

## **Analysis and Evaluation of E-Consultations**

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### **Abstract**

E-democracy relates electronic delivery of the processes of democratic representation to practices of communication, consultation, and participation in public decision-making. The evaluation of e-democracy initiatives has not developed as quickly as public debate about the potential impacts. We review criteria for the political evaluation of e-consultations, technical evaluation considerations, and social research methods that have been used to analyze e-consultation outcomes. We argue that socio-technical evaluation needs to encompass a range of qualitative and quantitative methods if interdependencies between the political, technical and social conditions for success are to be better understood. We briefly compare field experiment and case-study methodologies as a basis for evaluating e-consultation as a policy instrument intended to enhance public participation in policy making. We suggest that case study approaches are more suitable given the lack of previous research, the need for policy-makers to understand the contexts that underpin successful e-consultation, and the needs for further innovation.

**Keywords:** e-consultation, e-democracy, participation, evaluation, methodology