

e-Democracy facilitates public participation in civil society

"My children keep me busy – and so does my work – but I still found time to go online and give my opinion on the urban renewal project."

E-consultations facilitate transparent dialogue. They enable people to be fully involved in developing policy and in contributing to government processes.

"Signing a petition for improved health care in rural areas has given me a real sense of empowerment."

People initiate e-petitions. These tools give the public an opportunity to express its views and the politicians an opportunity to take them into account.

"I used to think that my local authority was spending too much on community care; but since I've tried to balance the books with their budget game I understand better the range of challenges we face."

Participatory budgeting tools and simulation games help the public gain more insight into the workings of government.

"We are delighted that our region now includes remote e-voting as an integral part of its participation strategy."

Underlying the current lively debate on e-voting is the idea that it is a way to strengthen democracy.



e-Democracy provides politicians and government with new ways to improve dialogue

"I use Twitter to communicate in real time. It allows me to maintain an ongoing dialogue with my constituents and it means I can get my message across undistorted."

Social networking sites are increasingly used by politicians and their constituents to share and exchange information and ideas.

"Good governance requires political will and transparency; using e-democracy tools in our council meetings enables us to achieve both."

Webcasting legislative, executive and judiciary meetings helps to reinforce trust in public institutions and improve accessibility and openness at all levels.

"The online vote navigator helped me decide how I wanted to vote."

Voting advice applications can help electors arrive at informed opinions. They provide a user-friendly overview of political parties, of politicians and of their programmes.

"My political party's website is key to our election campaign because it's a point of contact for people."

More and more party members and voters are looking online for political and electoral information. E-electioneering offers politicians a way to communicate directly with their supporters and to foster their engagement.



e-Democracy offers new ways to co-operate

"Over time I've learned to use my blog to challenge the 'truth' and to tease out the real stories behind the news."

Many bloggers are becoming independent citizen journalists as they share news, information and viewpoints on the Internet. Whilst there can be no substitute for high-quality professional journalism, due to blogs some serious issues have entered the mainstream media, thereby encouraging wider debate.

"Thanks to the Internet, for the first time ever the entire world is beginning to unite around a single idea – the fight against climate change."

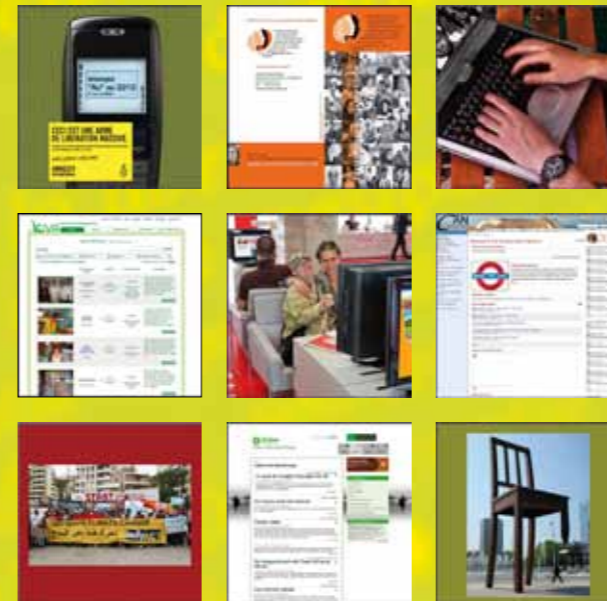
Online exchange and co-operation give everyone the power to convene. This redefines political priorities and transforms the ways our local and global communities can be governed.

"The Internet has made a big difference in my life; I now feel less excluded."

Facilitating online communication for disadvantaged people is a source of empowerment and improves the chance for social equity.

"Our online campaign to ban cluster bombs is happening from the grassroots up and 24/7!"

E-campaigning not only alerts the public to the extent of a problem, but also facilitates its involvement and reduces costs.



e-Democracy mobilises young people

"We are creating a new democracy in which we all have a role to play."

The net generation places great trust in peer-to-peer opinion. Young people develop social networks as well as their own news, entertainment and services through interactive Web 2.0 sites.

"At first I was surprised to meet political candidates in Second Life. Now I expect nothing less!"

Virtual communities offer an ideal forum for politicians to establish a dialogue with new audiences in order to show people that their policies are anything but virtual.

"I've learned from playing Wild Web Woods that I must never give out my name and address on the Internet."

Teaching children Internet skills ensures that they will acquire the social and critical abilities that are necessary to navigate both the real and the virtual worlds.

"Creating a parliament-based Internet television channel run by young people has helped to improve communication between 'them' and 'us'."

Research indicates that democracy is best taught by practising it and that young people are very comfortable using new information and communication technologies.

