Establishing a "Knowledge Network" of Local and Regional Development Subjects

Olexandr Molodtsov
National Academy of Public Administration, Ukraine

INTRODUCTION

Efficiency of collective action, aimed at social development, in many ways depends on the level of being well-informed and the intensiveness of knowledge sharing between the social agents, which are the professional corporate communities in this domain. Modern information technologies allow influencing the social development by establishing of Internet networks for geographically separated social agents who collaborate on the basis of "horizontal" communications. From this point of view, the Internet can be considered a catalyst of inter-group communication and an instrument for decentralized projection of social development. There has been no sociological research conducted in Ukraine to find out the efficiency level of cooperation between social agents using an Internet network to share information and knowledge concerning local and regional development. But even a general overview of the Ukrainian Internet shows an unsatisfactory state of such cooperation. Indirectly, this is proved by the data regarding the Internet content for 2002, which demonstrates that scientific research and educational organizations represented only 4.4% of the Internet content (Bryzhko, , Tsymbaliuk, Orekhov, & Galchenko, 2002, p. 101). We have all the grounds to state that computer databases existing in Ukraine do not meet the requirements of the local and regional development. Further, they do not contribute sufficiently to the professional growth and development of the professional communities' ethical standards.

In the present situation, the environment for virtual information is one of the effective mechanisms enabling global changes on all levels of social modernization—international, national, regional, and local. As a result, this mechanism has to become an element of special public information policy and a key factor of strategy-building activity of social agents who act in the sphere of local and regional development. Thus it is suggested that the following elements of information processes need to be revisited:

a. information (knowledge);
b. type of communication, setting the modes of behavior in the information space; and
c. type of social agents (participants) that form the value and goal structure of the information space.

These components in whole should give us an answer about the possibility of effective information interaction in the sphere of local and regional development in general but particularly relevant to the Ukraine.

As one of the resources, information is also an object of separation, and in this sense it is an object of information policy. In the purely administrative aspect, this last concept for the most part is interpreted as trends and methods of independent institutional objects—a state, its individual agencies, bodies of local self-governance, organizations, and institutions dealing with information collection, dissemination, and storage. The purely administrative context of information policy, in spite of wide variety of tasks that should be accomplished in the course of this activity, consists of the quantitative monitoring of information flow. Judgment about information openness and closeness of an information policy object are made on the basis of quantitative assessment of information flow index. In this perspective, information stands as an object of information policy. This orientation of the government authority's activity has achieved some success, which is demonstrated in particular by the establishment and functioning of the unified Government Web Portal and the setting into operation of the new communication trunk and zonal fiber-optical lines. The issue of information "electronic governance" systems and their implementation into public administration (E-Government) is also being developed (Klimenko & Litvinov, 2003), as well as variants aimed at broadening the possibilities of public access to the Internet. Further, the number of local self-governance bodies using the Internet for managerial purposes and for ensuring transparency of their work is gradually extending (Baiev, 2003). This gives us the ground to assert that the State of Ukraine, in the purely technical perspective, has the primary characteristics of an Information Society. The technological basis available allows a large information array of the activities of central, regional and local authorities, to become available for a wide circle of societal users.

However, the situation with regard to the control functions over the effectiveness of information is differ-

ent. This task is a more difficult one for the subject of information policy. A useful information policy has to implement its policy in such a way that allows particular information to reach an appointed target group and results in an expected effect. In such circumstance, the task group (social agent) becomes an object of information activity, while information develops a meaning of an administration influence tool. From that standpoint, information should be viewed as a complex of information measures, which are aimed at changing behavior and attitude towards the knowledge of certain social groups. These measures create possibilities of extending the sphere of power of the state through methods of civil influence that, according to the Declaration of the World Summit on the Information Society, also include information methods (The World Summit on the Information Society, 10-12 December 2003, Geneva, Switzerland, http://www.e-ukraine.com.ua/viewnews/press/31). The efficiency of such work can't be evaluated quantitatively, but only on the basis of the successful functioning of such social agents (corporate professional groups) on social development. This orientation (task) of information policy becomes especially significant when the matter concerns social agents, whose activity takes place outside the bounds of administrative subordination to the public authorities. In this case the concept of authority influence (Gavrilov, 2003) can be used, meaning that activity of government agencies is aimed at the dynamics of their relations with social agents, where the elements of public administration are absent.

CONFIGURATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In every stage of social development, a state has to determine and regulate at a legislative level those societal elements and interrelations which serve its strategic goals (Atamanchuk, 2003). This state function becomes more important under conditions of market-driven economies in a pluralistic society. If social agents are not administratively subject to the state, only legislative and information tools through administrative influence can be used. Because of this, they (objects of information influence) will maintain their vital social activity, at the same time serving the purposes of social development. At the declarative level, the Ukraine government agency has already defined the subjects of local and regional development. Associations of local self-government bodies and their unions, as well as agencies of local and regional development are recognized as institutional subjects. The

regulation of the legal status of associations and other voluntary unions of local self-government bodies is outlined in the bill, "On local self-governance in Ukraine." The government has also prepared a draft Law of Ukraine "On the principles of regional development stimulation," which provides for creation of the Regional Development Agencies Network.

This conception of regional policy and the above-mentioned bills override any other structures, which one way or another are the agencies of local and regional development. Also included in this list are state regional training, retraining and excellence centers for managers of local government institutions and municipal companies, non-governmental training institutions[1], scientific institutions—academic institutes, universities, branch research institutes, state research organizations that execute the orders of budget and private organizations, "brain centers"—non-governmental research institutions specializing in the sphere of local self-governance; consulting firms and other similar institutions; information and analytical editions covering the matters of local and regional development. The potential of individual social agents should not be disregarded and these include— employees of local public institutions, working in the information and analytical divisions, subdivisions of local development; a certain part of state employees, who create information products concerning local and regional development[2]. Some experts working in this field can act effectively expressing interests of larger elements of development infrastructure.

The groups listed above represent the configuration of an information and communication system of local and regional development, which is now spontaneously forming on the Internet without any external coordinating influence. This effort allows the observation of the processes of growth and self-organization of this system, which promotes engaging people and organizations into information bonds of various societal levels. Some of the agents of local and regional development are already involved on the Internet and in the analytical centers networks of Ukraine in particular (Analytical Centers of Ukraine Network, http://www.intellect.org.). This process lacks systematic character and coordination from the point of view of the creation of information resources. Most of the organizations involved function separately one from another. There is not enough information about their particular specializations and the market for consulting services. They don't have a clear idea of the experience and work results of each other, while institutions of local government receive scanty information about existence and consulting possibilities from many of them. Hence the unique experiences, document packages, knowledge, which are formed by every agent, remain untapped for the purposes of cohesive social devel-

Related Content

Coupling Real-Time 3D Landscape Models with Microclimate Simulations

Lewis Gill, E. Abigail Hathway, Eckart Lange, Ed Morganand Daniela Romano (2013). *International Journal of E-Planning Research (pp. 1-19).*

www.irma-international.org/article/coupling-real-time-landscape-models/76289

A Short Comment on Surveillance and Security in the E-Planned City

Lucas Melgaçoand Nelson Arteaga Botello (2013). *International Journal of E-Planning Research (pp. 75-78).*

www.irma-international.org/article/a-short-comment-on-surveillance-and-security-in-the-e-planned-city/105135

From Open Data to Smart City Governing Innovation in the Rennes Metropolitan Area (France)

Marie-Anaïs Le Breton, Mathilde Girardeauand Helene Bailleul (2021). *International Journal of E-Planning Research (pp. 17-38).*

www.irma-international.org/article/from-open-data-to-smart-city-governing-innovation-in-the-rennes-metropolitan-area-france/279269

Place Making Through Participatory Planning

Wayne Beyea (2009). *Handbook of Research on Urban Informatics: The Practice and Promise of the Real-Time City (pp. 55-67).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/place-making-through-participatory-planning/21793

Planning Ethics in the Age of Wicked Problems

Jeffrey Chan Kok Hui (2014). *International Journal of E-Planning Research (pp. 18-37).*

www.irma-international.org/article/planning-ethics-in-the-age-of-wicked-problems/114159