

Solonian Democracy Institute



2022

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.**

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Introduction

This report, now in its third year, tracks the development of digital democracy technologies and seeks 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. The goal is to provide a repository for policy makers, NGOs and academics, as well as for the democracy software industry itself. This year, we have evaluated 28 eDemocracy tools from 17 countries.

Since the publication of the first edition of this report in early 2020 we have seen a rapid expansion in the adoption of digital technology for civic purposes, both in terms of the number of people using digital democracy in their daily lives and in terms of digital participation becoming anchored in long-term official processes. The impact that digital democracy tools can offer citizens is becoming ever more apparent, and developers continue to make great strides in improving both the security and versatility of their solutions. This year we particularly saw the adoption and integration of video functionality into many tools, reflecting its wider usage in online communication. Several tools also added participatory budgeting features, again reflecting increased interest in this area.

Compared to previous years, we were able to increase our security expectations and to conduct more interviews with the civil servants, companies and citizens who have used eDemocracy tools. The feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive with many of those we spoke to being surprised at how easy it was to adopt eDemocracy. Many people also reported increased engagement, both in terms of quantity and quality, as well as significant cost-savings.

The challenges we foresee for eDemocracy in the future are thus not directly related to these tools. Nonetheless, these hurdles are considerable. One challenge is that the extreme partisanship in some social strata has led to an intense focus on the outcomes rather than the process of democracy. This can result in constraints and preconditions being set on participation, destroying the legitimacy of results. A second challenge is presented by large private foundations which have recently begun to funnel large sums of money into ‘democracy’-related activities. Such organizations, regrettably, often follow explicitly partisan goals that seek to subvert equality-based democracy. Yet a third challenge stems from governments who, in light of the increasingly tense geopolitical situation, may seek to use digital tools to legitimize their own foreign policy goals or, conversely, discredit the ends of their alleged enemies. Digital democracy, if it is to succeed, will need to withstand all of these intense pressures.

For these reasons, this report is rigorous and demanding. In selecting vendors, we focus exclusively on solutions with solid development and a proven track record of implementation success, rather than listing every gadget on the market. While we have provided an overall score for each vendor, each use case is different, so by outlining the strengths of every solution across multiple categories, we are hopeful that you will find the right one for you, 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 a voluntary organisation 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

New in this Edition

Once again, we have been able to substantially increase the number of tools we assess. Despite our rigorous criteria for inclusion, this number now stands at close to 30 tools, with a particular uptick in applications from the United States, France, Italy and Israel. We also included, for the first time, several tools specifically focused on deliberation.

In addition to this quantitative improvement, we were also able to increase the depth and quality of our assessment. In particular, we were able to add substantially to our stock of reference interviews. These include interviews with both end users (citizens/participants) as well as clients (e.g. civil servants, politicians). These interviews were extremely insightful and provided us with a much more complete idea of the many creative ways that these tools are being used in the field, and the impact that they are having.

We also took the opportunity to refine our assessment criteria based on what we have learned over the past several years. In particular, we ceased assessing each vendor's social media presence. Based on past performance, we no longer believe that a substantial social media presence is an important factor in a vendor's ability to execute. We also altered our workforce criterium to better reflect the fact that eDemocracy providers, being highly efficient, generally do not need as large a workforce as we had initially believed.

Furthermore, we increased the weight given to security in this report compared to previous years, and introduced an option for vendors to submit proof of compliance with ISO certification.

For the security section, we are very grateful to well-known ISO Auditor Anish Rao and Cyber Security Consultant Mohammed Adel who kindly donated their time to develop a Security Preparedness Questionnaire of 36 questions to help us assess a vendor's level of security across eight different areas. While this already has given us some insights, we plan to expand on this section even further in future reports, particularly where a platform is used to vote on policy.

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:

PB	DM	D/C	Id	PC	TA
Participatory Budgeting	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus Building	Idea Generation	Public Consultation	Government Task Automation
					

In the above example, the vendor does not claim to provide ideation or public consultation functionality, nor are they active in the area of government task automation, meaning that their Remit Score (see below for definition) is not affected by lack of functionality in these areas.

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

Participatory Budgeting	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus-Building	Ideation	Public Consultation	Government Task Automation
Does the software allow users to see what the projected cost of a decision item is?	Are users voting on a scale?	Does the software show distribution of votes?	Does the software allow users to contribute ideas?	Are the results of the consultation process public?	Ease of use for end users to navigate and use the software
Does the software allow users to see how much of the budget remains to be distributed after every decision?	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)?	Who decides which ideas go forward to a vote?	Ease of use for end users to navigate and make a submission	How efficiently does the software manage task assignment?
Does the software allow for logical constraints, i.e. prevent users from selecting two or more contradictory options?	Are users able to see the average vote and is voting transparent to the user?	Can users comment on decisions?	How does the software handle a large amount of ideas?	Is additional information easily accessible?	Can the privacy of information (financial, movements, etc.) be guaranteed?
Ease of configuring and setting up a participatory budgeting process in the software	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 setting up ideation process	Does the solution allow the client to easily organize submissions (e.g. thematically)?	How simple is it for the client to use the solution?
Ease of use for end users navigating the software and selecting PB options	Ease of use for end users navigating the software and voting / commenting on decision items	Can users paste links to external resources / websites?	Ease of use for end users to submit ideas into the process		How easy is it to update the system as circumstances change and customize to the client's needs
	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:

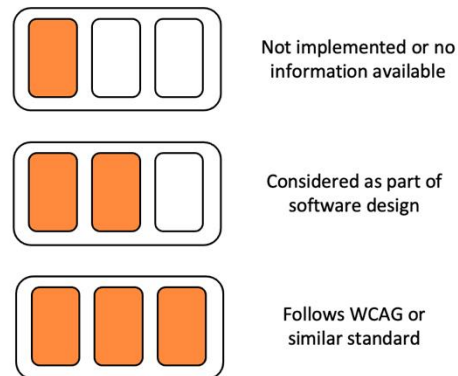
- **Number of active customers:** A greater number of active customers generates more revenue as well as increased feedback from users, which in turn can be used to improve the product.
- **Concurrent Users:** Assesses the number of users that can use the platform simultaneously and thus the ability 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).
- **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.
- **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.

The Ability to Execute section also includes two additional components, Accessibility and Customer References.

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.

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.



Accessibility Scoring Outcomes

Customer References:

We asked vendors to nominate up to two 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:

- Expectation Setting** ★★★★★
- Advice & Guidance** ★★★★★
- Project Success** ★★★★★
- Customer Service** ★★★★★
- Feedback Loop** ★★★★★
- Recommendation** ★★★★★

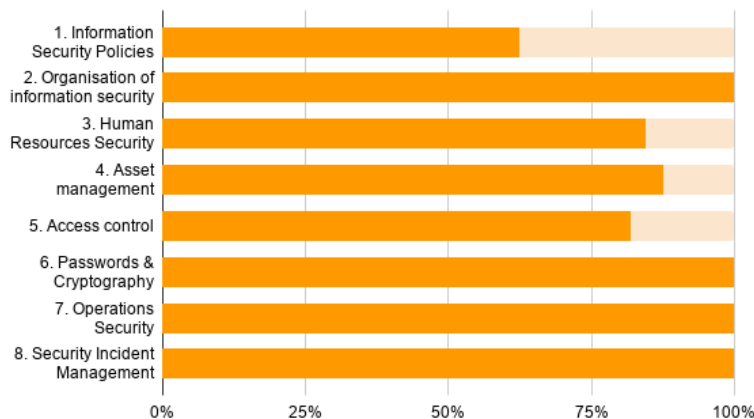
Assessment Area	Question	Answer Options
Expectation Setting	Did you feel that the vendor understood what you wanted to achieve?	Not at all / Somewhat / Mostly / Fully
	Did the vendor discuss any measurable KPIs or metrics with you (i.e. what good looks like)?	No / Somewhat / Yes
Advice & Guidance	Did the vendor convince you to change your original goal in any way, e.g. make you consider aspects you hadn't originally envisioned?	Original Goal / Suggested Changes (but not agreed) / Suggested Changes (agreed)
Project Success	Were you able to meet your goal?	No / Partially / Yes
Customer Service	How satisfied were you with the customer service - prior to sign-off?	Dissatisfied / Somewhat Satisfied / Fully Satisfied
	How satisfied were you with the customer service - during the project?	Dissatisfied / Somewhat Satisfied / Fully Satisfied
Feedback Loop	Did the vendor ask for feedback following the project?	No / Yes / Yes, and they responded to feedback
Recommendation	Would you recommend this vendor to other clients?	No / Depends on the circumstances / Yes

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?

Starting in 2021, we have collaborated with ISO Auditor Anish Rao and Cyber Security Consultant Mohammed Adel to develop a Security Preparedness Questionnaire of 36 questions to assess a vendor’s level of security across eight different areas. Given the importance of security management for the sustainability of digital democracy, we will continue to develop this assessment, as well as independent security testing, in future editions of this report.



Sample Security Assessment Score Graph

Overall Security Assessment Score

91%

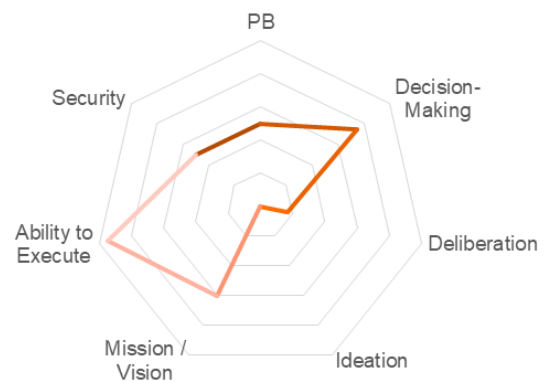
E. Combined Assessment

After scoring vendors on Functionality, Mission / Vision, 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 Mission / Vision, Ability to Execute and Security.

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



It should be noted that owing to our rigorous assessment of the various functionality areas and our decision to measure vendors against an ideal state, no vendor has achieved a perfect score. Receiving a low to medium score even across multiple areas should therefore not detract from the already robust functionality and abilities of these vendors, many of which are implemented in major projects across the world. Where we felt that a vendor did not have the necessary functionality or maturity to be used in a professional context, we have instead not included them in the report.

Vendor Overview

Vendor	Participatory Budgeting	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation / Consensus - Building	Ideation	Public Consultation	Government Task Automation
CitizenLab	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Citizens Foundation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Civil Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Civocracy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Delib	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
democracy.space	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Discuto	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Electis	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Ethelo	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Every Voice Engaged	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
FirstRoot	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
MyVoice (ManaBalss)	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Novoville	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
PlaceSpeak	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Polco	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
politik-digital e.V.	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Polys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Rahvaalgatus	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Rousseau	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
SkyVote	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Slido	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
VoxVote	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗

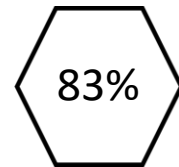
The above table lists all fully analysed vendors alphabetically, regardless of the number of functionality areas they support.

In contrast, the vendor reports (pages 11 to 68) are sorted from generalist (supporting more functionality areas) to specialist (supporting fewer functionality areas), whereby vendors with the same number of supported functionality areas are listed alphabetically.

CitizenLab

<http://www.citizenlab.co>

Remit Score



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 a high priority



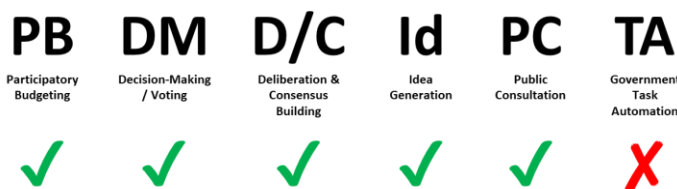
Overview

Founded	2015
CEO	Wietse Van Ransbeeck
Clients	300

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

Since its inception, CitizenLab has worked with 300 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 and participatory budgeting).

CitizenLab’s 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.

CitizenLab has continued to innovate over the past two years, adding an events page (to combine online and offline engagement), a geographical ideation feature (which allows residents to create ideas on a map) and improved analytics. CitizenLab has also integrated a video option into every phase of their engagement tools, allowing citizens to break into small groups to discuss ideas in more detail and then share their outcomes with all other participants.

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 50 people, most of whom are based in Europe), 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.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★★
Sales Channels	★★☆
USPs	★★

Security

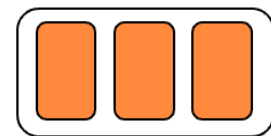
CitizenLab’s platform uses standard https encryption and users can either create an account on the platform or authenticate via Twitter, Facebook or Google. Passwords are hashed and user data is stored on AWS servers.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

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
- Video breakout functionality allowing for peer-to-peer engagement of participants

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

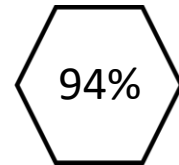
Client Feedback

CitizenLab received very positive feedback across all aspects of the customer lifecycle. Of particular note was CitizenLab's product feedback cycle which involved regular surveys and detailed, proactive communication on any product changes, as well as the overall advice and guidance to clients throughout the implementation. Constructive, albeit minor, feedback was received in the area of expectation setting and the administrator experience.

Expectation Setting	★ ★ ★
Advice & Guidance	★ ★ ★
Project Success	★ ★ ★
Customer Service	★ ★ ★
Feedback Loop	★ ★ ★
Recommendation	★ ★ ★

Citizens Foundation
<https://www.citizens.is>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Organisations that frequently run public consultations
- Government organisations that want to increase the transparency of their budgeting process



Overview

Founded	2008
CEO	Robert Bjarnason
Clients	100

Citizens Foundation was created in 2008 as a non-profit civic tech organisation to involve citizens more closely in decision-making following the 2007/2008 global financial crisis. Its open-source suite of products is now used by over 100 clients across 25 countries.

Scope of Offering

PB Participatory Budgeting ✓	DM Decision-Making / Voting ✓	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building ✓	Id Idea Generation ✓	PC Public Consultation ✓	TA Government Task Automation ✗
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Citizens Foundation's two main products, *Your Priorities* (ideation, deliberation & public consultation) and *Open Active Voting* (participatory budgeting) are often used in combination. In the first step, using *Your Priorities*, participants can add

written ideas or upload videos (automatically transcribed using a Google API) supporting a certain action (e.g. upgrading a public park). They can then add comments in support or against any of the uploaded ideas, which are neatly displayed in two columns for easier analysis by participants and organisers. In addition, a sophisticated algorithm groups thematically similar comments, allowing organisers to identify common feedback patterns. In addition to commenting, users can click to 'like' ideas.

These 'likes' are then used by organisers in a second step to select some of the ideas for a subsequent participatory budgeting (PB) exercise conducted using the *Open Active Voting* module. For each idea included in the PB exercise, participants can see the estimated cost, a detailed description, and the Pros & Cons table with comments carried over from the initial ideation. Participants can add projects to their budget and a bar-chart at the top (made up of the images representing each idea) automatically adds up the selected proposals and lets users see how much budget is remaining. Once they have completed their selection, participants can add a star to one of their selected proposals which the software interprets as a double-vote for that idea.

Mission / Vision

Citizens Foundation wants to "connect government and citizens". Its founders are concerned that some technology has "undermined our faith in debate in the public arena" and that technological innovation should be what restores it. Citizens Foundation is committed to solutions based on open-source technology, decentralisation and publicly operated servers.

Ability to Execute

Citizens Foundation's open-source solutions are used by clients from Australia to Scotland, often in high-impact projects such as policy crowd-sourcing for the NHS in the UK or Participatory Budgeting in Croatia. It has also worked with the World Bank on projects in Kosovo and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Citizens Foundation maintains a database of dozens of case studies and its activities in Iceland have attracted sustained media attention.

Add to this its recent foray into gamification (teaching students about constitutional design using a game called Make Your Constitution), and Citizens Foundation has a compelling offering for communities around the world seeking to engage their constituents.

Active Customers	★ ★ ★
Case Studies	★ ★ ★
Experience	★ ★ ★
Workforce	☆ ☆ ☆
Sales Channels	★ ★
USPs	★ ★

Security

Citizens Foundation uses standard SSL encryption and gives its users the choice to host the platform on a dedicated local server or on AWS data centres in either Europe or the US. User data is protected and Citizens Foundation is fully GDPR compliant.

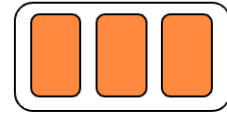
Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

ISO 27001
Certified

Standout Features

- Uses open APIs to provide real-time translation, transcription of videos and for detection of abusive language, e.g. profanity
- During a PB exercise a progress bar made up of images of the selected projects clearly indicates to users how much budget is remaining

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

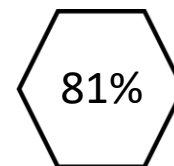
Citizens Foundation received overwhelmingly positive feedback from its clients in a number of areas, including for the ability to engage with citizens in a more flexible, spontaneous manner, its accurate anti-toxicity functionality, as well as the ability to quickly prioritize citizen requests. Users noted the higher levels of engagement they were able to achieve using Citizens Foundation, and that on some occasions ideas generated by citizens (and which authorities had previously been unaware of) were implemented. Suggestions for improvement centered around increasing functionality to make engagement between government administrators and citizens even more seamless. The latter, if anything, constitutes a success for Citizens Foundation in that demand for citizen engagement is beginning to even outpace the current functionality of the software.

Expectation Setting	★★★★
Advice & Guidance	★★★★
Project Success	★★★★
Customer Service	★★★★
Feedback Loop	★★★★
Recommendation	★★★★☆

Civil Space

<https://civilspace.io/>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Local councils that want a flexible portfolio of citizen engagement tools
- Clients who want a service-provider who can co-create and advise on consultation processes

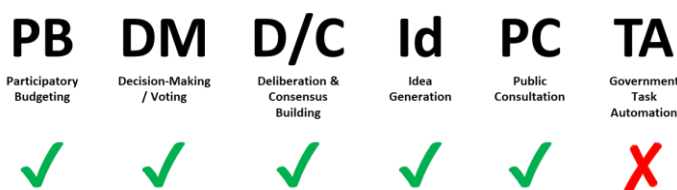


Overview

Founded	2018 (acquired by ZenCity in 2021)
Director of Product	Tim Booker
Clients	60

While Civil Space officially started in 2018, its original parent company, Domain7, dates back to the late 90s. Early adopters of open source technologies, Domain7 combined its UX expertise with its passion for cooperative business models to develop Civil Space in 2018. In late 2021, Domain7 sold Civil Space to Israeli civic tech company ZenCity.

Scope of Offering



Civil Space describes itself as a ‘reimagined town hall’ and the structure of the platform reflects this. Consultations are represented as multiple engagements including surveys, discussions, geo-spatial commenting (where users can drop

a pin on a map to comment on an issue or aspect linked to a specific location), a ranking tool (allowing users to drag and drop different decision options into a preferred order) as well as ‘Idea Boards’ where participants can create initiatives and ideas. Once a user has completed a series of engagements linked to a project phase, Civil Space automatically recommends other engagements (from the same client, e.g. a city) – helping to drive user stickiness and deeper citizen engagement.

The most interactive component of the Civil Space platform are discussions, where users can comment and upvote other comments (known in Civil Space as expressing ‘respect’). Civil Space automatically detects abusive language, but rather than simply deleting or moderating such comments, the system gives the user a choice: to change their wording or to refer it to a human moderator.

Of particular note is Civil Space’s Budgeting module, where users are asked to make trade-offs between different options (this can be used for Participatory Budgeting, Carbon Budgeting or Tax Distribution simulations). Administrators can decide whether users can exceed the budget, and if so by how much.

Civil Space has recently added functionality to let citizens see the impact of their participation via text, image or video updates on current or past projects (what Civil Space calls Dynamic Project Updates), as well as integrated semi-automated translations for multi-language projects and improved analytics. The ability to publish the outcomes of an engagement automatically to all participants also encourages greater transparency in the consultation process.

Mission / Vision

Civil Space wants to improve governance structures, specifically the relationship between citizens and their government, through the use of digital citizen participation. Inspired by the work of Dr. Martín Carcasson at Colorado State University and his idea that community consultation should ultimately result in the improved ability of the community itself to solve problems, Civil Space has focussed its efforts on not just providing a one-off consultation solution, but an entire framework that allows cities to build a sustainable consultation community.

Ability to Execute

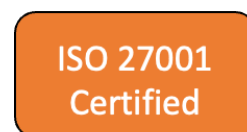
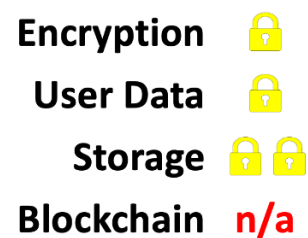
Since launching in 2018, Civil Space has been implemented for over 60 customer projects.

While Civil Space itself has less than 10 employees, having been part of Domain7 (ca. 50 employees) has allowed it to leverage existing relationships in the US, UK and Canada. Its recent acquisition by ZenCity will allow Civil Space to scale to ZenCity's existing customer base and form part of an integrated offering of passive and active citizen engagement tools.



Security

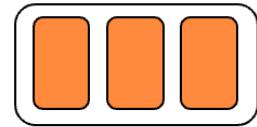
Clients can select their own data centre in either the UK, Canada or the US and choose between a multi-tenancy or single-tenancy setup. Civil Space allows end users to download or delete any data that they provide to the platform’s collaborative spaces and incorporates the GDPR principles into its design.



Standout Features

- Creates stickiness by recommending follow-on consultations
- Detects abusive language and nudges users to rephrase contributions

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

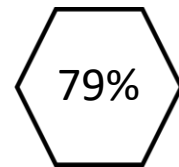
Civil Space has received strong and positive feedback with particular credit given to its user-friendly interface as well as the variety of question types available in the survey feature. Of particular note is the customer service, serving as a sounding board for its clients and co-creating success criteria. One client mentioned that Civil Space can be pricey (with separate costs for products and services), but that it provides excellent value for money.

- Expectation Setting** ★★★★★
- Advice & Guidance** ★★★★★
- Project Success** ★★★★★
- Customer Service** ★★★★★
- Feedback Loop** ★★★★★
- Recommendation** ★★★★★

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

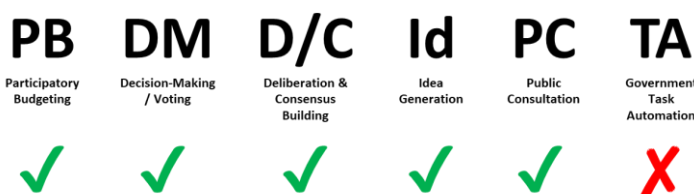


Overview

Founded	2015
CEO	Chloé Pahud
Clients	30

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 consists of four distinct modules: Consultations (where participants are asked to comment on proposed projects), Propositions (where participants can suggest their own ideas), Surveys, and a new module

for Participatory Budgeting (currently in beta stage). In addition, clients can keep participants engaged, even if there is no live process underway, by maintaining an events calendar or posting updates about community development. Overall, Civocracy 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. This is supported by automated emails which are sent to participants to update them on the status of the consultation.

Civocracy's new Participatory Budgeting module has been designed to allow clients to freely customize the steps of a PB process: ideation, analysis, voting and results publication. Participants can choose between Simple Voting (where each user gets a certain number of points to distribute to different projects) and Ranked Voting (which allows users to rank their top five projects).

In order to drive engagement, the PB module automatically emails all participants at every stage of the process. Unlike many other PB tools, users do not actually distribute budget in monetary terms, nor are they prevented from combining projects which together would exceed the total available budget. Instead, the client admins (e.g. public administrators or politicians overseeing the process) can choose which projects make the final cut based on how many of the winning projects fit into the budget. Unfortunately, this somewhat limits the educational and participatory benefits of the module and could impact on long-term participation if citizens do not see the impact of their engagement or if they feel that their expressed wishes are being overridden.

For all modules, Civocracy’s analytics dashboard allows organisers to understand the level of participation as well as sentiment, thanks to the vendor’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 measurable implementation of ideas rather than just attracting 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 help local decision-makers maximise citizen engagement and integrate their feedback into the process.

Ability to Execute

Despite still being a small company of ca. 20 employees (which represents a growth of 100% since we first reviewed them in 2019), Civocracy has built strong engagement in the projects they are currently involved in. This is in no small part due to how seriously their clients 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.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★★
USPs	★★★

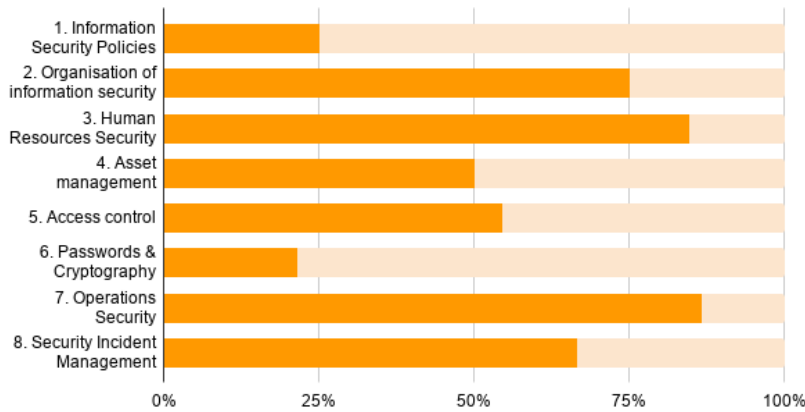
Civocracy’s focus on sustainable engagement (and measurable action) is a strong indicator of customer stickiness – and a promising sign of future referral business.

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.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

Civocracy participated in the 2021 security assessment and scored particularly highly in the areas of Operations Security, IT Security Organisation and Incident Management, with lower performances across Security Policy Management and Cryptographic Controls.



Overall Security Assessment Score

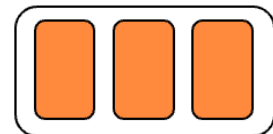
62%

Civocracy reinforces the importance of security management when onboarding new employees as well as at regular alignment meetings with their operations team.

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

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

With positive to outstanding ratings across all categories, Civocracy’s client feedback is strong evidence that its service delivery matches its product expertise.

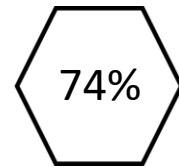
Particular praise was given to Civocracy's ability to engage participants at every stage of the process, by sending email updates and prompts to continue their involvement. While some feedback referenced a lack of clear success KPIs, the client who gave this feedback acknowledged that Civocracy helped to overcome this issue by mutually defining goals with the client.

- Expectation Setting** ★★☆☆
- Advice & Guidance** ★★★
- Project Success** ★★☆☆
- Customer Service** ★★★
- Feedback Loop** ★★★
- Recommendation** ★★☆☆

Delib

<https://www.delib.net>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Organisations that frequently run public consultations
- Government organisations that want to increase the transparency of their budgeting process



Overview

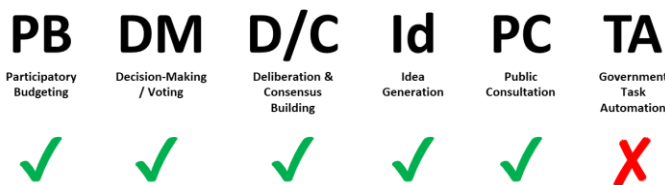
Founded	2004
CEO	Andy Parkhouse
Clients	200

Delib is one of the pioneers of digital democracy, working with BT and Accenture as early as 2002 to run online voting pilots for British local elections.

Formally incorporated since 2004, Delib has built a host of online decision-making and deliberation

apps, some of which were famously used by the Obama campaign in 2018 to crowdsource policy ideas. Since 2012, Delib has focussed on three core product offerings: *Citizen Space*, an online consultation platform; *Simulator*, a policy simulation tool which supports, inter alia, Participatory Budgeting; and *Dialogue*, a citizen engagement platform.

Scope of Offering



Delib’s main offering, *Citizen Space*, is an end-to-end consultation portal, complete with landing page (to integrate into a client’s existing web presence), surveys and a host of question options (including ranked choice, multiple choice and free text

answers). More lengthy consultations can be broken into chapters. The platform automatically updates the landing page when a consultation has ended, allowing participants to read about the outcome.

Dialogue, Delib’s second solution, is set up as an ideation and crowdsourcing platform, allowing participants to share comments with one another, something not possible within *Citizen Space* where comments and answers are only visible to the administrator.

Though strictly a Deliberative rather than Participatory Budgeting solution (all budget options are set by the admin rather than permitting ideation from the participants), Delib's third product, *Simulator*, is highly sophisticated, calculating remaining budget in real-time as the participant selects options. Prior to a budgeting exercise, clients can configure the platform to display the real-life consequences of budget choices (e.g. if library funding is cut by 10%, 3 libraries will close).

Since 2021, Delib also offers a geo-spatial add-on which integrates with all other solutions. Clients can use the tool to embed existing mapping data (e.g. Ordnance Survey data in the UK and Ireland), perform path-analysis (where residents can share what path they are using to travel between two points on a map) and even allow users to draw their own maps. Map data can then be used to tie survey or engagement data to specific geographic areas. Intended application areas of the geo-spatial module include traffic management, cycle path design, walking trails and even noise data management.

Mission / Vision

Delib's vision is "to encourage systemic shifts towards more open, efficient and accountable democratic processes by lowering barriers to entry for all parties." To achieve this, Delib strives to simplify the democratic decision-making process for citizens and public officials alike. Delib believes that depth of engagement – having a few core functions that people use extensively – is more important than breadth of functionality – having lots of bells and whistles that never achieve widespread usage. To encourage adoption by more and more departments over time, Delib charges by site (e.g. a whole county council) rather than by user.

Ability to Execute

With close to 200 active client sites (in most cases a city or county council, but also including larger sites like the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland), Delib has a substantial customer base.

Delib's focus on public sector compliance (ISO 27001, BPSS clearance, etc.) and continuous innovation (such as the new geo-spatial add-on) have kept the organisation at the forefront of online participation and public consultation.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★★
Sales Channels	☆☆☆☆
USPs	★★

Security

Delib uses standard security measures such as https encryption. User data can be held on dedicated virtual machines in a country of the client's choice, and internal procedures prevent even Delib employees based in other countries from accessing client data.

Delib holds an ISO 27001:2013 certification (Information Security Management), trains its employees on security on an ongoing basis and performs regular penetration tests to help secure its systems.

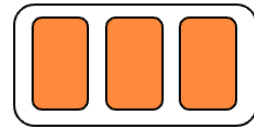
Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

ISO 27001
Certified

Standout Features

- Integration of geo-spatial data points with survey and engagement information
- Architecture of platform follows privacy-by-design principles
- Proven compliance with a wide range of public sector certifications

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

Delib received full scores in all feedback areas with particularly strong feedback around the vendor's ongoing project support and their deep understanding of local government requirements. The administration of the portal was described as 'super easy' without the need for administrators to be digitally savvy. The geo-tagging functionality was also praised as innovative.

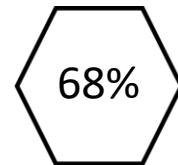
One constructive suggestion was to condense some of the survey elements into fewer pages in the desktop version of the platform.

Expectation Setting	★ ★ ★
Advice & Guidance	★ ★ ★
Project Success	★ ★ ★
Customer Service	★ ★ ★
Feedback Loop	★ ★ ★
Recommendation	★ ★ ★

Discuto

<http://www.discuto.io>

Remit Score



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



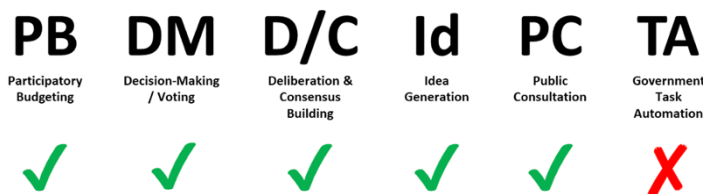
Overview

Founded	2013
CEO	Hannes Leo
Clients	20,000 users

Discuto utilises 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 on 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 in the media, 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.

Active Customers	★★★☆☆
Case Studies	★★★☆☆
Experience	★★★★★
Workforce	☆☆☆☆☆
Sales Channels	★★★☆☆
USPs	★★☆☆☆

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.

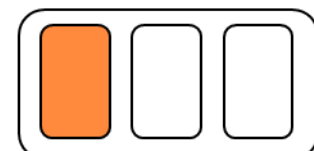
All stored data is encrypted, and communication with the server uses https encryption.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

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

Accessibility

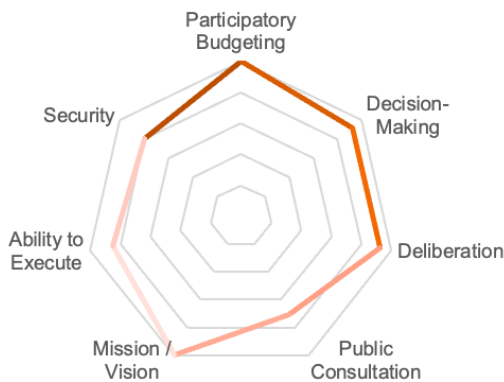
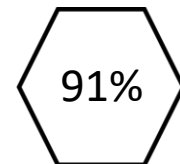


Not implemented or no information available

Ethelo Decisions

<http://www.ethelo.com>

Remit Score



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

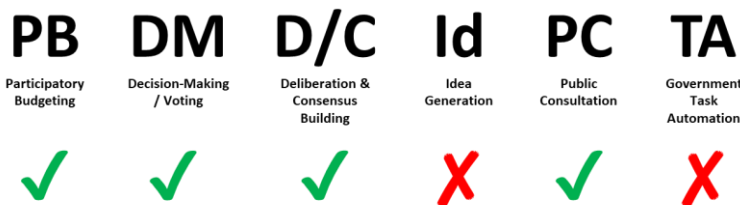
Founded	2011
CEO	John Richardson
Clients	Over 150

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. Users can add comments and links to external resources, adding a deliberative aspect to the decision-making process.

Since the acquisition of Citizen Budget in 2019, Ethelo has combined Participatory Budgeting functionality with its key strength of constraints computation, allowing it to offer innovative solutions such as carbon budgets that can account for multiple constraints (e.g. greenhouse gas targets, monetary budget, and a job creation target). An optional auto-balance tool helps guide the participant towards a balanced budget based on how important different policy areas are to the participant. Finally, Ethelo has brought its expertise in scenario analysis to its PB module as well, allowing clients to choose from budget distribution scenarios based on the level of consensus each of those scenarios attains (i.e. rather than picking individual projects or elements of a budget, the scenario-builder identifies the overarching consolidated budget scenarios that enjoy the most consensus overall, building each element into a cohesive whole and avoiding ‘design by committee’ pitfalls).

In 2021, Ethelo also expanded into solutions for Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) to help them make complex decisions on anything from day-to-day operational matters to major shifts in the direction of the company.

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 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 over 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 also maintains a not-for-profit arm, providing its licenses free of charge to community groups. With more than 10 years of experience in the market, positive customer feedback, as well as its recent acquisition of Citizen Budget and foray into organisational decision-making for DAOs, Ethelo continues to expand.

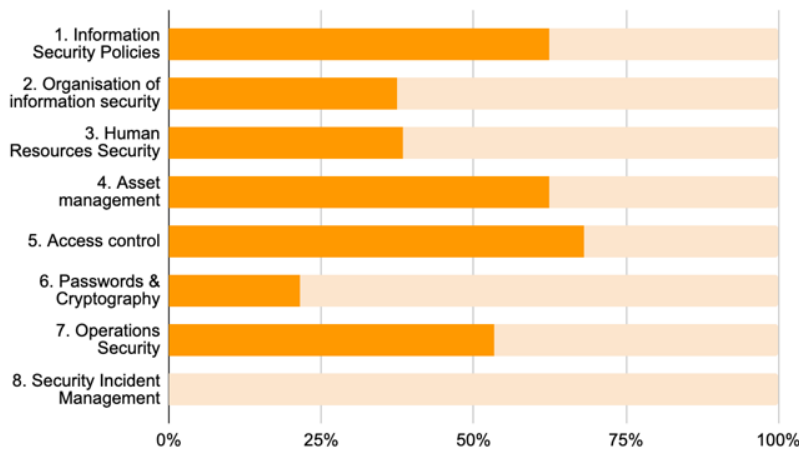
Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★☆☆☆
USPs	★★★☆☆

Security

Ethelo offers multi-factor authentication options for sensitive accounts. Clients have a choice between using AWS Cloud Storage, Google Cloud Hosting or a dedicated server in either Canada or the US. While Ethelo does not use Blockchain as part of its security architecture, the company has started to use Smart Contracts as part of its DAO solution.

- Encryption**
- User Data**
- Storage**
- Blockchain** **n/a**

Ethelo participated in our Security Assessment. While Ethelo has designed security policies and scores highly in areas such as access controls, few formal processes exist at this stage to manage aspects such as cryptography and security incidents. Ethelo does require employees to use a corporate controlled password manager to help secure the process of handling secret authentication information.



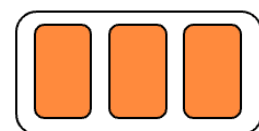
Overall Security Assessment Score

48%

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 voter preference

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from Ethelo’s clients with particular praise given to Ethelo’s focus on driving diverse engagement and the ability of its new PB solution to represent the budget in terms of the user’s personal taxes. While customer service was seen as excellent, areas of improvement include better reporting as well as helping clients develop effective KPIs to measure outcomes.

- Expectation Setting**
- Advice & Guidance**
- Project Success**
- Customer Service**
- Feedback Loop**
- Recommendation**

Novoville

<http://www.novoville.com>

Remit Score



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

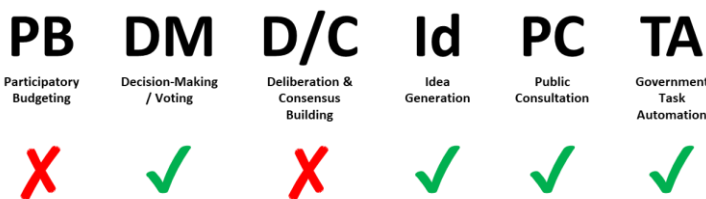


Overview

Founded	2016
CEO	Fotis Talantzis
Clients	65

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 organising online citizen consultations. With AI chatbots 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 Chatbot, which works off scripts to automatically poll users); the Payments App, which lets cities collect fees and fines (and allows integration of payment platforms such as ApplePay and PayPal); and finally the Smart Mobility solution, which helps citizens do a number of things such as finding (and paying 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. An automated workflow allows councils to define who gets assigned to the task depending on the type of issue, while the overall modular design allows clients to pick and choose which features of Novoville they want to use.

In 2021, Novoville released their Shared Repairs tool, which allows multiple tenants of a building development to report issues, agree on repairs, pool funds and select tradespeople to carry out jobs. Developed with the support of the Scottish Government’s CivTech Accelerator programme, Shared Repairs integrates with UK e-money vendor Modulr which allows tenants to gather funds without the need to create a traditional treasurer account.

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.

Novoville has won a number of awards over the years (e.g. National Democracy Week’s Collaboration of the Year Award for 2018).

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★☆☆☆
USPs	★★★☆☆

Security

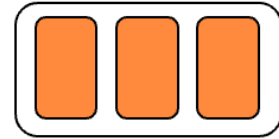
Novoville maintains a standard security and privacy policy and encrypts communication with their service using standard SSL (https). Novoville uses Microsoft Azure for Cloud Storage.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

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
- Ability to integrate new payment platforms, such as ApplePay, GooglePay and Paypal, allows payment methods to be continuously updated – saving public administration work and allowing better access for the unbanked/people using novel financial tools

Accessibility

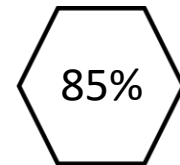


Follows WCAG or similar standard

PlaceSpeak

<https://www.placespeak.com>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Organisers that want to strongly tie participation to geographic location
- Anyone who wants to create and maintain a community of users that exists outside of specific projects



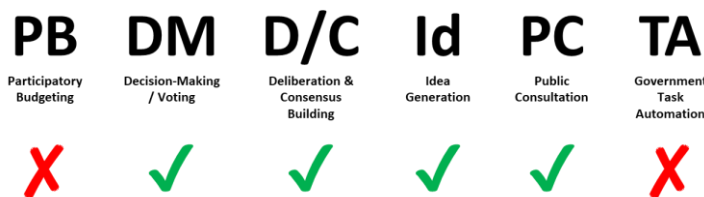
Overview

Founded	2012
CEO	Colleen Hardwick
Clients	25

PlaceSpeak is a public consultation platform that uses geo-spatial authentication to identify location-specific user groups. This allows clients, primarily local authorities, to target consultations at specific neighbourhoods to more accurately understand local feedback on proposed projects.

The company started in Vancouver, Canada and now serves over 30 communities across Canada, the United States and Northern Ireland.

Scope of Offering



The starting point for every PlaceSpeak consultation is the Overview page where the organisers can upload text, images and videos to explain the background and process of their consultation. A map of the consultation area can also be included.

Additional documents (e.g. maps, previous community reports, etc.) can be uploaded to the Resources Folder page. Organisers can then add: Discussions (where participants can answer questions, comment and upvote/downvote previous comments); Noticeboards (where participants can leave free text comments); Placelt (where users can report issues or ideas by placing tags on a map); Events (where organisers can advertise e.g. public meetings); and Polls (which collects survey data from participants). The organisers can decide who can take part in every aspect and can limit participation by location boundaries. PlaceSpeak uses the methodology of the Digital Identification and Authentication Council of Canada (DIACC) to confirm the exact geographic location of every participant.

This allows for validation of location using address data from telecommunication and utility providers, while giving the user full control over what data they want to share. Additional privacy controls ensure that organisers cannot identify individual contributors.

A key feature is that participants can choose to participate in several consultations happening in their physical area and are updated by the software about upcoming consultations. PlaceSpeak even auto-generates so-called ‘Seed’ consultations from public consultation data – once a pre-set threshold of users expresses an interest in participating, PlaceSpeak automatically notifies the local authority to consider a consultation.

Mission / Vision

PlaceSpeak’s mission is to “promote authentic meaningful dialogue on local issues”. The company name derives from the idea of people claiming their physical space (their neighbourhood, community, etc.) and – resulting from the sense of community – finding their voice. As a commercial vendor, much of the marketing information today focusses on the value to customers, but the original vision of empowering citizens is still reflected in the architecture of the software itself: rather than starting with an organisation and then building an audience, PlaceSpeak encourages citizens to sign up first – and then be alerted to organisations running consultations in their area.

Ability to Execute

PlaceSpeak was built with the collaboration of three Canadian universities, but now maintains less than five employees. For such a small number of staff, PlaceSpeak’s reach is significant with over 30 communities having at some stage run projects on the platform, all of which are minutely documented on the website’s extensive Case Studies section: From securing night filming permission for RoboCop (city regulations required a consultation before granting permission) to predicting a referendum result with greater accuracy than two major polling companies, to countless projects about parks, housing and public health, PlaceSpeak has much to be proud of.

Recently its SentiMap technology, which connects participants to geographic locations, won the 2018 SAP Partner Award (SentiMap runs on SAP HANA) and its partnership with SurveyGizmo significantly expanded its ability to integrate surveys. PlaceSpeak also launched a Geo API and Wordpress plug-in which allows others to utilise its geo-data in anonymised form.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	☆☆☆☆
Sales Channels	★★
USPs	★★

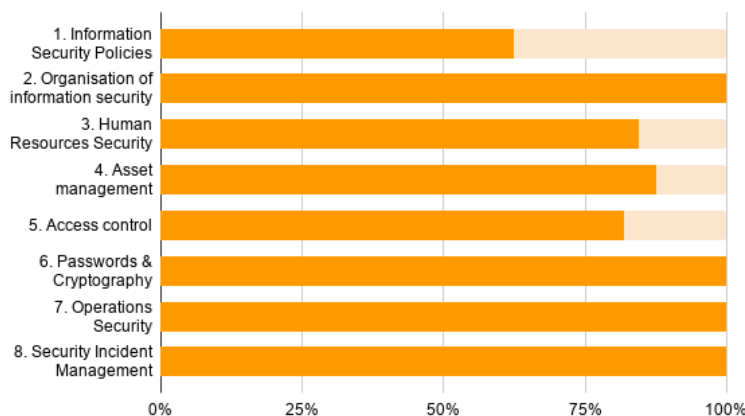
Security

PlaceSpeak has implemented a ‘Privacy by Design’ architecture based on the work of Dr. Ann Cavoukian which enforces strict privacy controls throughout the product lifecycle.

PlaceSpeak’s user data is hosted in Canada and enterprise users have the ability to choose a data centre in their province for sensitive data. Communication with the site is secured via https and passwords are encrypted.

- Encryption**
- User Data**
- Storage**
- Blockchain** n/a

PlaceSpeak participated in our Security Assessment and achieved consistently high scores throughout, with some room for improvement around the formalisation of IT Security policies.



Overall Security Assessment Score

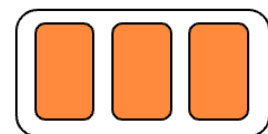
91%

Security is incorporated into PlaceSpeak’s employee onboarding training as well as formalised as part of their Employee Handbook. In 2020, PlaceSpeak asked an academic institution to analyse its security setup, demonstrating that security enjoys a high level of priority at PlaceSpeak.

Standout Features

- Links users to physical places without revealing that location to clients
- Concept of ‘Seed’ consultations builds groundswell among users to nudge local authorities to engage digitally

Accessibility



Follows WCAG or similar standard

Client Feedback

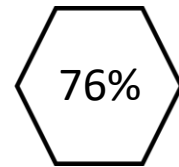
Overall, client feedback for PlaceSpeak has been positive, with clients particularly lauding PlaceSpeak’s ability to map users geographically.

Some feedback asked for more sophisticated reporting of outcomes, with others noting that while customer service is very responsive, a more defined service level agreement could be helpful to understand when (and when not) clients could call on PlaceSpeak to engage directly with users.

- Expectation Setting** ★★☆☆
- Advice & Guidance** ★★★
- Project Success** ★★☆☆
- Customer Service** ★★☆☆
- Feedback Loop** ★★★
- Recommendation** ★★☆☆

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	215

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

PB Participatory Budgeting ✓	DM Decision-Making / Voting ✓	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building ✓	Id Idea Generation ✓	PC Public Consultation ✗	TA Government Task Automation ✗
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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 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 500 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 its 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 500 communities 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%.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★★
Sales Channels	★★
USPs	★★

Security

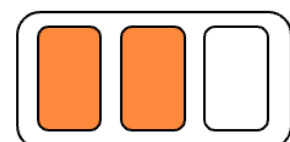
Polco maintains a detailed privacy policy and its approach is designed to protect individually identifiable voter data from both its clients and third parties. Polco uses standard website encryption and gives its users control over third-party cookies and tracking. All Polco data is stored on AWS Cloud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

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

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

Accessibility

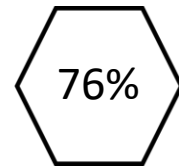


Considered as part of software design

Polys

<http://www.polys.me>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

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



Overview

Founded	2017 (part of Kaspersky)
CEO	Eugene Kaspersky
Clients	50

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.

Over the past few years Polys has gone from providing online voting at conferences and universities, to larger municipal and regional projects, such as the Moscow City Parliament elections of 2019, remote voting for the regions of Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod (where over 250k votes were cast) in the 2020 Russian constitutional referendum, and most recently the 2021 national elections where Polys was used for voting in Moscow. The technology was also used (along with video conferencing) by the Russian Supreme Court to continue its operations during the coronavirus pandemic. Polys has also recently completely re-engineered its Participatory Budgeting software and expanded its activities in this area.

Scope of Offering

PB Participatory Budgeting	DM Decision-Making / Voting	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building	Id Idea Generation	PC Public Consultation	TA Government Task Automation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

The Polys platform allows organisers to quickly set up votes and supports single selection, multiple selection and ranked voting. This allows it to accommodate a wide range of voting systems (first-past-the-post, single transferable vote, mixed-member proportional voting, etc.)

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 Blockchain technology (using specialised provider Exonum) 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 yet cast their ballot). At the same time, every voter can validate that their vote has been correctly counted by logging into their account which is automatically created when a user votes for the first time.

While Polys' voting application can be – and has been – used for Participatory Budgeting, Polys now has a dedicated tool to enable PB.

The process starts with users submitting ideas (images can be added to support the idea) and asking other users to comment and upvote or downvote. This gives the initiator of an idea an early indication of how likely the idea will pass at the PB stage. Users can also set up groups (e.g. associations) to pre-vote on ideas to submit to the wider participant pool. Ideas are then submitted to the moderator and once approved can be voted on as part of the PB exercise. Unlike many other PB tools, Polys does not limit the amount a participant can virtually "spend", but instead defines a maximum number of ideas any user can support. After voting concludes, Polys' algorithm then calculates the maximum number of projects which can be greenlit with the available budget.

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 and conducting participatory budgeting exercises.

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.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★☆☆
Workforce	★★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★★☆☆
USPs	★★★☆☆

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.

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 Blockchain. While voting outcomes (and the number of voters) are public, the privacy of individual votes is protected by encryption.

Polys' parent company Kaspersky holds an ISO 27001:2013 certification (Information Security Management) and runs regular training courses and quizzes for its employees on IT security.

Encryption 

User Data 

Storage 

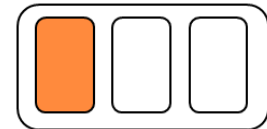
Blockchain 

ISO 27001
Certified

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

Accessibility



Not implemented or no information available

Rousseau

<https://www.ilblogdellestelle.it>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Political parties and movements that want more member participation and control
- Very large organisations that need a scalable tool capable of handling tens of thousands of users



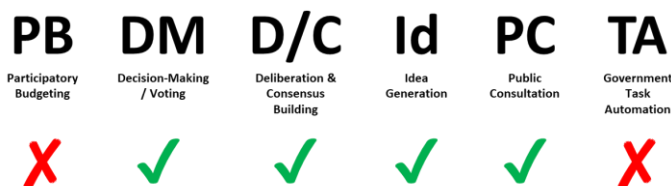
Overview

Founded	2016
CEO	Davide Casaleggio
Clients	1 (over 120k active voters)

Rousseau is the brainchild of the late Gianroberto Casaleggio, a well-known visionary in Italy, who together with comedian Beppe Grillo founded the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S or Five Star Movement), a political movement currently part of the Italian government coalition.

Now run by Gianroberto’s son Davide, Rousseau was, until early 2021, used by members of the M5S to discuss and vote on the political policies of the movement and has had an impressive run, inter alia, setting a world record for most online votes on a single day when 80,000 members voted on the government coalition agreement.

Scope of Offering



Rousseau has a number of different modules, all of which were designed to enable M5S’s members to influence the policy direction of the movement.

The module Lex Parlamento can be used by MPs to discuss proposed laws, while the Lex Iscritti function can be used by any member of the party to propose a new law. A third module facilitates the selection of candidates for political offices. For the selection process, candidates can choose to display so-called ‘merits’ – badges displayed on their profile to indicate expertise in a certain area such as economics, energy, etc.

These merit badges can be obtained by verifying a relevant degree, showing evidence of work experience in a certain area, or by completing online courses on the website. These are then used to determine the order in which candidates are displayed for voting by members.

Those candidates who receive the greatest number of member votes are then selected to run for office on behalf of the movement or party. Rousseau was also used by M5S to create party policy with members able to contribute ideas and vote on different policy proposals. Finally, Rousseau's eLearning module, with courses such as "How to be an MP", "How to read a public balance sheet", etc. seeks to make it easier for members to enter the political process.

Mission / Vision

At the centre of Rousseau's vision is a quote from its founder, Gianroberto Casaleggio: "the web does not replace the physical place, but integrates and completes it".

Rousseau seeks to enhance this physical place with new models of citizen participation, collective intelligence and direct democracy. The platform has been particularly successful in turning online collaboration and engagement into offline engagement, with members of M5S confirming that they also meet people they initially met on the platform in real life.

Ability to Execute

While technically it only served one customer (The 5-Star-Movement), Rousseau has done so on multiple governmental levels (local, regional, national, EU level) with hundreds of thousands of participants across the different areas of the platform. It has operated under great scrutiny both from the political establishment in Italy and abroad, as well as from its 187,000 certified platform users and millions of voters. As a consequence, Rousseau is by no means a start-up, having evolved the platform in response to hundreds of real-life scenarios.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★☆☆
Workforce	★★☆☆☆
Sales Channels	☆☆☆☆
USPs	★★☆☆

Security

Rousseau’s security setup can best be described as ‘battle-hardened’, owing to the large number of attempts which have been made to hack the platform (at some stage a weekly occurrence). Besides the usual https encryption of its website, Rousseau uses two-factor authentication (email + phone), locks all access to its databases while a vote is ongoing, and has each vote supervised and certified by a notary to ensure that the proper process was followed. Rousseau has also developed an internal algorithm that flags suspicious user activity on the platform.

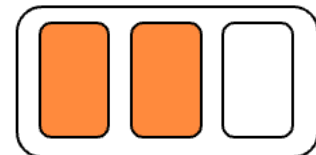
While Rousseau demonstrated a working model of porting their voting system to Blockchain at a Hackathon in 2019, it is not yet being used on the live platform.

Encryption	
User Data	
Storage	
Blockchain	n/a

Standout Features

- Provides a constructive pathway for mass, digital governance that meaningfully empowers people via traditional representative democratic structures
- Proven ability to handle tens or even hundreds of thousands of participants concurrently
- All-around functionality, including candidate selection, policy proposals, and scrutiny of laws

Accessibility



Considered as part of software design

Client Feedback

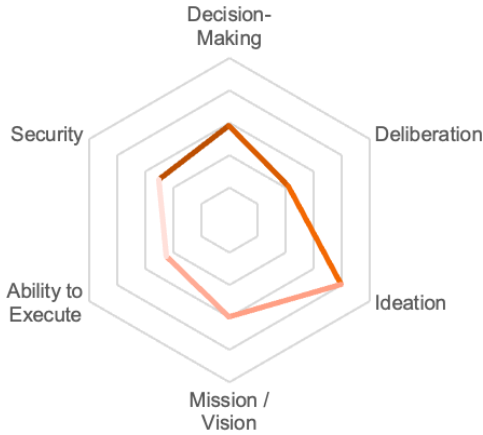
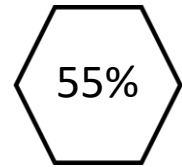
As part of our process, we spoke to M5S members who had used the platform. Overall, the feedback was extremely positive, with members commenting on how frequently Rousseau sought feedback from members to improve the platform, the eLearning element of the site, as well as the underpinning security. Members tended to enthusiastically emphasize that Rousseau had fundamentally changed their relationship with politics and that they desired even more participation. One element that members felt Rousseau could improve was to empower members generally to initiate votes on issues rather than having the initiative-power rest in a committee.

Expectation Setting	n/a
Advice & Guidance	n/a
Project Success	★ ★ ★
Customer Service	★ ★ ★
Feedback Loop	★ ★ ★
Recommendation	★ ★ ★

democracy.space

<http://www.democracy.space>

Remit Score



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



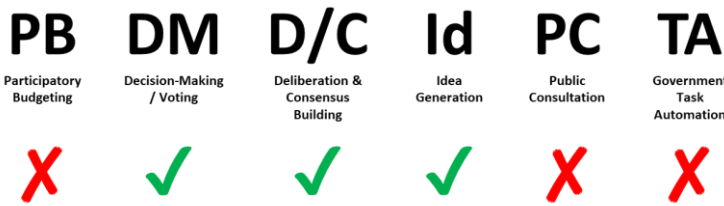
Overview

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 protecting 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.

Since we last reviewed democracy.space in 2019, few changes have been made to the platform, as the team behind democracy.space is focussed on creating a secure platform for internet voting – SIV, which we cover towards the end of this report.

Ability to Execute

For a relatively small company, democracy.space has attracted a lot of interest, not least by the half dozen candidates that have actively used 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.



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.

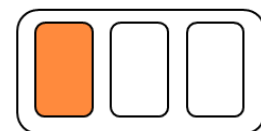
democracy.space uses Blockchain to store voting records.



Standout Features

- Simple layout and intuitive set-up
- Website widget that allows candidates to integrate Liquid Democracy into their campaign

Accessibility



Not implemented or no information available

MyVoice

<https://manabalss.lv>

Remit
Score

74%



Who should use this?

- Government entities that want to open the legislative process to citizens
- Political parties that want to gauge support for policy proposals



Overview

Founded	2011
CEO	Imants Breidaks
Clients	>300,000 users

MyVoice (ManaBalss in Latvian) is a public participation platform that allows Latvian citizens to submit and collect signatures for legislative proposals on the national, regional and municipal level. Set up in 2011 in Latvia, ManaBalss now has a sister website for Ukraine

and advises the North Macedonian Government on a similar solution. Out of the 75 proposals that were initiated on ManaBalss and presented to parliament, 45 have led to legislative change (a success rate of 60%).

Scope of Offering

PB	DM	D/C	Id	PC	TA
Participatory Budgeting	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus Building	Idea Generation	Public Consultation	Government Task Automation
X	✓	X	✓	✓	X

Any citizen of Latvia who is over the age of 16 can create a suggestion for legislation on the ManaBalss website. As long as the proposal does not contravene higher-ranking law, provides a solution and includes a plan of action, volunteer

experts and lawyers will be assigned to turn the suggestion into a formal proposal. All active proposals are then visible on the ManaBalss platform, with the most 'dynamic' petitions, i.e. those attracting the most signatures in recent days, at the top.

Citizens can sign initiatives by authenticating their identity using their online bank account (a common authentication method in Latvia), the official Latvian eSignature system or via "iDenfy", an authentication tool developed by ManaBalss for Latvian citizens who cannot access the eSignature system. A cleverly integrated micro-donation system allows citizens to donate towards the upkeep of the platform after they sign a petition. A social media sharing function helps to promote initiatives, with most of ManaBalss's traffic originating on social media.

Users may choose to sign (or not sign) petitions in their entirety – there is currently no option to leave comments. Under Latvian law, petitions that attract 10,000 or more signatures must be voted on by the parliament, with the initiator of the petition allowed to nominate experts to testify on the topic to the parliament.

While the platform is free to use for private citizens and non-profit organisations, companies and political parties can (and do) use the platform for a cost (currently between 1-5k EUR per initiative).

Mission / Vision

ManaBalss's vision is to use electronic participation tools to capture public opinion and to facilitate proposals for significant change – thereby promoting the development of a civil society.

Ability to Execute

ManaBalss has enjoyed a meteoric rise. Over 1.5 million votes have been cast across 1,700 initiatives with the most popular initiative attracting over 55,000 signatures. ManaBalss has a strong brand in Latvia, even hosting a TV show for three years where proponents and opponents of currently active petitions publicly debated the issues.

With over 6,000 followers across social media, including regional social network Draugiem, ManaBalss is strongly positioned in Latvia and, through its sister project Miivybir, also gaining a foothold in Ukraine.

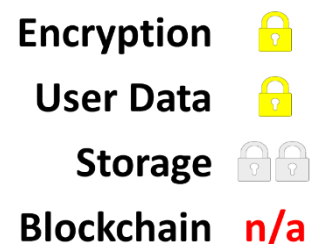
With only 7 permanent employees, ManaBalss is punching above its weight – but will likely need to grow its revenue base to expand further.

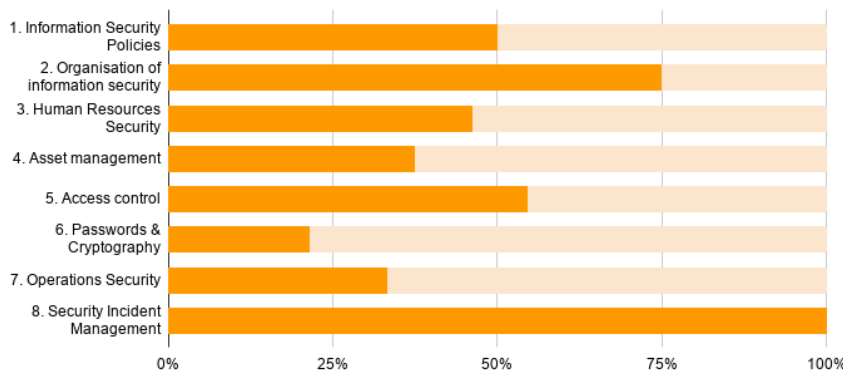


Security

ManaBalss uses standard SSL encryption on the platform. While ManaBalss authenticates users using their bank login or electronic ID, it does not verify whether a user is a citizen or over the age of 16. Instead it passes the data to the government who then verify this information with the participating banks.

ManaBalss participated in our security survey and performed particularly well in IT Security Organisation as well as Incident Management, although there is room for improvement in its handling of Asset Management, Operations Security and Cryptographic Controls.





Overall Security Assessment Score

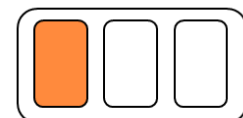
47%

ManaBalss has, as of yet, limited formal policies governing security, although security is regularly discussed as part of 1:1 and group discussions, and particularly enforced when it comes to de-provisioning account access when employees change roles or leave the organisation. While there is room to improve formal security processes, this is balanced by the fact that any successful petition is still audited by the Latvian government to ensure the validity of votes, as well as by the fact that ManaBalss's integration with the existing authentication procedure offered via online banks protects the integrity of the process.

Standout Features

- Full lifecycle e-petition solution with a focus on the feasibility of policy proposals
- Deep integration with online banking software allowing for authentication and micro-donations

Accessibility



Not implemented or no information available

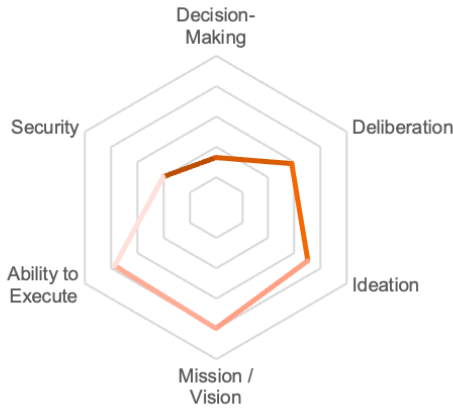
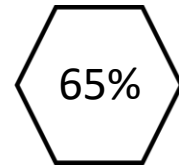
Client Feedback

ManaBalss received outstanding overall feedback from the clients and users we spoke to, with particular praise given to the transparency and simplicity of the platform. Customer service was consistently highlighted (with ManaBalss helping with formulating and advising on the petition process, and delivering very fast response times) as was the ability to get ideas from citizens directly (rather than being filtered through an NGO). Manabalss also kept clients informed of how a petition was progressing through the legislative process.

- Expectation Setting** ★★★★★
- Advice & Guidance** ★★★★☆
- Project Success** ★★★★☆
- Customer Service** ★★★★★
- Feedback Loop** ★★★★★
- Recommendation** ★★★★★

politik-digital e.V.
<http://aula-blog.website>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Schools and other childrens' organisations
- Those who want an open-source solution



Overview

Founded	1998
CEO	Dr. Steffen Wenzel
Clients	20

Politik-digital is a German not-for-profit organisation. Its school-based democracy platform Aula is led by Marina Weisband, a former leading member of the German Pirate Party.

Scope of Offering

PB Participatory Budgeting	DM Decision-Making / Voting	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building	Id Idea Generation	PC Public Consultation	TA Government Task Automation
X	✓	✓	✓	X	X

Politik-digital's school democracy platform Aula has been designed to give pupils a greater say in the day-to-day running of their school.

Aula works with schools to create a legally non-binding 'contract' in which the school agrees to implement ideas from the pupils as long as they are within the competency of the school, are feasible to implement and receive a certain quorum and the majority vote of pupils. Pupils can then brainstorm ('wild ideas' phase), ideate together with a school appointed moderator (often a teacher or a student representative), submit the idea for approval by the school and then put it to a vote. Following a positive vote, the originator of the idea then works with other pupils and teachers to implement it. Finally, all participants review the project and identify key learnings for future votes.

A key strength of the Aula system is that every component has been designed to drive accountability for the students and the school: No vote is put forward unless it is possible to implement (thereby avoiding the frustration of holding a pointless vote); the school administration agrees to refrain from blocking votes as long as they are within the agreed remit; and the originators themselves lead the implementation. Aula also provides a 60-page guide book, as well as slide decks for schools and teachers to help run the project and align it to desired learning outcomes.

A simple interface guides pupils through every step of the process. Participants can comment, up-vote / down-vote and even change or withdraw their vote while voting is open.

Aula is open-source software published under an AGPLv3 license.

Mission / Vision

What on the surface looks like a simple platform for pupils, teachers and education officials to communicate more effectively, also inculcates a deeper understanding of democratic processes. This enables – as Politik-digital puts it – the “education of responsible citizens” and develops competencies in the areas of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

Ability to Execute

While the core team is small (only three employees are listed on its website), Politik-digital has created an extensive network of advisors, partners and ambassadors (school officials, teachers, etc.) to help promote its vision.

With 20 existing clients and Politik-digital's commitment to turning clients into active users (by offering intensive training services alongside the platform product) the organisation is well-positioned to grow its client base.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★
USPs	★★

Security

The Aula web portal uses standard https encryption and maintains a standard policy for handling user data. One time passwords can be used to increase security.

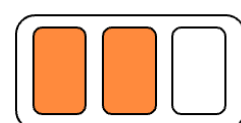
Aula does not use Blockchain.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

Standout Features

- Drives accountability throughout every step of the process
- Step-by-step guide for teachers and administrators

Accessibility

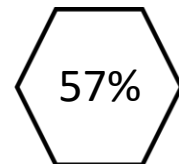


Considered as part of software design

Rahvaalgatus

<https://rahvaalgatus.ee/>

Remit
Score



Who should use this?

- Anyone interested in crowdsourcing proposals (legislative or otherwise)
- Those looking for a platform that provides an end-to-end environment for the serious user to initiate, discuss and vote on proposals
- Those who prioritize an open-source solution



Overview

Founded	2016
CEO	Kairi Tilga (ECA)
Clients	>280,000 signatures

The Rahvaalgatus.ee platform (Estonian for Citizen Initiative Portal) was set up by The Estonian Cooperation Assembly (ECA), with funding by the Estonian President's office, to implement a law, passed in 2014, that allows residents of Estonia to propose and sign collective

proposals for the government to consider. If 1,000 residents sign the proposal (or 1% of voting age residents for local proposals) it must be debated by the Estonian parliament (for national issues) or by the relevant local authority. Over 140 proposals have been submitted via the platform with over 140,000 signatures collected.

Scope of Offering

PB	DM	D/C	Id	PC	TA
Participatory Budgeting	Decision-Making / Voting	Deliberation & Consensus Building	Idea Generation	Public Consultation	Government Task Automation
X	✓	✓	✓	X	X

Any user can upload a proposal and discuss it with other users to create a draft bill. Users can also link to external documents to inform the debate. Once a proposed measure has been finalised, users can vote on it, as well as leave public comments. Any

proposal that reaches the required threshold is then submitted to the Parliament or local authority. All votes are digitally signed to ensure that users are authorised to vote. After a proposal is submitted to the parliamentary committee, ECA continues to track its progress by publishing updates on the legislative process as well any government documents, responses, etc. to the proposal.

In addition to the petition platform, ECA has also started offering online voting in schools to prepare young Estonians for being active citizens in later life. The school platform, like the petition platform, is fully integrated with the Estonian electronic ID system, and school children can use the tool for simple voting as well as participatory budgeting.

Mission / Vision

Rahvaalgatus.ee has its origins in the Estonian People’s Assembly of 2014, a platform aimed at crowdsourcing ideas and proposals to amend Estonian laws related to the practice of democracy (e.g. electoral laws). Its aim is to create “more possibilities for citizens to engage in policy-making between (and in addition to) elections”. By providing a transparent record of what happens with proposals raised on the platform, Rahvaalgatus.ee hopes to break what it calls the “vicious circle of distrust”, where citizens don’t engage with the legislative process, because they have not seen follow-up on previous proposals.

Ability to Execute

While Rahvaalgatus.ee is currently only used in Estonia, the platform has been released as open source. The open source licence conditions also allow commercial use and the platform could thus easily be adapted to other countries and customers.

With a small workforce and limited exposure, Rahvaalgatus.ee has some way to go to build international awareness.

Yet the simplicity of the platform and the transparency it provides for citizen-initiated legislation make Rahvaalgatus.ee a compelling offering for countries looking to deepen citizen participation.



Security

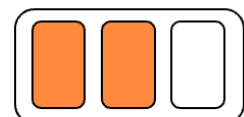
Rahvaalgatus.ee is able to leverage Estonia’s advanced public digital infrastructure to fit seamlessly into the national digital architecture. This includes using the national digital signature process to sign proposals, as well as the national data processing and privacy procedures which utilise blockchain. Digital signatures submitted via Rahvaalgatus.ee are verified against the national register by government officials. Users can delete their user account and all associated data.



Standout Features

- Full ideation process prior to submission – leading to well-articulated proposals
- Transparent process along the entire lifecycle of an initiative

Accessibility

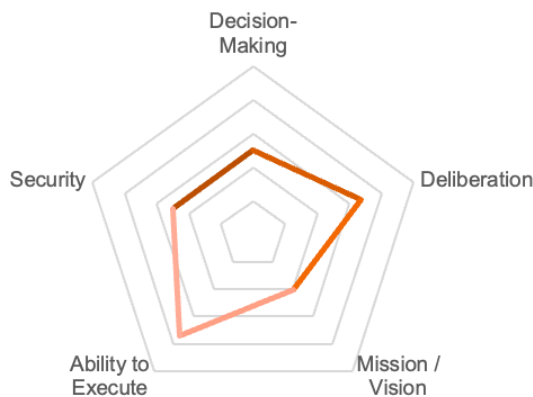
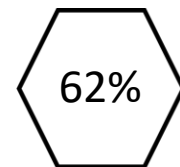


Considered as part of software design

Every Voice Engaged

<http://www.everyvoiceengaged.org>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Universities and Research Institutes conducting deliberation exercises
- Community Groups and Local Authorities interested in engaging people in political discussion



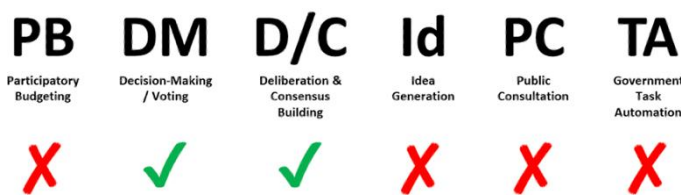
Overview

Founded	2012
CEO	Abizar Vakharia
Clients	125

Every Voice Engaged (EVE) develops and promotes the Common Ground for Action (CGA) platform, used by over 100 clients, primarily researchers and universities, to run interactive deliberation exercises for small to medium-sized groups. Active since 2012, EVE is a joint project of the National Issues Forums and the Kettering

Foundation.

Scope of Offering



The starting point for every CGA exercise is the Issue Guide. This document outlines commonly held views – referred to in CGA as “Options” – on how a particular issue (e.g. Healthcare) might be addressed (e.g. Public Healthcare, Private

Healthcare, Mixed, etc.). Organisers can choose to use one of the existing Issue Guides developed by the Kettering Foundation or to design their own.

Participants are broken up into small groups of 10-20 individuals. After sharing some personal background with each other (to build trust), they are asked to use the Issue Guide to rank a number of different “Actions” under each “Option”, such as “Expand Medicaid” or “Outlaw astronomical jury awards”. Participants are then confronted with counter-arguments or “Drawbacks” and are asked to evaluate whether they “Can Accept”, “Cannot Accept” or are “Conflicted” about these Drawbacks.

How participants evaluate each Action and Drawback is visually represented in a two-dimensional chart, where participants can see in real-time how much support each Action enjoys and the degree of consensus/division around it. Once participants have selected all Actions and stated their position on the Drawbacks, they then debate these over the course of 60-90 minutes in a chat-room environment. Participants are reminded (via the moderator) to change their preferences if another participant persuades them to change their opinion, which in turn is then visible to all other

participants. Once the exercise ends, CGA automatically generates an overview that ranks all Actions by Support and Agreement level and elicits feedback from the participants about their experience with the process.

Mission / Vision

The mission of Every Voice Engaged is "to create a world where everyone participates in their democracy, every day". EVE believes that the way to achieve this is to engage the community in structured conversation about each issue via the approach of deliberative decision-making.

Ability to Execute

While EVE's platform has been used in hundreds of deliberative exercises, its main user is the Institute for Democratic Engagement & Accountability (IDEA) at Ohio State University, where the platform has been deployed since 2014.





With an engaged end-user community (over 90% of participants express positive sentiment following deliberation), EVE is an innovate contribution to the practice of deliberative democracy, enabling it to scale well beyond the academic environment.

However, while the Issue Guides are well-developed, there is no simple option for participants to contribute alternative Actions and Drawbacks, a factor that could constrain the platform's ability to truly capture participant sentiment.

- Active Customers** ★★★★★
- Case Studies** ★★★★★
- Experience** ★★★★★
- Workforce** ★☆☆☆☆
- Sales Channels** ★★☆☆☆
- USPs** ★★★★★

Security

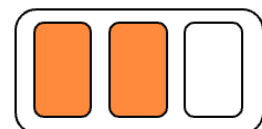
Every Voice Engaged uses standard SSL encryption and has an extensive data privacy policy which outlines in detail how personal identifiable information is separated from user submissions.

- Encryption** 
- User Data** 
- Storage**  
- Blockchain** n/a

Standout Features

- Intuitive graphic interface displaying support and agreement levels of selected actions in real-time
- Encourages open discussion of the pros and cons of different arguments without enforcing consensus

Accessibility



Considered as part of software design

Client Feedback

Overall EVE received strong feedback from their references, in particular with regards to customer service, feedback and follow-up as well as the deliberation process itself.

Clients valued that the online process, as opposed to face-to-face deliberation, counteracts typical social hierarchies as participants are unable to see the demographic characteristics of other participants.

Overall EVE was seen as a great tool to understand early on in the process where participants agreed, helping to move the focus quickly to areas of disagreement.

Some constructive feedback was given when it came to simplifying the setting up of sub-groups (particularly for large participant numbers) as well the overall design of the interface.

Expectation Setting ★★★★★

Advice & Guidance ★★★★★

Project Success ★★★★★

Customer Service ★★★★★

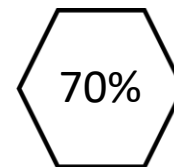
Feedback Loop ★★★★★

Recommendation ★★★★★

FirstRoot

<http://www.firstroot.co>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Educators interested in raising the level of financial and civic literacy for their student populations
- Administrators looking to involve students in the financial planning of their schools



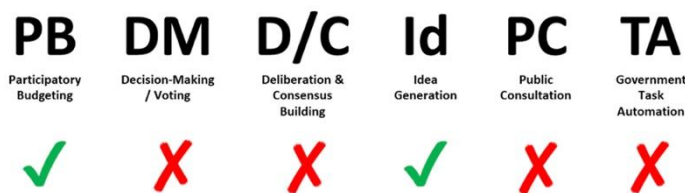
Overview

Founded	2020
CEO	Luke Hohmann
Clients	10

FirstRoot is the brainchild of serial entrepreneur and Agile software developer Luke Hohmann. After conducting a large number of Participatory Budgeting exercises for companies and cities at Conteneo, a company he founded in 2009, Luke set up FirstRoot in 2020 as a benefit corporation to focus on the education space.

Since then, FirstRoot have onboarded 10 clients in their efforts to bring Participatory Budgeting and Financial Literacy to schools across the United States.

Scope of Offering



FirstRoot is a Participatory Budgeting application designed to educate school-age children on all aspects of financial-decision making. The app runs on both mobile and desktop and guides students through five stages of the budgeting process:

Planning (where the budget is set and the process is discussed with students); Ideation (where students can upload proposals, along with images, links and videos and others can comment or like); Refinement (where students work with educators on adding detail and assessing the proposal for feasibility, sustainability and a host of other criteria); Voting (where students can vote, as well as express their sentiment – positive, neutral or negative – on all proposals) and finally Implementation (where educators can post updates about the progress of the winning proposals).

While the process is designed to transfer as much ownership as possible to the participating students, teachers are able to influence the process during two additional stages only visible to administrators: the Ballot Preparation stage (which takes part just before the Voting stage) and the Results Ratification stage (which happens after the Voting and before the Implementation stage). In particular, the Ballot Preparation stage ensures that student proposals do not override existing school policies (e.g. lesson plans) or conflict with pre-existing budget plans. In addition, all uploaded images and videos are

analysed by Amazon’s Rekognition and Youtube’s video filters respectively to prevent the posting of inappropriate content. Finally, FirstRoot offers a comprehensive curriculum and content repository to help teachers explain every part of the PB process as well as improve the financial literacy of their students.

Mission / Vision

FirstRoot’s mission is the “promotion of civic engagement and financial literacy through educational software and financial services”. Working from the understanding that “power comes from money, but change comes from people”, FirstRoot has set out to combine the two by creating an end-to-end curriculum and process that teaches young people how to define proposals, understand trade-offs and make financial decisions in an environment where the impact is as immediate as possible. FirstRoot believes that the best way for civic understanding and democracy to take its first root – hence the name of the company – is to create continuous cycles of participatory budgeting in schools.

Ability to Execute

Despite starting recently – FirstRoot was founded in 2020 – the company already has 17 employees, a large panel of advisors and the beginning of a partner infrastructure, including the Salesforce Educational Foundation (which funded a PB exercise with FirstRoot for a school in California)

With 10 clients to date, a multi-channel go-to-market strategy (which includes social media, targeted grants and the above partnerships) and a successful initial funding round, which raised over 600k USD for the company, FirstRoot is well positioned to scale their operations in years to come.

Active Customers	★☆☆
Case Studies	★★★
Experience	★☆☆
Workforce	★★☆
Sales Channels	★★★
USPs	★★★

Security

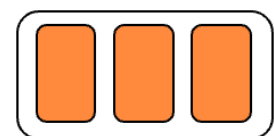
FirstRoot is hosted on AWS servers and uses standards SSL encryption to communicate with its backend. User data is protected and FirstRoot is fully GDPR and FERPA compliant, with efforts to achieve COPPA compliance underway, which will allow it to expand its services to younger students under the age of 13. As of today, FirstRoot does not utilise Blockchain for its services.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

Standout Features

- Embeds the Participatory Budgeting exercise in a fully developed curriculum which accompanies the entire end-to-end process
- Seamless embedding of image and video filters to ensure only child-appropriate content is posted

Accessibility

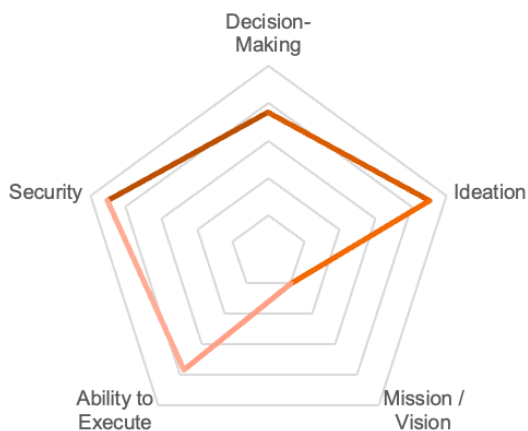
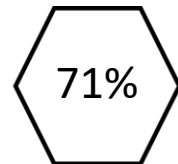


Follows WCAG or similar standard

Slido

<http://www.sli.do>

Remit
Score



Who should use this?

- Organisations that want to enhance participation in face-to-face or virtual meetings 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 1,000,000 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 1 million events with nearly 25 million poll votes submitted using the system. Slido has been used in over 120 countries and counts

companies like Lufthansa, Oracle and the BBC among its clients.

Scope of Offering

PB Participatory Budgeting	DM Decision-Making / Voting	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building	Id Idea Generation	PC Public Consultation	TA Government Task Automation
X	✓	X	✓	X	X

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 Google Slides, Power Point, Microsoft Teams and Webex, allows clients to embed live video 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 its 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 220 employees, Slido is well positioned to continue to dominate this niche. Slido's integration with other industry-leading applications (e.g. GSuite) makes it an attractive proposition for corporate clients already using these products. It has received numerous awards inside the tech and conference industry (e.g. the 2018 Deloitte Technology Fast 50 Laureate).

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★★
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★★
Sales Channels	★☆☆
USPs	★★★

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.

Slido outlines its security and data policies on a dedicated website in great detail, maintains an ISO 27001 certification (Information Security Management System) and even offers a bug bounty to identify security issues.

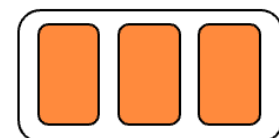
Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

ISO 27001
Certified

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

Accessibility

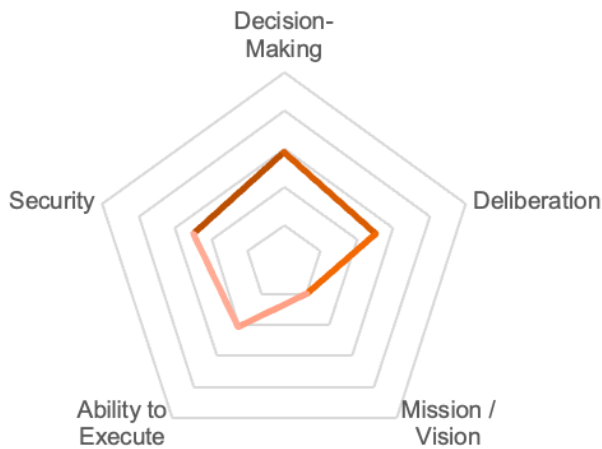
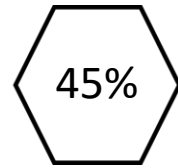


Follows WCAG or
similar standard

VoxVote

<http://www.voxvote.com>

Remit
Score



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

PB Participatory Budgeting	DM Decision-Making / Voting	D/C Deliberation & Consensus Building	Id Idea Generation	PC Public Consultation	TA Government Task Automation
X	✓	✓	X	X	X

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 that 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 that outpaces 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.

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

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★☆☆
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	☆☆☆☆
Sales Channels	★★☆☆
USPs	★★☆☆

Security

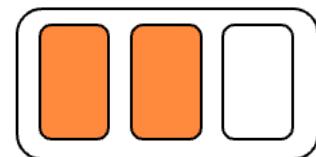
VoxVote maintains an extensive security and privacy policy, encrypts communication with their service using standard SSL (https) and salts passwords stored on the platform. VoxVote uses Microsoft Azure for Cloud Storage on European servers.

Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

Standout Features

- Free for educational institutions and maintains a list of over 2,300 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

Accessibility

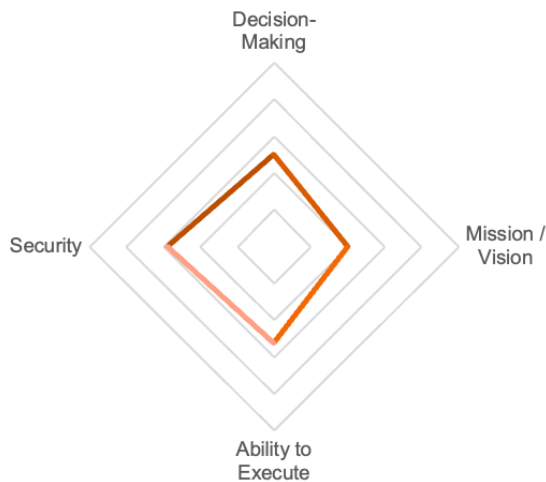
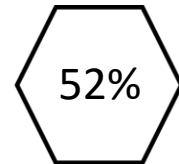


Considered as part of software design

Electis

<https://www.electis.io>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Universities or student organisations holding student elections
- NGOs and associations requiring a cost-effective online voting solution



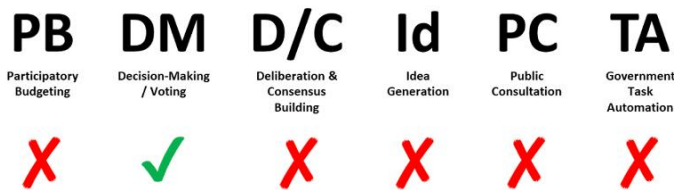
Overview

Founded	2018
CEO	Franck Nouyrigat
Clients	5

Electis was founded in 2018 as an open-source e-voting solution. Primarily used by universities as part of electronic voting pilots, Electis builds on Microsoft's ElectionGuard SDK to secure its voting app and utilises the Tezos Blockchain in combination with the IPFS online file system to

support the transparency and immutability of votes conducted on its platform.

Scope of Offering



On the surface, Electis is a simple online voting solution, with advanced encryption.

Organisers can add candidates for a vote and then upload the list of eligible voters using their email

addresses. Voters then log in to the application and cast their ballot by selecting one or several candidates (this can be customised by the administrator) and confirming their choice. Each individual vote is encrypted and stored on the IPFS (Interplanetary File System) and a "fingerprint" or hash of the individual vote is stored on the Tezos Blockchain, which allows for later verification.

A smart contract created on the Tezos Blockchain automatically publishes the encrypted results of the election once it closes. The organiser then unlocks or decrypts this result using a private key downloaded prior to the election. Multiple partial keys can also be generated and given to different observers so that no single person can know the result before voting ends.

Mission / Vision

The goal of Electis is to create "a cross-border community" and give this community "a place to engage in debate and promote democratic solutions". In order to achieve this, Electis wants their platform to be as transparent as possible and to be driven by open-source technology. Electis sees its role as "bridging the gap between research and experiment" by embedding cutting edge cryptographic research in an easy-to-use voting platform.

Ability to Execute

Electis launched three years ago and has already made some progress in showcasing its solution to larger audiences. Of particular note is a project they launched with the Lire la Société Association, where over 500 students across 40 universities in France used Electis to engage with the French parliament on the topic of electronic voting. Additionally, Electis has been used by the Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC (YOUNGO) to elect youth delegates to the COP26 climate conference.

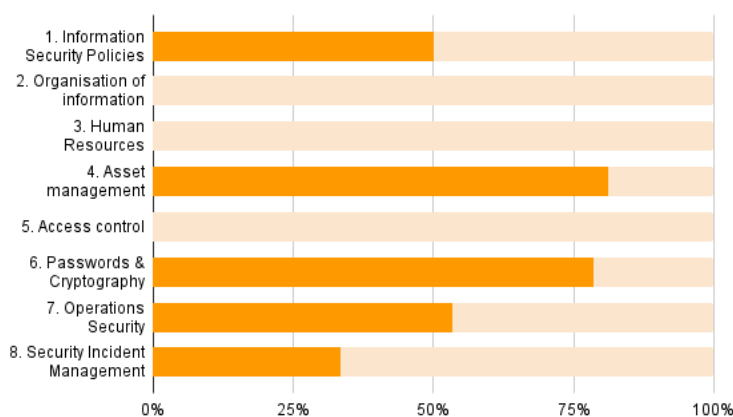
- Active Customers** ★☆☆
- Case Studies** ★★☆☆
- Experience** ★★☆☆
- Workforce** ★☆☆
- Sales Channels** ☆☆☆
- USPs** ★★☆☆

Electis still has a limited customer base (outside of the above examples it is primarily used for student elections) and its main challenge will be to expand on its offerings (both in terms of functionality and service). However, its open-source ethos and sophisticated encryption technology make Electis an interesting alternative to commercial vendors in this space.

Security

Electis uses standard SSL encryption and technology from ElectionGuard to secure end-to-end online voting, while the Tezos Blockchain is used to further election integrity. As Electis is open-source it can be deployed either on-site or at a data centre of the customer's choice.

- Encryption** 🔒
- User Data** 🔒
- Storage** 🔒🔒
- Blockchain** 🔒🔒



Overall Security Assessment Score

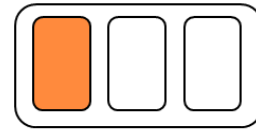
39%

Electis took part in our 2022 Security survey. While its internal security policies still lag behind those of more established vendors, the company has made some progress on asset security and cryptographic controls to protect its online election infrastructure.

Standout Features

- Combines blockchain (Tezos) with decentralised file system (IPFS) to further election integrity while reducing transaction costs
- Fully open-source using proven encryption security standards

Accessibility



Not implemented or no information available

Client Feedback

Electis has received overall strong feedback with only one minor area for improvement: The need to set strong success KPIs upon project initiation and then track these metrics throughout the lifecycle of the project. However, this minor shortcoming was primarily due to the projects we reviewed having only recently been launched.

Feedback was particularly positive in the areas of customer service (customisations were quickly implemented) as well as the overall user-friendliness of the platform, guiding both administrators and end-users through the voting process.

Expectation Setting ★★☆☆

Advice & Guidance ★★★★★

Project Success ★★☆☆

Customer Service ★★★★★

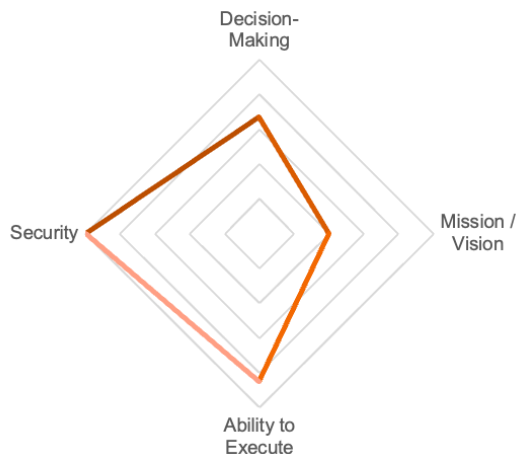
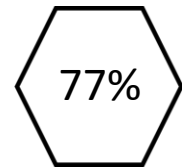
Feedback Loop ★★★★★

Recommendation ★★★★★

SkyVote

<https://www.skyvote.it>

Remit Score



Who should use this?

- Companies and associations that want to run effective board and member meetings
- Organisations, political parties and public sector entities running votes at scale

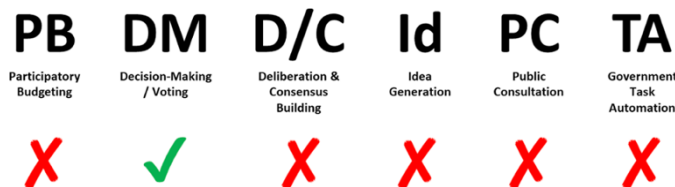


Overview

Founded	2004
CEO	Giovanni Di Sotto
Clients	200

SkyVote is an electronic voting solution developed by Italian tech company Multicast srl. Originally developed to facilitate voting at board and shareholder meetings, SkyVote's newest solution, *SkyVote Cloud*, is a distributed voting platform that can be used in public elections.

Scope of Offering



SkyVote is available as synchronous meeting software (*SkyVote Meeting* and *SkyVote Decisions*) as well as an asynchronous mass voting tool (*SkyVote Cloud*). While only *SkyVote Cloud* is designed to handle large numbers of participants, *SkyVote*

Meeting and *SkyVote Decisions* offer extensive functionality for smaller meetings (e.g. board meetings). With *SkyVote Meeting*, participants can review the agenda, download meeting documents and vote on motions while engaging with other participants via the integrated video-conferencing platform. *SkyVote Decisions* is used before a meeting by officers of the organisation (e.g. treasurer, president, chairperson, etc.) to build the agenda, prepare documents and link them to agenda items, and then after the meeting to assign deadlines and owners to tasks. In both applications, SkyVote uses role-based security to determine who in the organisation can access what type of document, and even watermarks downloaded documents with personal identifiers to prevent unauthorised distribution of privileged information.

SkyVote Cloud offers a variety of voting options: single or multiple candidate selection, free text or searchable lists (e.g. for union elections with 1000s of possible candidate options) and even condition-based voting (where e.g. a voter has to choose a number of candidates of each gender). On limited candidate lists, the software forces voters to scroll through all candidates before casting a vote, although voters also have the option to submit a blank vote. *SkyVote Cloud, Meeting and Decisions* can also be used in combination, meaning that e.g. a large association can use *SkyVote Meeting* to share agendas, motions and video and then integrate *SkyVote Cloud* to vote on these motions with large numbers of participants.

Mission / Vision

Multicast's vision is to contribute to digital transformation by "bringing citizens closer to the tools of direct democracy". *SkyVote* has been developed to improve what the organisation sees as two key aspects of democracy: participation and freedom of expression, whether that means helping people living with disability to vote independently or associations achieving higher levels of participation. At the same time, Multicast acknowledges the importance of security in online voting with MultiCast CEO Giovanni di Sotto calling for the regulation of the online voting industry and the establishment of enforceable standards that all vendors can be measured against.

Ability to Execute

Multicast currently has 20 employees and *SkyVote Cloud* is used by 19 customers and industry bodies, many of the latter consisting of multiple, independent organisations. The platform has enabled votes for as many as 35,000 users at a time.

While the company currently only operates in Italy, the decision of the 5-Star-Movement (M5S) to use *SkyVote* for party-internal decisions has generated significant media attention for the platform which will help to accelerate Multicast's stated aim of expanding beyond the Italian market.

Active Customers	★★★★
Case Studies	★★★☆☆
Experience	★★★★
Workforce	★★★☆☆
Sales Channels	★★☆☆*
USPs	★★★☆☆

Security

Multicast uses standard SSL encryption for its website and a sophisticated encryption system developed by Thales Gemalto to secure ballots on the user's device and for communication with the election server. *SkyVote* is designed to meet GDPR and the Italian AgID privacy standard. Clients have the option to store data on local servers in Italy or use AWS.

In addition to being fully ISO 27001 (Information Security Management) certified, Multicast also has ISO 27017 (Security Controls for Cloud Services) and ISO 27018 (Protection of PII in Public Clouds) certifications.

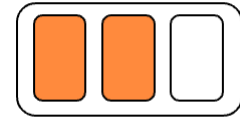
Encryption	🔒
User Data	🔒
Storage	🔒🔒
Blockchain	n/a

ISO 27001
Certified

Standout Features

- Seamless integration of a video platform into the voting process
- Condition-based voting options using intuitive design

Accessibility



Considered as part of software design

Client Feedback

Feedback for SkyVote was overall very strong with users praising the speed and scalability of the platform, as well as the quick response to customer queries.

Users liked that SkyVote enables hybrid voting with iPads provided in physical locations while noting the strong security and ease of use of the solution. In one instance, SkyVote increased the participation rate from 30% to 80% compared on an offline vote.

Expectation Setting	★ ★ ★
Advice & Guidance	★ ★ ★
Project Success	★ ★ ★
Customer Service	★ ★ ★
Feedback Loop	★ ★ ☆
Recommendation	★ ★ ★

Upcoming Technologies

As part of our research for this report, we were not always able to provide a full analysis on every vendor we have encountered. We are featuring some of these organisations here and are working towards a more comprehensive assessment for the 2023 edition.



Headquartered in Boston, Voatz is a provider of online election solutions with an impressive level of security and technical sophistication. Used primarily by local municipalities, but also for party conventions, Voatz allows voters to mark, review and submit election ballots online.

Users download a mobile app that scans the phone for malware and validates the voter by uploading a government issued ID and checking it against the voter roll. The app generates a facial match using a motion selfie and then – after linking the device to a unique anonymous ID – deletes the personal identity information from its system.

Voting data is securely transmitted to the election authority while a copy is stored on a multi-node Blockchain and an encrypted copy is returned to the voter. The mobile app can then decrypt the voting confirmation on the user's device. This allows voters to verify that their own vote has been correctly submitted. Once voting concludes, voters can also conduct what Voatz calls a "Civic Audit" where any voter can compare any ballot against the anonymised voting record. Thus far 100% of all votes conducted via Voatz have been audited in this fashion.

Voatz has been used in over 70 elections, facilitating up to a thousand votes at a time, but can be scaled to facilitate bigger events. In some jurisdictions, voters living with disability, as well as members of the military and US citizens living overseas are permitted to cast their votes using Voatz. With real votes on the line, Voatz puts significant emphasis on security, is regularly audited externally and runs a bug bounty programme to rule out any vulnerabilities in its software.

Polis

Polis, developed by the Computational Democracy Project, is a scalable decision-making and deliberation solution. Released under an open-source license, Polis is described by its creators as "a real-time system for gathering, analysing and understanding what large groups of people think in their own words, enabled by advanced statistics and machine learning".

Participants are invited to create short statements or comments on a particular topic and each participant in turn is then able to vote on each of these statements by either agreeing, disagreeing or "passing" (abstaining).

The software's algorithm then uses several factors to determine how often a comment is sent to other users, including the ratio of 'Agrees' to 'Passes' (with comments with higher agree ratios more likely to be selected) and how new a comment is (to allow for new comments to 'bubble up'). In doing so, Polis can identify opinion clusters or groups, while reducing the visibility of comments which do not drive engagement.

All statements and their related votes are stored in what in Polis is called an "Opinion Matrix", a table consisting of multiple columns (statements) and rows (individual participant votes). Data science techniques are then applied to interrogate this data to create heatmaps, opinion groupings and other insights which organisers can use to understand highly differentiated outcomes of this multi-dimensional survey.

Arguably most famously, Polis was used by the vTaiwan movement to understand participant sentiment on political decisions in Taiwan, such as the regulation of Uber drivers. Since then the use of Polis has spread to other jurisdictions and uses, including a virtual town hall in Kentucky, deliberating parking policies in the UK, and the engagement of young people in Singapore.

SIV

Secure Internet Voting (or SIV) is a new venture by democracy.space (separately featured in this report). Secure Internet Voting does just what it says on the box, creating a secure environment for voters to submit their ballots electronically in elections. In 2020, the solution was used for internal party elections in the US, with a small number of Members of Congress as well as a sitting US governor taking part in the process.

SIV provides a simple interface for voters to prepare, submit and validate their ballots. Upon registration, voters are checked against the voter role and an invite is sent to the user to create their ballot. Once the voter has filled in the ballot, the system creates a unique ID ('verification secret') that the voter can later use to ensure that their vote has been properly counted without revealing the identity of the voter. Votes are sent to the server encrypted along with a voting authentication token which is used to confirm that a vote is valid.

Trustees (usually representatives of opposing political parties) are each assigned a piece of a decryption key which is used to unlock and tally the results.

At no stage of the process can the voter be linked to the content of their ballot, i.e. how they voted, while still allowing the voter to use the verification secret (generated at time of voting) to check their vote on the system.

SIV supports First-Past-The-Post, Ranked Choice Voting, Approval Voting and Score Voting methods. The online voting process can be combined with traditional mail-in or in-person voting, giving election authorities flexibility and allowing voters to opt-in.

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 was tested by the University of Queensland as well as the Queensland University of Technology, 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. 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>



Camelot is a new organisation created by the team behind Italian e-democracy platform Rousseau. Unlike Rousseau, which was built to serve the M5S political movement, Camelot is a B-Corp intended to serve as a platform for private associations, such as housing cooperatives, sports clubs and similar bodies. The aim of Camelot is to significantly increase member's participation rates in the associations and communities they belong to. Participants will be able to use Camelot to cast votes (both publicly and secretly), and to set and manage the agenda for meetings. Planned features for Camelot include video integration and multilingual functionality. Camelot will also carry over the notary service used by Rousseau to certify votes.

<https://www.camelot.land>

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