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GOVERNMENT 2.0 IN BETAPHASE

A ANALYSIS OF ePARTICIPATION AND WEB 2.0 APPLICATIONS OF GERMANY'S 50 LARGEST CITIES AND 16 FEDERAL STATES

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An Analysis of eParticipation and Web 2.0 Applications of Germany's 50 largest Cities and 16 Federal States

Alexander Schellong Philipp Girrger

After years of sluggish progress, eParticipation is increasingly being prioritized by German and international policy makers. Web 2.0 applications are supposed to facilitate the citizen-government interaction. Following a web-based data collection of web-portals, eParticipation offerings and use of Web 2.0 applications in Germany's 50 largest cities and 16 federal states in the areas of urban planning, budgetary planning, complaints/suggestions and citizen services within a four-step policy cycle were analyzed. The results underline that informational integration of citizens in government outweighs consultative approaches. Therefore, this study concludes that—for the 66 cases studied—German Government 2.0 activities are still in beta phase.

Introduction

For two decades the potential of eParticipation has been outlined in numerous publications on eDemocracy.[1] Unfortunately, eDemocracy remains nothing more than a rhetorical promise.[2]

Nevertheless, recent years have seen greater momentum on the policy-level.[3] The Open Government Agenda[4] of the Obama Administration, the Malmoe Declaration[5] on the joint eGovernment strategy until 2015 ratified by the EU Member States[6], or the German government program E-Government 2.0[7] prioritize citizen participation in government and politics. Moving towards the network society[8], engaging with constituents is understood as a critical element of political legitimacy.

Frequently, two terms are being applied in this context: Government 2.0 and Web 2.0 (applications). The term Government 2.0 is understood two-fold. It either describes a vision of a new form of governance[9] and citizen-government interaction (e.g. as outlined in the Malmoe declaration) or the use of Web 2.0 applications[10]. The latter for example being blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, or online social networks. Since they allow for forms of social

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[1] Peri 6 (2001); Grönlund (2002); OECD (2003)
[2] Mahrer & Krimmer (2005); United Nations (2005)
[3] OECD (2008)
[4] www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-06.pdf
[5] www.egov2009.se/wp-content/uploads/Ministerial-Declaration-on-eGovernment.pdf
[6] European Commission (2009): 25; The number of EU Member states with a defined eParticipation policy has risen from 5 in 2005 to over 25 in 2009
[7] Federal Ministry of the Interior (2009); (2008)
[8] Schellong/Müller (2010)
[9] Müller (2010)
[10] Osimo, D. (2008); Punie/Misuraca/Osimo (2009); Nabatchi, T./Mergel, I. (2010)

interaction such as communication or collaboration, they are also called social media[11]. Their range of application in eParticipation activities and impact on the citizen-government relationship is just barely becoming visible. In any case, the facilitating potential of Web 2.0 applications for eParticipation is believed to be very high.[12] At the same time it is widely agreed upon that technology cannot solve the problems of democracy.

Despite numerous eParticipation projects started by politics, government or citizens, a recent study by the German Ministry of the Interior came to the conclusion that there is much room for improvement of eParticipation in Germany.[13] Because of the increasing public discourse on Government 2.0 and Germany's astounding improvement by 46 ranks from 2008 to 14th place in the area of eParticipation in this year's UN eGovernment benchmark[14], it is time to take a closer look at the current state of eParticipation and Web 2.0 in Germany.

Scope of this study

Taking a look at web-portals, CSC analyzed the state of eParticipation and use of Web 2.0 applications in Germany's 50 largest cities and its 16 federal states in four areas: urban planning, budgetary planning, complaints/suggestions, and citizen services.

Web 2.0 and e-participation in Germany

There are various studies on citizen participation, however, only few focus on eParticipation and Web 2.0 in German government. Most studies are either detailed single-case studies or general discussion[15] of Web 2.0 applications and their potential use within government or for citizen participation. Broader empirical studies are scarce.

BITKOM's policy paper tries to stimulate a debate on Web 2.0 in government.[16] It presents key characteristics of Web 2.0 applications and various examples from around the globe. Moreover, barriers to implementations (e.g. legal, administrative practices) are outlined. The authors stress the importance of Web 2.0 as a potential avenue for government to adapt to the changing and participatory needs of the network society.

A comprehensive approach was chosen by two studies from the German Ministry of the Interior[17] to capture the state of eParticipation in Germany and identify various areas and measures for improvement. Among others, a citizen survey showed that the motives and expectations for eParticipation depend on the level of government. On the local level, eParticipation is guided by perceived individual repercussions and impact on the policy decision. On the national level (federal government), eParticipation is the result of individual interest in a policy area. However, citizens believe that individual impact on policy makers is low. Overall, the studies show that Germany has reached a high-degree on the basic level

[11] Mergel/Schweik/Fountain (2009)
[12] United Nations (2010)
[13] Albrecht et al. (2008): 8;„[We can conclude that there are various good practice cases in Germany, however, overall broader diffusion and institutional embeddedness need remains in a nascent stage. Only seldom is ICT applied in sustainable way. Moreover, offerings lack transparency and responsivity as government fails to address why it is offering eParticipation, how it is utilizing citizen feedback and whether citizen can expect a response from government or politics.]"
[14] United Nations (2010): 84ff.
[15] Habbel/Hubert (2008); BITKOM (2008); Osimo (2008); Fages/Sangüesa (2007)
[16] BITKOM (2008)
[17] Federal Ministry of the Interior (2008); Albrecht et. al. (2008)

eParticipation spectrum—the informational stage. Consultative eParticipation activities at all levels of government are barely visible for citizens which also influences usage numbers.

Schoppé, Parasie and Veeit tried to identify factors influencing the use of eParticipation offerings.[18] According to their study, the perceived ease of use and usability of an eParticipation offering increases the likelihood of usage. Moreover, trust in privacy protection measures is important as well. Finally, users that have already participated online are more willing to become active in other eParticipation offerings than those users, who have never done so.

A study initiated by Amt 24 e.V.[19] gives insights into the use of Web 2.0 applications and in the federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg from a government perspective. 227 administrations were surveyed about the following topics: awareness of Web 2.0, possibilities of Web 2.0, current application of Web 2.0, perceived impact, chances and barriers of Web 2.0. The study failed to come to representative results due to a low return rate. The study shows, that the term “Web 2.0” is well-known and is mainly linked to citizen-interaction. In addition, Web 2.0 is thought to improve the quality of public services and the image of government. Internally, Web 2.0 applications support knowledge-management and communication. Participating administrations are using at least one Web 2.0 application—commonly for tagging or commenting— and are planning further activities in the near future. Limited budget resources, a lack of knowledge and employee acceptance are considered to be the biggest obstacles for Web 2.0 in government.

[18] Schoppé/Parasie/Veeit (2009)
[19] Amt 24 e.V. (2010)

Methodology and Data Analysis

Supported by a web-based standardized survey[20], the data was collected by a study team of CSC. The reason for this approach was two-fold. First, several studies[21] have shown that citizens try to gather information by visiting the respective government Internet presence or using a search engine before engaging in eParticipation. Second, the approach promised to be the most feasible way of handling data collection for 66 cases by dispersed team.

	Suggest	Prepare	Decide	Implement
Inform (I)	Insights into proposals that are discussed in politics and administration	Insights into detailed policies plans	Insights into voting - results/ -behavior; motivation	Insight into implementation progress and impact
Consult/ Co-Govern (C&C)	Commenting or votes on proposals from politics and administration. Gathering of proposals from citizens. Overview and voting of proposals from other citizens	Commenting or decision on detailed policies Collaboration or complete transfer of an creating policy documents Overview over the opinions of other citizens	Commenting on voting results. Test votes/polls. Participation in a voting. Overview over the opinions of other citizens.	*Excluded*

< Are Web 2.0 applications being used? >

Table 1: Framework to analyze eParticipation in urban and budgetary planning within a policy-cycle

The study analyzes four areas[22]: urban planning, budgetary planning, complaints/ suggestions, and citizen services, in the 50 largest cities[23] and 16 states. Urban and budgetary planning was chosen over other policy areas as they seem to be prime areas of eParticipation[24] activities in Germany. For states, urban planning was excluded. Furthermore, submitting complaints and proposals was seen as a basic and an easy to implement form of eParticipation which most governments offered since the early days of eGovernment. So it was interesting to see whether new approaches could be identified in this area. Besides citizen services, the study also registered the use of 14 Web 2.0 applications[25]. Table 1 gives an overview of the framework that aimed at creating a more differentiated understanding of eParticipation offerings within a four-step policy-cycle for urban and budgetary planning. In this study, publicly available information on the Internet is understood as the basic level of eParticipation. Transparency of processes in politics and

[20] Number of questions (open; half-open; closed): 41 in urban planning; 43 in budgetary planning; 16 appeals/ proposals; 17 citizen services

[21] Deutsche Bank Research (2005); TNS EMNID (2009); BITKOM (2009);

[22] It was decided that a focused approach would allow for greater insights into eParticipation activities in a few policy areas rather than collecting relatively generic data for eParticipation activities in all policy areas possible with the limited resources available.

[23] de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Gro%C3%9Fst%C3%A4dte_in_Deutschland (see Appendix for full list)

[24] http://www.buergerhaushalt.org/ a citizen budget can be found in 140 communes

[25] 14 Web 2.0 applications: Comments, Forum, Chat, RSS, Voting, Blog, Microblog (z.B. Twitter), Social Network (internal/external), Social Bookmarking, Tagging, Mash-up, Video, Podcast und Wikis. Further applications were not considered/ examined.

government as well as easy access to government for citizens is the basis for democratic governance and crucial for higher forms of participation: consultation and co-governance.[26] The four-step policy-cycle is as follows: suggest, prepare, decide and implement.

The first phase of a policy-cycle consists of identifying, suggesting and discussing ideas and issues. Eventually, priorities are set which will then be prepared in greater detail to generate a deeper understanding and have a basis for decision making. The preparation can be carried out by politics, administrations, economy, or citizens on a joint or individual basis. The third phase of the policy-cycle consists of the vote. Finally, government starts with the implementation of a policy or plan. For example, in urban planning, government would start by engaging in a public procurement process.

Data collection took place between April and May 2010. The entry point was the official municipal Internet websites (e.g. www.koeln.de) or state portals (www.hessen.de)–sub domains were permitted, however, special domains were excluded. eParticipation offerings in other policy domains were excluded from further analysis but registered when identified, in particular, when they seemed to be of innovative nature. This measure was important as data collection quickly indicated a lack of cases in the area of budgetary planning and complaints/suggestions for federal states. Furthermore, non web-based citizen participation activities within the scope of this research were recorded as far as possible.

Researchers had 1:30 minutes to find the appropriate data per question through web search, portal search or the website's navigation bar which is a little more than normal end-user search times being reported to be between 2 and 60 seconds.[27] Additional measures were supposed improve reliability: a pre-test of the survey, training sessions of the research time including a data collection exercise[28], redundant data collection and random data validation. The data was analyzed with PASW (SPSS) and MS Excel. Results were interpreted on the individual and the aggregate case level.

Readers should be aware of several limitations, or caveats, to the study and its findings. The study does not offer any insights into a government's motivation for offering eParticipation activities, how eParticipation is managed internally, into usage numbers and how citizen experience eParticipation. Furthermore, the research design (e.g. questions, policy domains) indirectly present a specific understanding of good eParticipation practice that should not be understood as the optimum but just one potential avenue for eParticipation. Finally, eParticipation activities are not mentioned here might be the result of poor data collection, however, could as well be interpreted as resulting from poor usability of the municipal and state websites.

[26] De Jong/Rizvi (2008)
[27] Hofgesang (2006)
[28] All members of the research team had to collect data of a particular city. This helped to improve the survey design in addition to quickly identify areas of further clarification on the individual level.

Results

Participation Offerings in Urban Planning

A rundown of results for each of the 50 cities shows that citizens overall remain in the role of passive information receiver in urban planning processes. Especially in large-scale projects (e.g. Hamburg's philharmonic hall next to the river Elbe or Berlin's Gleisdreieck) municipalities try to keep their constituents informed throughout the entire policy-cycle. Many times, however, citizens need to pay a visit to the respective urban planning government office for detailed insights. Related political decisions (votes) and discourse are not published on the project website but in the council information system. 58% of the cities offer citizen the possibility to comment on drafts and concepts but only 6% have virtual polls on urban planning projects. Web 2.0 applications are rarely being used, only Mash-ups have gained some popularity.

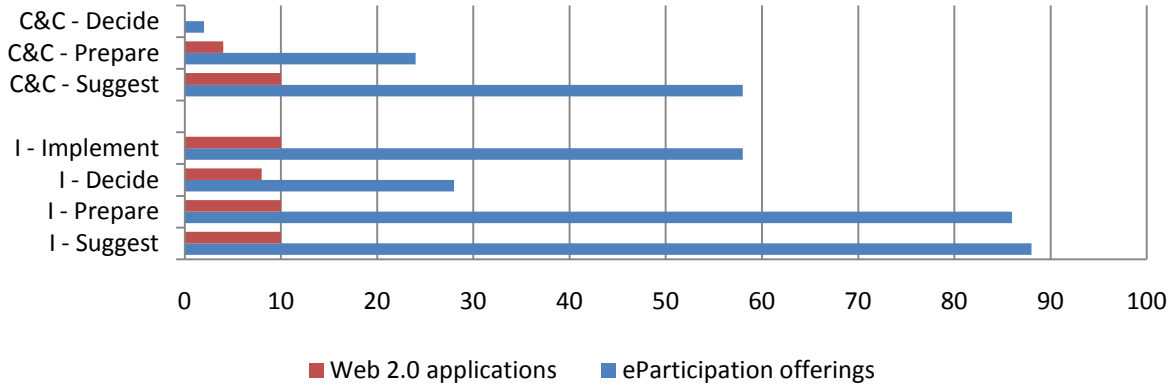

Figure 1: % of the eParticipation offerings and Web 2.0 applications for urban planning in 50 cities

The City of Freiburg (Breisgau) is a case in point for a comprehensive approach towards eParticipation in urban planning. With a population of around 220.000, the city is rather small; however, the local government tries to link various information sources and offers it in one location. Most information is four or less clicks away, making the site easy to navigate. Current and former urban development projects can be accessed in different ways. Citizens can find projects through an interactive maps or a special section. Depending on the project stage, citizens can find additional information such as project goal, zoning, environmental reports and council decisions. It also includes information on citizen participation activities. Social bookmarking functionality allows sharing information with others. Citizens may interact with Freiburg's government through email and forms besides the communication functionalities of social media such as Twitter or YouTube in various policy areas.

Participation Offerings in Budgetary Planning

Roughly 40% of the cities studied offer their constituents information throughout the policy-cycle. 30% of the cases provide greater insight into elected officials' voting behavior and motivations. 40% of cities and 8% of the states make their current budget as well as information on a government's project realized effects available to the public. 60% of cities try to include their constituents in the early phase of budgetary planning by offering them the chance to submit ideas—mostly through online forms and in 20% of the cases through a participatory budgeting platform. Only one city asks its citizens for a virtual vote on the final budget.

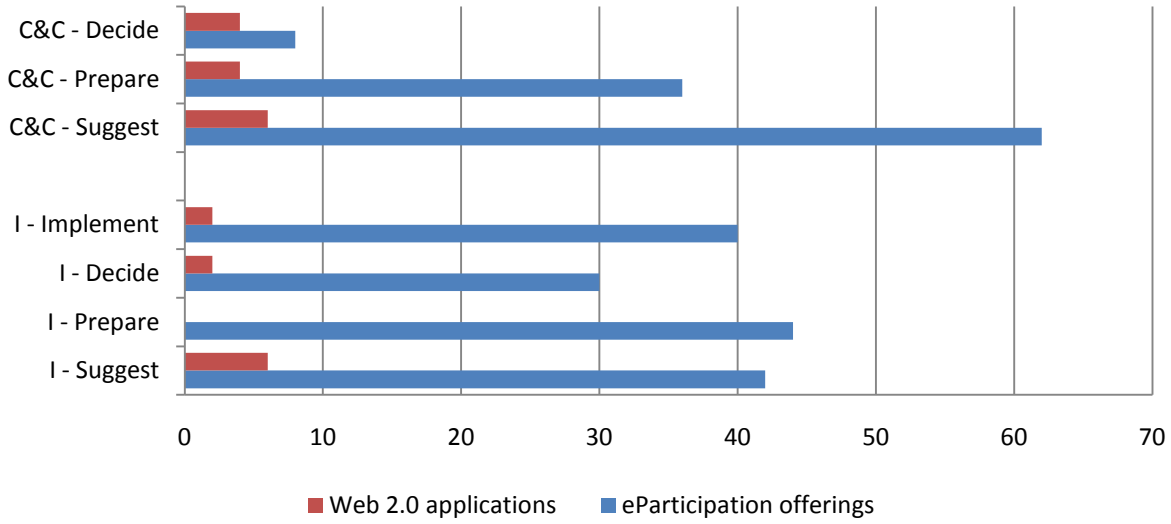

Figure 2: % of cities with the eParticipation offerings and Web 2.0 applications in budgetary planning

20-30% of state portals allow access to budgetary information throughout the policy-cycle. Similar to cities, 60% of states offer citizen the opportunity to submit comments or ideas on the budget—usually this is realized by presenting them an email address. State-level participatory budgeting activities or virtual polls could not be found. Moreover, Web 2.0 applications are rarely being used in budgetary planning.

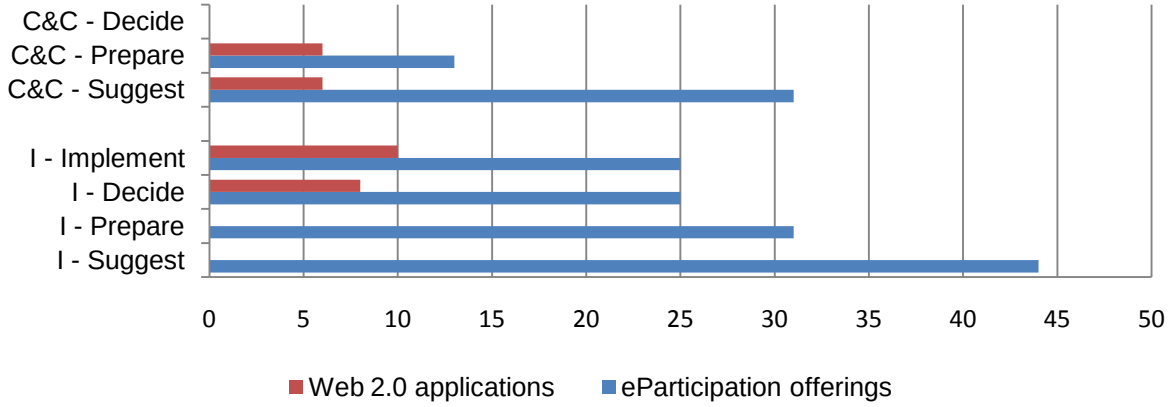

Figure 3: % states with eParticipation offerings and Web 2.0 applications in budgetary planning

The City of Essen's participatory budgeting effort to generate savings of 381 million Euros, gained a lot of attention during the data collection period, however, based on the methodology of this survey; it was not taken into consideration (the website had its own domain). Citizens were able to participate in the budgetary planning process between April 29th and May 20th by submitting ideas for savings and comment on suggestions from other citizens and government. A total of 3776 registered users participated; leaving over 2700 suggestions and 113,000 comments/evaluations. The city is still analyzing the data. Besides the use of a forum and polls, citizens could follow the discussion via Twitter which offered additional feedback opportunity.

The City of Cologne's[29] participatory budgeting offerings are noteworthy as well since it won numerous domestic and international awards.

[29] Kahlen 2010

Complaints and Suggestions

60% of cities and 31% of states offer citizens to submit a complaint or suggestion. Tracking its progress in government's internal processing or impact is offered by less than 10% of all cases. Online petitioning is possible in 50% of the states and 30% of cities. Web 2.0 applications are non-existent.

A noteworthy eParticipation offering outside the scope of this study is the "Maerker" [30] service by state of Brandenburg which is used by several municipalities. Citizens can report local infrastructure problems and track government handling. A similar solution is the "Unortkataster"[31] by the City of Cologne.

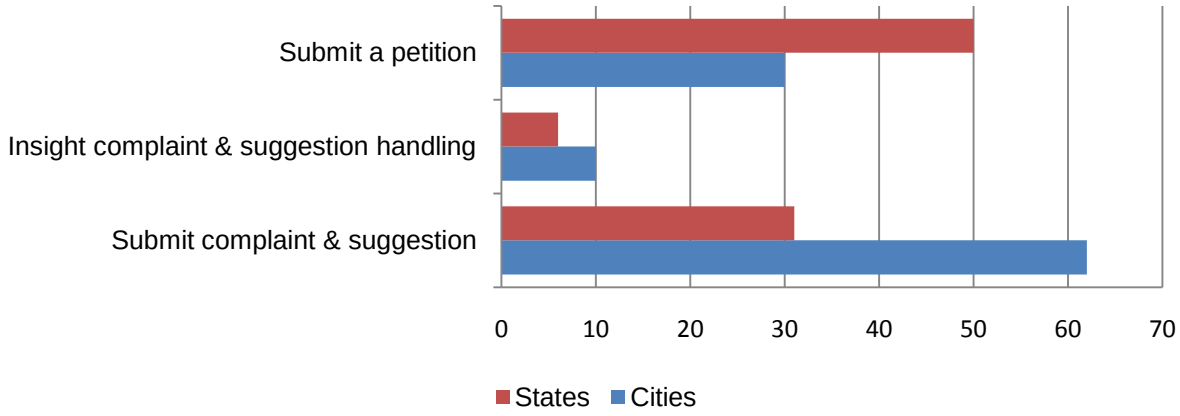

Figure 4: % of the cases of 16 states and 50 cities in the area of complaints and suggestions

[30] maerker.brandenburg.de/lis/list.php?page=maerker
[31] www.unortkataster.de

Citizen Services and Web 2.0 applications

25% of states and 26% of municipalities cities refer to Germany's single non-emergency government service number 115[32]. All cities participating in the national D115 pilot clearly communicate D115. Only the City of Cologne follows a different approach. While the website clearly points their users to the phone channel, the former number 211-0 of the city's contact center instead of 115 is still being communicated even though Cologne has been an early member of the national D115 pilot since March 2009.

Most of the 14 Web 2.0 applications set in this survey are not yet being used on the state and local websites. RSS is used in 14 states and 28 cities. Another popular application is video functionality which is part of 68% of state and 36% of municipal websites. Sometimes the term "podcast" is used for video functionality as well. While 36% of cities and 50% have started using micro-blogging, they lack information about the channel on their portals. Tagging, polls, Wikis, blogs and chats are those Web 2.0 applications that are the most seldom to be found on state and local websites.

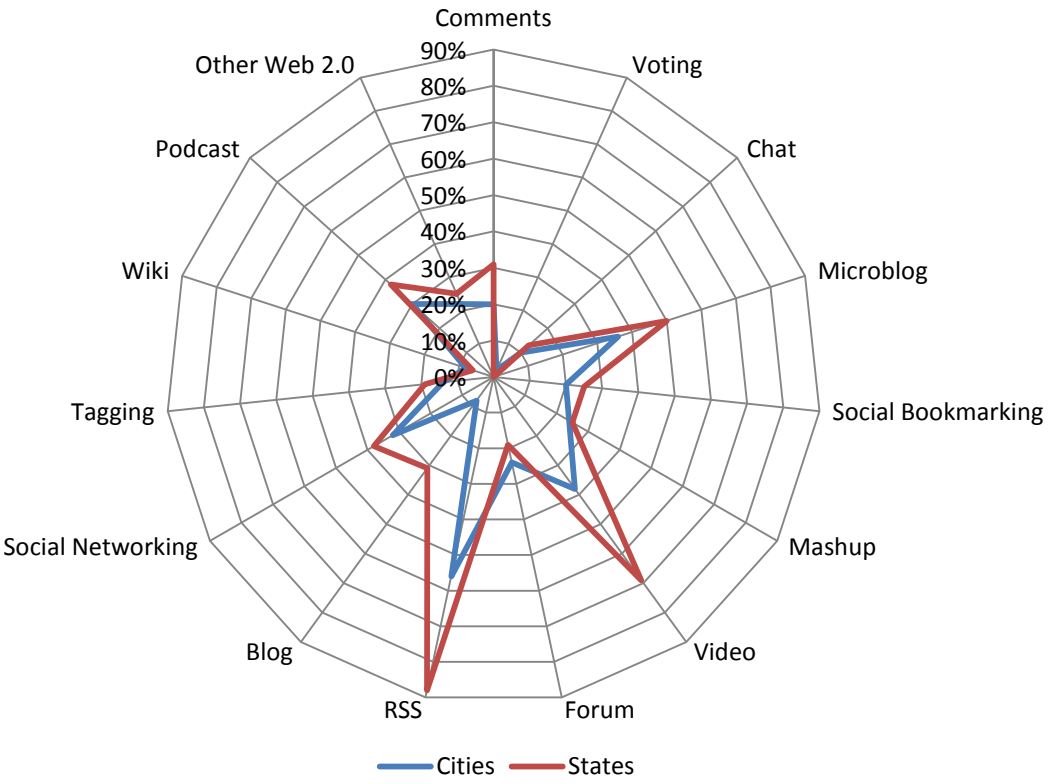

Figure 5: % of the implemented Web 2.0 applications in cities and states

[32] www.d115.de; see also: Lemke/Westerfeld (2010)

City Ranking

Up to 80% of all reviewed cities have not embedded any Web 2.0 applications in their websites. Therefore, Figure 6 only provides an overview of the top five cities. The City of Bonn ranks first, the City Freiburg (im Breisgau) second and the City of Braunschweig third in utilizing Web 2.0 applications. The ranking is based on the sum of Web 2.0 applications identified for each city.

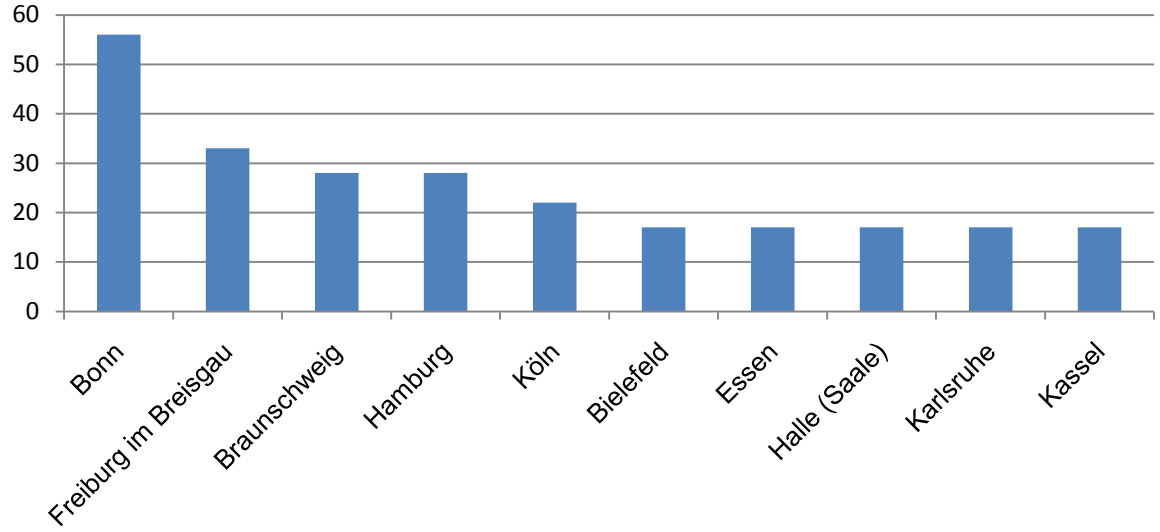

Figure 6: Top 5 of the cities based on % usage of Web 2.0 applications

Table 2 presents a ranking of the 50 largest cities based on the sum of all eParticipation offerings on both participation maturity levels. There are a total of 13 ranks with multiple-cases per rank. Due to a weak data set for states—as a result of a small number of cases that met our criteria and either utilized Web 2.0 applications or presented eParticipation offerings—it was not possible to come up with a robust ranking. Nevertheless, two out of the methodology's scope activities on the state-level are presented in the upcoming paragraphs.

Offerings such as "direktzu.bonn.de" and additional measures described in the concept "New forms of citizen participation in Bonn" underline the City of Bonn's leading position in both rankings. Juergen Nimptisch, the city's mayor, offers constituents to engage in a direct dialogue with him through an online platform.[33] After registration, citizens can comment on their fellow citizens' suggestions and comments, rate them or submit their own ideas. Virtual polls are also part of the eParticipation platform. Just like D115[34] the latter can be easily found on the frontpage of the city's web portal.

Berlin, Germany's capital and a city-state, offers a variety of eParticipation offerings. Along the lines of the one-stop government principle, these are aggregated on a micro-site which also aims at encouraging voluntary citizen engagement. Links to numerous citizen participation offerings on the district-level are given, e.g. participatory budgeting for the districts of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Lichtenberg or Marzahn-Hellersdorf; participatory urban-planning for other districts in addition to the city's general forum. It was, however,

[33] Leinhaas (2010)
[34] Bonn's service center is operated by the City of Cologne.

difficult to identify whether the city of state level part of Berlin's government was responsible to a respective offering which made data collection difficult at times.

Rank	City	%	Rank	City	%
1	Freiburg im Breisgau	0,86	8	Bochum	0,38
2	Herne	0,71		Dresden	
3	Berlin	0,67		Frankfurt am Main	
4	Bonn	0,62		Hamm	
	Erfurt			Mainz	
	Köln			Wiesbaden	
	Mülheim an der Ruhr		9	Essen	0,33
5	Dortmund	0,52		Kiel	
	Halle (Saale)			Lübeck	
	München		10	Augsburg	0,29
	Oldenburg			Gelsenkirchen	
6	Bielefeld	0,48		Hagen	
	Kassel			Karlsruhe	
	Leipzig			Leverkusen	
	Mannheim			Ludwigshafen am Rhein	
	Münster			Magdeburg	
	Wuppertal			Nürnberg	
7	Braunschweig	0,43		Oberhausen	
	Duisburg			Saarbrücken	
	Hamburg		11	Düsseldorf	0,19
	Hannover			Krefeld	
	Mönchengladbach			Rostock	
	Osnabrück		12	Bremen	0,14
	Stuttgart			Solingen	
8	Aachen	0,38	13	Chemnitz	0,1

Table 2: Ranking of the cities based on the % of the identified participation offerings

Since June 15th 2010, the state of Bavaria started an innovative eParticipation effort called "Aufbruch Bayern" [35] ("Advancing Bavaria"). Along the lines of the open innovation[36] concept, citizens can engage in setting the state's future family, education and innovation policy until 31st of July 2010. Registered citizens can create their own profile, rate other citizen's input and submit ideas by filling in a form, uploading a picture or documents. The eParticipation process is being moderated.

Finally, the state of Hesse allows citizen's to participate in developing the state's sustainability strategy since April 2009 through a microsite.[37] Forums cover issues such as "climate change and sustainable energy sources", "sustainable transport", "global challenges" or "government and public administration". An additional aim of these efforts is to motivate citizens to engage in voluntary projects. For example, the project "Hesse active: 100 schools for climate protection" tries to build a network of 100 school which try to save the climate through joint activities.

[35] www.aufbruch-bayern.de
[36] Von Hippel (2005)
[37] www.hessen-nachhaltig.de

Government 2.0 in Beta Phase

This study reinforces results indicated by earlier research[38] on eParticipation in Germany. In urban and budgetary planning, eParticipation remains mostly on the level of information provision. Nevertheless, opportunities for participation exist; however, citizens need to pay a visit the respective government office to become engaged. The Internet channel is rarely being used as an avenue for participation. Those eParticipation offerings that might exist remain hidden despite a most thorough search of government websites.

In urban planning, mash-ups are a great option of visualizing complex information for an existing or planned project in a comprehensive way. Since information such as the political discourse on a project is provided elsewhere on government websites, citizens have a hard time to quickly assess the context of a project. Furthermore, governments lack providing information on the impact and costs of a project. In general, it seems that the bigger an urban planning project the greater the likelihood of government providing detailed information about it. Citizens rarely get the opportunity to continuously comment on a project. City maps that provide an overview of citizens' comments for individual projects do not exist. Along the lines of Cologne's "Unortkataster" and submitting complaints such a map could help government to quickly identify problem areas in urban planning from their constituents' perspective.

While states and municipalities provide citizen's with a lot of information on the budget, the use of Web 2.0 applications is in a nascent stage. There are various U.S. cases[39] which show how Web 2.0 applications can be applied to providing financial information to the public. 60% of municipalities and 30% offer citizens the chance to share their budget related ideas with government. These numbers are impressive; however, any interpretation of the numbers needs to take the chosen methodology into consideration. Even simple in-text type information that submitting budget-related ideas via email is possible, was counted as an eParticipation offering. Of course, this is far from proactive compared to participatory budgeting. Unfortunately, the latter also struggles with successful adoption rates. According to buergerhaushalt.org out of 180[40] municipal participatory budgeting offerings in Germany, 67 cases can be considered active. Therefore, only 0.5% of all 14.000 municipalities in Germany have implemented Internet-based participatory budgeting. 20% of the 50 most populated cities in this survey are active in this domain, however, none of the 16 states.

A virtual poll, that is, an Internet-based vote that allows citizens to voice their position on any kind of idea, concept or policy, continues to be a novelty on government websites, especially on the state-level. Daily citizens' sentiment remains an unknown constant for government. Moreover, citizens rarely get the chance on the studied websites to interact with their peers, public administration or politics. Therefore, politics and public administration miss the chance of generating a better understanding of their constituents needs, providing targeted information or facilitating the citizen to citizen an citizen to government dialogue. The latter can have many positive effects[41]:

[38] Bundesministerium des Innern (2008, 2009); Albrecht et. al. (2008)
[39] www.nebraskaspending.gov *oder* www.usaspending.gov
[40] Stand März 2010; buergerhaushalt.org
[41] Lazer et. al. (2009)

- Increasing interest in politics and citizen participation
- Expanding the number and types of participants
- Generating support for a position / project
- Creating identity and trust

In 60% of the cities and 31% of the states, citizens can submit complaints. Yet less than 10% of all cases provide any kind of information on complaint handling and impact. It could, therefore, happen that several citizens complain about the same issue without being aware of each other. Even if government behavior and decisions deviate from a citizen's position, showing them that their input is taken serious and handled in the most transparent way will improve their overall trust in public institutions. The City of Bonn provides a case in point how Web 2.0 applications could be applied by public administration and politics.

Cities and municipalities that have implemented the single non-emergency government service number 115 continue to ignore its potential for citizen participation. The municipalities in this study use and communicate 115 as a channel for one-sided information provision. Contrary to this approach, U.S. cities and counties that offer 311 non-emergency government services, use the phone-channel to get almost real-time information on citizen needs, complaints and ideas. Through the media, elected officials and public managers frequently ask citizens to share their insights with government by calling 311.[42] The data generated through 311 is used to generate greater transparency and accountability in government, improve citizen orientation or legitimize government activities.

Identifying eParticipation offerings wasn't easy. Despite targeted and thorough search activities—especially through state- and local website search and navigation functionalities—, the team was not able to find information on online and offline citizen participation offerings. Keywords such as "council information system", "participatory budgeting", "citizen participation", and "eParticipation", "Twitter" or "Wiki" lead to unsatisfying search results even in cases of existing offerings and implementations. On the contrary, outside search engines such as Google, Bing or Yahoo provided better results. Large amounts of information remain hidden in proprietary state and local council information systems. Cities (14%) and states (19%) seldom use tagging functionality to include citizens in their efforts to improve website searchability. The Italian City of Turin has successfully improved their website by including citizen-based tagging of content (taggaTo).[43] These findings could generally support the hypothesis that low citizen usage numbers in eParticipation offerings are among other things the result of poor communication activities and poor embeddedness into a government's website.

Regardless of this study's scope on two policy areas, only 20% of the 66 cases utilize a wider range of Web 2.0 applications on their websites. Furthermore, Web 2.0 applications are mostly applied to disseminate information towards the public. Accordingly, video and micro-blogging applications are popular among cities and states. Whether and to what extent governments are using and are influenced by the feedback channel remains an open question.

[42] Westerfeld/Lemke (2008); Schellong (2008)
[43] The city of Turin allows registered users to plant bookmarks on the individual websites of the city and to tag those. The websites are describes in more details and also in colloquial language through this tagging-service.

This study illustrates that while states and municipalities have eParticipation on their agenda, they lack the willingness or resources to fully engage in it. For the cases studied, German Government 2.0 activities seem to be in beta phase. It is, therefore, important to focus on three areas. First, improve knowledge on the potential, limits and implementation of eParticipation and Web 2.0 applications in politics and government. Second, convince government officials to just try out new things and sail into uncharted waters. Third, give citizens the opportunity to learn participation in various ways as early as possible.

Appendix

Survey Urban Planning

	Suggest	Prepare	Decide	Implement
Inform (I)	Is it possible to look into the present proposals for urban planning projects?	Are plans, policy papers and concepts online?	Are citizens directly informed about voting results and motivations?	Are citizens informed about implementation and impact of a project?
Consult/ Co-Govern (C&C)	Is it possible for citizen to comment online on drafts/ concepts during the urban planning process?	Is it possible for citizen to participate in the planning process or vote about options?	Is it possible for citizens to comment on voting results or look into other citizens' comments? Are virtual polls on urban planning projects possible?	*Not examined*
< Are Web 2.0 applications used? >				

Survey Budgetary Planning

	Suggest	Prepare	Decide	Implement
Inform (I)	Are proposals or ideas how the budget is prioritized/ generated/ allocated or deletions online visible?	Are handling processes of the (budget plan provided to the citizen and the motivation and effects of the plan highlighted?	Are citizens directly informed about voting results and motivations?	Are the citizens informed about the implement-ation of the current budget and/or realized effects?
Consult/ Co-Govern (C&C)	Can citizen submit ideas for the budget? (allocation, etc.)	Can citizens submit ideas? Are citizens involved into the preparation of specific budget areas?	Is it possible for citizens to comment voting results or look into other citizens comments? Is virtual voting about (communal/state) budget possible – "atmosphere tests"?	*Not examined*
< Are Web 2.0 applications used? >				

The 50 largest cities in Germany

Aachen	Kassel
Augsburg	Kiel
Berlin	Köln
Bielefeld	Krefeld
Bochum	Leipzig
Bonn	Leverkusen
Braunschweig	Lübeck
Bremen	Ludwigshafen am Rhein
Chemnitz	Magdeburg
Dortmund	Mainz
Dresden	Mannheim
Duisburg	Mönchengladbach
Düsseldorf	Mülheim an der Ruhr
Erfurt	München
Essen	Münster
Frankfurt am Main	Nürnberg
Freiburg im Breisgau	Oberhausen
Gelsenkirchen	Oldenburg
Hagen	Osnabrück
Halle (Saale)	Rostock
Hamburg	Saarbrücken
Hamm	Solingen
Hannover	Stuttgart
Herne	Wiesbaden
Karlsruhe	Wuppertal

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CSC
Abraham-Lincoln-Park 1
65189 Wiesbaden
Telefon: +49.611.142.22222
E-Mail: deutschland@csc.com

www.csc.com/de

Worldwide CSC Headquarters
The Americas
3170 Fairview Park Drive
Falls Church, Virginia 22042
United States
+1.703.876.1000

Europe, Middle East, Africa
Royal Pavilion
Wellesley Road
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1PZ
United Kingdom
+44(0)1252.534000

Australia
26 Talavera Road
Macquarie Park, NSW 2113
Australia
+61(0)29034.3000

Asia
139 Cecil Street
#08-00 Cecil House
Singapore 069539
Republic of Singapore
+65.6221.9095

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