Week 4: Open Government

PAD 507 - Information for Decision Making

“Information is power. But like all power, there are those who want to keep it for themselves.”

—The Boy Who Could Change the World: The Writings of Aaron Swartz
Open Government Concept

- ICT as Enablers
- Creation of Public Values: Accountability, Trust in government
- Three Pillars: Transparency, Participation, Collaboration
- Democratic Institutions
Pillar 1: Transparency

- Making information about governments readily available (online)
- Benefits
  - Reduces corruption
  - Empowers citizens
  - Provides policy-watch organizations with needed information
  - Reduces information asymmetry
  - Increases trust in government (maybe)
- Requires decisions about what kinds of information should be made available
Types of Transparency

● Decision-making
  ○ Openness in the process of reaching a public policy/service decision and deliberation with rationales to reach such a decision

● Public policy and service information
  ○ Information regarding objectives, rationales, and plans for public policies

● Policy and service outcome information
  ○ Information on the impact and extent of policies and service provision
Pillar 2: Participation

- Citizen communication and engagement with government
  - Completes two-way communication loop
- Advancement of ICTs have lowered the cost and increased the speed of participation
  - Enhances input into the public policy and service provision decision-making process
- Quality information = quality participation
Types of Participation

● E-consultation
  ○ Citizens provide their input on public policy or public service issues electronically to advance public values
  ○ Most involves the generation of policy ideas
    ■ Example: Omaha citizen input website
  ○ A small part is about discussing or ranking existing proposals
    ■ Issues with representativeness due to digital divide

● E-policymaking
  ○ Citizens provide input to the actual policy-making process
    ■ Examples: E-rulemaking, E-petitioning
  ○ Important to be able to show how citizen input shaped the process
Pillar 3: Collaboration

- Deepens the two-way online communication loop to include organization and various sectors of society
  - Extends to all stakeholders
- Types:
  - Generating, deliberating, and ranking policy ideas
    - Electronic forums and social media for posting ideas, commenting, and rating them
    - Providing feedback to each other and using the results for reference
  - Producing applications
    - Governments make data available along with technical standards and tools (APIs)
    - Individuals, non-profits, for-profits develop value added applications
Oscar Wilde Quote

“Cecil Graham: What is a cynic?

Lord Darlington: A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Cecil Graham: And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything and doesn’t know the market price of any single thing.” –Lady Windemere’s Fan
Some Open Budget Portals

- https://openbudget.ny.gov/
- https://www.nc.gov/government/open-budget
- https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/omb/openbudget.html
- http://budget.douglas.co.us/#!/year/default