complexity of E-Government: Multi-method Approaches to Social Phenomena" (paper prepared for the 66th ASPA National Conference, organized by the American Society for Public Administration, Milwaukee, WI, April 2-5, 2005).

Sandoval Almazán, Rodrigo and J. Ramón Gil-García, "Assessing E-Government Evolution in Mexico: A Preliminary Analysis of the State Portals" (paper presented at the 2005 Information Resources Management Association International Conference, San Diego, California, May 15-18, 2005).

Williams, Christine B. and Pierre Berthon "Towards An Open Source Model for Democratic Politics" (paper presented at the International Conference on E-Government, Ottawa, Ontario, October 2005).

### About *The ITP News*

This newsletter is made possible by the many careful contributions of the members of the APSA's organized section on Information Technology and Politics. There is an open submission policy, which means there is never a bad time to send something in for the next issue. All ITP members are encouraged to contribute to (and distribute) this newsletter to help shape and grow the section.

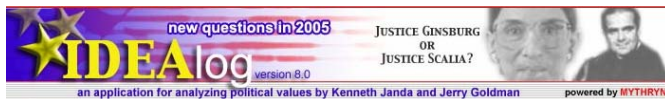
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<http://shulman.ucsur.pitt.edu>

# 2005 ITP Awards Announcements

At the annual business meeting in Washington DC, September 2005, the following awards were presented to the winners of the ITP- and Harworth Press-sponsored 2005 competitions. The winners received an engraved plaque and a check for one year's dues in APSA and, of course, ITP.

## Best Instructional Web Site

The ITP section's Best Instructional Web Site award for 2005 went to IDEALog at <http://www.idealog.org>. This year, the award was given for the simplicity and utility of the site. There are sites which may have much more information on a broader range of subjects, but IDEALog's ability to raise important, nuanced issues on the specific topic of U.S. political ideology is worthy of recognition. The site is a simple test that students (and others) can take to identify their own political ideology, providing instructors the opportunity to address overlapping issues and to point out to students that ideology is not always clear cut.



The original version of the IDEALog program was released in 1989. It was inspired by "The World's Smallest Political Quiz," a computer program that explained the libertarian political philosophy. In 1992, IDEALog won the Computer Software Award, Instructional Category, of the Computers and Multimedia Section of the American Political Science Association (ITP's predecessor!).

Indeed, Kenneth Janda and Jerry Goldman from Northwestern University are now 3-time award winners with a web site that permits professors to track class results, even over a number of iterations, to monitor ideological change. Since its inception, more than 1,000 classes and more than 10,000 students have visited IDEALog. While other nominations were also strong, the committee decided to go with the web site it thought had the greatest immediate impact for political science instruction.

## Best Research Software

The ITP section's Best Research Software award for 2005 went to The Virtual Data Center (VDC), a project founded by Micah Altman, Gary King, and Sidney Verba, and hosted by the Harvard-MIT Data Center: <http://vdc.hmdc.harvard.edu/VDC/>



The VDC is broadly applicable to the needs of social scientists. The committee was very impressed with the interface and feature list, and it helps simplify a long-standing problem in the discipline. Ultimately, almost all political scientists who use quantitative data may end up relying on this uniquely useful piece of infrastructure.

The Virtual Data Center is a complete open-source, digital library system for the management, dissemination, exchange, and citation of virtual collections of quantitative data. The VDC functionality provides everything necessary to maintain and disseminate an individual collection of research studies: including facilities for the storage, archiving, cataloging, translation, and on-line analysis of a particular collection. The system provides extensive support for distributed and federated collections including: location-independent naming of objects, distributed authentication and access control, federated metadata harvesting, remote repository caching, and distributed "virtual" collections of remote objects.

The long-term goal of the VDC project is to increase the replicability of research by providing a foundation for citation of quantitative data. The VDC system improves citation to data: by providing support for persistent, location-independent identifier, standardized metadata, and universal numeric fingerprints. VDC software is 'open source' and freely available for examination, modification, use, and redistribution, in support the principle that the fundamental infrastructure for research must be transparent (<http://thedata.org/>).

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### Best Article

The ITP section's Best Article award for 2005 went to Kenneth Rogerson of Duke University. The growth of Internet-mediated activities worldwide implies a certain level of speed of communications, connectivity, and access to information, or so many believe. However, Ken Rogerson's International Politics article, "Talking Past Each Other: International Organization Internet Policy in the Developing World," provides a textual analysis suggesting that the deliberative and decision-making processes of the international organizations responsible for forging consensus and implementing actions have their wires crossed.



Perhaps not surprisingly, the article demonstrates that equality in representation does not necessarily translate into equality in access. Instead, at a critical time in world affairs when the lack of opportunity has shown to breed discord and terrorism, the failure of these institutions to enable infrastructure development disproportionately hinders the developing world's ability to get online while the developed world continues to move forward. Ken's findings, relevant to both theory building and policymaking, raise the question of whether developing countries will seek alternatives to currently established venues to achieve the goal of realizing the Internet's potential for their citizens. Continued research in this rich area of inquiry should prove useful in helping political scientists better understand the fluid changes taking place in the global political economy. See an excerpt from Rogerson's article below:

Even with the extreme variety of mandates and actions, international organizations seem to be adapting to the complexities of the Internet and other new technologies... Within international organizations dedicated to a range of information/Internet issues, there are two different levels of discourse, one for the developed world and one for the developing world. For the developed world, the discussions focus on improved methods of Internet access and how to make the Internet more profitable. The developing world, on the other hand, is faced with the problem of simply getting access. The paradox is evident: the developed world is involved in both conversations, but the developing world only in one.

The developed world concentrates on the advancement of a Global Information Society (GIS) or Global Information Infrastructure (GII), a set of global integrated networks consisting of high-speed communications and digital services and applications, as well as providing full interactive access to these network-based services within countries and across national borders. Focusing on these issues, representatives from the developed world are able to promote their own, broader interests, such as the expansion of markets for the goods produced in their own countries.

Since the developing world is seeking similar things – though for the alternative rationale of simply becoming a part of the producing market – both worlds participate in a discussion in which they believe they are speaking to the others' issues....

[Among the IOs] that have information issues as a common theme, the level of their involvement in information-related activities varies greatly. One reason for this is the tendency of member constituencies to talk past each other when presenting their agendas.... With a few exceptions, the general trend is that those organizations in which the membership – whether country or sectoral – is structured to be more all-inclusively global, the themes are focused more on the developed world. As the organizations become either smaller and/or more specific in substantive focus, rhetoric about the developing world becomes predominant. [pages 188-89]

### Best Graduate Student Paper

The ITP section's Best Graduate Student Paper award for 2005 went to Kathleen McNutt of Simon Fraser University. Her paper, "The Canadian Virtual State: E-Government Policy and Progress," provides a very thorough, balanced and well referenced analysis of e-government in Canada. It shows how Canadian e-government deserves its reputation as the 'best in the world' and its place at the top of consultancy and NGO rankings for several years, but also carefully outlines some key weaknesses in the country's e-government efforts, particularly in terms of responsiveness and democratic enhancement. While providing an excellent synthesis of research that has been carried out in this field, the paper also illustrates how political research and analysis more generally tend to ignore the impact of technological change.

[If you know a colleague who should be in ITP, why not use this chance to buy a few friends a gift membership? If every member sent two, we'd have 15 instead of 5 panels at APSA]



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