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Freedom *with* Information: Electronic Government, Information Intensity and Challenges to Citizenship.

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Introducing Freedom *with* Information: yielding information in differentiated technological domains

This chapter explores how new forms of citizen identification in electronic government may be enabling government agencies to re-shape their relationship to citizens. Just as Freedom of Information legislation comes into force in the UK, so government is becoming freer in its use of information on the citizen as it seeks to respond both to the demands imposed by customer relationship management (CRM) and the demands for enhanced citizen safety and state security. The delivery of new forms of market sensitive electronic public services provide government agencies with both novel and specific methods of citizen identification. These are the subject of a new research project; a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and based at the Oxford Internet Institute, in collaboration with Caledonian Business School¹

Emerging from this research is a complex typology of citizen identification by government agencies, combining key variables including technological domain, policy sector, type of citizen relationship, institutional setting and methods of information capture and management through which identity is both initiated and authenticated, and from which access to services is authorized. The technologies currently employed for citizen identification include:

- caller-line identification in government call centres, backed by pin numbers, passwords and forms of 'shared secrets';
- smart cards used in local government settings containing embedded personal data for multifunctional use in varying policy and service domains;
- biometric systems such as iris scans or fingerprints checked against a database and used increasingly at travel points such as airports;
- CCTV, used in many law enforcement and community safety situations with the increasing use of facial and other recognition systems allowing for data matching against a database;
- electronic tagging technology such as radio frequency identification (RFID) enabling, for example, tracking and monitoring of people and vehicles;

- Internet based access to government web-sites supported by varying degrees of identification and authentication depending on the type of transaction being undertaken.

Each of these means of identification is incorporated in practice and procedure expressly to permit a service to be delivered to the citizen at the level and quality deemed appropriate to that service. For some of these services, the capturing of personal data is explicit and well understood by the citizen. For many others, however, information related to the citizen is captured only with an implicit understanding that it is occurring. Some examples of these are the recording of 'click behaviour' in on-line relationships and location data gathered through mobile phone use. In some service arenas these new methods of identification provide the *sine qua non* of access to the service, in others these methods of access are optional. In sum, government has increasing access to electronically captured personal data on citizens across a wide array of service-providing agencies and the 'technological domains' to be found in and around those agencies. Much of this data is patchy and uncoordinated although, increasingly, data is being shared across government and integrated 'dossiers' on the citizen are being created (Lyons, 2003; Bellamy *et al*, 2005).

Freedom *with* Information: sharing data on the citizen.

Extraordinary changes have occurred in many countries in recent years in relation to the ways in which governments are both seeking and enabling the integration of data on citizens, so as to provide themselves with new and powerful information resources. The most macro level of explanation for these widespread developments was to be found after the world's most recent and most dramatic example of 'punctuated equilibrium' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1991; 2002). The '9/11' attacks on the US shook the institutionalized setting of US government and political and administrative demands for higher levels of information on both citizens of the US and visitors to the US grew exponentially. From that time, many security and administrative practices have been challenged to the point where they have been broken and replaced, particularly through the development of an accompanying 'data revolution' and the building of massive new information resources. New government/private company partnerships have been put in place to develop these resources; perhaps the most brilliant and contentious came to be known as The Matrix, a project that provided the capability to develop and mine gigantic databases. At the heart of these partnerships and systems, hugely diverse datasets have been made amenable to interrogation in response to specific requests from law enforcement agencies (O'Harrow, 2005). Databases and search algorithms, many of which had been developed initially for CRM purposes were re-assigned for the purpose of high security data mining. These frequently led to results that were applauded by the authorities, even though they occasionally produced 'false positives' that led to the arrest of innocent parties (O'Harrow, 2005).

In the UK less dramatic examples of the settled order of administration being unsettled by events have undoubtedly played their part in loosening up approaches to data sharing in government. For example, the Bichard Inquiry (2004), which followed one such upheaval – the child murders at the village of Soham

in England – has called for the urgent development of new systems that will allow for more intelligence sharing between English police forces. It is a curious contradiction that the Office of the e-Envoy (now the e-Government Unit) laments the lack of will in Whitehall to ‘join-up’ central government in the UK (see below), whilst Bellamy *et al* (2005) report the existence of many national initiatives in the social policy arena in Britain where data is being shared and matched extensively. In keeping with the Office of the e-Envoy’s view, studies have shown how the federated departmental and agency structure of central government in the UK appears resistant to macro-level initiatives that would bring about data sharing on the citizen (e.g. Bellamy and Taylor, 1996). Evidence from the criminal justice system (CJS), for example, made it clear that each constituent agency defined the meaning of ‘citizen’ differently and, in consequence, took a view on the stewardship of personal data held in their own databases that was incompatible across the CJS as a whole. Thus at the highest, most strategic level, cross-agency working requiring extensive data sharing seems hard to achieve whilst at lower levels that is not the case (Bellamy *et al*, 2005). ‘Precautionary intervention’, the contemporary watchword in many social policy areas, is demanding new forms of risk management and this, in turn, points to the need for more complete forms of inter-agency working and the data sharing by which it is under-pinned.

A second example, from the UK, of where loosened up approaches to data sharing in government are being introduced found in the incorporation of so-called ‘intermediaries’ - voluntary and private sector organizations - in the provision of electronic government services. The ‘settled order’ of electronic service provision by government has been disturbed by the relative failure of government to secure high levels of on-line services uptake by citizens and by the urgency for change injected by the recent Efficiency Review (Gershon, 2004). Models of intermediation in service provision vary between countries, but common to them all is the prospect that intermediation will enlarge the scope and scale of e-government through encouragement and incentives to citizens to take up new forms of e-service provision, together with their promise of huge cost savings. A further anticipated gain in the UK is that of re-establishing trust in government in an era in which expressed trust in government has plummeted (Taylor and Burt, 2005a; 2005b). From a government perspective, intermediaries are seen as enabling a move to the ownership and delivery of services by voluntary agencies that are highly trusted and seen as independent of government, and by business firms that are seen as highly competent.

In most systems of government where intermediaries are to be found, these organizations are in formal partnership with government. In the UK, however, government is crafting a model of e-government development based upon ‘intermediaries’ as independent owner/deliverers of e-government services, deliverers that wholly own the services to be provided rather than deliverers working to a narrower contract and acting as agents of government (Office of the e-Envoy, 2003a; 2003b; 2003c). It is envisaged, for example, that some insurance companies may propose to government that they take on the collection of road taxation for certain client groups, or voluntary organizations may take over certain advisory functions, particularly perhaps in aspects of social welfare. In putting forward these proposals these private and voluntary sector organizations will demonstrate synergistic advantages in service provision based upon their existing portfolio of activities, as well as demonstrating to government that its

cost base will diminish significantly from the ceding of these services to them. Thus, for example, the insurance company that offers specialist insurance services to disabled or elderly citizens may propose the gathering of road taxation from those same citizens, thus reducing the burden on government whilst notionally at least enhancing the quality of service available to these citizens. Equally, the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) (Wheatley, 2004) may propose the enlargement of its advisory service to welfare claimants by integrating into its own provision those advisory services that are currently run out of government departments. Such a proposition would carry with it the potential for significant reduction in the government cost base and would be advantageous to the CAB through allowing that organization to amplify and make more complete its relationship to the citizen.

Initiatives by intermediaries, particularly perhaps the strong variant that is being implemented in the UK, involve the establishment of changed and new relationships with non-governmental organizations from the private and voluntary sectors. These new relationships can only be constructed from exchanges of data between the parties involved. In particular, intermediaries will require access to government databases if they are to deliver the enhanced e-services that are the basis of these changes. For the CAB, for example, their advisors will require access to government claimant records so as to offer these enhanced services. To achieve such access these advisors, many of whom are volunteers, must be identified and have their identity authenticated as they enter portals from which access to data on their clients can be achieved. Equally, for the system to operate effectively, the departments of government must be willing to yield data. However, there is already evidence that there may be more resistance than co-operation (Kearns, 2004; Wheatley, 2004). Additionally, as we have pointed out elsewhere in this chapter, the electronic mixed economy raises questions about the segmentation of government services, as organizations identify niche client markets into which they will supply service. Thus, the electronic mixed economy holds within it the potential for many variations in service type and quality, suggesting a shift away from universalist values

Finally, and at a more macro level, the electronic mixed economy raises issues of accountability and legitimacy, both of the individual organizations concerned and of the emergent system of governance more generally (Taylor and Burt, 2005). For example, to what extent will the intermediary actually become independent of government, or will it be *de facto* an agent of government whilst appearing to be independent? In other words, does the *virtual* relationship, based as it is upon new flows of data, supervene and thereby over-ride the nominal, expressed relationship that assumes independence?

Freedom *with* Information: information capture and 'layered citizenship'

For the past four years the 'Gateway' project, intended to facilitate access through the UK government portal and thereby to electronic services, has been developed and implemented at the centre of British government, first at the Office of the e-Envoy and now at the e-Government Unit. The Gateway now has over 5 million registered users and over 50 services available currently, with more services to come online

during 2005. If the Prime Minister's target is to be met, all public services should have on-line availability by the end of 2005, with demonstrably high uptake of certain 'key services'.

The climate within which the Gateway project has emerged has been hugely influenced by four different, though largely coincidental, movements that together have shaped government during that same period: modernizing government and its major concomitant 'joined-up government'; reducing the costs of government including service delivery; introducing the methods and systems of CRM, including the 'personalization' of on-line services; and the setting of ambitious targets for the take up of e-government. Brought together, these movements created an impetus at the centre of government to reduce or even eliminate the patchwork of Internet access opportunities by which it had been previously characterized. The Gateway should support the modernization process by enabling joined up government at the point of access; it should help to reduce costs through its facilitation of lower cost electronic service delivery; it is the front-end component of robust, on-line relationship management systems; and it aims to deliver the step increases in consumption that have been targeted.

The Gateway project has struggled with creating a common identification and authentication system for Internet access to services which will cover the many domains of government, and work continues to achieve that goal together with the take-up of joined-up high use services that are seen as a consequence of such a development. The preferred model for the government Gateway combines two features in particular that give rise to the concept of 'layered citizenship'. The first of these concerns the establishment of the identity of the citizen, business or intermediary wanting to enter the portal. The intention is that the Gateway will assign a single user identification (ID) that will enable access to all services on the Gateway, thus eliminating the need for separate registrations and log-ins. Secondly, the Gateway will enable real time, on-line authentication through which both the user ID and the service they are entitled to access are confirmed, after which entry to the portal can be accepted. The government acknowledges that authentication of identity from within its own data sources will be unreliable and 'trusted third parties' will be brought into the process as a consequence. These trusted third parties are likely to be credit referencing agencies. Companies such as Experian and Equifax (both mentioned in internal documents) are able to assemble highly reliable information on individual citizens, information that is very up to date including home address and financial records such as those relating to mortgages and credit cards. Furthermore, and most relevant in the context of developments towards the formation of layered citizenship, is the incorporation into the authentication process of 'trust profiles' on each citizen. Thus the level of assurance on the individual citizen provided by the trusted third party companies, together with the record of that citizen in dealing with government through the Gateway, will enable a percentage level of trust to be built for each citizen user of the Gateway. It follows, therefore, that individual citizens using the government Gateway will be assigned a trust profile that will then determine their level of access to public services. It is at this point that the Gateway can be seen not simply as enabling the delivery of electronic government services, as face value suggests, but as delivering alongside it a layering of citizenship, with the most trusted layer of citizens on the top and the least trusted at the bottom, with as many percentage layers in between as government chooses to assign. Those citizens with

the highest trust ratings will find on-line service transactions with government easier to navigate and conclude than those from lower ratings.

Freedom *with* Information: on-line personalization

The development of modernized, flexible and responsive public services has come to the centre of political debate in the UK. An increasingly strong theme in that debate is the 'personalization' of public services, both off-line (Leadbetter, 2004), and on-line (Lips *et al*, 2004). Political leaders in the UK have come to see personalization as providing citizens with 'more power, more information, more choice and more convenience' as well as being a 'route to addressing the disadvantages' of some social categories (Reid, 2004). For Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, personalization can correct 'information asymmetries' between service producer and consumer.

Personalization means opening up wherever possible a greater range of options to the service user ... making public services responsive to the particular needs of their users so that his or her needs are better met: ... public services can be shown to be superior to privately provided services in these areas; and a new model of non centralized non market public service delivery can evolve ... (Brown, 2004).

Political leaders are thus offering a vision that is in keeping with its equivalent from commercially and technologically inspired discourses on the capacity of Internet-based service delivery channels to deliver customized and personalized outcomes. The success of some 'dot coms', of which Amazon.com is perhaps best known, is seen as springing from their ability to accumulate information on customers' browsing and buying habits, their tastes and preferences. The overt capture of transaction data, together with more or less covert data delivered by 'cookies', for instance, enables these companies to build customer profiles, both at aggregate and personal levels, and to apply new methods of 'collaborative' and 'content filtering' to determine personalized services for each individual customer. Customers returning to electronic commerce sites such as Amazon are greeted in personal terms and offered new product choices based on their previous browsing and purchasing behaviour, the information to support such offers having been captured by 'cookies' that have been placed on the customer's computer. Thus, the Internet is seen as lifting electronic commerce away from the commercial past in the production, delivery and consumption of mass products and delivery systems, taking it to a future characterized by customization and personalization.

In a governmental context, personalization opportunities can be realised in many different ways as public service organizations deliver different kinds of service. In principle, elements of personalization can occur in services that are purely informational, in service arenas characterized by high levels of interactivity between citizen and agency such as on-line passport application or tax filing, and in service arenas that support the completion of financial transactions. Just as on-line business relationships change the nature of the commercial business/consumer relationship, so the common feature of all on-line approaches to the personalization of public services is that they change the informational relationship

between citizen and government. Gordon Brown envisages the 'equalization' of government and citizen through the removal of information asymmetries. In the example of personalization of services in electronic government, given below, the question of whether the informational relationship will shift in favour of citizen empowerment, and thereby towards information symmetry, remains open. In this example, set in an entirely on-line situation, the citizen/government relationship is *apparently* reshaped, though beneath this apparent change lies a new informational relationship that, once examined, suggests a more uncertain outcome in terms of citizen empowerment. The surface level changes are evident; the virtual changes subtle, largely invisible and raising new questions about how to adjudicate on the question of whether the relationship brought about through on-line personalization is one that does empower the citizen and reduce information asymmetry.

The personalization of public web-sites provides this example. As in national government, portals at regional and local levels are being designed as an integrated front end to many forms of e-government services (Lips *et al*, 2004). As with the UK national site and the Gateway, discussed above, access beyond the portal is achieved through initial yields of personal information, with verification of these details undertaken on each occasion the citizen visits the site. The authentication of citizen identity is usually achieved through a Personal Identification Number (PIN).

Some sites of this kind also provide opportunities for the citizen to personalize the site towards his or her own needs and preferences. One form of personalization occurring on these sites enables the citizen to structure the site to provide him or herself with post-code triggered identification of the service providers in the area. Citizens are able to create a personalized homepage, selecting only the information and services they personally want to receive as well as arranging for updating and notification of new and changed services. Thus the citizen is able to specify both the content and the design wanted for his or her page on the local government site and arrange for personal updating of information that is useful to their specific needs.

This example of personalized service provision in e-government does, at face value, appear to support Gordon Brown's test of reducing information asymmetries between service provider and the citizen. The citizen need no longer be in receipt of standardized, uniform information. However, underneath this appearance lies a new information relationship between citizen and government: a relationship that requires the yielding of personal data by the citizen as well as permitting a permanent digital relationship to occur through the citizen's request for personal updates of information. This latter presents the government body with opportunities to gather additional information about the citizen's browsing habits and their service and political interests in general, including, for example, interests in specific political parties and the exclusion of others. When conjoined with the potential for 'trust profiling', as set out in the section above, the question about whether the digitized, personalized relationship between citizen and government exhibits the reduction or removal of information asymmetries becomes difficult to answer. Is on-line personalization about the modification of a service delivered to the citizen as a consequence of holding more 'information about the user' (Paternoster and Searby, 2002) or, is it about the empowerment of citizen groups to devise public policy solutions (Leadbetter, 2004)? Evidence of on-line

personalization in government is sparse at present, especially when compared to evidence from the private sector (Lips *et al*, 2004). What evidence there is suggests that on-line personalization should be interpreted in the first of these ways.

Freedom *with* Information: consumer types or social sorts?

The concept, methodology and systems deriving from the CRM movement are at the core of much of the drive in electronic government to provide services that are marked out by their 'citizen-centricity'. CRM has been introduced into business settings in ways that lead to the segmentation and classification of consumer groups so as to allow for the building of models designed to predict consumer behaviour (Gandy, 2000). These models enable the profiling of individual consumers, the aggregation of those consumers into designated 'consumer types' and their targeting for the marketing of goods and services. Moreover, CRM focuses upon the achievement of a longer term relationship between businesses and consumers, leading to a situation where information captured on actual or potential customers may have value over a considerable period of time.

CRM is now being extensively incorporated into e-government practices in the UK, its methodology being deemed especially relevant to the personalization of public services, set out above. The declared aim of CRM is to change and develop the use of information by the producer of a good or service so as to provide improvements to that good or service that lead to the greater satisfaction of the consumer. In the private sector the application of CRM methodologies has led to various approaches to the classification of consumers. In government, too, we are seeing the reworking of information on and about the citizen as consumer so as to classify, or 'sort', the citizen in ways that enable the segmentation of the service being provided (Lyon, 2003) and ultimately allow for citizen profiling. Lyon (2003) refers to these processes as 'surveillance' for, through this intense aggregation and application of personal information, CRM techniques enable the imposition of marketing-led classifications onto the population of consumers. Thus citizens are clustered as one of the 'urban elite' or 'rural downscale' (Lyon, 2003), or somewhat more bizarrely, as in the well-known CACI categories in the UK, clustered as 'surfing suits', 'dot-com dabblers' and 'virtual virgins' (Nettleton *et al*, 2004; Fernie *et al*, 2003).

The sorting of citizens into 'deductive' marketing categories such as these is undertaken both at spatially disaggregated (post code) levels within the city or the region as well as at the level of the nation state, leading some to comment that, in effect, the identity of the citizen becomes a consequence of where that citizen lives (Amin and Thrift, 2002; Burrows and Ellison, 2004). To live in a particular neighbourhood, which has itself attracted a specific marketing designation, (including the credit record of that post-code area) determines the citizen's standing, credit worthiness both as a consumer of goods and services, and as a citizen in the state. Equally, consumption referents such as post-coded and socially categorized home locations, can be augmented to include, for example, gender, race, sexual orientation, and disability, thereby supplying the provider(s) of a service with more and more sophisticated ways of 'knowing' the person with whom they are transacting.

Such classification systems, whilst widely used, are the subject of profound criticism. For example, some argue that citizen classification, particularly in respect of public services such as health and welfare services, would be much improved were it to derive inductively, thus reducing the likelihood of potentially life-shaping 'false positive' and 'false negative' identifications that could, in effect, lead to the exclusion of the citizen from necessary services and/or to inclusion into the wrong service regime (Nettleton *et al*, 2004). Where these public services are e-government services, then the use of such deductively derived social sorting techniques becomes even more questionable. As with 'citizenship layering', discussed above, citizen sorting opens the possibility that these forms of remote classification will shape access to service in a variety of ways largely hidden to the end consumer, breaking down the historic eligibility of the citizen to service consumption based on a 'universal access' conception of citizenship.

The layering of citizenship, and the typing and sorting of citizens, can thus be seen to work with each other to produce complex matrices of citizen groupings, with the verticals of the matrix including, perhaps, the categories of social sorting referred to above whilst the rows of the matrix are formed from the layering of trust profiles.

Whilst a number of revealing academic contributions have drawn out examples of social sorting in a variety of government contexts, from electronic traffic management and road pricing, ID cards and caller-line identification systems in public service call centres (Lyon, 2003; Graham and Wood, 2003; Nettleton *et al*, 2004), much further work is needed on how combinations of citizen sorting and layering are occurring in practice and with what effect on both the status of the citizen and the meaning of citizenship.

Freedom *with* Information: ambiguous confusions for government and the citizen

It is, perhaps, a reflection on the contemporary *Zeitgeist* of many western liberal democracies that the nature of citizenship is under review. As governments seek to transform electronic service provisions in the direction of CRM-inspired informational integration, the building of citizen trust profiles, personalization, and forms of social sorting, questions arise about the nature of citizenship. Equally, as those same governments wrestle with the development of new forms of state security in the light of incipient security threats, the nature, including the limits, of citizenship comes under review. This chapter has been chiefly concerned with the effects on citizenship of electronic government, as conventionally understood, as it seeks enhancements in services to citizens. It has noted that the security agenda of modern government is adding to a climate wherein the identification of the citizen is seen as of paramount importance. If services to the citizen are to be provided effectively, then identity issues come to the fore. If enhanced personal and state security is paramount then the means of identifying individual citizens becomes of crucial importance. Janus, the Roman God of Portals (how apposite in a chapter that in part looks at government use of the Internet) faced simultaneously in two directions. Janus-like, modern government is enlarging citizenship through offering new and enhanced experience of its services whilst, at the same time, concerns for the security of the state result in 'reducing' the scope of citizenship through new restrictions on the individual's private sphere.

This context of ambiguity suggests that interpretations of the drive for citizen identification, whether undertaken for conventional e-government services or for security reasons, may well themselves be ambiguous. Two very recent contributions to the debate on citizenship provide useful exemplars of this ambiguity. First, there is the concept of the 'glass citizen' (Mayo, 2005) a condition in which the consumption of electronically recorded services leads inevitably to ease of monitoring and scrutiny through digital transaction records. Thus, enhanced access to service and product consumption, made possible through new technologies, carries a price measured by losses of privacy. Secondly, there is the concept of the sovereign citizen (Matai, 2005), a condition in which the highly 'informed' individual is both self-directing (a desirable state of affairs) and, at the same time, that same individual can organize, travel to, and deploy forms of terrorism beyond the purview of the individual nation state. Thus, enhanced access to information and communication resources makes possible this new form of 'citizen (and small group) sovereignty' with accompanying threats to nations states.

Freeing up Information: rebalancing information relationships in the information polity

Many approaches to the provision of electronic services by government are leading to a changing informational relationship between itself and the citizen. Information is being captured and used electronically, often in circumstances where that information capture and use is scarcely understood by the citizen. More and more, we find instances where government's informational relationship with the citizen is no longer vertically integrated and where, instead, third party organizations are being used in authentication regimes and in service delivery. Governments are increasingly confronted with the ambiguities of citizenship associated with their desire to improve main-line service provision to the citizen through good information management as well as to secure the state against threat through the better management of information.

In this chapter, emphasis has been placed upon the freedom *with* information that governments are acquiring in many different ways. It is our conclusion that an effective freedom *of* information regime must take account of these developments and must also emerge from a clear normative view of citizenship in so-doing. An holistic practitioner perspective on freedom *with* and freedom *of* information is needed.

A further conclusion of this chapter, one that we written about more extensively elsewhere (Taylor and Lips, 2004), is that our analysis also exposes profound shortcomings within the scholarly and academic research community. The challenges that we raise in this paper for academic researchers in e-Government and Public Administration are manifold, yet, it seems, scarcely recognized. Neither the new orthodoxy of e-Government scholarship nor the old orthodoxy of Public Administration has the conceptual and analytical tools to meet these challenges. In the case of e-government, the predominant 'way of seeing' is techno-centric, positivist and comparative. In the case of European Public Administration the predominant 'way of seeing' lies in the networking paradigm with its variants in governance, joined up government, co-production, and policy networks, all disengaged from the study of information networking and Information and Communication Technology.

What is necessary for effective scholarship and analysis is a way of seeing based upon understanding information, its flows, impediments and innovations in and around organizations of government and the wider polity. Scholars must recognize that pervasive forms of computer networking, including Internet applications, are information bearing systems. It is imperative that academic thinking breaks away from the inherent technological approach by which it remains characterized. This is thinking that, unsurprisingly, has given rise to the adoption of the prefix 'e' in the languages of so many societies, capturing as it does, in simple form, the commonplace mind set of technological determinism - begin with the electronic and all else follows. The prefix 'i' (for information) would lead to thinking in a different, altogether more complex direction, yet it is only by understanding new information resources and flows that we can fully understand processes of government administration, policy making and citizenship, and plan for them.

A focus upon information leads us to understand the polity as an 'information polity' (Taylor and Williams, 1991; Bellamy and Taylor, 1998; Taylor, 1999); a political system made comprehensible by the information that flows, or fails to flow, around its constituent parts. The relationships between departments of government, between government and other agencies including voluntary and private sector bodies, between administrators and politicians, and between the governmental system and the citizen, are essentially informational. Scholars of the information polity have unique opportunities to reveal the nature of these relationships, to which orthodox public administration is purblind and in ways that orthodox e-Government does not recognize as necessary. The information polity encourages x-ray understanding of the body politic (Taylor, 1998), enabling new evidence to be examined with new research questions, questions developed from theories and concepts utilized by orthodox studies of public administration. How are newly designed information flows causing reshaped relationships between the constituent elements of the polity? Do these informational relationships change the configuration of power within them? Is Internet-based government empowering or dis-empowering the citizen in the information polity? If so, in what ways and through which information resources and channels? Is new information capture allowing governments increasingly to insinuate themselves into all aspects of life without appearing to do so? What is actually happening to the 'information asymmetries' that exist between government and the citizen? Are they becoming narrower or wider in a contemporary polity characterized by both freedom *with* and freedom *of* information?

Note

¹ Personal Identification and Identity Management in New Modes of E-Government. Ref: RES-341-25-0028

A..M.B. Lips, J.A.Taylor and J. Organ

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