

# Solonian Democracy Institute



## 2020 Digital Democracy Report



## **Disclaimer:**

The information contained in this report is for general information purposes only. While every effort has been made to accurately reflect the functionality, strengths and weaknesses of participating vendor solutions, this report does not constitute investment advice nor should it be relied on as a conclusive analysis of the participating vendors' capabilities. Some of the information in this report relies on self-reported information from vendors that has not been independently verified. **The Solonian Democracy Institute clg makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability of any elements of this report.**

## Introduction

Over the last 15 years, consumer technology has brought about significant advances in peer-to-peer communication (e.g. Skype), commerce (e.g. Ebay) and social networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.). It is now possible to share ideas and opinions free from geographic restriction.

Spurred on by these developments, dozens of technology vendors are now architecting the future of digital democracy. The integration of Blockchain into these technologies over the past few years has also addressed some of the security concerns around digitalising democratic processes.

This report will track the development of these technologies and seek to provide an overview of the various fields of application (e.g. voting, participatory budgeting, public consultation, etc.) to anyone interested in advancing this field. Our ultimate goal is to provide a repository for policy makers, NGOs and academics, as well as for the democracy software industry itself. This report represents our first step in that process.

While not all of the technologies analysed here have an immediate application in the public sphere, they do all have the potential to reshape how we think about public participation.

This first edition of the report will not cover every technology currently in development or circulation, although we have made every effort to contact every vendor of which we were aware. We openly invite anyone in this burgeoning industry to contact us to help improve future editions.

In the following pages we will outline our approach to assessing the capabilities of each vendor and seek to identify each solution's areas of strength. This should help you understand the democratic software landscape, whether you are organising a participatory budgeting project for a small community or planning a major voting exercise for a large city or even country.

The Solonian Democracy Institute is dedicated to creating the conditions for direct, digital democracy based on Athenian democratic principles of citizen participation. All of the technologies outlined in this report will help us pave the way towards this exciting future.

Dr. Roslyn Fuller  
Managing Director  
Solonian Democracy Institute

## Digital Democracy

When most people hear the term ‘democracy’, they think about elections and referenda. However, it can describe other processes as well. For the purposes of this report we have defined democratic processes as:

*“any process which allows citizens or residents of a country or community to interact with their public political institutions”*

Democratic processes can therefore include:

- Elections (local, regional, national and supranational)
- Referenda & Petitions
- Public Consultations & Surveys
- Participatory Budgeting (where part or all of a community’s budget is distributed in accordance with how members of that community have voted)
- Administrative processes such as requesting permits, parking tickets, etc.

Digital Democracy describes the act of digitalising democratic processes so that they can be carried out online, as opposed to in person, by post or via telephone. The tools available in this area can perform a variety of functions. For the purposes of this report we have defined digital democracy tools as:

*“Software applications and/or processes which either transfer an existing democratic process online or create a new online democratic process for the purpose of either empowering the participants or seeking their input to make or validate a decision or assumption”*

While most vendors analysed in this report are digitalising existing or new democratic processes, we have also included a few vendors that currently operate in the private sector. We have included these vendors as some aspects of their technology could be adapted to operate in public democratic processes.

## 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. Mission / Vision
- C. Ability to Execute
- D. Security

These categories are explained in detail below:

### A. Functionality

We have assessed all vendor solutions against all functionality areas they have self-reported as being active in:

	DM	D/C	PB	Id
	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus Building	Participatory Budgeting	Idea Generation
1. Decision-Making / Voting	✓			
2. Deliberation & Consensus-Building		✓		
3. Participatory Budgeting			✓	
4. Idea Generation / Ideation				✗

In the above example (top right), the vendor does not claim to provide ideation functionality, meaning that their Remit Score (see below for definition) is not affected by lack of functionality in this area.

In scoring each functionality area we assessed the following aspects and assigned points for each aspect:

Question / Aspect	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus-Building	Participatory Budgeting	Ideation
1	Can users vote on a scale?	Does the software show distribution of votes?	Does the software allow users to see what the projected cost of a decision item is?	Does the software allow users to contribute ideas?
2	Are users able to weight their vote on a decision item compared to other decision items in the same exercise?	Does the software allow for ranking of alternative voting options (e.g. different items in a PB decision)?	Does the software allow users to see how much of the budget remains to be distributed after every decision?	Who decides which ideas go forward to a vote?
3	Are users able to see the average vote and is voting transparent to the user?	Can users comment on decisions?	Does the software allow for logical constraints, i.e. prevent users from selecting two or more contradictory options?	How does the software handle a large number of ideas?
4	Ease of configuring and setting up a vote / decision item in the software	Can users add images, videos or other forms of media?	Ease of configuring and setting up a participatory budgeting process in the software	Ease of setting up ideation process
5	Ease of use for end users navigating the software and voting on decision items	Can users paste links to external resources / websites?	Ease of use for end users navigating the software and selecting PB options	Ease of use for end users to submit ideas into the process
6	Does the software allow comparison against (and filtering by) existing voter lists or geographic location of voters?	Can discussions be moderated?		

## B. Mission / Vision

We assessed a number of factors to determine the level of change a vendor would bring to the market or wider society if their products were widely implemented:

- **Political Impact:** We assess the impact of the vendor solution on public decision-making. We give stronger weighting to vendors whose solutions increase the impact participants ('ordinary voters') are able to have on decisions than to vendors who merely help to digitalise the existing process.
- **Future-Proofing:** We assess whether the vendor seeks to optimise or replace a single, currently existing challenge of the political system or whether they have thought through a staggered approach to react to the wider availability of democracy-enhancing technology - and how this might impact their development roadmap.
- **Breadth of Vision:** While the bulk of the Remit Score for each vendor is calculated from the solution areas vendors have self-identified as being active in, vendors who were active in more areas received a higher score on Breadth of Vision.

## 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.
- **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).
- **Social Media Presence:** How active a vendor is on social media can directly impact how likely end users as well as customers are to engage with the product and is therefore a strong indicator of any vendor's ability to scale quickly. In assessing this criterion, we looked at social media presence (Shares, Follows, etc.) of the vendor's official account(s) on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.
- **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.
- **Unique Selling Points (USPs)** - USPs are a strong indicator of competitiveness as they increase the likelihood of winning market share if the USP is seen as desirable by the market.

## 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?
- Does the vendor take measures to protect login data (including passwords) against leaks or hackers (e.g. salting passwords, multi-factor authentication, etc.)?
- 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.)?
- 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?

## Combined Assessment

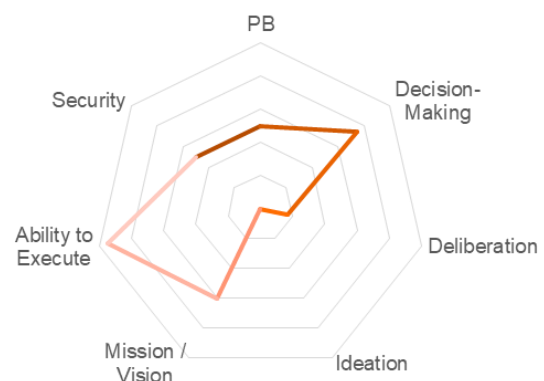
After scoring vendors on Functionality, Mission / Vision, Ability to Execute and Security, we then assign an overall Remit Score.

**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 Mission / Vision, Ability to Execute and Security.

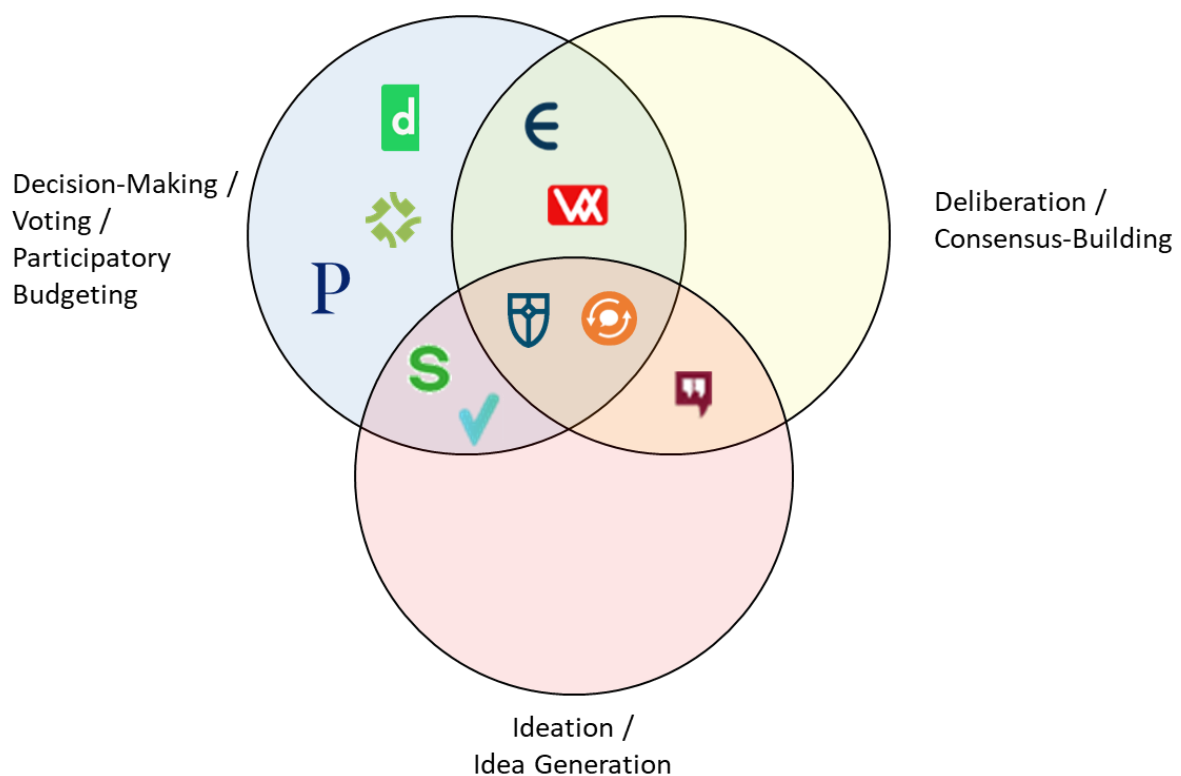
The assessment for each category is also displayed as a visual radar chart.





## Vendor Overview

The below Venn diagram represents each vendor's areas of strength. Vendors have been included in one or more of the three circles if they scored 50% or more of the available points for that category. In order to be included in the DM/Voting/PB circle, vendors have to have achieved 50% or more of the available points in either DM/Voting or Participatory Budgeting.



 =  Polco

 =  democracy.space

 =  citizenlab

 =  €THELO

 =  Civocracy

 =  novoville

 =  slido

 =  Discuto

 =  Polys

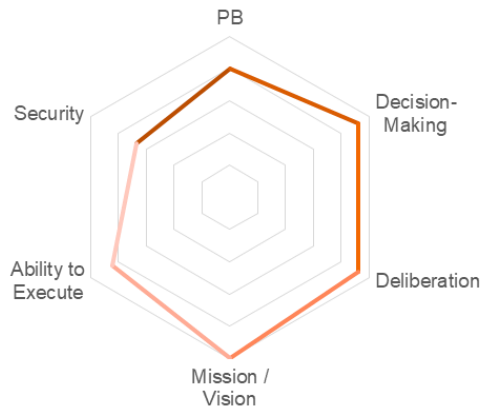
 =  VOXvote

## Ethelo Decisions

<http://www.ethelo.com>

Remit  
Score

86%



### Who should use this?

- Anyone who is serious about giving communities a transparent stake in decision-making
- Participatory budgeting projects
- Those with a complex decision to resolve



### Overview

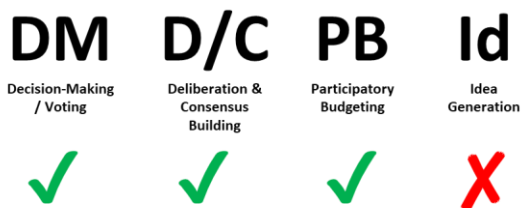
Founded	2011
CEO	John Richardson
Clients	150

Ethelo was founded in 2011 by Canadian mathematician John Richardson to facilitate complex decision-making processes that contain multiple, potentially interdependent, questions. By quickly calculating the potential vote combinations, Ethelo can provide organisers with

recommendations on which outcomes attract the most support, are most or least divisive, or fulfil other criteria (e.g. remain within a certain budget for a participatory budgeting exercise).

The technology was originally used during a referendum in the Canadian province of British Columbia and has since evolved to provide a complex decision engine to both public and private organisations.

### Scope of Offering



Ethelo offers a decision platform that clients can utilise to allow participants to vote on options which the Ethelo algorithm will combine into all the possible scenarios based on rules and constraints. Users vote on several options at a time and have the ability to weight their answers (e.g. a user may decide to give more weight to their answers on environmental aspects of a

decision at the expense of economic aspects or vice versa).

Ethelo then ranks these various scenarios by decision strength and consensus score.

As a consequence, Ethelo is particularly strong in informing organisations as to the most 'fair' outcome of a combined vote, i.e. those scenarios that attract a high level of consensus. As Ethelo allows administrators to add costs to every decision item and to insert constraints (e.g. preventing users from choosing a combination of decision items that would exceed a budget), Ethelo can also be used for participatory budgeting projects. Users can add comments and links to external resources, adding a deliberative aspect to the decision-making process.

## Mission / Vision

Ethelo wants “to empower people to solve society’s hardest problems using eDemocracy technology.” At the core of its philosophy is “the importance of fairness in the distribution of satisfaction as a precondition for strong social contracts.” While this may sound like a lofty goal, it does have a scientific basis in the concept of “inequity aversion”, or as Ethelo defines it, the concept that “people will (a) reject unfair outcomes even when they would otherwise benefit, and (b) support personally unsatisfactory outcomes because they perceive the process to have been fair.”

Ethelo sees this as an antidote to divisive and partisan electoral politics and believes that its software can help both public and private clients uncover areas of consensus (or at least less division) and ultimately make ‘fairer’ decisions.

## Ability to Execute

With approx. 150 customer implementations Ethelo is well established in the nascent democracy marketplace. Detailed client testimonials and impact evaluations of past projects speak to the traction of this product. Ethelo sells both through partners and directly to clients. It also maintains a not-for-profit arm, providing its licenses free of charge to community groups. With more than 7 years of experience in the market, Ethelo is well placed to expand. The company, however, has paid the price of focusing on nuts and bolts rather than PR, and lacks significant media and social media presence, with less than one thousand followers across Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. The lack of publicity could lead some to either underestimate or discount the product.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

Ethelo boasts strong USPs, including its ability to transparently display possible outcome scenarios for very complex decisions with multiple factors, as well as the ability to re-weight scenarios using demographic criteria such as age, gender, etc. of participants.

## Security

Ethelo offers multi-factor authentication options for sensitive accounts. Clients have a choice to use AWS Cloud Storage or a dedicated server in either Canada or the US. Ethelo is also working towards an Ethereum implementation of its solution which will utilise Blockchain.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

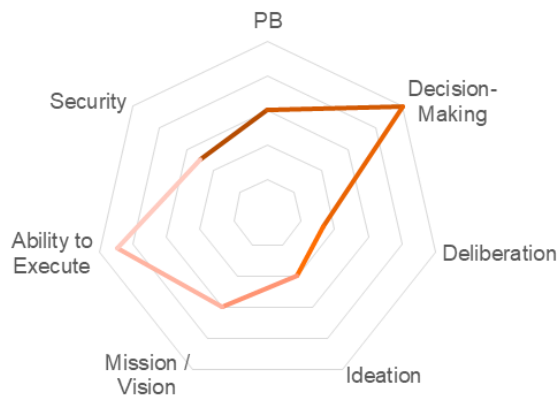
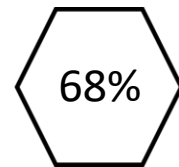
## Standout Features

- Fully transparent outcome scenarios for even the most complex decisions
- Allows users to weight their votes, making each outcome scenario more meaningful and more accurate in terms of actual voter preference

## Polco

<http://www.polco.us>

Remit  
Score



### Who should use this?

- Planners and politicians who want to gauge voter sentiment on straight-forward questions
- Politicians who want to ensure they are listening to registered voters



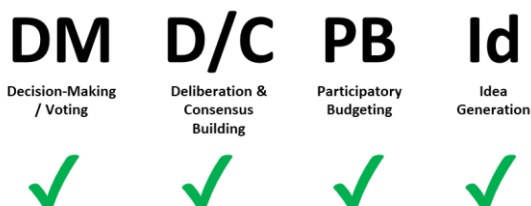
### Overview

Founded	2015
CEO	Nick Mastronardi
Clients	75

Polco started out as a US national vote tracking platform that allowed voters to see how their political representatives voted on bills and then compare this to the voters' own political preferences.

Since then Polco has evolved into a full-fledged civic engagement platform with particular focus on local government and community activation.

### Scope of Offering



Polco's platform allows decision-makers (e.g. city councils, town boards) to get input into political decisions from residents in their districts. Decisions are made up of questions and what Polco calls "background information": text, images, videos and links to documents that help to inform the voter.

Participants can answer questions posed as a simple yes/no or as multiple choice options. Organisers can access extensive analytics to understand voter sentiment. Of particular note is the ability to compare voter profiles against registered voter lists which allows Polco to display the geographic distribution of voter sentiment. This helps to surface the impact a decision could have on different subsets of a community.

While Polco does not have its own participatory budgeting software, communities can integrate Balancing Act's participatory budgeting tool which helps users understand the current distribution of funds and then allows them to give recommendations as to how they should be distributed in future.

Polco's freemium business model (some functionality is available at no cost to local communities) has fuelled a rapid expansion (Polco is used by over 400 communities across the United States). With its modern interface and fully mobile-enabled platform, Polco is well positioned for rapid adoption.

## Mission / Vision

Polco's mission is to "help organizational leaders and constituents seek and provide quality input on important items". The software seeks to do this by gathering input from as many people as possible (not just the most passionate and vocal) and by encouraging people to be civil and constructive in providing their input. The latter is achieved by requiring participants to vote first and only then allowing them to provide a comment on the matter at hand. By following this approach, Polco hopes to ensure that people have a say in the decisions that affect them.

Polco's method of tying discussions to actual votes, as well as strong commitment to protecting the privacy of those giving input, convincingly creates an incentive for voters to share their opinions, and makes it harder for elected officials to ignore them.

## Ability to Execute

Polco's expertise lies in data and this shows in the structure of the company. Not only does Polco employ a dedicated team of research analysts, it also boasts its own research institute, the National Research Centre (NRC), acquired in 2019. Owing to its freemium business model, Polco already has a wide reach, with over 400 cities using its free or paid services.

Polco's unique selling points, such as its ability to geo-map support levels for a certain decision, have helped it appeal to political decision-makers, culminating in a (self-reported) customer retention rate of 70%.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

## Security

Polco maintains a detailed privacy policy and its approach is designed to protect individually identifiable voter data from both its clients and third parties. Polco uses standard website encryption and gives its users control over third-party cookies and tracking. All Polco data is stored on AWS Cloud Storage.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Able to measure and visualise geographic distribution of voter sentiment, e.g. by electoral district
- Can compare user groups voting on the platform with publicly available voter lists or other lists provided by the client, creating politically actionable datasets for every decision

**Polys**<http://www.polys.me>**Remit  
Score****61%****Who should use this?**

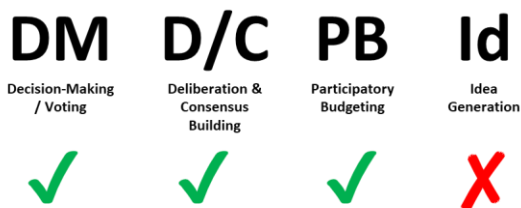
- Anyone wanting to get rid of paper ballots
- Simple participatory budgeting projects
- Those who want to set up a vote quickly and securely

**Overview**

Founded	2017 (part of Kaspersky)
CEO	Eugene Kaspersky
Clients	30 major + 100s of smaller projects

Polys was created by Kaspersky's internal Business Incubator Division to address concerns surrounding the security of online voting. As one of the world's leading online security companies, Kaspersky is well placed to tackle this challenge – and its embrace of Blockchain gives it the technology it needs to do so.

Polys has primarily been used for online votes at conferences and universities, as well as for a number of participatory budgeting projects with large numbers of participants. The Yabloko Party of Russia has also used Polys to select candidates during primaries.

**Scope of Offering**

The Polys platform allows organisers to quickly set up votes and supports single selection, multiple selection and ranked voting. Of particular note is Polys' ability to show the progress of an election (i.e. how many people have voted so far) in real-time while keeping the result secret until polling has ended. Polys can also issue individual, physical voting tokens for extra security.

The real magic happens behind the scenes however, where Polys uses a sophisticated implementation of the Ethereum 2.0 Blockchain technology to secure and distribute the voting ledger. Voting outcomes are only revealed once all observers (political parties, candidate representatives, etc.) have computationally validated that the voting ledger has not been modified and once the voting window has closed (so as to not influence voters who haven't voted yet). At the same time, every voter can validate that their vote has been correctly counted by logging into their Ethereum account which is automatically created when a user votes for the first time.

## Mission / Vision

Polys wants to transfer paper-based voting processes online, believing that there is a resurgent interest in democracy and citizen participation, but that this energy is kept at bay by doubts over the security of online voting. By providing a secure, Blockchain-enabled voting platform, Polys hopes to change this and digitalise the conventional process of selecting leaders or conducting a simple participatory budgeting exercise.

## Ability to Execute

Polys is fully funded and operated by Kaspersky Lab – an organisation of 4000 employees, and this shows in the professional set up of the Polys project team, complete with product management, development, sales and marketing teams. Polys has patented the technology which allows it to store voting data on the Blockchain while keeping individual votes secret (patented in Russia and patent pending in the US, Japan and China), and has published an extensive white paper detailing security.

Polys has a number of large success stories, including a PB project with over 80,000 participants and a university election where over 1,000 students completed the vote in less than 12 hours.

While the marketing is professional (case studies, website as well as an animated video explaining the software), Polys' social media presence is still limited with less than a thousand followers across major social media sites.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ☆

## Security

Security is where Polys is to the fore of many other vendors. Not only does it utilise industry-standard encryption and offer a full privacy policy, all voting data is directly stored on the Blockchain. While voting outcomes (and the number of voters) are public, the privacy of individual votes is protected by encryption.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Extremely simple interface, allowing anyone to set up decisions quickly and share the voting process (and outcomes) with an audience in real-time
- Maintains the secrecy of the vote while allowing voters to verify that their vote has not been manipulated

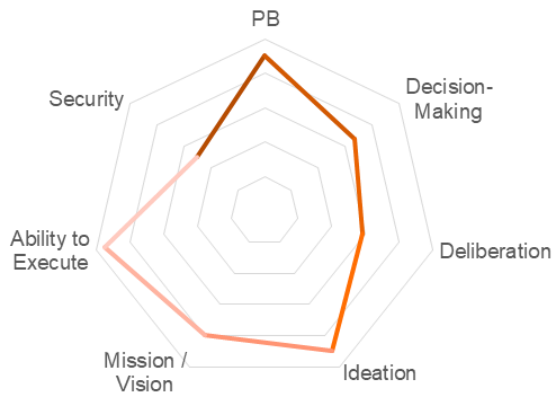


## CitizenLab

<http://www.citizenlab.co>

Remit  
Score

78%



### Who should use this?

- Clients who want to take advantage of a modular approach and roll out digital participation in phases
- Projects where a simple, highly visual interface for users is high priority



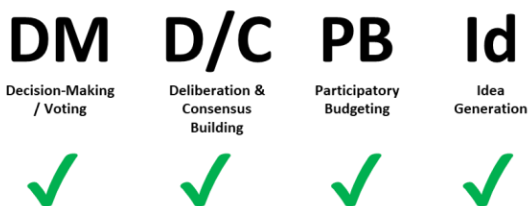
### Overview

Founded	2015
CEO	Wietse Van Ransbeeck
Clients	125

CitizenLab was founded in 2015 with a focus on digitalising public participation at local government level.

Since its inception, CitizenLab has worked with more than 120 clients across Europe and the Americas, with products and services ranging from Public Consultation to Participatory Budgeting and Ideation.

### Scope of Offering



CitizenLab provides a comprehensive Citizen Participation Platform that lets local authorities set the level of engagement, from passive (e.g. surveys and polls), to passive-active (ideation) to active (co-creation of policy). CitizenLab's unique timeline feature allows residents to understand where they are in the participation process while organisers receive a detailed breakdown of

decision data, including a geographical breakdown of voter preferences. Of particular note is CitizenLab's use of natural language processing which automatically groups ideas around key words and physical locations.

CitizenLab really shines when several modules are combined to create a 'tool box' for local decision-makers, allowing public officials to get a sense of fluctuations in public opinion as well as geographic differences in voter preferences. By sending frequent nudge emails, the software encourages officials to communicate the outcome of decisions to voters, creating a virtuous cycle of participation.



## Mission / Vision

CitizenLab's mission is to strengthen local democracies by improving the efficiency and legitimacy of local governments through citizen participation.

Though the main focus of CitizenLab's strategy is local government, its tools have been used by larger movements, e.g. a large national citizens' consultation in Chile in 2019, demonstrating that CitizenLab's technology has applications beyond just digitalising local representative democracy.

## Ability to Execute

With a sizeable headcount (it currently employs 20 people in its Brussels HQ), CitizenLab is well-established with a significant marketing presence: dozens of articles in high-profile publications, professional case studies and a state-of-the-art website that includes detailed information about its products as well as the processes of digital governance.

Having been named a "cool vendor in Smart City Applications" by Gartner in 2017 (among other awards), CitizenLab maintains an extensive network and social media presence with approx. 15,000 followers across major social networks.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

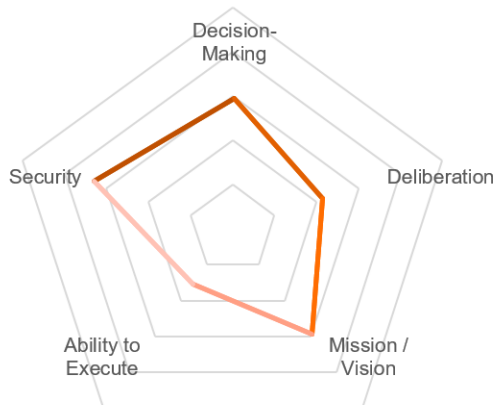
## Security

CitizenLab's platform uses standard https encryption and users can either create an account on the platform or authenticate via Twitter, Facebook or Google. Passwords are hashed and user data is stored on AWS servers.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Timeline feature allows administrators and voters alike to stay up-to-date on the progress of the participation process
- Toolbox approach is flexible to local authorities' needs
- User interface is simple and intuitive – designed with the end-user in mind

**democracy.space**<http://www.democracy.space>**Remit  
Score****46%****Who should use this?**

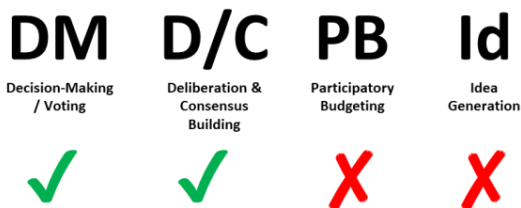
- Political candidates committed to enacting the expressed will of their constituents
- Groups who want to use the Petition feature to build awareness and pressure on political issues

**Overview**

Founded	2016
CEO	David Ernst
Clients	10

democracy.space, formerly known as United.vote and Liquid.us, is a US-centric implementation of the Liquid Democracy approach, in which voters can choose to either directly vote on a given measure or to delegate their vote to someone they consider more knowledgeable in that area. Though similar to

tools like LiquidFeedback used by a number of Pirate Parties around the world, democracy.space is a stand-alone application that also includes cryptographic protection of voter information using Blockchain.

**Scope of Offering**

democracy.space provides a simple interface to vote for or against a motion – currently these are primarily bills introduced to the U.S. Congress which are uploaded to the website. Users can add comments to justify their vote and provide information for undecided voters. Users can decide to remain anonymous or publicly reveal their identity as part of the voting process.

democracy.space also allows users to initiate petitions which other users can sign and comment on.

democracy.space's strength lies in its approach to protect individual votes while making it possible for voters to confirm that their vote hasn't been altered. This is achieved by calculating a unique hash from a user registration ID, a unique email and a passphrase. In its current implementation using U.S. Congress data, democracy.space also provides an overview of how elected representatives actually voted and allows users to contrast this with the input derived from voters.

## Mission / Vision

democracy.space's ultimate goal is a "system that improves education and debate around issues, ensures the political process enacts the will of the people and upends the dominance of money and partisanship in politics".

Founder David Ernst has also been gathering a network of candidates to run on his Liquid Democracy platform in Senate and even presidential elections. If elected to office, these candidates have pledged to let voters steer the candidate's vote on every issue.

## Ability to Execute

For a relatively small company (currently a three person team), democracy.space has attracted a lot of interest, not least by the half dozen candidates actively using the software in their electoral races. While the software still lacks some of the functionality of other product suites, the simplicity of the setup and the ability for political campaigns to quickly integrate the system into their website has the potential to spread quickly.

To do that, democracy.space requires exposure (apart from a limited Youtube channel the organisation does very little marketing), but even one of their candidates winning a seat could change this overnight.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★☆☆
<b>Case Studies</b>	☆☆☆
<b>Experience</b>	★★★☆☆
<b>Workforce</b>	☆☆☆☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★★
<b>Social Media</b>	☆☆☆☆
<b>USPs</b>	★★

## Security

democracy.space uses standard https encryption. The software allows users to create an account without a password, instead assigning single-use sign on codes for every session. It also collects additional identifying information (such as address and phone number) to verify eligibility to vote in a certain district. The public facing website is hosted in the US.

democracy.space uses Blockchain to store voting records.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒🔒

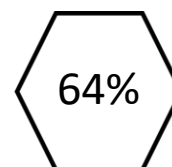
## Standout Features

- Simple layout and intuitive setup
- Website widget which allows candidates to integrate Liquid Democracy into their campaign

## Civocracy

<http://www.civocracy.org>

Remit  
Score



### Who should use this?

- Clients who want to streamline public consultation processes and improve responsiveness
- Clients who could benefit from a wraparound consultation and implementation service

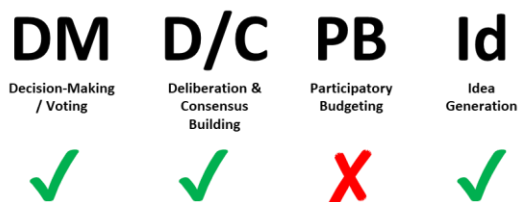


### Overview

Founded	2015
CEO	Chloé Pahud
Clients	11

Civocracy, headquartered in Germany but also active in the Netherlands, Belgium and France, provides digitalisation tools for the public sector. It is primarily used by local governments to consult residents about planned projects and invite suggestions for local policy improvement.

### Scope of Offering



Civocracy's platform is structured like a social network: Organisers can upload information (text, images and video) and add surveys and discussions. Users can follow discussions, comment and like contributions from others. Comments that garner the most likes are then highlighted to organisers.

Throughout the discussion users can see whether the organiser has read or responded to their contribution, which helps to drive accountability.

The analytics dashboard allows organisers to understand the level of participation as well as sentiment, thanks to Civocracy's natural language processing engine.

## Mission / Vision

Civocracy's mission is to "improve governance structures through the use of digital citizen participation". Pragmatism is at the core of Civocracy's strategy which focuses on actual, measurable implementation of ideas rather than just attracting a lot of engagement without action. To this end, Civocracy places a lot of emphasis on ensuring that contributions from users are followed up, for example, by generating email notifications to organisers when a new suggestion has been submitted and by including extensive consultancy as part of their services to educate local decision-makers on how to maximise citizen engagement and integrate their feedback into the process.

## Ability to Execute

Despite a relatively small team (currently less than 10 employees) Civocracy has built strong engagement in the projects they are currently involved in. This is in no small part due to how seriously their customers take citizen participation, with evidence of consistent two-way communication between citizens and local government over the participation channels Civocracy has built for its clients. Civocracy's case studies confirm this sentiment with plenty of glowing references from customers.

With a little over 2000 followers across various social media sites, Civocracy is in a good position to expand its brand.

Civocracy's focus on sustainable engagement (and measurable action) is a strong indicator of customer stickiness – and a promising sign of future referral business.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

## Security

Civocracy uses standard https encryption. The extensive privacy policy clearly states which data is public and how data is stored (on AWS servers in Europe) and protected (e.g. passwords are encrypted). If a user decides to delete their account, all of their activity on the platform becomes anonymous, preserving privacy while at the same time safe-guarding the context of previous decisions.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

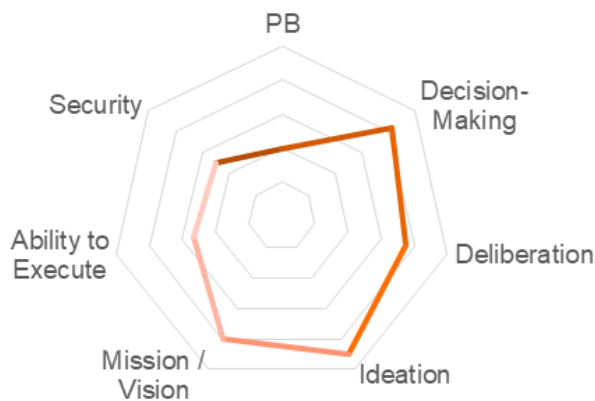
- Full life cycle implementation and consulting services – ensuring that organisers are thoroughly trained in how to get the most out of citizen engagement
- Generates notifications to organisers every time a user submits a contribution, helping to nudge them to engage actively in the process

## Discuto

<http://www.discuto.io>

**Remit  
Score**

66%



### Who should use this?

- Clients needing to create an end-to-end process, from ideation to decision
- Projects that involve a highly technical discussion where the devil is in the detail



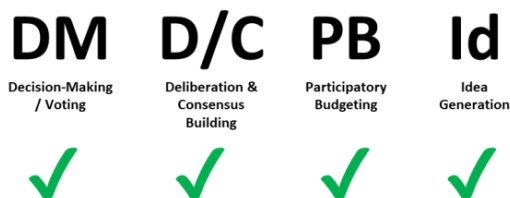
### Overview

Founded	2013
CEO	Hannes Leo
Clients	20,000 users

Discuto allows its clients to utilise a policy-centric decision-making process that allows participants to create and co-design policy documents. This is particularly facilitated via a system of up/down voting aspects or sections of a document. The Austrian company has an impressive list of

customers, including the European Union, the German Bundestag and the Ukrainian Government, alongside private clients such as Telekom Austria.

### Scope of Offering



The Discuto Ideation & Discussion platform allows users to co-create and co-discuss ideas, whether on the basis of an existing document or from scratch. Uploaded documents such as MS word files are automatically split into paragraphs with each paragraph becoming a discussion where users can suggest changes, add new content or comment and upvote/downvote others' content and comments.

Alternatively, users can start an ideation process from scratch and then allow other users to comment and vote on their ideas. In both cases, a gamification badge system encourages users to interact with the process and contribute their ideas. During and following the discussion process, organisers get a breakdown of popular comments, particularly divisive paragraphs or those attracting consensus, as well as engagement levels. Polls can be set up while a discussion is ongoing to resolve challenging areas by getting more users to chime in. Administrators can also use the system to send nudge emails to users to increase participation.

## Mission / Vision

Discuto's mission is to "facilitate crowd based deliberations that help to insource knowledge for better and more inclusive decisions."

Discuto aims to make collaboration more manageable by breaking down policy documents into small, individual discussions. In addition, by analysing votes and comments on all sections of a draft, Discuto wants to focus collaboration on divisive or complex aspects of a document while accelerating sign-off on sections with strong consensus levels.

## Ability to Execute

Discuto's small team (three developers and one "marketeer" in addition to the two founders) belies a wealth of experience in both academia and business which doubtlessly helped in securing their already impressive customer list.

Discuto has had very little activity on both traditional and social media channels, but has been able to be quite successful without it. In doing so, it has been able to differentiate itself from widely available collaboration tools (such as GSuite) which lack some of Discuto's functionality.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ★
<b>Social Media</b>	☆ ☆ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ☆

## Security

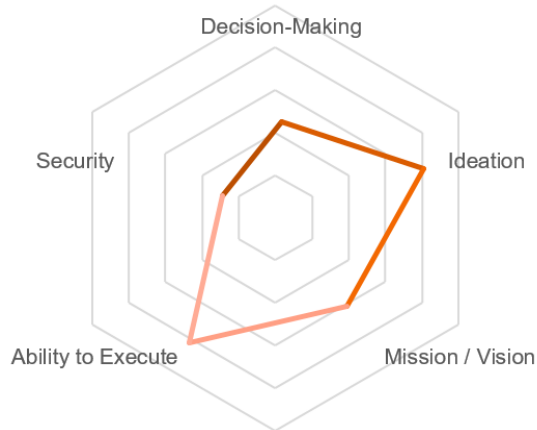
All of Discuto's data is stored on German servers (hetzner.com) and Discuto maintains a detailed privacy policy outlining the security and backup arrangements with their hosting provider, as well as the rights of users to request deletion of their data.

All stored data is encrypted and communication with the server uses https encryption.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Can adjust to provide the right tool for the right phase in the co-designing process: Ideation to start the process, Discussion to interactively co-create a document and Polling to resolve divisive points or impasses in the process
- Allows for very granular and detailed collaboration on policy documents by splitting documents into paragraphs for discussion and decision

**Novoville**<http://www.novoville.com>**Remit  
Score****67%****Who should use this?**

- Local Authorities that want to automate and streamline repetitive tasks – for citizens and civil servants
- Organisations looking to increase engagement and still get a measurable ROI

**Overview**

Founded	2016
CEO	Fotis Talantzis
Clients	50

Originally founded in Greece, Novoville has now set up its headquarters in London, where its team helps local authorities throughout Europe accelerate and simplify local community tasks, such as logging local issues (think potholes), managing parking tickets (and parking enforcement) and organising online

citizen consultations. With AI chat bots and clever integration of existing technologies, Novoville has carved out a niche by focussing on the day-to-day of local government – while still harbouring grander ambitions.

**Scope of Offering**

The Novoville suite of products consists of four distinct solutions:

The e-Frontdesk which allows citizens to report local issues (e.g. broken street signs, fly-tipping, etc.) as well as manage local permits (e.g. marriage licenses); the Consult & Communicate tool which allows communities to advertise consultations across several

social media channels (powered by Novoville's AI Chat Bot, which works off scripts to automatically poll users); the Payments App which lets cities collect fees and fines; and finally the Smart Parking solution which helps citizens find (and pay for) parking spots while giving traffic wardens a mobile app to check for and fine parking violations.

All products come with an interactive dashboard (and can be integrated into the same dashboard) to provide a real-time tracking solution for anything happening in the local community.



## Mission / Vision

Novoville’s mission is to “rebuild trust between people and government while saving government precious resources.” Its products and services certainly do this (by automating and optimising the various touchpoints between citizens and city administrators), but are currently limited to the local level which Novoville sees as the “front-end” for politics, i.e. where most people feel the impact of politics on their lives.

## Ability to Execute

Despite only a dozen current employees, Novoville has been able to expand from its original Greek base to London and has also delivered projects for over 50 local authorities. Focussing on digitalising existing local authority processes has given Novoville a key advantage: Measureable comparative data points (e.g. 35 % reduction in call centre volume) that Novoville uses effectively in marketing its products.

With ca. 4000 followers on Facebook, >1000 on Twitter and some exposure on YouTube, Novoville has made significant inroads for the awareness of its brand. It is also increasing its stature within the start-up community, having won a number of awards over the past three years (e.g. National Democracy Week’s Collaboration of the Year Award for 2018).

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ☆
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

## Security

Novoville maintains a standard security and privacy policy and encrypts communication with their service using standard SSL (https). Novoville uses Microsoft Azure for Cloud Storage.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Modular system allows local authorities to only purchase the parts they need while allowing them to add functionality in the future without compatibility issues
- Measurable impact: Thanks to its analytics dashboard and pre-existing comparative data, Novoville can prove the impact of its products quickly

## VoxVote

<http://www.voxvote.com>

Remit  
Score

52%



### Who should use this?

- Anyone looking for a sophisticated software with wide functionality for live audience interaction



### Overview

Founded	2013
CEO	Vincent van Witteloostuyn
Clients	>80,000 users

Founded in 2013, VoxVote is the creation of Dutch data scientist Vincent van Witteloostuyn. It aims to replace the need for clickers and similar physical voting devices during audience participation at conferences. Drawing on his background in market research and data analytics, van Witteloostuyn and

his small team have turned VoxVote into a highly customisable tool to get actionable audience feedback.

### Scope of Offering

<b>DM</b>	<b>D/C</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>Id</b>
Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus Building	Participatory Budgeting	Idea Generation
✓	✓	✗	✗

VoxVote is a straightforward product that allows presenters to pose questions onstage which the audience can answer by either going to a website or by using an app on their mobile phones. The presenter can then display the outcomes on screen, along with customisable text and images. Its look and feel is designed to mimic a Powerpoint presentation which allows

presenters to seamlessly move in and out of their presentation to ask questions.

However, beyond the simple façade, VoxVote is a sophisticated survey product, allowing presenters to utilise simple and multiple choice questions, scored ranking, weighted averages, word clouds and free text questions. In addition, the software can merge results from several questions (called “crossing” by VoxVote). Its mobile app also allows audience members to ask private questions to the presenter which can then be clarified as part of the presentation.

Owing to the range of question methods (and its freemium business model), VoxVote is particularly popular with academic institutions and maintains a list of over 2,000 educational institutions which can use the software free of charge.

## Mission / Vision

VoxVote's mission is to "allow any vote anywhere" and to replace voting hardware (such as clickers). VoxVote at times feels like a hobby project or 'pursuit of passion' rather than a commercial company – its website is informal and there is a lack of formal marketing and business development. Despite this, over 8 million users have used the platform for voting to date.

## Ability to Execute

With a strong (and, judging by online reviews, satisfied) user base, and functionality to outpace many commercial vendors of audience engagement software, VoxVote should be strongly positioned to grow its market share.

Its small team of six employees includes a Customer Success Manager, but no outbound sales or marketing team, making it dependent on its freemium business model (and word of mouth) to win over new customers. Its social media presence is limited, with only a few hundred followers across the major social networks.

Still, with the right focus, and investment in sales & marketing, VoxVote could be a serious contender in the audience engagement and deliberation space.

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ☆ ☆
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ☆
<b>Social Media</b>	☆ ☆ ☆
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

## Security

VoxVote maintains an extensive security and privacy policy, encrypts communication with their service using standard SSL (https) and salts passwords stored on the platform. VoxVote uses Microsoft Azure for Cloud Storage on European servers.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

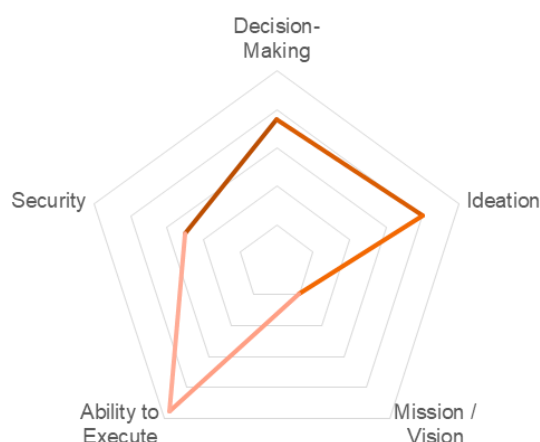
- Free for educational institutions and maintains a list of over 2,000 of them, automatically opting in new users with a matching email address to their free service
- 'Crossing' feature that can combine answers from multiple questions into insights in real-time during a presentation

## Slido

<http://www.sli.do>

Remit  
Score

75%



### Who should use this?

- Organisations that want to enhance face-to-face participation and gain fixed data points (e.g. poll results) that can structure and focus a conversation



### Overview

Founded	2012
CEO	Peter Komorník
Clients	Undisclosed (used at over 320,000 events)

Slido is an audience engagement platform that allows organisers to pose questions, polls and quizzes to participants. Headquartered in Slovakia, Slido now has offices in the UK and the US and has been used at over 320,000 events with nearly 25 million poll votes submitted using the system. Slido has been used in over 120 countries and counts

companies like Lufthansa, Spotify and Oracle among its clients.

### Scope of Offering



Slido offers its customers multiple ways to engage with their audience: Questions (where the audience can ask and vote on existing questions – with the ability for a moderator to select a subset to display on stage); Surveys & Polls (which can be single choice, multiple choice, open text, word cloud or star rating); Quizzes (which can be used with automatic timers); and Ideas (which let

participants start from a blank canvas and add ideas, comments and vote on other ideas).

For all engagement types, results update in real time on the screen, nudging other participants to engage and creating a gamification feel to the experience.

Slido comes with full integration with Slack and Google Slides and even offers a Switcher app which allows organisers to seamlessly switch between PowerPoint and Slido. The comprehensive analytics tool lets organisers understand the most popular questions, identify influencers in the audience and share data with the audience using infographics.

## Mission / Vision

Slido's mission is "to transform how meetings and events are run around the world". For a software solution primarily designed for the corporate world, Slido certainly offers increased participation for employees and conference attendees and some of the features (e.g. the ability to comment or submit ideas anonymously) strengthen an honest exchange of information. Slido's focus remains on the employer side, allowing companies to partially choreograph participation by filtering the information the audience can see. All of this makes sense from a commercial point of view, but underlines that Slido is more engaged in corporate evolution than political participation per se despite significant crossover functionality (e.g. in facilitating discussion and handling information flows) that could be applied in more public contexts.

## Ability to Execute

Slido has successfully established itself as a leader in the audience engagement space, with numerous corporations and major events (e.g. the WebSummit) relying on its technology for attendee engagement. With a workforce of over 140 employees, Slido is well positioned to continue to dominate this niche. Slido's integration with other industry-leading applications (e.g. Slack and GSuite) makes it an attractive proposition for corporate clients already using these products.

Slido has a substantial media presence with over 32,000 followers across social media. It has received numerous awards inside the tech and conference industry (e.g. the 2018 Deloitte Technology Fast 50 Laureate).

<b>Active Customers</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Case Studies</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Experience</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Workforce</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>Sales Channels</b>	★ ☆
<b>Social Media</b>	★ ★ ★
<b>USPs</b>	★ ★

## Security

Slido uses 256-bit encryption for storage and data transfer and offers integration with multiple Single-Sign-On solutions (Google OAuth, OneLogin, etc.). All data is hosted on AWS servers in Ireland.

<b>Encryption</b>	🔒
<b>User Data</b>	🔒
<b>Storage</b>	🔒 🔒
<b>Blockchain</b>	🔒 🔒

## Standout Features

- Switcher app that allows organisers to seamlessly transition between PowerPoint and Slido
- Real-time audience updates to create an interactive experience for audiences

## Solutions in Progress

The following vendors either do not have a publicly available product, or are still at the beta phase of product rollout with a limited number of clients. We are showcasing them below to help them gain awareness and may include them in future reports once they have a fully developed and publicly available version of their product.



NewVote is an Australian Institute and app developer focussed on issue-based voting. The app, which is currently being tested by the University of Queensland and which has been used at the Woodfordia Festival, will allow users to vote on issues, leave comments and upload external information for and against proposals. NewVote's institute arm researches different forms of deliberative and direct democracy and works with several international democracy organisations such as Democracy International and Designing Open Democracy.

<http://www.newvote.org>



Flux is technically an Australian political party that, however, self-describes as “more a celebration of democracy than a party”. Flux will allow Australian citizens to elect what Flux calls “Proxy-Senators” who, without regard to their own personal political opinion, would vote in line with the expressed will of the party members, of which Flux has just shy of 9000 at the moment. The idea is for members to use the Flux app to vote on every bill coming before the Senate – and for the Flux Senator to then vote in line with the majority.

<http://www.voteflux.org>

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