

Online engagement track		
	<i>Number of dots</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1. Online and face-by-face strategies and tools should be used in concert to engage people where they are in order to optimize the benefits of both for communities that work for everyone.	22	26%
<p>Comments: This is the lesson to be learned from "Arab Spring." These social movements were not launched by social networking alone (as per mass media accounts), but rather through a shrewd synthesis of face-to-face and virtual communication techniques (including cell phones, not solely internet). I'm still impressed with Malcolm Gladwell's caution that virtual communication alone can only create "weak ties." – Harold McDougall, Howard University</p>		
2. We need more collaborative laboratories in which people from different sectors (technology/IF, civic organizations, community organizers, public officials, citizens, community members, academics...) work together to experiment and innovate online civic engagement tools. These new collaboratives will result in knowledge building and sharing ideas across fields.	15	18%
<p>Comments: The more promising locations for innovation and creative solutions may be in the creation of trans-organizational systems focusing on three streams of collaboration: governance, coordination of work processes, and building trust. – Mike Huggins, City Manager, Eau Claire, Wisconsin</p>		
3. Develop and test technological tools that match the specific engagement need.	12	14%
<p>Comments: My richest online experience so far combined old and new technologies: list-serves, conference calls, Skype, face book, wiki, and two face to face meetings. It's a lot of work and probably works best with co-facilitators who know the advantages and limits of each segment. – Dennis Boyer, Fellow, Interactivity Foundation</p> <p>The challenge here is that many tools support many different use cases. They may be a good match for some engagement needs but not for others. To make things even more complicated, successful engagement depends on a human component (to varying degrees). A well-planned, well-designed and well-run process that relies on a crappy tool may be hugely more successful than a poorly-run process using a tool that should, in theory, be a great match for the engagement need at hand. – Tim Bonnemann, Intellitics</p>		
4. "Who is being excluded?" is an even more important question when using online technologies.	12	14%
<p>Comments: The proliferation of cell phone use is a tremendous opportunity for using technology to engage a broader range of the public in civic engagement activities and learning. However, we should do so carefully and deliberately, with the support of good data about exactly how people of different segments of society are using their phones. As with any new technology, there is always the risk of its use for civic engagement replicating social divisions and then limiting its impact. It is both a question of access and a question of the culture of use. We</p>		

should understand both questions as we tread into this area.

– Joe Hoereth, Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement

Cell phones are much more widely distributed than computers and formal online internet access. People in developing countries are using cell phones for operations only accessible via Internet in the developing world – money transfers, purchases, etc. The same techniques could be used in less affluent sectors of developed countries.

– Harold McDougall, Howard University

5. We believe citizen engagement is a social good.

- Some people believe civic engagement is political by definition
- Some people believe the context determines whether or not a given civic engagement activity is political.

7

8%

Comments:

Civic engagement need not be partisan, but it is political in the broader sense of politics as the everyday processes of negotiating situations involving power relations and making public decisions, and very much a public good. Could an embedded culture of active civic engagement in a community be viewed as a common pool resource?

– Mike Huggins, City Manager, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Citizen to citizen engagement is the key social good, and builds a public capable of taking on the work of democracy. That work...deciding, making commitments to act... is inherently political, whereas "citizen engagement" (it's a big tent) done by institutions on citizens, erodes trust and increases cynicism. I think political/not political is an important topic for the field.

– Connie Crockett, Kettering Foundation

Note also Nobel Prize winner Douglass North's insight that all systems in society (government, business, and civil society) run better if there are deep reservoirs of trust (social capital). Civil society is the primary place in which trust is built. That's what runs it. Government runs on votes, the market on money... This goes beyond engagement akin to the power of the media (a role for probing and accountability for public officials). This relates to Bill Bradley's notion of civil society as one leg of a three-legged stool, the other two being business and government. In the US, Bradley said, the civil society leg is much shorter than the other two, making the stool (American society) unstable...Most civil society activists have an overly modest sense of the scope of their role and the scope of their responsibility.

– Harold McDougall, Howard University

Conversations surrounding the semantics about whether civic engagement is political don't seem nearly as interesting as whether blind partisanship and opinion-forming by passive exposure constitute engagement. One of the risks to our form of government is being too busy for more than superficial fascination with political gossip and one-line zingers. Relative depth of engagement might make for an interesting discussion. Thank you for asking!

– Nancy Chaney, Mayor, Moscow, Idaho

I am unsure that "political/not political" gets us very far. It is about public life, decisions and values to some degree. I'd rather see people's thoughts on what goals are important to this conference and "the movement"

a) Engagement as education as citizens. Better educated citizens make for better dialogue and decisions

b) Engagement as civic skills and leadership development. Learning about "how to do" democracy has a value for the vitality and richness of democracy in many settings, in developing good civic skills, and, for some, to encourage and support their becoming leaders at various levels, with our without being elected to a position

c) Engagement as a check against insider power. Akin to the power of the media (in the best circumstances), a role for probing and accountability for public officials (be they elected or as employed government administrators).

All these could be important - which seems most important/viable for conference attendees and others like me chiming in from afar?

– John Stephens, University of North Carolina

6. We need to explore how online technology options can support sustained citizen engagement.	4	5%
7. We need to explore how online technology can be used to teach the skills essential to citizen engagement, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ability to speak my truth- Ability to listen open-minded and open-hearted- Ability to assimilate fact-based pros and cons- Ability to use technology tools- Ability to lead and organize people	4	5%
<p>Comments:</p> <p>In online D&D I have seen several ways that engagement skills can be improved: modeling by facilitators, simulation exercises, podcasts of discussion segments. It's my impression that these issues and techniques will clarify through time simply through younger tech-savvy taking over the reins, In the meantime, for us Boomers, the issue is often tutorials and support by paint-by-numbers approaches.</p> <p>– Dennis Boyer, Fellow, Interactivity Foundation</p> <p>There is a huge potential for education: in schools, higher education and outside the classroom! Even some of the more basic online tools can be used in ways that help participants acquire basic process know-how (e.g. various group methodologies, basic moderation/facilitation skills) that can then be applied for online and offline citizen engagement.</p> <p>– Tim Bonnemann, Intellitics</p>		
8. Ensuring that people have access to the Internet is not enough. In addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- People need the skills and knowledge necessary to use the tools- The tools must match the hardware people are using	3	4%

<p>9. All kinds of people need environments (both physical and virtual) that are centered on the needs and goals of ordinary people, and that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are welcoming to them - Match their languages and cultures 	3	4%
<p>Comments: Yes, this is exceedingly important if a truly representative and engaged community is to be nurtured and utilized. Different ages, socio-economic, ethnic cultures obtain information differently and feel invited often through different means of outreach, so the one-size-fits-all approach is becoming more and more ineffective as the demographics of our communities change and broaden.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– William Roper, Orton Family Foundation</p>		

The “neutrality challenge” track		
How we approach the “neutrality challenge”:		
	<i>Number of dots</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1. Be clear and explicit and transparent about goals, and design the process to match those goals. The process flows from the purpose.	18	24%
2. Part of the task is building capacity and skills to wrestle with values tensions.	18	24%
3. Include multiple, diverse perspectives throughout.	10	13%
4. Good skilled facilitation and convening can mitigate some tensions.	10	13%
<p>Comments: Increasingly I've become interested in how we share the skills of facilitation with participants (as happens in World Cafes). I don't think we can continue to rely on professional facilitators (who mostly do the work for nothing or near-to-nothing), ie for small group facilitation when convening a large-scale event. I think we can build facilitation skills training into our process design when designing large deliberative events. The lead facilitator still needs to be skilful, of course, and I agree, this can certainly reduce tensions. It's a very important role--weighing task and group maintenance. The opposite is true as well, poor facilitation (too laissez faire or too directive or anxious) can heighten tension.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Lyn Carson, University of Western Sydney, Australia</p>		
5. Processes should be grounded in the words and perspectives of the community.	9	12%
6. Focus on inclusion at multiple points of a process (topic selection, process design, framing, facilitation, convening, etc.).	4	5%
7. Be mindful of our choice of language, as potentially exclusive and/or compelling.	4	5%
8. Study the issues, including facts, history, context, data.	2	3%

The theory and practice track		
Statements about theory and practice:		
	<i>Number of dots</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1. Theory often emerges in teaching and learning	14	25%
<p>Comments: Build skills in reflection and critical analysis to discern and point out the examples of colonization we encounter everyday. Incorporate a new language into public conversation to better name and explain and to ask different questions. Why is distortion of the public sphere harmful? Where and how is it occurring? What are common indicators of distortion? Some practical applications of Habermas lite combined with the work of the Demos Center for the Public Center and the Topos Partnership to reframe then underlying organizing ideas for public talk would seem promising, especially those that focus on the concept of public structures (the public physical, organizational, and social systems) as critical to the ability of families and businesses to thrive</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Mike Huggins, City Manager, Eau Claire, Wisconsin</p> <p>Read Benjamin Barber's <i>Consumed</i> – see especially his thoughts on "civic schizophrenia" – we behave as consumers but must learn to act as citizens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Harold McDougall, Howard University</p>		
2. Limits to theory include unpredictability and the fact that contexts are very different	11	20%
3. The relationship between theorists and practitioners is sometimes exploitative (going in both directions)	8	15%
<p>Comments: I'm not sure "exploitive" is a helpful description. A better metaphor might be seeing theory building as interpretative ensemble dance by academic practitioners, government practitioners, and civil society practitioners all with leading and supportive roles throughout the performing experience. Each is necessary to the performance that creates theory.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Mike Huggins, City Manager, Eau Claire, Wisconsin</p>		
4. Sometimes practitioners use existing models to tackle problem and then turn to theory to improve practice	3	6%
5. Sometimes practitioners look to theory for strategies when what it offers are values.	1	2%

Theoretical questions we should pursue (a theory agenda):		
1. What are principles of institutional design for collective action and civic renewal?	14	25%
<p>Comments: Top-down civil society approaches fashioned after "representative democracy" models of government and/or "scientific expert" models breed corruption and elitism, like the models they imitate – a function of their lack of accountability on a day-to-day basis. The problems we now face are beyond the ken of such a narrow slice of the population – we need to hear from everyone, from those most affected, on a "retail" basis.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Harold McDougall, Howard University</p>		
2. What are principles of “civic artisanship”?	11	20%
3. Can we develop a theory to take good practices to scale? (Such as the Ostrom model)	9	16%
<p>Comments: I am working on a new model to take study circles to the scale of a million people, without sacrificing face-to-face contact or "bonding" social capital. I call it the "center-periphery" model.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Harold McDougall, Howard University</p>		
4. How do we build civic agency to foster a civic renewal movement?	7	13%
5. The realm of ideas has been colonized by market thinking—how can we reclaim it?	6	11%
<p>Comments: Theory often develops from a conceptualization of experience and from its testing and refinement through continuing experience. A political process is developed through a series of experiments and is constantly refined as it is used. A practitioner conceptualizes experience so as to move the learning from one experience to another or to teach the process that has evolved from experience of others.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Hal Saunders, International Institute for Sustained Dialogue</p> <p>I have found that teaching students (in my case, at the graduate level) is very much like community organizing. You are trying to empower the students to take responsibility, make informed choices, and to impart your experience and insights without making them feel that your achievements cannot be duplicated, or surpassed. Teaching models that take the center of attention away from the teacher and place it on the students themselves (such as small group exercises) are useful in both community and classroom contexts. In both cases, you want them to learn to get on without you.</p>		

– Harold McDougall, Howard University		
6. How to move from self-interest to community? (How to use technology for that purpose? How can we maintain neutrality?)	6	11%
<p>Comments: Read Jeremy Rifkin's <i>The Empathic Civilization</i> – this discusses (among other things) the impact of the discovery of “mirror neurons” on models of human motivation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Harold McDougall, Howard University</p>		