

Cary Coglianese

*E-Rulemaking: Information Technology and the Regulatory Process*

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Abstract by Melissa Sutton

The author discusses Electronic rulemaking, or e-rulemaking, and the potential it offers federal regulatory agencies to overcome some of the informational challenges associated with developing regulations. The article begins with a look at the significant information demands placed on federal agencies when crafting government regulations. It explores the use of technology to help streamline and improve regulatory management and increase the public's access to and involvement in rulemaking.

In cooperation with the National Science Foundation's Digital Government Program, the Regulatory Policy Program at Harvard University initiated two major dialogues on the future direction for research on e-rulemaking: one in Washington, DC in March, 2002; the other at Harvard in January, 2003. These workshops brought together specialists from the information sciences, law, social sciences, and public management, as well as key regulatory officials from more than ten different government agencies. This article summarizes the discussions that took place at these workshops and seeks to expand further the community of researchers and policy analysts who can contribute to this new area.

The first part of the article details the rulemaking process, outlining procedures that agencies must currently follow in developing new regulations and highlighting some of the problems generally associated with rulemaking. Part two of the article considers ways that information technology may be able to improve the rulemaking process, as well as discusses some of the chief goals, choices, and challenges associated with e-rulemaking. Finally, the article presents a cross-disciplinary agenda for research intended to contribute to e-rulemaking's long term potential for improving government regulation and enhancing the management and legitimacy of the rulemaking process.