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Out of the way. thanks everyone for continuing to introduce yourself.

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Some chat again. Hi! if you've just come in please leave your name location organization in the chat.

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And for for those of you who are new to a political well welcome.

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We are a global learning platform for government, you by more than 170,000 public servants.

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We. we believe in equipping public servants like yourselves, with the essential 20 first century skills and knowledge and networks for for making governments more effective

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Which in turn should improve the divides of people before we dive into it.

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It'll be great to see who else is in the room as is our traditional apolitical.

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If you're comfortable doing so, please turn on your camera and just give everyone a nice big wave we want to see your bright, beautiful smiles and bonus points.

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If you have cats in the background, Hi, everybody great, great, yeah, and feel free to stay on camera or go off as well.

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If you have 2 we will start off with a couple of pull questions to to get a sense of where everyone is coming from.

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This information could also be helpful for our speakers.

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To to understand the audience and frame today's conversation so the first pull question.

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Excuse me, is, I believe, in the importance and urgency of citizen engagement.

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So how far do you agree with this statement

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Yeah, if you can't see? in your on screen My colleague has also put in the chat. we'll just wait a couple more seconds, and then we can share the results.

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Yup. Can everyone see the results? Yeah, not too. not too many strongly disagrees.

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Not not surprising, given that if you're attending the session, it's already quite self-selecting but still some some work for the speakers to convince more people more more strongly great the second pull

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question is, how familiar are you with citizen engagement work in government?

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So one extremely familiar. Maybe you directly work on this in your department.

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Adequately familiar, a little familiar, not at all familiar

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We a bit more as well, and then results In meantime, Hi, Emily, I, Gilmar, come on from Brazil.

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Thanks for joining us today

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Can everyone see the results? Yes, so we have a few who are very familiar with this.

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Some adequately familiar 40% and and a good chunk not too familiar and not at all from there.

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So. so. yeah, I think it's a good good spread of people today.

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I think that makes for a very lively discussion. So I think, yeah, we can.

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We can get right into it right now. I am really excited to introduce our first speaker, Dr.

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Don Venian Don is President and CEO of middle ground policy research based in Ottawa, Canada.

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My colleagues also pushing the buy in the chat throughout his career, done as developed and let engagement projects in a wide variety of areas, but with an emphasis on social policy and projects include a country-wide

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dialogue of building a pen Canadian health data system and the development of Community Service vision for a new Ottawa hospital.

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Many of his projects involved multiple levels of government don has over 30 years experience as a project leader, researcher, writer, commentator, speaker, senior government, advisor, trainer, and facilitator he's the author of a continuous stream of

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articles, studies and books on public engagement, government,

transformation and open government.

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Demo, but then so don't to start off with some opening questions.

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Feel free to tackle some or all of them.

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You know What is Susan engagement? and why is it important and urgent, or or is it? And

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Yeah, what What a trends for citizen engagement in this current epoch!

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Right where where there is war polarization backsliding of democracy where we're seeing this targetization of countries.

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So we have quite, quite big, and brought questions to set the scene.

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The the floor is yours done. Great. Thanks very much, Billy.

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First of all, let me thank you, Willie, and

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And the Pasha, and the political for the opportunity to speak here and for everyone.

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That's that's attending I think what i'd like to do I understand?

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I've got about 5 to 7 min here which i'd like to take just the time to kind of frame in based on my experience.

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I've been at this a long time folks how I how I understand public engagement, and particularly public deliberation and ultimately, how it's evolved over the last 2 or 3 decades that I've been at work

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on it, and where we are now. So my big question here is, where are we?

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In the public deliberation, slash, consultation, world.

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And how do we get here? Let me start with the distinction itself

very fundamental, and I see that there are some people who are not that familiar.

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So this may be worth saying. First of all, let me draw a distinction between deliberation and consultation.

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Consultation traditionally is very simple. What it means is governments go out.

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They have a problem. And they ask people just like we do as human beings.

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What do you think about X, And they do so because they want to get information from people that will help inform their point of view.

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The big thing here in consultation, is once you hear what people think about X. You retreat behind closed doors, whether it's a minister or a public servant, or whoever it may be, and you crunch that stuff and you draw some

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conclusions. You use people information to come to those conclusions. In the case of deliberation.

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The big difference is, suddenly, we've decided or over time we've decided that all this shouldn't happen behind closed doors, that when we ask people, what do you think Then we ask them together?

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What do we think together about this? And we started discussion around this?

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And how far that discussion goes, and what it says is really what the liberation is all about. So here's, I guess what I want to lay out before you was that governments tend to see consultation as they tend to prefer it or

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have traditionally, because they believe it minimizes risk.

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They tend to the. They tend to be shy about deliberation, because they think it increases risk.

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And I want to explain that basically let's look at what's happened over the last 20 years since I've been watching this indeed, 30

years is first of all 3 things there's been a real proliferation of interest

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groups in civil society, and others who have become much more active and engaged.

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There are tons of people out there every time. an issue is raised I've seen this grow in my career.

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We can see it all over the place Now second of course, there's the rise of social media it's everywhere.

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Thirdly, most importantly, perhaps, there's a growing independence in our understanding of issues and policy areas. I can remember a time when we talked mainly about the economy or sorry climate or environment without talking a lot about the economy.

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Now we see those 2 things is absolutely fused is we can't have an intelligent discussion about the the climate without talking about the economy, and that just means these things become far more overlapping and messy.

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The issues public-date debate, because they're more complex, becomes increasingly fractious and division.

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And ultimately these divisions have fed some of this portion, and have also fed that this trend towards a decline in trust for governments.

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I guess so. I want to say to you in my experience, and I think not.

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Just here in Canada, but around the world this evolving situation has been a game changer for elected officials.

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If you have Cabinet Government the way we do here in Canada.

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The idea traditionally was that when governments had to make decisions, the Cabinet got together, and they have their own debate around the Cabinet table, and they would arrive at a decision, and in theory if they were within the bounds of

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the Constitution. they had the authority to go to the public service

and say, Deliver this solution.

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We elected our governments to do that, and for quite a while it worked reasonably well.

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Increasingly. it does not. Why not? Because it's it gets really complex the way I've described with social media proliferation of interest groups interlocking and interdependent issues.

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What happens is when the minister just makes a decision or when the cabinet makes a decision, and the minister goes out to announce that there's no guarantee at all that a whole bunch of people out there are going

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to agree with them. In fact, the more divisive we get in, the more complex these issues become, the less likely it is for the minister that he or she is going to be able to simply deliver that solution through the through the public service and that

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raises a big question. I have a football analogy here.

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American football, if you know it, that I like to use.

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The minister tends to get stuck in the end zone may be holding the ball, he or she but they can't get out of there because they're getting tackled every time they try to move by all of the people out there

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who are not on their side, and that just means, even if they have the authority, they tend to be paralyzed.

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This is where a public engagement comes in. Governments have turned to public engagement because they think it will win them legitimacy and help them get down the field with the ball.

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The minister can start running again But here's the problem. If we try to use consultation to do that, and this is the core of what I have to tell you in my experience is in consultation If the minister goes out and says i've

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got an issue here, and I want to solve it. Tell me what you think.

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And then the Mission minister retreats back to the cabinet table and behind closed doors.

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That Cabinet makes all those trade-offs on the issues and the concerns and the values at stake, and then comes back out and announces it.

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The people out there who are in disagreement not only have no ownership of that solution.

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They're just inclined to say look I would have done it differently.

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So why should I listen to you? and what that really has meant?

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Is that increasingly the risk behind consultation where governments tend to think it was safer.

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In fact, the risk has grown. it becomes more divisive because people simply disagree with government.

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Say, I don't see why you made the trade off that way? why didn't you make them some other way?

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The whole point of deliberation is to try to tackle this problem by bringing people into that discussion in a way that in some meaningful sense they participate in that discussion and help make those trade-offs So that there's more cohesion

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out there enough cohesion out there in the society around the minister, in civil society and in the public, that the minister, to continue with my analogy, can take the ball and run down the field. My job.

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Is a guy who does public administration is to run into interference for the minister.

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If I can use that analogy it's when he's stuck in his. his.

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Her own end zone. it's to go out there and essentially create enough cohesion among the stakeholder community and the public that the minister can get moving with the issue. and once the minister gets far enough down the

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field that he or she can hold the ball and run with it themselves.

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My job is done. i'm not saying there are no other things that we can do with deliberation, and we can talk about it.

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I just want to say to you that I think the reason we are so concerned about it today is because increasingly Cabinet government is paralyzed is paralyzed by the complexity of the issues and we need to create a higher level

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of cohesion out there in the field. And the way we do that are one of the most important ways we can do that is, by in various ways bringing the public into that discussion about complex trade-offs and letting them get some

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ownership and have a say so that they feel the solutions are legitimate, and the Cabinet can move forward.

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So Willie. i've done 35 s over my 7 min.

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I'm gonna stop there for now. and I can certainly Say, a lot more as we get on with the questions.

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Perfect perfect. Thank you. Thanks. Thanks. Don. Yeah. Thanks for this really.

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Great overview of the theory and practice of sitting citizen engagement in government, A lot lots of impact there.

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And we're gonna leave Q. a for after our second presentation.

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But please type all your questions into the chat as we go along.

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Great. So our next speaker is Ellis Whitehead, joining us from the Uk.

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Ellis worked in policy right and a few government Uk Government departments before getting bit by the digital transformation.

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Buck. after extended the Government to chose service, she began considering how the lessons of digital transformation could apply to more of governments activity, including policy, development and service delivery.

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She is an enthusiastic advocate for user center policy design and an active member of the central Government.

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Ucp community. That is the unfair Commercial Practices Directive.

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As a historian and sociologist, Alice has studied how objects and events are experience which has parallels with digital methods like service design, behavioral insights and user research.

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And and for our audience something to maybe think about. Well, as is sharing her Uk Government experience, I love for you to reflect on your own context and department as well.

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And how our insights and experience could be relevant for for our own work.

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Yep, so Ellis on to you. Hi! hi! everybody!

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So I thought that as I was thinking about what to say I think i'm going to tell you a bit more about that kind of journey that Willie is just summarized for myself, of how I got to where I am today, and what this interest

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of my assistant engagement from where I started, which was being kind of randomly exposed to digital transportation as part of my graduate scheme, and I hope that there, as we kind of as I go through this somewhat

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chronologically it will, it will reveal some interesting aspects of citizen engagement.

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That some may feel quite far from policy. but others I think we'll have some application there.

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So I think it. I do recognize that having a way into system engagement that comes from digital and product design can can be seen is quite unusual and quite far from the policy making world.

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But I was actually in the policy making world in the uk government to begin with, and I didn't find engagement a very inspiring exercise when it happened, mostly because it seemed to be about being lobbied, and I I kind of do like to

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bring the word lobby into this discussion. because I think it's, sums up sort of part of what governments have to do in their engagement practices.

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So I wasn't taken by the idea of going into a job that was more to do with stakeholder engagement.

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And then, for completely other reasons, I got some exposure to the story.

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The success story that is Uk digital government and Nice. And because I was placed in that organization I saw some of the things that they were building, and this was about 6 7 years ago.

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Now, and I absolutely love the idea that the things that were happening in that organization were based on real People's needs just people who are part of our society who government is there to help and that could be somebody who was applying to get social

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security benefits. It could be a member of staff logging onto the Wi-fi, or it could be a teenager getting their first license.

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It's, not their driving license, but they're fishing rod license.

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And now I welcome a digital service. So I am in that space.

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But for years before that I was thinking about how to take those concepts that I discovered in the world of building digital servers back into that policy world.

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And that is a space in the past 5 6 years in the Uk Civil Service has really developed, and it's come from a community of about 5 people who cared about it, and a much a much bigger group of interest people and a political has been a

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really big part of that, with their awards and their articles and seminars.

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But i'm going to say a bit more about that journey, and I really feel that I was one of the people who was at the beginning and thinking about that community, and how we could move those concepts like service designer product design over towards

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policy. So what do I do when I do this like I?

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I look at theory there's service design theory there's also theories of system engagement. I use my own experiences, and I adapt examples from that kind of digital and product worlds.

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But one of the main things I do is I listen. for when people are using different language to talk about citizen engagement, but actually underneath it, they mean the same thing.

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And those can be terms like digital democracy, stakeholder, engagement, user research, social research.

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And I I really like to emphasize the similarities between these different kind of areas of interest.

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People have. And I think about how digital policy intersects.

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When I do this, because I now, even though I kind of learned about these things in the world of digital, I've tried to reverse my position, and I put policy first.

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I think digital or technologies and and those technologies are very often used to turn policy from words into reality.

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But digital was just one channel, and there are other channels like face-to-face interaction.

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And those can make policy happen to. So I think that policy is much more important and critical to the function of governments than digital, which is more of a method or a vehicle.

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And one of the things that I did that I was really proud of that sort of brought this journey from trying to bring the the way of thinking about building digital products and services for people into the policy world was when I did a little piece of work with the

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Uk parole board. The parole board makes decisions about whether prisoners should be released on parole, and they

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In response to some pressure they made a new process where victims of a crime could send in a statement for the Board to consider as they made that decision, and I was working in justice at the time, and I saw this, and I thought who is going

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to kind of who is going to engage the actual victims in this process?

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And how is that? How are we going to get their inputs made?

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That process actually work for them, and actually be something that makes sense.

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And and we brought together a couple of professionals, a researcher and a writer, and we considered all of those needs.

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So we applied that digital methodology of looking at the government's needs which were important and the individuals needs. and we mapped the interactions that there were.

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And we, we created forms to enable this process that were really clear, and they were really sensitively worded.

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And they explained to victim how this very emotional process would actually work.

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And so it wasn't straightforward but you can't just go out to a victim of a crime and ask them to talk to you about about their experience and re traumatizing that way.

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But we just refuse to let that stand in our way and say oh, no, it can't be done.

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We can't can't have engagement. around this process we found a way to create that engagement.

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Then we used what we heard, and we turned that into the delivery of

the new thing. And that was just one example of a time when I thought that if you just try, and if you just commit to that system, engagement, you can make

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a real difference to small pieces of policy everywhere, and then other times i've been really disappointed when that hasn't been possible when my commitment hasn't been present, and when fellow policymakers have been been too

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shy or too risk of us to engage in that type of engagement.

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So I think this really you know there's there's so much to say.

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Here i'll i'll tell say one more thing before I wrap up.

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I think it is really important to have a nuanced position about the possibility of doses and engagement, and the value that it can bring in this the original articles that Don and I wrote on this topic kind of touched on this I

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think there are times when system engagement isn't appropriate or isn't useful, or am I gonna do awesome?

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Do you also think it's important to consider the kind of value add of the engagement, or how much you get out of it for the effort you put in.

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But I still think that it should be used much, much more than it currently is, and I believe that there is a lot of work to do.

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Perhaps, before you get to the stage where it can do that engagement where you have to create a climate and a buy-in for doing it.

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And that's before you go on to design it and do it well.

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So sometimes you do need to spend that energy working out how to sell.

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The idea and sell the the concept of system engagement before you can move on to that. And that's something we could talk further about, or I'm also happy to talk more about those methods that I mentioned of kind of doing a really

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high quality piece of engagement. that will give you that value and pay you back for the investment that you put in, and the buy-in that you create

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But i'll leave it there for now. amazing thanks thanks so much, Adam, for giving us this preview of what it's like being on the ground.

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The the Uk Government, and I think the the cases you share on digital government.

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Also against some of these questions in the chat about technology and media.

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I don't even have seen those yeah so thank you both.

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Now we're going into the q a we have a bunch of presumptive questions as well as questions from the chat.

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But to to start off I I like to pick up on Alexis presentation.

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So as it sounds like in your experience, getting by in for Susan.

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Engagement is is quite a sticking point, even though the the constraints in the the the machinery of the the Uk Government.

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I like to take this point, and maybe direct it to don first who has done extensive work in pitching citizen engagement to government who's who's done quite a lot of strategic discourse

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framing around the issue. So yeah, Don, could you share thoughts?

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And some of these strategies for securing bin Well, first thing i'd say, I I think Alice did a good job of this between what I had to say and she had to say, is I think you obviously have to draw the

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distinction, or or maybe better way to put it as scope.

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The problem. And what I mean by that is how big and how serious is

the problem you're trying to solve.

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And sometimes the problem is not is not even necessarily a problem we're just trying to say, How do we make this policy of this program better?

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How do we deliver this service more effectively and if it's not a big problem, so that it's not ruffling any feathers at the political level.

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Then I think there's probably there are lots of practical questions about how you do this.

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I would say that that there's lots of room here in Canada increasing room for what I call sort of small scale and relatively controversial engagement, and that's more around the idea of going out and just asking people and

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having fairly light conversations. we're getting beyond consultation so it's in some sense engaging people in the dialogue.

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But to some extent we're really doing is canvassing ideas and getting them to put their ideas together.

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For example, I recently did a vision on a hospital, and it was really important to bring the community into this discussion.

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So the community feels the hospitals and just being plot down in the middle of 5 communities and maybe fragmenting those communities. and it's a chance for them to have a say on how the design of that building will work and how it will

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make sure that the community is in integrated, whether then blown apart.

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On the other hand, if it's a government that's if the Government is dealing with something, it's a serious and controversial issue in my country, we might look at something like energy policy you know to what extent should we

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be developing and and shipping oil to other countries, or perhaps something like like medically assisted dying.

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These are issues that are highly controversial and they're politically sensitive, and I think those are the ones where, I would say there a lot.

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The government will see them as riskier, but they become much more ambitious and meaningful in the sense that we really need to get voices in there to be able to build cohesion and overcome the difficulties that we have so we can

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move important policies forward, and I think those kind of processes you really do have to work them through with the public service, and ultimately the political level to make sure.

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In fact, I I guess I would send one message here's what the minister needs to know before you ever go out there and try and deliver an engagement process Is you're telling the minister at some level You've got to give

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people some space to have a conversation. and play into the decisions you can't just decide that in the cabinet table, or there won't be any buy in but what you can't tell the minister or he will or she will never say

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Yes, is, and that space is wide open and I have no idea what they're gonna say.

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But he's just gonna whoa I don't want to go there.

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So you gotta figure out how big is that space how much flexibility are we bringing out there to people to have a conversation?

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And I think what you've got to be able to tell the minister is the space.

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Is this big? it's a little bigger than a red box but smaller than a fridge, and on the other hand we don't exactly know where this is gonna land. But we know what the space is and we know roughly what this is gonna

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look like, So can you live with that minister because the reward you get?

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Is it's gonna let you get down the field and essentially get this issue moving again.

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So I think the real challenge, I would say on the big issues is framing the space that will that will bring people into the conversation, and they feel they have a a space in which to play and do something important.

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But where the political level does not feel threatened and it's going to end up with a decision that has no idea what to do with. And I think our job is first and foremost to figure out what that space is how big is it is it

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bigger than a breadbox. Is it smaller than a fridge?

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What likely is in that fridge. Great thanks, thanks, Dawn. Eddie.

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Did you ever need that today? Yeah, I mean, I I can talk about this all day.

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I think there are. there are different lenses that we can look at this question of describing what it is you're trying to do so.

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A common mistake that I see people make is get very hung up on the kind of theory or the methodology, and what they're doing like.

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That's not the kind of thing that ministers or decision. Makers are likely to be very interested in they're they're not going to be convinced by you doing a presentation.

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To say why this is such a really kind of well-established idea.

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And this is exactly how you're going to conduct it and you're going to use all the latest cutting edge sort of democratic or methodological developments.

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But there is a way of looking at it which is which is about that rational that Don mentioned.

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So There's there we don't just do sort of these information exercises, because we want to get the information from the public.

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We also do them because of how they make people feel or we don't do them because of how they would make people feel so.

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There's one element which is the idea of touching on sort of what are we going to learn like?

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What? what is the information in question here? And, as one says, you do need to have some idea of what that might be.

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Then there's another area which is this like what will we achieve.

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If we do this, you know, kind of saying no matter what people say if they've been consulted in some sense they're likely to feel more engaged.

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And so both of those views. I think are very relevant to a minister, what won't be relevant if that kind of I propose that we follow this methodology.

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And let me go into a lot of detail around Why, that's brilliant.

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I did. No, no, no, i'm sorry go ahead, Alice. Well, I was just gonna I was just gonna add.

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But finish by saying that I think they're they're all I would even go so far as to say there are 2 quite distinct moments when you might want to do this type of engagement. So one could be on you know a larger or kind

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of complex or controversial issue, and that might be something exactly like those students mentioned.

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Maybe it's not politically contentious. but it really strongly affects a community, or maybe it's a very polarizing issue like a sister dying.

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But there's also I think a different way of looking at system engagement which can be that sometimes it can add the most value at a more granular level, and often that's because some high-stakes political issues really aren't

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going anywhere, like the reason that they're kind of deadlocked is because society is quite evenly split, or because we can't afford to do the thing that most people want to do.

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And I think in those kind of difficult cases, what can actually be the most productive approach is to go right into that detail and say, we are not going to be able, as a group or as a consultative project to change that high

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level. About 50% of the population go either way on this.

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But what we can do is in this particular way that this thing plays out in this particular process, or on this particular interaction between 2 players or this specific funding pot.

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We can make small changes, and that can be a way to do engagement that does result in meaningful change for people, and perhaps on the ground that changes a lot of things.

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And yet the bigger issue remains stark But on the whole people still feel better about it, and that I think is really important to be able to differentiate between what which level you are talking about when you're thinking about that kind of

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engagement, will you? could I just add one more thing to this there's a set of distinctions here that I think maybe maps onto this usefully.

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Sure. Yeah, i'll be brief I promise but but But first of all, I agree with everything that that Alice said, and and I think one of the things that we do need to think about methodologically. if I can use that word when We're when we're asking ourselves.

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How do I design this process when, when we're doing traditional consultation, the way governments do it is to sort of throw up in the doors and say, everybody come and tell us what you think a town hall, You know everybody can come and stand

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up the Mic. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have to say, and we just take the government takes a whole bunch of notes and goes away and figures out what to do with it when we're doing deliberation I think one of the

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places To start when you try is to ask yourself, what kind of issue

is this, and what kind of discussion am I going to have?

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And I would say there are 3 very different kinds of participants in this that you need to distinguish between.

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One of them is stakeholders, and by stakeholders I mean organizations or people representing organizations who have a professional interest in that problem.

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And these are usually people, if they're people representing an organization.

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There are people who will be speaking for their organization. They are, as Alice said earlier, they will be lobbying you.

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They will be trying to advance up an interest in a point of view.

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The good thing about stakeholders is, they usually have lots of experience.

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They are sophisticated. Often they're well trained they have their statistics and their information at their fingertips, so they can engage in a dialogue.

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A discussion, a debate. They can make presentations they can put stuff on the table, and they're really good at working with one another to try to if they're well directed to try to work through issues that's one kind of

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discussion. On the other hand, if you are talking about something like assisted dying, this is going to be usually, at least here in Canada.

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Most of this will be a very different kind of discussion it's a really, deeply values-based discussion.

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People are talking about how they feel about things that are enormously emotional, and they're not necessarily very subtle about this, and they don't necessarily have to be.

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And I think this is where citizens tend to play. They are the speakers.

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They speak authoritatively on value questions. If you want to know, should we be

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Should we be advancing medically assisted dying all the way to including mental problems?

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I'm not saying you shouldn't ask stakeholders, but you'll have a very different discussion with them than you will as citizens, and I think we need to recognize if we're getting down to values that's small we want to talk directly.

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To citizens, and we may want to separate citizens from stakeholders, and even have different discussions at different levels between them.

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That's a very important methodological point I would argue thanks thanks Dawn.

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That's that's great we have a storm questions bring the chat right now.

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So i'm gonna have to start stitching them together, and I think i'll get to the digital stuff in a bit.

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But 1 one recurring theme here is is that of power.

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So you know this is question of how do you ensure these?

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Did. Deliberations are inclusive, and do not privilege citizens with power, influence, and voice.

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And you know, focusing on indigenous communities as well.

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And I think I think that was this participatory governance initiative, I think, might have been the Us.

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Where, you know they wanted representation from all these different stakeholders, right?

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And business was apparently one of these stakeholders, and then they got like a big seat at a table with like an apple, or Google, and that skewed the entire like table of voices, right?

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Just because they add that one seat there. And so, yeah, how do you?

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How do you prevent that that quotation within those kinds of deliberation?

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We could start with. Yeah, this is a great question, and a little one that we could go on all day about.

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So i'm just gonna be very reconciliation a couple of things.

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First of all, once again I would distinguish between citizens and and and stakeholders.

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Here's the way in in processes I run I tend to deal with that question in in with stakeholder communities. W.

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When we're looking at some area that's say a professional interest around regulators, Suppose it's regulatory positive regulatory policy around something to do with packaging food or something like that there'll be a bunch of

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stakeholders and community, You know consumer groups and so on who have an interest in that most citizens are not inclined to participate in that sort of thing.

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You know you're mainly going to have a stakeholder conversation about how best to package food to make sure it's safe, and it's not expensive, and all those kinds of things to create new regulations in that case what I

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would do what I would normally do is look at the issue, and begin to ask myself what interests are really at stake here.

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Clearly public safety of interest. Clearly the the the meat packers that will be concerned about the cost of packing their meet.

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So you start to figure out you map out that space, and ask in the space that we're looking at, which interests are really at stake,

and what I would normally do Here, is then, approach the interest community for these different interests and

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say ultimately, we don't need 15 people representing one interest, and we at the same table to have a discussion.

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You guys decide who you want at this table to represent, for example, consumer interests, and that person speaks for all of you.

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And when you go, when that person leaves the table, you all have a conversation about whether that is working or not working for you.

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So we need somebody to speak to the interest authoritatively we don't need 15 people.

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It just gets confusing, and this forces them to work together, behind the scenes to coordinate their conversation to figure out what it is they want to advance, and what they want to, say, and how they're going to work with others who have different

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views. so I would map up this the interest community and make sure that the interests were fairly represented at the table, so that we are in that sense inclusive.

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It's another question with citizens but I don't want to take up too much time.

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I would just say with citizens, I think you have to be a lot more open about how they participate.

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But what you can't do is is you've already alluded to Willie is you can't for example. you can't have a process that doesn't have room for or create space for key key communities

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that are out there and you're gonna do some community mapping, for example, indigenous people here in Canada.

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If we don't bring them into the discussion we've done something really wrong, or other diversity communities.

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So we do have to do some mapping here. But I would argue the mapping for interests, and how we bring people to the table in a citizen.

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Discussion is more complex and messier because there are more overlapping interests than there are with with stakeholder communities.

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But I would separate those 2 things so i'd have a lot more to say about it.

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That'll have to do for the moment yeah it's a fascinating one isn't it so i'll have a couple of thoughts, maybe more in the space of those citizen based discussions So one is that I think that

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like you have to admit to yourself that you have to do the work like I really eat.

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The easiest thing you can do is invite a bunch of people to a room and ask them to talk like that's really low effort.

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And sometimes in the public sector we are squeezed, and we find organizing these events difficult.

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But I would say the first you have to be prepared to put in the requisite amount of effort for it to be a success, and that means not just picking a date, and seeing who's free to turn up on the date it means

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actually planning out who you want to approach when there available who's available, how you're going to you know make it work for them.

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Essentially. and I think that there's an element of respect in that which is that you are actually using them for an outcome.

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And so it is. It is on you to make sure that it works for your participants.

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And then once you've got people there and you've kind of invested in that event management of some sort, you you have to plan it, and you have to deliver it properly, and that means things like Maybe you need a professional

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facilitator. Maybe you need 18 little groups, and they all need to have a chair and a note taker, and that means that you need to bring

36 people to that event.

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And that's lots and lots of people many more than I have in my team, right?

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So there's this kind of sense of investing in what you're doing to do it properly, and make it worthwhile to appreciate that there are power dynamics in a room to make sure that everybody's voice is heard

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and all the notes are taken and I think in a case where we can't talk about combining interests which in a way every citizen has a unique set of values.

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And can't be represented by an interest group Then we have to find ways of sharing or engaging that respect every individual viewpoint while looking for synthesis, and many of the methods that are used in the product world

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do exactly that. So they allow for every individual to contribute but they afterwards look for patterns and synthesis within what's being said.

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And I think that can be really applicable here and what that means is everybody's individual voice is respected.

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But we can get something meaningful at the end rather than just a lot of noise.

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Yeah, we can. Thanks, Alice. And I see that.

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Yeah, the the chat is super interesting stuff. And Laura has posted, linked to some frameworks from the International Association of Public participation. Thanks.

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Laura. yeah. feel free to share resources. These are great.

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I guess a full up question to to what would just talked about.

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And this comes from the th. The presumption to questions as well as from the chat is

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Often you can have all these structures and and processes of engagement.

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But after all, this feedback is collected, there is there.

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There is a black box in the zoom making a don you're talking about this red box in the fridge, right?

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But then, on the government side there is this black box is fine you don't know if the citizens input made any impact at all. and and this might have to do with you know, qualitative or quantitative measuring.

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But how? How do you avoid this sort of But station Brownie points or tokenism, but but no real change, of course.

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How do you get to that kind of genuine deliberation?

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Sorry Is that for me? really? this is for both of you.

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Anyone can start good. Can I just ask, Did you say something?

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Is this a digit? Was there something there about digital in particular?

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Or is this just generally a question about how you make sure that people's voices are are meaningful.

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Yeah, this is about like the the the black box of decision making where you don't know if anything has been filed in to change the decisions.

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So i'll just get a little bit into process here and and I think very usefully.

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Alice. is already taking us down that road so Here's what I would say is in a process first of all, I fully agree with Alice.

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You got to do the work you do have to design a process and every process is different.

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We don't have time going to go through all that but all the things that she said, and more are gonna go into your planning for the process, including you have a facilitator. How many people who's going to be at the table.

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All this, but I would also say in the planning and I've already touched on this an absolutely critical task at the very beginning is what I would call framing at the issue and So that Black box I talked about a red box or

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fridge you whatever it is and it's your question to really it's saying this: What is the problem we're trying to solve.

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Now you have to remember is that framing that problem.

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The beginning may not be the way it looks. at the end because once you start to have a discussion with people, you may discover things about that issue, you didn't know before you probably will.

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So the participants themselves will push and pull on that issue and reshape it.

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And that's where a facilitator becomes important because you got to have boundaries. You can't let the reshape in any way they want to go, or they may take you somewhere that the minister or you don't

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ever want to go. So you've got to have boundaries but the boundaries have to be big enough to allow people to begin to shape that issue.

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But the boundaries also have to tell us something about. This is, how do?

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How far are we going to be able? How far is the Government willing to let us make a decision?

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Are they telling us it's all up to you whatever decision you make we're gonna live with are they telling us. Okay, you can give us 3 choices, but we're gonna choose from those 3 or you can essentially give us some priorities,

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or something like that. So you have to tell people at the front end

only what the issue is.

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But basically, what you're asking them to do how much this is space?

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Are you giving them? And what are you gonna let them do?

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And then they know that at the end of the day what they're trying to what space, how much they can put into it, and what they're gonna get back out of it.

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And the the only thing i'd say here is that if you don't map that out.

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Well, you may have the Have them. making a decision that the government can't live with, and is not happy about the Government should be able to say at the front end, if you've mapped your space.

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Well, you should be able to say to the government. here's the range of possibilities that can happen the good news is whatever decision you make is gonna take you over the creek.

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And now you can start moving further. But you're gonna have to live with that decision, and then the minister scratches his head ahead and says, I can live with that.

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So let's do it. But you got to be careful to make sure you tell them how big that space is, and what kind of decisions they're gonna make, and you have to tell them that at the beginning so they know what they're there to

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do, and they make decisions that they can live with and they're happy about, and they're making compromises, and then move the government's agenda forward.

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So I think that's the most important task in getting this right he don

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This. This next question is targeted at Atis. This is about web 3 and and yeah, a lot of people in the chat are asking about these kinds of fourth Industrial Revolution technologies like blockchain And And ai And how can

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you use them to engage people better? And I think, yeah, some people are not big fans.

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So web 3 some people think it's it's a good way to do it.

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And yeah, what what are your thoughts at Is yeah so I think I each I won't talk about every like specific technology. But as a general point, I think it is fair to say that sits and engagement is, you know, is is newly

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accessible for governments to carry out. So in the past, where we might have to do a sort of a study that would involve kind of like physically finding people and then phoning them up.

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And although those phone bills costing a lot, and so on, we can now just reach out to people in the Web, like the the online space where people like to come and talk about issues, although I will have the act but as someone already mentioned there

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isn't always an element of who's being selected if you do do something purely in that online space.

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But it is a good way for for capturing of say a majority of opinions, and then you might seek to supplement it with a bit of targeted engagement to mop up people who definitely aren't going to be in that space and i'm sure

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you can think of some examples there. So I think that one of the things that is interesting for governments is that we have new, cheaper possibilities. Now for doing engagement from the classic online form to really innovative kind of participatory software things

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and in my government department. when we look after planning, as in howing and planning permissions, we have seen some really interesting stuff which uses kind of geospatial like shape files overlays the more maps

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puts like a user interface on them that looks a bit like Google Maps, which is something lots of people are familiar with

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And then also uses predictive technologies to put forward questions that people might be more interested in.

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So they can comment on planning applications, and so on.

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So there is lots of really interesting stuff out there and then there's also just that that idea of the open webin itself which is free to use.

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So I think that I think this is exciting for government and I think that that's why take up is at the kind of it's at the beginning of a maturity.

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Curve, because governments have not woken up to the possibilities that this offers them.

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And there are. there are loads of really interesting ways of doing that which are kind of they.

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They force us to move away from I Don't know if people have heard of this concept before.

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The there's a there's it there's a concept that we sometimes talk about, which is like digital paper.

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So most of the things that we use on our computers are just digital versions of stuff that we used to have in our offices like pete memos in, you know, internal messages, writing each other little notes on a piece of paper

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doing a form. Now we have digital versions folders.

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Now we have digital versions of all of those things, right?

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But the really interesting thing about the Web revolution is where we are completely breaking away from stuff like that, and where we see more innovative stuff like you can drop a pin on a map, and then you can watch the little car drive along and do things like

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that you know these are moving us, trying to move us away from the mental models that we understand, and that we know from the physical world and bring them into the digital world, and that with consultation or engagement offers lots more possibilities and

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i'll just mention one that I saw that was really interested in recently.

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That was from the sort of deliberation platform that they have of the Government for Taiwan, and which is Audrey Tang, is the minister there of people.

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Have perhaps heard of her and they didn't exercise where they created lots and lots of statements that people could sort of express affinity with.

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So think of that a little bit like tinder for kind of political views.

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So you're saying like Yes, yes, Yes, no no Yes, I agree with this?

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No, I don't agree with this and then all of those data.

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Port wins were kind of mapped onto a visualization to show whether was consensus.

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So there was the ones that the ones that lots and most people had affinity with, and the ones that were more.

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Yeah, less commonly held. And what that might reveal depending on the issue is that there is actually a lot more content to than you think.

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And certainly in their case, when they used it on a kind of a thing about regulating taxi industry.

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They were able to find that most people actually agree with some of the basic principles, and that meant that they only really needed to focus their efforts on some of the more controversial parts of the reform.

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So it's just wanting example of how kind of interesting technologies can can really show us completely new horizon.

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And since terms of engagement, Yeah, the Taiwan is definitely like pushing boundaries in terms of digital democracy.

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And these kinds of innovations. Don, Did you have anything else to add on that?

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Maybe a couple of things. I say very quickly. to jennifer's point in the chat about engaging seniors that are not necessarily able to navigate digital platforms that back to the idea of inclusivity as well that

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something you wanted to touch on. I guess all I would say there, and this is this is an ongoing problem.

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Is that a an ongoing question? I should say problem is, I think governments as they move online and we're moving online very rapidly, which is a great thing for all the reasons, Alice said, and more obviously There are still lots

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of people for all kinds of reasons. they may be age.

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They may be aged and simply not able to use the technology.

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They may be in remote communities but they don't have access to the technology.

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There's lots of reasons which simply means that if we want to be inclusive.

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We have to make sure we have other channels by which we reach those people, and that we are making sure that they are part of the discussion and not left out. and we will surely find over another 10 or 15 years virtually everybody is online by the

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whatever that means. 15 years from now. Great thank you in the interest of time.

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We're gonna have to start wrapping up I want to be respectful of your hour.

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If you have any lingering questions from today's session, they they weren't answered you can post them in our Q.

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A my colleague will in the chat as well.

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We have a Q. and a feature on the political platform.

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But I would just wanna say a big thank you to all of you for joining us today, and for your deep engagement a message, Thank you to my colleague with Pasha as well for supporting the backend and of

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course, our speakers for their available insights, and also for for people pressing on with this yeah pressing work.

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Thank you. Thank you so much. and just before we we finish and do our one word takeaway as this tradition.

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We love to get a sense of how you felt about this workshop.

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I'm gonna just pull up a quick survey here we won't.

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We won't share the results of this survey this is just for us to use to help improve our workshops and offerings.

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So yeah, i'll pash all that you close it whenever you get enough responses and the rest of you start thinking about your your one would take away from today's session.

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I will ask the speakers to. I need this one to to tell.

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Yes,

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Great. I think thing is close to. Okay, Great. thanks, everyone.

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So this is just one thing left. that is your one word. Take away.

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This is something we like to do at a political, so I can start with my word. My word is actually redistribution, you know, because so much of this work is about redistributing power redistributing decision making

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and and that that invariably leads to the redistribution of resources as well.

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For for for more equity, better lives, etc.

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I like to ask the speakers to unmute themselves, and also share one with takeaways at Ellis.

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Do you want to start? Oh, we put it on the spot, really.

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I think. Yeah, I think for me i'm gonna i'm gonna maybe be a bit boring and say that that my word is organization in the sense that if you want to do something.

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If you want to do something like this, you should do a properly, and if you do have that opportunity, in the sense that you get a permission, or you, somebody kind of gives you, a chance to Try it out, or you you kind of

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impinge on citizens time to help you out with this.

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You should respect them by organizing it really. Well, to get the maximum value out of it.

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And you done. Yeah, my word is encouraging. and i'll tell you. Why is that? I started out the session talking about kind of why we are doing?

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Why, I think we're doing public deliberation as opposed to consultation?

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Increasingly all the time, and it it. it ties into this idea of complexity, complexity of the issues the proliferation of interest groups, and and so on.

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And a lot of the the dysfunctional discussions, and so on, that the polarization and fragmentation that's going on.

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I would leave this thought around encouraging thing is I don't think for a moment that public engagement public deliberation is the answer.

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The only answer to polarization or the answer to it.

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But I think it is a very fundamental part of the answer is that if our institution is needed to change to overcome the stuff we have to recognize the traditional Cabinet government is wanting.

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We're not here to replace ministers we're not here to replace Cabinet government.

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We're here to enhance it by creating new tools that allow them to do with the new deal with new kinds of problems.

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And I think a really important part of this is under and thinking through how public engagement can create a social cohesion rather than fragmentation, and bring people together enough that we can actually make decisions and deliver them.

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That's not the only part of the solution, but it's a very important part of it, thank you, Thanks, John Grants right.

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So we have redistribution organization encouraging i'm just gonna retal off some of the stuff in the chat social cohesion.

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John says: Insightful legitimacy commitment deliberation, hopeful respect.

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Dylan says citizen language is one word and it's very creative.

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Technology, Equitable: Yeah, that has come up quite a bit as well.

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Conclusion collectivity Great. thank you, everyone thanks for joining us today, and of course we'll be sending you the recording of this this presentation.

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So have a good rest of your day, and yep big thanks for speakers once again.

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Thank you, Willie. Thank you, Alice, and thank you. Everyone out there Gotcha.