



**PROVINCIA DI PISA**

**dott.ssa Patrizia Marchetti**

Assessore al Sistema Informativo

P.zza Vittorio Emanuele II, 14 – PISA

E.mail: p.marchetti@provincia.pisa.it

ECML/PKDD 2004 – Opening Session

Pisa, 20 September 2004

Welcome address by Mrs. Patrizia Marchetti,  
delegate to the Information System

**The importance of knowledge discovery in Public Administrations.**

On behalf of the president of the province of Pisa, Mr. Andrea Pieroni, I wish to welcome to all delegates, organizers and authorities.

The topic of this conference has a deep impact on our work, and makes me think about the expectations that the public sector places on knowledge discovery.

In the public administrations, information systems were built primarily to optimize internal procedures. The aim has been replacing the type-writer, and automatize office processes, possibly decreasing cost and increasing performance.

It has been a slow process, although a new impulse is now evident, thanks to Internet and the Web, which were the lever of change, also in the PA. E-governement projects try to create online services for the citizens – services that should improve quality, effectiveness and efficiency in the interactions between the citizen and the PA.

The key to success, in e-government, is the knowledge base: knowledge is essentially the basis of government. In this perspective, the PA is hungry of new technologies which may help in mastering knowledge in their daily attempt to answer to citizens' needs.

We are aware that information is not necessarily knowledge: we cannot flood citizens with useless information and, at the same time, deny access to real knowlegde – which entails exclusion from a democratic decision-making process.

Your research work reflects our needs: the huge mass of data that are gathered and stored in our archives, digital or not, should be identified, integrated and extracted quickly, to become pieces of real knowledge.

The image of the “nugget” discovered in the mine captures nicely the idea – I, as a non-expert, understand how certain nuggets might help in a better planning of the territory and its resources. I, as an administrator, feel this need and count on your work, in the hope that your achievements can be used by the PA worldwide.

Here, in Italy, there is still a gap to fill. More than half the population has not access to digital information; in Tuscany, only 45% households has a computer. Clearly, this situation is even worst in many other countries. A broader, universal access to information technologies should be the goal, shared by the PA e universities and research centers you come from.

We are willing to learn, but of course we expect technologies which are close to the final user – we don't want to delegate the data analysis activity only to you, the specialists. We want to realize e-government which enables e-democracy: we aim at a network model for information distribution which facilitates a real interaction between citizens and the PA – one where people is not at the end but with the decision making processes.

At the beginning of our mandate, our committment is to strengthen the contacts between public administration and research.

While I wish you a successful meeting, I hope you will have some time to visit our territory – in the meanwhile, we let you know our flavors, through some delicacies that we brought and, in a while, you will taste.

Many thanks for your kind attention.