How democratic will e-Democracy be?

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Abstract

Recent developments (e.g., e-Government, e-Democracy, e-Voting, etc.) of the Information Society expose the limits of system security. The ubiquitousness of Information Technology relies on stringent system requirements. Although new technology addresses technical problems and provides new challenges, new technology often gives rise to new hazards. In order to identify mitigation actions, it is necessary to understand diverse multidisciplinary aspects. The complexity and multidisciplinary of Information Technology require us to investigate new mechanisms that address general requirements (e.g., Trust, Security, etc.). A debate on the problems arising in particular Information Society scenarios would benefit from a broad multidisciplinary audience. This panel advocates a multidisciplinary debate on e-Democracy: How democratic will e-Democracy be?

1. Panel Rationale

The ubiquitousness of Information Technology (IT) in the modern Information Society (IS) gives rise to new forms of social and political interactions (e.g., e-Democracy, e-Voting, etc.). The ubiquitousness of Information Technology relies on stringent system requirements. Although new technology addresses technical problems and provides new challenges, new technology often gives rise to new hazards. Recent developments (e.g., e-Democracy, e-Voting, etc.) of the IS expose the limits of system security.

IT, however, enables e-Democracy [1, 3, 4, 8]. On the one hand, IT provides an Information Infrastructure enabling e-Democracy [3, 4]. On the other hand, IT is a threat, because it exposes the IS to new hazards. These new hazards represent vulnerabilities for the (IS) and its e-Democracy. For instance, e-voting exposes security limits of e-democracy and its decision-making processes [5, 7].

Social structures (e.g., networks, lobbies, etc.) stresses the social shaping of e-democracy [1, 3, 4]. *Social connectivities* [6], for instance, rely on trust between peers communicating by computers. The introduction of new technology often requires the re-negotiation of social organisations (e.g., responsibility and accountability) as well as overall system features (e.g., security). Electronic mediated social structures, therefore, affect how IS engages social, political debates and decision-making processes. Moreover, social structures affect risk perception [2].

2. Acknowledgements

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