

Methodological issues in the study of e-democracy

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UNITAR/eDC 'state of the art' workshop
18 December 2007

What are the research questions?

- What is the impact on democracy of particular devices?
- How are ideas (innovations) emerging and diffusing?
- What is the relationship between e-democracy and other ICT uses?
- How do e-democracy devices relate to offline practices?

Methodological problems

- Understanding the relationship between continuity and change – transformation or reinforcement?
- Understanding the relationship between structure and agency – the micro-foundations of democratic change?
- Getting beyond competing normative claims for democracy – from principles to sequences

Democratic enactment (Saward 2003)

- Sequencing of devices gives life to different democratic principles
- Sequence = several democratic devices which are temporally and procedurally organised to arrive at decisions
- Sequences have popular endorsement as being democratically legitimate
- Sequences attach relative significance to different devices and the way in which they are combined
- Because democracies are reflexive, sequences change over time as well as between places

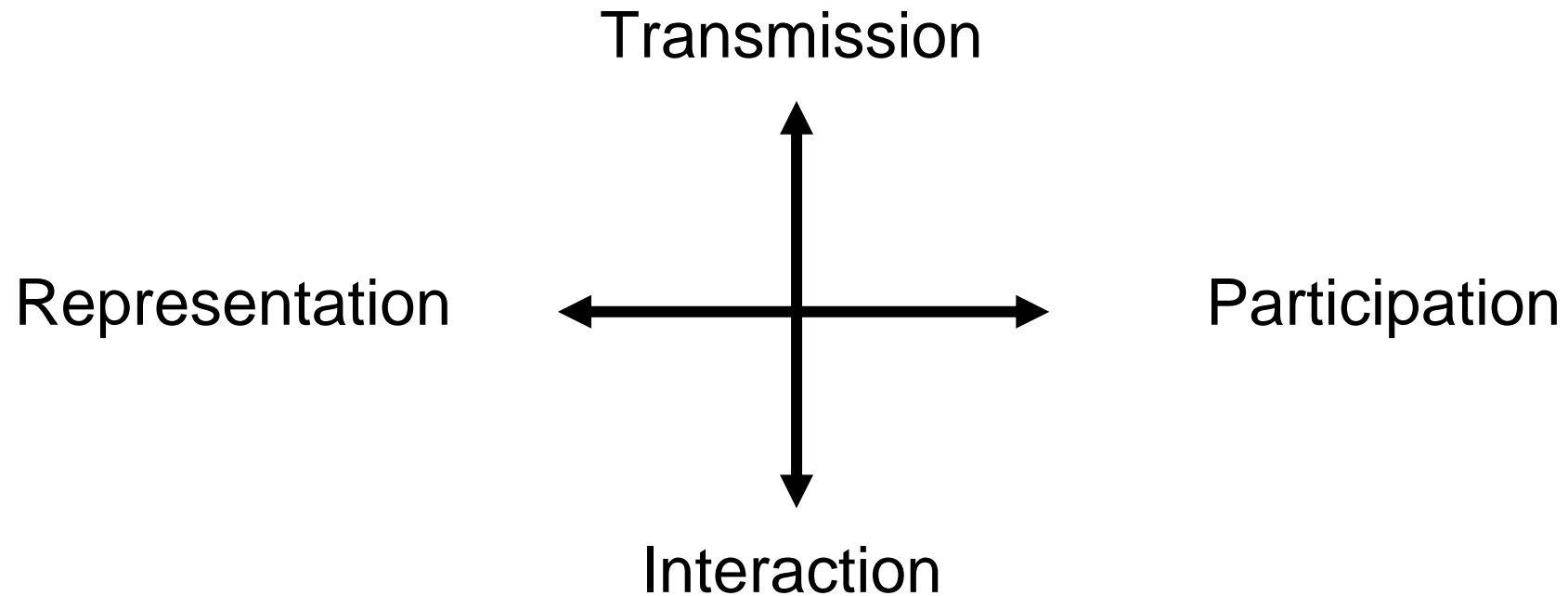
Two dimensions for analysis

Representation

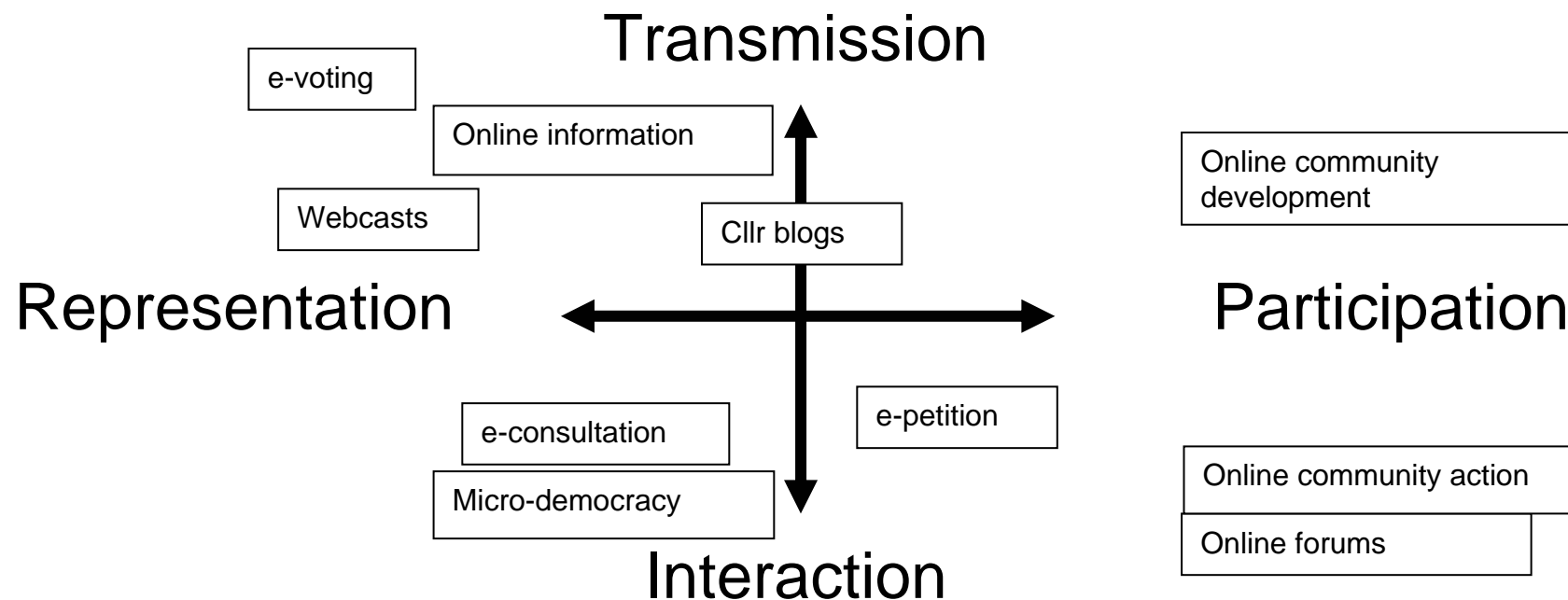


Participation

Two dimensions for analysis



Examples



Methodological issues

- What are governments doing? (website analysis, case studies, surveys)
- What are citizens doing? (surveys, games/modelling, passive data collection)

Does e-democracy need different methods?

e.g. collaborative research methods (action learning sets etc)

Thank you

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