Reframing Democracy-Making Through Digital Tools

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On-line Citizen's forum »European Debates« success factors and criteria assessment

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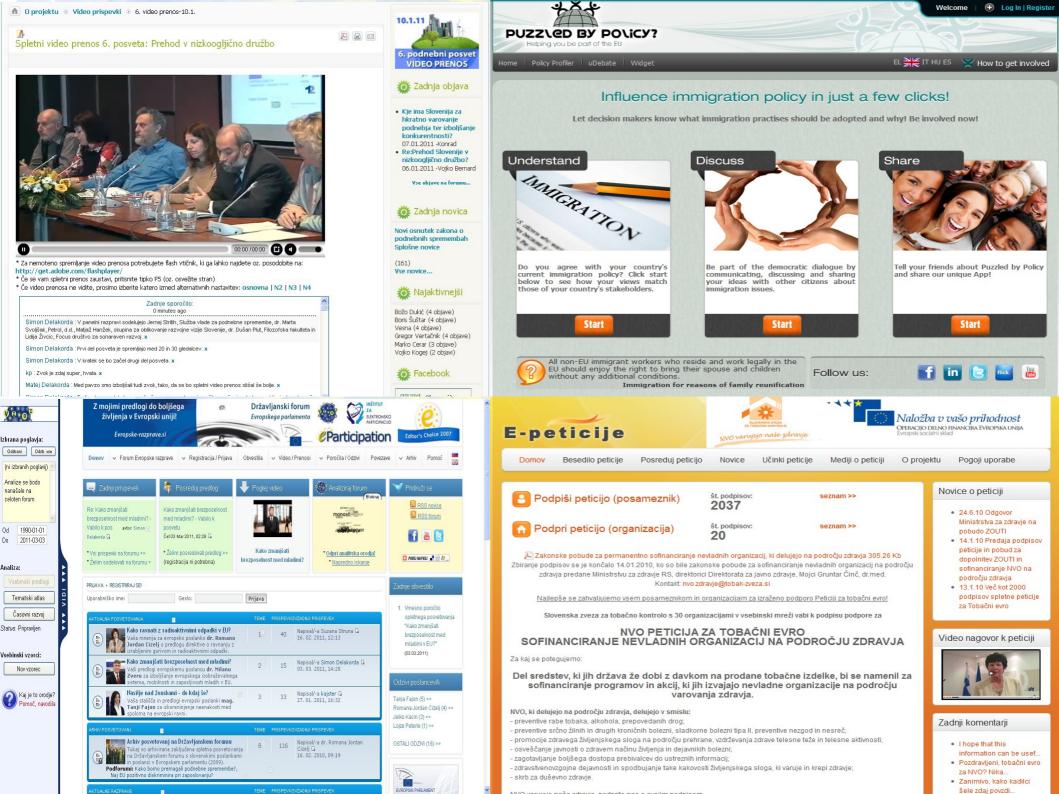
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INSTITUTE FOR ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION

1 Institute for Electronic Participation (INePA)

- an independent, not for profit, professional NGO established in 2007 in Ljubljana, Slovenia
- focus on democratic challenges of digital society, e-participation at the EU level and civil society e-democracy
- consultations, studies, analysis, evaluations, lectures, advocacy, networking, on-line tools facilitation, target groups involvement and dissemination
- member of the Pan European eParticipation Network (PEP-NET), the Central and Eastern Europe Citizens Network (CEE CN), the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs in Slovenia (CNVOS)
- listed among key actors in eParticipation developments (the European eParticipation Study 2009)
- since 2014 coordinator of the national Network of non-governmental organisations for an inclusive information society in Slovenia





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Zavad Inititut za elektronsko participacijo

Prispevamo k razvoja demokracije z družbeno inovativno roko interneta www.inepa.si

Elektronska demokracija:

- a svetovonin a concluse in studios
- > predavonyo
- > cogevenilive
- > povezavanje
- sizobraževacje » projektes sodelavanje

Elektronska participacija:

- > splense velives
- > mteraktivna komuniciranis
- > opravljanje aplikacij
- > spletno moderironje
- > priprovo rezuliatov



Policy recommendations

Call for action

Recommended issues and policies that could be crowdsourced at European level in relation to the Future of the European Union:

- Healthcare (Common safety concerns in public health);
- Environmental issues (Climate change);
- Citizenship education (Active participation);
- Constitutional design of the EU.

The first two topics are both shared competences of the EU suitable for a first crowdsourcing pilot project at EU level.

In addition, the following policy-cycle phases and democratic debate steps are recommended for piloting the EU level crowdsourcing:

- issue identification by collecting ideas;
- policy formulation through solutions identified by citizens.

More detailed recommendations are available at http://ecas.org/projects/eucrowd/.



Interested in e-participation of citizens in politics and policy with a focus on the application of crowdsourcing in fostering a democratic debate on the future of the European Union?

Join the network of civil society organizations in European citizens crowdsourcing!



Contact

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EUROPEAN CITIZENS CROWDSOURCING

Towards crowdsourcing the future of the European Union http://www.inepa.si/eucrowd/



The EUCROWD project has been co-funded with the support of the Europe for Citizens programme 2016 under activity Democratic engagement and civic participation and subactivity Civil society projects.



Co-funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union



- > Assessment Framework for e-Participation (CODE project).
- On-line Citizen's forum »European Debates«
- Citizen's forum success assessment

Assessment Framework for e-Participation

Crowdsourcing

Social listening E-Participati

E-Participation Assessment Framework





Events Policy Recommendations Contact

Activity 3: E-Participation Assessment Framework and Ethical Guidelines for Social Listening

CODE Europe's ambition is to answer two major research questions: 1. How can we define the success of an e-participation project? and 2. How can we make sure we are doing online social listening in an ethical way?

1. We will develop a universally applicable methodology for assessment of e-participation experiences. The E-Participation Assessment Framework will allow objective comparison of the impact of e-participation projects across time and geographical space ensuring systematic and impactful knowledge-sharing, exchange of good practices and capacity building. The partners, led by e-Governance Academy, will implement a comparative analysis of cases on the basis of a jointly developed assessment framework with the goal of creating a final "check list" of success factors for e-participation initiatives. The Assessment Framework will be applied to the project's Crowdsourcing pilots in order to collect feedback, validate and improve the methodology.

2. We will ensure that the social listening of the project will be carried out in compliance with strictly defined Ethical Guidelines. These Guidelines will ensure that the project will perform social listening with integrity and a sense of responsibility when dealing with personal data, in line with the expectations of European citizens and current legislations.

Once ready, the E-Participation Assessment Framework and the Ethical Guidelines for Social Listening will be published here.

E-participation definition

e-Participation is a democratic process of involving and enabling citizens to impact political decision-making process through ICT to make it more inclusive, participatory, and deliberative.

The strategic goal of e-participation is to empower citizens and to ensure that public policymaking takes place in partnership between citizens and government.

E-participation success factors

1) **Inputs** (general conditions)

- > public interest in the topic of the initiative
- > political importance of the initiative
- > legal framework supporting the initiative
- > link to the formal decision-making process
- resources available to the initiator of the case
- > user friendliness of the platform
- sustainability of the platform

E-participation success factors

2) Activities (implementation)

- > user friendliness of the platform
- clarity on the participation process and its aim
- possibility to interact with other participants
- combination of online and offline activities
- Feedback to participants about what has been done with their contributions/the
- results of initiative
- > public outreach and engagement

E-participation success criteria

The results of the e-participation initiative on different levels.

- <u>Output</u> consists of immediate, direct and tangible results of the e-participation initiative.
- <u>Outcome*</u> is the short or medium-term effect of the eparticipation initiative in terms of democracy (benefits for citizens, better policies, increased public awareness, etc.).
- Impact is generally characterizing long-term effects of the eparticipation initiative on democratic processes in the society.
- *Assessing the outcome of the e-participation initiative is particularly important within the framework of Theory of Change.

Any case would be assessed as successful if the result would be assessed as positive in least for one of the success criteria.

Desired outcome of e-participation initiatives

- Participants are satisfied, they acquired new knowledge and skills.
- Public authorities are satisfied, they gained valuable input for their work.
- The case has had direct effect on political decision-making.

On-line Citizen's forum »European Debates«



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Zasebnost

Main facts about the case

- On-line dialogue between Slovene public and Slovene members of the European parliament on the Future of Europe and latter on EU policies and topics.
- Duration 2006-2013.
- > 1200 users contributions published on the forum (including those submitted by e-mail or in paper form.
- > 18 official responses from Slovenian members of the European Parliament were provided as a feedback to 7 consultations and discussion reports prepared by the forum facilitators.
- In 2007 Citizen's forum received the Editor's Choice recognition by the European ePractice portal.

Outcome (satisfaction of the organizers)

- Your views and opinions although sometimes diverse are presenting to MEP as me a valuable source of information and views on further implementation of environmental policy. I am inviting you to continue with your participation" (MEP Romana Jordan).
- Nearly 17,000 unique internet users visited the forum between 2009-2010 only.
- The Information office of the European Parliament in Slovenia provided funding for the Citizens forum which secured its long term operation.

Outcome (satisfaction of participants)

- Citizens taking part in on-line forum at live events indicated restraints towards publicly expressing policy views and skepticism relating to the citizens influence on policy-making.
- When initiating on-line consultations and discussions, MEPs, NGOs and forum facilitators provided background information in policy topics and the process including video messages and relevant documents.
- The MEPs mostly provided agreement or disagreement with the citizens opinions and suggestions summarized in consultation reports.
- Most citizens used the platform only once.

Outcome (effect on policy-making)

- Documents and information (policy papers, reports, draft regulation) were accessible to Citizens forum participation during consultation enabling them to provide informed opinions.
- Feedbacks on consultation reports provided by MEPs indicate limited evidence of involving citizen contributions into their work at the European parliament.
- A new way of direct communication of citizens with Slovene MEPs.
- Several assessments and reflections on e-democracy impacts of the on-line Citizens forum were made.

Impact

- The Citizen's forum strengthened communication between the Slovenian citizens and MEPs resulting in an increased interest to initiate public consultation by themselves and to seek public reflection, opinion exchange and co-creation on their policy proposals.
- The on-line forum contributed to a stronger sense of civic empowerment as a e-participation platform providing direct interaction with MEPs.
- The European Parliament Information Office in Slovenia initiated additional activities to support e-participation of Slovene citizens in European Parliament decision-making.
- Lessons learned were acknowledged by different Slovene government institutions.

Conclusions on the case and lessons learned

- E-participation impact depended from MEPs personal attributes (their interest to directly communicate with citizens).
- Strong institutional support provided by the Information office of the European Parliament in Slovenia (organization capacities, finance, MEPs involvement, media access).
- Capacities of citizens to massively engage with MEPs on EU policy topics.
- Methodology to assess the impact of on-line consultation on decision-making with the European Parliament.

THANK YOU!

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