Digital Approaches to Participatory Budgeting

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Learning from 2016-19

• Can ensure a wider range of voices are involved.
• Flexible: overcomes barriers of time and place.
• Work at different paces and compliment offline.
• Harness the power of networks.
• No single tool is always significantly better than the others.
Participatory Budgeting can be described as “Local People deciding how to allocate part of a public budget.” It is a way for citizens to have a direct say in how public funds are used to address local needs.

http://www.participatorybudgetingworks.org/what-is-pb
Designing online PB processes
This section

- Elements of a digital PB process
- Designing your online PB
- Proposals and pitches
- Deliberation
- Voting
- Tools
Elements of a Digital PB process

- Information + data
- Idea generation
- Developing proposals
- Deliberation
- Voting
- Monitoring implementation
Designing your online PB process

A framework for building a participation plan

Aims:
- To gain a deeper understanding of a programme or project
- To get some high-level design elements outlined
- To determine the type of participation methodology best suited for the programme
- Outline roles and responsibilities
- Begin to explore key issues that the project needs to take into account and how they might be managed

More info: ‘Planning your PB process’ webinar
Designing your online PB process

- Timeline and planning
- Skills & resources (in-house or external)
- Design with users and test, test, test
- Training in the tools
- Check compatibility with mobile tech
- Simple guidance
- Where can participants get support?
- Security and verification – trust
- Facilitation and moderation
- Promotion and outreach
Building from the ground up

Scope | Design | Build | Test | Refine | Launch

Research & Communication
Idea generation, proposals and pitches

More info: Idea generation and deliberation
Deliberation

Digital Approaches to Participatory Budgeting

ClimateAssemblyUK met online for the first time this weekend, with 107 members taking part.

Check out some of the coverage here: news.trust.org/item/202004191...

And the presentations are online here: climateassembly.uk/meetings/weeke...
Not just for PB: Practical information about how to design an online deliberative process.

Designing an online public deliberation

The Democratic Society and The newDemocracy Foundation
Voting

Lots of options...

- Ranking system (e.g. rate 1-3 star)
- Budget allocation
- Weighted voting
- Areas and themes
- Live voting
- Hybrid

Practical considerations...

- Voter verification
- Security (e.g. flags and blocks)
- Personal information requested
- Counting votes
- Minimum age for participation

More info: Digital PB: Voting webinar
Voting

Ranked Budget allocation
Voting

Bonus or weighted

Areas and themes
Multiple votes +/−
Voting

Live voting

Hybrid
• Voting options were selected or removed: **112,508** times

• Map explored **2,041** times

• Projects were explored **11,545** times

• Project Design PDFs were opened **1,729** times

• **4,300** evaluation survey responses from the **11,472 voters**
Aberdeen City - Collaborative Legislation on a new school facility [https://abc.communitychoices.scot](https://abc.communitychoices.scot)

Fife - PB Voting [https://fif.communitychoices.scot](https://fif.communitychoices.scot)

Glasgow - [https://glasgow.communitychoices.scot](https://glasgow.communitychoices.scot)

North Ayrshire - Collaborative Legislation (on various projects) and PB Voting [https://nay.communitychoices.scot](https://nay.communitychoices.scot)

North Lanarkshire - PB Voting [https://nla.communitychoices.scot](https://nla.communitychoices.scot)

West Dunbartonshire - PB Voting (site not live)
How to support people to get involved in PB processes which have moved online due to COVID-19
This section

- Thoughts and considerations
- Recent process experience
- Making connections between groups
Considerations

- **Inclusion**: digital access, digital skills, digital confidence, accessing information, being in the home, mental health, feeling connected and ‘part of the group’

- **Wellbeing**: looking after wellbeing ‘quiet room’, building wellbeing into your design of the engagement process from the start, making sure participants have the right information for their needs

- **Safeguarding**: using the features built into digital tools to protect people, monitor asynchronous engagement activity, consider your requirements around safeguarding policies and plans in online world

- **Privacy and security**: consider what should be in place to protect people’s privacy and the security of their devices.
Thoughts

- Plan for a future of hybrid online/offline processes
- You still need an engagement plan
- Think about barriers, skills and training plans in advance – tech inductions
- Break processes into manageable chunks and don’t use too many tools
- Complex verification or excessive personal data capture can turn people away
- Some rules apply equally online and offline: clear purpose; openness and transparency of process; inclusive practice; manageable; feedback loops; data collection and analysis help to assess processes.
Recent process experience

- Identify additional support needs (participant survey) – ask about devices too.
- Liaise with known participants and consider access to any software and hardware they require to participate. This could include screen readers, braille display, magnifiers and speech-to-text software. Data dongles and tech loans.
- Tech induction and skill share sessions.
- Create moderation guidelines. Refresh process and conversation guidelines, with the addition of relevant points for working in an online setting.
- Video should have subtitles and be live captioned.
- Information should be available in different formats, including audio. You might still need to post out packs.
Making connections between groups

Collaborative tools
**Links**

- *Designing an online public deliberation* (2020) [https://medium.com/digital-diplomacy/creating-online-spaces-for-deliberation-what-were-thinking-e94fb40b1e](https://medium.com/digital-diplomacy/creating-online-spaces-for-deliberation-what-were-thinking-e94fb40b1e)
- Demsoc resources (blogs, webinars, podcasts): [www.demsoc.org](http://www.demsoc.org)
Thank you!

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