Preface

Electronic Government

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Citation (APA)
Scholl, H. J., Gil-Garcia, J. R., Janssen, M., Kalampokis, E., Lindgren, I., & Bolívar, M. P. R. (2021). Preface: Electronic Government. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science (including subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics), 12850 LNCS*, v-vii.

Important note
To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

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20th IFIP WG 8.5 International Conference, EGOV 2021
Granada, Spain, September 7–9, 2021
Proceedings

Springer

Preface

The EGOV-CeDEM-ePart conference is now in the fourth year of its existence after the successful merger of three formerly independent conferences, that is, the IFIP WG 8.5 Electronic Government (EGOV) conference, the Conference for E-Democracy and Open Government (CeDEM), and the IFIP WG 8.5 IFIP Electronic Participation (ePart) conference. This larger, united conference is dedicated to a broad area of digital or electronic government, open government, smart governance, e-democracy, policy informatics, and electronic participation. Scholars from around the world have found this conference to be a premier academic forum with a long tradition along its various branches, which has given the EGOV-CeDEM-ePart conference its reputation of one of the leading conferences worldwide in the research domains of digital/electronic, open, and smart government as well as electronic participation.

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year's conference, held during September 7–9, 2021, at the University of Granada, Andalusia, Spain, was provided in a hybrid format of on-site and online attendances. All presentations and discussions, workshops keynotes, and panels were provided in this hybrid format. Despite this adjustment and a lower-than-normal on-site attendance, the conference was a great success.

The call for papers attracted completed research papers, work-in-progress papers on ongoing research (including doctoral papers), and project and case descriptions, as well as workshop and panel proposals. The submissions were assessed through a double-blind peer-review process, with at least three reviewers per submission, and the acceptance rate was 38%.

The conference tracks of the 2021 edition presented advances in the digital and socio-technological domain of the public sphere, demonstrating cutting-edge concepts, methods, and styles of investigation by multiple disciplines. The papers were distributed over the following tracks:

- General E-Government and E-Governance
- General E-Democracy and E-Participation
- AI, Data Analytics, and Automated Decision Making
- Digital and Social Media
- Digital Society
- Emerging Issues and Innovations
- Social Innovation
- Legal Informatics
- Open Data: Social and Technical Aspects
- Smart and Digital Cities (Government, Communities, and Regions)

Among the full research paper submissions, 23 papers (empirical and conceptual) were accepted for this year's Springer LNCS EGOV proceedings (vol. 12850) from the General E-Government track as well as from the tracks on Smart Cities, AI, and

Open Data. Another 16 completed research papers from the General E-Democracy and E-Participation track as well as from the tracks on Digital and Social Media, Legal Informatics, Digital Society, Social Innovation, and the Emerging Topics and Innovation went into this LNCS ePart proceedings (vol. 12849).

The papers included in this volume have been clustered under the following headings:

- Digital Transformation
- Digital Services and Open Government
- Digital Open Data: Social and Technical Perspectives
- Smart Cities
- Data Analytics, Decision Making, and Artificial Intelligence

As in the previous years and per the recommendation of the Paper Awards Committee under the leadership of Noella Edelmann (Danube University Krems, Austria) and Evangelos Kalampokis (University of Macedonia, Greece), the IFIP EGOV-CeDEM-ePart 2021 Conference Organizing Committee granted outstanding paper awards in three distinct categories:

- The most interdisciplinary and innovative research contribution
- The most compelling critical research reflection
- The most promising practical concept

The winners in each category were announced during the obligatory awards ceremony at the conference.

Many people behind the scenes make large events like this conference happen. We would like to thank the members of the Program Committee and the reviewers for their great efforts in reviewing the submitted papers. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to Manuel Pedro Rodríguez Bolívar, Laura Alcaide Muñoz, and their local team at the University of Granada (UGR) for hosting the conference.

Voted the best institution of higher education in Spain by international students in 2014, the public UGR does not only reside on very famous historical premises, for example, the former Royal Hospital of Granada (1511-1526) and its unique Renaissance Courtyard, but it also was founded in historical times (1531) some forty years after the last Muslim rulers were forced to leave the Iberian Peninsula. Today, the university, with about 60,000 students, is the fourth largest in Spain with a large contingent of international students seeking and receiving their higher-education degrees at this extraordinary institution. UGR provides a wide range of studies organized in 5 schools, 22 faculties, and 116 departments.

The attendees who were able to make it to the conference in person were greatly reimbursed for their traveling efforts by finding themselves for a few days in a stunning environment of natural and architectural beauty, the latter of which spans many centuries with world-famous complexes such as the Alhambra, the famous palace city of the Muslim rulers, and the Cathedral, among other examples of outstanding architectural skill, taste, and ingenuity. Today, the quarter-million population City of Granada has remained a bustling Andalusian center of diverse culture, exquisite gastronomy, modern and traditional commerce, and great Mediterranean outdoor life surrounded by the august

scenery of the Sierra Nevada and its snow-topped peaks. Granada and the UGR were unforgettable hosts of the 2021 conference.

September 2021

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