
BOOK REVIEWS



WEB CAMPAIGNING. Kirsten A. Foot and Steven M. Schneider. *Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006, 272 pages.*

NEW MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND THE MANAGED CITIZEN. Philip N. Howard. *Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 286 pages.*

The new media facilitate both general and targeted political communication. The dissemination of general messages has never been more efficient as one message posted on the Web can be immediately accessible to a potentially unlimited audience at minimal cost. The dissemination of targeted messages has never been more efficient, as data compilation and user recognition in the new media allow a customized message to be transmitted at low cost. How are political advocates taking advantage of this unique opportunity available through the new media?

In *Web Campaigning*, Kirsten Foot (University of Washington) and Steven Schneider (SUNY Institute of Technology) provide a compelling perspective on Web campaigning, emphasizing communication with general messages. The authors tie their content analysis of publicly accessible campaign Web sites to user expectations: "Although it is common knowledge that campaigns produce different messages for different audiences in offline media, such as advertisements for particular television markets, Web users expect to see a unified, coherent message on a campaign site" (p. 199). Examining thousands of campaign Web sites over the last decade, they describe four key functions of online campaigning. Campaigns engage in informing, involving vis-

itors in campaign affiliation, connecting visitors to a third party, and mobilizing visitors to activate others. The book emphasizes the pursuit of these functions through techniques that entail coproduction with another entity, linking to other Web objects, and convergence with the offline world. After providing an up-to-date portrait of Web campaigning, they explain what characteristics make campaigns more or less likely to employ the various functions. Lastly, they reflect on existing trends and the future of Web campaigning.

In *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen*, Philip Howard (University of Washington) examines the effect of technology on politics with an emphasis on targeted messages. Howard expressly ties new media to targeting: "The production of political content through hypermedia technologies is a process of tailoring content not for mass consumption but for private consumption" (p. 184). Howard begins by describing the e-politics community. He finds that they are often separate from the partisan tracks and have some shared values. One consensus value is that political actors will find the voters that they want to communicate with based on the data shadow that they have generated. Howard describes how databases are compiled and then ultimately used for political purposes. He explains how the information flows of e-politics impact the structure of campaign organizations. Howard concludes with a consideration of hypermedia's democratic implications and a call for more government oversight of how campaigns use personal information.

Asked to consider these two books together, I find them an intriguing pairing. One book focuses on general messages and the other fo-

cuses on targeted messages. Both books, however, recognize the other type of message. Indeed, Howard is the most often cited scholar in *Web Campaigning*, and he collaborated with Foot and Schneider on a survey of Web site producers. Both books make an eloquent argument for the importance of Web campaigning to the overall campaign. Ultimately, the books are complementary and together provide a compelling portrait of the state of the art in political communication through the new media.

The contrasting emphasis on the more visible general messages and the less visible targeted messages leads to strikingly different methodological presentations. Foot and Schneider's *Web Campaigning* is an innovator in the technique and transparency of Web content analysis. It is hard to imagine a more thoroughly documented book on Web content. This documentation involved becoming archivists who collaborated with the Library of Congress in preserving campaign Web sites: "The creation of publicly accessible Web archives of campaign-produced materials is vital to the study of many aspects of contemporary politics" (p. 63). In exploring the more hidden world of targeted communication, Howard has employed a methodology that reflects those challenges. Immersing himself in the e-politics community, Howard guaranteed anonymity in order to gather information about a hidden world that people are reluctant to talk about on the record. Howard relates the genesis of his work as an outline on a napkin to his commitment to preserving anonymity of respondents: "As part of my obligations to my respondents, I have melted my tapes and destroyed the code pad that identifies respondents with interview notes. If anyone wants to critique my arguments or subpoena my evidence, I still have my soiled napkin filed in my research filing cabinet" (p. xiv). At the same time, he carefully describes his methodology of network ethnography and provides lists of organizations from which samples were obtained.

The contrasting methodologies are reflected in the major empirical sections of the books. The principal component of *Web Campaigning* is the four chapters on informing, involving, connecting, and mobilizing that demonstrate in detail how these functions are pursued and that illustrate them with specific historical exam-

ples. The principal component of *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen* is four case studies under pseudonyms reflecting how personal information is being collected and used by political consultants. The case studies are selected to reflect typologies of campaign organization along the dimensions of motivation (altruistic or opportunistic) and clientele (producers or consumers of political content).

The books are both successful measured against their own goals and the existing literature. Foot and Schneider describe their principal goal as "to provide a historical accounting of campaigns' use of the Web" (p. 190). They are clearly successful with a longitudinal work that examines thousands of campaign Web sites with interesting and important measures. Howard describes his goal: "This is a book about the people who develop and deploy these technologies [for using personal information about voters] and the emerging practices that are transforming patterns of political communication" (p. 29). He clearly succeeds with a work that interviews numerous campaign consultants and gives an insider's view of how information technology is being used. Both books are systematic and empirical in a way that compares favorably with previous work in the field.

An important part of the success of each book is precise and insightful terminology. The books take great care in providing conceptual definitions. Foot and Schneider, for example, give us a compelling view of a Web sphere bounded by "a shared topical orientation across Web resources and a temporal framework" (p. 20). They effectively define functions and techniques of Web campaigning. Howard gives us the intriguing concept of a *thin citizen* who "can respond quickly to political urges and need not spend significant amounts of time contemplating political matters" (p. 185). He defines political redlining as "the process of restricting our future supply of political information with assumptions about our demographics and present or past opinions" (p. 132). Combined, the books give us a useful terminology for understanding online politics.

Ultimately, different portraits of democracy emerge. In *Web Campaigning*, the focus is on candidates who are held accountable for their public Web site content. The goal is persuading

real people to support the candidate. To win, a majority will need to be obtained. Campaigns can benefit by empowering supporters through innovative use of the Web: "The essence of empowerment is the provision of tools that enable site visitors to take actions on their own, independently of the campaign, without the campaign tracking, managing, or even necessarily knowing about the actions" (p. 148). In contrast, *New Media Campaigns and the Managed Citizen* focuses on political consultants who may have roles independent of candidates and party politics. Their actions below the surface may not be traced to a particular campaign. The goal is to identify supporters based on their data shadows. To win, a minority of people will need to be activated to demonstrate concern to policymakers. Empowerment is unwittingly obtained through data shadows: "Data profiles, some of which we generate knowingly and some of which is collected without our informed consent, are our true representatives and, in fact, what are truly represented" (p. 187).

Together, these books advance our knowledge of information technology and politics. Both general and targeted communication are important and facilitated by new media. The way in which campaigns balance these types of communication remains an interesting question. The future may reveal interesting relationships between these communication types. The Web certainly can expose conflicting targeted communication to a general audience. In trying to envision the future of new media and politics, we will benefit from the insights in these two complementary works.

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THE WEALTH OF NETWORKS: HOW SOCIAL PRODUCTION TRANSFORMS MARKETS AND FREEDOMS. Yochai Benkler. *New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 528 pages.*

What are we to make of the desire to demonstrate that the period in which we live is a revolutionary time, that changes wrought by technology are transforming our lives? Certainly there is no shortage of people who wish to celebrate (or condemn) the Internet, and information and communications technologies (ICTs) more widely, for the changes they have produced. Indeed, this journal's title itself encompasses the premise that there is a relationship worth analyzing between information technology and politics. Although one might want to dispute the choice of the computer and latterly the Internet as the information technology that such studies might primarily focus on, nevertheless much analytical effort has been expended wondering about the manner in which new ICTs have political (widely read, to include socio-economic) effects. While the early period of such investigation was marked by a literature that was long on optimism and prediction and short on anything substantial in the way of analysis, evidence, or historical context, recently writers have started to produce more balanced (yet nonetheless broadly revolutionary) sets of claims linked to the prospects for the Internet age. The latest of these attempts to explore and understand the new realm of the network society is Yochai Benkler's volume under review here.

Although the notion of globalization and its attendant perceived social phenomena might suggest that treatments of the new global network society would be able to escape the particularities of the social context in which they are developed, accounts remain strikingly related to the geographical location of their development. Thus, it will come as no surprise that, as Benkler works at the Yale Law School, his analysis develops a position that is at best agnostic about the state, and stresses individualism and atomistic social analysis as the route to understand the wealth of networks. Moreover, located as he is in a US law school, again it is no surprise, but it is a little disappointing, that so much of the detailed empirical evidence (much

of it concerning specific legal cases) is drawn from the United States, with much less from Europe and elsewhere. This is not necessarily to detract from Benkler's often powerful and interesting account of networked organization in the developing information society, but merely to note that any globalization of intellectual endeavour in the new network age seems to be far from fully evident. Even if we might want to accept that America is in the avant-garde of network society, surely its globalizing logic would suggest that there should be a wealth of non-US examples and cases to draw on.

To those familiar with Benkler's previous work, that the central element of this book is a series of chapters dealing with *The Political Economy of Property and the Commons* is to be expected. This central group of six chapters is preceded by a section that sets out the economic processes that typify the networked economy, and it is followed by a shorter concluding section drawing the themes developed in the previous chapters into an account of the enhancement of freedom through networked informationalization. In the first section, Benkler explores the forms of work and innovation that have been identified in his own and others' previous work, ranging from the economics of network production, issues of incentivization, and collective intellectual activity, to more technical matters around the manner in which intellectual property rights have been developed in light of a very specific (and perhaps erroneous view) of the process of innovation and creation. This leads Benkler to also examine such topical issues as peer-to-peer networks and their challenge to owners of copyright, and the role and place of state developmental policy in the support of innovative human activity. In the final section he returns to this political question to argue that the patterns of individual endeavor and cooperation that were suppressed by the property system, facilitated by the emergence of the modern state, are being re-engaged by a new networked generation. However, to make this argument, Benkler needs to critically re-evaluate the value of property in the (global) network society.

The centrepiece of Benkler's account is therefore a critique of the centrality of property in political economy; proprietary technologies

and resources have been over-emphasized in accounts of development, and what the shift to an information society has revealed is how much intellectual and physical work in society is already conducted through open, networked methods of interaction. Indeed, for Benkler, the emergence of a global regime for the protection of intellectual property rights has had a corrosive effect on society, with little regard to the social costs of the enforcement of such rights. However, the increased autonomy in networked informational relations that has been facilitated by new ICTs has also allowed a new non-proprietary form of innovation and development to emerge. Here, Benkler's analysis has some striking parallels with Steven Weber's analysis in *The Success of Open Source* (Harvard University Press, 2004). Thus, for Benkler, like Weber before him, the promise of open source stretches far beyond the realm of software development, where contemporary ideas of openness have been most obviously re-asserted, and into the social and political realms of everyday life.

For Benkler, echoing many of the early celebrants of the information society, the expansion and proliferation of avenues of communication, and sources of information for individuals, enhances and supports a greater creative and social autonomy among the population of the networked realm. Thus, the shift in communicative organization, and most specifically the expansion and greater visibility of non-market participants in the public communicative space, will lead to the decline of the previously dominant position of the mass media in the development of contemporary democratic politics. However, unlike his predecessors Benkler does not see this merely as a teleological manifestation of technical shifts, but rather notes that the transformation of politics still requires political agency, and it will be quite effectively resisted by states with the means to control and intervene in the technological realm. Moreover in other realms, most specifically the global regulation of intellectual property rights, it is the rich and developed states who are the main agents of resistance to open networks, through such organisation as the WTO or the World Intellectual Property Organisation. Thus, unlike some

previous studies, Benkler much more clearly recognizes the conflict-laden and contested terrain that networked communication and production set out, and while suggesting its social value also recognizes that the realization of the value of networking is a matter of social agency not merely the result of the increasing reach of the Internet.

So to return to my initial question: what are we to make of this analysis? Like so many celebrants of the new age, Benkler is torn between an empirical account of changes that he can relate in some detail to substantiate the claim that the network society is already here, if as yet not fully developed, and a plea to his readers to act to take this revolution forward and ensure that it does not fall back into the morass of property owning, proprietary economic relations that he claims has bedeviled social development in the last two or three decades. In this sense, Benkler is caught between social observation and report and a more future oriented, more polemical form of prediction and social activism. Thus, although in many ways he presents a robust and well argued analysis of the development of the network as an alternative mode of resource development and interaction, like many previous celebrations of the new age, this book wants to propose a strategy for completing the revolution.

Thus, while *The Wealth of Networks* is more than merely social analysis, it seems a little ill-at-ease with its manifesto-like qualities, even though the tentative character of Benkler's text is exactly what saves it from the pitfalls of many of its predecessors.

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DIGITAL ERA GOVERNANCE: IT CORPORATIONS, THE STATE, AND E-GOVERNMENT. Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts, Simon Bastow, and Jane Tinkler. *Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 302 pages.*

This is an excellent book. The sophisticated analysis of the impact of information technology (IT) on societal development should appeal broadly to scholars in public administration, information technology and politics, and communication systems, as well as to public managers and IT professionals. The book is a major output from a five-year research project that the authors conducted for the United Kingdom's Economic and Social Research Council. It evaluates the impact on the public domain of the shift by advanced industrialized countries (since the early 1990s) to predominantly corporate provision of IT systems.

After demonstrating that information technology is now crucial to public services and obligations such as national security, welfare provision, and immigration control, the authors report on seven in-depth case studies of government contracting markets in the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, and the Netherlands. Data for the book were gathered via research visits to each of these countries and via more than 250 interviews with civil servants, IT professionals, scholars, and IT executives. The authors refine the analysis further through sector-based investigations of the role of IT in taxation systems, social security, and immigration, and they have a remarkable ability to keep the book's scholarly narrative flowing, despite the huge amount of data processed and presented in this project. This is due both to the explicit and well-defined theoretical model outlined in the early chapters, and to clear prose; while scholarly throughout, the book rarely slips from a lucid, accessible style.

The book also combines rich empiricism with theoretical significance. Evaluating the Weberian model of the *rational bureaucracy*, the authors present a strong case that in the modern era "the most foundational information processing and decision capabilities of the state now rest on public officials' ability to manage complex industrial contracts and advanced 'knowledge intensive' professions and occu-

pations" (p. 2). In addition, the book makes a crucial contribution to understanding the legacy of New Public Management (NPM), adopted assiduously in both scholarly and public management circles in the 1990s. While acknowledging NPM's initial successes, particularly in promoting competitive processes among multiple providers, the authors assert that NPM is "intellectually dead, an orthodoxy now played out and plagued by evidence of adverse by-product effects" (p. 7). In place of the now middle-aged NPM, the authors argue convincingly in light of the previous empirical work/ case studies—that scholars of public administration and information technology should acknowledge *digital-era governance* (DEG). In the penultimate chapter, "New Public Management is Dead-Long Live Digital-Era Governance," the authors conclude that IT can no longer be relegated to the periphery of public management because in the contemporary era it fundamentally determines what is feasible in terms of service provision and delivery. Indeed, the scope of IT's influence is understood to be profound (though not deterministic), extending to "a wide range of cognitive, behavioral, organizational, political, and cultural changes" (p. 217). Finally, where NPM resulted in fragmentation and duplication in many applied instances, DEG presages re-integrated service provision, cooperation across sectoral and administrative boundaries, and digitalization of administrative operations.

This book is a signal contribution to public administration scholarship broadly defined, and certainly to the study of information technology and politics. The clarity of the analysis, axioms, and conclusions provides an opening for scholars to test these important assertions in other cases and other sectors. There is much fuel here for additional research comparing new public management to digital-era governance, and the overall analysis of the digitalization of the public sphere should be relevant to anyone interested in the relationship between information technology and democracy. Though likely too sophisticated for most undergraduate courses, it would be an excellent text for graduate courses in public management and the politics of information technology. At the graduate level it could also be used productively as an example of how to manage large

comparative data sets. For instance, in chapter three, the "Comparative Performance of Government IT," the authors explain and then apply C. Ragin's (2000) fuzzy set social science approach in order to draw out and compare the implications of the seven case studies. They consolidate an enormous amount of qualitative data into an accessible and powerful comparison of how these seven studies compare on three indices of government IT performance: (a) the scrap rate of government IT projects, (b) the costs of government IT, and (c) the modernity of government IT. Fuzzy sets are also used to chart and explain the impact of governance institutions and bureaucratic cultures on differences in government IT development (chapter 4) and the power of industry to shape government IT (chapter 5).

In their introduction, the authors propose to "provide a range of key audiences with a critical theoretical and empirical updating to help them appreciate not only the extent of existing changes but the impact of modern IT systems and IT contracting on the future direction of democratic governance" (p. 3). They have succeeded admirably in this goal, and this book is highly recommended to the readers of the *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*.

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DIGITAL GOVERNMENT: TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE. Darrell M. West. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005, 256 pages.

Darrell M. West's book explores the implementation of Internet-based government services at all levels in the US and globally. Availability of reliable network connectivity is altering governmental operations worldwide, introducing novel means to deliver public value and to meet popular expectations. The text displays an extensive array of data and studies, highlighted with 47 tables. Three appendices detail West's methodologies, rankings of Web sites, and the so-called best practices of e-gov-

ernment, as evidenced in his highest ranking sites.

The first chapter lays out West's construction of the book, and clearly describes the context and content for each chapter. If a reader were particularly interested in surveys of government Web sites, he or she would be directed to Chapter 3. Another, interested in Web-based applications, might be pointed to Chapter 5, his case study of online income tax filing. Most of the book's theoretical base is developed in the first two chapters. Overall, this book is more pragmatic and descriptive than theoretical in orientation.

West builds his model of e-government around sequential states of usability. The first state, which he calls *billboard*, describes early Internet Web sites that served more as online brochures than transaction or communication vehicles. From a rudimentary Web presence, he sees government Web site development as traversing a series of further states, from partial service delivery to Web portal before achieving full interactive democracy, which he describes as public outreach and accountability enhancement.

West describes what he terms the causes of e-government and the consequences of its implementation, that is, in a general sense, how the Internet affects the public sector, politics, and democracy. In a few paragraphs he summarizes and advocates a version of the argument made in Fountain (2001), that institutions shape technological impact, rather than the inverse case where technologies reshape institutional roles and responsibilities. In this, he presages his incrementalist approach to technological adoption.

One strength of the text is West's grounding in data and his showcase of investigative methods. The work derives from 17,077 content analyses of government Web sites over several years: 5,005 analyses of municipal sites, 6,146 analyses of state Web sites, 274 analyses of federal Web sites, and 5,651 analyses of global sites. It also uses survey data from the Council for Excellence in Government and develops a case study of the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Two chapters discuss multivariate analysis of performance indicators. As each chapter stands on its own, this creates an impression of

an edited book of contributed chapters, though in this case the author is the sole contributor.

The bulk of the book is based on analysis of executive, legislative, judicial, and agency Web sites at multiple levels of government and sampled over several years. The measures West discusses are contact information, links to publications and databases, access to services, privacy and security, usability by special needs populations (disabled, non-English speakers), and readability.

In addition, West checked response time to a simple email inquiry in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, by sending the message "I am trying to find out when your office is open. Could you let me know the official hours your office is open?" Interesting variations in the response times on this message and another, more complex inquiry, "How much does it cost to obtain government documents from your agency?" are described with brief discussion in Chapter 7, Public Outreach and Responsiveness.

West states at the beginning of his book that government process modifications are incremental and transactional in nature, rather than transformative. The book lays out in its chapters his evidence of the non-transformational nature of government technology initiatives. This ranges from internal to external constraints, and includes the bureaucratic construct of government organizations and the typical political and fiscal forces acting on agency operations.

To the degree that West is correct, it suggests missed opportunities in government adoption. Further, he argues, the inability of governments to shut down old-style communications and compel use of new technologies limits in most cases any positive budget impacts, such as are common in private sector technology implementation.

This book joins a short list of offerings that provide useful and comprehensive reviews of government technology as practiced at the start of the 21st century. West's stated intention is to ground this study of practice in theory, though the theory references are brief. Still, any reader new to the study of technology in government would become well-informed by reading beyond the text, using the sources provided as endnotes to each chapter as a guide.

West discusses the potential of the Internet to advance democracy. He notes that the initial expectations of digital government were democratic, even populist in nature. That is, the medium lends itself to decentralized, non-hierarchical, asynchronous, and interactive exchanges. For the most part, these are unrealized, and instead, as Fountain too has argued, technology can equally be used to centralize and constrain the operation of front line bureaucrats. Even the concept of a Web portal suggests that visitors should be directed to the front door of an agency, rather than to establish links to the places within of greatest interest.

Fundamentally, the topic of information technology in government is fluid and unwieldy. One assumes at least linear growth in West's ongoing research, with an ever-more extensive range of sources and approaches to tackling the data created by measure and surveys beyond the period from 2000 to 2003 discussed here. Further, there have been several major network-based shifts in popular experience since then: Web-based episodic writing—that is, Web logs, or blogs; social networking via sites such as MySpace; and video on demand, most notably on YouTube. Each was envisioned as a social construct, and each has already become firmly established for professional, commercial, and public sector use. Political bloggers commanded media space at the 2004 national political conventions, human resource departments routinely check the Internet for information on prospective hires, and public officials must assume that anything they do or say may be captured on video and made available for worldwide dissemination.

Early government adaptations of these technologies are appearing, in large measure where they can be introduced at no cost, becoming the latest tools of government leadership eager to connect with their population via their online presence. As one example, the Sacramento Police Department has established a Weblog on its Web site, at <http://blog.sacpd.org>. Here, the Chief of Police, neighborhood officers, and administrative staff each contribute periodic posts, reducing the stale nature of unchanging Web sites. These adoptions suggest that governments are reactive as much as incremental, and any transformation is incidental to the technology introduction.

In the next edition of West's book, a new chapter might be expected on telecommunication transformation via cell phones and wireless Internet access commonly known as WiFi, for wireless fidelity. The cell phone is a ubiquitous technology, in both rudimentary and feature-rich, PDA (personal digital assistant) formats. Smarter, cheaper phones are introduced weekly with vibrant competition for smart phones based on several operating systems and using differing communication networks. Young adults send dozens of text messages daily that arrive instantly on the phones or in the e-mailboxes of friends and family; those same phones now take photos and videos to be posted online for viewing. This text references PDAs without discussing what it means to develop Web pages for optimum display properties on tiny screens and without explaining why global Web sites have moved ahead of the US on this type of accessibility. Cell phones are more ubiquitous than personal computers, and as mobile devices, offer perhaps the best pathway to connect directly to the public.

West's book offers solid data and analysis while providing a mixed snapshot of digital government. It is a good assessment of the nuts and bolts of early implementation of Web services in government agencies and of the adaptation of traditional services to new modalities. A few persistent issues, such as the digital divide, mentioned in a few places in passing, deserve much expansion in the next edition, especially to the degree that services delivered via the Web are targeted to populations that either are not able to use online resources, or as noted in Horrigan (2004) are evading Web technologies as a matter of personal preference.

Government technology is frequently the subject of overly optimistic reporting, often using language popularized by business consultants. Whether or not prior projects are successful, government technology managers follow similar steps for each project. This process involves partnerships with vendors and other interested parties, kickoff meetings, process re-engineering, product launches, and lessons learned reports. West feeds into this pattern with his appendix entitled "E-Government Best Practices." The reader can find in this final appendix listings of the top five local,

state, federal, and global sites, based on the Web site measures studied. In a nutshell, here are the best practices West has noted:

- Easy to read in multiple languages
- Attractive and uncluttered
- Easy to locate complete contact information
- Easy to request or receive services
- Uniform across sub-pages
- Uniform across devices (universal access; wireless access)
- Complete and organized, not eclectic and random
- Functional and extensive e-services

Government managers would do well to plan moderately with an eye to Web-based successes in private sector and personal computing, to limit expectation of fiscal benefits from technology, and to focus on protecting confidential information. These are not surprising findings, but West improves substantially on the quality of evidence supporting his recommendations.

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DIGITAL STATE AT THE LEADING EDGE. Sandford Borins, Kenneth Kernaghan, David Brown, Nick Bontis, Perri 6, and Fred Thompson. *Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 409 pages.*

Is information technology (IT) transforming governance? This is a question asked by many studying the intersection of politics and the Internet and answered most recently by Borins et al., in *Digital State at the Leading Edge*. Using what is described as a holistic, anthropological, and comparative research approach, the authors trace the evolution and management of IT between 2000 and 2005, focusing primarily on the Government of Canada and the provincial Government of Ontario. Careful to avoid the utopian-dystopian dichotomy they feel has dominated the literature, a *techno-realist* position is adopted which portrays myriad mixed consequences.

A conceptual framework which points toward differences in traditional modes of governance and IT-enabled governance is outlined, the primary innovation is seen as being the addition of a third electronic channel or option for voters, interest groups, and users of government services, which supplements and, in some cases, replaces in-person and remote services. Four concepts are identified as a guide to understanding the dynamics of IT-driven governance: channel choice, organizational integration, procurement markets, and digital leadership. These concepts are meant to provide a roadmap for interpreting the chapters to follow.

E-government is the focus of the first part of the book (chapters 2-6). The authors provide an in-depth overview of Canada's Government Online initiative, the Ontario Government's experience with IT, integrated service delivery, the development of government call centers in Canadian cities, and knowledge management. Focus then shifts to e-democracy, with an emphasis on online campaigning, IT in legislative life, e-consultations, and digital leadership (chapters 7-10). Chapters on the situation in the US and the UK follow, before the closing chapter returns to the original research question. Improved transparency as a result of the increased availability of information and the potential for

greater interaction with both civil society and the media, as well as substantial changes in the workplace of both public servants and legislators, show that IT has transformed governance. A less certain portrait of realized improvements in efficiency and cost savings is depicted, although the potential for substantial savings to government is made clear.

The longitudinal nature of the study makes it useful as a starting point for future works on the subject. While the authors were in the unenviable position of completing the book at a time when a federal election campaign was underway, they are clear about their timeframe and do acknowledge some of the early findings of the election related to the use of IT such as online campaigning.

Extensive field research in the form of interviews and surveys contributes to the comprehensiveness of the work, giving readers a first hand feel for the undulating process politicians and public servants have faced with the adoption of IT. Data from a variety of sources, such as the KTA Centre for Collaborative Government and Elections Canada, is brought together to form a detailed account of e-government in Canada, thus filling a gap in a literature dominated by accounts and studies of the US. In doing this, the book marries the discipline of public administration with research done on the impact of the Internet on politics.

The link with a public administration perspective is overdue and goes a long way to understanding e-government. However, it would have benefited from a fleshing out of the concepts of e-government and e-democracy. And, while the four concepts of channel choice, organizational integration, procurement markets, and digital leadership are useful when it comes to identifying elements of e-government and e-democracy, they rarely receive direct mention in subsequent chapters. Although all the chapters present interesting and useful information regarding IT and government, the book lacks a fundamental narrative which would

bind them together. The conceptual framework outlined in chapter 1 is not sufficient for analyzing the useful information presented or for asking broader questions regarding the significance of the authors' findings. As a result, the text often appears disjointed. The comparative element is lost, as the chapters related to the UK and the US appear to have been simply tacked on to the end of the book, leading to a missed opportunity for rich comparative analysis. Similarly, the reader is left to question the focus of the book with the inclusion of the chapter on municipal government call centers, which seems somewhat out of place given the work purports to examine IT in the federal government and the government of Ontario.

Further opportunity for critical analysis is lost in the, albeit rich, but at times overly descriptive, text and by the limited attention paid to the citizen's perspective or use of IT. The progress governments have made in implementing IT within government and the hiccups experienced along the way are clearly portrayed, but little information is given on the uptake or success of the programs discussed. Granted, the authors do say in closing that "focus is on the work experience of politicians and public servants," but further information and statistics regarding the impact of their work would have lent to a more complete understanding of the significance of the transformations occurring, or not occurring, as the case may be (p. 356).

Despite the book's theoretical shortcomings, it is a useful resource for both students and practitioners of public administration in Canada. The details of numerous IT initiatives, persons, and institutions are rich, and these make the book a useful reference for future studies on e-government in Canada.

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