# 2012 European Evaluation Society Conference in Helsinki

## Description

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Date: OCTOBER 1-5, 2012
Venue: HELSINKI, Finland

Conference website

## EVALUATION IN THE NETWORKED SOCIETY: NEW CONCEPTS, NEW CHALLENGES, NEW SOLUTIONS

The Tenth Biennial Conference of the European Evaluation Society will be the international evaluation event of the year. It will be held in Helsinki, Finland during 3-5 October 2012 (pre-conference workshops 1- 2 October).

Evaluators are living in times of unprecedented challenge and opportunity. The networked information environment is inducing fundamental changes in culture, politics and society. Whereas the industrial society was reliant on centralised, hierarchical, high cost information systems, the networked society is characterised by decentralised, voluntary and cheap information exchange.

The advent of social networking without borders will have fundamental implications for evaluation agendas and methods. First, it will redefine the value and legitimacy of evaluation in global social accountability networks and accelerate the internationalisation of evaluation. Second, evaluation cultures, structures and processes will have to deal with the limitless quantity, speed and accessibility of information generated by new technologies, e.g. drawing useful meaning from huge data bases, assessing the validity of an exploding number of rating systems, league tables, etc. in ways consistent with democratic values of freedom of expression and protection of privacy.

The new information technologies offer new ways of making authority responsible and accountable as well as bringing real time citizen involvement and reliable information to bear on public policy making. What are the implications of an information economy that allows instant connectivity to thousands of program beneficiaries suddenly able to make their voices heard? Will the spread of mobile telephony to the weakest and most vulnerable members of society and the rising power of social networks act as evaluative and recuperative mechanisms or will they merely aggravate social instability? What are the risks of network capture by single or special interest groups and cooptation of evaluation?

The rise of the evaluation discipline is inextricably linked to the values central to any democratic society. How will these values be protected in a context where weak links and increasing inequalities have created new fissures in society? How will evaluation independence be protected against the pressures of vested interests intent on retaining control over the commanding heights of the society?

To help explore these and other issues relevant to the prospects of evaluation in Europe and beyond the Conference will stimulate evaluators to share ideas, insights and opinions about a wide range of topics that will throw light on the future roles of evaluation in the networked society. The Conference will

help draw evaluation lessons learnt in distinct sectors and regions of the world. It will also examine the potential of alternative and mixed evaluation methods in diverse contexts and probe the challenges of assessing public interest in complex adaptive systems and networks.

To these ends the Conference will offer participants a wide choice of vehicles for the transmission of evaluation experience and knowledge: keynote speeches, paper presentations, panel debates, posters, etc.  As in past years the EES Conference will aim at a pluralistic agenda that respects the legitimacy of different standpoints, illuminates diverse perspectives and promotes principled debate. The Conference will also provide an opportunity for evaluation networks to interact and improve the coherence of their activities.

We look forward to welcoming you in Helsinki. It is one of the world leaders in modern design and it provides Europe with a world class high tech platform. It also boasts a 450 year history and lays claim to being the warmest, friendliest, most â??laid backâ?• city of Northern Europe. Its nearby archipelago of islands offers an ideal environment for sea cruises and its neighboring old growth forests provide an idyllic setting for restful nature walks. We promise you an enjoyable as well as a professionally rewarding time!!

Ian Davies, *President, European Evaluation Society*
Maria Bustelo, *Vice President and President Elect, European Evaluation Society*

**Category**

1. Conferences
2. Types of Events

**Tags**

1. accountability
2. Information / Communication Technology (ICT)
3. network
4. social networks

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