

New type of actors and roles

Another issue that is highlighted is the blur of roles. The distinction between professionals, politician, civil servant, expert, consumer and citizen, are blurring dramatically.

The public sector is becoming just one player in a new form of “open-source governance” in which it may often only play the role of arbiter, coordinator, funder and regulator for the activities of others in delivering public value.



Rolf Luehrs listens to Matt Poelmans (in the foreground)

We cannot believe that just because we use new technology everything will happen. There is a need of blending online and offline methods for participation. Face to face meetings are important and can never be replaced, but they are expensive and exclude a lot of people who can't attend a public meeting or are intimidated to speak up in a public forum.

If government don't open up for online debate citizens will increasingly take this role themselves, especially on hyper-local level. This means that the issues in any case end up with the local level so why not take an active role from the start.

One question that was discussed during the workshop was that government need to change focus from seeing citizens as customer to see citizens as participants. We need a new paradigm in which eGovernment is being reinvented according to the

future needs of an e-society. This is not about convenience but about creating public value.

Open by default

The concept of openness is central and was highlighted as a key issue in building confidence, but openness has more parts as; open information, open process, open access, open standards and open mind.

Another question that was raised is the importance of skills among civil servants in using new tools as social media, multi-media, images and video. These skills haven't been highly valued in the world of public services. Politicians need more knowledge of how to act online, they are very skilled when it comes to meet people face to face but doing it online is a different thing.



Catherine Howe listens to Matt Poelmans (in the foreground)

Maybe the citizens are beginning to enter dialogue with each other in lack of dialogue with their representatives, and this interaction challenges the position of their representatives if they outnumber the percentage of representation; showing a gap that needs attention, a gap that might have existed there for a long period of time, but made visible with the help of new technologies.

It is both an opportunity and a challenge using social media inside organisations for sharing ideas and information can promote a culture of knowledge sharing and innovation. But this too requires a culture of openness and willingness to let go of hierarchical boundaries.