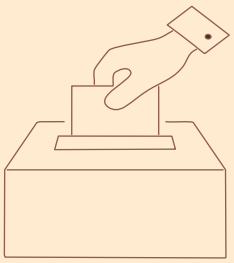
SDI Solonian Democracy Institute



Voting Applications

Digital Democracy Report '26

episdemos

EPISDEMOS

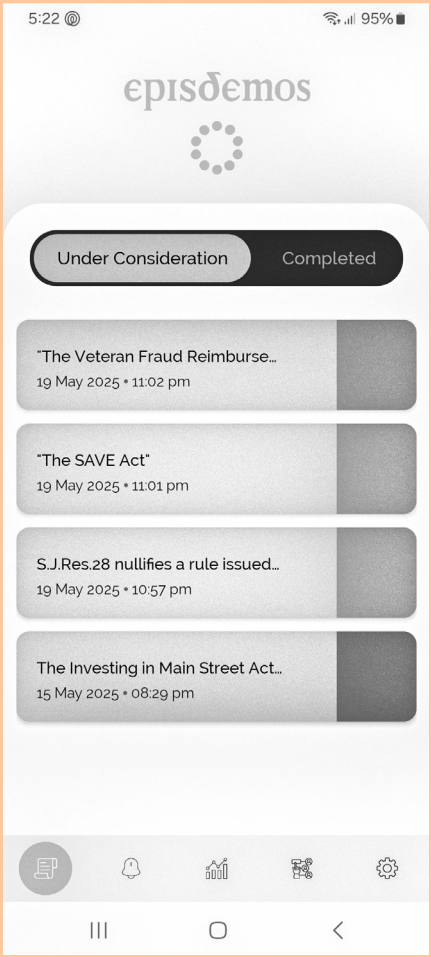
https://www.episdemos.com/

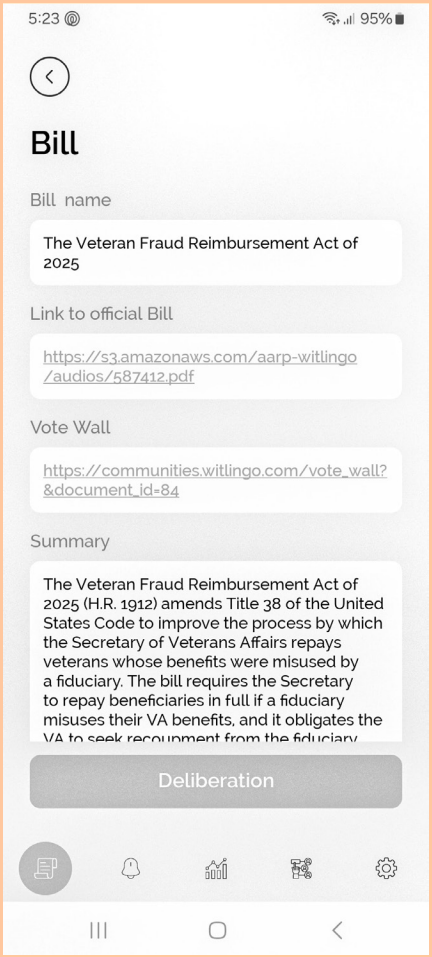
Overview

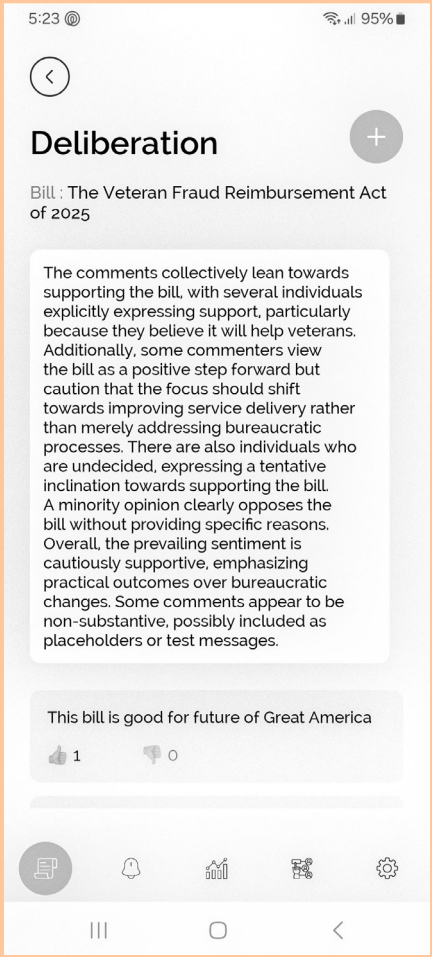
On the surface, Episdemos is a simple voting application geared towards facilitating discussion and voting on proposed legislation.

However, beneath its simple and straight-forward UI, it leverages new technology and advanced vote transparency techniques to potentially radically democratize existing voting processes and expand democratic decision-making across multiple languages.

While Episdemos is currently in beta development, and a full evaluation is therefore premature, the technology is interesting enough to warrant an initial analysis and discussion of its democratic potential.







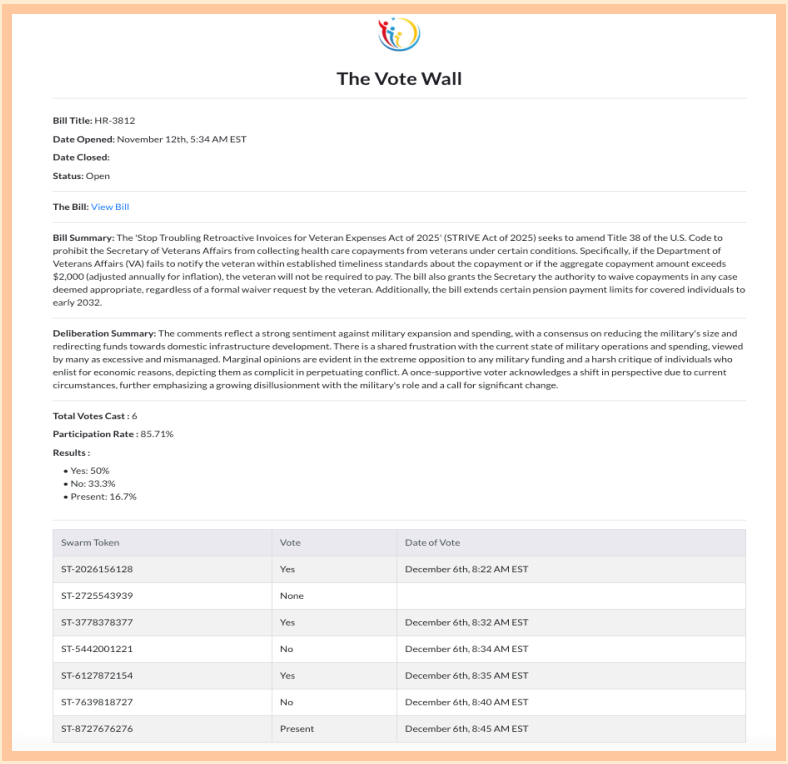
episdemos

PB Participatory Budgeting | DM Decision Making | Id Idea Generation | D/D Debate & Deliberation | PC Public Consultation

Scope of Offering

Episdemos works by importing a decision item (for example, the text of a parliamentary bill) and summarising its content using AI. Voters are presented with a summary of the proposed motion and its likely ramifications. Mirroring the common American practice of political endorsement, the software also produces a short set of AI-generated predictions regarding which groups would likely endorse or oppose the motion (e.g. unions, landlords, certain associations, etc.) and their (likely) reasons for doing so. A link to the original document (e.g. the bill) in its entirety is also provided. Although Episdemos allows organisers to choose which AI to use (current options include Open AI, Google Gemini, or open source alternatives), providing a link to the original helps to counteract any potential bias, error or inexactitude in the AI-generated summary. Because it leverages AI, Episdemos can automatically translate all aspects of its software (documents, voting, comments, etc.) into more than 20 different languages, allowing participants to seamlessly communicate across language barriers.

Episdemos aims to reconcile the twin objectives of privacy and verifiability common to all voting systems by using a simple and transparent voting system.



The Vote Wall

Bill Title: HR-3812
Date Opened: November 12th, 5:34 AM EST
Date Closed:
Status: Open

The Bill: View Bill

Bill Summary: The 'Stop Troubling Retroactive Invoices for Veteran Expenses Act of 2025' (STRIVE Act of 2025) seeks to amend Title 38 of the U.S. Code to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from collecting health care copayments from veterans under certain conditions. Specifically, if the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) fails to notify the veteran within established timeliness standards about the copayment or if the aggregate copayment amount exceeds $2,000 (adjusted annually for inflation), the veteran will not be required to pay. The bill also grants the Secretary the authority to waive copayments in any case deemed appropriate, regardless of a formal waiver request by the veteran. Additionally, the bill extends certain pension payment limits for covered individuals to early 2032.

Deliberation Summary: The comments reflect a strong sentiment against military expansion and spending, with a consensus on reducing the military's size and redirecting funds towards domestic infrastructure development. There is a shared frustration with the current state of military operations and spending, viewed by many as excessive and mismanaged. Marginal opinions are evident in the extreme opposition to any military funding and a harsh critique of individuals who enlist for economic reasons, depicting them as complicit in perpetuating conflict. A once-supportive voter acknowledges a shift in perspective due to current circumstances, further emphasizing a growing disillusionment with the military's role and a call for significant change.

Total Votes Cast : 6
Participation Rate : 85.71%
Results :
- Yes: 50%
- No: 33.3%
- Present: 16.7%

Swarm Token	Vote	Date of Vote
ST-2026156128	Yes	December 6th, 8:22 AM EST
ST-2725543939	None	
ST-3778378377	Yes	December 6th, 8:32 AM EST
ST-5442001221	No	December 6th, 8:34 AM EST
ST-6127872154	Yes	December 6th, 8:35 AM EST
ST-7639818727	No	December 6th, 8:40 AM EST
ST-8727676276	Present	December 6th, 8:45 AM EST

Episdemos Vote Wall

When participants first sign up on the Episdemos mobile App, they take a Token ID, which serves to identify them on the application without disclosing their real identity. Votes are publicly recorded on a bulletin board (referred to as the Vote Wall), which displays each vote and the Token ID that cast it, allowing voters to check that their own vote has been recorded as cast, as well as viewing all other votes cast and the Token IDs that cast them.

Voting options currently mirror those available to American Congresspeople (yes, no, present).

EPISDEMOS DATA

Name: WITLingo
Type of Organisation: Private Company
CEO: Ahmed Bouzid

Year founded:
2016

HQ Country:
United States

episdemos

PB Participatory Budgeting | DM Decision Making | Id Idea Generation | D/D Debate & Deliberation | PC Public Consultation

Episdemos is designed to encourage continuous participation, allowing voters to see their voting history on multiple decision items. The software also automatically notifies participants of upcoming votes using inApp notification.

In addition to voting, users can comment on the decision item (e.g. the proposed law) and are able to upvote and downvote previous comments. Administrators (referred to in Episdemos as Swarm Managers) can also upload additional documents to provide more information on the decision.

The Administrator/Swarm Manager portal also makes use of AI to generate summaries of voter feedback, creating an overview of why people voted for/against legislation. As with other features, Episdemos can generate this summary across languages.

Who should use this?

01 Political Parties and Movements

02 Unions and University Bodies

Ability to Execute

Episdemos is still in beta development - work commenced in early 2025 - but its creators at WITLingo have significantly longer experience in the technology behind it, also running a successful software platform focused on providing translation and communication solutions for care home residents in the US. In addition, founder Ahmed Bouzid brings experience of AI from previous work as a product manager at Amazon Alexa with him to this venture.

While the jury is out on whether Episdemos will achieve product fit in the e-Democracy space, its technology, design principles and USPs definitely make it a strong contender.

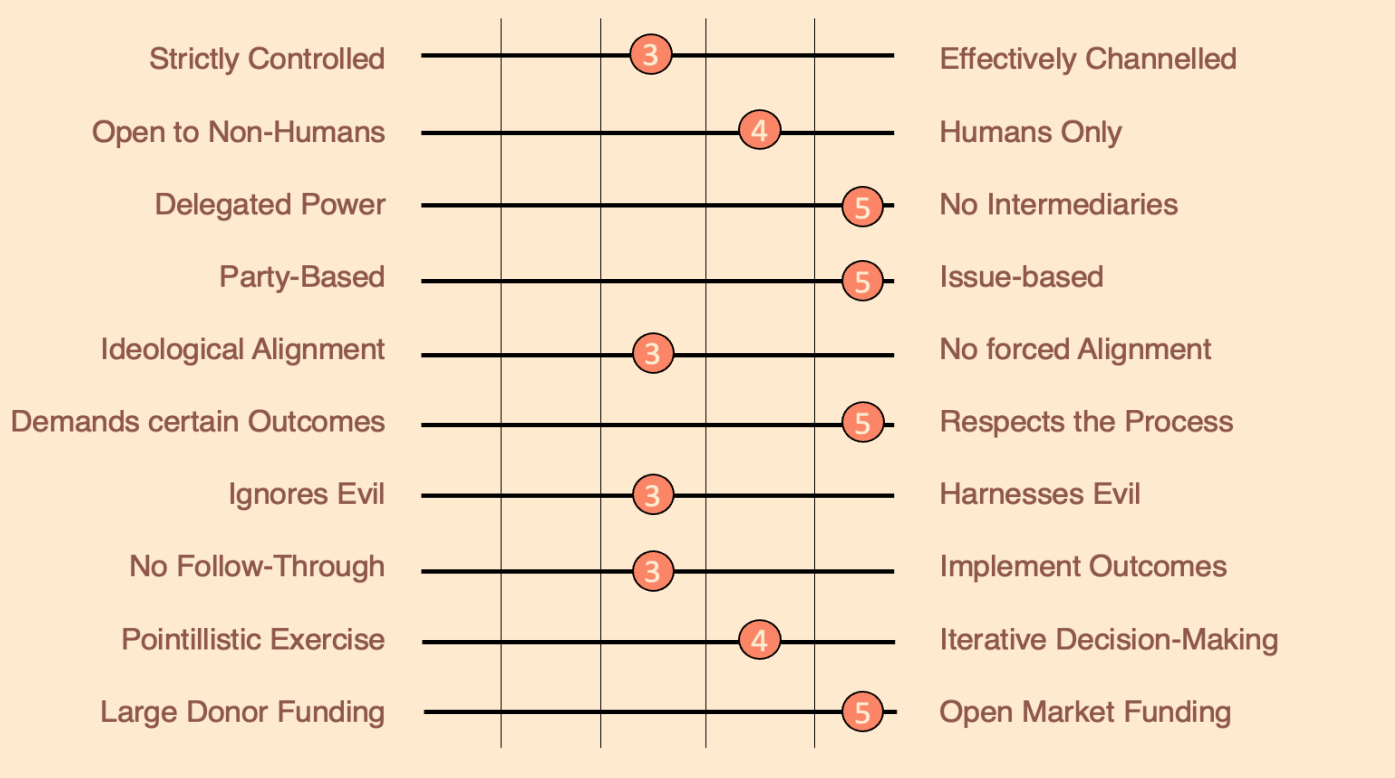
Episdemos has not yet considered accessibility in the early versions of the platform, but are working on an audio-only version.

The platform currently stores data on AWS servers.

Democratic Potential

Episdemos is the first software since Rousseau to aggressively target wide-scale, high-impact political decision-making.

While Rousseau was primarily used by the Five-Star Movement in Italy, Episdemos finds an analagous counterpart in the True Representation Movement (TRM) in the USA, a movement that aims (much as the Five-Star Movement did) to support candidates that commit to heeding their constituents, rather than donors or party operatives. Episdemos' architecture is geared towards direct decision-making and could easily be used by elected representatives to inform - or even direct - their votes, or be used as a voting application for direct democracy (referendums).



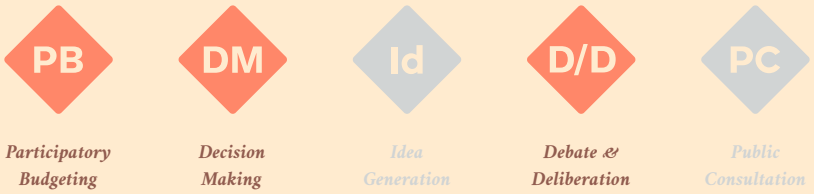
Methodology

Our analysis is based on a combination of self-reported and independently researched data points across a variety of criteria. Where possible we have taken advantage of the vendors' offer to analyse a test environment of their software. At a high level we have scored vendors on the following:

A. Functionality
B. Democratic Potential
C. Ability to Execute
D. Security

A. Functionality

We have assessed all vendor solutions against all functionality areas they are active in:

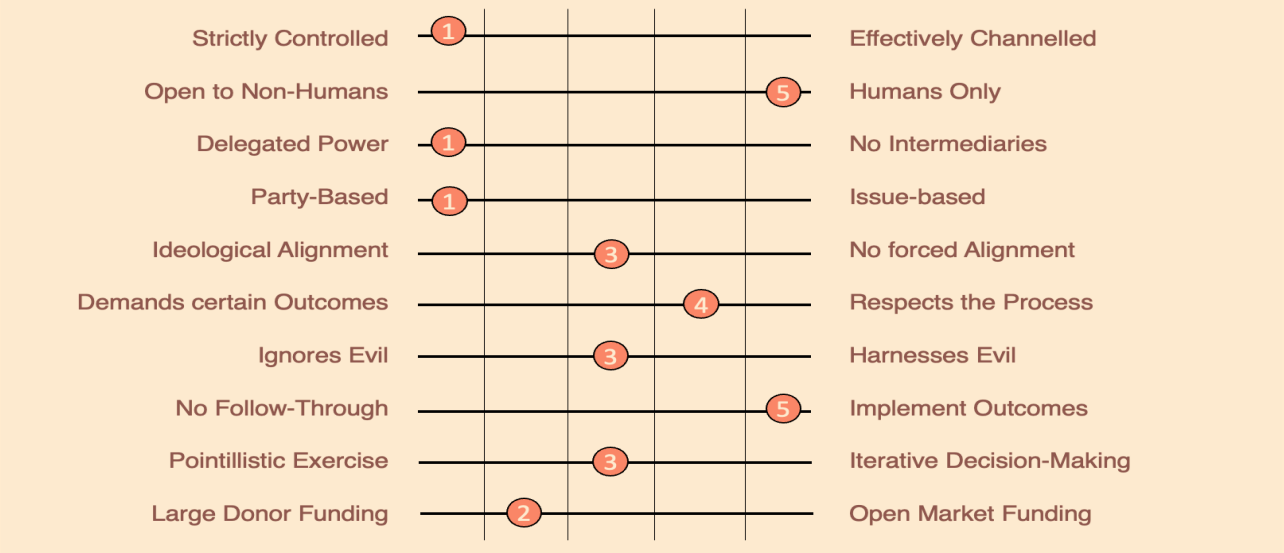


In the above example, the vendor does not provide ideation or public consultation functionality, meaning that their Remit Score (see below for definition) is not affected by lack of functionality in these areas.

Methodology

B. Democratic Potential

For each vendor, we have assessed the democratic potential of their platforms against the *Fuller Democracy* framework. While a summary is provided below, for more details refer to *Principles of Digital Democracy*: *Theory and Case Studies* (De Gruyter, 2023).



1) Control of Power

Measures whether the software effectively channels the expressed will of its participants into outcomes or whether the process is guided and/or confined to a limited number of pre-set outcomes. This criterion asks how manipulable the process is.

2) Legal Personality of Participants

Processes and software that allow for the participation of legal entities (such as NGOs, companies, etc.) rather than just natural entities (people) de facto inflate the influence of some people (who can utilize organizations to scale their influence), thus subverting the principle of 'one person, one vote'. This criterion asks whether the software can ensure that only those entitled to participate democratically can make use of it.

3) Delegation of Power

Applications that allow or encourage vote delegation (e.g. forms of liquid democracy) enable a form of representation with little scrutiny or accountability, and they encourage passivity on the part of participants. Applications that allow such delegation are thus seen as less democratic than those that demand that participants directly choose to vote or abstain on an issue.

Methodology

4] Party–based vs. Issue–Based

Software that allows for issue-based voting, where one decision is taken at a time, rather than voting for an entire package or platform of proposals helps to counteract groupthink as well as enabling issues and areas of disagreement to be identified with greater precision. It also makes it harder for organisers to manipulate participants into consenting to policy they disagree with in order to get some other desired policy.

5] Over–Alignment

Software that attempts to force alignment, e.g. pre-agreement on certain issues, discouraging forthright debate, arbitrarily limiting the parameters of a discussion, or funnelling contributions into consensus, is less democratic than software that facilitates the expression of honest debate and disagreement.

6] Accepting Wins and Losses

Tools that communicate clear outcomes based on the agreed-upon rules without forcing consensus, changing goal posts, or making participants re-evaluate decisions that have been made, allow voters to move on constructively rather than descending into interminable argument. This criterion thus asks whether the software allows participants to reach a conclusion and move on or whether decisions can be vetoed or impeded by the organisers or minorities.

7] Constructively Leveraging Bad Actors

This criterion asks whether the application makes provision to deal with bad actors - those intentionally or by reason of mental illness disrupting the process. This could be done in a number of ways, such as ensuring ID verification to prevent bad actors who are not entitled to participate flooding a local process. However, the process itself can also be constructed in such a way that bad actors are not able to derail a process or unduly harass others. Software that can achieve this while not or only minimally invading the rights of bad actors themselves is preferred over heavy-handed interventions.

8] Follow–Through on Outcomes

Software platforms that include the ability to track whether decisions were implemented are preferred to those that simply ask for engagement without follow-through.

Methodology

9) One-off vs. Iterative Process

Most decision-making processes are by their nature directional; not all future issues can be foreseen. Platforms that allow for an iterative decision-making process, where participants are asked to fine-tune their decisions based on changing real-world circumstances are therefore preferred to isolated processes.

10) Overreliance on NGO or Large Donor Funding

A greater reliance on funding from NGOs or large donors makes it more likely that the vendor is focussed on achieving certain policy outcomes rather than on the democratic process itself.

C. Ability to Execute

This category assesses how well the vendor is able to translate their vision into reality. Factors that we examined here were:

- **Number of active customers:** A greater number of active customers generates more revenue as well as increased feedback from users, which in turn can be used to improve the product. Additionally, the number of active users can serve as a proxy for the financial stability and expected future growth of the company.

- **Concurrent Users:** Assesses the number of users that can use the platform simultaneously and thus the ability of the vendor to scale.

- **Testimonials / Case Studies:** In conjunction with the number of active customers, case studies are a good indicator of successful customer projects. We give stronger weighting to case studies where customers confirm the success of the project.

- **Workforce:** The number of full-time employees working for the vendor. We use this as a proxy to determine how established the vendor is, which will affect their ability to execute.

- **Experience:** The number of years this vendor has been active. Generally, how long an organisation has been active is an indicator of their ability to maintain a positive cash flow and the level of professionalisation (i.e. business vs. hobby).

Methodology

- **Policy Impact:** Assesses whether use of the vendor's platform has resulted in political change, for example, a change in national law or local government procedure, and whether the software has proven that it can be an effective vehicle for what it promises to do.

- **Sales Channels:** Assesses the vendor's go-to-market strategy. Generally a multi-channel sales approach is a stronger indicator of the ability to execute than e.g. only a self-serve option.

Accessibility

For any technology solution to have a truly inclusive impact, everyone needs to be able to access it, including people living with disability. We asked all vendors to provide evidence (and sought out publicly available information where we did not receive it) on how vendors have considered accessibility in the design of their platforms.

Not implemented or no information available.

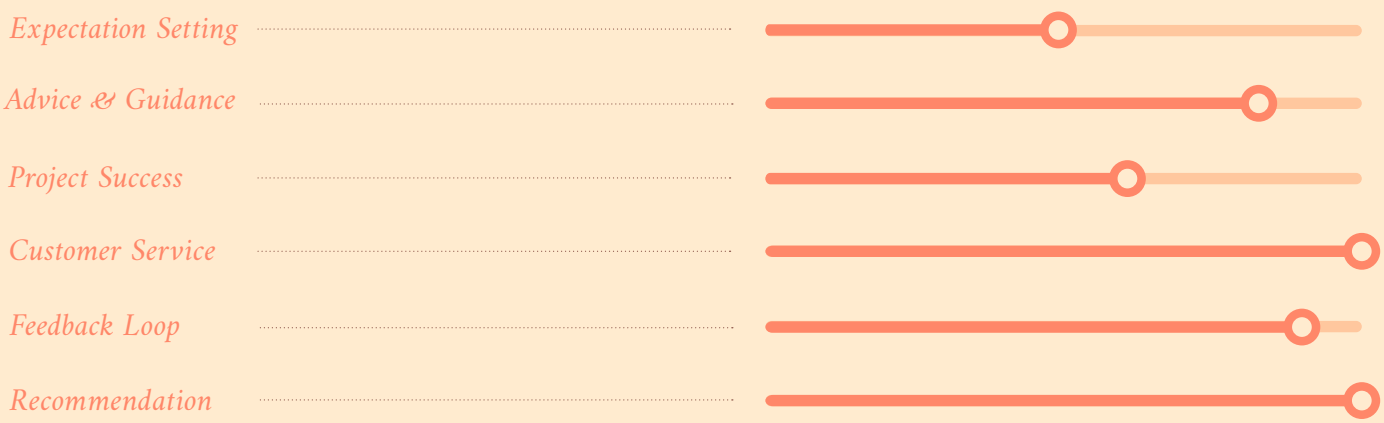
Considered as part of software design.

Follows WCAG or similar standard.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are the most common measurement of accessibility, but we have also considered similar standards in a number of countries to fairly assess vendors.

Customer References

We asked vendors to nominate reference clients we could speak to about the functionality and usage of their platform. Reference clients were asked to score vendors on certain criteria as well as provide general feedback. The following rating criteria were used and visualised.



Methodology

D. Security

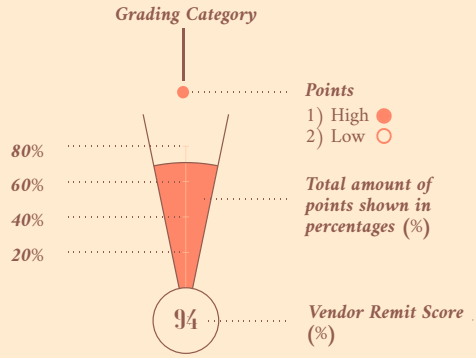
We have assessed a number of different aspects to determine how secure a vendor solution is, such as encryption, data storage and - particularly for vendors involved in political voting - how securely a vote is protected against subsequent changes from the administrators or external parties. Please note that for the purposes of this review we are relying on information provided by the vendor and publicly available information about the solution. We have not performed our own penetration tests.

- **SSL (HTTPS) Encryption:** Does the website use standard SSL encryption to prevent the data being intercepted or changed between the user device and the server?
- **Protection of User Data:** Does the vendor take measures to protect login data (including passwords) against leaks or hackers (e.g. salting passwords, multi-factor authentication, etc.)?
- **Storage Location of User Data:** Where is user data stored (e.g. own server, hosted with mass providers such as Microsoft Azure, Amazon AWS, etc., smaller providers, on Blockchain, etc.)?
- **Blockchain Anonymity:** If the solution uses Blockchain to store voting data and prevent modification, how does the solution ensure that voters cannot be linked to their vote?

Where appropriate, we also consider ISO certification and evidence of external penetration testing.

E. Combined Assessment

After scoring Functionality, Democratic Potential, Ability to Execute and Security, we then assign an overall Remit Score.



The Remit Score is calculated by dividing the overall score of the vendor by the maximum available points for the functionality areas the vendor is active in, as well as their score for Democratic Potential , Ability to Execute and Security.

The assessment for each category is displayed as a detailed data visualisation chart.