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Think tank for e-government meets for first time
e-by-government

By KableNet

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A think tank dedicated to e-government issues has had its first meeting.

The e-Government Integration and Systems Evaluation (e-GISE) Network, is aiming to identify the challenges associated with e-government, with an initial focus on local authorities.

Brunel University's School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics (SISCM) will run the group, with central government funding through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). Professor Zahir Irani, head of the e-GISE Network, said the funds are in place for a three-year programme and the first meeting of the group had recently taken place.

The group includes representatives from the e-Government Unit, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and from local government. Its purpose is to help local authorities realise the benefits of the relevant technologies and achieve return on investment. It aims to do this by promoting national debate and identifying the necessary research strategy.

Irani said: "We are trying as academics to interface with practitioners and find common ground to say: 'These are the challenges that have to be addressed for e-government exploitation.' I hope it will inform central government funding in the future."

He said central government's work has so far concentrated largely on development, with little going into the research agenda, and that the e-GISE Network would fill this space. It intends to carve out research areas for local authorities and bring together the relevant expertise, helping them to understand the risks and strategic benefits.

"We are trying to keep the focus on evaluation and integration," he said.

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