



The United States'

Democratic

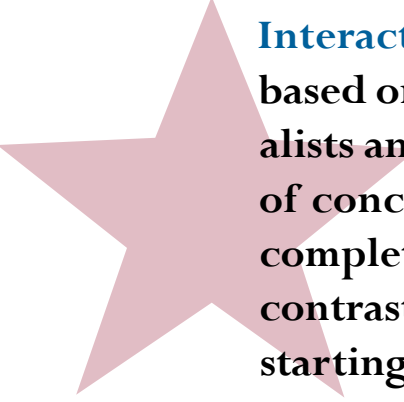
Promise

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Fellow of the Interactivity Foundation

With Developmental Assistance from
Jeff Prudhomme and Melissa Simonson

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The “Democracy Project”



Interactivity Foundation Fellows conduct discussion projects based on a process that relies on two panels (one of citizen-generalists and one of expert-specialists) to explore and develop areas of concern. These projects ask questions, develop answers, and complete other developmental tasks that assist in the drafting of contrasting policy possibilities that, hopefully, serve as discussion starting points for the public.

In this project, the two panels met in Madison, Wisconsin, from September 2010 to May 2011. This included a period of significant political turmoil in Wisconsin, including two months of protests by citizen groups and labor unions and an occupation of the state capitol. Several panelists played a role in these protests while several others opposed them. Needless to say, conditions on the ground provided a very interesting backdrop to the fundamental issues involving democratic governance and democratic government.

Panelists considered democratic governance to involve those elements of civil society that contribute to the conversation on the direction a democratic society should take, the cultivation of skills that contribute to democratic citizenship, and the formation of public opinion on choices that democratic citizens must make. Panelists saw these governance areas as important, or more important, than the formal systems of elections and processes that make up democratic government. It was the sentiment of the panels that a discussion of democracy in modern society must take both governance and government into account.

The panels started with a recognition that the United States’ experiment with democracy has been shaped by many forces and that our understanding of what democracy is has grown steadily. It was noted early on that the United States was founded as a republic with constitutional features that did not guarantee wide participation or majority rule. There was much struggle over who could participate as a citizen and the extent of the rights of that participation. Along the way, most U.S. citizens developed a sense of government of, for, and by the people, which many interpret as a promise of democracy.



The “Democracy Project”

Panelists felt that this promise of democracy has numerous aspects—some in contention with others. For some, the most important elements were freedom from arbitrary and heavy-handed government. For others, the central features had more to do with enlarging the community of citizenship and fostering participation. Many saw a complex web of rights and responsibilities that need to function as a democratic “ecosystem.” Almost all thought that attention must be paid to honest elections and fair democratic processes that inspire confidence and deal with democratic citizenship in the face of changing social conditions and expanding technological capabilities.

By the end of the project, panelists had arrived at the items that make up the possibilities in this report. Panelists recognized that some citizens might not want to enlarge democratic participation and that some public discussions of this report might focus on the reasons not to pursue these possibilities. The possibilities are contrasting approaches to the search for a democracy that goes beyond periodic elections and lip service to encourage participation. The possibilities value the consent and informed involvement of citizens. The possibilities also value the proximity of decision making and action to citizens.



Possibilities at a Glance

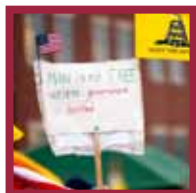


Possibility A 1

Rebuild the Structures of Democracy:

Engage Citizens in Constitutional Renewal

A vision of a national conversation based on our ground rules of democratic governance to keep democracy vital for a growing and changing society



Possibility B 5

Free to Be You, Free to Be Me:

A Society of Democratic Individuals

A vision of democracy as a society of free democratic individuals within a context of minimal government, local institutions, and responsible citizenship



Possibility C 9

It Takes a Village to Be a Democracy:

Create and Sustain a Democratic Community

A vision of democracy as a shared culture, one that encourages broad civic participation in governance and community life as a whole



Possibility D 13

Level the Playing Field for a Democratic Society

A vision of democracy that promotes equal access to civic participation by removing social and economic barriers

Possibilities at a Glance



Possibility E 17

Democracy is a Conversation:

Adopt Collaborative, Cooperative, and Conversational Governance

A vision of democracy based on dialogue and deliberation, with methods embedded in government, civil society, and organizational development



Possibility F 21

Strengthen the Democratic Electoral Process

A vision of democracy focused on enlarging electoral participation, expanding choice, and supporting integrity



Possibility G 25

E-Democracy: New Technologies for a Stronger Democracy

A vision of democracy focused on expanding the use of technology to enable civic participation in democratic life and governance

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility envisions an open-ended civic exploration of how we as a society wish to operate as a democracy. At its core, it holds that the institutional or governmental structures through which democracy functions are key. It also holds that these structures must constantly adapt to evolve to societal changes. The policy starts with an understanding that many of our chief governance and government frameworks, including the Constitution, were not designed with a large, diverse society in mind. This policy vision encourages greater alignment of our governance structures with our democratic expectations for a growing and diverse society.

Under this possibility, citizens are encouraged to exercise their inherent power to withdraw consent from frameworks that frustrate

greater realization of democratic practices and processes. They are encouraged to see constitutional renewal as a healthy and necessary “safety valve” that permits social change with minimal societal disruption.

Democracy under this possibility is adaptive and reflects a national sense of how society wishes to carry out its democratic governance and governmental business. It recognizes that court decisions and executive branch practices have challenged our understanding of the meaning of constitutional provisions. This possibility is a door opener to the broader democratic conversation of what “consent of the governed” means today and whether citizens are in a position to assume a larger democratic role.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility could be expressed through an enlarged governance conversation about society's needs and expectations of democratic practices and processes. Citizens would expect to re-examine all facets of democratic governance and government, including the relationships between citizens and government and large economic institutions. Possible policy dimensions might include:

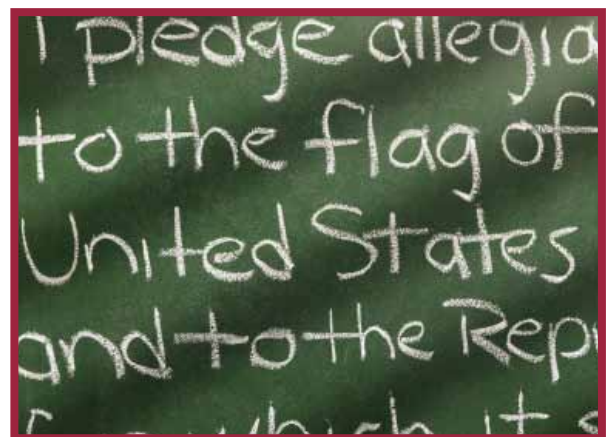
- ★ **Examination of scale and efficiency issues posed by the federal system of states.**
- ★ **Study of the primary constitutional issues involved in greater democratization of governance and government, including controversial court decisions.**
- ★ **Reconsideration of the distribution of powers between the branches of government and the possible creation of other institutions.**
- ★ **Development of a new concept of “national citizenship” that permits direct participation in democratic decision making.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementation of this possibility would take place on an unprecedented scale. It might be triggered by the existing provisions that allow amendments to the United States Constitution, including convening of constitutional conventions. It might be brought about by citizen movements that organize alternative governance arrangements during times of government crises and inability of government to govern. The following are some of the implementations that might flow from a vision based on this possibility:

- ★ **Democratic national elections, with consideration of a parliamentary system; abolition of the Electoral College; and direct popular election of the president, and reorganization of the U.S. Senate as a representative body.**
- ★ **Amendment to the Constitution to limit corporate power and political action.**
- ★ **Amendment to the Constitution to allow states and regional entities to function more fully as laboratories of democracy.**
- ★ **Realignment of governmental units based on considerations of delivery of services, regional relationships, and ecosystem considerations.**





Examples of Consequences

A national conversation on constitutional renewal would raise many concerns about uncertainty and instability during possible transitions to new forms of democratic governance and government. Some of those concerns might center on whether conditions of uncertainty and instability could lead to fewer democratic rights for citizens instead of more. Other concerns might focus more on the unfamiliarity of the emerging political landscape. Among a wide range of consequences this possibility might be associated with are the following:

- ★ **States as we currently know them might be replaced with various regional administrative units or they might be given even more discretion in a redesigned federal system.**
- ★ **Human rights might be clearly elevated over property and commercial rights in a new constitutional framework.**
- ★ **Executive powers, particularly police powers and the use of the military, might be subjected to more democratic control.**
- ★ **A national dialogue on constitutional renewal might produce an understanding that there are several irreconcilable visions of American democracy and that provisions must be made for peaceful partition into self-governing bodies that can maintain commerce and neighborly relations.**

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility draws upon traditional values of individual liberty and freedom, linking them to a vision of minimal government within a framework of responsible citizenship. According to this vision of democracy, the free individual is the key: a person in control of his or her own life, living with minimal intervention from society or government. Under the possibility, there might be a culture that is mindful of community, as a collection or voluntary association of free individuals, but it would not routinely rely on government compulsion to enforce particular visions of community. The overall thrust of the policy would be to foster democratic life for individuals.

Under this possibility, citizens would expect to act as democratic individuals capable of

charting their own course and combining with others in fluid and diverse arrangements that fit their circumstances and goals. They would live in a diverse and imaginative society that values creative expression, privacy, and the freedom of choice. Citizens in this society would not presume to restrict choices that do not harm others and will not tolerate a government that attempts to do so.

Under this possibility, democracy goes beyond elections. It is a way of life for individuals that could represent a cultural attitude of openness to exploring various ways of “living democratically,” whether in relationships, living arrangements, or civil society. It assumes that democracy is what happens when government gets out of the way.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility could be expressed through a number of policy initiatives, or it could take shape largely through the repeal of existing policies that could be seen as restricting individual freedom and liberty. Government would look for the least restrictive means to accomplish the roles assigned it by democratic citizens. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- ★ **Direct democracy wherever and whenever possible.**
- ★ **Locate the power of decision making at the level most accessible to citizens.**
- ★ **Place lifestyle issues beyond government reach unless there are clear dangers to others.**
- ★ **Favor cooperative models based on one-person/one-vote of humans over non-human corporate models.**
- ★ **Encourage personal and community education as the chief means to prepare citizens for the responsibilities of democratic citizenship.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementations of this possibility might occur outside of what is usually thought of as the normal political sphere of democracy. It might encourage the formation of new institutions and arrangements that promote choice, or it may work to dismantle traditional arrangements that are found to be oppressive. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a democratic society working from this possibility as a vision:

- ★ “Charter communities,” formed and disbanded to fit the collective needs of like-minded individuals, might replace much of what we now consider government in the provision of public services.
- ★ Interpersonal and family relations are left mainly to faith communities and voluntary associations to outline and regulate, with government serving mainly to register arrangements and administer benefits in an evenhanded fashion.
- ★ Intrusive government (in terms of surveillance, “drug wars,” and excessive data collection) might be limited to demonstrated threats to security and safety, and citizens would secure more control over personal decisions like the right to die.
- ★ Incarceration and punishment might be replaced with approaches that stress recovery of damages and restorative justice.



Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility envisions democratic life to be a collective one, based on consensus and broadly based forms of democratic practices and processes. For this possibility, democracy is not so much about institutions but a way of life—a way of community life. According to this possibility, a democratic community is more than a collection of free individuals, more than the sum of its parts. It is a community that enables people to be free. This is an approach that protects minorities from the tyranny of majorities, but it also charts social policy based mainly on the goal of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It is a democratic vision that encourages mutual responsibility of the society for the individual and responsiveness of individuals to the greater good of the community.

Under this possibility, citizens are empowered to participate fully in democratic life. They are encouraged to engage in life-long learning concerning democratic citizenship and civic life.



The policy aims to foster a broad understanding of civic literacy and the responsibility of individuals to become informed and involved in civic life. Under this policy approach, citizens would expect a vibrant democratic culture and would not be fearful of contentious issues or political arguments. The policy aims to foster confidence in the process of broadly based democracy and its ability to problem solve.

Democracy under this possibility goes beyond what we traditionally think of as government, since it focuses on a broader community culture of democracy. The possibility is a call to democratize most aspects of our social institutions and civil society. Democracy and democratic skills are seen as part of a resilient societal capacity and as an essential form of human capital. This possibility is seen by many as the primary way for a society to develop and sustain consensus on a social compact with its citizens.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility could be brought about by political initiatives that approach the overall vision as a series of individual reforms that shape political processes and practices in areas where the public is most prepared to see change, or as an educational effort aimed at a more general social transformation. In either case, there would be considerable effort made to deepen and broaden democratic governance capacity. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- ★ **Grassroots democracy movements that educate citizens and build momentum for change.**
- ★ **Education resources refocused on serving democratic citizenship.**
- ★ **Re-examination of economic organization and regulation.**
- ★ **Experimentation with community-based organizations as laboratories of democracy.**
- ★ **Enlarged roles for open information systems, transparency, and neutral ombudspersons to help citizens navigate democratic institutions.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementations of this possibility might occur at a number of different levels with a variety of mixes of governance and government emphasis. Some sectors might be permitted to become “self-governing,” while in other areas, public oversight might require closer regulation. In some cases, the implementations might relate to securing formal governance roles for non-governmental organizations. In other cases, it might be necessary to end preferences and special arrangements enjoyed by certain powerful institutions. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a democratic society working from this possibility as a vision:

- ★ **Workers, community representatives, and shareholders might be given enlarged roles in corporate governance.**
- ★ **Education might be democratized through discussion-based learning.**
- ★ **Civic and advocacy groups might be held to standards of democratic practice and accountability to memberships.**





Examples of Consequences

Creating and sustaining a culture of democracy would touch most aspects of our society and social relationships. It is expected that the changes envisioned by this possibility would not be welcomed by all elements of society. Like Possibility B, there are far-reaching implications of Possibility C:

- ★ **Multinational business and finance might retaliate against our economy if they feel their interests are threatened.**
- ★ **A culture of democracy might permit and encourage a shift to more sustainable lifestyles with less emphasis on consumption and acquisition of wealth.**
- ★ **The hold of wealthy families and special interests on our society and politics might be broken or at least moderated.**

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility focuses on promotion of equality to encourage the broadest possible participation by citizens in democratic governance and government. According to this policy, a democratic society is a free society, and a society can only truly be free when everyone is free. This vision of equality might be carried out in various ways, some having to do with equal opportunities and other having to do with equal means. Under this possibility, we might come to a societal understanding that some citizens need affirmative assistance in achieving equality in our democracy, while in other cases, we might be looking at the removal of barriers to equality.



Citizens under this possibility would be empowered by direct assistance in participation. This could involve a wide variety of creative means to provide time and resources for access to civic life. At its heart, this policy would reject the notion of “the best government money can buy” and would look to correct imbalances caused by wealth and privilege.

Democracy under this possibility considers a number of dimensions of equality. It considers the impact of poverty, class, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, incarceration, and other status issues that tend to disadvantage people in their efforts to participate equally as citizens. This possibility looks to remedy inequalities as the chief means of setting the stage for democracy.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility requires a societal shift to a deeper understanding of equality and rejection of the dog-eat-dog competitiveness of the market economy as the model for governance. It recognizes that inequality is inherently undemocratic. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- ★ **Re-examination of the historical roots of inequality and the current barriers to participation.**
- ★ **Assessment of the resources and assistance required by various disadvantaged populations.**
- ★ **A redesign of governance to bring it closer to citizens.**
- ★ **Limits on money in governance conversation and election campaigning.**
- ★ **Protection of public goods and services that tend to promote equality.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementations of this possibility might occur on a wide range of scales. Certain rights to equality and restrictions of privilege might be possible only at the federal level. Other affirmative actions promoting equality might be better achieved at a local level through more accessible government or civil society groups. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a society that embraces the promotion of equality:

- ★ **Resources in the form of time off from work, transportation, child care, and other support services would be provided to encourage voting and attendance at governance events.**
- ★ **Public services and civil society resources would be fully utilized in support of equality so that governance information and participation opportunities would be fully integrated in our social services, health care, elder care, correctional systems, and other public programs.**
- ★ **Governance networks would be rebuilt along democratic lines, starting at the community level and proceeding up to citizens' assemblies at the state, regional, and national levels.**





Examples of Consequences

Promoting equality would call into question some long-standing societal views about governance and the role of privilege in determining core policy questions. This possibility might well affect other aspects of social policy:

- ★ **Society might reach a deeper appreciation of how the availability of time and leisure and the meeting of basic needs create greater opportunities for democratic participation.**
- ★ **Our political life might be transformed as the reduction of inequality eliminates many of the “conflict points” in our society.**
- ★ **Citizen “buy-in” through inclusion and enhanced participation will reduce cynicism about government.**
- ★ **Some elements of society will reject egalitarian governance and will “push back,” possibly in disruptive ways.**

Democracy is a Conversation:

Adopt Collaborative, Cooperative, and Conversational Governance

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility is based on a vision of democracy as a kind of conversation about what we might do as a society. It is motivated by the sense that governance discussion in the United States is in serious need of improvement and that it might be improved through a number of collaborative, cooperative, and conversational approaches. It aims both to expand the opportunities that citizens might have to participate in deliberative-democratic discussions *and* to improve the quality of these discussions.

In terms of expanding opportunities for deliberative democratic discussions, the policy would create ways for citizens to participate in groups as a way of exploring and developing policy concerns. In terms of improving discussion practices, citizens would learn new ways to collaborate, cooperate, and engage in civic conversation through ongoing discussions that not only introduce them to policy

concerns but also to new conversational models. Citizens in this society would not expect policy disagreement to disappear but would better learn the causes of disagreement and appreciate opportunities for compromise or new solutions. The policy would aim to foster citizens' ability and willingness to understand various points of view, to consider alternatives for policy and to maintain openness to creating new ideas through dialogue.

Democracy under this possibility is seen as a rigorous civic enterprise that requires sustained discursive or conversational engagement—even with those with whom we disagree. The ability to facilitate discussions, report on the sense of a discussion, and assist in the development of new ideas that might flow from such discussion would be considered a significant public service and a new way of understanding civic leadership.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility could be acted upon in a number of ways that involves government and civil society. An exploration of models and best practices could provide institutions with choices that fit their circumstances and goals. Sustained citizen conversation in private and public forums could be encouraged and supported. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- ★ **Involvement of deliberative practitioners in the design and facilitation of public conversation processes.**
- ★ **Education about the various collaborative and cooperative conversational models available and their advantages and disadvantages in various settings.**
- ★ **Understanding of “professional competency” as including an ability to organize and facilitate basic public conversations.**
- ★ **Inclusion of deliberative processes in governmental and civil society settings where interaction with the public is required or desirable.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementations of this possibility might occur on a wide range of scales, from local to national and international. The American tradition of the town hall meeting provides a framework that most citizens have some understanding of but are uncertain about in terms of fitting to circumstances. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a democratic society working from this possibility as a vision:

- ★ National and local “deliberation days” might explore issues and concerns in support of better understanding and decision making.
- ★ “Participatory budgeting” might grant local areas a role in the allocation of resources for public services.
- ★ Periodic review of public programs and processes by advisory bodies and the public might encourage evaluation of performance and a readjustment of goals.
- ★ Conversational models might be “embedded” in agency processes, corporate charters, and nonprofit bylaws as a way of shifting societal expectations and behaviors.





Examples of Consequences

Reliance on collaborative, cooperative, and conversational approaches would alter the tone and usefulness of much of what we think of as governance discussion. It may even mean a shift in governmental interactions that involve the public. While the possibility cannot solve all the causes of conflict over politics and policy, it may change how we talk to each other about our differences and how we solve problems:

- ★ **“Centrist” political forces might be strengthened, as might the outlooks of moderation and compromise.**
- ★ **“Winner-take-all” tendencies in society might be replaced with a win-win spirit of approaching problems.**
- ★ **Social inclusiveness of the approach might create a sense that all voices have been heard and that resulting decisions are more legitimate.**
- ★ **Avoidance of conflict at all costs might simply defer hard decisions and create deeper crises.**

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility looks to our expression of choice within a system of governance and government as a core feature of democracy. Democracy is all about making choices and the ability of democratic citizens to take part in making public choices about the direction of civic life. At the same time, this policy possibility goes considerably beyond the notion that the availability of voting is the same thing as democracy. Under this possibility, wide and confident participation in electoral processes is seen as evidence of the vitality of a democracy and the legitimacy of its decisions.

This policy possibility would expand and enrich the ways that citizens express their individual choice in a democracy. Under this possibility, citizens would be able to expect meaningful choices with no filters that narrow those choices before wide public discussion. Those filters often narrow choices to the point where citizens feel there is no meaningful choice to be made. The policy would create ways to capture a range of choices, rather



than constraining all public choices to one of two options. Under this possibility, citizens could expect that minority opinion would still be able to find expression and representation in a system of democratic choice. They could also expect that the democratic electoral process would be transparent, fair, honestly administered, and user-friendly.

According to this policy’s vision of democracy, strengthening and enhancing the electoral process will strengthen democracy and help maintain its integrity. The policy would work to protect the rights of citizens to participate in the electoral process and to set electoral process standards. Any factors that compromise those rights or dilute those standards would be seen as weakening our commitment to democracy. A vigorous defense of our rights to participate and our electoral process standards would be expected from all friends of democracy and all officials who take an oath to uphold the law of the land.



Policy Dimensions

★ ★ This possibility has many “practical” implementations that could be instituted without much difficulty and with fairly broad citizen consensus if entrenched political interests are overcome. There are other implementations of this possibility that could be seen as more complex, especially where it could be argued that the United States Constitution or the constitutions of states might need to be amended to allow for more democratic elections. Possible policy dimensions might include:

- ★ **Consideration of electoral “best practices” for both wider participation and more reliable election administration.**
- ★ **Examination of the roles of information (including misinformation and disinformation) and political campaigning in shaping voter decisions.**
- ★ **Evaluation of election law enforcement mechanisms, the politicization of enforcement, and the relatively light penalties for violations.**
- ★ **Consideration of how to bring about representative bodies that are more reflective of our diversity as a society.**



Examples of Implementations

Implementations of this possibility would likely affect who votes but also who runs for office, possibly enlarging the number of voters and candidates. It would also likely shape a broader vision of time and space for elections. Institutional preferences for incumbents and the status quo would likely be reduced if not eliminated. Representation might need to be reframed along lines of communities of interest, instead of geographical districts. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a democratic society working from this possibility as a vision:

- ★ **Adoption, at the state and federal levels, of a *Voter's Bill of Rights* * securing enforceable guarantees of citizen access to the process and of competent and honest election administration.**
- ★ **Development of a process to encourage multi-party systems and proportional representation within our governments.**
- ★ **Criminalization of acts that corrupt elections; suppress voting; or deny the rights of voters, political activists, or candidates.**
- ★ **Extension of voting time periods, election day "holidays," and use of postcard and Internet voting.**





Examples of Consequences

Strengthening the democratic electoral process would be largely a matter of election administration within government, but it would also touch upon other social and political relationships effecting governance. Interests that prefer to see limited participation and narrow differences between candidates will not find diversity or broad citizen involvement to their liking. Others would welcome the new openness. The implications of this possibility might include:

- ★ **More delay and difficulty in coming to decisions within large, diverse representative bodies.**
- ★ **Increased turnover of elected officials, with some loss of expertise and institutional memory.**
- ★ **More opportunities for political minority representation in government, along with opportunities to form coalitions and influence decisions.**
- ★ **A possible need to rely on the implementations of Possibility A (“Engage Citizens in Constitutional Renewal”) to create conditions more favorable to democratic elections.**

* *Several such compilations of such protections and best practices exist, including two common 10-point versions at: www.globalexchange.org and at “National Voters’ Bill of Rights” on Facebook.*

Sense of the Possibility

This policy possibility embraces the capacities of emerging electronic media to strengthen democratic participation and practice. It stems from recognition of the profound transformation of communications and human interactions made possible by the Internet and new social media. The Internet is seen as having the potential to provide information and opportunities for democratic networking on scales that were once unimaginable. This possibility may well be part of the implementations of other possibilities in this report or may be the gateway to an entirely different approach to conducting government and governance in a democratic society. It is a vision of using the full potential of technology in aid of participation and decision making.

This policy approach would enable citizens to expect more equal footing with officials and experts in terms of access to information and analysis. It would enable citizens to have more

time-sensitive expression of opinions and choices. Providing greater access to information and analysis through new communication technologies would help to undo the barriers to civic participation that are created when access to information is delayed or the material is deemed to be too complex for citizens to understand. The policy would also enable citizens to take advantage of expanded opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals and engage in dialogue with those with different ideas.

This possibility envisions democracy along the lines of “open source” technology formats that are under public or user control. The policy’s support of new media aims to make democracy on a large scale more achievable—and render obsolete political barriers and boundaries of all sorts. This possibility is seen as the primary way to engage in democratic practices and processes in the future.





Policy Dimensions

This possibility could be brought about by initiatives that stress universal access to and public control of the Internet. Commercialization would be limited, strictly regulated, and subject to meaningful public interest requirements. The Internet would be the village square on a large scale. Possible policy dimensions of this approach might include:

- ★ **Applications of technology that “fit” various needs of democratic government and governance on different scales and timelines.**
- ★ **Consideration of the “ownership” issues of the networks and the “democratic applications,” including intellectual property and fair compensation.**
- ★ **Exploration of issues of privacy, security, and reliability of information and processes.**
- ★ **Access issues involving those underserved by the Internet.**
- ★ **Examination of new roles for elected officials, civil servants, and neutral third parties in E-Democracy.**

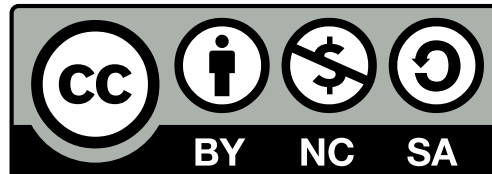


Examples of Implementations

Implementations of the possibility might occur through direct pressure on government to institute E-Democracy approaches within existing programs and agencies, or citizen movements may develop their own forms of E-Democracy that are ultimately recognized by government. Citizen development of E-Democracy approaches might start to blur the distinction between government and governance as the sense of E-Democracy discussions comes to exert major influence on official decisions. The following policy directions are some of the implementations that might occur in a democratic society working from this possibility as a vision:

- ★ **Virtual town halls could operate on a sustained basis on large scale with minimal logistics and overhead.**
- ★ **Citizen polling on issues of concern and voting on initiatives could occur rapidly and shape policy in real time.**
- ★ **High-speed Internet connections could be brought within reach of the overwhelming majority of citizens.**
- ★ **Internet regulation might be treated as more than a matter of commerce, expanding to deal with ethics and fairness in a democracy.**





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Contrasting Possibilities & the Interactivity Foundation Discussion Process, 2nd edition (2009)
Public Discussion as the Exploration & Development of Contrasting Conceptual Possibilities (2006)
Teaching Tips (2009)
Julius “Jay” Stern: A Biography (2010)
Plenary Review: A Macro-Policy Approach to Improve Public Policy (1991)

In pursuit of its mission to encourage and enhance the discussion of—and engagement with—broad public policy ideas (or “possibilities”), the Interactivity Foundation continues to conduct new discussion projects and develop new Discussion Reports from those projects. It is also continually revising its prior reports and developing new discussion guidebooks and other materials. The above list of publications was accurate as of the print date. For an up-to-date listing, visit the IF website at www.interactivityfoundation.org.



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