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Research Discussion Breakfast with Tom Birkland on Lessons of Disaster

Lessons of Disaster: How Can We Learn from Disaster Experience?

Tom Birkland

Wednesday, March 14 @ 8:30 a.m.

Center for Technology in Government, 187 Wolf Road, Albany, NY

In his recent book, *Lessons of Disaster*, Dr. Birkland argues that "learning" "lessons" from disasters like Hurricane Katrina or the 9/11 attacks is unlikely, because of various institutional barriers to "learning" and because of the problem with the metaphor of "learning" itself. But, assuming that disasters and other "focusing events" do trigger events to take in information and make better decisions for the next disaster, what features of a political system, a policy domain, and an organization can enhance learning and improved performance? Tom will suggest some avenues of research, focusing in particular on gathering and managing information. He will also suggest fruitful funding sources, including the National Science Foundation.

Tom Birkland is an associate professor of public administration and policy and is the director of the Center for Policy Research at the University at Albany. His expertise is in the public policy process, and in public policies dealing with natural and technological hazards and disasters. He is the author of *After Disaster and Lessons of Disaster* (both from Georgetown University Press) and of several scholarly articles in the field. In 2006, Tom was program officer for the Infrastructure Management and Hazard Response program in the Division of Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) in the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Engineering.

To register to attend, please go to: <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/about/breakfasts>.

Your Help is Needed to Shape Future Investments in e-Government

Over the past year, CTG has been the US partner on an international project to explore the future research agenda for e-government. The project included 21 workshops held around the world to envision scenarios for society and government in the year 2020, identify gaps in current knowledge and capability, and develop key themes for future research. The international project team has developed 13 research themes which are now the topic of a ten minute survey. The results will be used by the European Commission (and shared with the US National Science Foundation and other research sponsors) to help shape future investments in e-government research. As an expert involved with e-government research or management, please participate in the survey by going to [http://www.ve-forum.org/Apps/survey.asp?Q=Research theme survey](http://www.ve-forum.org/Apps/survey.asp?Q=Research%20theme%20survey).

New CTG Article on Leadership and Public Sector Knowledge Networks

Knowledge and information-sharing networks are emerging in an increasing number of government programs and policy arenas. This article, "Authority and Leadership Patterns in Public Sector Knowledge Networks," explores ways in which formal authority and leadership characteristics shaped the results of four knowledge network initiatives. The article was published in the March 2007 issue of the *American Review of Public Administration* and was authored by Ophelia Eglene, Sharon S. Dawes, and Carrie A. Schneider. Learn more about this and other results from CTG's Knowledge Networking project at <http://www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/pubs?proj=kdi&sub=pubs>.