Water Alternatives
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Special Issue on

Information and Knowledge for Water Governance in the Networked Society

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Water management goals, conceptual approaches and institutional frameworks have evolved significantly over the past 30 years. More recently this transformation has been accompanied—and enhanced—by the explosion of available information and communication technologies that enable new and rapidly evolving means of generating, sharing and disseminating information, of relating to one another, and of creating new conditions for social and political change.

Information and knowledge requirements for natural resources management today are conditioned by numerous factors: increasing possibilities provided by polycentric and changing sources of information generation; rapid development of earth observation technologies; different avenues for sharing and disseminating data and information; policies and legislations that enhance the harmonization and reutilization of publicly produced information; and growing demands for information and transparency in natural resources management from increasingly critical social actors. In this context of change it becomes relevant to reflect upon how particular information and knowledge is generated, reproduced and becomes predominant or hegemonic. To what degree can we expect higher levels of citizen engagement with decision-making processes to emerge in this new context? Will social actors take advantage of the new political participation potential provided by new technologies or are new control mechanisms being constructed to avoid it?

Water Alternatives will publish a special issue on *Information and Knowledge for Water Governance in the Networked Society*. The special issue will build upon contributions to an International Conference organized by the SWAN project at the University of Seville in June 2014 under that title. The Conference aims to contribute to the debates on data, information and knowledge generation, dissemination and application, emphasizing the concepts of poly-centricity and collaborative generation of information, public participation, open data generation and the re-use of information in the context of the networked society. *For this Special Issue, contributions will be accepted from conference speakers and other interested parties focusing on two thematic areas:*

- **Power, information and the policy process.** Rapidly developing New Information and Communication Technologies are indeed (or should be) influencing discussions on water policy paradigms and are clearly affecting the way water governance is happening in different geographical settings. Nevertheless these effects are conditioned or contextualized by wider socio-political processes (neoliberal globalization, post-political age, post-democracy, etc.) and thus they must be understood in that context. Papers should focus on discussions about the key theoretical issues that can help us understand how the emerging ways of generating, accessing, and managing information reshape social relations of power in water use, management and governance.

- **Polycentric information for water governance: Generation, quality control, sustainability and potential for social and political transformation.** New practices of collaborative and distributed generation of information are facilitated by the New Information and Communication Technologies. How are they helping to meet the demands of transparency, open data and the new information needs for water management and governance? Attention will be paid to information quality control, ensuring the consistency of information on water throughout its life cycle. The issue of information sustainability will also be addressed, that is, guaranteeing its continuity through time, free access, optimizing generation efforts and minimizing overlaps. How is this information transformed into useful knowledge for water governance in the era of big data? What is the role of knowledge and information in relation to unequal social relations, legitimation of hegemonic positions and/or key politically contentious issues?

Timeline

- Abstracts by April 15, 2014
- Notification of authors by May 15, 2014
- Draft papers by November 1, 2014
- Peer-reviewed comments by February 1, 2015
- Final version of paper by April 15, 2015 for publication on the **first of June 2015**

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Full papers can be developed following WaA editorial guidelines