MIT ECAP

e-commerce and architecture project

http://ecitizen.mit.edu

Digital and Physical Place, Process and Presence
Introduction

In this seminar, students will design a digital environment to house and facilitate participatory democracy. To ground the design, Massachusetts’s local form of government, known as “Open Town Meeting” (OTM), will be modeled as an example. OTM requires all interested townspeople to get together once a year and determine basic issues like the tax rate, zoning/development questions or allowing sex education in schools. The thesis of this seminar is that this very old form of direct democracy can be facilitated and made more broadly accessible by allowing remote users to participate in the decision rooms and by unleashing the right technology in and around those physical rooms.

This rough design slide presentation sketches a possible interface, flow and function set for the remote users.
INTRODUCTION/LOG-IN
Provide information on purpose of site; allow user to access site as guest. Allow them to register (linking to registration information). Log-In.

REGISTRATION
Fill in preferences for use of site; provide profile information and filtering criteria, etc.

HELP
Can post inquiries. Also provides information on any function of the site.

ARCHIVE
Storage Area of all recorded information: post, debate, vote results and appeals.

TERMS OF USE
Rules and regulation on use of site and proper user conduct.

QUERY
Search the entire site (including archives) according to certain search criteria. Anonymity function allowed.

APPEALS
This area will provide information for any overturned decisions and provide the related legal notes.

yourPORTAL
Portal which can include: Links to local news, collaborative and/or personal filtering, contact list, a biography (optional), interests, privacy controls (log in with alias, full name or anonymously) and other customization features.

MEMBER PROFILES
Can access the member profiles from a query or by linking from a post or debate entry. NOT accessible via anonymous link from post.

Accessibility to Guests

GU=Guest Usable
GV=Guest Viewable
GVL=Guest View Limited
E.T.

CURRENT ISSUES

PLANNING + TRANSPORTATION

HIGHWAYS
TTC
MARINE
AIR
RAIL
LAND USE
ENVIRONMENTAL

KING/SPEARING PROPOSAL
ZONING VARIANCE AT 1108 YONGE ST.
DENSITY INCREASE AROUND AIRPORT LINE
VARIANCE FOR ROM-EXTENSION
VARIANCE FOR A.G.O. EXTENSION

LIMIT ISSUES BY WEEK

HOW IT WORKS:

STEP 7
FIND AN ISSUE.
VARIANCE FOR ROM EXTENSION

SUMMARY

UNDER CURRENT ZONING, THE ROM CANNOT BUILD THE PROPOSED EXTENSION. ROM IS ASKING FOR A VARIANCE TO THE ZONING IN ORDER TO FACILITATE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EXTENSION.

WEEKS: 11/12

REPORTS: TRAFFIC STUDY.PDF | PROPOSED_EXTENSION.PDF | ECONOMIC IMPACT.PDF

LINKS: HTTP://WWW.GLOBEANDMAIL.COM/010302-ROM.HTML HTTP://WWW.ROM.ON.CA

BEST ARGUMENT FOR

BEST ARGUMENT AGAINST

HAVE A QUESTION?
SEE OUR GLOSSARY.
CONTACT AUTHOR.

POSTED BY:
SMART GRAMMAR

HOW IT WORKS:

1. FIND AN ISSUE
2. READ ABOUT AN ISSUE
3. POST NEW ISSUE
4. DEBATE AN ISSUE
5. VOTE ON ISSUE
**How it works:**

1. **Find an Issue**
2. **Read about an issue**
3. **Post an issue**
4. **Debate an issue**
5. **Vote on issue**

**Context**

- **Title of issue**: MAX. 50 characters.
- **Category**: ADMINISTRATION
- **Sub-category**: COMMUNITY SERVICES
- **Other**: DAY CARE, WELFARE
- **Ward(s)**: 1, 2, CIPMOFTORONTO, 6TH REGION
- **Summary of issue**: MAX. 100 words.

**Post**

**Debate**

**Vote**

**Search by**: Ward, Keyword

**Upload documents**: MAX. 7 MB.

**Submit**
### Public Debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments For</th>
<th>Arguments Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Good for the city by Richard Jackson 3/10/20 8:20</td>
<td>- Occupy, stop the madness by Anonymous 3/10/20 12:58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Committee Debate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments For</th>
<th>Arguments Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not supportive of this by A.H. Mel Lastword 3/10/20 1:12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How It Works:

1. **Find an issue**
2. **Read about an issue**
3. **Post new issue**
4. **Debate an issue**
5. **Vote on issue**

**Contact Us**: KECO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Posted By</th>
<th>Posted On</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!
   Re: WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!
   Re: WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!
   WHY NOT?               | John Smith          | 3/20/02 11:07 AM     |
|                     | Barbara Johnson     | 3/20/02 12:34 PM     |
|                     | Anonymous           | 3/22/02 07:11 PM     |
|                     | John Smith          | 3/22/01 10:15 PM     |
|                     | Dan Greenwood       | 3/21/02 08:00 AM     |

Go to: Other Subject

---

**How It Works:**

1. **Find an Issue**
2. **Read About an Issue**
3. **Debate an Issue**
4. **Post an Issue**
5. **Vote on an Issue**
**TOPIC: REPAVING MAIN STREET**

**Subject**

WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!

**Posted By**

John Smith

**Posted On**

3/20/02 11:07 AM

This has to be the worst idea ever. Main Street was paved less than three years ago, blah blah, blah. Why don't we save the money or use the money to fix up the smaller side streets in the downtown area?

---

**VOTE TALLY ON POST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>REDUNDANT</th>
<th>OUT OF ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Re: WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!

Re: WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!

WHY NOT?

Re: WHAT A LOUSY IDEA!!

Barbara Johnson

Anonymous

John Smith

Dan Greenwood

3/20/02 12:34 PM

3/22/02 07:11 PM

3/22/01 10:15 PM

3/21/02 08:00 AM

---

Go to: Other Subject

---

**HOW IT WORKS:**

1. **FIND AN ISSUE**
2. **READ ABOUT AN ISSUE**
3. **DEBATE AN ISSUE**
4. **POST AN ISSUE**
5. **VOTE AN ISSUE**
John SMITH

Biography:
Concerns: Pollution, Land Use
Other Information:
Number of Posts: 75
Friends List:

VOTE TALLY ON JOHN SMITH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>REDUNDANT</th>
<th>OUT OF ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

View All Posts by John Smith
Variance for Room Extension

Summary

Should this issue be put on town meeting warrant?

Yes
No

Submit Vote
Change Vote

Time Remaining:
3 days, 21 hrs, 5 min

Yes: 30 (60%)  No: 20 (40%)
The social interaction aspect of town meetings constitutes around 80-90% of the meeting. The goal of embedding a synchronous or asynchronous interaction device is to enhance the experience of creating a sense of community.
How it works:

1. Find an issue
2. Read about an issue
3. Post new issue
4. Debate an issue
5. Vote on issue
**VARIANCE FOR R.O.M. EXTENSION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC DEBATE</th>
<th>ARGUMENTS FOR</th>
<th>ARGUMENTS AGAINST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GOOD FOR THE CITY</td>
<td>NO WAY, STOP THIS HAVOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BY RICHARD COX, 8/6/2 8:30</td>
<td>BY ANONYMOUS 8/6/2 10:45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMITTEE DEBATE</th>
<th>ARGUMENTS FOR</th>
<th>ARGUMENTS AGAINST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NOT SUPPORTIVE OF THIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BY R.H. MEZ LASTMAN 8/6/2 1:12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEXT STEPS

User testing
Software development (open source)
U.I.
Press
Amendments Process