

The 26th European Conference on Information Systems
23 – 28 June 2018

Proposal for Workshop



Title of the workshop
Platformization in the Public Sector
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Organizers
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Theme of the workshop
This workshop targets digital infrastructures in the public sector and focuses on the emergence of platforms as a distinct technological and organizational form. The platform ecosystem has emerged as a dominant technological form for global innovative organizations (Balwin and Woodward, 2009; Tiwana, 2013). It represents the current “best practice” to deal with the complexity of digital infrastructures as well as to leverage dynamics of multi-sided markets and

exploit network effects. Platforms are adaptable, scalable and extensible to many other parties and represents an alternative to an integrated collection of “silo systems”.

Public sector organizations around Europe are introducing platforms as part of their digital strategies, but we still have a limited understanding of the challenges associated with establishing platforms in the public sector (Fishenden & Thompson, 2013; Brown et al., 2017). Current research has mainly addressed platforms in the commercial sector (Parker et al., 2016). While the insights from this existing research are highly relevant, there are also important areas where the digital infrastructures can be expected to differ: The technical, regulatory and organisational complexity in the public sector is much higher than for commercial platforms. Multiple different public sector organisations at different government levels are involved in information flows and data custody. The development of national and regional solutions is usually undertaken as joint endeavour between public and private actors, to stimulate socio-economic benefits and innovation, involving a diverse portfolio of systems and registers. Furthermore, the role of the citizens not as mere service recipients but as contributors and co-creators is becoming more central while security concerns, government’s responsibility for citizens’ privacy and citizens’ demand for transparent use of data are rising (Linders, 2012; Nam, 2012).

In addition, the business models of a public sector platform will be different (Bygstad & D’Silva, 2015). The network effects of platform ecosystems (i.e. the self-reinforcing process where more customers trigger more suppliers, which attracts more customers, and so on) may be facilitated in public sector platforms but towards different aims than the ones found in market situation. Monetising network effects is not a key interest for public sector platforms but rather, leveraging network effects for mobilising more resources from inside and outside public organisations and triggering decentralised innovation is a key interest. Network effects that can contribute to better synergizing rather than competing are of interest in the public sector domain and need to be better understood.

This workshop seeks to address this lack of theorizing specifically to these concerns. The themes include but are not limited to:

- Business models of a public-sector platform
- The network effects of public sector platforms
- Network effects of synergizing rather than competing in the public sector domain
- How platforms shift work practices of public sector professionals with the inclusion of citizens
- Empirical studies of platformization, including the gradual process of establishing a platform
- How technical and organizational structures and governance regimes shape and are shaped by the specific public sector context
- The role of the citizens not as mere service recipients but as contributors and co-creators
- Security concerns, government’s responsibility for citizens’ privacy and citizens’ demand for transparent use of data

- Identify core requirements for a platformization strategy that may increase sustainability of public sector platforms
- Develop theory of public sector platforms that is attentive to the technical, regulatory and organizational specificity of this context
- Develop process theory on “platformization” that describes key steps and core challenges in the building of platforms and surrounding eco-system
- Develop theory on the interdependencies between architectural (technical) design, organizational forms, and governance regimes

We seek to contribute to the research as indicated above, and to formulate insights on how public sector platform and surrounding ecosystems develop, can be studied, designed, and theorized.

Format

Authors are invited to submit short papers, not exceeding five pages (including all figures, tables and references). The workshop will be a one-day event, starting with a short keynote followed by three sessions. In the first session, the accepted papers will be presented. The second session is thematic discussion where participants will form teams to jointly develop the papers. The third session is a roundtable where the whole group discuss possible directions for a special issue on platformization in the public sector.

Suitability to ECIS audience

The IS discipline is built on the proposition that any system cannot be seen as hardware, software or human-based in isolation. The platform, as a distinct technological and organizational form, is becoming pivotal for innovative digital infrastructures. This is reflected in the agenda of many IS researchers and in the recent popularity of the platform literature. However, there are limited insights about the adaptation of the platform concept in a public sector context and the technical, organizational and regulatory conditions of public services. The platform ecosystem trend is a radical socio-technical change with the potential for great societal impact, beyond mere digitization. Socio-technical platform thinking provides a base to make sense of the new types of Information Systems that emerge within a digitalized world.

Program committee members

Confirmed members:

Anna Sigridur Islind (University West, Sweden)
 Polyxeni Vassilakopoulou (University of Agder, Norway)
 Margunn Aanestad (Oslo University, Norway)
 Tomas Lindroth, (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)
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 Helle Sinner Henriksen (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)

Jonas Hedman (Copenhagen Business School, Denmark)
Mark Thompson (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom)
Will Venters (London School of Economics, United Kingdom)
Joan Rodón Mòdol (Universitat Ramon Llull, Spain)

Plan for publications

In parallel with the consideration of this proposal we will initiate an application to a relevant IS journal for a special issue on the topic of platforms in the public sector.

Target audience and expected attendance

The workshop aims to attract researchers and practitioners who are interested in the topics of digital infrastructures, public sector, platform ecosystems and e-government. In the workshop, participants will share their knowledge about cases of public sector platforms and digital infrastructures. We want to reach out in order to establish a community of researchers that can cooperate beyond the event itself. We seek to build on and extend the efforts of an ongoing, but not yet formalized, collaborative network of European researchers.

Workshop schedule

Submission Deadline: April 4, 2018
Notification to Authors: May 4, 2018
Deadline for Final Papers: June 4, 2018

Date of the workshop: 25th of June

Special equipment needed

(projector and a screen)

Prior experience of the proposers in workshops organisation

Inter-Organizational Systems, Information Infrastructures and Innovation Dynamics (**ECIS 2013**)
Innovation in Information Infrastructures (III) Workshop (**13th – 16th October, 2014**)
Innovation in Information Infrastructures (III) Workshop (**7th -9th November, 2017**)
Workshop on the potential of IHE XDS to enable patients' access to personal health information (**August 17th, 2016**)
Nye helsetjenester, arbeidsprosesser og datastrømmer: Hvilke muligheter og begrensninger gir eksisterende teknologi? (**October 31st, 2016**)
Workshop on patient-oriented e-service platforms (**September 15th, 2015**)

References

Baldwin, C., and Woodard, C. J. 2009. "The Architecture of Platforms: A Unified View," in *Platforms, Markets and Innovation*, A. Gawer (ed.). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Brown, A., Fishenden, J., Thompson, M., & Venters, W. (2017). Appraising the impact and role of platform models and Government as a Platform (GaaP) in UK Government public service reform: towards a Platform Assessment Framework (PAF). *Government Information Quarterly*.

Bygstad, B., & D'Silva, F. (2015). Government as a platform: a historical and architectural analysis. In NOKOBIT (Norsk konferanse for organisasjoners bruk av IT), 2015.

Fishenden, J and Thompson, M. (2013), Digital government, open architecture, and innovation: why public sector IT will never be the same again, *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 23 (4), 977-1004.

Linders, D. (2012), From E-Government to We-Government: Defining a Typology for Citizen Coproduction in the Age of Social Media, *Government Information Quarterly*, 29 (4), 446-454.

Nam, T. (2012), Suggesting frameworks of citizen-sourcing via Government 2.0, *Government Information Quarterly*, 29 (1), 12-20.

Parker, G. G., Van Alstyne, M. W., & Choudary, S. P. (2016). *Platform revolution. How networked markets are transforming the economy and how to make them work for you*. WW Norton & Company.

Tiwana, A. (2013), *Platform ecosystems: aligning architecture, governance, and strategy*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.