Rethinking Planning + Participation
NEW TECHNOLOGIES, OLD PROBLEMS, BETTER PRACTICES

11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

21 November 2007
Today’s agenda

1. Rethink planning’s interest in (obsession with?) “participation”—in transition to final part of the course.
2. Understand the “participation industry” that interest has created.
3. Examine the promise and limits of contemporary information and communication technologies (ICT) in particular.
Review and extension

- Modernist planning led to some successes but many disasters—and much criticism, especially of top-down, profession-dominated practice.
- Advocates of “deep democracy” have pushed the professional field and the project of planning hard.
- Some planners have become full-time participation facilitators and managers (“industry”).
- New technologies—the internet, ubiquitous GIS, etc.—seem to offer many opportunities.
- More and more problems are cross-sector problems, not just problems for public policy (let alone privately driven design).
Three broad transitions underway

- **In the role of “active citizens”**: From *making claims* to *processing claims* (getting in the role of decisionmakers) and *deliberating*. Example: participatory budgeting in Brazil, deliberative polls.

- **In focus**: From *expanding channels for participation* to *enabling better problem-solving*. Problem-solving may be the only reason citizens (and others) stay involved in public affairs.

- **In scope of efforts**: From *devising better plans* to *co-producing change* through deliberation, negotiation, collective learning, and constituency building.
Three broad purposes of participation in planning

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<tr>
<th>Agenda setting</th>
<th>Define issues and stakes for collective attention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy making</td>
<td>Analyze, devise best-possible courses of action on given set of issues and stakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participatory design and/or implementation</td>
<td>Design and/or implement specific projects that advance the strategies.</td>
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Risks, in lieu of clear purposes

- Letting the tactics drive things. Tactical specialists have strong incentives to recommend their specialties.
- Sending mixed signals, creating confusion, conflict.
- Missing opportunities to do smarter stuff.

Right: A handbook of tactics

Image removed due to copyright restrictions: cover of Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning, by Henry Sanoff.
21\textsuperscript{st} century town meetings

Screenshot removed due to copyright restrictions. See www.americaspeaks.org > 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Town Meetings.

America Speaks “virtual tour” online.

Usefulness: Helps gauge citizen reaction quickly, generate momentum, sense of collective project. Very text driven, limited by table facilitators filtering input.
Visualization, modeling, communication

Screenshot removed due to copyright restrictions.
... with key functions

Usefulness: Helps “tame complexity,” revealing options and their implications more fully. Does not provide a process.
Usefulness:
Great in the right context (time and place).
But having ideas is one thing, refining and acting on them is something else.
Or “deliberative polling” and other “deliberative designs”

Deliberative polling: A randomly drawn group of citizens, with access to “experts,” deliberates a public issue and makes policy recommendations.

See deliberative-democracy.net
Logo Link: global “learning network,” focus on developing countries, local governments

Screenshot removed due to copyright restrictions. See LogoLink at http://www2.ids.ac.uk/logolink/index.htm.
Participation as industry: Consultants, specialist staff, etc.

Screenshot removed due to copyright restrictions.
See www.iap2.org.
Stepping back: lessons on technology use—and misuse—from business, government, and “community informatics.”
Private sector lessons, hard won

Process model for working smarter with technology (organizational application)

Size up the work (content, value-creating aims)

Map the processes targeted for IT

Design uses of IT

"Build" or "buy"

Re-assess opportunities to create value

Re-assess Process

Figure by MIT OpenCourseWare.
## E-Government objectives, evolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td>BROADCAST</td>
<td>Static web content describes services, representatives, how to access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSACTION</td>
<td>Interface allows someone to pay a parking ticket or contract with government online. See “e-citizen centre” at Singapore government website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-DEMOCRACY</td>
<td>Technology supports better governance through deliberation, more.</td>
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Purpose: Just transaction or transformation (non-routine problem-solving, broader social change)?

GOVERNMENT
- Better internal processes
- Knowledge management ("learning and growth")

EXTERNAL CAPACITY (Contractors + Partners)
- E-contracting
- Knowledge management and transactions in strategic alliances, new value propositions/advocacy

THE PUBLIC(S)
- Service delivery
- Digital democracy

“ACCESS”
Pursuing “e-democracy” through “democratizing data” or “community informatics” (GIS, public data, etc.)

Many failed efforts failed to understand this knowledge loop or cycle as a social process:
A few more resources

Building the Virtual State
(on e-government)

Modernizing Democracy (on citizen participation through technology)

Plus:

Cyberpolitics: Citizen Activism in the Age of the Internet

Community Informatics: Enabling Communities with Information and Communication Technologies
The economy is too important to be left to the economists.
Technology is too important to be left to the technologists.