PARLIAMENT FOR THE FUTURE
Forecasting the form of a digitally-enabled Parliament

Hansard Society Report, August 2007

Produced by Ross Ferguson and Laura Miller

INTRODUCTION

The Hansard Society was funded by the UK Parliament's Group on Information for the Public (GIP) to establish an initiative that would provoke creative thought about how Parliament, its staff and Members can take advantage of information and communication technology (ICT) over the next decade. We welcomed the opportunity and the result is this *Parliament for the Future* (P4tF) report.

The Hansard Society is an independent and non-partisan charity that is tasked with promoting the accessibility of Parliament and encouraging debate about representative democracy. Our eDemocracy Programme was established in 1997 to ask critical questions about the contribution of ICT to parliamentary politics: what influence it is having on processes and the relationships between citizens, elected representatives and political institutions.

We began *P4tF* by isolating three areas of parliamentary business in which ICT might improve effectiveness and efficiency. These were:

- **Information**: using ICT to improve communications and marketing;
- **Legislation**: using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance;
- **Representation**: using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions.

Previous reports have also studied the application of technology in these areas but have tended to look at the issues exclusively through the lens of parliamentarians or citizens. We wanted to provide unique perspectives with *P4tF*, so we worked with leading researchers and developers from the private and public sectors, asking these experts how they would use technology to enhance democratic processes.

The Hansard Society developed a 'brief' that set out three problem scenarios based around the three parliamentary business areas [see Appendix 1]. This brief was sent out to 100 academic departments, companies and consultants whom the Hansard Society had observed taking an active and consistent interest in Parliament's use of technology. These individuals and organisations - few of which were already active in parliamentary politics - were invited to review the brief and produce a solution (for some or all of the scenarios) based on five to 10 year projections of technological development.

Nineteen of those invited ultimately submitted a solution. We have dubbed these respondents the *Parliament for the Future* 'incubator group'. All have contributed on a *pro bono* basis and Part Two of this report presents the solutions they have developed.

Although forecasting constitutes the core dynamic of the *P4tF* report, we were also interested in attempting to provide an historical overview of Parliament's use of technology. To be able to do this within the resources and time available, we

have limited ourselves to looking at the use of internet-orientated technology. We have also tended to focus on the use of the internet to enable communication between citizens, elected representatives and Parliament (as a corporate entity). While this history is partial, we have included it to provide context for the 'incubator group' submissions.

The earlier sections of this report have been combined with our findings from working with central government departments and local authorities, and formed into a set of recommendations to Parliament for creating the conditions in which ICT innovations could be promoted across both Houses.

A website was also established at www.p4tf.org.uk to provide a public access point to the initiative. From the site, visitors were able to read about the report, the incubator group and topical developments in civic and political uses of ICT posted by the research team.

The Hansard Society eDemocracy Programme
Established in 1997, our eDemocracy Programme was the first dedicated research unit to explore the political and social impacts of information and communications technology (ICT). Our current activity is structured into three work streams:

- Research and Development
- Evaluation
- Comment and Analysis

ICT provides many of the best opportunities to connect citizens to their representatives and political institutions, potentially resulting in a less remote system of democratic governance. The use of online resources presents significant logistical and transparency benefits not always present in conventional, offline engagement methods although these remain important.

The eDemocracy Programme are:

- Ross Ferguson, Director
- Barry Griffiths, Project Manager
- Dr Laura Miller, Programme Researcher

More information about the Programme and the Hansard Society can be found at **www.hansardsociety.org.uk**.

PART ONE
PARLIAMENT AND THE INTERNET – KEY DATES AND DEVELOPMENTS

1. **Key dates**
2. **Key developments**

1. KEY DATES

1980	Parliamentary On-line Information System (POLIS) is launched; a database which is maintained and updated by House of Commons Library staff, and searched every day by MPs, Peers and officials.
1981	The Parliamentary Information Technology Committee (PITCOM) is formed to bridge the gap between Parliament and the IT industry.
1994	Anne Campbell becomes the first MP to have a website.
1995-6	Commons Serjeant At Arms Department takes responsibility for developing a Parliamentary IT network. The Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) is set up but departments within both Houses continue to operate autonomously.
1996	Parliament launches its corporate website, which includes Hansard – the parliamentary record. Parliament.uk email addresses are available; by end of year 50 MPs have parliament.uk email.
1997	General Election is the first where political parties use the web for campaigning.
1998	All Party Internet Group (APIG) set up to promote discussion between new media industries and parliamentarians.
1998	Central provision of ICT (resources and services) is agreed by the Commons Information Committee (to be administered under auspices of PCD and in liaison with departments in the House of Lords). Implemented following 2001 General Election.
1998	200 MPs have PCs; 60 have websites.
1998-9	House of Commons Information Committee produces a report arguing against Parliament's fragmented approach to the administration of ICT: *The Supply of Members' Information Technology Equipment, Software and Associated Services*, 18 December 1998, HC 76 1998-99.
1999	Braithwaite Review publishes report: *House of Commons Commission Review of Management and Services*, 23 July 1999, HC 745 1998-99.
1999	First online deliberative forums are piloted by parliamentary committees, with build, moderation and evaluation support by the Hansard Society.
2000	House of Commons Information Committee produces a second report urging Parliament to coordinate ICT provision: *Information Technology provision for Members*, 30 November 2000, HC 758 1999-2000.
2000	Central government appoints an E-envoy to coordinate and improve public services delivered online.
2001	Parliament develops an Information Architecture and Support Unit (IASU) for both Houses with no executive powers.
2002	House of Commons Information Committee produces a new report highlighting how new technologies can be used in both Houses: *Digital Technology: Working for Parliament and the Public*, 15 July 2002, HC 1065 2001-2002, based on PITCOM survey of MPs.
2002	Parliamentary website upgraded and relaunched.
2002	First webcast of debates in Westminster.
2002	Online consultation carried out by Joint Committee on the Draft Communications Bill results in changes to clauses.
2002	Email estimated to making up 10 – 20 per cent of correspondence to MPs.
2003	430 MPs have parliamentary email addresses; 280 have websites.

2003	MPs take part in first pilots of online constituency surgeries.
2003	Communications Act passed.
2003	Richard Allan becomes first MP to have a weblog.
2003	APPG on eDemocracy established.
2003-4	Cummins Review proposes a single joint IT department with an accountable Director who maintains a close relationship with all Parliamentary bodies: *IS/IT Review: Report to the Clerk of the Parliaments and to the Clerk of the House of Commons*, 22 March 2004, *Consultation Document*.
2004	The Modernisation Committee produces a report outlining the need to use ICT in democratic engagement contexts: *Connecting Parliament with the Public*, 16 June 2004, HC 368 2003-04.
2004	Hansard Society launches TellParliament.net bringing parliamentary committee online consultations under one portal site.
2004	Clerks of both Houses announce decision to form Parliamentary ICT (PICT) as a single organisation following review by Serjeant at Arms, Sir Michael Cummins.
2004-5	Parliamentary Information Management Services (PIMS) technology infrastructure becomes operational.
2005	The Information Committee, along with another four Select Committees, is replaced in July 2005 by the Administration Committee.
2005	Parliament comes under pressure to produce a communications strategy (to include application of the internet) and redevelop its corporate website following publication of the Puttnam Commission report.
2005	Parliament subject to attack by hackers taking advantage of software vulnerabilities.
2005	Parliament appoints Managing Editor to coordinate corporate website.
2006	Parliament produces a five-year internet strategy document and agrees a business case for the redesign of the parliamentary website.
2006	Defence Select Committee runs its online forum around 'Educating Service Families' inquiry, with reduced support from Hansard Society. Members of Committee moderate forum for the first time.
2006	Home Affairs becomes the first select committee to use mobile phones to gather evidence for inquiries. Its Chair, John Denham, becomes first MP to appear on YouTube.
2007	Development of PICT services department formalised through Joint Department Bill.
2007	Commons Modernisation Committee recommends permitting members to use handheld ICT in chamber.
2007	Parliament launches online forums section on corporate website to host committee inquiries.
2007	House of Commons Commission report published– headed by Sir Kevin Tebbit – stresses the importance of the internet in fostering relationships with the public and suggests moving away from dependency on traditional mass communications to more sophisticated social media models of engagement.
2007	All Party Communications Group is created from a merger between APPG on Communications, AP Mobile Group and the APPG on the Internet.
2007	520 MPs have websites, compared to 7 Peers. 39 MPs and 1 Peer have blogs.

2. KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In many ways Parliament's application of ICT (the printing press, telephone, radio, and television, for example) has followed development processes similar to those of other public and private sector bodies. In other ways it has been unique. This section of the report provides a partial overview of key developments in

Parliament's adoption of internet-orientated ICT; it is designed to provide context for the incubator group submissions presented in Part Two.

In the early 1980s, Parliament sought to find a way of using ICT to make its administration more efficient. Of prime importance was the development of a library database to organise the vast amount of information resources required by Members of both Houses. This emphasis mirrored developments outside Westminster, where small to large organisations were also harnessing ICT to systematise and organise their work. But whereas other professional bodies matched systems development with workforce training, in Parliament MPs and Peers could choose whether to take advantage of ICT as a workplace resource. Around this time, in a scrutiny context, there was a move by forward-thinking Members of both Houses to explore the regulatory issues arising from increased use of ICT in the UK. For example, the Parliamentary Information Technology Committee (PITCOM) was established in 1981, for this purpose.[1]

By the 1990s, Parliament had further developed its policy focus in response to an emerging public interest agenda around ICT. The proliferation of email and other online forms of communication had led to public and institutional concerns about the 'digital divide' between those with and those without access. Although it was understood that some members of the public may choose not to go online, by 1995 Parliament was identifying 'digital exclusion' as a particular problem that it should work to obviate. In July 1997, only 2% of the UK population had access to the internet; by the end of 2000, 33% of the UK was able to go online regularly; by April 2006, 60% of the UK adult population was online regularly.[2] Whether this growth is a product of policy or a result of market and equipment developments is the subject of ongoing debate.

Notions of harm, offence and online security framed other regulatory approaches discussed within Parliament during the 1990s as a broader cross-section of the population began to gain access to the internet. Further parliamentary committees appeared with discrete areas of interest (such as 'communications' and 'mobile telecommunications'): of most relevance here is the All Party Internet Group (APIG), formed in 1998 to discuss whether regulation of online forms of communication was necessary; and the APPG on eDemocracy established in 2003 to monitor the impact of ICT on democratic engagement.

Despite Parliament's focus on the public facing aspects of the internet in policy deliberations, the impetus to exploit ICT for its own efficiency and effectiveness gains had fallen away. Parliament's own website was launched in autumn 1996, and included the parliamentary record - Hansard - reflecting a desire to establish a means of public scrutiny online. However, it was based on static webpages and not upgraded until six years later in 2002.

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[1] By 1998, PITCOM had begun to focus more on Parliament's own use of the internet and ICT, encouraging Parliament to develop a corporate strategy.
[2] http://www.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/digitalage/

Some Members and staff became increasingly concerned that Parliament's corporate application of ICT strategy was not keeping pace with developments outside of Westminster, to the detriment of Parliament's communications and engagement responsibilities. In 1998 PITCOM, anticipating the findings from the Braithwaite Review of management and services in the House of Commons, suggested that there should be central provision of IT and support across both Houses.[3] Until then, MPs and Peers were required to buy their own ICT equipment and inform themselves about how best to deploy it across their representative and scrutiny responsibilities. By 1998, 200 MPs had set up computer systems for their Westminster offices; 60 of these had also established an online presence. In general, those MPs who were early adopters of new technologies sought to replicate the forms of communication that were taking place online beyond Westminster.

In 1999 Parliament began to pilot the use of online forums, testing their viability in the context of select committees, bill committees and All Party groups. The forums were set up in diverse ways to evaluate different dynamics: some used pre-moderation; multi-channel advertising was sometimes deployed to promote them; whereas some forums involved only the 'usual suspects' – namely specific stakeholder groups, others were open to members of the public who could join experts in focused discussions. Run with the support of the Hansard Society, these pilot exercises were designed to familiarise MPs and parliamentary staff with interactive online engagement tools, and determine the interest and needs of public users. In the *Tell Parliament* report the Hansard Society collected evaluations of these ventures. In particular, the report highlighted the role that online consultations could play in gathering experiential evidence for inquiries and engaging citizens who do not interact with Parliament or Members via other means.[4]

In 2001, the Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) stepped up its centralised provision of IT support. Within a month, it had processed 599 requests. Each MP could now expect to receive one laptop, three desktop PCs, two CD-Rewriters and up to two printers from Parliament as a basic provision – political parties and their whip's office could supplement the allocation if desired. However, MPs were, again, left to their own devices when it came to learning how to use the technology and apply it to their core business.

For most MPs, at this stage, a readiness to use computers for administration did not translate into a desire to go online to interact with the public for engagement or enhance the provision of information. Most still thought that by connecting to

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[3] The 'Braithwaite Review' report (Review of Management and Services: Report to the House of Commons Commission, 1999, HC 745) discusses the need for central resourcing of ICT and for internet to be used to engage the public. Sir Kevin Tebbit's report (Review of Management and Services of the House of Commons, 25 June 2007, HC 685) developed these recommendations and added new recommendations for more interactivity on the website.
[4] Ferguson, R. et al. TellParliament.net - Interim Evaluation Report, 2003 - 2005 (Hansard Society, 2006).

the internet, they would be increasing their workload.[5] Nevertheless, the proliferation of ICT beyond Westminster was building progressively to provide a powerful incentive for many parliamentarians – particularly those whose constituency role was a priority. Some realised that they faced fewer restrictions when producing e-newsletters than they did when publishing printed material, meaning that campaigning work and contact with constituents offline could be augmented via online channels.

Whether or not those working in Parliament regarded their experiences of using ICT as positive or beneficial, it is noteworthy that, by 2003, 430 MPs had email accounts and 280 had websites. Despite the increase in online activity, two influential reports were published in 2005 suggesting that Parliament needed to do far more to develop a strategic approach to public engagement via ICT. In the first, Parliament's Modernisation Committee argued that the corporate website should do more than simply reproduce the paper outputs of Parliament's work online.[6] The Puttnam Commission, meanwhile, urged Parliament to think about the ways that it could use its website as an engagement tool, while providing individuals with information about their representatives in both Houses.[7] The Puttnam Commission also raised concerns about the readiness of leadership and resources across Parliament that could be relied upon to deliver the required improvements.

Since 2005, the number of MPs with websites has risen to around 520. There are currently 39 MPs blogging in Westminster: before the 2005 General Election, there were just seven. This proliferation hinted at a renewed drive amongst a small proportion of MPs to find additional ways of connecting with constituents to supplement the standard offline means.[8] A similar trend has not been observed in relation to the use of ICT by Peers for administrative, communicative or engagement purposes.

A hallmark of the ICT-orientated discussions that have taken place since the publication of the Braithwaite Report is their strategic rather than managerial emphasis. The underlying question is 'how best to use ICT to enable the public and stakeholders to connect with Parliament?' The general consensus amongst those taking part in the discussions is that:

- ICT should be used to improve communication within Parliament, across its committees and between both Houses;

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[5] Information Committee, 2002, 'Digital Technology: working for Parliament and the public,' HC 1065. The report highlighted how developments internationally (particularly in North America) were alerting MPs in the UK to the perils of email overload.

6 House of Commons Select Committee on the Modernisation of the House of Commons (2004), "Connecting Parliament with the Public," First Report of Session 2003–04, HC 368, House of Commons Stationary Office.

[7] The Puttnam Commission produced a report, entitled *Members Only: Parliament in the Public Eye* (Hansard Society, May 2005). The report suggests that Parliament needs to improve its public-facing work and can harness ICT to do so.

[8] A useful discussion of these trends can be found in: Ward, Stephen & Mary Francoli (2007). 21st Century Soapboxes? MPs and their blogs. Paper presented at the Annual conference of the Political Studies Association, University of Bath, 12-14 April 2007.

- Members and their staff should harness new technologies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their Westminster and constituency offices;
- The internet should be used as a public engagement tool – the approach used should allow for appropriate levels of participation in committee inquires and corporate outreach work;
- Online technologies should be used to open parliamentary business and data up to greater public scrutiny;
- Parliament should learn from good practice in the use of ICT by other private and public sector bodies both within the United Kingdom and internationally.

There remains some discussion about what constitutes 'good practice', however. Taking email administration (as a commonly cited example), some believe that MPs should attend to email correspondence within set time-scales, while others suggest that email correspondence should be treated in the same way as postal mail. Meanwhile, although the idea of engagement appeals to Members, there is little consensus about how it should be carried out or how much time should be spent on such public-facing work, which could encroach on time required to fulfil other roles, including scrutiny of government and draft legislation.

In 2005, Parliament recruited a permanent Managing Editor for its website, the first in a succession of positions created for dedicated ICT personnel. With the Managing Editor in post and the formation of a Web Team there has been a flurry of activity around the corporate website in particular. A five-year internet strategy was produced alongside a business plan for an upgrading of the corporate website (approved in 2006). Cosmetic upgrades were made to the overall design of the website; but in 2007 more radical plans began to materialise, represented by the establishment of a section on the corporate website that hosts deliberative forums convened by parliamentary committees.

Since 2006, some MPs have begun experimenting with social networking tools such as FaceBook, MySpace and YouTube. Such social network websites have been used in a variety of ways to engage the public, ranging from the formal to informal, and from constituency to parliamentary business. For example, in 2006, the Home Affairs Select Committee – in partnership with the Hansard Society – piloted the use of mobile phone technology to support select committee inquiries. As part of this venture, a short video clip was recorded of the Committee Chair, John Denham, setting out the inquiry questions for interested participants: this was uploaded to YouTube and was the first video on the site to feature a Member of Parliament and (by proxy) a select committee.

As yet there are no guidelines or training programmes for Members or staff relating to the application of ICT for knowledge management, engagement or research purposes, although the joint Parliamentary Information Communications Technology (PICT) was formed in January 2006 by both Houses to coordinate ICT strategy. When PICT was formed, members of staff from both Houses were

seconded to it. While both Houses provide a proportion of PICT's budget from their own funds, some of the joint department's income is centrally allocated.

Members' attitudes towards PICT are mixed, although no official survey has been carried out to gauge their attitudes. Within the Lords, concern has been expressed about costs, employee turnover within the new department, inter-House allocation of support and departmental assessment of parliamentarians' needs.[9] While parliamentarians are generally positive about the establishment of a joint department, there is some general concern that the corporate restraints imposed by Parliament might limit the effectiveness of Members' strategic requirements.

While PICT continues to find its feet, parliamentarians are attempting to develop ICT-based communication in a range of other ways. In a policy context, a new All Party Parliamentary Communications Group (apComms) was formed in July 2007 following a merger between The All Party Parliamentary Group on Communications, The All Party Parliamentary Mobile Group (apMobile) and The All Party Parliamentary Internet Group (APIG). From an engagement perspective, Parliament voted to give MPs a £10,000 communications allowance in April 2007. Some MPs have used it to cover their stationery costs with others developing ICT strategies to enable them to communicate with their constituents and beyond.

Underinvestment and a lack of strategic direction over the last 15 years resulted in Parliament's failure to capitalise on the first wave of maturing ICT. Critics argued that Parliament's passivity, or resistance, toward technology not only meant that it missed out on valuable efficiency and logistical benefits, but at a time of declining political engagement, it also passed up opportunities to enter into productive dialogue with the public.

With the drafting of its internet strategy, a business case for investment and the creation of the office of Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT) in 2005, Parliament took significant steps toward redressing deficiencies in its provision and use of ICT.

This attitudinal and practical step-change in Parliament is a positive one. However, it is important to acknowledge that it is overdue and that during the years of inaction, layers of apprehension and complexity have built up that will make Parliament's implementation of even routine and straightforward changes difficult and time-consuming.

Whilst it is redesigning and implementing its corporate website and intranet, Parliament must protect against losing touch with developments in new media

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[9] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199697/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds06/text/60522w03.htm

technology once again. The *P4tF* research project is designed to support Parliament's long term planning and investment in ICT.

Producing this historical account of Parliament's use of ICT was a significant challenge, particularly because Parliament's application of ICT has been fragmented. There were often no records for the build up or aftermath of certain developments, and in places official sources were contradictory. A dedicated investigation to produce a coherent history of this area would make a significant contribution to Parliament's future use of ICT. This idea is elaborated on in the 'Recommendations' section of this report.

PART TWO
PARLIAMENT FOR THE FUTURE - INCUBATOR IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS

1. **Overview**
2. **Submissions**
3. **Incubator group review**

1. OVERVIEW
The Hansard Society was funded by Parliament to provide a report on how the institution, its members and staff might use ICT over the next decade to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. There are conventional ways of responding to such a challenge; in this instance, we wanted to pilot an innovative approach.

The Hansard Society eDemocracy Programme is recognised for the depth and breadth of its practitioner network, which extends beyond the 'eDemocracy field' to a range of other industries and academic areas. We decided to call upon these contacts and turn the challenge over to them. In this way we hoped to tap into a variety of disciplines and encourage truly creative thought about the challenges that Parliament faces in its adoption and adaptation of ICT.

The Hansard Society developed a brief that set out three problem scenarios based around the three parliamentary business areas [see Appendix 1]:

- **Information**: using ICT to improve communications and marketing;
- **Legislation**: using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance;
- **Representation**: using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions.

This brief was sent out to 100 academic departments, companies and consultants whom the Hansard Society had observed taking an active and consistent interest in Parliament's use of technology. These individuals and organisations were invited to review the brief and produce a solution based on five to 10 year projections of technological development.

Those who were sent the brief were free to interpret it as they saw fit. The Hansard Society was available to provide clarifications and background research, but contributors were encouraged to draw on their own experience. A submission format was specified, and an emphasis was placed on the primacy of creative ideas over tangible products.

Nineteen of those invited submitted a solution. We have dubbed these respondents the *Parliament for the Future* 'incubator group'. They are as follows (in alphabetical order):

A. Accenture
B. Anamer
C. Consense

D. Delib
E. Design Council
F. Dialogue by Design
G. eRepresentative
H. Headstar
I. ICELE
J. iMeta
K. Incentivated
L. Informatiehuis
M. Kwiqq
N. Mick Fealty and Paul Evans
O. Milo
P. Nigel Jackson, University of Plymouth
Q. Open Rights Group
R. Propylon
S. Vohm

All have contributed on a *pro bono* basis and this section of the report presents the solutions they have developed. In places it has been necessary to reduce the submission length or rearrange it into the prescribed submission format, but we have paid careful attention not to disrupt the essence of the submission.

2. SUBMISSIONS

A.

OWNER
Accenture

SOLUTION
Collaboration Applications Accelerator Toolkit

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Legislation - using ICT to coordinate and enhance scrutiny
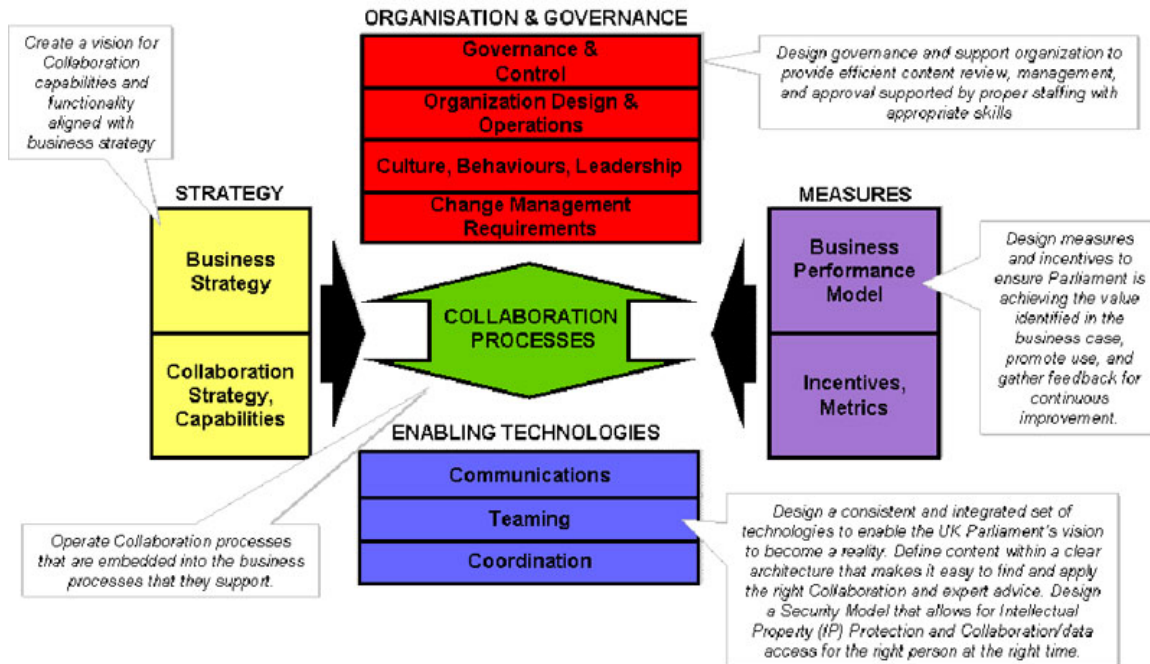
OVERVIEW
One of the most time consuming activities that MPs are involved with is the review of new legislation. Bills go through numerous stages passing between the Commons and the Lords and this remains a complex process with limited transparency to the public. Practical limitations make improving this process a challenge but would provide real benefits such as; freeing time for MPs and office members, improving transparency to the general public and fast tracking the legislative process.

The idea of collaborating for drafting documents in virtual teams is not new. There are many technologies, processes and ideas that are currently available to organisations to support their collaboration requirements.

This is however quite a maze and many organisations are reticent to embark on programmes that rest upon technology that are either proprietary or associated with the world of the internet rather than the business world (e.g. Wikis, Blogs).

The proposed Collaboration Applications Accelerator Toolkit would help Parliament identify, design and deploy the most appropriate set of tools to support coordination and collaboration between MPs during the drafting process. The introduction of such technology would help make the drafting process available for scrutiny by the public and also increase transparency.

The Accelerator Toolkit rests upon a framework that takes into account; the strategy, organisation & governance, measures, and enabling technologies that best support collaboration processes.

ORGANISATION & GOVERNANCE

Governance & Control
Organization Design & Operations
Culture, Behaviours, Leadership
Change Management Requirements

Create a vision for Collaboration capabilities and functionality aligned with business strategy

Design governance and support organization to provide efficient content review, management, and approval supported by proper staffing with appropriate skills

STRATEGY

Business Strategy

Collaboration Strategy, Capabilities

COLLABORATION PROCESSES

MEASURES

Business Performance Model

Incentives, Metrics

Design measures and incentives to ensure Parliament is achieving the value identified in the business case, promote use, and gather feedback for continuous improvement.

ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES

Communications
Teaming
Coordination

Operate Collaboration processes that are embedded into the business processes that they support.

Design a consistent and integrated set of technologies to enable the UK Parliament's vision to become a reality. Define content within a clear architecture that makes it easy to find and apply the right Collaboration and expert advice. Design a Security Model that allows for Intellectual Property (IP) Protection and Collaboration/data access for the right person at the right time.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED

Many providers offer tools that allow online collaboration. The Collaboration Applications Accelerator Toolkit would assist in identifying and integrating the various tools and adapt it to the current IT infrastructure, provided by the Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT) Service.

A number of alternatives are available but the principle would be to offer a platform that supports users across multiple technologies.

Tools such as 'Microsoft Windows track changes' have been standard in the desktop based environment and are now being upgraded onto services accessible as a web interface. Solutions such as Google Docs and Spreadsheets can also support the core of the functionalities.

The concept would be to be able to create a team where people can contribute work into an activity regardless of the tool they're in. This would be a way to transcend the different stove-piped environments.

The Collaboration Applications Accelerator Toolkit would be comprised of:
- Set of functionalities: Collaborative editors, spreadsheets, media
- Maintenance toolset
- Training packs and material
- Support documentation and demo for PICT support team

PEOPLE INVOLVED

The development of the Collaboration Applications Accelerator Toolkit would be based on working closely with a user group to identify the functional

requirements as well as the starter pack/help instructions. One of the key success factors for take up of the facility will not only be a user friendly interface but also intuitive self support help functions which graphically demonstrate how to use the various tools.

The PICT group would be an integral part of the toolkit development and introduction.

DESCRIPTION OF USE

Once the toolkit has been deployed, a co-ordination team at PICT could be responsible to set up environments for new bills and legislative reviews.

A collaboration office could be set up allocating access/security permissions and manage the co ordination of the collaborative environment.

The updates and suggested changes could be made visible to the public on a real time basis through a publicly accessible web site.

ORIGINS

The origins of this technology rest on the convergence of groupware technologies, desktop functionalities and the advances in Internet technologies.

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

The key outputs is efficiency gains for the MPs and their office members taking part in the review of new and existing legislations.

The expected outcomes are twofold:
- Freeing up MPs time to concentrate on other important activities while improving their input in the legislative process
- Making the legislative process more transparent to the public at large.

ACCENTURE

Accenture is a leading provider in Government transformation and innovation implementation in the UK and internationally (www.accenture.com).

Accenture Technology Labs, the technology research and development (R&D) organisation within Accenture, has been turning technology innovation into business results for 20 years. Our R&D team predominantly explores new and emerging technologies that are one to five years out, and uses them to create prototypes and cutting-edge solutions that will help organisations improve performance in the future.

Accenture is vendor neutral and works with the leading providers of technology innovations.

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B.

OWNER
Anamer Ltd.

SOLUTION
WebDem

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - Using ICT to strengthen democratic connections

OVERVIEW
A unique way to bring MP and constituents together
The purpose of WebDem is for MPs to encourage their constituents into political debate and strengthen democratic connections with minimal effort and minimal ICT training. WebDem is engaging, accessible and easy to use and by taking a bottom up approach to democratic participation it gives members of the public a genuine sense of involvement. It automatically puts forward members of the community to join their MP in guiding public debate and also provides MPs with a powerful reporting tool to gather voting and polling statistics for use as evidence to influence policy.

A proven technology for council and community
From May 2006 to May 2007 WebDem was piloted as the technology behind the Votebug.com website, covered by the BBC and attracting a broad audience both young and old. It enables a member of the public to take part in local political debate by spending as little as 10 minutes, say during a lunch break, to post their views on local topical issues either through the website debating chamber or as an SMS text message. However it was used by only a handful of councillors and MPs and lacked a more widespread by-in from councils across the UK. Votebug.com has now been invited to take part in a trial scheme by Camborne Council for the Sustainable Communities Bill currently going through Parliament (at the time of writing).

A versatile and valuable tool for the MP
WebDem is hosted centrally and can be tailored by each individual council or Westminster to match the look and feel of its existing website. The cost for individual MPs is minimal and with very little effort on their behalf it will extend the breadth and depth of democratic engagement with constituents while reducing the workload involved in answering individual requests. It is an efficient, cheap and risk-free way for MPs to engage with the people who elected them.

TECHOLOGY INVOLVED

WebDem is based on standard website hosting technology connecting to a high-end database server (Oracle or SQL Server). It uses standard email server technology to update MPs and constituents with feedback. WebDem also uses existing SMS server technology to communicate to constituents via mobile phone for those who don't have regular access to the internet.

The website complies fully with WCAG web accessibility standards. It is designed to run on the lowest specification computer over the slowest internet connection to ensure nobody is marginalised by advances in technology. For members of the community who don't have access to the internet their council can register them by providing WebDem with a mobile phone number. They can then participate via the SMS text messaging service.

WebDem is hosted centrally for the UK to which each council can subscribe individually for a small annual fee. The subscription gives the council its own WebDem pages and a set of pages for each of its wards. The subscription will enable a council to tailor the look and feel of the site to match the council's branding and colours. Over the next 10 years WebDem will be extended to provide a secure voting platform using Chip and Pin technology. It is expected that some form of Chip and Pin type authentication will be available for mobile phones.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

Anamer Ltd have designed and built WebDem over the past 2 years and tested it in the public domain through a year-long pilot scheme called Votebug.com ending in May 2007. They have recently teamed up with Datalogic Computing Ltd to provide development and 24hr support for the WebDem technology. Datalogic Computing Ltd has won several contracts for design and support of bespoke software systems in the financial industries in the City (including Lehman Bros. and the Bank of England).

While Anamer Ltd and Datalogic Computing Ltd will maintain the central functions of WebDem the councils who subscribe can put in as little or as much resource behind their franchises as they want. The WebDem technology is designed to run itself through the efforts of the constituents taking part, however council or MP involvement is crucial to providing the credibility behind any debates and opinion polls.

DESCRIPTION OF USE

The concept behind WebDem is that of an on-line democracy composed of a hierarchy of WebDem "spaces". Each space represents a geographically defined community containing its own debating chamber, polling station and community leader. The smallest space represents a ward sized community which feeds into a council sized space, which then in turn feeds into a county wide and finally a single UK wide WebDem space, loosely mirroring the UK democratic system.

A constituent registers initially in the WebDem space for their ward and can participate in local debates by entering the WebDem debating chamber. A constituent who has no access to the internet can participate through text messaging from their mobile phone. Through a simple but powerful system of voting and elections WebDem selects a local community leader who represents the majority view for the ward.

The MP or councillor for that area in conjunction with the WebDem leader sets new debates and opinion polls on relevant local issues. The results of debates and opinion polls set by the MP are broken down demographically and geographically across the constituency and can be used as evidence in select committees and to guide future policy.

The MP can get involved as little or as much as they want in the running of their WebDem community. As an immediate gain it will help reduce the workload of an MP in responding to individual email requests from constituents. The MP can recommend the use of WebDem as a forum to encourage debate. Constituents will jointly discuss their issues and form considered opinions which will be put forward to the MP. WebDem promotes majority opinion so will automatically filter out extreme views from constituents.

The MP will receive a monthly summary of activity by email with a link to their own dedicated MP's page. Here they can inform constituents of progress and opinion on current issues being debated and feedback on how evidence gathered through WebDem opinion polls has helped policy decisions.

ORIGINS

WebDem was originally designed as a way for communities to discuss local issues and resolve them through a simple voting system. It adopts a bottom up approach to political involvement by placing the focus on democratic participation at a local level. Following sessions with Councillors, MPs and leaders in the field of e-democracy WebDem was extended to act as a tool for local politicians to gauge public opinion on local issues and provide feedback to constituents.

WebDem was then used in a year long trial from May 2006 to May 2007 as the technology behind www.votebug.com. Launched in the UK in the run up to the local elections in May 2006 it received coverage from the BBC and prime-time national radio. Its community grew rapidly to some 2000 users in the first few weeks however as only a handful of local politicians were willing to get involved relevant local debate lost purpose and legitimacy and the discussions eventually became focussed on more controversial national issues.

The pilot was successfully used to test the WebDem technology against large volume traffic and to extend the functionality based on user feedback. A possible future change which is still to be assessed from the trial is to enhance the

competitive aspect of debating by providing a mechanism whereby users could form political allegiances in the same way that political parties bring together like-minded politicians.

WebDem has now been adopted as part of a pilot scheme by Camborne Council and campaign organisers behind the Sustainable Communities Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to put the economic and social focus back onto local communities. Existing ICT products such as political blogging and e-consultation tools were considered for the pilot but WebDem was the only one suited to increasing democratic involvement at a local level.

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

The success Votebug.com achieved as a pilot for WebDem was down to public engagement and their desire to participate in "soft democracy". The Power Inquiry concluded that there was widespread voter disengagement with the democratic process but Votebug.com proved that given the right framework and incentives constituents are still very interested and willing to be involved in political debate. WebDem is the only ICT in the market place which is aimed at broadening democratic participation amongst constituents beyond those who already commit the time and effort required for local politics.

For the MP, WebDem provides an ideal means of keeping in touch with their constituents from Westminster while reducing some of their workload. They require little or no ICT training and as long as they have an email account and access to the internet they can promote their activities to constituents. Through the use of WebDem they can stimulate debate on real political issues and provide constituents with feedback on how their participation has affected policy decisions.

Finally, WebDem generates reports on democratic participation and opinion. The MP will receive detailed statistical analysis stratified demographically and geographically on the results of opinion polls set in their constituency. It is a powerful source of evidence which can be used to influence council planning and policy. It is also positive proof of the extent of an MP's democratic connections with their constituents and at a national level will demonstrate how engaged the UK public can be with a parliament that embraces ICT for the future.

ANAMER LTD.

Anamer Ltd is a website development company run by Nick Anderton, an IT consultant in the City, and Liz Anderton, a tax specialist with a large accountancy firm in the City. Nick and Liz have designed and created WebDem out of a desire to make democratic participation easy and fun for a wider audience, and have recently teamed up with Datalogic Computing to provide better support and resource for future projects.

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C.

consense

OWNER
Consense

SOLUTION
Open Debate

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
Open Debate serves to engage a wide range of people in consultation and communication processes by initiating accessible involvement via the internet, whilst ensuring data is manageable and fully auditable. For both MP and constituents, the system would provide an interactive and accessible channel of communication.

An MP could present information and issues to constituents, inviting them to register to provide feedback to help shape local policies and decision-making. All feedback received from registered constituents would be immediately recorded into a database, which could be accessed live by authorised users through a password protected administration area. The MP could then respond to the constituents' comments, amend information, and instantly generate reports on feedback - all via Open Debate.

For the constituent, Open Debate would provide an accessible, convenient and interactive environment to contact their MP and get actively engaged in issues affecting their area, without having to take too much time out from their daily lives.

For the MP, the number of individual incoming letters and emails would significantly reduce. Open Debate would instead provide a recognized central area or 'first port of call' for constituents to make contact with their MP, and, in turn, an environment for the simple and effective management of this feedback by the MP. Furthermore, comments received via Open Debate could be grouped by issue for ease of reply, thus reducing the time and resources required. Additionally, when information is updated, Open Debate offers a simple way to notify registered constituents of the change via a group email, and invite feedback where necessary.

Open Debate benefits from a low set up cost and virtually no ongoing costs. Several areas of the system can be built so that they can be updated by the MP /

MP's support directly by using a simple publishing system accessed via the password protected administration area. There is certainly no requirement for training to use or update Open Debate.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED

Open Debate is a web-based application built using ASP.NET/XHTML/CSS which utilises the security, scalability and speed of the Microsoft .NET framework, and Microsoft SQL Server.

It is possible to invite key stakeholders (such as business owners or specific groups) to give feedback on a specific issue via Open Debate by using tracked email technology. An invitation would be sent to each stakeholder on a specified list issuing each with a unique username and password, so that they can log in to the system with ease and comment on relevant information, and their activity can be recorded. This is particularly useful during consultations, not only to encourage stakeholders to give comment, but also to be able to identify who has and who hasn't accepted the invitation to get involved.

Open Debate often incorporates simple maps using Flash technology, to help users to visualise ideas or plans. All systems Consense creates are optimised for search engines.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
- The MP and their office support would be required to manage updates to the information given via Open Debate and provide responses to questions or comment received using a simple publishing system. (Alternatively, an update service can be provided by Consense)
- Constituents would use Open Debate to read latest news or proposals affecting their area and submit comments or questions.
- Key stakeholders within a constituency such as community groups, environmental bodies or business owners, would use the system to remain up-to-date on significant local issues and take part in relevant consultations.
- Members of the public from outside the constituency may use Open Debate to learn more about an area or how issues are consulted on and debated in another region.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
- Daily communication and information dissemination
- Key point of contact for an MP
- Community and stakeholder consultation on key local issues and policies
- Updating constituents directly via email with local news
- Managing constituents' questions via one central system
- Reporting on consultations / local opinion within a constituency
- Building a valuable database of active community members and stakeholders within a constituency

- Demonstrating open, accessible and wide-reaching communication

ORIGINS

Open Debate was developed with the aim of making public consultation accessible, easy-to-manage and measure, and inclusive.

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES
- Accessible environment for constituents to receive and comment on information
- Easy-to-manage channel for an MP to communicate with constituents
- Time-efficient for both constituents and the MP
- Fully auditable system, recording registered constituents' details, comments and questions, MP's responses and other usage statistics
- Low set-up and maintenance costs - many areas of information can be updated by the MP / MP's support

CONSENSE

2Cs Communications Ltd, the parent company of Consense, began its work in online consultation following the Barker Review in 2005 which identified the need for a significant increase in new housing across the UK. After meeting with several house builders and local authorities, 2Cs identified that poorly implemented public consultation can be disruptive to the already complex and lengthy nature of the planning process. In response, Open Debate was created.

Consense formed as a dedicated division of 2Cs Communications Ltd to manage this increase in demand for online consultation. The system is flexible in that the consultation and reporting facilities it offers can be tailored to a number of communication activities. Essentially, where engagement needs to be encouraged and communication recorded, Open Debate can be used.

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D.

OWNER
Delib

SOLUTION ONE
Committee Tracker

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Legislation - using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance

OVERVIEW
The committee tracker would be an online system for managing and tracking the work of all parliamentary committees to allow greater public engagement with their work.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
The system will be an online application built in Plone - an open source content management system, used widely by Delib.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
Delib would work with parliamentary staff and MPs to deliver the system.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
Parliamentary committees carry out a vital role within our parliamentary democracy, and yet finding concise and accessible information on their work remains difficult. The committee tracker system would allow;

- Clear publication of topline committee information, such as remit, membership, issues under consideration, as well as the role of committees within the legislative process.
- More detailed committee information, including member profiles, searchable meetings and events calendar, witness interviewed and oral evidence gathered, committee reports, recommendations and outcomes.
- Public consultation channels in a standardised and accessible format, simplifying the work of committee secretaries in evidence gathering, and removing the current poor practice of 'consultation by pdf download'.
- Subscription update service, allowing the sending of email and SMS updates on the work of the committee to any who wished to track its work.

- Embedded online video presentation of oral evidence presented to committees, as currently available through other media such as BBC Parliament.

Whilst much of this information already exists online, it is presented in an extremely text heavy and formal style, allowing little if any interaction with the work of the committee itself.

ORIGINS

The committee tracker would build on the work of Delib in organising groups online and providing improved access to information and consultation both within organisations and amongst the wider public.

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

The key outcomes of this project are;

- Increased public understanding of and engagement with the work of parliamentary committees
- Increased efficiency of the workings of committees, particularly in the areas of evidence gathering and meeting organisation.
- Improved publication of the work and findings of committees, building into a searchable database of committee activity over time.

DELIB Ltd.

Delib gets people thinking, engaging and participating using new technologies.

Governments, charities and businesses use our tools to create a dialogue with people and make a difference. People use our tools because they want to participate and we make it enjoyable and easy.

Good communication is at the heart of our award-winning approach; we favour websites, software and games, but also work with media such as print and film.

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E.

OWNER
Design Council

SOLUTION
Online Hansard for constituents and Constitupedia for MPs

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
A good user-centred design approach will truly unravel the concerns of users by engaging actively with all the service users and providers to gather insights that drive design from the earliest stages of service development, right through the design process. Awareness of the experience of end users can lead designers to question established practices and assumptions - and it can yield innovation that delivers real user benefit. The system infrastructure behind each of the scenarios needs to be fully understood alongside stakeholder involvement to arrive at an improved service.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
MPs have Hansard to report on the proceedings of the House of Commons. We think constituents deserve an online 'Constituency Hansard' to report on the proceedings of their local MP.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
This Hansard would include:
- A job description for the MP as they define it
- Their constituency priorities and results to date
- A list of services offered by the MP
- When he or she has been in town
- A synopsis of their diary
- An account of meetings and events attended
- A breakdown of requests received, including petitions and letters concerning current affairs
- A profile that explains the MP's background and how they became an MP
- Profiles of local and Westminster staff

A 'Constitupedia' for MPs:
- MPs and their offices tend to work alone. We came across little sharing of best practice between MPs, even within parties, Party rivalry shouldn't prevent better ways of doing democracy.
- Innovation in constituency practice is happening, but is seldom shared.

We think, for the public good of democracy, there is need for a 'Constitupedia' – like Wikipedia, an online and open resource to share best constituency practice between MPs and across parties.

ORIGINS

Last year, a specialist team from the Design Council decided to research the positive changes MPs could make in order to reconnect their constituents with the democratic process.

There were five stages to the project:
- Observing MPs at work in their constituencies
- Conducting user research among constituents
- Running constituent design workshop
- Facilitating a design workshop with MPs at Westminster
- Working with one constituency office on a week-long design immersion project

This type of research helped us to identify the unmet needs of the users and allowed us to 'co-design' a new service offering for Doncaster North and all MPs.

DESIGN COUNCIL

The Design Council is the national strategic body for design. It believes that design can help people to do what they do better. Funded by the UK government, they promote the use of design throughout the UK's businesses and public services. They demonstrate that design can play a vital role in strengthening the UK's economy and improving society.

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F.

dialogueby**design**
making consultation work

OWNER
Dialogue by Design

SOLUTION
Scrutiny

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Legislation - using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance

OVERVIEW
- To enable Parliamentarians, Committee Members and members of the public to comment remotely and in detail on Bills during the legislative process
- To enable successive amendments to be compared with the original text and with each other
- To enable amendments to be linked remotely to other documents, such as evidence, research findings, previous legislation etc
- To assist Parliamentarians to negotiate amendments
- To provide a totally secure but user-friendly method to enable legislative scrutiny to be more wide-ranging, more reflective, and more intense.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
Scrutiny is a development of Dialogue by Design's well-used Document Review software.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
MPs and Peers; parliamentary staff

DESCRIPTION OF USE
1. A Bill is introduced. During the Second Reading it becomes apparent that it arouses fierce interest and there are many proposals to amend it.

2. The Bill is placed within Scrutiny on a secure website and comments are invited from members of both Houses, from interested organisations and from the public. Those who wish to comment complete a simple online registration form and are given secure passwords. Members of either House need only to indicate their interest to receive a password. Organisations and individuals would be asked to provide more information about themselves, including the nature of their interest in the Bill, before receiving a password. (This is purely so that in later stages Members can

see the source of comments; there is no suggestion that anyone should be excluded from commenting.)

3. How Scrutiny could be used would obviously be a matter for the appropriate body to decide. We can see three stages during which it might be useful as a means by which proposed amendments and comments could be submitted:

   i. Between the Second Reading and the Committee Stage so that they could be taken into account by the Public Bill Committee (for Bills submitted to the House of Commons) during the committee stage.

   ii. The amendments accepted during the committee stage would then be incorporated into the Bill and the revised text would again be placed within the Scrutiny software and comment invited throughout the Report Stage and the Third Reading.

   iii. Following the Third Reading all amendments and comments would again be considered and those accepted would be incorporated into the text.

4. The software would not only make it possible to see the entire sequence of proposed and accepted amendments to the text. Participants could also add the reasoning behind proposed amendments, attach evidence in support of amendments, link to previous legislation or add links that will take readers to other documents or websites. As a Bill progresses it would also be possible for the reasoning behind proposed, accepted or rejected amendments to be displayed.

ORIGINS

Dialogue by Design began to develop Scrutiny in 2002 in response to a request from a North American client. The client had already used our Document Review software to enable the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), which is a source of outside policy advice to the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to coordinate comments on a report. The client was interested in enabling committee members to make line-by-line comments on reports. The client subsequently abandoned the project and while the software is conceptually sound since then further development work on Scrutiny has been sporadic.

Scrutiny, like its parent software, Document Review, has three origins:

1. The 'single text process' as used in mediation processes. The concept of making all amendments to a single text, with a third party being the only one allowed to make changes, was developed by Professor Roger Fisher of the Harvard Program on Negotiation and first described in his seminal book Getting to Yes (Penguin 1981 ISBN 1-84413-146-7). Dialogue by

Design used the idea as the basis of its online Document Review process, launched in 2000, and then refined the idea for the development of Scrutiny, beginning in 2002.

2. The 'track changes' facility in programmes such as MS Word, itself simply a computerised version of any editorial process. Scrutiny is a development of track changes in that it enables users to see successive historic amendments, to do it remotely, and to add links to other documents or sources of information.

3. Scrutiny also resembles a wiki (though it was in fact developed before wikis became widely used) in that it enables users to make amendments from a distance. Scrutiny differs from many wikis, however, in that it is hosted on a secure sever and access is allowed only to registered users.

The Constitution of the United States was used as pilot text in the initial development of Scrutiny. In this first screenshot the text is divided into sections. Participants can insert proposed amendments in the boxes beneath the original, and add reasoning, comments, evidence or links in other boxes as illustrated in the second screenshot.
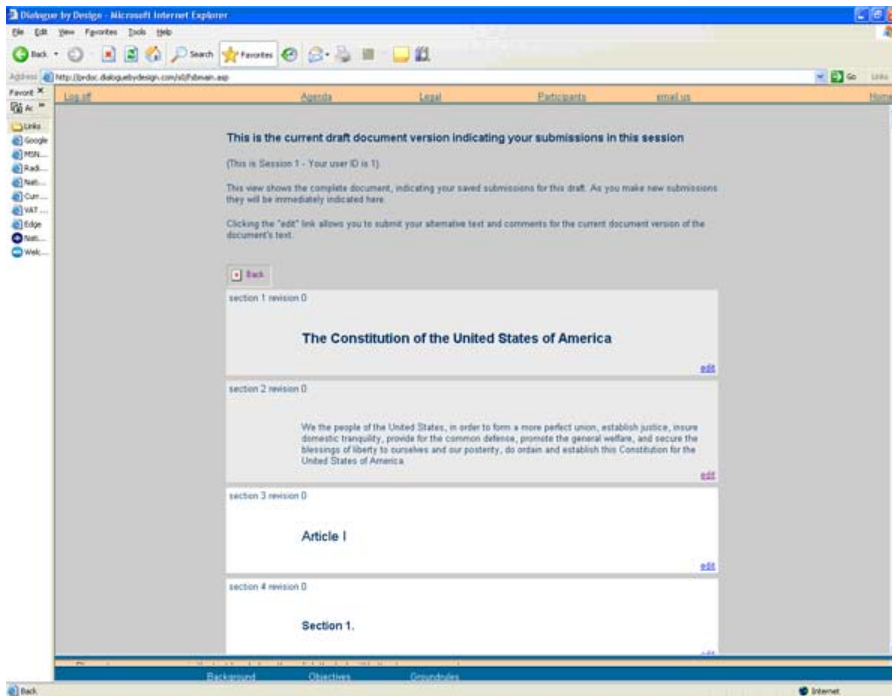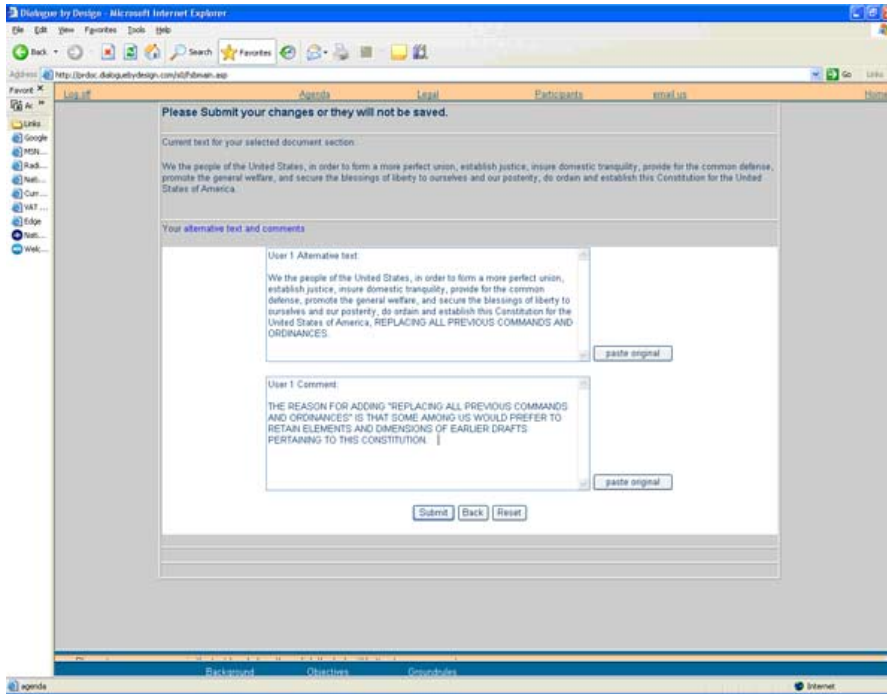
OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

- Making accessible successive versions of Bills in one place at one time
- Enabling legislators to see the originators and reasoning behind amendments
- Coordinating of public and stakeholder engagement with the legislative process
- Improving public ability to follow, participate and influence legislation
- Making the whole legislative process transparent
- Facilitating the work of legislators and drafting teams
- Improving the quality of legislation.

DIALOGUE BY DESIGN

Dialogue by Design is a limited company established in 1999 by two leading practitioners in the field of public and stakeholder engagement, Pippa Hyam and Andrew Acland, and an expert in software design, Dr Dominic Gooding.

The original impetus for the company came from two related frustrations: the difficulty and expense of managing international engagement processes, and the inadequacies of face-to-face meetings and workshops for serious consultation on complex subjects.

Dialogue by Design has enabled us to translate the most effective methods used in face-to-face processes into the electronic environment by developing templates that emulate workshop processes, thereby trying to preserve the

immediacy and human dimensions of 'real' encounters while exploiting the advantages of 'virtual' processes.

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G.

OWNER
eRepresentative Project Partnership, submitted by Napier University

SOLUTION
Explores the impact of a virtual desktop to support the mobile elected representative

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Information - using ICT to improve communications and marketing; Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions.

OVERVIEW
The primary research focus of the project is to investigate the potential impact of a virtual elected representative's desktop - the eRepresentative - to support the work of elected representatives at national, regional and local level by making legislative and local assembly services more effective and tailored to meet their individual requirements.

The eRepresentative project aims to bring social and technological innovation to the work of national, regional and local elected representatives with the objective of enhancing their working environment. eRepresentative will enable them to work anytime and from anywhere with secure access to relevant and appropriate information. The project is taking current state-of-the-art technologies and integrating them, thereby increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of elected assemblies (i.e. Parliaments, National and Regional Assemblies, Councils and Public Authorities) as well as extending the state-of-the-art in this domain.

The specific project objectives are:
- To understand what it means to be a mobile elected representative and model the associated legislative services needed by them and the tasks they need to undertake;
- To appreciate and model the information and information systems associated with legislative scrutiny of legislation and policy;
- To specify and develop a virtual desktop environment for secure mobile working;
- To deploy the eRepresentative desktop in a number of national, regional and local elected assemblies;
- To critically evaluate its potential and usefulness for elected representatives and the impact on legislative services.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
Recent literature reviews indicate an increasing pace of change in use of ICT by elected assemblies. Assemblies' implementation of legislative databases has had a major impact on 'early adopter' elected representatives. However members of European parliaments are mostly adopting new ICT tools of their own accord rather through strategic development by political parties or parliamentary administrations. Surveys, including one of 20 European assemblies conducted in eRepresentative Wp2, also indicate a need for elected members to work from a variety of locations and still have the ability to securely access and share relevant information and working knowledge with other committee members. eRepresentative is addressing this need, firstly by modelling the associated legislative services needed, identifying the tasks to be supported, the technical skills and the interface requirements.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
Much of the work of elected assemblies relates to the preparation of complex policy and regulatory documents that require widespread discussion and scrutiny. The project has extensively modelled the legislative process in each of the participating assemblies, and the legacy information systems that currently serve it. The assemblies' current security mechanisms have been surveyed and guidelines for secure mobile services have been developed.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
Requirements to support elected members and their advisors have been identified. Four main areas that representatives and other stakeholders consider to be problematic or in need of improvement are: -

1. Improved access to legislative documents
2. Better reporting of time-sensitive developments
3. Improved and more transparent collaboration and consultation
4. Remote participation in legislative decision-making.

The architecture for eRepresentative provides services to meet these needs:-

- Overview: to cope with information overload
- Opinion making: to form a well considered opinion
- Decision making: to express opinions and cast votes efficiently (remotely)
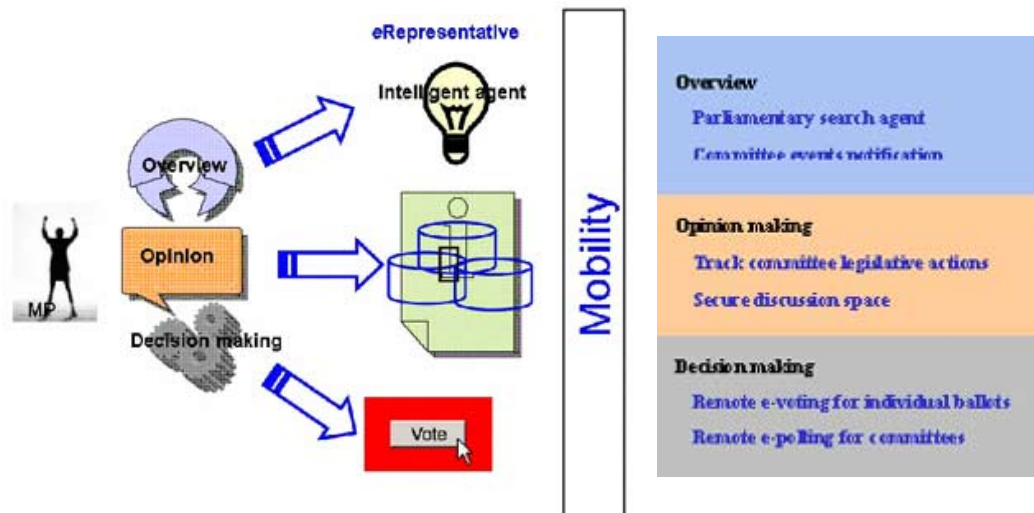
ORIGINS

eRepresentative will deploy the alpha version within the participating parliaments and legislative assemblies in the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Hungary and Ireland. Following initial feedback, a beta version will be deployed extending the support for inter-legislative communications. The project is defining a methodology for the validation and evaluation of the platform. Recent literature indicates that assessments of ICT impact on representatives' work are rarely carried out, and the project is well positioned to contribute to this area of eGovernance research. The evaluation will provide feedback in relation to building the business case required for elected assemblies to justify investment in developing mobile ways of working in business terms as well as directly supporting the technical evolution of the platform. The benefits sought for elected representatives are:-

- More effective use of elected members' time;
- More convenient access to relevant legislative documents;
- More convenient access to views of colleagues, stakeholders;
- Added traceability/ transparency of legislative actions;
- Faster availability of information;
- Acceptable security and ease of use.

OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

At present national and regional parliaments and local elected assemblies across Europe are facing a number of challenges to support the improvement of good governance (efficiency, inclusiveness, democracy, openness and accountability) and to provide a secure mobile working environment for their elected members regardless of whether they are in the chamber, committee room, local office, home or travelling. By taking a pan European approach, eRepresentative will contribute to improving democratic processes & promoting the Information Society across Europe. eRepresentative is taking a pan European perspective

and researching a generic solution that can be easily tailored to any platform rather than develop a single solution for each Elected Assembly.

Elected assemblies need to provide access to the eRepresentative platform using public channels (such as the Internet). This aspect poses serious security issues to the information available from the platform that, in most cases, is used for political decision making and/or legislation. One of the most innovative aspects of the project is the introduction of application level cryptography to grant end-to-end protection to the information. The project also integrates Scytl's Pnyx.parliament platform, an electronic voting solution for Parliaments and Assemblies. This will enable members to vote even if it is not possible for them to be physically present during the session, while guaranteeing the e-vote is as secure as the traditional one based on electric systems or in a show of hands.

The project is adapting open source solutions that are attractive to many local and regional governments with limited resources, including DSpace, an open source software platform co-developed by HP Labs and MIT. The project applies DSpace to the legislative domain for the first time, and extends it to support:

- Document authenticity verification;
- "Trusted" federation of content;
- Customised views of data/search results.

One of the innovative aspects of eRepresentative is that it is developing a web services based solution that can be easily tailored to any platform, rather than developing a specific solution for each elected assembly. Elected assemblies will be able to leverage this solution, reducing the costs associated with undertaking a significant level of consultancy and integration to develop a custom solution.

The partners are identifying vehicles for jointly exploiting the project results; e.g. to provide advice and consultancy to elected assemblies on appropriate interaction design methods, use of the security guidelines, and evaluation methods; and to promote the developed extensions to the Dspace repository technology for web-service oriented environments.

EREPRESENTATIVE

eRepresentative is a research and development project that will create a virtual desktop to support the mobile elected Representative. The project is co-funded under the IST Programme by the European Commission and has project number FP6-2004-26985.

The eRepresentative project started in February 2006 and will end in January 2008. It involves representatives, civil servants and other stakeholders in five European Parliaments and Assemblies.

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H.

OWNER
Headstar

SOLUTION
An eDemocracy agency and the d-Pod

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
While the number of MPs and government officials harnessing the power of the net has been on the rise in recent years, we are still some way off a position whereby our national politicians are considered leaders in the field of e-democracy, as they often have been in the task of building democracy in its more traditional forms.

So what are the factors that have been holding up progress? In recent years, they have included:

- a lack of experience and confidence in using ICT;
- a lack of time to come to terms with the issues, in a packed schedule;
- a lack of clarity about which Parliamentary groups can offer assistance, among an ever-growing mass of all-party groups and affiliated committees;
- the fear of unknown political consequences if new technologies and systems are embraced on a large scale;
- the fear of personal failure, and of looking silly if they get it wrong;
- a lack of resources (recently partially addressed by the £10,000 MPs' website allowance announced in March);
- insufficient support from government and Parliamentary officials.

The e-democracy innovation gap has so far been filled by those outside politics: citizen-led non-profit projects such as those developed by MySociety.org, for example, or sites developed by the BBC and other news organisations.

This is an issue that needs to be addressed. Just as all types of organisation must come to terms with new technologies to compete and survive, our national politicians must keep step or risk losing further precious ground in the already

tough struggle to prove themselves relevant to a generation of people used to conducting every aspect of their lives online. In fact, they must do more than keep step: to undo the damage already done, they must begin to take a lead, to embrace technology in ways and on a scale which few senior politicians have yet seemed willing to accept.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
Open source tools could be used and the eDemocracy agency, while based within Parliament, would be open to suggestions from any UK-based organisation with recommendations that could improve the services offered.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
All MPs would be offered training in the use of both new and existing tools that may be of use to them, as well as basic IT training if needed. Training would take the form of a blend of classroom-based and online e-learning. Where MPs already have IT skills, and equipment, or feel the software tools are no better than what is on offer to them elsewhere, it will be up to them to accept or refuse assistance offered. But where MPs are less skilled or less confident, a full set of tools and training could be presented to them ready-loaded onto a laptop running any operating system they choose: the 'd-pod'.

The time to start is now. The new Parliamentary agency should be created as soon as possible, at arm's length from current agencies and committees but with their full support. Relevant cross-party bodies such as the All-Party Internet Group, the Parliamentary IT Committee and EURIM should be represented on the steering body of the new agency, and actively feed in support and ideas at all stages.

Further help could be drafted in from external bodies such as the Hansard Society, MySociety.org, and bodies addressing issues of access to technology by all parts of society such as HumanITy and AbilityNet.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
A new agency within Parliament is likely to be necessary because the rigid administrative structure of the heart of the UK's democracy, while ensuring stability and the maintenance of authority, is not currently well-suited to embracing new technologies with enough speed to innovate.

This could mean setting up a new unit that sits entirely outside the current structure of Palace of Westminster procedural committees. Such a unit would be charged with examining how technology can be woven into the everyday fabric of Parliament, and the work of MPs both in Westminster and in their constituencies.

It should be able to think radically, and act radically. Of course, rigorous safeguards will be needed: the basic underlying structures of our democracy should not be cast aside simply to introduce new ways of working.

The way to do this will be to look at ways of using new technologies to ensure our elected officials are in close touch with the people they represent - not to bypass the decision-making power of our properly elected officials, with tools that promote direct democracy with all its Big Brother (TV show) implications; but to allow those officials to closely understand the views of citizens on all issues, and to communicate rapidly, flexibly and effectively with large numbers of their constituents and other key groups.

Any new agency would first consult with MPs, citizens and all other stakeholders about what tools would most help them connect better with the constituents they represent.

The next step would be to look at what tools are already out there that could help them. Where robust, secure, politically neutral tools already exist, there will be no need to reinvent them: only to systematically educate politicians as to what is available, how they can be used, and how it can be integrated with their work and with the other technologies they may use.

Finally, if definite gaps are identified in what is available, a limited number of experimental new software tools for politicians would be developed, to help them in their daily work. It would be important for MPs themselves to have the final say in what tools would be developed. Possible areas to examine could include tools for running constituency-based email lists and discussion fora; systems for managing both offline and online correspondence through letters, emails and online forms; and systems for broadcasting text, audio and video messages to all kinds of groups over the web, and receiving feedback and interaction from constituents.

HEADSTAR
Headstar (www.headstar.com) is an innovative publishing and events company based near London at the UK's 'Silicon Beach' - Brighton and Hove. Headstar publish two market-leading independent email newsletters, and run a series of conferences and events on technology and social issues.

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I.

ICele
International Centre of Excellence for
Local eDemocracy

OWNER
International Centre of Excellence for Local eDemocracy (ICELE)

SOLUTION
The Community Window

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation – Using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
Pictures paint a thousand words and increasingly the use of imagery and penetration of digital imaging devices (such as webcams, camera phones and disposable digital cameras) is a feature of the World Wide Web. Sites such as flickr, youtube and MMS based neighbourhood 'fix-it' schemes provide compelling mediums for relaying messages about public issues.

The concept of 'Community Window' is to provide a filtered feed of images from constituents to the offices and bedrooms of MPs based on a constituents channel. The idea is that this highlights, in a very real way, home issues. It also enables evidence to be passed from the community into parliament in a timely manner depending on current events.

The idea is that constituents can send images of their community (or travellers to a particular locality) to a web service such as flickr. This can be done by uploading them from a PC, wireless device or multimedia mobile phone. Each image is tagged; this is the process of attributing relevant keywords to the image. For example, I may have an image of traffic congestion which is tagged "traffic jam" or roadside waste which is tagged "fly tipping".

MPs can then take a filtered feed of these images, presented as a slideshow, based on a selection of words. The idea is that local imagery can be summonsed based on the debates of the day, hot topics or on a random basis. The media, bloggers and activists can use the pool of local imagery to support their own campaigns too.

The way that images are selected can be intelligent too. For example, images are displayed based on the most popular tags only - in this sense the slideshow of images highlights prevalent issues in a locality.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED

The community window uses a mix of web, mobile, wireless and screen technologies. WiFi enabled image frames are used to relay images in community window. Example frames include the Kodak EX-811 which has built-in WiFi and an 8" colour LCD screen. Manufacturers of these frames include many practical in-built applications such as alarms, clocks and calendar functions that are superimposed on-to screen. The devices then become multifunctional.

While it is recognised that WiFi is required to provide a dynamic feed to the frames, many have card slots which can be used to load a sequence of images - compiled say from a MPs office. Equally, second generation devices contain Bluetooth which means that images that are displayed can be sent directly to a printer or transferred to a mobile information device such as cellular phone.

We anticipate that the concept of the image or video Wiki will be possible. In other words, MPs who receive images can write or draw on them in real-time for the benefit of feedback to their constituents. The projection technologies will also mature and ICELE would suggest that the use of multimedia in parliament should be encouraged to enhance debates. In this event, it is envisaged that members of the house could project their own footage into a central stage.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

- MPs and their office staff
- Local elected members
- Citizens/constituents

DESCRIPTION OF USE

Step One:	Step Two:	Step Three:	Step Four:	Step Five:
Citizen notices a public sign that the locality is accepting imagery to improve life in the area. Citizen takes photograph on a mobile phone or camera which is tagged with keyword(s) and sent by MMS to the advertised number or via the internet to a web storage area.	Images are collated by tags in the internet channel. These can be viewed/searched and sorted by locality, keywords and by date. Inappropriate material is removed by the community moderators.	MP sets-up the digital frame in their office with WiFi enabled. In the event that the venue is not WiFi enabled then MP offices periodically compile community images onto memory card. Keywords are chosen depending on the daily events or the frame is set to display 'hot topics'.	MP takes time to watch a short slideshow. Compelling images are sent to be printed or transferred to a mobile phone via Bluetooth. Other community windows are explored for fellow MPs to see if the same problems are experienced across the nation.	Imagery is used in parliament to support debates.

ICELE

ICELE aims to provide best practice advice, support and practical solutions to help local authorities increase national eParticipation rates.

ICELE has been designed to take forward the work of the eDemocracy National Project, as well as create new solutions to drive up eParticipation rates. Lichfield District Council supports the development of ICELE as the responsible authority for the Centre.

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J.

OWNER
iMeta

SOLUTION
Mi-MP

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation – Using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
Mi-MP would be an 'off the shelf' template driven website that would enable MP's to consult and communicate with their constituents, quickly and efficiently without requiring extensive IT skills or knowledge to set-up or support.

Mi-MP would allow a citizen to:

1. Track correspondence with their MP
2. Request a referendum or poll on a National or Local issue
3. Vote on local polls and referendums as set-up by the MP
4. Access an MP media library where the Citizen can view their MP's performances in Parliament AND as band width improves be able to stream live video/ audio to Mobile devices, TVs and PCs
5. View their MP's diary
   - Up and coming Clinics
   - Commons diary
6. View how their MP has voted on bills
7. View an explanation of why the MP has voted the way they have
8. View how the MP believes they performing against their manifesto

The product would initially be driven through the Web with the ability to deliver certain content via a mobile phone. However, over the next 10 years as the majority of information and communication devices become IP based, iMeta envisage a richer, multi-media experience being made available via Digital TV and Mobile Phones. The proposition would be developed to incorporate these mass media devices ensuring an MP could reach a high percentage of their constituents. The service could also be extremely interactive, for instance registered users could view an MP's performance in 'real time' on the device of their choice and then at the end provide instant feedback to the MP on how they think they have done.

The product would be sold on an annual subscription basis that would also include support. The subscription model would allow the product to be sold at a fraction of the price that would be charged if built on a 'one off' basis, making it accessible to every MP.

The premise of the system is to bridge the gap between an MP and their Constituents through the use of technology. The common perception of politics is that it is something that the citizen participates in every 2 to 4 years. The voter is then absolved (or denied?) of any further say or participation in local or national issues and the "keys" are handed over to the MP to run the constituency for the next term.

In general, communication between an MP and their electorate is then sparse until the next general election when manifestos land on voter's doormats. Visibility of an MP's activity whilst in term is also poor; feedback on how an MP voted on a particular issue, how an MP is performing against their manifesto, clear communication on the key issues they are working on, are just some of the accusations levied at MP's by the Public.

By improving the visibility of an MP's work, by making it more readily accessible and by allowing a citizen to feel that:

1. They are being consulted
2. That their view is important
3. That their MP understands what is important at a local level
4. They have a firm understanding of their MP's views on local and national issues
5. Politics is an everyday event that they can participate in
6. Their MP is working for them and is accountable for their actions

Then the gap between the elected Member of Parliament and their Constituents would be reduced. Voters would feel more engaged in the political process and that their vote meant something.

At the same time, Mi-MP would also provide a mechanism for MP's to effectively communicate and understand the views of their Constituents, enabling them to represent their Constituency's views and feedback on what is happening at Westminster. This type of application would improve the MP's visibility, accountability and could help them be re-elected to their post.

It is important to note that the technology to implement this system is available now. All that is required is a PC with Internet access, which a large proportion of UK households now have. As technologies converge iMeta anticipate this service being made available through digital TV and mobile devices.

The key factor in whether Mi-MP would succeed or not is how well the product is marketed to the electorate.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
The majority of technologies described here exist today, web servers, Digital TV and Mobile Internet are all realities, as they develop further in the future we can expect more bandwidth and more processing power available both in the personal PC, set-top box and in the mobile phone. This will allow more content to be accessed on-demand from a variety of locations.

The power of these technologies is to allow people to communicate quicker and easier, and also to be more informed on the issues that concern them. This can be either making the information easier to access and consume, by proactively bringing information to the consumer's attention, or by connecting people with similar interests.

With on demand video now becoming a reality in the home and on the move, it is entirely possible for a constituent to be alerted when their MP is speaking in the House of Commons and for them to join, for example, the live BBC Parliament coverage of the debate. By tuning the alerting options, constituents can be alerted by MPs, issues, bills - anything they have an interest in, and can then use the same technology to communicate with their member of parliament in real time.

The goals of these technologies are to make communicating easier, and given that is also the main goal of Mi-MP it appears there is a good synergy between them.
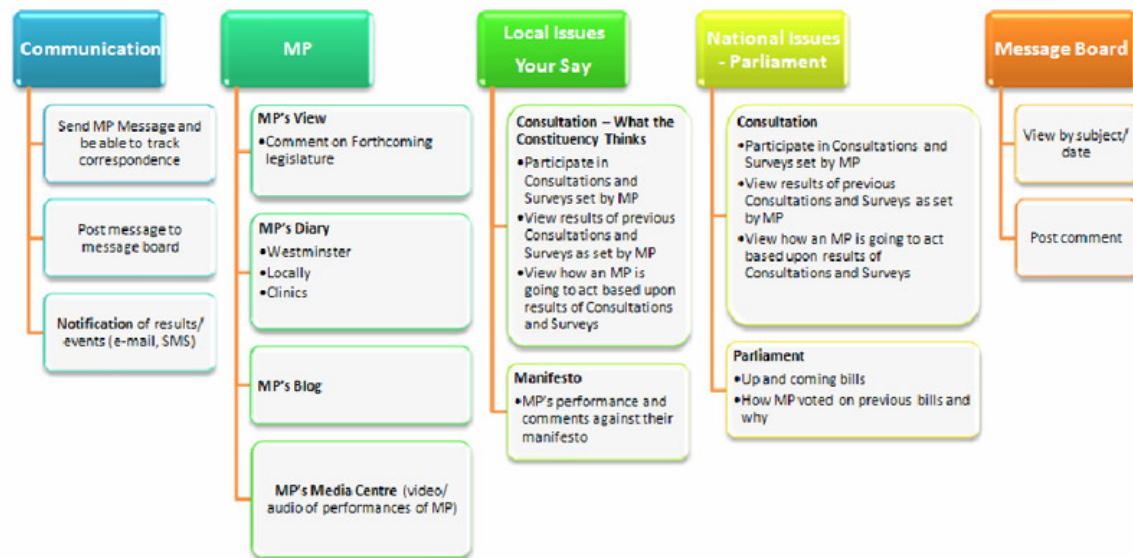
PEOPLE INVOLVED
The Citizen
The MP
iMeta Technologies Limited (support only)

DESCRIPTION OF USE
The Citizen would be presented with the following options once they had successfully registered with the site.

The MP would be provided with online administration that would enable them to:

1. View all registered Constituents and send them a 'broadcast' communication based on constituent preferences/ interests
2. Review Constituents request to join site prior to sending them a username and password
3. Responding to any correspondence
4. Commenting on forthcoming legislature
5. Submitting their Westminster and local diary
6. Inform/ notify citizens of forthcoming clinics
7. Uploading any media material to the Media Centre
8. Setting up polls/ surveys in the local/ national level
9. Commenting on progress made against their manifesto
10. Providing an update on Parliamentary issues
11. Maintaining the message board

ORIGINS

The idea for Mi-MP came out of a Product Development Meeting held by the Mi-Voice Project Team, which includes members from iMeta's Sales, Development, Testing and Project Management Teams.

iMETA TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED

iMeta are experts in designing, developing and delivering IT solutions that increase the efficiency of business processes and reduce costs. Active in the Government, Mobile and Financial Services sectors we have developed a reputation for bridging the gap between longer term strategic technology initiatives and the evolving market.

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K.

OWNER
Incentivated

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Information - using ICT to improve communications and marketing

OVERVIEW
Mobile technologies reach people in all corners of the world and via many languages and character-sets, via text messaging, location based services and the mobile internet.

The mobile phone is an intensely private medium. Respecting this principle, campaigns and services run using mobile technologies can provide information that consumers find useful and welcome.

The mobile channel can play a key role at every stage of the customer journey: from acquisition (mobile marketing) to retention and CRM (mobile customer service) to transaction (mobile commerce). Incentivated has expertise with all three phases of the journey.

Incentivated advises clients how to maximise their investment in the mobile channel. Most of our business develops from an initial pilot campaign which introduces first time users to the various ways they can use mobile, gives them access to our on-line campaign management platform, iris, and evaluates closely response rates and ROI.

SOLUTIONS
2.1 WAPsite: Houses of Parliament main WAPsite (MP's can have their own personal WAPsites) which houses relevant information including order of the day; diaries; blogs; documents for download etc.

2.2 Podcasts: allow MP's (and members of the public) to broadcast podcasts to subscribers' mobiles. Podcasts can also be available for download on the HOP or MP's WAPsites.

2.3 Mobile petitions: allows members of the public to create and sign up to online petitions via mobile.

2.4 Surveys: conduct surveys via mobile i.e. SMS, WAPsite (fill out on-line form/questions) or even by video based questions from MP or live video link.

2.5 Parliament/Community TV via mobile: Parliament TV available to MP's & members of the public – allow people to upload their own content (i.e. videos etc). Interactive elements available i.e. Text & Win, have you say (messages displayed on-screen); live votes/polls etc.

2.6 Near Field Communication (NFC): allows MP's to swipe their mobile handsets to conduct daily transactions. Could be used for entry recognition into Parliament buildings & used for payment of Parliament services (similar to Oyster swipe).

2.7 Bluetooth Parliament: install Bluetooth transmitters in the corridors of Parliament allowing MPs to pick up new Government PDF documents and to read on a mobile/PDA, quickly and easily.

2.8 Expenses tracking & payment: MPs always seem to be having problems with their expenses. A mobile application could be deployed whereby MP's could update and submit expenses via their mobile handset as they go along.

2.9 Carbon footprint calculator: similar to above, the mobile handset could be used to record, track, and monitor an MP's weekly carbon footprint.

2.10 Parliament mobile guide: a simple guide can be available for download for new MP's & Lord's i.e. guidelines; glossary of terms; practices & customs of the house; location based services or Bluetooth to pinpoint MP's in Houses of Parliament.

2.11 Postcode event: allow members of the public to text in their postcode with information being sent to their mobile on Government related events happening in their area (can access a WAPsite and search for events).

2.12 Crime reporting: allow members of the public to report crime via mobile (i.e. send in SMS/MMS/Video of crime being committed). Can text in to a special code whereby nearest CCTV camera can be alerted and moved in place to record crimes being committed.

2.13 Inbound Staff Communication: allow MP's and HOP employees to communicate with each other via mobile i.e. PA's could send out alerts to MP's i.e. travel delays, meeting re-arrangements; Lifestyle tips sent out to MP's; MP's could update other employees via SMS or by updating WAPsite; text to automatically update diaries.

2.14 MP barcodes: Parliament could send out special promotional (discount) barcodes to selected MP's which can be used around HOP / London / UK.

2.15 Text for information: allow MP's to text in any questions they have whereby answers can be sent back i.e. text in asking for a meaning of terms or practices; debating issues of the day; order of the day etc.

2.16 SMS alerts to the public: public can sign up to receive alerts directly from HOP or from their representative (link to the MP personal WAPsite can also be sent so public can access further information).

2.17 SMS reminders to the public: text or video reminders can be sent to members of the public i.e. appointment reminder; upcoming political broadcast; voting dates etc.

INCENTIVATED
Founded in 2001, Incentivated advises clients how to maximise their investment in the mobile channel. Most of our business develops from an initial pilot campaign which introduces first time users to the various ways they can use mobile, gives them access to our on-line campaign management platform, iris, and evaluates closely response rates and ROI. Incentivated works with brands, the public sector and charities to help them communicate with customers instantly and easily via their mobile phones.

We develop and manage mobile marketing campaigns and on-going services on local, national and international levels.

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L.

OWNER
Informatiehuis

SOLUTION
The politician's dashboard

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Information - using ICT to improve communications and marketing; Legislation - using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance;

OVERVIEW
A political dashboard is an interface to all applications relevant for participants in a "Parliament for the Future" that, according to the Hansard Society, is characterised by "strengthened democratic connections, improved communications of Parliament and an enhanced legislative process."

In our vision a digital parliament should not be built from the centre, but from the bottom up: from a better personal information-household one may develop a virtual office for (parliamentary) parties, constituencies etc and only then a digitised legislative process might work.

Dashboards are instrumental panels giving information necessary to perform functions and manage processes. Usually a dashboard consists of gauges, charts, graphs, sparklines, maps and tables. In our analogy a Politician's Dashboard is a mash up of dashboard widgets on a personal screen. The configuration and appearance of the Politician's Dashboard (PsDB) depends on personal preferences. An unlimited number of proprietary or open applications, services, databases and devices can be incorporated or linked to the dashboard. The Politician's Dashboard itself is an open standards application, paid for by subscriptions and administered by a not-for-profit-foundation.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
Technology in a PsDB may be a combination of proprietary and open applications, the driver of course is the World Wide Web. The problem is: nobody knows what the Web will look like 10 years from now. The PsDB solves this problem by defining an interface to existing applications that is simple, adaptable to personal preferences and capabilities. It starts with what is already there and paid for and takes new developments along as it grows. The foundation will formulate and administer a development plan according to open source organization principles.

The dashboard is an instrument that makes complex technology easily accessible

PEOPLE INVOLVED
A PsDB is being developed in the Netherlands by Informatiehuis, a consultancy practice, and several partners. This proposal was written by Henk Bos and Robert van Doesburg.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
Mash-up solutions in a personal dashboard for parliamentarian and active citizen alike make politically relevant information easy accessible. The volume and quality of communication between representatives and constituents grows exponentially.

1	Small Budget	Open source development of Politician's Dashboard. Product is freely available (also for citizens). Budget is needed for further development and special personal demands. Functions can be used for other purposes. Subscriptions to a not-for-profit foundation makes it manageable and trustworthy.
2	Breadth and depth engagement activity	Traditional working methods still available. Enhanced services include mailing list, wiki platform, intelligent agents for searching information databases, calendar, address book and mindmapping. Other wishes can be incorporated.
3	Time away from constituency	The Politician's Dashboard has extensive publishing facilities. Constituents can track and trace activity representative (when authorized). Groups active on wiki platform or mindmap can work together via internet.
4	Little time for specialist ICT training	No training necessary for basic version Politician's Dashboard. Using advanced possibilities is voluntary. Representatives can make their own assessments between the costs of additional training and the benefits of better or specific services. Availability of applications is according to own choice and willingness to adapt and learn.
5	ICT independently and through party	Representatives are free to make their own choices in using the dashboard. The Politician's Dashboard also contains a virtual office that can be shared with any group and is also available for other groups (party, parliamentary committees, constituencies). Representatives can choose to join these groups any way they want.
6	Simple ways of communications for constituents	Traditional ways of communication remain available. The amount of new ways of communication with constituents depends on the initiative of representatives. The Politician's Dashboard offers: on line calendar, blogging, methods for crowd sourcing, registering meeting demands of constituents.
7	Tracking activity of representatives	The on line calendar can be made public or available to certain profiles/persons. Coverage of activities can be linked to the calendar. Intelligent agents can inform designated people of upcoming visits. Representatives can make their present location known by Google Maps (for the public or for

		authorized relations).
8	No computers of internet access	The services connected to the Politician's Dashboard will be accessible by phone or television. Computers can be used in public places. Constituents can subscribe for printed media derived from web-based productions.

All kinds of applications are added onto the dashboard through a virtual office that makes communication with all kinds of groups and relations more easy and reliable.

1	Small number of staff	Staff will also have access to the Politician's Dashboard. Processing, storing, retreiving, distributing and tracking information will be easier. Crowd sourcing techniques facilitate mobilising amateur staff members under constituents.
2	Large volume of information not in Hansard	Digital information can be made accessible via the Politician's Dashboard. Information on paper can be scanned and enriched with metadata, making it accessible for digital searching methods.
3	Ways of processing and storing information	Information can be stored on a parliamentary server or on a private facility. Instruments for digitalizing large volumes of information on paper can best be centralized. Individual representatives or their staff can digitalise small quantities and private information.
4	Ways of distributing and tracking information	Digital distribution will be done by email or on websites. Email lists can be used to inform specific groups of people. Email confirmation gives data on the reception of the message. Tracking is used for retrieving historic data and delayed responses. We have good experiences with agreeing on one format e.g. pdf, which has very good dedicated search and meta-data-functions.
5	Calling up information at short notice	All information is stored digitally and accessible by internet. When visiting places without internet access relevant information can be cached on a laptop or PDA.
6	Input from electoral and interest-based constituencies	Input is organized by wiki platform or mind-manager-groups. Input on paper is archived after digitalization.
7	Knowledge-sharing and information management	Instruments for making information public are widely available. Knowledge-sharing in groups, committees or parliamentary parties are facilitated by authorization of members.
8	Balancing accessibility and transparency with privacy and security	Information is public, semi public (accessible for subscribers), restricted (accessible for authorized group members), or private. For security existing or new governmental systems can be used. There is a tendency to build communities and systems on the basis of the 10% that might be risky. The other 90% of public information suffers accordingly. We prefer an open system and suggest to design a different regime for the information that is sensitive. Retrieving information can be done anonymous. Citizens will digitally identify themselves

		before communicating with representatives. We are against anonymity on the web!

The semantic web as foreseen in 2007 by Berners-Lee will deliver all kinds of profiling and prophesying possibilities that will immensely increase the effectiveness of the PsDB. Citizens and their representatives (former representatives) manage their profiles and receive alerts accordingly.

1	Tracking many changes	Why Wikipedia and not Wiki-law? We think it is possible to put the legislative processes on their head: let's have input to laws together and make parliament responsible for the outcome!
2	Schedules and protraction	Protraction of the legislation process is reported on Wiki-law (which is combined with a law-flow-system.) Contributors can subscribe for alerts or RSS feeds for changes and changing schedules.
3	Passing between Commons and Lords	Commons and Lords have a designated area to contribute to the bill. The results of the law making process are published on Wiki Legislation and Hansard.
4	Coordinating stakeholder and public participation	Wiki Legislation facilitates public participation. Stakeholders and special interest groups can create a designated area for working out their contribution. Community software can make scrutiny of laws permanent.
5	Tracking progress by citizens	See C2.
6	Solicited and unsolicited input	Solicited and unsolicited input can be made on Wiki Legislation. Solicited input is processed by intelligent agents using trust systems are doing the valuation of unsolicited contributions.
7	References to old legislation	Wiki Legislation retains a history of all edits and changes of old legislation.
8	Reviewing existing legislation	Wiki Legislation gives room for evaluating and reviewing legislation.

The starting-page of the PsDB consists of three columns:
- one to produce or generate information on the left
- one to receive and consume information on the right
- and a working space in the middle.

We do not suggest different solutions for the three scenarios, but propose our dashboard proposal as a jack of all trades. The sooner parliamentarians and constituents can start using (the beginning of) a PsDB the sooner our *fata morgana* can become a reality.

INFORMATIEHUIS
Informatiehuis explores the relationship between politics and ICT; to this end, it has established a knowledge bank that stores information gathered over the past

25 years. It looks at the use of ICT in consultations and in relation to policy – in both instances, it has an international focus, exploring the engagement and regulatory aspects of the proliferation of ICT. Informatiehuis is based in the Netherlands.

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M.

OWNER
Kwiqq

SOLUTION
Kwiqq Online Social Network

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
To provide an internet service for each electorate where constituents can easily connect with their MP and his/her office. While only those on the electoral roll can join, the service will be viewable to all who have internet access whether through public or private means. Both local and national issues can be presented for information and debate. Opinions can be canvassed anecdotally or via an inbuilt voting system.

The service will also put constituents in touch with each other, should they wish to meet other people who feel strongly about particular issues. Our application will also provide tools to make the use of the most popular social networking sites easier for an MP, opening up additional lines of communication with constituents with the minimum amount of work.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
Anyone wishing to use this service will need access to an internet connection and the hardware (computer, mobile phone, PDA etc) and software (web browser) necessary to access it.

The software will be built using the widely used LAMP architecture (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LAMP_%28software_bundle%29 for more information) to provide a stable, secure and extensible platform for the application.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
Online social networks are a phenomenon of the internet. Web sites such as Myspace, Facebook and Bebo are incredibly popular with millions of users of all age groups in the UK and worldwide.

The use of such technology is not completely new to politics. Most high profile American politicians have their own pages on Myspace and often on Facebook. Some have their own dedicated online social network for campaigning and fundraising (most notably: www.mybarackobama.com). By harnessing this functionality the service will provide the voters with their own social networking site to facilitate conversations and debates with their current MP.

Participation will be available to anyone on the electoral roll for the MP's constituency. In order to join the service, a user will complete an online form, detailing their name, date of birth and address. This will be automatically checked against the electoral roll and a confirmation letter will sent to the user's electoral address. This letter will contain a code to activate their login, thus enabling them on the service. The MP could also verify a person, creating a username and password for them without the need for the letter to activate their login, lowering the required steps for someone the MP has met in person.

Contributing users must use their real name on the website, but they could make posts anonymously should they choose to do so, providing they have a verified username and password to use the service.

Gathering opinion.
If an MP would like to gather opinion among his constituents on a particular issue, he/she creates a page on the website describing the issue, giving background information and featuring images, sound and video if required. This can be as simple as filling in a template or as elaborate as desired.

Users will be able to vote on each issue. This could be a simple Yes/No vote or could provide a response with more options if required. They will also be able to add a written response on the issue page, including additional information and opinions (again including images, sound or video if required). All users will be able to view the original information provided by the MP, all of the responses given by other constituents and the current status of the vote on the issue.

Each issue will have an end date (set by the MP when creating the issue page). Once this date has been reached, no more votes or responses will be accepted for this issue. The MP will then be able to add an outcome to this page, detailing what he plans to do based on the result of the vote and the responses received. The discussion can be continued using other features of the service and on the users' personal pages.

We envisage that only the MP and his/her staff will be able to create issue pages. Users will be able to form groups on the site. They could use these groups to lobby or discussing a particular issue. Once a user has formed a group, they will be able to invite other users to join their group. This could be used for networking and possibly campaigning. The application will provide a mail merge

facility so that letters could be sent to users. For example, a letter relevant to all users who voted on a particular issue.

Other features
The service can provide a full suite of social network tools. These include online chat, forum, messaging as well as personal webspace to build their own profile pages.

Facilitating use of other social networks
We will build a tool into our software that automatically checks the name and postcode of all users of the site against the major online social networks, making them immediately available to the MP to list as their friends on that site, saving hours of searching. This is presently possible for Facebook as they provide an open API for their data and will be possible for other sites if they agree to do the same.

Conclusion
With this service in place in most or all electorates, many millions of people will gain a simple, focused tool to contribute to their local democratic process. The service will share a database system so results can be aggregated and analysed nationwide.

KWIQQ

Kwiqq builds online social networking solutions for corporate clients, including First Choice Holidays, 2wentys and The E3 Group.

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N.

OWNER
Mick Fealty and Paul Evans

SOLUTION
A model of popular deliberation

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - strengthening democratic transactions

SUMMARY
In his 2001 document prepared for the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee Gary Kass of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology noted:

"Around the world there is widespread and growing interest in engaging the public in more deliberative and inclusive processes linked to policy and decision-making. This is occurring for a number of reasons, but principally in response to a wider social trend away from automatic deference to, and trust in, institutions of authority."

User-generated content has changed the ecology of political / policy publishing. And user-generated content owes its origins to the revolution that has swept the internet over the past five years. In the 1990s - since the establishment of the first websites - the technical ability required to author content has been lowered. Content Management Systems (CMS) have removed the need for advanced technical skills, and anyone with an internet connection and basic word-processing skills can now publish.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
One could argue that blogsophere is, in essence, simply a CMS. And CMSs are themselves evolving. They are getting richer in functionality and cheaper to buy. They are developing - and in some cases, surpassing - all of the rich collaborative authoring functionality that can be found in Microsoft Word. Peter can write a first draft of an article, refer it to Paul who can correct and comment and refer it back to Peter. When Peter and Paul are satisfied, it can go to Mary, the chief sub-editor who can publish or refer it back to the original authors. Documents can have 'version control' and older versions can be 'rolled back'. A complete audit trail can be established.

There are, of course, parallels between the process by which an article is drafted, and the way that a piece of legislation can reach a statute book, or a piece of evidence can be considered admissible in court proceedings. All decision-making processes have some form of scrutiny in which basic ideas or criticism can be introduced, evaluated and improved upon before being implemented. Wikipedia

has a well-tested form of authoring - collaborative writing - in which a competitive encyclopaedia has been developed.

Similarly, the wider blogosphere is a conversational place, in which sound analysis is generally highly prized. It has adopted conventions that reject the use of weasel words in favour of a neutral point of view. Where these demands are not met (and in fairness few blogs do meet them), they have 'fisking'. Informally, authors develop reputations. Those that expect to be taken seriously have to demonstrate their credentials before advancing an argument. They have to argue constructively, acknowledge counterfactuals, and remain open and responsive to criticism.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
This does not, of course, make for perfect content. Wikipedia, for example, has acknowledged its own shortfalls. It has to strike a balance. On the one hand, to the site's originators, it is axiomatic that numbers are a good thing. The more contributors, the argument goes, the better the quality of content. Facts can be checked and corrected by more people. The more contributors there are, the better the process will be by which arguments can be couched in neutrality. There are, however, downsides to this approach, and none of the collaborative authoring projects have even come close to overcoming these problems. Some of the debates on Wikipedia have been known to become quite poisonous. Many of the more popular bloggers - particularly the ones who address controversial issues in a serious way - are no longer prepared to leave their comments boxes open and un-moderated. Many won't even open comments on many of their posts. Those that do often feel obliged to delete ruthlessly.

Websites with a well-managed acceptable use policy have been shown to discourage inappropriate behaviour. By requiring users to sign agreements, by publishing those agreements on websites, by ensuring that users are provided with briefings explaining the rules, acceptable use policies have been shown to work on other websites. In the same way that commenters can be encouraged to moderate their own behaviour, it can also make sense to ask authors of particular pieces of research or policy proposals to establish their credentials in a more rigorous way.

E-bay has processes whereby buyers and sellers have to establish their reputation. Expert witnesses in courtrooms have to establish the basis for their expertise. Yet public debate is often dominated by strategically released information - often of dubious origin - from pressure group or political think-tanks. It could make sense to insist that evidence should be presented in a timely way if it is to be taken seriously. It could make sense to insist that evidence should be properly circulated and that everyone who is interested in contributing to debate.

There is a strong argument to be made for the establishment of a lightly-regulated space for public policy outputs. Whether they are pamphlets, research

papers, opinion pieces, conference transcripts, interviews or even press releases, the concept of 'admissibility' could be a valuable one.

If the work of every think-tank, academic body, political party, individual politician or journalist, professional and trade association or pressure group were logged in one place - subject to a simple classification system - then this would provide the basis upon which they can be used in a more orderly way. If the classification system were one that were recognised by policymakers at a governmental level, this process could offer a more open and accountable alternative to the model of lobbying that currently excites so much suspicion among the general public.

If a policy proposal is placed before the public, it could be possible to show an audit trail that indicates where it came from, and what interactive processes had produced it.

The initial evaluation of each of these outputs would be the key to such a project. If every one of these 'outputs' were registered in this way - but subject a 'purdah' period - a combination between 'Chatham House Rules' and an 'embargo' during which it is discussed - but only online, then this could help to drive up the quality of information that is formally placed within the public sphere.

Everybody commenting upon these outputs would need to develop a reputation in the same way that traders on e-bay do. 'Trolling' could be deleted ruthlessly, as could excessive partisanship. Users of the site could develop reputations as 'sifters', working to ensure that less 'bias' enters public debate. By building the site to ensure that abuse is reported will help with this. By attracting volunteers to enforce these rules can ensure that the worst excesses are deleted. It is proposed that any commenting system is - initially - only opened to selected users who will be able to establish and build reputations within the site. This limited group will include all elected representatives - MPs, MEPs, WAMs, MSPs, MLAs, Councillors (through the LGA) etc.

OUTCOMES
If politicians and journalists were to commit to only using this information once it has been tested in the most elementary way - by the more interested sections of the general public, this would achieve a number of aims.
- It would help to level the playing field - evidence shouldn't increase in value because more resources are put into circulating it
- It would reduce the advantage that is enjoyed by campaigns with a lobbying budget (or a synergy with media interests)
- It would provide completeness - everyone that is interested in a particular policy area would be sure that they had access to all relevant information
- It would reduce the value of being an 'insider' - everyone could become an insider if they have something worthwhile to add
- It would begin a process whereby the quality of these 'outputs' can be debated before they start to be used as evidence in public debate.

- It would enable elected representatives to conduct their deliberations in a less disrupted atmosphere.

DESCRIPTION OF USE

The simplest way to formally place an item into the public domain would be to register it with a website. Visitors to the website - initially, those that have been invited - will be asked to recommend anything that they would like to see placed into the public domain.

Once they have registered with the site (using the password provided in their initial invitation), they will be invited to download a small javascript plug-in to their browser. This will work in much the same way as the del.icio.us tagging system works - with one important exception. It will primarily ask those with posting privileges to classify all items under an agreed set of categories.

Once tagged, an item would be viewable under the categories that it was placed in. Each category would have its own RSS feed that any visitor could subscribe to, or syndicate onto their website. Visitors would be able to re-order all postings according to 'most recent first' (the default setting), by originating organisation or author.

If the site started attracting a fair amount of comment, it may be appropriate to allow visitors to rank all postings according to a set of agreed metrics. For instance, they may wish to give each posting marks out of ten for:
- Impartiality
- Topicality
- Being informative - written for the general reader
- Expertise - written primarily for experts

THE OWNERS

Mick Fealty is a freelance political analyst and writer and a visiting research associate at the Institute of Governance at Queens University, Belfast. He is the original blogger behind the awarding winning Irish blog Slugger O'Toole (www.sluggerotoole.com). He's also been involved in innovative 'blog reporting' of the last three major elections in Northern Ireland, the Earth Summit in Johannesburg 2002 and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Nigeria in 2003.

Paul Evans is one of the co-founders of Poptech, a co-operative web development agency that specialises in highly accessible and usable websites. Many of their projects are designed to motivate sections of society that currently don't use the internet.

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O.

milo

OWNER
Milo

SOLUTION
MP TV, representation through citizen journalism

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
Milo presents MP TV, a platform for citizen journalism where everyone in the constituency can tell their story. MP TV uses open source existing online tools to foster agency and participation, and to kick-start a new way to engage with politics through story telling. MP TV will provide citizens with an entry point through their constituency page, but the overall output will contribute to a national repository of stories.

Milo Creative is currently piloting a similar initiative for disaffected Asian youths, and this proposal is informed by our experience and enthusiasm.

Very often, it is the most disempowered and disenfranchised members in a constituency who find it difficult to contact their MP and seek help or advice. It is easy for minorities such as religious or ethnic groups, the poor and elderly or the young and apathetic to become excluded. And very often, because of their disenfranchisement these minorities do not believe that their voice would make a difference, or even that there is the willingness to be listened to.

With MP TV, Milo's vision is to create an open channel for citizen journalism in constituencies. MP TV is a mash-up of affordable, pre-existing technology, which allows citizens to voice their problems, their concerns and their reality. It is a social platform where they can engage in conversations with other citizens, both inside and outside their constituency, and to communicate issues to their MP in order to promote a proactive response, and set a grass-roots political agenda.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
The process starts with the MPs targeting a pilot group via community centres, civic groups, residents or refugees associations, religious leaders or special interest groups. Once these groups are engaged in the project, some investment will go into workshops in community centres, where those taking part are provided with simple video equipment and training.

For individuals participating in MP TV, the act of telling is empowering in itself, as it invites reflection about their reality, the issues they need help with, those that they want to debate, or just by giving them the ability to show what is right or wrong in their situation. Video tools allow them to create the discourse in their space, into which the public, and the MP as mediator, are invited.

Films are uploaded to the MP TV page of each constituency, and hosted in video web services such as YouTube. This helps both to keep the cost down, and to cross promote the videos by exposing them to a mass audience.

The MP TV pages are constantly enriched by visitors. They can rate the videos, comment, add their opinions and send links to others, so promoting viral distribution and awareness of the content. The ratings system is dynamic, bringing to the top those videos with the higher ratings. This immediately highlights the issues that are more pressing for the constituents, and helps define the MPs political agenda according to the constituents' priorities.

Video-stories can be geo-tagged and launched from a map interface (using a free online map service such as Google maps). This provides the story with a geographical context, and allows visitors to search for content based on location. By geo-tagging stories, we also provide the space for a meta-story to be created: e.g. are there particular types of stories that cluster in a given area? Can we identify patterns in terms of say, crime or pollution?

The videos can be accompanied by polls on pressing issues, so allowing the MPs to take the pulse of their constituency. MP TV can be an immediate source of data, where visits, clicks and statistics are tracked, offering valuable feedback.

MP TV can liaise with local TV Channels and news-rooms, and, following on from the Current TV model (where citizen journalism provides the content and citizen votes determine what content is broadcast on TV), the votes of the community will determine which videos are aired.

Fundamentally, once the conversation has started, any constituent should feel empowered to participate by posting up their vision of a problem, their response to a previous issue, or even to share their pride in their local communities.

In order for this initiative to be successful, it is fundamental that the MP engages in the dialogue. Proactive action taken as a result of citizen's stories should also be chronicled, as the major motivation for action is the certainty that there will be a reaction.

ORIGINS
For the past few years we have witnessed the inexorable rise of social networking sites. For a whole generation of young Britons, the internet is the place to connect with like minded people, exchange ideas, create, consume, and

even form pressure groups. This is a generation for which engagement is no longer about one-way information streams; it is about two-way conversations and participation.

Furthermore, even though younger generations are the natives in this new ecosystem, the latest statistics show us that the internet is shifting the behaviour of much larger demographic groups. Young women account for 18% of all active online Britons, and one in four online Britons is at least 50 years old.

OUTPUTS
- This approach to public debate will capture audiences whose engagement in politics is currently non-existent
- By giving a voice to marginal groups, we facilitate their re-insertion into society and their participation in public debate
- This forum allows for citizens to engage in conversations and setting the political agenda from the grassroots.
- The collection of MP pages provides a mass representation repository of citizen stories, and an all encompassing vision of what the nation is thinking.
- Investing in tools for creativity and participation will encourage a wider culture of 'citizen politics', in which many more people will see themselves as potential contributors.

MILO
Milo is a digital design company that creates cutting-edge web content with rich interactivity. They have worked with a number of educational charities as well as for broadcasters and universities.

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P.

University of Plymouth

OWNER
Nigel Jackson, University of Plymouth

SOLUTION
Structural framework for ICT use by MPs

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

OVERVIEW
The key issue is not just the potential of specific technologies, but the ability or willingness of MPs to convert them into democratic gains for individual citizens. Focusing merely on the technological level (and this is not to say it should not be an important focus) alone will mean that any mistakes or missed opportunities made with previous technology will probably be repeated with any new technology.

Although the Internet is only one aspect of ICT, the lessons learnt in how this particular technology is used should have wider applicability. The successful use by MPs of any new technology requires an agreed framework in place, and this response seeks to create an appropriate framework. Without agreement of the key components of "representation" we are unlikely to successfully use ICT to strengthen democratic connections. Meanwhile, any discussion cannot be divorced from a consideration of resources. Whilst the recently announced Communications Allowance, and the creation of office of Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT), may go some way to addressing this, MPs cannot pull democratic rabbits out of the hat without adequate financial, skill and time resources. Moreover, we need to differentiate between the MP as an individual, and the MPs as essentially a part of a wider organisational structure (i.e. with staff and offices). This report suggests that it is the second which should be the more important, as MPs themselves do not necessarily need to be technical wizards, but they do need to know how to use and manage ICT to enhance their representative role.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
The adoption of websites by MPs is largely influenced by a 'bandwagon effect', rather than as a deliberate and coherent communications strategy. Many MPs have used the Internet as largely a one-way communication channel. Whilst

there is evidence that constituents do want to know what MPs are doing on their behalf, they also want dialogue with their MP, and this has been absent in too many MP's online presence. Most MPs are still using the Internet as 'shovelware' - for existing offline tasks - rather than using its unique features to create new approaches to how they represent their constituents. The reason for such reticence in overtly and deliberately entering into an online conversation appears to be threefold. First, many MPs have not asked their constituents what they want from their online presence. Therefore, if they do meet what constituents want from their online presence it is largely a result of either luck or intuition.

Second, many MPs do not necessarily see an obvious cost-benefit from using it, therefore, why should they invest significant resources into the Internet? Third, many MPs are wary of the amount of extra work dialogue may lead to given their finite resources, believing that it may just encourage cranks, and not enhance representation. Moreover, each of the 646 MPs has their own objectives, attitudes and approach to using the Internet. As a result, the use MPs make of the Internet is individualistic, and there is very limited collective agreement by MPs as to how they should use this technology.

However, there is a growing number of pioneering MPs (probably 50+) who use the Internet as a means of enhancing their relationship with constituents. Recent research suggests that regular communication from an MP provides constituents with both updates on what they are doing, and encourages the development of a conversation. Research suggests that constituents who feel they are engaging in a dialogue with their MP feel they are being better represented as a result. Regular non-partisan use of the Internet can strengthen the relationship between an MP and those constituents who access their online presence. What appears to separate these pioneers from the rest is that they have a vision of how and why they are using the Internet. However, the collective impact of their pioneering work is limited by the fact that is not a single agreed vision, rather they each have their own.

The assumption behind scenario A is that representation is enhanced through connections between an MP and individual constituents. It is unlikely that this will be achieved through one-off contacts, such as an occasional visit to a website or a single email. Rather, it implies regular and long-term contact via virtual networks in order to help build relationships.

There is some evidence that the Internet may be gradually shaping the concept of representation, in particular the creation of what might be termed e-representation. This is not an alternative to traditional representative models, rather an evolution of it, and due to the digital divide not to be found equally amongst all MPs or constituencies. Moreover, there appear to be two separate components to e-representation. First, the use of online dialogue, such as through regular e-newsletters, to geographic constituents is enhancing the MP-constituent relationship. It is worth noting that those constituents who gain this

added level of representation are usually already politically interested, and so this might be creating a representation divide. Second, and much more challenging for MPs, is the possibility that MPs' weblogs may be creating a separate e-constituency. Because few constituents visit MP's weblogs, blogging is creating representation based on interest and not geography. Moreover, for blogging MPs the physical and online constituencies may be in competition for their time. Therefore, the Internet has raised conceptual questions on how and who MPs represent. Any solution to the problems identified by the Hansard Society needs to address not just the technological issues, but also the current reality of representation.

Under Scenario A, the Parliament For The Future brief raised the situation MPs like Alistair Carmichael faced, and then went on to raise six issues for how ICT might help MPs. New technologies may provide opportunities for addressing each of these questions, but it can be argued that some MPs are already using existing technology to address these points. Some MPs provide podcasts which include their parliamentary activities, such as speeches in debates or PQs asked. This can satisfy the need of constituents to know what their MP is doing on their behalf. Other MPs provide regular communication that encourage feedback, such as e-newsletters, which enables constituents to respond with their questions and ideas. Many MP's now hot-desk, their office is where they and their PC are. It might be possible for an MP whose constituency is a long way from Westminster to conduct online surgeries through videoconferencing.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
- Gain agreement from MPs as to what are the objectives for using each ICT. Moreover, these should be designed to help support an MPs representative role.
- Remove from individual MPs the responsibility for producing, managing and financing their ICT communications to constituents. This could be achieved by providing expert help from a dedicated IT unit within Parliament (perhaps within an upgraded PICT). Thus ICT used to enhance the representative role, such as websites, would be managed by House of Commons staff. This would benefit from economies of scale, and mean that MPs were less reliant on the skills of their transitory staff. More partisan communication could still be provided from an MP's own non-parliamentary funding sources.
- Provide rewards or at least additional financial support for those MPs who pioneer the representative use of new technologies. At present there is little or no overt motivation for MPs to champion new technology beyond any personal interest by them (or their staff) in each new ICT. MPs trying out new technologies could receive extra financial, staffing or expert assistance. The lessons learnt could then be made available to other MPs.
- Identify what constituents want from their MPs in how they use communication technology? A small number of MPs have asked this

question, but most have not, and consequently do not really know what their constituents want from their websites, e-newsletters, podcasts etc. Yet qualitative and quantitative research conducted by independent researchers could help MPs assess how their constituents want them to use technologies. Therefore, a tailored ICT communications audit could be provided for each MP representing the specific communication needs of their constituency.

- The Modernisation Committee has from time to time looked at these issues, but individual and groups of MPs (such as the All-Party Backbench Internet Group) have not necessarily shaped the debate. MPs themselves need to be asked their views. MPs should be encouraged to feel an 'ownership' of how they currently should use ICT, and perhaps more importantly also how they might be used in the future.
- Encourage (with financial support) greater two-way communication if this is clearly what constituents want. The Best Practice of those MPs who are currently already achieving this should be promoted to others.
- Much of an MP's ICT usage is the remit of their staff, and they need to be involved as part of any consultation and training process.
- The nature of representation, especially the development of e-constituents, needs to be considered in terms of who, how and why MPs wish to reach via new technologies.

NIGEL JACKSON

Nigel Jackson started out in the political sphere, first as a volunteer campaigner, which included being a parliamentary agent, and then professionally for one of the main British parties, an MP and then as a parliamentary lobbyist.

He became Head of Communications of a national charity, then headed up the Public Relations department of a marketing communications agency before managing the communications systems of a major international training company. He has also acted as a consultant for a number of companies. He is now based at the University of Plymouth.

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Q.

OWNER
Open Rights Group

SOLUTION
Provision of parliamentary data for public use

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Information - using ICT to improve communications and marketing

OVERVIEW
In its P4tF brief, the Hansard Society considers three scenarios, and asks for respondents to contribute a technology-led solution to one of them. The three scenarios are summarised as: representation - using IT to strengthen democratic connections; information - using ICT to improve communications; and legislation - using ICT to coordinate and enhance scrutiny. The Open Rights Group does not believe these scenarios are anything but facets of a single issue.

The effective communication of information is critical to representation and to enhancing the scrutiny of legislation. The process of strengthening democratic connections occurs through effective scrutiny by the public of the activities of parliament (such as creating legislation) and the effective communication of concerns from the public to their representative. Therefore the Open Rights Group believes that providing good quality information flows from and to the public is an important step in ensuring the effective scrutiny of parliamentary process.

First, we must ask a fundamental question. Is the role of parliamentary interaction with the people most effectively served by parliament providing services directly to the public in the form of web sites and tools? Or is the role of parliament better served in the provision of data?

Sites such as WriteToThem.com and TheyWorkForYou.com have demonstrated that the public is capable of making effective use of data. The provision of data in open formats under an effective and flexible copyright regime allows the public to process the data in an innumerable number of innovative ways. Even if parliament does choose to provide actual web based services to the public, it should also provide raw data. This cannot be overstated.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
This represents a huge opportunity to leverage existing tools and technologies. Although we should emphasise that the techniques might need to be applied in a

manner that is sensitive to the differences in the relationship between an MP and their constituents and that between a business and its customers.

The Open Rights Group does not believe that selecting technologies based upon the tools themselves is an appropriate manner in which to improve parliament. This is the same process which has led to numerous government IT failures. The focus should instead be upon standards and open data formats that can be effectively processed by all software suppliers.

Imagine the scenario where two systems are proposed for the tracking of legal bills and the two major parties adopt different incompatible systems. This would not in any way further the activities of parliament and would make the ICT system effectively useless, or worse, a tool for exclusion. A similar problem occurs if a single expensive solution is chosen - it becomes a tool by which major parties can exclude the minor parties or indeed the public from easy use of processes. It removes the ability of individual parliamentarians and parties to select tools best suited to their needs.

PEOPLE INVOLVED
The long term use of ICT for collaborative projects by its very nature requires that parliament places its emphasis on formats and on tools which use these formats. This has been proven again and again in the commercial world, and in successful healthcare ICT deployments in Europe.

In order to understand the benefit of open standards and the need for interoperability, take the current trend for parliamentary blogging. Right now, Members use a variety of blogging or blog creation tools. Some use hosted solutions provided by service providers, others run their own systems, or have a system run by their local party or party activists. Various members have differing facilities. They select a solution that suits their requirements and can switch or update if they find a problem or need new features such as blogging notes by SMS from a phone, or Welsh language support.

OUTCOMES
But all of these blogs can be read using a single web browser, via a single standard data transfer mechanism over the internet. None of this would have been viable had a single software solution been selected centrally, nor could a single solution have been sufficiently accurately specified in advance. Most of these blogs are hosted or run with software which also supports the XML-based standard for aggregation and monitoring of web content. This allows other standard tools to be used to monitor the latest entries from the parties and their members. It allows numerous pieces of software on arbitrary computer systems to do interesting things with the data on MPs' blogs.

It can be used to see all the parliamentarians' blog entries together in one place using tools like *planetplanet* (www.planetplanet.org). It can be used with

numerous RSS readers (including those now shipped by default with new operating system products such as Windows Vista). It can be used to do searches and with RSS monitoring tools which can for example mail someone when a keyword or phrase is mentioned in a new entry.

This huge choice in software and this huge flexibility in tools are driven by standards adoption, not by a selection process. The initial choice of software program is not the primary driver. The Open Rights Group believes that a process that starts by the proposal of tools is flawed. That recommendation (proprietary, open or bespoke) can only come after relevant effective open standards for interoperability have been identified.

Consider email. Email is fast becoming a vital resource in the relationship between Parliamentarians and the public. The public use numerous mail applications on numerous computer operating systems. They continue to evolve their use and send mail from new technologies like Blackberry. Likewise parliamentarians and their aides handle this email with many systems in many places. They can buy, write or download all sorts of tools to do things like virus/spam filtering, keyword sorting, automatic responses. There is no need for a common system, nor would one be viable across the entire represented population.

The Open Rights Group believes that effective scrutiny with the public starts with access to information. Information is most valuable when the represented bodies can process it effectively and flexibly. This process starts with the provision of data in standard and open formats from parliament to the people. It continues when the people are allowed to reprocess that data and to provide their own tools and views of parts of the data.

Hansard itself was born from the need for the public to receive information and to scrutinise parliamentary activity. It was provided in a format that at the time was the most useful format for all. Before deciding that tools matter more than open standard formats it is worth contemplating how effective Hansard would have been originally had it been written in Ancient Greek or only usable by someone in possession of a special Hansard reading machine.

OPEN RIGHTS GROUP
The Open Rights Group is an independent, non-profit advocacy group, campaigning for the digital civil rights of British citizens. Founded in 2005, it is a supporter-led grassroots organisation that seeks to inject technological expertise into public debate.

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R.

PROPYLON
The Legislative Software Leader

OWNER
Propylon Limited

SOLUTION
Legislative Workbench

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Legislation - using ICT to enhance scrutiny and performance

SUMMARY
We propose modifying the traditional approach of using only standalone documents to describe amendments to a legislative text. We propose supplementing this approach with a process which allows those amendments to be seen as they would appear in the context of the revised text. In other words: "What would the revised legislative text look like if these particular amendments had been merged into it?"

Our approach would not require a change to existing parliamentary processes as all current documents (amendment papers, amendatory bills, etc.) would continue to be produced in their current formats. They would be supplemented by technology which would allow the effects of any combination of the proposed changes to be viewed instantly. The view of the proposed changes could be under the control of the end-user of the application or could be under the control of a committee clerk and used during the transaction of legislative business in committee rooms containing display panels.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED
We propose to realise the scenario described above by using a customised version of the Amendment Manager module of Propylon's Legislative Workbench application.

DESCRIPTION OF USE
- Amendment Manager assists the process of amendment consideration. Amendments may be viewed as standalone documents or in the context of the document to be amended.
- Various sets of amendments can be merged on a trial basis and alternative versions of the final bill can be compared.
- Automatic engrossment (merging) of amendments which have been approved is also supported by the Amendment Manager. Conflicting amendments are identified and are flagged as requiring operator resolution.

- Amendments are entered into the system in a simple and intuitive way with all associated technical language and descriptive text being generated automatically.
- Amendments are correctly described in relation to page and line numbers of the official publication.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

An implementation would involve Propylon's consultants working in collaboration with the Parliament's own ICT function

ORIGINS

The application software and ideas outlined in this document have been developed over a series of engagements with legislative assemblies in the USA and with the Irish Parliament.

OUTPUTS

- Instantaneous consolidation of approved amendments and immediate generation of clean-copy preview of amended legislation.
- Ability to described and present amendments in variety of new ways, both in print and online. (Colour-coded, redlined, side-by-side old/new comparisons, etc.)
- Increase in the speed of production of amendment papers - the requirement to format amendment papers, to collate amendments and to manually merge them into the next-stage bill would be removed.
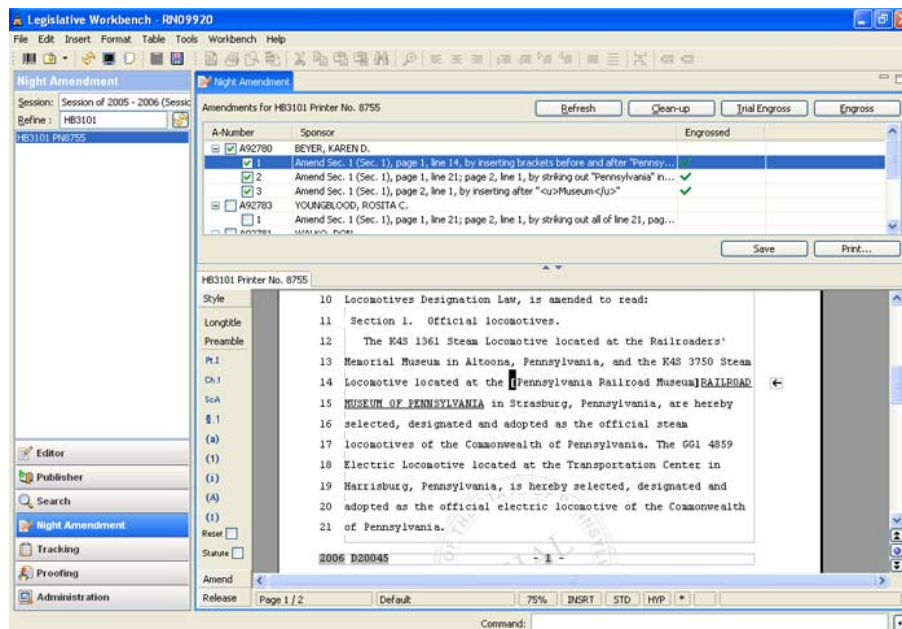
Legislative Workbench screenshot, showing multiple amendments ready to be merged

PROPYLON

Propylon was established in 1999 and is a world leader in lawmaking automation. Propylon has an unparalleled breadth and depth of expertise in delivering solutions for legislative document drafting, collaboration, management and publishing.

The company employs over 60 people and has offices in Dublin, Ireland and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

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S.

OWNER
Vohm

SOLUTION
myParliament (single sign-on)

APPLICABLE SCENARIO
Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic transactions

SUMMARY
Authentic interaction online requires that both parties are confident with the identity of the other. This is a key factor in eCommerce and eBanking, and we think, eDemocracy.

By creating a single sign-on that can be used by MPs, Parliamentarians and Citizens across all public-facing Parliamentary websites, it will be possible to stimulate interaction via a diverse range of services where the identity of the participants is assured. A single log-in interface will make taking part considerably easier for all participants as they will only need to register once in order to gain access to a range of online services.

Technologically, parallels can be drawn with Microsoft Passports or Google IDs, both of which allow users to access a range of online services. Similarly, Open ID is an emerging way of allowing users to register once, and then access a wide variety of sites.

With each consultation that takes place using the single log-in, the user base will be broadened. While it will always be possible to restrict access to particular groups, for general public consultations there will be a larger pool of participants available to take part.

By issuing guidelines to developers, it will be possible to allow them to securely interface with the central user system via an API (Application Program Interface), this won't hinder experimentation or innovative new methods of interaction. In fact it will help new ideas gain momentum as the central core of users will already be available to take part in their project through their single sign-on username and password. Users could even indicate a preference for taking part in beta trials when they take place and be invited to get involved.

TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED

A single sign-on system could be developed as a web based application. There are a number of languages that may be appropriate. We strongly advocate the use of Open Source, rather than proprietary software so a Linux web server running Apache, with the application itself written using MySQL or PostgreSQL and PHP, Ruby or Python would be our preferred platform.

There is also the option of building on the work of existing open source projects such as Open ID, especially with a view of exploring the use of such a system in a trial capacity.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

The myParliament single sign-on would be open to all. MPs and Parliamentarians would be pre-registered.

DESCRIPTION OF USE

Currently online activity is fractured, with various interactive consultations running over short periods - each requiring users to register separately. By creating a single sign-on it will be possible for citizens and Parliamentarians to move seamlessly between consultations, removing a key barrier to interaction.

By registering via the myParliament service, users will create a unique username and password. The registration process will be simple, but also request enough data that the user can be successfully verified. This could be as straightforward as testing their email address is valid or more sophisticated, perhaps checking against details on the electoral register. Measures should also be taken during the registration process to ward off robots or other malware, ensuring registrants are as genuine as possible.

From a visual perspective, all users should have a photo or avatar. This not only makes comments and deliberation more visually appealing but also indicates something of the personality behind the text, giving contributions a more human value. Each user would have a personal dashboard, with links to consultations in which they are participating, links to their MPs profile and other parliamentary online services. This personalisation will foster a sense of closer interaction with parliament as a whole, beyond that experienced with single issue consultation sites.

As well as providing personalised access to various online services, a myParliament profile would be able to track participation in various consultations. This would allow citizens to review the participation of their MP in online consultations. It would also be possible to invite users to take part in specific consultations based on their previous participation or interests.

The myParliament single log-in could be used across a range of interactive services including Blogs, Webchats, ePetitions, Forums and other deliberative

consultations. By creating an API (Application Program Interface) for the single login, any newly developed interactive consultations will be able to hook into the system. Documentation for the API would be provided for developers to enable them to make use of the service in their projects.

API documentation for the single log-in could form part of a larger set of advice and guidelines for developers producing online interactive services and content for Parliament.

Other topics covered by the guidelines could include Open Source Policies, Standards Compliance and Accessibility. Sharing resources in this way works best in an Open Source environment. Moving to a modular, Open Source development model for Parliamentary applications would allow components to be developed to work within a common framework, even if they are developed by a cross section of suppliers with different specialisations.

By making the whole eParliament project Open Source the process will be open, transparent and cumulative, with each round of development contributing to the larger process. Adopting this mentality will make it far easier for applications to share resources, to quickly experiment by adapting existing code and to build from the work of past projects.

An example of a system that could utilise the myParliament log-in would be a consultation platform that allows users to set-up and run their own discussions. These could be self-moderated. Providing tools for citizens to run discussions in this way will allows them to raise issues of concern and discuss them with others, perhaps prior to filing an ePetition.

A significant advantage of doing this within the Parliamentary framework with official tools is that once a campaign has enough activity, an invitation could be sent to relevant Members of Parliament and Parliamentarians to review the debate and possibly comment on the discussion.

The increased potential that subjects raised and discussed in this semi-official space will be visible to MPs. This combined with a low difficulty curve in using the tools would make this an attractive option for citizens compared with creating and running a debate in isolation using their own software.

This is where we would see the benefit of the single sign-on process. Not only would discussion groups be actively recruiting others to take part in their discussions, increasing the number of people available to take part in other interactive consultations, using the myParliament single sign-on, MPs and other registered users would also be able to take part easily.

VOHM

Vohm is a UK based web design agency that has been combining art and technology to deliver enterprise level web applications since 1998.

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4. INCUBATOR GROUP REVIEW

In this section of the report we highlight some of the common themes emerging across the incubator group submissions, and appraise the pilot format of the incubator group.

Common Themes

Each member of the incubator group approached the *P4tF* brief in a different way. However, as a result of being confined to parliamentary politics and through concentration on particular forms of technology, a number of common themes stood out across the submissions. Here we pick out those that would benefit from further study.

Convergence

Many hardware and software components that feature in the group's forecasts are already in use. However, more often than not they exist as separate units. Most members of the group envisaged that these pieces of technology would increasingly be used in combination or be formed into a single multipurpose unit. In their submissions, the group played with the advantages that would result from these forms of convergence. The main advantages related to cost and flexibility; other benefits are covered below.

Time efficiency

Across the incubator group there was concern that MPs were busy people and great value was therefore placed on helping MPs to make better use of their time. Savings could be found, the group suggested, in automating tasks, systematising routine processes and allowing MPs to work remotely. For the latter suggestion, greater use of mobile devices was seen as the all important enabler.

While most MPs already have one or more of PDAs, Blackberries, laptops or mobile phones, these are often basic models performing one task well, usually ensuring a link between office staff and the MP. Much better, the group believed, for these to be combined but also for their scope to be expanded away from solely administrative tasks to facilitating interaction between parliamentarians, their constituents and other stakeholders.

Convenience

The incubator group also saw that time was important to citizens. Specifically, the group was interested in exploring how ICT might be utilised to lower 'barriers of entry' into the parliamentary process, either through the creation of user-friendly interfaces or by enabling asynchronous participation (allowing citizens to participate in a place and at a time that suits them). By making elected representatives and the institution more accessible via technology, the group believed that citizens would not only be more likely to seek out and take up

opportunities to get involved, but would also have more opportunity to hold Parliament and its politicians to account.

Constituency connections
Most of the ICT parliamentarians have at their disposal is centred in Westminster, and the main thrust of ICT development has taken place at an institutional level driven by corporate processes, such as committees and the need to open proceedings in the Houses to public scrutiny. However, for the *P4tF* incubator group there was clearly more that could and should be done with ICT in enhancing engagement between elected representatives and citizens at a constituency level.

From reading the incubator submissions, the suggestion was that this shift in development focus from the institution to the constituency has been facilitated by a new sophistication in technology, which makes it easier to manage and cheaper to install and maintain. Another key development is that a majority of households in the UK have broadband internet access and the mobile is a pervasive feature in UK society.

Data standards
Developing ways of managing and applying data feature across the incubator submissions. All shared an explicit or implicit belief that current practices are ineffective or lack efficiency, but there exist technology-based means of addressing this deficiency.

In some cases, the emphasis was placed on applying an open standards approach to the wealth of data that Parliament collects and creates so as to make it available for scrutiny and reuse. Concerns about the security of that data were mitigated through parallel emphasis on systems safeguards and testing. A desire for greater openness was, therefore, balanced with recognition of the need for robust systems for data storage and retrieval.

Trust
A slightly less explicit theme but one that permeated a number of the submissions (particularly in relation to other themes highlighted above) was that users might be encouraged to share more information about themselves in transactions with Parliament, parliamentarians or their peers if they believe that the technology is secure and if by sharing more personal information their contributions are likely to carry more weight.

Presently, the average citizen's interaction with the parliamentary process online tends to be cursory and anonymous; this lessens the credibility that parliamentarians place on online interaction, but also impacts negatively on citizens' perceptions of their peers. Encouraging greater breadth and depth of technology use in democratic contexts will, therefore, be dependent on levels of efficacy and trust.

Format

Given the task of providing some foresight on what ICT Parliament might call upon over the course of the next decade, we wanted to take the opportunity to depart from conventional methods of producing such a report. The creative approach we piloted was to form a diverse group of contributors, prepare a brief and invite responses. There was very little precedent for such an approach, particularly in the context of British parliamentary politics. The untested nature of the approach meant that it contained a high element of risk. What follows is an appraisal of the incubator group method; building on the *P4tF* incubator group is covered in the 'recommendations' section of the report.

We would have liked to have received a greater number of submissions, but in truth our original projections for submissions were lower than what we eventually received. It was not possible to pay for the time taken to develop submissions, so we are very grateful to those group members who did put effort into producing a submission. We were encouraged by the range of submissions; every member of the group interpreted the brief in a different way. If anything, we would have liked more submissions from academic departments (to tap into new ways of analysing data collected online) and Third Sector organisations (who might emphasise the value in empowering citizens to set the agenda, particularly those on the margins of society).

One area in which the group's submissions might be open to criticism is for having too great a focus on technology. The core purpose of the project was to concentrate on technology; we also required the group members to keep their submissions short. As a result, there was little opportunity for the group to articulate their focus on user-centric design principles, their consciousness of issues relating to the digital divide, or their belief in the need to balance online engagement methods with those that are offline. While all the group members would doubtlessly subscribe to the importance of these concerns, it may have been helpful to ask members to use extra space in submissions to explain how they might overcome such challenges.

We were concerned that in some submissions there was a tendency for owners to elaborate on existing products designed for contemporary uses, rather than attempt to develop speculative solutions for future challenges. Again we were willing to exercise flexibility, accepting the novelty of our approach and the fact that individuals and organisations were being asked to contribute on a *pro bono* basis. Still, a small number of submissions were rejected on the basis that they were too far adrift from the requirement and spirit of *Parliament for the Future*.

In trying to be as open to creativity as possible, the *P4tF* brief may have been unclear in places. However, the group were encouraged in the brief, the original invitation email and in subsequent update emails to make use of the Hansard Society, either to seek clarifications on the brief, on parliamentary procedure or to seek background information about use of ICT in civic and political contexts. It

was clear to us on seeing the final submissions that some of the group would have benefited from a 'drafting period' where feedback could have been provided and amendments made where necessary.

In certain cases, the submissions seemed to lack ambition. We spoke with some of the incubator group to determine what the cause of this was. Interestingly, it emerged that they had made an assessment of what they believed Parliament's appetite for innovation to be and checked their submissions accordingly. We had anticipated this to an extent and had sought to guard against it in the brief. However, the project team could have perhaps done more by arranging more frequent reviews with group members. In the end, we had opted against this for fear of unduly influencing the direction of the group's contributions.

Ultimately, the overall quality of submissions impressed the Hansard Society and a number of the group members were clearly very inspired by the initiative. As well as providing an insight into the thought processes of particular practitioners who are shaping the development of ICT in their particular field, *Parliament for the Future* has given us an overview of how the current use of ICT by Parliament and parliamentarians is perceived and how it might take shape in years to come.

CONCLUSIONS
Moving Forward in the Digital Age

There is a broad recognition - inside and outside of Westminster - that the UK Parliament has struggled with ICT, particularly the internet. It has variously approached internet-orientated ICT as i) a set of administrative tools that helped manage knowledge and staff, ii) a means of publishing and distributing information in the public domain, and iii) as a facilitator of engagement. At times mobilisation of ICT has been viewed as a responsibility for Parliament as a corporate entity, and at others as a concern of individual MPs and Peers. The result has been an uncoordinated, hesitant and costly application of ICT to core business areas.

With the establishment of PICT and associated operational units (such as the Web Team), the recruitment of personnel dedicated to coordinating and delivering ICT support across both Houses, and the release of budgets ring-fenced for spending on ICT, Parliament has made its intentions clear – the days of a 'hit and run' approach to the internet and other forms of ICT are in the past. Amongst parliamentarians, too, there would appear to be a step-change from seeing the internet as something to be countered, to seeing it as something that can help make more of the resources and time available. These internal manoeuvres coincide with external pressures – for example, central government's use of social media to engage the public in the policy making process, the number of British households with access to broadband reaching over 60%, and the sustained trend of public disengagement from Parliament.

In 2007, Parliament and parliamentarians find themselves more convinced of the value of harnessing ICT but facing an entirely new set of challenges from those encountered in the 1990s. The pace of technological development has quickened and public and stakeholder expectations have increased. Parliament and parliamentarians will have to convince citizens that they are committed to ongoing engagement, enabled by new forms of sedentary and increasingly mobile technology. They need to learn from mistakes that Parliament has made to date with regards to the internet, and master how to catch the waves of future ICT development, so that they can be capitalised on. In part this is a responsibility for parliamentary staff and officials, but Members must also take the initative. The involvement of Members of Parliament in the development of parliamentary ICT will bring vital expertise to ensure that developments are fit for the purposes of constituency and parliamentary politics.

To encourage Parliament to look ahead and anticipate developments in ICT, rather than having to be reflexive, has been our motivation with *Parliament for the Future*. Our work on this report is driven by a belief that the UK Parliament can be a world leader in parliamentary reform, and that ICT will be central to the facilitation of change in years to come. We hope this report will encourage the UK Parliament to be more confident in the face of rapid technological

development. Producing the report in this innovative way was demanding, but we hope overall that it will be welcomed for its objectivity, its fresh perspectives and its contribution to an ongoing debate about the nature of representative democracy in the 21st century.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Creating the conditions for ICT innovations

We would like to close this report with a series of recommendations to Parliament. Our recommendations relate to the creation of conditions in which Parliament can assess information and communications technology through strategic, evidence-based approaches. We envisage these recommendations could be actioned within a parliamentary cycle.

These seven recommendations are informed by *Parliament for the Future* primarily, but augmented by our previous work with Parliament and ongoing research with central and local government on related initiatives.

1. **Sustain the *P4tF* incubator group**
   The *Parliament for the Future* initiative has demonstrated that with a small resource base and a concentrated scope, much can be done to assist Parliament to prepare for developments in ICT. The Hansard Society would be willing to continue in its role as convenor and rapporteur of *P4tF*. In the second year, we propose to consolidate the 'incubator group' membership, refine the scope of the submissions, engage a parallel review group consisting of MPs, Peers and staff, and develop the initiative website as a point of public access to *P4tF* and Parliament's activity in this area. The core aim would be to promote the conditions in which ICT innovation can flourish in Parliament.

2. **Compare practice with other parliaments and political institutions in the UK and abroad**
   The UK Parliament should initiate an ICT-based 'community of practice' within the UK with representation from central and local government, as well as the Scottish Parliament and Northern Irish and Welsh Assemblies. This could be a function of the *P4tF* initiative. The UK Parliament should also ensure it has representation with the Global Centre for ICT in Parliaments (run by the IPU and UNDESA).

3. **Encourage an annual audit of corporate and individual use of ICT in Parliament**
   Parliament should prepare a mandatory audit of ICT use at a corporate level and by its Members in administrative, publishing and engagement contexts every five years. A smaller-scale optional audit should be considered on an annual basis. This should be managed by PICT.

4. **Run small-scale pilots**

   Parliament should set aside a small annual budget for small-scale ICT pilots. This would be managed by PICT and the Web Team, and awarded to internal or external groups in allotments of up to £15k (based on existing levels of government funding for piloting of web-based political engagement resources). Evaluations should be carried out for each pilot, reported to the Commons' and Lords' Administration and Procedure Committees, and made available in the public domain.

5. **Release web statistics into public domain on a regular basis**

   Parliament should follow the example of other public and private sector organisations and release usage statistics for its corporate website and related web-based resources. As a minimum these should cover hit rates, unique visitors, return visits, duration of visit, key search terms and popular pages. Parliament should also consider releasing the results of any user testing into the public domain.

6. **Fund an authoritative 'history of Parliament and ICT'**

   There is no authoritative, empirical account of Parliament's use of information and communication technology. Although not an easy work to produce, such an account would lay important foundations for future development of ICT. Parliament should fund the compilation of an official history of Parliament's use of a broad range of information and communications technology (as well as the internet) by an external body. This should be available in the public domain.

7. **Publicise online developments and promote public take-up**

   Parliament should do more to raise public awareness and take-up of its existing and forthcoming online engagement channels available through the corporate website. In addition to media campaigns and paid-for marketing, Parliament should also seek advocacy from Third Sector organisations to encourage participation by their members, stakeholders and supporters.

APPENDIX 1
The *Parliament for the Future* Incubator Group Brief

[Note - this is not a tender or procurement document. It should not be reproduced without written consent from the commissioning body]

TITLE
Parliament for the Future (P4tF)

COMMISSIONING BODY
Hansard Society

SUMMARY
The Hansard Society has been funded by Parliament to project the form a digitally-enabled Parliament might take over the next 10 years.

The research will provide a platform to ask difficult questions of the democratic contribution made by technology to date. Crucially, it will also provide a neutral space for Parliament to think creatively about how it can take advantage of new media - now and in the future - by networking with those who are leading advances in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

The Hansard Society is inviting individuals and organisations to contribute their ideas and visions of how Parliament and parliamentarians should use digital ICT to enhance communication, representation and scrutiny.

Respondents will constitute an 'incubator group'. Responses will be fully credited and published in their entirety in the final research report. Participation will be on a *pro bono* basis.

CONTEXT
Underinvestment and a lack of strategic direction over the last 15 years resulted in Parliament's failure to capitalise on the first wave of maturing ICT. Critics argued that Parliament's passivity, or resistance, toward technology not only meant that it missed out on valuable efficiency and logistical benefits, but at a time of declining political engagement, it also passed up opportunities to enter into productive dialogue with the public.

With the drafting of its internet strategy, a business case for investment and the creation of the office of Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology (PICT) in 2005, Parliament took significant steps toward redressing deficiencies in its provision and use of ICT.

This attitudinal and practical step-change in Parliament is a positive one. However, it is important to acknowledge that it is overdue and that during the years of inaction, layers of apprehension and complexity have built up that will

make Parliament's implementation of even routine and straightforward changes difficult and time-consuming.

Whilst it is redesigning and implementing its corporate website and intranet, Parliament must protect against losing touch with developments in new media technology once again. The *P4tF* research project is designed to support Parliament's long term planning and investment in ICT

REQUIREMENT
The Hansard Society is inviting 100 stakeholders to form a Parliament for the Future 'incubator group'. These stakeholders will include academics, designers, developers, researchers and technologists.

To join the group, individuals and organisations are asked to submit a technology-led solution to one or more of the scenarios below. A working prototype is not required. Responses should be written and incorporate any graphics following the suggested response structure below.

Respondents should place their solutions within the context of parliamentary politics. Solutions should reference existing hardware and software but seek to speculate on the form these might take over the course of the next 10 years.

Responses should be creative and address the needs of Parliament, parliamentarians and citizens.

SCENARIOS
Respondents are asked to submit a technology-led solution to one or more of the scenarios below.

Responses can account for the area in its entirety (such as legislative scrutiny) or a particular aspect (for example, how mobile phones might be used to gather evidence for select committees).

A. Representation - using ICT to strengthen democratic connections
It is not easy being an elected representative - for a host of reasons. Just think of Alistair Carmichael MP, who has to travel up to Orkney and back every week. Even Mark Field, MP for Westminster, must find it difficult to get round to all the places he needs to visit.

Keeping a connection with 60,000 plus constituents - each living their own busy life - is a logistical nightmare. Never mind ensuring that when you are in touch with your constituents, you are doing it in the most efficient, effective and transparent way possible.

Through, for example, websites, blogs, email, PDAs and even a smattering of SMS messages, we have seen that ICT can empower MPs and those they represent. But these technologies have only gone so far - so where to next?

Some issues to consider:

1. MPs have a small budget to spend on ICT;
2. MPs have to be inclusive. How can they ensure the breadth and depth of their engagement activity?
3. MPs spend most of their time away from their offices in the constituency and Westminster;
4. MPs don't have a lot of time for specialist ICT training;
5. MPs can arrange for ICT independently or through their party;
6. Constituents need simple ways to communicate with their elected representatives;
7. Constituents want to be able to track the activity of their elected representatives;
8. Constituents may not have computers or internet access.

B. Information - using ICT to improve communications

Information is the lifeblood of Parliament. It both consumes and produces masses of information, and managing that process is complex.

MPs and Peers get hundreds of emails, letters, publications and reports delivered every day providing facts, figures, suggestions and views. They also get just as many requests for information. Parliamentarians and their staff have to assess the quality, relevance, application and how to prioritise all of this material.

Parliament provides information management support to Members, Peers and committees through units such as the Commons and Lords libraries. MPs also have their own researchers and staff spread across their Westminster and constituency offices. Of course, Hansard records proceedings in Parliament and this is made available to the public.

Technology has sped up and increased the volume of information. How should Parliament be reacting and adapting? How can it be a more efficient and effective consumer and producer of information?

Some issues to consider:

1. Parliamentarians and committees have small numbers of staff;
2. Parliamentarians and committees produce a large volume of information which is not recorded in Hansard;
3. MPs need ways of processing and storing information;
4. MPs need ways of distributing and tracking information;

5. MPs and Peers need ways of calling up information at short notice;
6. Parliamentarians need to gather input from electoral and interest-based constituencies;
7. Parliamentary committees need to be able to coordinate the information distributed to their members;
8. Parliament has to balance accessibility and transparency with privacy and security.

C. Legislation - using ICT to coordinate and enhance scrutiny

Parliament is a legislature and making the law is a consequential and demanding aspect of the work parliamentarians do.

Legislative scrutiny has always been a complex, involved and time-consuming activity. However, the quantity of legislation and scrutiny of parliamentarians' legislative responsibilities has steadily increased over the last 50 years.

It is difficult to coordinate the process of making the law. Parliamentarians have to read bills and track changes; they may be required to sit on committees which have particular responsibility for gathering evidence or reviewing legislation. MPs also have to vote on whether a bill can become the law.

Some issues to consider:

1. Bills go through many changes before they become law – tracking these changes is complicated;
2. Bills are scheduled but the process can be protracted;
3. Bills go through a number of stages in both the Commons and the Lords;
4. There is a need to coordinate stakeholder and public participation in the legislative process;
5. Citizens need ways of tracking the progress of legislation;
6. MPs and Committees receive both solicited and unsolicited input into the legislative process;
7. New legislation often references old legislation;
8. Parliament is increasingly involved in reviewing existing legislation.

RESPONSE STRUCTURE

Responses to the above scenarios should be written and be no more than 3 sides of A4.

Graphics can be photographs, screen-grabs or illustrations. Large graphic files should be sent separately of the response document.

As far as possible, responses should keep to the following structure:

- Name of developer
- Name of application/process/product

- Applicable scenario
- Summary of purpose
- Technology involved
- People involved
- Description of use
- Origins
- Outcomes

Each response should be accompanied by a separate profile covering the individual(s) or organisation(s) involved. This should be no longer than a side of A4, and include contact details and a logo (if available).

DEADLINE
An expression of interest in contributing to P4tF must be received by March 23 2007.

Finished contributions must be received by May 18 2007 via email.

END PRODUCT
The Hansard Society will produce a research report to be published on- and offline. The report will have the following sections:

1. A history of Parliament's use of ICT;
2. A showcase of hardware and software applications for use in a parliamentary context consisting of the 'incubator group' submissions;
3. Recommendations to Parliament about developing, tracking and investing in digital ICT.

The research will be presented to Parliament. The Hansard Society will encourage a response from Parliament. This will be in relation to the research overall, and cannot be guaranteed for specific contributions.

The research will be placed in the public domain by the Hansard Society. Contributors will also be able to disseminate the report.

CONTACT
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