



eDemocracy and eParticipation in the Flemish region: Where is the “demand site”?

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Global Forum 2008

Session 8

Government challenges converging technologies /
eDemocracy & eParticipation

Athens, October 22, 2008

Who's Indigov

- Spin-off K.U.Leuven
- Consultancy and user oriented research
- Expertise in eSociety (eGovernment, eParticipation....) and adoption/use of new media
- Broad experience: EU, Belgian Federal Government, Flemish Government, Local government, IT and Telecom industry

The demand-site of eDemocracy/eParticipation

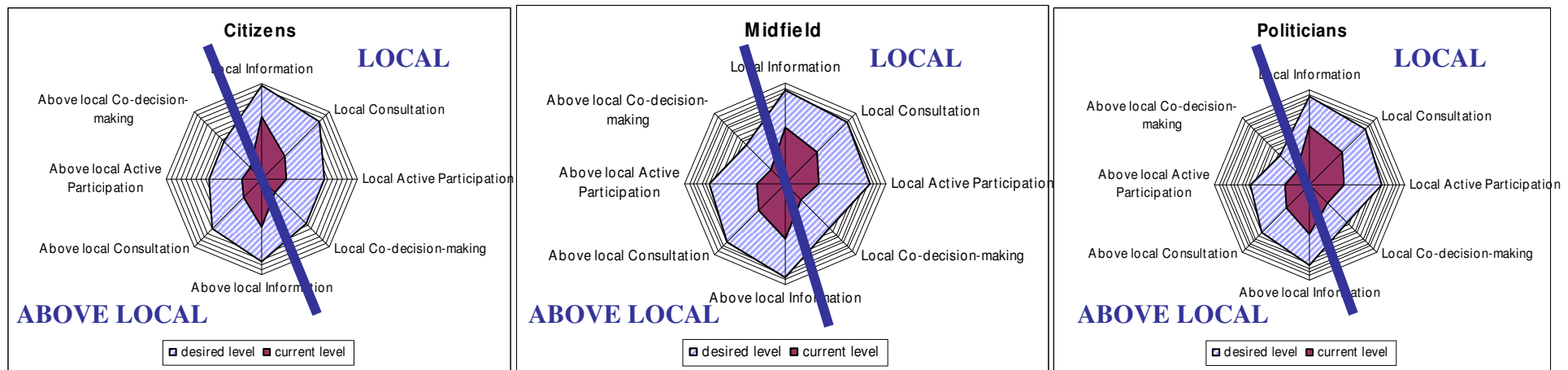
- In the last years a lot of eDemocracy/eParticipation initiatives: EU-project, studies, conferences...
- What about the actors of Democracy?
- What are the instruments of eDemocracy, best practices.....?

Study 2006 - eDemocracy in Flanders

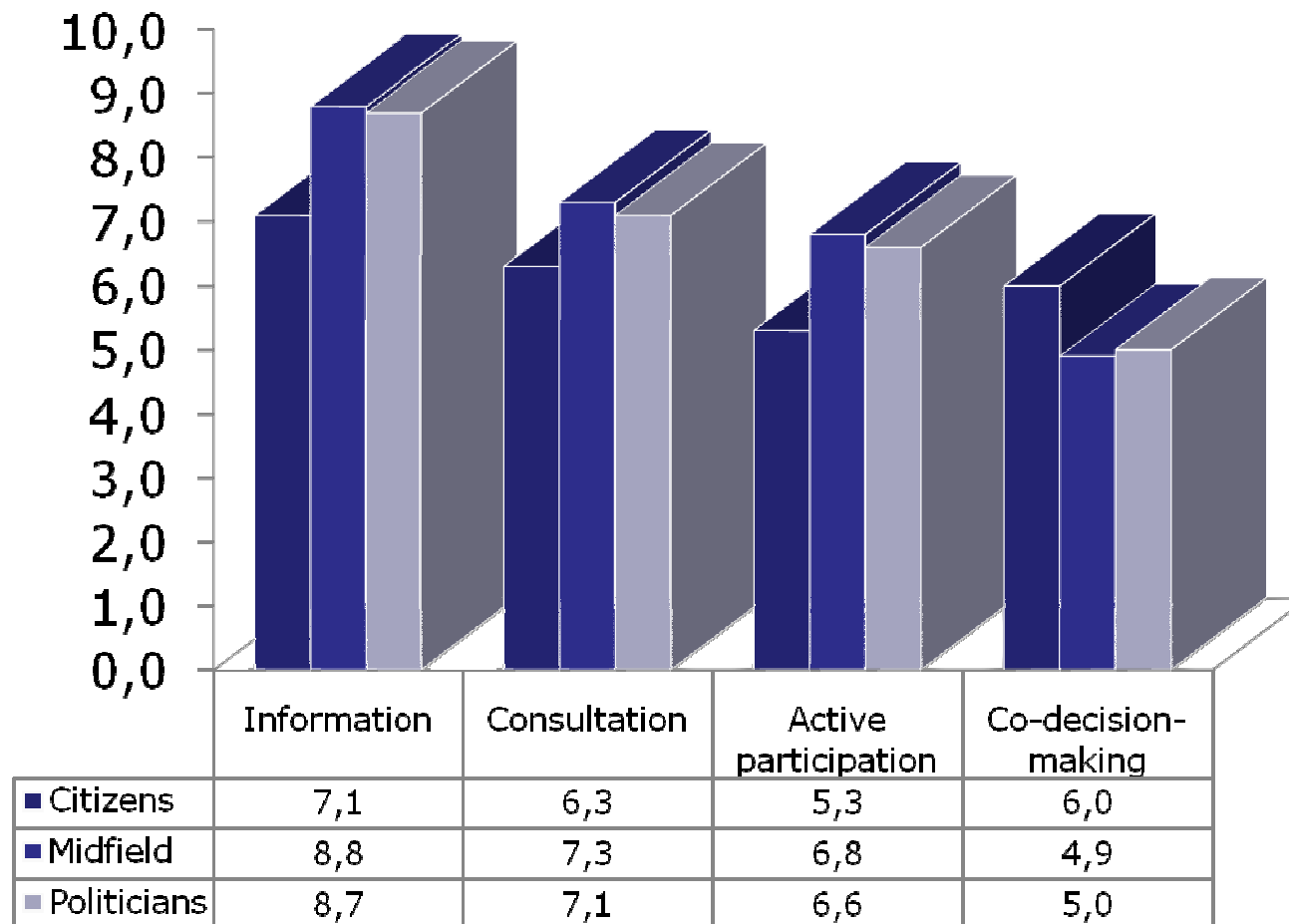
- Assigned by the Flemish Parliament
- Survey of key stakeholders (Indigov)
 - Quantitative research: citizens, Flemish politicians, civil society & journalists
- Result
 - A scientific report - **First time that a systematic understanding was provided of the attitudes and knowledge of the various stakeholders**

Study 2006 - eDemocracy in Flanders

- FINDINGS - Current and desired level of policy participation
 - There is an immense **gap** between the **desired and current level** of participation, whatever its form (informing, consulting, active participation and co-deciding), according to each group of stakeholders.
 - Participation is more important at the **local level** than at any higher level

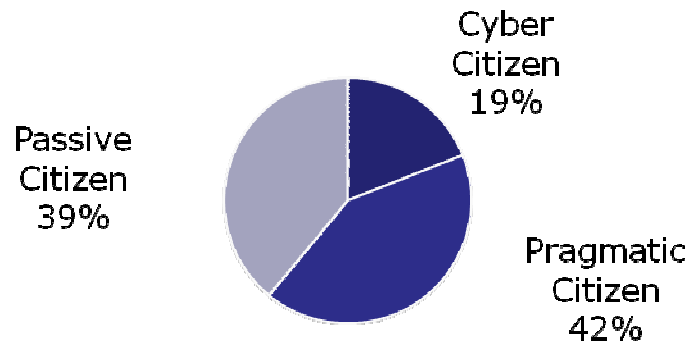


ICT as a driver for e-democratic processes

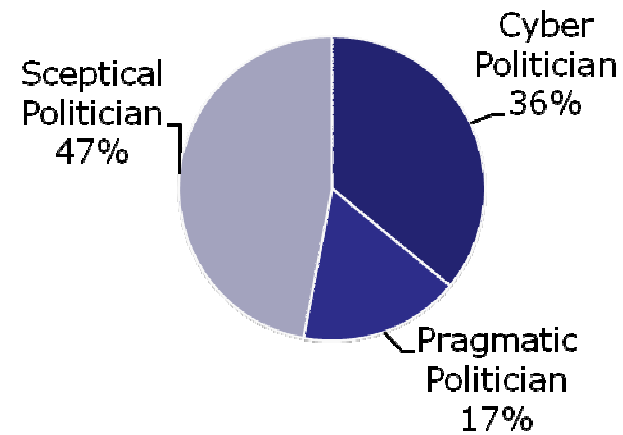


Typology of eDemocrats

- Citizens



- Politicians



Conclusions

- There is room for more eDemocracy initiatives
- There is a need for a well developed framework
- There is a need for an eDemocracy toolkit
- There is a need for positive case studies / examples

Point of view - president Flemish Parliament

- Flemish Parliament - Wants to build bridges to encourage citizens to participate
 - Focus on: Information - reaching àll people – multichannel approach
 - Online: Latest information asap consultable on website
 - Offline: Permanent Information Centre, debates accessible for citizens, Yearly open door day, guidance tours,...
 - TV: Plenary meetings live on TV
 - Project 'kracht van je stem' 'Power of your voice/vote' for students
- Flemish parliament - working on improvement quality of legislation & Qualitative deepening of participation process
 - Now: Public hearings, frequently thoroughly thematic research concerning social problems, citizens lets hear their voice through right of complaints, ombudsservice,...
 - Intentions: Involve individual citizens more direct at political thinking.

Flemish government – Flanders in Action

“ Flanders in 2020 – Think and participate!”

- Future plan to bring Flanders at the top of European Regions in 2020.
- Project must be carried by all flemish people
- 4 topics: Talent, Logistic & mobility, Innovation, Flanders International
- Different actions to involve the broad public to this initiative

Flemish government – Flanders in Action

- December 2007:
 - 154 people between 20 and 30 years old discussed online simultaneous in 5 sessions more than 60 minutes on the topics (Talent, Logistic & mobility, Innovation, Flanders International) of the project
 - People were recruited as a representative sample of the Flemish population
 - The results were used at a high level workshop with the Midfield and Politicians
- August/September 2008
 - Theme “Flanders in the international scene”
 - Online discussion Fora
 - 117 Flemish people living abroad
 - 100 non-belgians living in Belgium and abroad (knowing Flanders)

Building a eParticipation toolkit

- Project supported by the Flemish government to build an online toolkit that can help setting-up participatory projects
- Not only technology but deeply rooted in good methodology
- Covering all different phases in the participation ladder
- Methodology we are focussing on: Worldcafe

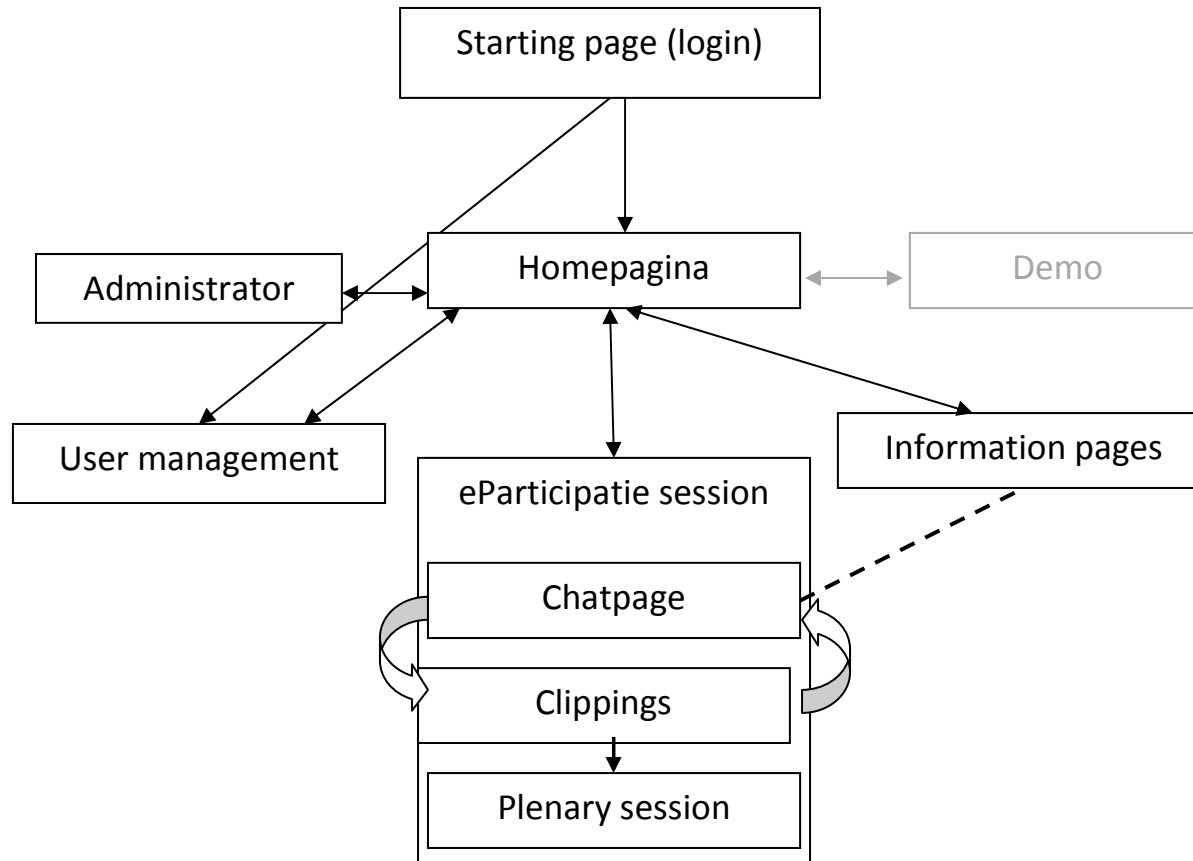
eParticipation – the (near) future

Type of eEngagement Stage in policy making cycle	eEnabling	eConsultation	eParticipation
Agenda-setting	<p style="text-align: center;">eParticipation platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bringing all existing and proved tools together on one central managed platform •Solution for the complete “cycle” of policy making :multi-channel, open source & reliable •Together with scenario’s, best practices in order to “manage” an eParticipation initiative <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> 2008 : Building Platform 2009 : Proof of concept / trials </div>		
Analysis			
Policy creation			
Implementation			
Monitoring			

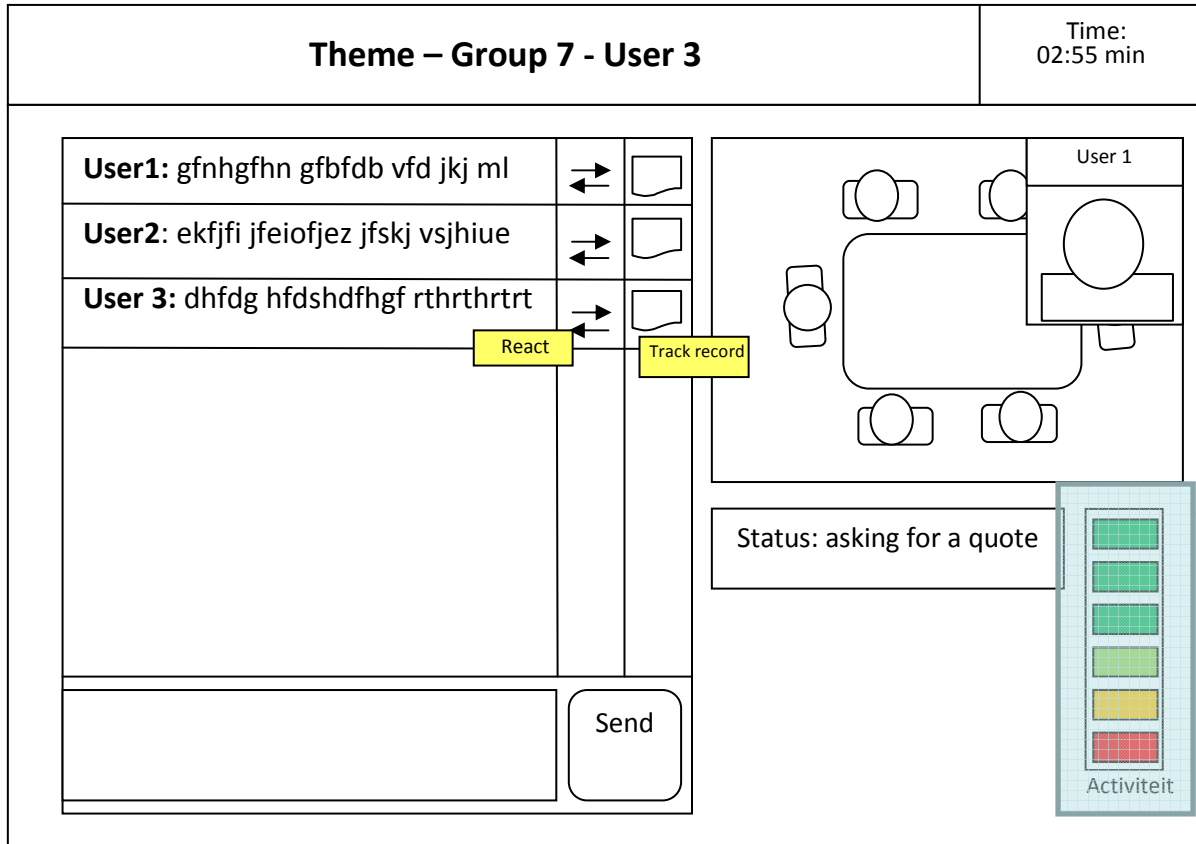
Building a eParticipation toolkit

- Using the latest internet technology (a.o. Web 2.0) to make it a userfriendly and interactive tool.
 - Pushed and pulled information
 - Wikis, blogs, maps, audio, video and text
 - Avatars
 - Social Networking Possibilities
 - Video and audio communication
 - E-voting

Worldcafe - Online



Module 3- Discussion GUI



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