



NSF Workshop

Participatory Challenge Platforms with a Public Intent

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The George Washington University

Exploring the emerging body of participatory challenge platforms with a public intent and developing an agenda for its research and practical applications and implications in an effort to embolden efficient, effective, and legitimate governance processes in an increasingly complex and interconnected environment.



NSF WORKSHOP
PARTICIPATORY CHALLENGE PLATFORMS WITH A PUBLIC INTENT
Critical Reflections and Future Practices

Participatory Challenge Platforms with a Public Intent: Critical Reflections and Future Practices is a workshop funded by the National Science Foundation and hosted by the Arizona State University, School of Public Affairs and Center for Policy Informatics. Participatory challenge platforms are an emerging approach that can increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the public policy development and implementation process in an increasingly complex, interconnected, and resource-constrained governance environment. It seeks to give voice to, tap into, empower, and focus the vast array of expertise, experience, and democratic surplus possessed by diverse individuals throughout the nation in the governance process to develop innovative and practical solutions to shared public challenges. As such, the workshop is designed to critically reflect on and envision the future of participatory challenge platform research, practical applications, and implications. The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Bring together a cross-sector and interdisciplinary group of practitioners and academics to engage in constructive, interactive, and dynamic discussions with one another to examine the big questions concerning participatory challenge platform research and application.
- Highlight the importance and specific examples of the research and practice of participatory challenge platforms for efficient, effective, and legitimate governance in an increasingly complex, interconnected, and resource-constrained environment.
- Identify the obstacles, opportunities, and best practices of designing and implementing participatory challenge platforms to address public issues.
- Discuss the limitations facing government agencies in using challenge platforms, the impact of its public nature on these limitations, and how can they be overcome.
- Explore mechanisms to foster sustainable networks of problems solvers and hosts from diverse backgrounds around shared interests and public challenges.
- Vision the future of and identify the next steps for the research and practice of participatory challenge platforms in facilitating efficient, effective, and legitimate governance processes and outcomes.
- Collect, analyze, disseminate, and publish the results and findings that emerge to stakeholders.

The workshop takes place the day after the finale for [The Policy Challenge](#) – an example of a participatory challenge platform with a public intent. The Arizona State University, School of Public Affairs and the Center for Policy Informatics have been working 16 [partner institutions](#) to design a national policy proposal competition in response to the [Startup America Policy Challenge](#) from the White House. Through a network of schools and organizations, The Policy Challenge asked students, faculty, practitioners, and the general public to propose innovative, viable, and actionable plans for administrative change to be implemented by the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Energy, or U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that will break down barriers to entrepreneurship and best enable the use of new technologies in education, clean energy, and healthcare, respectively. At The Policy Challenge Finale, the finalist teams presented their proposals to a panel of high-level expert judges and an audience of attendees, and the winners were announced at the awards reception.

NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS

The workshop consists of about 65 participants ranging from public administrators, practitioners, researchers, and challenge participants from government, industry, and academia from across the nation. Participants possess considerable expertise and experience in participatory challenge platforms, public policy and administration, and technology and innovation across a variety of content areas. The workshop participants represent the following government agencies, organizations, universities, and participatory challenge platforms with a public intent.

Government Agencies

National Science Foundation
White House Office of Science & Technology Policy
White House Office of Digital Strategy
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
U.S. General Services Administration
State of Arizona
Alachua County, Florida

Universities

Arizona State University
Columbia University
Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas (ESADE)
George Washington University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Penn State Harrisburg
Saint Louis University
Seton Hall University
Syracuse University
University of Florida
University of Maryland
University of Texas – Austin
University of Virginia
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Virginia Tech

Organizations

Alliance for Innovation
Arizona Small Business Association
Ashoka Changemakers
Association of Public and Land Grant Universities
Bob Ramsey Executive Education at ASU
Center for Policy Informatics
AASCU Grants Resource Center
John C. Lincoln Health Network
Metropolitan Institute
MIT Center for Collective Intelligence
National Association of Schools of Public Administration & Affairs
National Academy of Sciences
New America Foundation
Purdue Foundation
Sterling Choice Health Lifestyle
USAID
World Bank

Participatory Challenge Platform Examples

[10,000 Solutions](#)
[Challege.gov](#)
[Climate CoLab](#)
Commerce Business Apps Challenge
[Grand Challenges](#)
Investing in Innovation
[Open Cities](#)
[Open Living Labs](#)
[The Policy Challenge](#)
[Startup America Policy Challenge](#)
[UVA Bay Game](#)
[We the People – Petition Platform](#)

FORMAT

This is not a workshop where a few experts share their knowledge and experience with a passive audience. We believe that everyone has something valuable to contribute. As such, the workshop is designed to actively connect public administrators, practitioners, researchers, and challenge participants in constructive, interactive, and dynamic conversations that enable everyone to contribute their expertise and experience to critically reflect on and envision the future of participatory challenge platforms research and applications.

The workshop consists of four targeted sessions. For each session, participants will be seated in small groups that intentionally mix public administrators, practitioners, researchers, and challenge participants. A number of specific speakers with significant expertise and experience with participatory challenge platforms will give a brief lightning talk to the entire workshop that highlights their relevant background and provokes reflection on “questions to consider” related to the theme of the session (see Agenda). The lightning talk will be followed by general questions and answers. Subsequently, each smaller interdisciplinary and cross-sector group will collectively explore the session theme and questions to consider, and then share their observations and discussion highlights with the workshop as a whole. At the end of each session, there will be a break and new groups will be constructed. Over the course of the day, each individual will have the opportunity to meet and engage in constructive conversations with the majority of workshop participants.

AGENDA

The George Washington University
Cloyd Heck Marvin Center | Continental Ballroom
800 21st Street, NW | Washington, DC 20037

Tuesday, May 22, 2012

Registration/Continental Breakfast 7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

Welcome Remarks 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

[Jonathan Koppell, PhD](#) – Dean, College of Public Programs, Arizona State University

Session 1: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Best Practices 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Participants will identify the obstacles, opportunities, and best practices of designing and implementing participatory challenge platforms to address public issues.

Questions to Consider

- What strategies are available to improve the quality of all participation?
- How do you judge the quality of participation?
- Beside money, what prizes motivate participation?
- When challenges do not work?
- When is there a benefit from open vs. targeted/informed participation?
- What other design tensions have you discovered?

Session 2: Design Tensions in Platforms with a Public Intent10:30 – 12:00 p.m.

Participants will discuss the limitations facing government agencies when using challenge platforms, the impact of its public nature on these limitations, and how can they be overcome.

Questions to Consider

- What differentiates challenges of a public nature with those by private organizations?
- Can participation in challenge platforms lead to increased civic activity in other contexts?
- Can participants learn to participate in these activities and similarly “level-up” as citizens and/or learn to participate in challenges more effectively?
- How do can competitions provide value to participants who do not win?
- Should we compete at democracy?

Luncheon12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

[Thomas Kalil](#) (Keynote) – Deputy Director for Policy, White House Office of Science & Technology Policy

[Esteve Almirall, PhD](#) (Keynote) – Associate Professor, Department of Information Systems, Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas (ESADE)

Session 3: Building a Community of Problem Solvers and Hosts 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Participants will explore mechanisms to foster sustainable networks of problems solvers and hosts from diverse backgrounds around shared interests and public challenges.

Questions to Consider

- What strategies are available to improve the quality of all solutions?
- How do hosts and solvers thoughtfully engage in continuous improving participation?
- What are the tensions between individual and group work?
- What supporting resources can be given to build a sense of community?
- What mechanisms are used to manage the relationship between participants and hosts?
- Could someone have a viable career as a professional problem solver?

Session 4: The Future of Participatory Challenge Platforms3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Participants will vision the future of and identify the next steps for the research and practice of participatory challenge platforms in facilitating efficient, effective, and legitimate governance processes and outcomes.

Questions to Consider

- Are challenges a passing fad?
- What is next for challenges?
- What context would benefit the most from the proliferation of challenges?
- What are the next steps to build a community of practice starting with the people at this workshop?
- What are the questions that you need answered by challenge participants?
- What are the questions that you need answered by practitioners?
- What are the questions that you need answered by researchers?
- What are the questions that you need answered by government agencies?