Foreword

Kathryn Kloby and Maria D’Agostino have made a significant contribution to our understanding of Web 2.0 technologies and governance. It is easy for the average citizen, as well as the seasoned public administrator to feel overwhelmed by the new technologies that are introduced on a seemingly daily basis. Local governments have just gotten proficient with e-mail and websites and now there’s Twitter and other social networking sites. Even the best public administrators, who are busy providing services and coping with the economic crisis, have precious little time to explore digital platforms and figure out which ones best meet their needs. Kloby and D’Agostino have done us all a favor in demystifying these emerging technologies and their relevance to the public sector.

Kloby and D’Agostino skillfully identified scholars and practitioners to contribute chapters to this edited volume. These contributors have extensive background in e-government, e-deliberation, and other digital platforms, and their shared expertise and experience helps us more clearly understand Web 2.0 technologies, how they can be applied to the public sector, and their potential for public sector transformation. Digital technologies have the power to not only enhance the performance of public sector agencies and institutions, but they also have the power to creatively engage and connect with citizens.

Of particular importance to the editors is the way Web 2.0 technologies can be adopted by the public sector to more meaningfully engage citizens in matters large and small. We learn about 3-D digital platforms and how they can be used for collaborative decision making in rural areas; we are introduced to Web 2.0 technologies and their ability to foster “authentic” participation; and we are also cautioned about transformational tweeting and the potential to devalue democracy.

*Citizen 2.0: Public and Governmental Interaction through Web 2.0 Technologies* is a must read for public administrators looking for new and cost effective ways to engage the public; for elected officials who want to increase their visibility and communicate more efficiently with their constituents; and for students of public administration, public policy, and communications as an introduction to emerging trends and digital strategies that have the potential to advance public discourse and engender broader civic participation.

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