

First Principles and Design Requirements: Collaborative Filtering & Open Source Code for Electronic Self-Governance

There are two basic principles guiding the design of this Participatory Governance Environment: 1. that collaborative filtering can be used to leap frog the barriers to very large yet effective groups of individuals actively participating in the governance process; and 2. that Open Source Code can be used to assure ownership and control remains in the hands of those who consent to use and be governed through it. Our Design Principles Page details the reasoning and approach associated with these dual imperatives.

Collaborative Filtering:

Theoretically, the use of collaborative filtering technologies can unleash the genius of the community acting through all its members by availing them of simple means to express their reactions and preferences in a “machinable” manner. By “machinable”, what is meant is that the data is in a digital form and is structured in according to predictable standards. In this way, the results of inputs from hundreds of thousands or even millions of people could be received, collated and utilized immediately – limited only by bandwidth and CPU power. By contrast, gatherings of people in physical spaces to discuss, debate and reach agreement on matters is limited to hundreds at the most, without resort to very significant dedication of time (amounting to many days, weeks or longer) and difficulty in maintaining order and flow. More information about our use of collaborative filtering technologies is available on our [“Can We All Finally Talk At Once”](#) page.

Open Source:

Self-governance is a unique and important aspect of any free-society and open economy. The software used by a community to self-govern itself can become inextricably tied to the autonomy of the community itself. For that reason, it was decided that Open Source Code, and the affiliated bottom-up code generation practices, would be the best fit for this software project. The social, legal, political and economic ramifications of using Open Source Code as the basis for the Participatory Governance Environment are detailed in more depth on our [“Open Source and Participatory Governance”](#) page.