DIGITAL COMMUNITIES
IN A NETWORKED SOCIETY
e-Commerce, e-Business and e-Government
IFIP – The International Federation for Information Processing

IFIP was founded in 1960 under the auspices of UNESCO, following the First World Computer Congress held in Paris the previous year. An umbrella organization for societies working in information processing, IFIP’s aim is two-fold: to support information processing within its member countries and to encourage technology transfer to developing nations. As its mission statement clearly states,

*IFIP’s mission is to be the leading, truly international, apolitical organization which encourages and assists in the development, exploitation and application of information technology for the benefit of all people.*

IFIP is a non-profitmaking organization, run almost solely by 2500 volunteers. It operates through a number of technical committees, which organize events and publications. IFIP’s events range from an international congress to local seminars, but the most important are:

- The IFIP World Computer Congress, held every second year;
- Open conferences;
- Working conferences.

The flagship event is the IFIP World Computer Congress, at which both invited and contributed papers are presented. Contributed papers are rigorously refereed and the rejection rate is high.

As with the Congress, participation in the open conferences is open to all and papers may be invited or submitted. Again, submitted papers are stringently refereed.

The working conferences are structured differently. They are usually run by a working group and attendance is small and by invitation only. Their purpose is to create an atmosphere conducive to innovation and development. Refereeing is less rigorous and papers are subjected to extensive group discussion.

Publications arising from IFIP events vary. The papers presented at the IFIP World Computer Congress and at open conferences are published as conference proceedings, while the results of the working conferences are often published as collections of selected and edited papers.

Any national society whose primary activity is in information may apply to become a full member of IFIP, although full membership is restricted to one society per country. Full members are entitled to vote at the annual General Assembly, National societies preferring a less committed involvement may apply for associate or corresponding membership. Associate members enjoy the same benefits as full members, but without voting rights. Corresponding members are not represented in IFIP bodies. Affiliated membership is open to non-national societies, and individual and honorary membership schemes are also offered.
DIGITAL COMMUNITIES IN A NETWORKED SOCIETY

e-Commerce, e-Business and e-Government

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD................................................................................................................................................ix
PREFACE .................................................................................................................................................... xiii

## SECTION 1: E-GOVERNMENT

1. E-GOVERNMENT – A ROADMAP FOR PROGRESS  
   R. Traunmüller, M. Wimmer .................................................................................................................. 3

2. REDUCING NORMATIVE AND INFORMATIVE ASYMMETRIES IN FISCAL MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS  
   M. Carducci, M. A. Bochicchio, A. Longo .............................................................................................. 13

## SECTION 2: BUSINESS MODELS OF E-APPLICATIONS

3. WHO ARE THE INTERNET CONTENT PROVIDERS?  
   C. C. Krueger, P. M. C. Swatman .......................................................................................................... 27

4. NET MARKET MAKERS IN THE AUSTRALIAN B2B E-SPACE  
   M. Singh .................................................................................................................................................. 39

5. THE SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR HYBRID BUSINESS MODEL  
   S. Vatanasakdakul, E. L. Boon Kiat, J. Cooper .................................................................................. 51

## SECTION 3: INNOVATIVE STRUCTURES IN THE INTERNET

6. INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES ON SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSFORMATIONS  
   W. Cellary, S. Strykowski ..................................................................................................................... 65

7. PRODUCT PLATFORMS FOR THE MEDIA INDUSTRY  
   L. Koehler, M. Anding, T. Hess ............................................................................................................. 77

8. DYNAMIC MANAGEMENT OF BUSINESS SERVICE QUALITY IN COLLABORATIVE COMMERCE SYSTEMS  
   B. Roberts, A. Svirskas ........................................................................................................................ 89

9. SOFTWARE FOR THE CHANGING E-BUSINESS  
   M. Alaranta, T. Valtonen, J. Isoaho .................................................................................................... 103
SECTION 4: AUCTIONS AND E-PAYMENT

10. DYNAMIC ROI CALCULATIONS FOR E-COMMERCE SYSTEMS  
    M. Amberg, M. Hirschmeier ....................................................... 119

11. µP: A MICROPAYMENT SYSTEM  
    P.A.L. Mindlin, C.M. Schweitzer, T.C.M.B. Carvalho, W.V. Ruggiero .... 131

12. ELECTRONIC AUCTIONS IN FINLAND  
    V. K. Tuunainen, M. Rossi, J, Puhakainen .................................... 143

SECTION 5: FUTURE ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

13. I-CENTRIC COMMUNICATIONS  
    R. Popescu-Zeletin, S. Arbanowski, S. Steglich .................................. 157

14. A COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK TOWARDS FLEXIBLE ASSOCIATIONS OF BUSINESSES IN EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTS  
    H. Ludolph, G. Babin, Peter Kropf ............................................ 175

15. INTRODUCING NEW BUSINESS MODELS IN PROVISION OF QOS NETWORKS  
    B.D. Jerman-Blazić ................................................................. 187

SECTION 6: INTERNET AND THE WEB

16. THE SEMANTIC WEB  
    R. Studer, S. Agarwal, R. Volz .................................................... 203

17. WEB PERSONALIZATION BASED ON USER’S TRADE-OFFS  
    M. Martins, I. Garaffa, M. Kling .................................................. 215

18. XML ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR EFFECTIVE WEBEDI  
    F.G. Beckenkamp, W.Pree ............................................................ 227

19. INSTITUTIONAL WEBSITES PERSONALIZATION USING MACRO AND MICRO USER PROFILES  
    P.S. Rodrigues Lima, M.S. Pimenta .............................................. 239

SECTION 7: ADVANCED PLATFORMS AND GRID COMPUTING

20. THE GRID: AN ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FUTURE E-BUSINESS, E-COMMERCE AND E-GOVERNMENT APPLICATIONS  
    F. Silva, H. Senger ................................................................. 253

21. INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL E-SERVICES ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT ON COMPUTATIONAL GRIDS  
    F. Arcieri, F. Fioravanti, E. Nardelli, M. Talamo ............................ 267

22. A WEB SERVICES PROVIDER  
    J.-P. Bahsoun, B. Chebaro, S. Tawbi ............................................ 279
23. USING METAMODELS TO PROMOTE DATA INTEGRATION IN AN E-GOVERNMENT APPLICATION SCENARIO
A. Figueiredo, A. Kamada, L. Damasceno, M. Mendes, M. Rodrigues......................, 293

SECTION 8: COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION OF E-SERVICES

24. A SERVICE ORIENTED APPROACH TO INTERORGANISATIONAL COOPERATION
C. Zirpins, W. Lamersdorf, G. Piccinelli,.........................................................., 307

25. A DATA AND EVENT ORIENTED WORKFLOW PROCESS DEFINITION METAMODEL COHERENT WITH THE UML PROFILE FOR EDOC SYSTEMS
J. Soto Mejia,..........................................................................................................., 319

26. XML-BASED E-CONTRACTING
M. Merz,..................................................................................................................., 333

27. ICT SUPPORT FOR EVOLVING HARMONIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES
R.M. Lee, E.D. Campillo,............................................................................................, 345

28. MODELING FRAMEWORK FOR E-BUSINESS SYSTEMS
M.M. Narasipuram...................................................................................................., 357

SECTION 9: MODELING AND CONSTRUCTION OF E-SERVICES

29. REFERENCE MODELS FOR ADVANCED E-SERVICES
C. A. Vissers, M.M. Lankhorst, R. J. Slagter............................................................., 369

30. MAPPING “ENTERPRISE BUSINESS ARCHITECTURE” TO “INFORMATION SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK”
A. Yamaguchi, M. Suzuki, M. Kataoka,................................................................., 395

31. A COTS-ORIENTED PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTING ADAPTABLE E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES
C. Ncube,................................................................................................................, 415

32. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN SERVICE PARAMETERS FOR SERVICE LEVEL MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEM UTILIZATION
M. Akatsu, S. Konno, N. Komoda,............................................................................, 427

33. USE OF MODELS AND MODELLING TECHNIQUES FOR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
L. Ferreira Pires, M. van Sinderen, C.Guareis de Farias, J.P. Andrade Almeida,......................, 441
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A Citizen-Centered State

Information is one of the basic resources of the society of the new millennium and therefore, a common asset in the realm of the government, the private initiatives, or the individual. Its generation, distribution and use should take place in a two-direction channel of easy access in order to be used productively by all.

Thus, the government should not only inform the population about the services it offers but also supply guidance about the use of the services offered.

That is the reason why the State has been changing its structure, so that it can increase efficiency and lower costs for the citizens. As a result, the use of information technology by the government has been a tool to facilitate such process.

The information transfer by electronic means has made the government to adopt a new style of administration, in other words, the e-government. E-government means a commitment with the use of information technology for the society. It will make possible the continuous improvement of the actions of the State focusing on the efficiency of the internal administration and establishing a system of information management to arrange internal processes and to speed up decision-making at all levels of the government. It also allows the establishment of an information network integrating the State Public Administration and the municipal and federal areas, and the Executive area to the Legislative and Judiciary areas, and facilitating democratic access to information by the citizens through its suitability to the socio-cultural reality of the majority of the population.

E-Government

E-government’s aim is to place the government within the reach of all citizens increasing transparency and citizen’s participation. Thus, the development of electronic government should promote universal access to government’s services, integrate administrative systems, networks, and databases, and make such information available to the citizens via Internet.

In the last decade, the rendering of public services in Brazil has been changing substantially. Some aspects are the indicators of an increasing