

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION BY DC-AREA FEDERAL AGENCY PERSONNEL, ACADEMICS AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION STAFF: TEST NEW TOOLS FOR SORTING FEDERAL DOCKET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (FDMS) PUBLIC COMMENTS, BLOG COMMENTS AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC PUBLIC DIALOG

What: Public Comment Analysis Toolkit Training & Usability Workshops

When: Friday January 22, 2010 - i) 9:00 am **{Session is FULL}** or ii) 11:00 am **{8 Seats Left}**

Where: The Bureau of Labor Statistics - Human-Computer Interaction Laboratory - Washington, DC

Sponsors: The National Science Foundation and the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Host: Dr. Stuart Shulman, Director of the Qualitative Data Analysis Program at UMass Amherst

Program: Each 105 minute computer lab-based session will consist of three parts. During the first part, Dr. Shulman will introduce the Public Comment Analysis Toolkit and lead the group through a series of steps to establish accounts on the Web-based Public Comment Analysis Toolkit (PCAT). After a brief orientation to the features in the system, all participants will be asked to perform a series of tasks to familiarize themselves with the scope and nature of the PCAT software. Once the testing is complete, a brief, anonymous and confidential usability survey will be available online.

Why: Proliferating digitized text collections present multifaceted problems for individuals, groups, corporations, universities, and governments at every level. As the volume of intermixed germane and non-germane information grows (with the latter often growing much more rapidly), the need for more streamlined work flows and assistance from automated tools also grows. On the individual level, the pain is concrete in the form of repetitive mouse click-induced cases of the computer-related carpal tunnel injury.

Existing document management platforms compel users to work through lengthy lists, sub-parts or pages of lists, and finally the individual items within those lists with a click-by-click set of repetitive motions on the computer mouse. Getting manually to the next document or document sub-part, isolating the relevant text, and recording the correct classification and associated annotations currently requires too many painful clicks and drags on the mouse even when the number of documents is relatively small. These new tools and technologies are based upon well-researched principles of automated text clustering, work flow efficiency design, analytic efficacy, internal and external validity checks, inter-coder reliability tools, and human-computer interface usability. User feedback at these sessions will shape the future direction of these tools as well as their overall usability.

Who Currently Uses PCAT? Among the first 250 PCAT BETA TESTERS are a wide variety of academics as well as personnel from the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US General Services Administration, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Department of Transportation, the US Forest Service, the US Secret Service, the US Department of Agriculture, the Federal Communication Commission, and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For More Information: Please visit <http://pcat.qdap.net> or write to Dr. Shulman for more information (stu@polsci.umass.edu) or call him at 413-545-5375. Directions to the lab are online at: <http://www.umass.edu/qdap/DirectionstoPCTrainingRoom.pdf>.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure: Dr. Shulman is the inventor of the Public Comment Analysis Toolkit and therefore has a direct financial interest in any future commercialization opportunities. He is the manager of an independent software venture (Texifter, LLC) and has a financial interest in any technology transfers based on this research.

To Register for 9:00 am January 22:

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?hl=en&formkey=dDRUbu4tQVhLX1VMVXRFaFRkeXBFaEE6MA>

or try <http://tiny.cc/u1y4T>

To Register for 11:00 am January 22:

<https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dEZDd0JUNDMtncpBcjdOT1R3a2NGYIE6MA>

or try <http://tiny.cc/hCROd>

This research project was initiated during the fall 1999 semester was made possible with the following grants from the National Science Foundation: III-0705566 "Collaborative Research III-COR: From a Pile of Documents to a Collection of Information: A Framework for Multi-Dimensional Text Analysis," IIS-0429293 "Collaborative Research: Language Processing Technology for Electronic Rulemaking," EIA-00328914 "SGER COLLABORATIVE: A Testbed for eRulemaking Data," SES-0322662 "Democracy and E-Rulemaking: Comparing Traditional vs. Electronic Comment from a Discursive Democratic Framework," and EIA-0089892 "SGER: Citizen Agenda-Setting in the Regulatory Process: Electronic Collection and Synthesis of Public Commentary." We are also grateful for past financial support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in these workshops are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Science Foundation or any federal agency.