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30 March 2006

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Industry News

National Stakeholder Consultation on the e-Government Research Agenda



Brunel University to work with key partners and practitioners to identify the priority areas for academic work

Brunel University's School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics (SISCM) has successfully secured Government funding to identify the emerging research issues in the area of e Government Information Systems.

Over the next 5 months, together with the CIPFA Improvement Through Technology Network, a series of workshops will take place around the UK to consult key stakeholders about their experiences and future challenges, and thus support research capacity building in this area. See below for details of how to get involved.


Why this consultation is important

In setting out the importance of this work, Professor Zahir Irani, the principle investigator, explained that, "Local authorities and government agencies have risen to the challenge of building an e-Government infrastructure, often from nothing. However, almost all of this work has been developmental, reacting to central Government mandates. It is now time to reflect on what has been done and to establish a research agenda to make the UK a world leader in e-Government practice".

Meetings will take place between February and May 2006

Four consultation meetings are planned, starting in London on February 10th. Others will take place in March, April and May in **Cardiff, Manchester** and **Edinburgh** respectively.

The meetings will be chaired by Dr Paul Jackson from the Improvement Through Technology Network at the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).


 Match

If you wish to attend these events - or would like to be kept informed of news from project VIEGO - please send your email and organisational details to Omiros D Sarikas (omiros.sarikas@brunel.ac.uk) .

Dedicated consultative meetings are also planned with major interest groups, such as the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit and the ODPM. The results of this consultation process will be published as a joint report "Electronic Transformation of Government in the UK: A Research Agenda" by project VIEGO and CIPFA in late June.

VIEGO represents the first stage of a project funded by the EPSRC

This is the first stage of a project funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC), the government body that funds most academic research on information systems. In the second stage Brunel, in collaboration with the Universities of **Reading, Wales at Swansea, Nottingham, Napier, Manchester Business School** and others, will draw up an integrated series of research projects in response to the research agenda identified by project VIEGO. These subsequent projects will address the future challenges surrounding transformational Government over the next five to six years. They will be presented to EPSRC with the intention of the work being funded and commencing from April 2007.

How to obtain more information

Further details can be obtained from the investigators Professor Zahir Irani: (zahir.irani@brunel.ac.uk) and Dr Tony Elliman (tony.elliman@brunel.ac.uk).

The VIEGO Project:

The EPSRC has pledged £32k for project VIEGO to prepare the ground for future of e-Government research. Currently (2006) e-Government has evolved with little prior research, with most attention having been directed towards developmental type projects. There is a great deal of experience but not much by way of a body of knowledge in the area of electronic Government. Putting Government online was meant to produce major changes in the way the citizen interacts with Government but change has been limited, slow and even sometimes cumbersome.

We believe that, to better exploit the existing technology, a co-ordinated research plan is needed. The first step in this project is to define key e-Government research themes through focused workshops with stakeholder communities. The second step is to devise a coordinated group of projects or work packages that knit together into a coherent research proposition. It is our anticipation that contributors from step one will become collaborators in step two. Integrated together, these will create the body of knowledge needed to deliver novel and effective change within the public sector. This also supports the political ambitions of the UK in being a leading light for others in Europe and the world.

EPSRC already funds Brunel University to lead some e-Government research. However, that current network grant (e-GISE) aims only to study information systems evaluation and integration technologies. That network's 3-year agenda is to gain deeper insights within these two areas. In contrast, project VIEGO aims to widen the breadth of this agenda by exposing other critical themes for future e-Government research. The vision is to create a Virtual Electronic Government Research Institute by bringing together people from many disciplines to form a coherent research programme of integrated work packages.

VIEGO Objectives:

The aim of VIEGO is to perform a scoping study to explore and define e-Government research themes that will lead to the formation of a coordinated programme of multi-institution, multidisciplinary projects that will in turn underpin, enhance and accelerate the implementation of e-Government in the UK. In particular, VIEGO has the following objectives:

- To identify, through regional meetings and workshops: (a) the key socio-technical research themes that need defining and refining into effective e-Government research, and (b) appropriate stakeholders with the knowledge, needs and experience to contribute towards an e-Government research programme.
- To develop a consolidated series of recommendations, which sets out a coordinated programme of e-Government research.

VIEGO Deliverables:

- A report - "Electronic Transformation of Government in the UK: A Research Agenda" - setting out the issues and questions that need to be addressed through academic research.
- Published positions papers in Conferences and Journals setting out the required research agenda.
- An integrated project proposal to be presented to EPSR

About Brunel University's SISCM

The School of Information Systems Computing and Mathematics (SISCM) has emerged as one of the largest and most successful schools of its kind in Europe. The School is headed by Professor Rob Macredie. In line with Brunel University's reputation as the University of choice for applied research and education, SISCM's activities are focused on delivering commercial and industrial relevance: its research aims to provide significant potential for practical exploitation and its graduates are known for their excellent employability.

Internationally, SISCM is aligned with prevailing European Community views that strategic research should be defined in terms of co-operation with users, the opening up of international activities, the acceleration of technology integration and the mastering and consolidation of emerging technologies. SISCM's research has a strong practical grounding, borne out by its work with a number of industry sponsors, including Abbey National, Aonix, Computer Associates, Unisys and Xansa.

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/siscm>

About eGISE at Brunel

The purpose of the e-GISE network (also funded by EPSRC) is to promote national debate and highlight research strategies to increase understanding of e-Government, and the processes involved in evaluating decisions surrounding human, organisational and technical components of information society technologies (IST). In particular, the network will explore IST strategies and their embedded mechanisms for evaluation and integration within government and the service or public sector. At present evaluation is mainly volumetric or case study coverage with only vague notions of benefit to the citizen. Clearly, to make adoption more successful, there is a need to better understand the issues surrounding e-Government; in particular, gaining a clearer insight into the barriers, benefit realisations, risk management or mitigation, and cost management, which together provide decision makers with a realistic insight into e-Government infrastructure planning.

Starts: 1 November 2004. Ends: 31 October 2007, Funding £60K.

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/siscm/research/centres/iseing/grants/researchnetworks>

About CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), is one of the leading professional accountancy bodies in the UK and the only one that specialises in the public sector. It is responsible for the education and training of professional accountants and for their regulation through the setting and monitoring of professional standards. Uniquely among the professional accountancy bodies in the UK, CIPFA has responsibility for setting accounting standards for a significant part of the economy, namely local government.

<http://www.cipfa.org.uk/corporate/>

About the CIPFA-SOCITM Improvement Through Technology Network (ITT)

The CIPFA-SOCITM Improvement Through Technology Network (ITT) continues a partnership between two organisations that have an established track record in supporting public sector managers. SOCITM - the Society of IT Management - has been working with CIPFA since the early 1990s, offering a unique blend of advice to public sector bodies. The ITT Network builds on this, and recognises that the role of new technology in delivering efficiency gains and improving public services has never been more important.

<http://www.cipfaitt.net/>

Posted 31/01/2006 14:36:51

