

(W)E-DEMOCRACY: **Will Parliament** **survive the** **Digital Era?**

Dirk Holemans & Kati Van de Velde



Hopeful approaches to democracy in digital times

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In short

The 21st century democracy in Europe is in dire straits. Citizens feel disconnected with politics. Many people, especially youngsters, no longer see the traditional democracy as a good system of governance. Democracy like we know it today seems to be overdue for a profound upgrade. How can we reverse the erosion?

Democratic institutions haven't changed much since their formation in the 19th century. Even though our lives have been permeated with digital technologies, our parliaments and local councils have not. If we do not intervene quickly, our democracy is threatened to fall behind on digitalisation, and the gap between citizens and politics will grow even more.

Nonetheless our digitalised society offers a fertile breeding ground for citizens who organize themselves in innovative ways to participate in political decision-making. Digital initiatives like online knowledge centres and participation platforms pop up everywhere in Europe. For example, did you know that the mayors from Barcelona and Paris use digital platforms to actively engage citizens in outlining policy? What is the potential of these technologies to renew democracy? What are the challenges? What about participation of the elderly for instance? And how can local governments respond to these growing digital trends?

In this trend paper we explore innovative approaches to democracy.

Description of authoring organisation:



The Green European Foundation (GEF) is a European-level political foundation whose mission is to contribute to a lively European sphere of debate and to foster greater involvement by citizens in European politics. GEF strives to mainstream discussions on European policies and politics both within and beyond the Green political family.

The foundation acts as a laboratory for new ideas, offers cross-border political education and a platform for cooperation and exchange at the European level.



Photo Credit: https://c1.staticflickr.com/6/5308/1619745315_26c2d1b752_b.jpg

Introduction: a few alarming figures

FACT #1

No less than 54% of EU citizens do not agree with the statement 'My voice counts in the EU' (source: Eurobarometer November 2016).

In the survey, a majority of people indicate that they feel they have very little influence as an individual on the politics decided on a EU level. Looking at the numbers for the individual Member States, Greece is the tail light with 84% of all respondents not agreeing with the statement, whereas among the Swedish interviewees 67% feel that their voice counts in the EU.

FACT #2

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of political participation (source: The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2016 versus 2015).

The Democracy Index is based on 5 categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture. Based on their scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy", "flawed democracy", "hybrid regime", and "authoritarian regime". Check annex 2 for an overview of the indicators for "political participation".

	Rank	Overall Score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political Culture	Civil Liberties
Norway	1	9.93	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	10.00
Iceland	2	9.50	10.00	8.93	8.89	10.00	9.71
Sweden	3	9.39	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	4	9.26	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00
Denmark	5	9.20	9.58	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.41
Canada	6	9.15	9.58	9.64	7.78	8.75	10.00
Ireland	6	9.15	9.58	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00
Switzerland	8	9.09	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.41
Finland	9	9.03	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	9.41
Australia	10	9.01	9.58	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00
Luxembourg	11	8.81	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Netherlands	12	8.80	9.58	8.57	8.33	8.13	9.41
Germany	13	8.63	9.58	8.57	7.78	7.50	9.71
Austria	14	8.41	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	9.41
Malta	15	8.39	9.17	8.21	6.11	8.75	9.71
United Kingdom	16	8.36	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.75	9.12
Spain	17	8.30	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.13	9.41
Mauritius	18	8.28	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.71
Uruguay	19	8.17	10.00	8.93	4.44	7.50	10.00

	Rank	Overall Score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Poitical participation	Political Culture	Civil Liberties
FLAWED DEMOCRACIES							
Japan	20	7.99	8.75	8.21		7.50	8.82
USA	21	7.98	9.17	7.14		8.13	8.24
Italy	21	7.98	9.58	6.43		8.13	8.53
Cabo Verde	23	7.94	9.17	7.86	7.22	8.75	9.12
France	24	7.92	9.58	7.14	6.67	7.50	8.82
South Korea	24	7.92	9.17	7.50	7.78	8.13	8.24
Costa Rica	26	7.88	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.13	9.71
Botswana	27	7.87	9.17	7.14	6.11	6.88	9.41
Portugal	28	7.86	9.58	6.79	6.11	6.25	9.41
Israel	29	7.85	9.58	7.50	8.89	7.50	6.18
Estonia	29	7.85	9.58	7.86	6.11	6.88	8.82
Czech Republic	31	7.82	9.58	7.14	6.67	6.25	8.82
India	32	7.81	9.58	7.50	7.22	7.50	9.12
Taiwan	33	7.79	9.58	8.21	6.11	6.88	9.41
Chile	34	7.78	9.58	8.57	4.44	7.50	9.41
Belgium	35	7.77	9.58	8.57	5.00	6.88	8.82
Cyprus	36	7.65	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	9.12
Slovenia	37	7.51	9.58	7.14	6.67	5.63	8.53
Lithuania	38	7.47	9.58	5.71	6.11	6.25	9.71
South Africa	39	7.41	7.92	7.86	8.33	5.00	7.94
Jamaica	40	7.39	9.17	6.79	5.00	6.88	9.12

FACT #3

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of e-participation
(source: UN E-Participation Index).

The United Nations' EPI measures the use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens ("e-information sharing"), interaction with stakeholders ("e-consultation"), and engagement in decision-making processes ("e-decision making"). While in the 2016 global survey the United Kingdom is number 1 in the world by achieving the full score, Hungary's index for instance is 0,4915 and most EU Member States remain in midfield in this global comparison.

FACT #4

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of Networked Readiness
(source: World Economic Forum Global Information Technology Report 2016).

The Networked Readiness Index assesses the factors, policies and institutions that enable a country to fully leverage information and communication technologies for increased competitiveness and well-being. In huge parts, it results the results of the United Nations' EPI, with the United Kingdom being ranked first and Hungary having the lowest index among EU Member States.

Democracy on the move

The origin of our Western democracy derives from the Ancient Greeks. **Aristotle** already emphasised the basic principles that we still acknowledge today as the building blocks of our democracy, like freedom for every citizen, elections and the system of majorities. At the time, active citizenship was however only reserved for male citizens.

Between this description and the introduction of universal suffrage for all citizens lies a period of more than 2200 years. This is related to a number of factors whereby the increase of the population in modern society played an important role. What was executable for free men in the old Athens – to gather them at a square for public debate – is not feasible in countries with millions of inhabitants. Because of that, the Scottish philosopher **James Mill** described in the early 19th century the representative democracy as the *grand discovery of modern times*: it allows that the few represent the interests of the many in an efficient way. At least on the condition that the many have the right to vote, so they can hold the few in power accountable. At the heart of this concept is the notion of passive citizenship: if a small group wants to be in politics, then the rest can devote themselves to their personal goals.

In the meantime, the parliamentary democracy is reaching its limits. Is the idea of passive citizenship in a highly educated society still justified? Are citizens still happy with filling out a voting ballot once

every four or five years? What about the powers of the government we elect, what is the influence of big companies and the financial markets? How can a democracy caught up in nation-state thinking and election cycles tackle ecological issues that transcend borders and concern future generations?

In addition, our modern society has been changing fundamentally since the advent of internet. Our society digitalises; if democracy wants to remain operable, it will have to acknowledge this new reality and moreover, actively anticipate it. Research shows that youngsters for example follow the news increasingly through social media and less through classic media (source: www.apestaartjaren.be).

In this trend report we neither advocate for a blind faith in new technology – not every discussion on Twitter leads to something good – nor do we favour an unsubstantiated suspicion. We look at e-democracy as a necessity in digital times. We do however assume that a proactive approach can strengthen democracy, gather citizens for present-day forms of public debate and well-founded decision-making. In other words, all technological innovations initially disrupt existing practices but it is important to appropriate them and deploy them in a sensible way that strengthens society. Following James Mill, will there be a *grand discovery of digital times* this time?



E-democracy

Vertical becomes horizontal

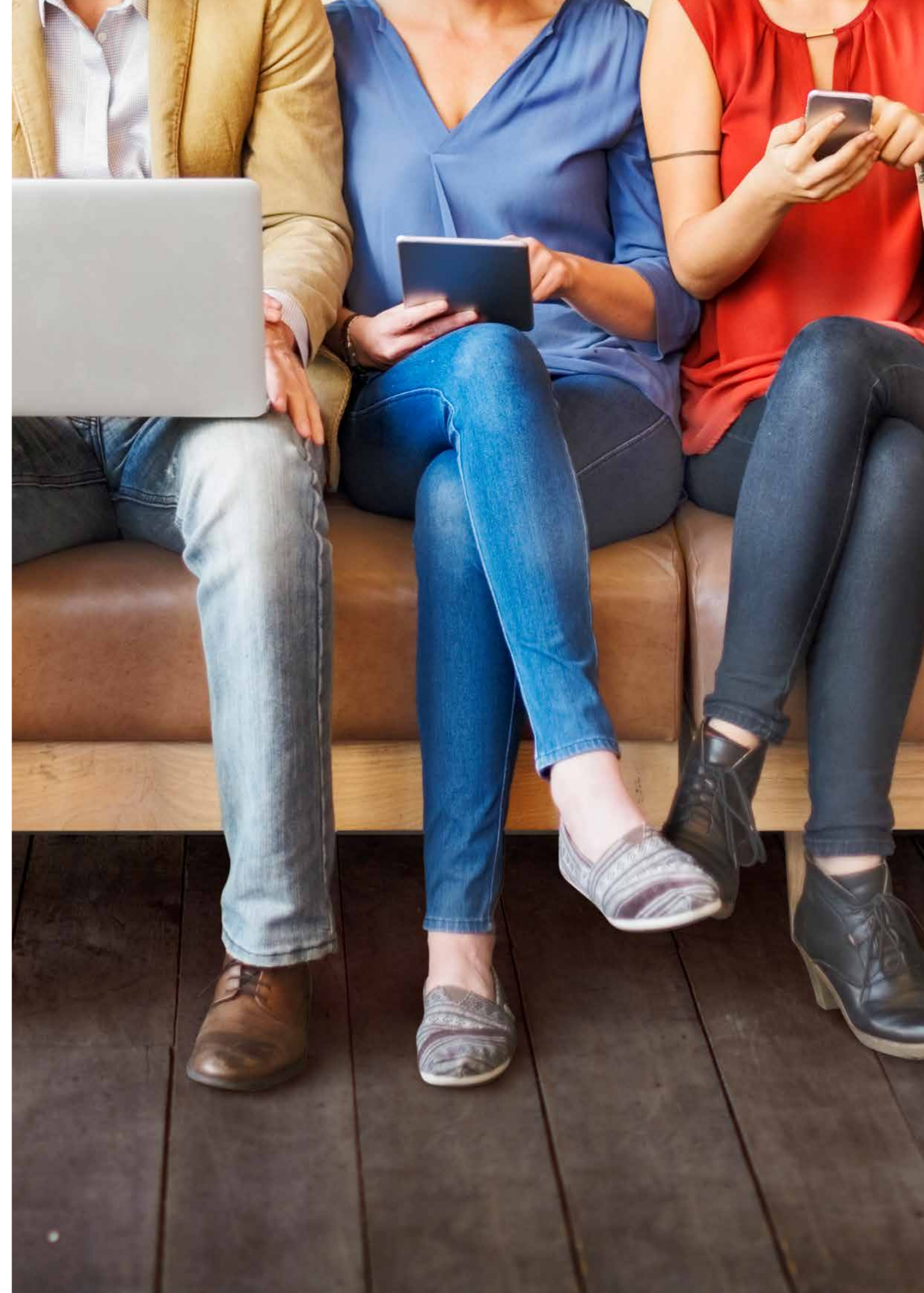
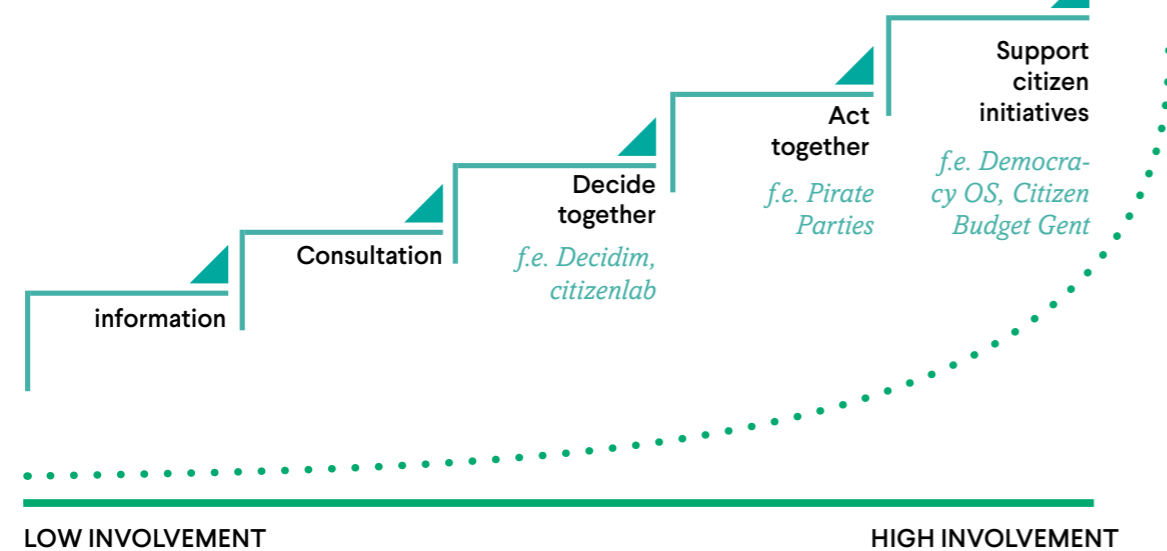
Thanks to digital technologies we can nowadays communicate, bank, study, read the news and so much more via our computer or smartphone. This new digital society requires new forms of leadership, governing and interaction which allow societies to anticipate the impact of new technologies and to react quickly to changing circumstances. Citizens increasingly question traditional forms of representative democracy and expect more innovative processes of decision-making, both offline and online. So what is the best possible way to use digital tools to strengthen democracy and its basic principles – freedom of expression, the right of initiative, the right to vote and equality? (How) can digital tools reduce the distance between citizens and politics, improve (the quality of) decision-making, make democracy more representative and increase transparency? How can political decision-making evolve from a vertical to a horizontal structure?

The answer lies in the use of digital tools on the different steps of the existing **participation ladder**:

- 1 Information**, or give citizens free access to public sector information;
- 2 Consultation**, or involve citizens top-down in the elaboration of and concertation of public policy and services to broaden and deepen the debate;
- 3 Decide together**, or empower citizens through allowing active participation from the grassroots level and facilitating bottom-up input to the political agenda;
- 4 Draft policy together**; involve citizens in the thinking process to develop policy;
- 5 Support** as the government citizen decisions and initiatives.

Digital ways to realise step 1 of the ladder are already well-established. Most municipalities have a website with a wide range of useful public sector information. Also step 2 is catching up: local governments or parties consult citizens more often in a digital way on specific local topics. The challenge lies in the establishment of the three upper steps, with which several European cities are already experimenting.

Fig. 1: Participation ladder according to David Wilcox (source: <https://brightanswers.eu>)



E-participation: case studies

Citizens currently feel less prompted to take part in traditional 'offline' forms of participation. Can the internet help to broaden engagement and develop new tools for participation? Several cities, civic movements and political parties in Europe are already experimenting with software platforms which allow for more dialogue. Let's have a closer look on examples in Barcelona, Iceland, Paris, Hasselt and Gent.

BARCELONA - Decidim

Since the terror attacks of 2004 in Spain and the political protest that followed, the country has gone through a thorough political transition. The demonstrations of the 15 M Indignados Movement in 2011 and 2012 paved the way for a new form of policy. Extensive deliberation exercises rose within civic movements, political parties and institutions and went hand in hand with an intensive use of digital technologies. This made traditional institutions evolve towards social movement-like institutions. There was a high need for more openness, transparency and accountability. Barcelona became a breeding ground for citizen initiatives, and the local elections of 2015 resulted in the victory of a political party that emerged from such citizen initiatives. It led to the steep rise of flexible ad-hoc collectives and networks as well as to the strengthening of traditional organisations which adapted to the new reality.

In February 2016, Barcelona launched '*decidim.barcelona*', a project about participative democracy built on an open source software platform. Its goal is to let citizens participate actively in an open and transparent way to the formation of a strategic plan for the period 2016-2019. It wants to give a leading voice to the citizenry and different neighbourhoods of Barcelona. The city collects proposals from citizens with a variety of interests and backgrounds, and fosters the participation of the least active collectives or collectives with more difficulties. It wants to foster a culture of collective construction of the city government and the citizen democracy, and to strengthen the foundations for future processes of citizen participation.

Today, *decidim.barcelona* has more than 26.000 users and there are 10 projects in the development phase. The city and its citizenry are for instance debating about the future of the old Teatro Arnau (see picture). The theatre closed its doors in 2000 and went from owner to owner, until the city bought it in 2011. Today the theatre is in a state of severe negligence to the chagrin of local groups. Barcelona now calls on its citizens to join the online debate and think along about the future possibilities for the theatre.

Another example is the revision of the local bus network. Within the framework of the Pact for Mobility of Barcelona, the city collects citizen proposals through *decidim.barcelona* and through local gatherings in order to improve the service and coverage of the bus network.



Photo Credit: <http://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/alcaldessa/sites/default/files/9873gr.jpg>



Photo Credit: <http://democracyos.eu>

PARIS – 'Madame Mayor, I have an idea' and DemocracyOS

In 2014 the new Mayor of Paris, **Anne Hidalgo**, launched an online participatory budgeting tool. Since 2015, Parisians can launch project proposals every year in January and February, for other citizens to comment on. From March to May, a co-creation phase takes place for representatives of similar proposals, to develop and refine their ideas. Then, a jury comprised of representatives of political parties, the City Administration, civil society and citizens pick out the best ideas. These are made public in summer for public evaluation. Each proposal gets support to campaign. In September, citizens can vote and the most successful ideas are included in the December budget. The realisation starts the following year.

In 2016, a total of no less than 158.964 Parisians have voted for a final selection of 219 ideas coming from 3.158 proposals. In response to the Mayors question which proposals the Parisians would like to see accomplished in view of the aim of a carbon neutral city by 2050 for instance, citizens voted en masse for the strengthening of the position of the bicycle in the city, a reduction of waste, for sustainable production and consumption, and for more green spaces in the city. The full report can be consulted here: api-site.paris.fr/images/91103.

Another successful example is **DemocracyOS**, an open source platform that aims to promote the participation of everyone in the political decision-making. It was launched in 2012 in Buenos Aires and then quickly spread to other countries and continents. DemocracyOS France for instance, was set up in 2015 to support civic movements, institutions, start ups, associations and any type of organisations that are ready to embrace online participatory democracy by using a free, simple and powerful tool. DemocracyOS promotes a new culture of citizen involvement and favours the emergence of a civic tech ecosystem in France.

In 2016, the city of Nanterre developed an online permanent agora by using the means of DemocracyOS. The open source digital space allows every citizen of Nanterre to debate, share, acclaim and build projects. The main goal is to develop a participative city where citizens are at the centre of all political decisions. In 2016, a total of 1559 people got involved on the platform. Citizens, elected representatives and associations have debated and cast their vote on seven topics. For example, people were invited to discuss the transformation of the former paper mills whose future needed to serve different goals: creating employment, maintaining the environmental and urban landscape and preserving historical memories. People of Nanterre were very concerned about the project and the civic mobilisation for this topic was particularly considerable as the city decided to include the consultation in a legal framework. More info can be found here: participez.nanterre.fr.



ICELAND – Pirate Party

The Icelandic Pirate Party was founded in 2012 by a number of internet activists and although it has lost some seats in the parliament in the most recent elections, it is still a quite popular party. Authenticity, transparency, open debate and participation are very important for them, and they deploy a mix of offline and online participation tools to meet these goals. Everyone can for instance launch a proposal during physical meetings. When 5% of the attendees vote in favour of the proposal, it is published on the online crowdsource portal x.piratar.is where all members can read or submit their comments alongside the proposal within one week, followed by a vote. If more than 50% of the members vote in favour of the proposal, it is then adopted as the official party position. Further adjustments or amendments remain possible through the same system even after the proposal has been adopted. Other participation tools offered by the party are a discussion forum and an internal online election tool.

In August 2016 the party counted more or less 2500 members. The [x.piratar](http://x.piratar.is) platform could count on 100 votes in 2015 and 2016, with often less than 50 contributions to debates. Although these figures may seem low, the votes and debates happen quite frequently. Since its creation in 2013, no less than 100 proposals were discussed and voted, and more than 7000 votes were cast.

HASSELT – online platform for ideas (via Citizenlab)

In 2016, Citizenlab launched together with the City of Hasselt an online platform for ideas to enhance reciprocal digital communication between the city and its citizens. In this respect, Hasselt collected ideas for the reconstruction of its city park **Kapermolen** over three months.

Via the platform, the city wanted to offer visitors of the Kapermolen park the possibility for more interactive, more accessible and faster participation, and to give a voice to each citizen interested.

GENT – the citizen budget + crowdfunding Gent

In 2015, the City of Gent introduced a new form of co-decisionmaking for subsidies. Every year the city makes 55.000 euro available for the co-financing of non-profit projects that make use of the Gent crowdfunding platform. A jury of experts within and outside the city administration selects projects and co-finances them for 25%, 50% or (exceptionally) 75% up to 5.000 euro at most. Those resources are only paid after successfully crowdfunding the remaining amount. The citizens of Gent mobilise their neighbourhood online to collect resources. This then counts as proof of the social support for the project. This way, citizens in Gent decide digitally which projects the city government supports.

Moreover, in 2016, the City of Gent launched a digital platform for citizens to build the city together: the citizen budget. With the city mission as its guideline, they invited all citizens from Gent, whether they are organised in a movement or not, to propose projects that help tackle the challenges in their communities, and more than 200 proposals were declared admissible. In late 2017, every citizen of Gent who is 14 years of age or older, could co-decide which projects should become reality by voting online for the 3 proposals of their preference.





Photo Credit: <https://innovatingdemocracy.io/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/nesta.jpg>

Challenges

Successful examples of e-participation often have a few characteristics in common. The direct link between citizens and policymakers for instance, a clear engagement from involved politicians, the support of local (civil society) organisations, the mix of online and offline participation methods and the high degree of transparency. But despite the positive examples from Iceland, Barcelona, Paris, Hasselt and Gent, citizens' participation is often a bumpy road with many challenges. The cost for the design, management, promotion and visibility of such platforms is often significant, and the human capital needed to process the input too. Moreover, it is crucial that all levels of the population are reached and involved, and that also more complex topics can be discussed, but how? Let's have a look at some of the challenges in more detail.

Challenge #1: inclusion

One of the main obstacles for citizens' participation is inclusion. From different European online platforms that have been described in the 'Digital Democracy' report (2017) of the British foundation **Nesta**, it appears that e-participants are often highly educated and male. The demographic structure of the society is barely reflected. **Youngsters** for instance are a target group currently abstaining from politics, but at the same time they are the most frequent internet users and therefore can be potential policymakers of the future. But how can all layers of the population be in-

cluded? The answer lies partly in a good mix of online and offline participation tools in view of a larger/more representative pool of ideas.

Civil society organisations play an important role in making civil concerns politically relevant on behalf of those citizens who have too little power as individuals or in small communities. Civil society organisations can evolve to **digital social movements** and act as a catalyst for more citizens' participation. Thus, individual participation and representative participation can go hand in hand. More extended concertation with citizen movements, political parties and institutions, and a more intensive use of online and offline participation tools are critical. Digital tools should be perceived as a valuable resource for inclusion rather than a factor for alienation among individuals in our societies.

Challenge #2: management and quality monitoring

A second challenge is the processing of information. More participation and thus a larger pool of ideas implies adjusted infrastructures for the processing and evaluation of this increased input. Additionally, more participation does not necessarily lead to better quality of decision-making. Is a limited amount of high quality contributions of experts not to be preferred over thousands of contributions from the public that can only be processed laboriously? This depends to

a large extent on the methods, the process as well as the anticipated outcome, and it is crucial that the rules are clear beforehand for every citizen. The moderation of those processes therefore also needs to be as transparently as possible to avoid control or manipulation. Otherwise, it is likely that citizens will become discouraged and not participate anymore.

An ideal tool for the processing and evaluation of big data is currently being found in algorithms. These are intelligent infrastructures and decision-making processes who no longer depend on individual officials, but at the same time transparency becomes essential. Data processing for participative purposes also requires vigilance with the use of algorithms because they can paint a distorted or ambivalent picture of reality.

Challenge #3: digital citizens' rights and privacy

Along with the digitalisation of our society we can witness an increase of electronic data collection: through social media, bank transactions, online shopping, GPS tracking, or cameras with technology to recognise a license plate or even a face.

Fundamental rights like privacy and the protection of data no longer seem to be guaranteed. Information is being gathered and stored endlessly, and internet users lose control over their online profiles. How far a government should go with the collection of big data is highly controversial. Where are the limits of legitimate use of data now that large surveillance mechanisms have increasingly become the new normal? Big data is eagerly deployed in fighting terrorism for

example, by wiretapping phones, locating individuals through unmanned cameras, and much more. Should those same techniques be used to track down tax fraud for example?

To make online democratic interaction of citizens a reality, certain other rights must be guaranteed. A safe and trustworthy infrastructure is needed with an adapted policy framework that allows for people to exercise their citizenship in a digital way, meaning that their right freedom of expression or to protest must also be guaranteed online. Additionally, it is key to provide the necessary infrastructure for citizens to exercise this right in an informed and transparent manner.

Challenge #4: social justice

An era that is more and more driven by data collection technologies also constitutes risks when it comes to social justice. Data collection technologies can be beneficial, for instance when used in city infrastructures to solve problems like air pollution, poverty, and other issues – those are oftentimes called 'smart cities'. However, they can also be used as a tool for social and economic control, by watching users, and predict or even manipulate their behaviour through algorithms. By doing so, they can pose a serious threat to personal autonomy, equal rights and democratic participation. Moreover, it can lead to discrimination against individuals based on an (over)simplified combination of complex personal data, such as medical data, financial situation, religious background, criminal past, etc. A sensitive approach to this topic is therefore indispensable when designing digital platforms, and governments should monitor this actively to protect the citizens.

Recommendations

Advocates of digital democracy typically are in favour more citizen involvement. A healthy democracy certainly requires participation of its citizens, on various levels as the participation ladder shows us. Countless experiments show that more digital interaction between governments and citizens can lead to fruitful results that strengthen democracy. But it is important to give serious thought to the challenges and pitfalls, namely:

- 1** Citizens should get the **information** they need in order to participate in a worthwhile manner.
- 2** Participation platforms must be **user-friendly** and **open source**.
- 3** Digital is not the only form of participation – **traditional ways** of outreach and engagement remain important in working towards maximum **inclusion**.
- 4** Citizens should get the feeling that their **contribution** really matters, if they want to feel motivated to participate.
- 5** Therefore, **transparency** is so important. Insufficiently thought through participation initiatives can cause a lot of harm, leading to apathy and disappointment among citizens and further erosion of their trust with politics.
- 6** Digital democracy is **not cheap** and is not an easy fix. It requires money but also people and their expertise for qualitative information collection and efficient **data processing**.
- 7** Moreover, increased data collection calls for reflection about **civil rights** like **privacy** in a digital environment. The digitalisation of democracy should not lead to new forms of inequality or exclusion. And destructive behaviours like **'trolling'** should be ruled out.
- 8** Finally, the **support of policy makers** is indispensable to be able to achieve policy results effectively.

When these conditions are met, governments will be better prepared to achieve the last three steps of the **participation ladder** together with citizens, to make decisions together, act together and have faith in giving citizens more autonomy.

What's next?

Can digital tools make democracy attractive again by providing new possibilities for people to participate?

Can digital tools improve the quality of decision-making for parliaments, city councils, political parties and governments?

Can digital tools improve the legitimacy of our democratic institutions and processes?

Yes and no.

Digital participation is only a part of the solution for the crisis in which today's representative democracy finds itself in. The digital gap should also be closed. It is important to know what exactly the reasons behind citizen participation are. Sometimes it is easier said than done. Nonetheless, in many respects, it would be a real progress to turn digital democracy into the new normal, by anticipating new technologies to a maximum, and closing current gaps. It is important to understand what works in a digital democracy, and what not. For that reason, sufficient attention needs to be spent on impact and evaluation, according to the rule 'learning by doing'. In short, digital democracy could be quite a trump card but it also has its limitations.



Annexes

1. E-participation platforms

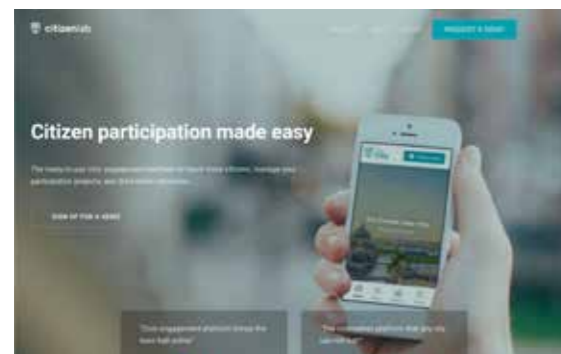
What follows is an overview of some popular participation platforms, with a brief explanation and where possible a screenshot. For further details we like to refer you to the respective websites.

loomio.org



Origin: New Zealand
Characteristics: open source, free for local communities and local use
Users: National Assembly for Wales, P2P Foundation, OuiShare, Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs, London School of Economics (for crowdsourcing the British constitution)

citizenlab.co



Origin: Belgium
Characteristics: paying, for-profit
Users: the Cities of Aalst, Hasselt, Oostende, Sint-Niklaas, Geel, Schiedam

airesis.eu



Origin: Italy
Characteristics: open source
Users: mainly local Italian organisations

dcentproject.eu



Origin: United Kingdom (Nesta Foundation)
Characteristics: open source, blockchain
Users: decidim.barcelona, better reykjavik, decide Madrid, Decisions Helsinki

[democracyos](http://democracyos.com)



Origin: Argentina, copied in France
Kenmerken: open source
Users: OpenCop21, City of Nanterre, the Mayor of Paris

sovereign.software by democracy.earth



Origin: United States
Characteristics: open source, blockchain
Users: Democracy Earth, DemocracyOS

represent.me



Origin: United Kingdom
Characteristics: open source
Users: citizens and groups

pol.is



Origin: United States
Characteristics: open source.
Users: vTaiwan, citizens and groups

backfeed.cc



Origin: Israel
Characteristics: open source, blockchain

2. Indicators of political participation according to the EIU 2016

1 Voter participation/turn-out for national elections. (Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.)

1 if above 70%.

0.5 if 50%-70%.

0 if below 50%.

If voting is obligatory, score 0.
Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.

2 Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but serious flaws exist.

0: No.

3 Women in parliament.

% of members of parliament who are women.

1 if more than 20% of seats.

0.5 if 10-20%.

0 if less than 10%.

4 Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations.

Score 1 if over 7% of population for either.

Score 0.5 if 4-7%.

Score 0 if under 4%.

If participation is forced, score 0.

5 Citizens' engagement with politics.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics.

1 if over 60%.

0.5 if 40-60%.

0 if less than 40%.

6 The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations.

1 if over 40%.

0.5 if 30-40%.

0 if less than 30%.

7 Adult literacy.

1 if over 90%.

0.5 if 70-90%.

0 if less than 70%.

8 Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day.

1 if over 50%.

0.5 if 30-50%.

0 if less than 30%.

9 The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some attempts.

0: No.

Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora.

If participation is forced, score 0.





Contact us:



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