Local Open-Source E-Government for Pittsburgh

**Definition of e-government:** There are multiple definitions of e-government. The World Bank defines e-government as “the use by government agencies of information technology (such as wide area networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interaction with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, more efficient government management.”

The Center for Technology in Government at the University of Albany more concretely defines e-government as “e-government is the use of information technology to support government operations, engage citizens, and provide government services.” They identify 4 key areas: e-services, e-commerce, e-democracy, and e-management.

**NOTE:** The only area of e-government that the City of Pittsburgh has developed is in e-services. In our project, we would like to focus on the other aspects of e-government.

**Hypothesis:** By developing a moderated open-source network, we seek to develop a system in which the government can provide updated, accessible information (e.g. updates on municipal projects) in a centralized location and receive feedback from members of the community.

**Benefits:**
- Increase govt. efficiency by-
  - a) Increasing transparency of government
  - b) Increasing accountability
  - c) Increasing responsiveness
  - d) Improving communication
  - e) Aligning citizen’s interests with the government’s interests
  - f) Providing an example to other governments
  - g) Decreasing corruption, revenue growth, and cost reduction (World Bank)

**Costs:**
- a) Privacy and security concerns
- b) Monitoring
- c) Time
- d) Monetary costs
- e) Government approval

**Scope:** Local government level (e.g. City of Pittsburgh)

**Stakeholders:** Local government officials, government contractors, local businesses, local citizens

**Technology:** We think that a web portal with searching capabilities should be developed for the City of Pittsburgh. It should include moderated forums, links to stakeholder and government information, and local news. A good example of a government web portal is the official US government web portal, which can be found at [http://www.firstgov.gov/index.shtml](http://www.firstgov.gov/index.shtml).
Ideal Stakeholder Interaction:

Narrowing the Scope:

Conceptually, this model can have numerous applications. However, due to the limited time span of the systems project, we feel that narrowing the applicability of this model is necessary. Some specific clients we could work with:

- Pittsburgh Housing Authority
- Infrastructure development municipalities (e.g. utility companies)
- Local political leaders (i.e. to implement e-democracy)
  (Open to suggestions)

The client’s operational needs would define the scope of the project. We hope that subsequent years of Heinz students can build upon this model, or that it can have some political impact.