

Digital tools and Scotland's Participatory Budgeting programme

A report by the
Democratic Society for
the Scottish Government
February 2016



The
Democratic
Society



Introduction

1

The Scottish Government commissioned the Democratic Society (Demsoc) to conduct a research project into the use of digital tools to support Participatory Budgeting (PB), in the context of the requirements of local councils in Scotland. This report, drawn from Demsoc's own research and workshops and discussions with 18 councils currently working on PB around Scotland, is the output of that work.

2

This project included both needs assessment and product analysis components. We engaged with officers from 18 councils across Scotland to ascertain what they saw as their current needs as well as their aspirations for the future with regards to digital PB tools. We also analysed over 60 digital tools and engaged with developers and experts to produce 6 demonstration websites to display how digital tools could be used as part of PB in Scotland.

3

We facilitated workshops across the country with participating councils to allow them to explore and assess possible digital tools that could be used to augment their PB projects. The data gathered throughout this 4-month project has enabled us to form a number of recommendations that relate to the use of digital tools for Participatory Budgeting in Scotland.

Recommendations

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On the basis of our research and conversations with councils, set out in detail below, our recommendations are that:

4.1

Digital engagement is an important support for and complement to participatory budgeting processes, but cannot replace offline engagement

4.2

A successful use of digital engagement will ensure a wider range of voices are involved in PB processes

4.3

The most suitable tools for Scottish councils to use are:

- Dialogue, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion and prioritisation of ideas and projects.
- Your Priorities, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion and prioritisation of ideas and projects.
- Open Active Voting, which is most suitable for allocating funding to projects.
- Participare, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion of ideas and voting to allocate funding to projects.
- Democracy21, which is most suitable for voting to allocate funding to projects.
- Zilino, which is most suitable for co-production of ideas and in-depth deliberation and discussion of ideas to receive funding.

4.4

There is currently no single tool that is significantly better than the others in all situations, and no universal platform for participation

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To take the use of digital in PB projects further, our conversations with councils and officials lead us to suggest that the Scottish Government should consider:

5.1

supporting the uptake of digital engagement tools for participatory budgeting through financially supporting the technology cost of further experimentation to enable the different suitable tools to be tested in different situations, based on the needs of councils in Scotland

5.2

offering councils limited support around the implementation of the digital engagement tools, for example a certain number of days of expert support funded by the Scottish Government

5.3

requiring councils, in return for support, to share and document their learning and participate in a digital PB learning group

5.4

asking the digital PB learning group, working with the Scottish Government and others, to draw up introductory materials for councils and other government agencies who are embarking on participatory budgeting work, and develop the connection of participatory budgeting activity into the Scottish Government's wider work on democratic renewal and collaborative government.

Digital engagement: some preliminary considerations

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It has been repeatedly noted that the Internet and Digital Tools provide an opportunity to "increase participation... boosting inclusiveness and engaging individuals who were previously uninspired by traditional politics and community activities" (Peixoto, 2015), including younger generations (Loader, 2007).

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This is partially due to digital's distinct qualities of interactivity, affordability and connectivity. These attributes create the possibility of a "Networked Public Sphere" (Benkler, 2006) that allows "active, creative and vocal citizenship" (Brants & Voltmer, p9 2011) and enables "many new forms of participation and collaboration" (Dahlgren, p144, 2009).

8

In other words, digital engagement tools could help governments: reach new audiences; involve more people in decision making; be more flexible in their engagement processes, by overcoming barriers of time and place; speed up engagement processes; and connect local networks to engage with the government and each other.

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However, digital tools may also generate potential problems for engagement including the "Digital Divide" (Norris, 2001), which is the phenomenon of digital haves and have-nots, in terms of access to, use of, and the literacy, knowledge and understanding of digital tools.

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Therefore, it is claimed that the Internet and digital engagement tools could amplify existing offline voices (Agre, p314-7, 2002, Hindman, 2009, Margolis & Resnick, 2000), or create what could be termed E-Usual Suspects: people who regularly engage offline, and continue to engage online.

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Furthermore, it is claimed that digital engagement tools may also encourage polarisation and fragmentation of online communities (Noveck, p29, 2000, Sunstein, 2001). In other words digital engagement tools could create "echo chambers bouncing back consonant views and mirrored images that small groups have of themselves" (Macnamara, 2010) which could result in liked minded agreement between a group of similar people, as opposed to deep deliberation.

Potential of Digital Engagement to improve PB

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While the pros and cons above could encourage optimism or pessimism about the ability of digital tools to improve PB processes, it is important to guard against technological determinism (an overreliance on technology) and focus on the *added potential* of digital tools, and not focus on the impact of digital tools on their own. In other words: it is not the digital engagement tools that will determine the success of a PB process, but how those digital tools are used and the quality of the PB process as a whole.

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As the PB Unit has previously pointed out "technology shouldn't be the main driver for considering e-PB. Rather the design and process of PB itself should indicate whether or not e-PB could add value." (PB Unit, 2009). A good PB process should be: genuine and have real impact on real decisions; provide feedback, so people know what has happened because of their engagement; be open, transparent and fair; and have buy-in from the local community and political representatives.

14

Digital engagement tools should be used as part of a *range of methods* in order to ensure maximal, highest-quality engagement. Digital tools for PB should be used to augment existing offline PB processes, as nothing can completely replace the experience of face to face deliberation and the positive 'heat in the room' generated by a community gathering together in the same place to take decisions on how to improve their local area.

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Different engagement methods are required for different people: some people will enjoy attending a meeting at their local community hall, whereas others may prefer to engage online, from the comfort of their own home. Developers of digital engagement tools realise that a range of engagement tools are required in a PB process and as a result they encourage face to face meetings to work alongside their digital solutions for PB. Many digital tools for PB focus on mobile technology, which enables more seamless Offline/Online integration, and can for example speed up the administrative processes of traditional PB events.

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"Good online participation is created by integrating it with the offline world..." the various problems that come with digital engagement "can be mitigated by joining up online and offline PB activity" (ibid). Digital is part of a quality PB process, not the *only part* of the process. By using digital tools to augment existing traditional engagement processes, governments could reap the positive benefits of digital engagement, while minimising the impact of possible issues generated by the over-reliance of digital tools.

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Our recommendation is that digital engagement should be part of PB activity in Scotland as long as digital is part of a broader engagement process, integrated with quality offline engagement methods.

Where in the PB process can Digital Tools be implemented?

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Our work suggests that there is no perfect ‘one size fits all tool’ to support PB processes in Scotland. Although it is possible to build an entire digital tool from scratch for a specific purpose, as seen in Paris’s PB process, for example, the sheer variety of potential PB processes across Scotland means that it would be impractical and expensive to build bespoke digital software for PB in Scotland.

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Instead, pre-existing, customisable software can be used at various stages throughout the PB process. Digital tools can be used to support the following aspects of a PB process:

- Idea Generation
- Prioritisation of ideas and projects
- Discussion of projects
- Deliberation over how best to spend the allocated budget
- Voting for projects to receive funding
- Budget allocation

Methodology

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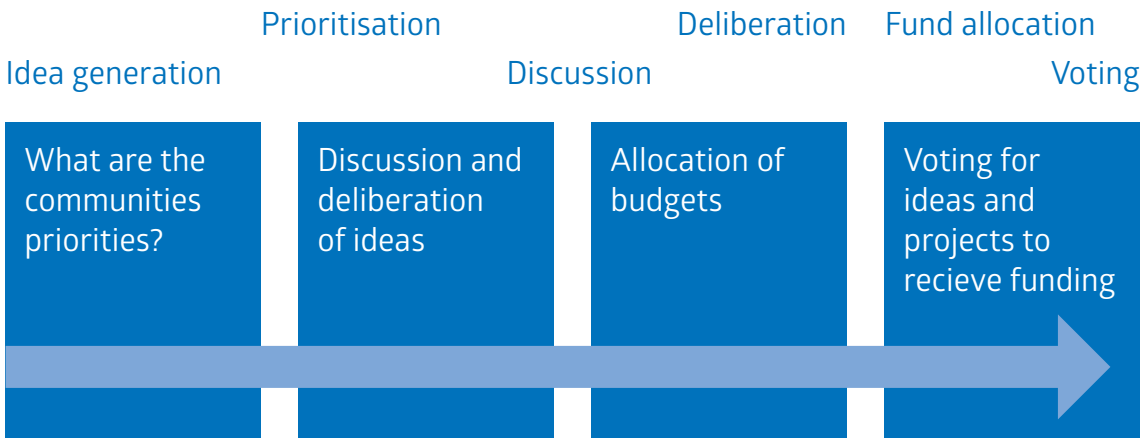
Throughout the project, in line with our constitutional requirement to be independent and non-partisan, we behaved in a ‘platform neutral manner.’ In other words, we did not provide preferential treatment to any particular digital tool, except on the basis of our research and recommendations from external experts, and we have no commercial or personal interest in the tools discussed. We presented tools to councils on their individual merits; and we stressed that other digital tools for Participatory Budgeting, and other democratic engagement processes, are available – however we believe the six tools we selected would be widely seen as representing the best-in-class.

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We began by carrying out a series of semi-structured meetings, both face to face and over the phone, with 11 of the 18 councils who are participating in PB activities in Scotland. The purpose of these meetings was to assess their understanding; discuss their initial ideas on how they could use digital in support of their PB activities; and the areas where they felt that digital tools could be useful.

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Based on that research, we analysed a range of digital democracy tools that could be of use to



Aspects of PB process that could be supported by digital engagement tools

councils interested in PB. We then had conversations with leading PB experts and digital developers to ensure that the digital tools we considered to be potentially useful were viable and ready for use by Scottish councils.

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We then presented demonstration sites for each of the six best-rated tools at workshops with councils around the country and collected feedback and comments to inform this final report.

Expert opinions

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We discussed our initial research with two PB experts, Tiago Peixoto, Team Lead at the World Bank's Digital Engagement Unit, and Jez Hall, associate at PB Partners, who are providing consultancy support on PB to participating councils in the Scottish PB programme.

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Tiago noted the issues of varying rates of Internet access and literacy in digital tools, but he agreed that these issues could be overcome "by ensuring that digital and non-digital aspects of a PB process run in parallel."

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Tiago noted that security and verification were an important aspect of PB digital tools but stressed the need for "balance between security and accessibility." For example, while it is important that voting processes for large amounts of funding should be secure, too much security (for example, requiring ID verification) could put up too many "barriers to engagement".

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Tiago thought deliberation was a key aspect of any PB process and stressed that "digital tools for PB must allow participants to consider their preferences, and the preferences of others," preferably with a focus on dialogue, discussion, prioritisation and ensuring participants "are being exposed to a diverse variety of views and coming across different perspectives." According to Tiago "it is the diversity of views that generates epistemic

value and individual and collective learning" in a participatory process.

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Overall, Tiago was encouraging of Scotland's PB programme and particularly interested in seeing how PB projects could grow in scale over time.

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Jez, an expert in offline PB processes, noted that he was "keen to see digital tools for PB to develop in Scotland" especially in relation to "engaging young people" and the "opportunities to connect people to PB in remote areas." However, he echoed the danger of "local authorities adopting an online-only PB process, without any offline deliberation".

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Jez agreed that digital tools could be useful for PB processes, especially for prioritising needs and voting, but stressed that "quality of interaction" was a key factor in any PB process and this was why both online and offline methods must be used in PB processes.

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Jez also noted that online and offline processes should be fully integrated and "not seen as two separate parts in a PB process."

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These conversations with PB experts gave us confidence in our initial research and ensured us we had all the information required to carry out quality needs analysis of participating councils and eminent research of the digital engagement tools market.

Needs analysis exercise

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Before we could analyse any potential digital tools it was important for us to assess the expressed needs of the councils that were interested in participating in PB projects in Scotland.

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We contacted all of the 18 participating councils to invite them to meet with us to discuss the option of digital tools for PB and set up conversations with staff from the following 11 councils:

- Aberdeenshire
- Angus
- Argyll & Bute
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- East Ayrshire
- Edinburgh
- Fife
- Glasgow
- Moray
- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire

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The remaining 7 participating councils declined our invitation to meet to discuss digital tools for PB as they were at an early stage in setting up potential PB processes. They also indicated that they wished to wait for the publication of this report before exploring digital tools for PB further.

Councils' Expressed Need for Digital Tools for PB

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In order to find digital tools that would be useful for the PB projects of councils, it was important to assess what use councils had for digital tools for PB. This section describes the councils' expressed needs for digital and is derived from meetings with the above 11 councils to assess their possible use for digital tools for PB.

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This section provides an overview of PB projects in Scotland, and the processes that councils plan to use throughout their projects.

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There is also a summary of the possible uses that councils have for digital tools for PB. Following this, there is a discussion on how this digital aspect could fit with the overall digital strategy of the councils.

39

There is also a summary of how councils perceived the issue of voter verification and a section that summarises the councils' considerations around how the online aspects of their PB process would be integrated with their offline process. Lastly, there is a short summary of the councils' thoughts on cost and available budgets for digital engagement tools.

PB Projects and Processes

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Overall, many of the PB projects that councils are undertaking are experimental; a first attempt at a PB project from which they hoped to learn lessons for the future.

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Many of the council officers we spoke to are still in the early stages of developing and planning their PB projects and processes. They were also starting their training and consultancy with PB Partners. While all councils we spoke to felt it was good to consider digital aspects of PB at the beginning of their PB project work, several felt that they are not yet ready to implement digital aspects of PB. Several council staff noted that they were just beginning the exploration phase of their projects and have not gone in to sufficient detail on how the project will work and how these projects may be practically delivered in terms of digital aspects and offline PB processes. A number of councils had yet to finalise budgets for PB processes, but there was enthusiasm and excitement about the possibilities available and potential funding that could be allocated for PB.

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Councils are focusing on a variety of topic areas in relation to their PB projects. Issues such as transport, Health and Social Care Integration and provision for young people were all highlighted as areas where PB could be used to allocate funding. Others are targeting specific areas in the council region and working with organisations in the community to distribute grants. There were also some councils that are expanding on existing projects, such as 'Leith Decides' in Edinburgh City Council.

43

Most council officers we spoke to had limited experience of using digital tools for public participation, such as using Survey Monkey for budget consultations, and inviting the public to participate both online and offline. They felt that they were not always up-to-date with current thinking in terms of digital engagement strategy for the council and saw the need for more innovative digital services to engage with the public. All of the councils were new to using digital tools

for PB projects specifically. Every council was interested in seeing what digital aspects were available for PB and what role these tools could play both in their PB project, and in the wider work of the council.

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The council staff we spoke to thought it was important that digital tools should be used as part of their PB process. Many council staff we spoke to were keen to ensure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to take part in PB, using online and offline engagement methods.

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Council staff in rural areas noted that the geographical spread of people in rural regions made it difficult to reach people in an offline way through public meetings and saw the potential benefit of digital in helping them to reach as many people as possible, especially those who are unable, or unwilling, to attend a traditional PB event. However, councils were concerned that some rural areas would not be able to take part in a digital process due to some areas having little or no access to Internet and/or phone signal. While council officers recognised the need to make efforts to involve people despite these challenges, it was felt that without basic infrastructure, such as Internet connection and high speed broadband, digital tools for PB would only have limited impact in some areas.

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The council staff that we spoke to felt that digital tools for PB could help them to reach different demographics, particularly younger people.

Digital engagement tools and the overall council digital engagement strategy

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Council staff we spoke to felt that digital tools for PB should be linked in closely with their council's overall strategy on digital engagement. Most of the people we spoke to made it clear that they wanted to experiment with digital engagement tools, although there were some who were not sure if they were 'getting it right' in their current work on engaging the public through digital means. They wanted advice and help in this area as they were

concerned that it would be difficult, with some suggesting that it is hard to get digital engagement 'spot-on'.

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Council staff we spoke to felt strongly that PB is an important part of their council's broader engagement methods and strategies, and thus the council officers that we spoke to largely felt that there would be wider interest in digital engagement tools from other parts of their council. They thought of digital engagement in terms of how it could help with their communications strategy, and how this could link with their social media work. Many of the councils expressed their problems with trying to generate debate on social media, and felt that they needed a better platform on which to host these discussions.

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Some council staff wanted to accumulate information on digital engagement tools for PB and gather together more digital engagement examples as part of a 'toolkit' for PB. They felt this would enable them to persuade councillors and others that PB is a good idea, and not as time-consuming as it is sometimes perceived it to be. They were interested in tools that would minimise labour on behalf of the council, which is possible with some digital engagement tools.

Cost of digital tools and capacity

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The councils we spoke to varied in capacity and resources available for spending on digital engagement tools. Council staff largely expressed a lack of available budget for PB projects and digital tools and that they would welcome additional support to help them use digital engagement tools. There were also some concerns about internal procurement processes for digital tools that might act as a potential barrier and slow the process.

Voter Verification and security of process

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The council staff we spoke to were concerned about how they could verify the identity and location of digital voters, and were unsure of the options for ensuring a secure digital voting process. While many officers were less concerned with tight security for the process of idea generation, they felt that it would be important to have secure voter verification for the voting stage where decisions would be taken about money.

52

The key message from the council staff we spoke to was that the registration process should not put people off taking part. Council staff wanted to know how the digital tools can respond to gaming and manipulation, and felt it would be beneficial to the process to have a tool that could spot suspicious voting patterns.

53

Some of the council staff we spoke to were concerned that the verification process could act as a barrier for young people if it required debit or credit card verification. Council staff were interested in hearing about the variety of ways in which participants could be verified through methods such as SIM card verification or using postcode or council tax details. There was interest in finding out more about SMS voting, as some had concerns about the integrity of digital voting applications.

Offline/online integration

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Council staff felt that digital engagement tools would help them to involve more people in their PB processes; some noted that digital engagement tools *'would lower the barriers to participation'*.

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However, council staff also wanted to use digital engagement tools that would work smoothly alongside other engagement methods. Council staff felt that the most important part of the PB process is the human interaction through engagement and participation at PB events; however, they felt that

there was room for a digital element to further augment the level of engagement in their PB projects.

Analysis of available products

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We undertook an extensive analysis of the digital tools available to support participatory budgeting, based on the conversations with councils. Tools for consideration in our analysis were identified from our own experience and network as well as through the Open Knowledge Foundation participatory budgeting tool census.

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Tools were assessed on the following basis:

- Ease of setup and reuse by administrators
- Suitability for processes which seek to generate ideas and allocate resource to ideas
- Ease of use for the public
- Active support and development from supplier or open source community
- Record of previous successful implementations
- Ability to provide demonstration versions
- Facilities to integrate with offline processes

58

Every tool was, wherever possible, trialled by Demsoc, and implementations of the tools in use elsewhere were reviewed. Tools which had not been used or maintained for a significant period of time were scored down. Also, tools that made heavy assumptions about a certain approach that was unique to a particular national context were also scored down. For example, if a tool had been built for a Canadian municipal budget setting in a way which made it hard to adapt and re-use in the Scottish context then we would reduce its score.

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Assessment of the criteria were combined into a score between 0 and 3. Tools that scored 3 were approached to provide a demonstration specific to this project. Each demonstration provided by tool suppliers then underwent a further feedback review with the supplier before proceeding any further.

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For a full list of tools assessed see appendix 1.



Tools selected to be made into demo sites

61

The top five tools which scored the highest according to our criteria (above) were as follows, in no particular order.

- 'Dialogue' by Delib – Demo available at: <https://pb.dialogue-app.com/>
- 'Your Priorities' & 'Open Active Voting' by Citizens Foundation – Demos available at <https://scotland-pb-demo.yrpri.org/> and <https://tiny.cc/pbscot>
- 'Participare' by Change Tomorrow – Demo available from <https://myalba.participare.io/#/>
- Democracy 2.1 – Demo available from <http://tiny.cc/pbd21>
- Zilino by Intellitics – Demo available from <http://scotland-pb-demo.zilino.com/>

62

In the following section we consider each tool on three important characteristics identified by our conversations with councils – online/offline integration, cost and voter verification.

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Online/Offline integration: If the online PB process is to link with the offline process, the digital tool should ensure that the two processes are compatible and integrated, and it should support and augment the offline PB process.

64

Voter Verification: The voter verification process must strike a balance between security and

accessibility. The security should not be unduly onerous or people will be put off. On the other hand, the registration process must be able to verify voters are local and only vote once. It is also important to spot suspicious voting patterns in order for the PB process to be legitimate.

65

Costs: The selected tools each offer various costs and packages for support. Some are based on licences, and others are based on size of project and the numbers of users. Some of the tools also include support packages as part of the cost. The developers have suggested pricings with the possibility to look at alternative options.

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Summaries of the digital tools, with commentary in relation to these key issues are as follows:

Delib – Dialogue

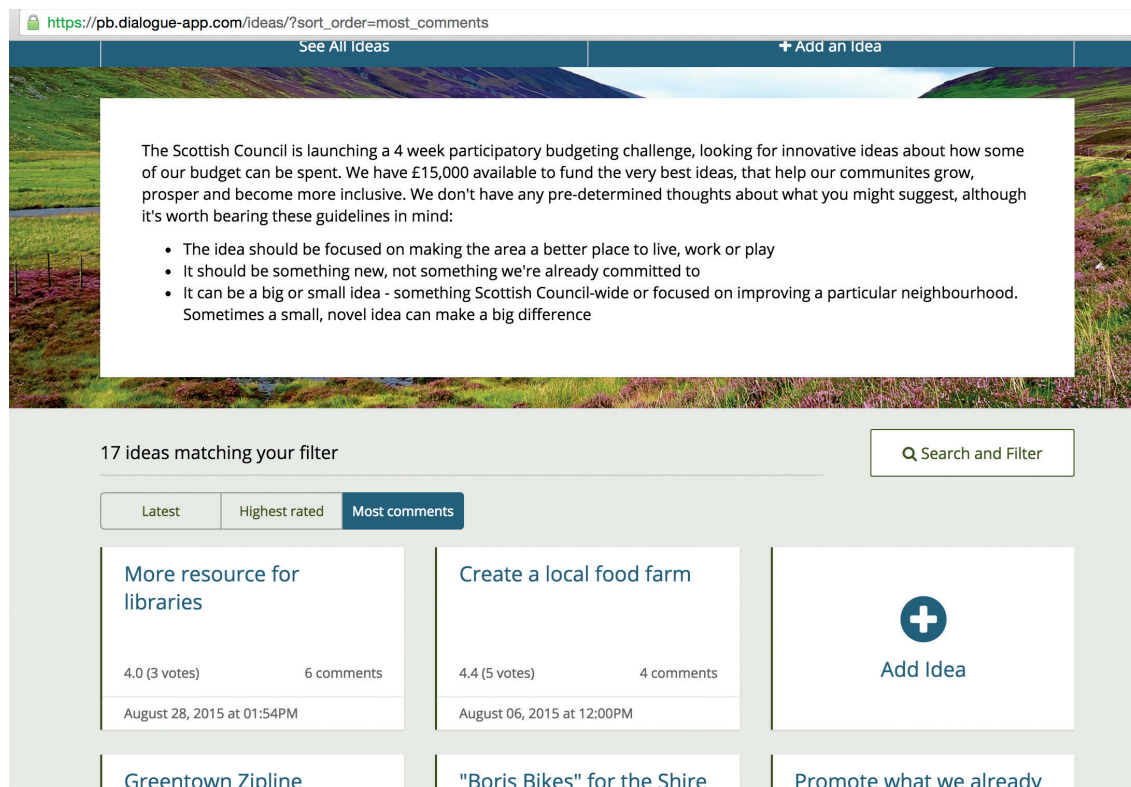
www.dialogue-app.com/info

67

Delib offer a tool called 'Dialogue' which is a digital tool for hosting structured debates. Users are invited to submit proposals and ideas, which can then be discussed and rated by all users. The process produces ideas that can be put into practise. The ratings, awarding between 1 and 5 stars, can be used for voting.

68

Dialogue has been widely used in the UK and is already being used by some Scottish councils for engagement processes other than PB. It has been used widely elsewhere, by over 45 organisations on 3 continents.



Dialogue Demo Screenshot

Online/Offline Integration

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The tool can be used wholly online, but allows any offline processes to feed in to the online discussions. These online ideas can be showcased and discussed at offline events, and rated either at the event (using iPads or smartphones) or after the event by moderators, by manually uploading the comments, feedback and ratings to the online forum. Ideas and ratings submitted at offline events must be entered manually into a spreadsheet that can then be exported and uploaded to the online platform.

Voter Verification

70

Delib requires email addresses and postcodes to verify users. While this means the process is not entirely secure in terms of strict authentication, Delib suggest that people are unlikely to game small PB processes, especially at the idea generation

stage, and propose that these simple checks are sufficient for verification. It is also possible to create unique, single use links or identity codes that can be mailed directly to all participants to verify users.

Cost

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Delib's Dialogue App runs a subscription model which costs **£4995 per year, for unlimited use** per organisation. This means it can be used for multiple projects once the license is purchased. This is a managed service and includes an online 'helpdesk' for enquires, 'Zendesk', as part of the support package.

Citizens Foundation – Your Priorities and Open Active Voting www.citizens.is/

72

Firstly, they offer an idea generation platform called Your Priorities, which is a digital tool that allows people to submit ideas that can then be prioritised and debated by the other participants. The second tool they offer is a tool for voting and fund allocation stage, called Open Active Voting. This platform provides secure voter registration and authentication through a variety of means; ID cards, email address and postcodes. Open Active Voting also includes a budget simulator section; highest priority projects are costed by the council and then participants are shown the full budget and given the option to vote for different projects, selecting as many or as few as they like within the total given budget. This teaches participants about the realistic options within the scope of the budget and how it works i.e. it is not possible to have lots of very

expensive projects, as that would be outwith the budget, but it encourages voters to think about their preferences and make trade offs and decisions.

73

The Citizens Foundation has over 4 years of experience of using these tools in Reykjavik, Iceland. Their project 'Better Neighbourhoods' has been running successfully since 2012.

Online/Offline Integration

74

The Citizens Foundation suggests that the online ideas can be supplemented by frequent offline events in which ideas are gathered offline and submitted manually to the online platform. These ideas feed into the online process and can be discussed online for some time before the voting stage.

Your Priorities Demo Screenshot

Participatory budgeting in Scotland

CITIZENS FOUNDATION

Home Ideas Categories People **SUBMIT YOUR IDEA** Search Account About

Top voted No category filter

Benches and tables by Carlton river
Set up benches and tables to improve facilities for staging and recreation.

Vote
UP 11
DOWN 1

Share
Tweet 0
Like 0

1 points for 0 against
[Join debate](#)

Shared outdoor classroom in Kings Park
An outdoor classroom that local schools can share amongst them, both for teaching about nature in the nature and also to be able to go out on sunny days and learn in a relaxed atmosphere.

Vote
UP 7
DOWN 0


Share
Tweet 0
Like 0

3 points for 1 against
[Join debate](#)



Ali Stoddart
-1 social points
Earn social points with constructive debate. Spend social points on promotions for ideas you like at the top of the page.

Your Priorities

1. Pedestrian lights at Colburn Street, next to Skene Terrace x
2. Shared outdoor classroom in Kings Park x
3. Skate Park for DemoTown Park x
4. Slow people should wear rollerskates when out in public? x
5. Benches and tables by Carlton river x
6. Outdoors exhibition area for local artist in Inverness stree x
7. Install a dog fence in Grafton Park x



Participatory
budgeting in
Scotland

[Help](#) | [Rules](#) | [Logout](#) |  

1 AUTHENTICATE

2 SELECT BOROUGH

3 CHOOSE PROJECTS

4 VOTE RECEIVED

Scottish participatory budgeting

E	N	Q	R	G
---	---	---	---	---

86700 used, 13300 left

You do not have to use the whole sum

Select projects by clicking a name below

Project name	Amount in gbp	Project name	Amount in gbp
A A resting place w. benches by the geothermal pipeline	4830	K New pavement at Trinity Street playing area	9660
B Basketball court at High Park	24155	L Outdoor exercise equipment at Gallowgate	9660
C Benches and tables by Carlton river	9660	M Pedestrian lights at Colburn Street, next to Skene Terrace	48310
D Better signs at historic places in Alba Road	7245	N Plant small groves of trees in open area by Calton Road	14490
E Bicycle shelter at Lochend Elementary School	24155	O Plant vegetation in noise barriers in Union Terrace	7245
F Clean the shore east of the harbour area in Harriot Street	24155	P Speed bump at Chapel Street, south of King Street	9660
G Clearer signs for the tunnel under Castle Street	4580	Q Two speed measurement signs at High street	36230
H Create a neighborhood garden west of Regents Church	24155	R Outdoors exhibition area for local artist in Inverness street	7245
I Install a dog fence in Grafton Park	12075	S Shelter for the homeless near city center	48310
J Installing a ladder down to the beach at Broad Street	9660	T Shared outdoor classroom in Kings Park	24155

Smeltu hér til að kjósa

Number of sent in votes 28 | [betrireykjavik@ibuar.is](#) | [About the vote](#) | [About Better Reykjavik](#) | [Citizens Foundation](#) | [City of Reykjavik](#)

Open Active Voting Demo Screenshot

Voter Verification

75 Security, in terms of verifying and authenticating every user is not highlighted as a concern for the Your Priorities idea generation tool. This is because the developers want to encourage as many ideas as possible and no money is available during the idea generation process.

76 However, the strict voter registration and authentication process in the Open Access Voting tool ensures security for the voting and fund allocation process. Strict authentication ensures one vote per person. Participants must select only one region in which to vote; this prevents people from other areas interrupting a local voting processes. The authentication process in Iceland requires a national ID card (if applicable) or an electronic ID from mobile phone SIM cards or debit cards. However, for a UK context the developers are willing to experiment with postcode and council tax number verification.

77 It is also possible to disseminate individual links to potential participants via email that gives them user access to the tool. This method also ensures that each user receives one vote.

Cost

78 Citizens Foundation proposes the following in terms of cost of services for each Scottish council, with the possibility to look at alternative options.

- Weekly share and assistance meetings with Citizens Foundation staff followed up by 2 hours of work each week for Citizens Foundation to research and dealing with issues that come up in meetings, software customization and responding to questions via email.
- Citizens Foundation charge nothing for information or use of our software, there are no licenses, it is free to use. Costs are generated through additional services and support provided by the Citizens Foundation.

- For example, support for 4 hours a week, 16 hours per month, can be provided a **monthly fee of €1600**. All hosting costs for Your Priorities and support are included in this price.
- Citizens Foundation charge a hourly rate for assistance, custom development, information processing and research
- For extra assistance and bespoke work on software development and processes they would charge **100€/hour**. This is the same amount they charge the city of Reykjavik in their participation partnership with them.
- The moderators at Citizens Foundation would facilitate information exchange between Citizens Foundation, Scottish councils and the city of Reykjavik.
- Citizens Foundation has been highly involved in the design, planning and operation of Better Neighborhoods PB project in Iceland from the start. The city of Reykjavik will surely welcome the opportunity to share its experiences with Scottish cities and regions as well as learn from their experiences.
- The moderators at Citizens Foundation would visit Scotland, a few times, at the best times for the projects to meet up and assist. They would also like to do workshops and presentations from our experiences at a venue and with participants of your choice. This would be combined for different communities / projects.
- The purchasing council would pay for flights, hotels and per-diem. The moderators at Citizens Foundation would invoice only for hours worked in meetings or presentations.

Change Tomorrow – Participare

www.participare.io/

79

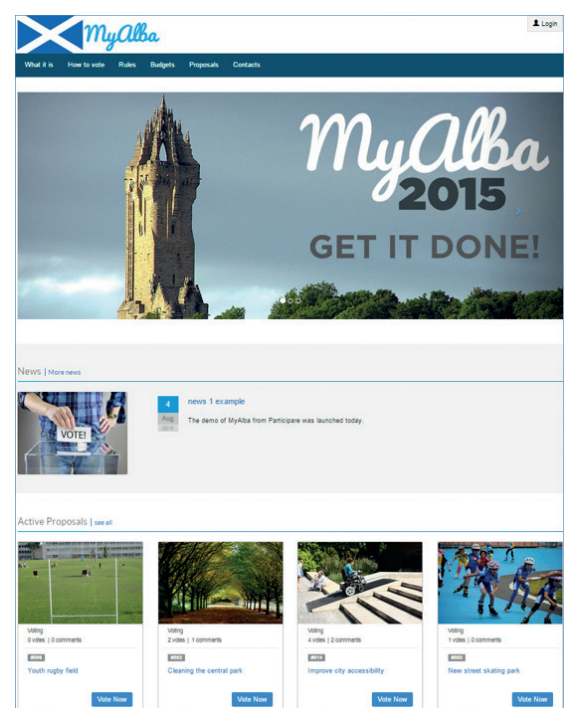
Change Tomorrow offers an online platform called Participare that is fully integrated into the offline process, establishing a clear link between the different parts of the process. It ensures full integration by linking the offline events with the online platform (i.e. offline meetings are scheduled and all online users are invited to attend. The results of the offline meeting are inputted into the online process). The platform also offers exceptionally high security for voter authentication. The verification process requires information such as ID card and DOB, and although these can be altered to fit a Scottish setting such as postcode verification, the tool maintains strict security throughout. Participare has been trialled, tested and used in over thirty PB processes in Portugal since 2010.

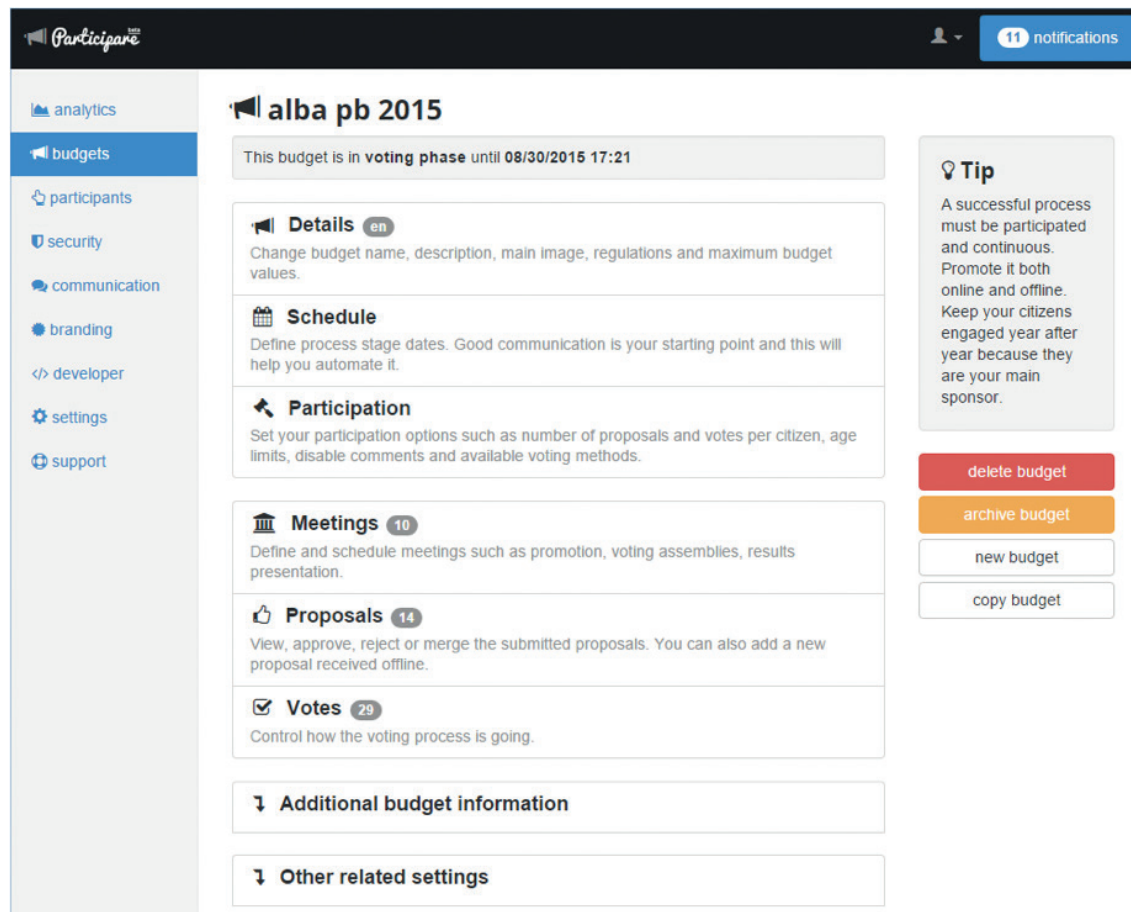
Online/Offline Integration

80

The link to offline events is very clear and the platform includes a timeline on which offline

Participare Demo Screenshot





Participare Demo Screenshot

meetings can be scheduled, and all users can be emailed about the event. This messaging service ensures they can stay informed and engaged.

81

Information and votes from offline events can also be entered into the system via specifically designed CSV files.

Voter Verification

82

The process of registration requires authentication and verification which ensures it is secure. Voters are required to provide ID cards in Portugal, but there is the possibility to register with postcodes, council tax numbers and email address for suitability in Scottish councils. It has the option to require other forms of identification in order to increase security if so desired. Users receive confirmation that their

vote has been counted after they have been successfully verified.

83

Participare also boasts sophisticated anti-fraud mechanisms that can detect suspicious users and voting patterns, including users registered on the same computer and users registering with similar information

Cost

84

Change Tomorrow have suggested the following costs, with the possibility to look at alternative options.

- **Option 1: Only one municipality wants to have a trial**
Free for the first year. Subscription cost after first

year will be set based on number of participants or £4999 for unlimited participants.

- **Option 2: 5 municipalities want Participare**
£4500/year per council for unlimited participants
- **Option 3: 20 municipalities want Participare**
£2999/year per council for unlimited participants

Democracy 2.1 – D21

www.d21.me/

85

Democracy 2.1 (D21) is a voting tool, and can be used after the idea-generation stage of the PB process. People are given a fixed number of positive and negative votes which they can distribute across the ideas. D21 suggests this helps participants to be more invested in the final decision, as opposed to only having one vote on a single issue. Furthermore, D21 propose that the negative voting feature, allowing people to oppose ideas, leads to more support for the final decisions and therefore to more overall satisfaction. D21 uses an algorithm based on the number of options available to calculate the number

of votes each user is allowed to cast. For every 2 positive votes cast, the user has the option to cast 1 negative vote, to assist with prioritising ideas for funding. It is also possible to remove the option for negative votes.

86

D21 has been used in 2015 in projects in New York City, Tunisia, China, Portugal and Paris.

Online/Offline Integration

87

D21 proposes that their tool can be used be used in online or offline PB exercises. It can be fully automated or fully paper based with staff manually inputting ideas and votes on to system, or a mix of the two.

Voter Verification

88

D21 address the issue of voter identity by offering various means of voter authentication. It is possible to create unique, single use links or identity codes

D21 Demo Screenshot

The screenshot shows the D21 voting interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links to 'Dashboard', 'My polls', 'My votes', and a user profile 'Ali Stoddart'. Below the navigation bar is a progress indicator showing four steps: 'Introduction', 'Choose', 'Voting', and 'Done'. The 'Choose' step is currently active. The main content area displays a poll titled 'The Democratic Society' with four options, each with a 'Vote' column containing a '+' and '-' button, and a 'Choice' column with the option name and description. A 'DETAIL' button is next to each option. On the right side, there is a green 'REVIEW' button and a section titled 'Votes you can still assign in this poll:' showing '+ 2 - 1'. Below this, there is a 'Voting deadline:' of '12/29/15 1:25 PM' and a 'How to vote?' link.

Vote	Choice	DETAIL
<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>	New Play Park The current one is run down and not used. We need a replacement	<input type="button" value="DETAIL"/>
<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>	Improve Lighting in Jake Street It is dark and scary	<input type="button" value="DETAIL"/>
<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>	Invest in free wi-fi in the highstreet Good for local people and businesses.	<input type="button" value="DETAIL"/>
<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>	Renovate and improve the Community Hall Our much loved community hall is in need of repair	<input type="button" value="DETAIL"/>
<input type="button" value="+"/> <input type="button" value="-"/>	Plant more trees and plants in the Park	<input type="button" value="DETAIL"/>

REVIEW

Votes you can still assign in this poll:
+ 2 - 1

Voting deadline:
12/29/15 1:25 PM

How to vote?
[Click here](#)

that can be mailed directly to all voters to verify users. This method ensures that each user receives only one vote.

Cost

89

D21 offers **free, no-commitment testing of its municipal platform and a free consultation on the customisation and services that the council would prefer**. D21 then works with each municipal partner on a made-to-order contract based on the services and support required, including staff trainings, data management, ballot counting (paper & digital), and data analytics of consultation or election results. Service packages have tended to range from £ 3,000-20,000, but the costing structure is flexible to meet the needs of any city or council, no matter the size or budget.

Intellitics – Zilino

www.zilino.com/

90

Zilino, by Intellitics, offers an opportunity to host dialogue and hold an in-depth deliberative conversation online. Target groups are specifically invited to take part, and throughout the process participants deliberate and work together to come up with proposals. It replicates the offline process providing opportunities for participants to: share and learn about the needs of the locality; co-designed and cost projects; present projects; and vote for projects to receive funding. This process is made possible by a 'virtual facilitator' to support and run the process; break-out rooms and virtual chalkboards for participants to discuss and deliberate on ideas; and 'pulse' survey tools, to allow participants to vote for ideas. Intellitics are happy to provide these online facilitation services, government organisations are welcome to bring in their own preferred consultants or use in-house staff.

91

The way Zilino can be used for PB is to firstly involve a full range of community stakeholders in the

Zilino Demo Screenshot

Scotland PB Demo

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

The Democratic Society

Democratic

HOME
NEWS
SCHEDULE
LIBRARY
PEOPLE
ACTIVITY
METRICS
FAQ

WHAT IDEAS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE AREA? [EDIT](#)

Table topic

Example

Summary instructions

example

List of tables

Table name	Group size	Comments	Notes
Table #1	3	1	(this is your table)

Key facts

Owner: [Democratic Society](#)

Starts: Aug 20, 2015

Ends: Oct 20, 2015

Tables: 1

State: closed

Manage roundtable

planning and design process. The deliberative online forums allow participants to submit ideas; users are then invited to give feedback on these proposals.

92

The process offers participants more opportunity to be engaged with the process, through inclusion of features such as user profiles, direct messaging, project resource library, and an activity stream. Zilino has been used widely across the North America, including a citizen's forum project with NASA.

Online/Offline Integration

93

The process is a virtual replica of the offline process and so takes place fully online. The process can run alongside the offline process through moderator or 'virtual facilitator' ensuring that the process is closely linked to the offline process.

Voter Verification

94

Zilino sends targeted invites to participants to invite them to register as users. This unique invite ensures that all users are verified in order for them to contribute.

Cost

95

There are three different pricing options for Zilino, with the possibility to look at alternative options. A monthly subscription would cost approximately **€1,000/month** for technical support, unlimited participants, unlimited moderators, and unlimited projects. Single-project uses are **€500/month** for the number of months the project lasts, while larger projects with significant involvement by Intellitrics, Inc., the digital engagement firm behind Zilino, in project design and content could cost between **€5,000** and **€25,000**, or more.

Councils' Assessments of the digital tools

96

This section details council staff members' assessment of the tools presented in workshops, and is a summary of both verbal and written feedback. There is also a short Q&A section in appendix 3 that details further questions from the councils that were taken to the developers to answer.

97

Demsoc ran workshops in four locations, covering six councils, which included an opportunity for council staff to use the demos and get hands-on experience of digital engagement tools for PB. The workshops also included an introduction to digital engagement and discussion of how digital tools for PB could be best used in the council area. The workshops were held for:

- Moray Council, 20th August 2015
- Aberdeenshire Council, 21st August 2015
- Edinburgh City Council, 28th August 2015
- North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils, 17th September 2015

98

The participants at the workshop were staff involved in Community Planning, Community Development, Community Engagement, Strategic Development, Digital Communications, Health and Social Care Integration, and Youth Services. We engaged with over 50 members of council staff during the series of workshops.

99

Feedback was collected both verbally by a scribe (Demsoc Staff) and written feedback from participants. The template for the Feedback Sheet used in the workshops can be found in Appendix 4.



Digital tools workshops in Edinburgh & Aberdeenshire

'Dialogue' – Delib

100

It was felt that the design was overall very user friendly and that taking part in the PB process online through this tool was quick and easy. Workshop attendees described it as *'easy to navigate and visibly accessible'*. They liked that there was a link to social media to share the online process, and that the categorisation included the option to add 'tags' to ideas; an option that participants felt made the tool more accessible and user friendly.

'Seems straightforward, easy and clear even for a technophobe like me!'

101

Workshop attendees liked the ratings system, but were less confident about allocating money on the basis of ratings (i.e. star ratings from 1 to 5) as opposed to a more formal voting process of allocating a set number of votes. There were also some concerns about the necessary capacity for moderation. Attendees considered that it would be a good tool for discussing ideas, but less suitable for voting.

'Your Priorities' & 'Open Active Voting' – The Citizen's Foundation

102

Participants thought that this tool was easy to use and had a clear lay out, with the categories feature being particularly popular. They likened the tool to 'Tripadvisor' and felt that this was beneficial in terms of ease of use, with some commenting that this tool was *'idiot proof'*. People liked that it was very visual, with particular reference to the 'for' and 'against' feature to discuss ideas.

103

They liked that it included stages for both voting and prioritisation, which would work well in a PB process. Participants liked that the Open Active Voting tool included a focus on finance and budget allocation that would give participants the option to choose projects based on a clearly defined available budget. Workshop attendees suggested that they felt that this helped to make the process appear more transparent which was considered an important feature for public involvement in participatory budgets.

104

In terms of voting, the participants liked that there were restrictions on voting for projects only within local geographical areas, which would prevent people from other places influencing voting in the process. They also thought in some cases that this would be helpful for the council structure and would accurately reflect the local area boundaries.

105

They also liked the aspect of personalisation in the tool, through presenting ideas as asking people to consider voting for their proposed ideas. Indeed, some considered this aspect as 'lobbying' for support. They also felt taking part in the process was a more '*personal journey*' for participants, created by engaging them in discussion & deliberation, as opposed to arguments. Some participants noted that '*people would be more drawn in*' to the process due to its emphasis on points for and against an idea, as opposed to a tool in which the ideas are presented in a format more similar to that of a 'list'. They also liked the Social Points feature; this awards points to active users for taking part. They felt that this was another way to encourage people to participate and stay involved.

106

They thought it was beneficial to the process that the tool encouraged debate, and made space for this during the process. They felt that this gave rise to an '*opportunity for better engagement*'.

107

It was felt that this tool could have many uses and there were some who suggested that this tool could be used by schools for small PB projects. In this sense, they thought that it would be flexible for

different uses and different size projects, proposing that it '*would be useful because it is scale-able*'.

'Participare' – Change Tomorrow**108**

People thought that the tool had a friendly user-interface and simple design and layout, which made the tool easy to navigate. They thought that the tool offered the opportunity to include more in-depth information and that this was complimented by the option to include pictures and other visual content.

109

People also liked that the tool was very secure in terms of registration to take part in the process, but people were concerned that this level of security might be off-putting for people. They felt that high security would be necessary for big PB projects, yet to be more suitable for their projects, it would be more accessible if it had less requirements for registration.

'The registration process is too long and the level of security requires too many steps which may put some users off at a project that had smaller budgets.'

110

They thought that moderation set-up was good, including the option to assign users to 'whitelist', 'greylist' or 'blacklist' depending on behaviour. The groups also felt that the extensive list of 'inappropriate terms', which are automatically blocked if they a user attempts to submit such a term, would significantly help with moderation.



Democracy 2.1 (D21)

111

Attendees thought that the design and layout was good and they felt that it was very user friendly. They particularly liked that it was possible to for the public to upload video and images. They felt embedding videos made the process more interactive.

'It gives in depth information which helps people to decide with confidence – it also is user friendly which would encourage people to share their own ideas and take part'

112

People felt that this tool would work well with the offline process. They felt it was both quick and easy to take part in the process and so would be easy to use for voting at offline events.

113

Council staff attending the workshops liked the voting system, and largely felt that the algorithm was helpful to determine a clear prioritisation of ideas.

'Its good that people have to vote for and against ideas; they will really have to think about their choice'

114

There were some who were concerned about the possible impact of negative votes in the process, however, it was largely agreed that this algorithm helped to show ideas and priorities emerging throughout the process. Participants liked that votes were counted immediately and that they would be able to see an overview of how the projects were progressing in terms of popularity among the public throughout the voting period.

Zilino

115

People liked the format of having all the stages of a PB process online that would occur at an offline event. Participants liked that the tool offered the opportunity to discuss and deliberate ideas as they felt that this would encourage people to come up with good ideas and 'creative solutions to local situations'. They thought that the level of detail and the option to have in-depth discussions would be useful for finding about what was important for local people.

'This would be really good for debating issues and going into detail'

116

They thought that this tool could have wider use beyond immediate PB projects, for example, there were some who suggested that this tool could be used in policy making, where policy makers find it useful to gather a variety of responses to proposals and find out priorities for the region.

117

There were some concerns about how the facilitation would work and the impact of having a facilitator who does not have local knowledge. They thought there could be problems if the external facilitator was from Intellitics and would not have a good understanding of local problems and issues. It was suggested that this could be done in-house by the council and that this would address these concerns and other concerns with the pricing structure for this external facilitation. They also suggested there would be a need for training for staff involved in using this system.

Conclusion and recommendations

118

From our research and conversations, we would draw the following conclusions on digital tools for PB in Scotland. These recommendations are drawn from an analysis of the research project recorded in this report. We took into account the following when making these recommendations: research into the available digital tools, the expressed needs of the councils for digital tools for PB, and the feedback received from participants at the workshops.

118.1

Digital engagement is an important support for and complement to participatory budgeting processes, but cannot replace offline engagement

118.2

A successful use of digital engagement will ensure a wider range of voices are involved in PB processes

118.3

The most suitable tools for Scottish councils to use are:

- Dialogue, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion and prioritisation of ideas and projects.
- Your Priorities, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion and prioritisation of ideas and projects.
- Open Active Voting, which is most suitable for allocating funding to projects.
- Participare, which is most suitable for idea generation, discussion of ideas and voting to allocate funding to projects.
- Democracy21, which is most suitable for voting to allocate funding to projects.
- Zilino, which is most suitable for co-production of ideas and in depth deliberation and discussion of ideas to receive funding.

118.4

There is currently no single tool that is significantly better than the others in all situations, and no universal platform for participation

119

To take the use of digital in PB projects further, our conversations with councils and officials lead us to suggest that the Scottish Government should consider:

119.1

supporting the uptake of digital engagement tools for participatory budgeting through financially supporting the technology cost of further experimentation to enable the different suitable tools to be tested in different situations, based on the needs of councils in Scotland

119.2

offering councils limited support around the implementation of the digital engagement tools, for example a certain number of days of expert support funded by the Scottish Government

119.3

requiring councils, in return for support, to share and document their learning and participate in a digital PB learning group

119.4

asking the digital PB learning group, working with the Scottish Government and others, to draw up introductory materials for councils and other government agencies who are embarking on participatory budgeting work, and develop the connection of participatory budgeting activity into the Scottish Government's wider work on democratic renewal and collaborative government.

Appendix 1: Full ranking of available tools

Name	Demsoc PB Score	Website
Acuerdo Educacion	0	http://www.acuerdoeducacion.cl/
Adhocracy	1	https://adhocracy.de/
Allourideas	2	http://www.allourideas.org/
Amipenzunk.hu	0	http://www.amipenzunk.hu/#/~-koltsegyvetesi-kiadasok
Backseat Budgeter	0	http://backseatbudgeter.com/
Budget Allocator	2	http://bangthetable.com/products/budget-allocator/
Budget Ballot	0	http://budgetballot.com/
Budget Challenge	0	http://www.next10.org/budget/license.html
Budget Hero	0	http://www.marketplace.org/topics/economy/budget-hero
Budget Simulator	2	http://www.budgetsimulator.com/info/
BudgIT	0	http://yourbudgit.com
Choicely	2	www.choicely.co.uk
Citizen Budget	1	http://citizenbudget.com/
Citizen Space	0	http://www.citizenspace.com
CitizenSpeak	0	http://citizenspeak.org/
City of London 2012 Budget	0	http://londonbudget.stevenshelby.com/budget
Civic Sponsor	0	http://www.civicsponsor.org/
CivicEvolution	2	http://civicevolution.org
Contoso	0	http://www.microsofttownhall.com/
D-Brain	0	http://www.digitalbrain.go.kr
Deliberatorium	1	http://cci.mit.edu/klein/deliberatorium.html
Democracy	0	http://www.positech.co.uk/democracy2/index.html
Democracy21	3	http://www.d21.me
Demos.eu	0	http://www.demos-budget.eu/
Dialogue App	3	http://www.dialogue-app.com/info/
Dialogue Web portal	0	http://www.skl.se/vi_arbetar_med/demos/demokratiutveckling/medborgardialog/medborgardialog_med_it_stod/dialogue_with_the_citizens
discourse-machine	1	http://www.binary-objects.de/index.php?page=software&id_page=7
DIY Budget App	0	http://zoeandgavin.com/budgetapp/
Fair-share Spending Ballot	0	http://tupelo-schneck.org:8080/cgi-bin/WebObjects/OtraBallot.woa/wa/main
Fix My Tweet	0	http://www.fixmytweet.com/
Gol Mobile	0	http://www.golmobile.com.br/
Greensboro PB	0	http://greensboropb.org/
Guardian Cuts App	0	http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/interactive/2010/oct/19/comprehensive-spending-review-cuts

Happyville	0	http://www.gamezebo.com/games/happyville-quest-utopia
Hyperarchy	0	https://hyperarchy.com
Ideas by Apps.IO	1	http://www.apps.io/for/Ning/Ideas
IdeaScale	0	http://ideascale.com/
Infoop	0	http://www.infoop.org/observ/index.php
Leih Deiner Stadt Geld (Borrow your city money)	1	https://www.leihdeinerstadtgeld.de/
Lisbon City Hall Participatory Budgeting	0	http://www.ourservices.eu/?q=node/57
London By The Numbers	0	http://londonbudget.noahjstewart.com/
Loomio	2	https://www.loomio.org/
Maryland Budget Map Game	0	http://iat.ubalt.edu/MDBudgetGame/
Meiraha.eu	0	http://meiraha.eu/
OpaVote	2	http://www.opavote.org
Participare	3	https://participare.io/index.html
Picola	1	http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/picola/
Popularize	2	https://popularise.com/cities/1
Project for Public Spaces PlaceMap	0	
Proracunskikalkulator	1	http://proracunskikalkulator.com/ #3f420192999f12479097ad1d6f1bb332
Rozpočet pro všechny	0	http://rozpocetprovsechny.cz
See, Click, Fix	0	http://makehoustongreat.com/seeclifix/
Solo Kota Kita	0	http://solokotakita.org/en/
Spacehive	2	http://spacehive.com/
Spending App	0	http://www.spending-app.com/info/
UserVoice	0	http://www.uservoice.com/
Verbeterdebuurt	2	http://www.verbeterdebuurt.nl/
Voordemocratie.nl	0	http://www.voordemocratie.nl/
Vote with Your Taxes	0	http://votewithyourtaxes.com/
World Bank ICT4D Applications	0	http://blogs.worldbank.org/ic4d/ mobile-enhanced-participatory-budgeting-in-the-drc
Your Priorities & Open Active Voting	3	http://www.citizens.is/why/
Zebalog Budgeting	2	http://ffm.de
Zilino	3	http://zilino.com/

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Appendix 3: Q&A with developers; questions from participants at workshops

Dialogue Q&A

Can new ideas be linked to older ideas (almost like a subheading) or does this come under 'comments'?

Dialogue allows for the linking of older ideas in a couple of ways; namely the use of tags to provide thematic search and also by adding links in supporting comments, referencing the idea or ideas that it was building upon.

Can ideas be categorised?

Dialogue allows admins to tag each idea, to provide thematic search for end-users. The tags can also be exported and turned into charts, which helps with analysis and reporting of the exercise.

Does the system notify the administration if an unsuitable or offensive comment has appeared?

Dialogue doesn't provide functionality for unsuitable or offensive comments as it's used in the UK, North America, Australia, New Zealand and Continental Europe, which makes it tricky to establish the words, phrases etc, that might offend. It does however provide options for either pre or post moderating exercises, so that anything offensive or irrelevant can either never make it into the public domain or can be quickly removed thereafter. I'd also suggest that smaller, local exercises, rarely need moderation due to the low response level.

What happens to the comments – are they responded to or taken into account along with the rating?

The comments linked to ideas can be used in any manner that the organisation sees fit. For example, the comments can be used for community management purposes to direct the conversation or to clarify a point, or they can be used to understand how an initial idea was refined by the audience.

Is there a limit on the number of characters that can be used on a comment?

There isn't a character limit on the comments, although they're generally pretty short as the most engaged people revert to creating a bespoke idea.

Is it sufficient to use the ratings to allocate funding?

The ratings should be used in conjunction with the rest of the response mechanisms, and a defined process, to decide the best ideas to fund. It's common for an organisation to take the top thirty ideas (judged by ratings and number of comments) to an advisory/ decision panel of some sort, who can check them for feasibility, before reducing them down to say 10 ideas. In this instance it would be important for the advisory panel to also contain members of the audience.

Can the option to change ratings be removed?

The option for a respondent to change their own ratings can't be removed without bespoke product development. This is to ensure that participants don't attempt to 'game' the exercise.

Can you add videos and images?

Absolutely, the site administrators can embed videos, maps and images. We would want to help them though, as the responsive front-end requires the embedded content to adapt correctly to different devices.

Does it work on a phone or tablet?

Dialogue is a fully responsive tool, that adapts to the type of device it's opened upon, ensuring a great user experience. Ultimately, responsive design helps to reach the largest possible audience online.

If you wanted to target a specific community how do you know if a person is from that community?

Dialogue registration is entirely editable by the site admins, allowing them to ask demographic questions such as a participant's geographic location. These details are tied to ideas for analysis and reporting purposes, to make it quick and easy to identify trends by location.

Are there measures in place to sift out double voting or is this unlimited?

It isn't possible for a participant to vote on an idea twice although they can vote on as many ideas as they wish.

Are analysis and results available to view?

They sure are. Dialogue includes an admin dashboard which displays: ideas, comments and ratings totals, alongside export options for further analysis. Tags can be used to create a basic thematic analysis of ideas submitted.

Democracy 21 Q&A

In certain circumstances could it be possible to switch off the negative voting?

Absolutely. The minus-vote can be very helpful in showing patterns of consensus or controversy around different options, but it is a strictly optional feature of D21 voting. Our team can help advise on when it could be more or less appropriate to include a minus-vote option, but it's always just that – optional.

Could budgeting be added to stop the public picking options that are beyond the local budget? Could this be done by adding a money calculator?

Yes. We implemented a 'budget bar' option as part of New York City's participatory budgeting earlier this year. Our team can talk through the advantages and risks of using voting-by-project vs. voting-by-budget, according to the needs of our Scottish partners.

Can you add a money calculator?

If by 'money calculator' you mean a feature which shows the total budget available to PB projects and 'counts down' according to projects selected by the voter, then yes, this is exactly what we mean by our term 'budget bar' above.

Does it work on a phone/tablet?

Yes, the D21 platform is compatible with all laptops, tablets, and smartphones on a wide range of browsers.

Can it utilise voice technology?

D21 is currently exploring the integration of IVR into its platform. If this is a priority for Scottish partners, we would be open to accelerating the development of this feature.

Is there a way to take into account people's highest priorities, rather than what gets the most votes?

D21's voting system produces a higher rate of consensus and satisfaction through its two main features: (a) the effect of more votes, and (b) minus-votes alongside plus-votes (where appropriate). The consensus-producing power of the D21 system depends on all votes being equally weighted. There are (somewhat sophisticated) mathematical reasons for this, but we have also found in our work across seven countries that giving equal weight to all votes makes the voting process faster and simpler for voters, without sacrificing the flexibility and empowerment that distinguishes our approach to civic participation.

Participare Q&A

Does it work on a phone or tablet?

Yes, Participare is compatible with all laptops, tablets, and smartphones on a wide range of browsers.

Your Priorities & Open Active Voting Q&A

Is there any evidence that projects with a bigger cost can suffer as people try to spread total budget across more projects?

This seems to be balancing out. It started with citizens approving many cheaper projects then went to fewer more expensive but in the 2015 voting it swung back. 420 ideas have been approved by citizens in Better neighborhoods from 2012 - 2015, ideas per year: 2012 – 124, 2013 111, 2014 78, 2015 107.

To us it looks like the general public, in general, wants things somewhat balanced.

How is 'controversial' determined?

The more equal the number of Supporting and Opposing voters the more controversial the idea.

Can you add more options to submit ideas?

This will be easy in our new version of Your Priorities which will be released in the next weeks, it's preview version is open at <http://yourprioritiespreview.org>

Does it work on a phone or tablet?

Yes, current version works but new version is mobile first and can be into a cellphone app if so desired.

Can it auto-select borough post authentication?

Via Postcode? That is not built in but should not be difficult to implement in new version.

Can projects that are already costed be submitted, rather than waiting for them to be costed by the panel?

Yes, for sure. Your Priorities (current and new versions) is quite flexible as regards democratic processes, it's more a matter of defining the processes and making the decisions on how to proceed.

Is it Excel integrated?

Users will be able to export their data in the new version to a CSV file that Excel (and other spreadsheets) can open easily.

That said, should a greater level of openness/visibility/access be a requirement, we'd be happy to look into it. In fact, it's an area that's already on the roadmap for the our next major release.

Do you have an app for it? You mean a dedicated mobile app (e.g. for iOS or Android)?


No, we do not. The idea is to have Zilino perform well on mobile devices via standard (mobile) web browser. For the most part, using Zilino on mobile today is OK but not great. The next major release is being developed following a mobile-first approach and should meet all current web accessibility and cross-platform requirements

Zilino Q & A*By invite only – not sure that's open enough for our needs. Could do otherwise?*

Project administrators in Zilino can set the settings so that anyone with the project URL can sign up for a project, no invitation required.


At this point, however, accessing any of the content (materials, user profiles, conversations etc.) requires authentication. That means participants need to create an account first and sign into their project in order to gain read/write access. Providing safe spaces for conversation online can be a big challenge, and historically we've started from the assumption that our online dialogue events should not be "Google public".


Appendix 4: Feedback Sheets for participants at workshops on tools






Digital Tools for Participatory Budgeting Digital Tool Feedback Form


Please write down any comments or questions you have about the demos and we will pass them on to the developers.





Dialogue  Dialogue: generating, discussing & prioritising ideas, (focus on rating & deliberation)






YourPriority  YourPriority: generating, discussing & prioritising ideas (with budget allocation system)




Participate  Participate: generating, discussing & prioritising ideas (with focus on security)



D21  Democracy21: comprehensive voting system



Pebble  Pebble: focus on in-depth deliberation & discussion

