

dg.o2004 Poster Session

Title: Comparing and contrasting models of participation for online transportation decision-making

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The Participatory Geographic Information Systems for Transportation (PGIST) Project is developing geographic information system- and Internet-based tools to support public participation in transportation decision making. An early task is to compare and choose methods and techniques for public participation to embed within our Internet-based participation system. More than 20 participation methods and techniques have been identified for synchronous settings – i.e., same time/same place. However, most of these have not been evaluated in an asynchronous (i.e. different time/place), Internet supported setting. To assist with systematic comparison of methods, we are developing a conceptual framework to describe them and evaluate their suitability for translation to Internet based decision support systems.

We conceptualize participatory interactions to occur at one of four ‘process scales’ which are differentiated in terms of event duration as follows (see also Figure 1).

- 1) Technique - basic building blocks of analytic-deliberative interaction that occur during public participation processes e.g. voting, survey, analysis, and/or display, etc.
- 2) Method - a structured way of interacting with one or more techniques to gather ideas, organize them, select which information is relevant, then review and move on to the next step in a meeting.
- 3) Meeting - an interaction setting which organizes the sequencing of one or more methods.
- 4) Decision situation – an interaction made up of a series of meetings to conduct participation processes for the overall transportation improvement programming process .

This poster will focus on a comparison of four participation methods (process level 2), Nominal Group Technique, Delphi (modified), Technology of Participation, and Citizen Jury/Citizen Panel. Evaluation criteria are designed to illustrate the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and weaknesses of various participation methods. Evaluation criteria include a short descriptive overview of the method, steps (techniques) required to complete the method, the purpose of the method, the expected outcome (consensus document, list of priorities, etc), the number and length

of sessions that are typically required, the optimal size of the group participating, the role of a facilitator (if needed), the process by which synthesis occurs, the intensity of public interaction, and special considerations for translating it to an asynchronous setting. The evaluation criteria (rows) and participation methods (columns) are displayed in a large matrix. Reading down columns provides an overview of each participation method. Reading across rows fosters a more systematic comparison of methods.

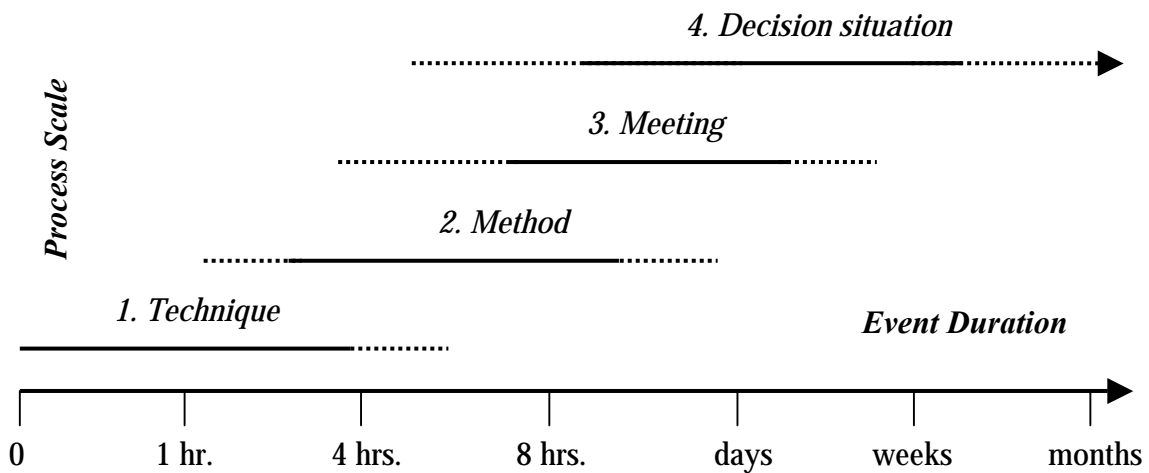


Figure 1. *Event duration* provides a sense of “scales of participation process” across participation models (adapted from Sanderson and Fisher, 1994)

Major similarities and differences among the participation methods will be discussed. Once the research team has identified the most suitable methods and techniques for asynchronous implementation, we will review participation priorities with project partners and subjects, and make decisions about which methods and techniques to include in the design specification for the decision support system under development.