2007-09 E-Democracy.Org DRAFT Strategic Plan
Current to 4 April 2007

Goal 1, *Engagement: Strengthen, expand, and diversify engagement through effective and meaningful online discussions and information exchange on public issues*

Strategy 1.1 Expand number of Issues Forums

- Create additional Issues Forums
- Enable Issues Forums to be created
- Training and Outreach - Share updated guidebook and convert portions into engaging online educational materials
- Shared forum hosting services (GroupServer)
- Seek partners
- Integrate *prospective* outreach for new Issues Forums, steering committee and charter development and start-up recruitment tools into future technology enhancements

Strategy 1.2 Support existing Issues Forums

- Increase participant registration on existing forums, increase web visitors
- Increase and sustain more diverse participation, "new voices"
- Expand civic relationships among individual participants within forums and overtime across communities
- Establish relationships among/across local committee/chapter leaders

Goal 2, *Information and Civic Education: Increase the use and relevance of information resources about elections, governance, the media, and public affairs to help address public challenges*

Strategy 2.1 Significantly strengthen our election information and education efforts

- Leverage increased election season participation to support broader E-Democracy.Org efforts
- Better educate forum leadership and participants about the options related to the discussion of local elections on Issues Forums (analysis of UK election law is required)
- Promote online candidate debates
- Continue innovations in election information gathering and promoting, and disseminate tools such as MyBallot.Net widely

Goal 3, *Best Practices and Tools: Develop and disseminate best practices and tools to promote community conversation and engagement, civic education, and information exchange*

Strategy 3.1 Strengthen relationships by promoting online activities through related off-line activities

Strategy 3.2 Use open source tools to the greatest extent possible and work to ensure that major investments in our primary software platforms are released under common open source licenses

- Engage Issues Forums leaders and participants in envisioning future GroupServer enhancements and use of other citizen media/engagement online tools

Strategy 3.3 Learn from others: Maintain continuous awareness of other groups working toward similar goals, paying attention to emerging tools and practices so we can incorporate successful methods into our own toolbox

Goal 4, Promote Active Citizenship: Empower participants with online skills and experiences to have an impact on their communities and governments

Strategy 4.1 Develop sustainable projects that support mission and goals (build on and go beyond forums)

- Leverage our Issues Forum participatory audience by integrating mission-supporting "citizen media" and other online engagement activities using tools such as blogs, wikis, video blogs, audio podcasts, photos, consultation and collaborative communication tools, online surveys, etc.
- Engage volunteers in developing and implementing these projects

Strategy 4.2 Building from Issues Forums, "deepen" the local e-democracy experience across a community

- Programs, tools, activities, events, partnerships, local e-democracy audits or evaluations, neighbor/neighborhood or community "life" forums, etc.

Strategy 4.3 Actively engage people from diverse communities to raise "new voices" that are less represented in our forums; particularly underrepresented communities and non-native speakers

- Develop a "social inclusion" strategy and outreach proposals for funding

Goal 5, Organizational Capacity and Sustainability: Maintain an ethical, stable, and financially strong organization of volunteers and staff that effectively and efficiently responds to growing and changing expectations, opportunities, and responsibilities

Strategy 5.1 Build the organizational infrastructure to support goals 1-4

- Strengthen the Board's ability to govern
- Recruit additional Board members to…
- Strengthen organization's ability to effectively manage projects
- Hire and pay staff/contractors
- Increase number of volunteers and use them more effectively
- Manage finances efficiently and effectively
- Manage public reporting better and more effectively – taxes, stakeholders, partners, supporters, participants
- Work with our attorney and other regulatory entities to fully determine our lobbying, information service provider status, and advocacy legal status (Marcia Avner's book); separate organization and hosting of tools from what participants do with them; secure pro-bono legal support in countries with Issues Forums outside of U.S.
- Build legal support to protect Issues Forums from potential legal or political threats and limit liability by seeking to protect organizational projects, local committees/chapters, and volunteers

Strategy 5.2 Develop effective evaluation structures, tools, implementation, compilation, and reporting

Strategy 5.3 Fund the necessary organizational infrastructure to support goals; organizational

funding

- Increase grant funding for projects and operations
  - Improve grant-writing ability and success
- Create compelling case for contributions of all kinds
- Increase individual contributions
  - from individual IF participants
  - from wealthy individuals who care about community, democracy and the Internet/new media
  - from individuals who already support our work and activities, but are not Issues Forum participants
- Increase earned income through project work, speaking, consulting and training services
- Sell products such as print versions of the Issues Forum Guidebook, etc.
- Establish a structure for Issues Forums to contribute toward services provided by E-Democracy.Org

Strategy 5.4 Systematize global public and media relations work on behalf of E-Democracy.Org

- Redesign currently static "www.e-democracy.org" website so it's useful, helpful, informative, and usable
- Develop and communicate key messages; pursue marketing help
- Develop full complement of communications products - fact sheets, brochures, video clips, audio interviews, information packets for potential major donors/foundations, etc.
- Make use of interactive tools (like the new E-Democracy.Org project blog) to disseminate best practices, generate more interest in and awareness of E-Democracy.Org work; consider adding more writers
- Explore email newsletters to disseminate information or generate interest about E-Democracy.Org activities

Strategy 5.5 Build global structure to support and reflect local needs

- Develop local leadership and governance structures, including strong input into national/regional associations and international Board activities
- Define requirements to effectively support local governance structures and autonomy
- Figure out how to do this in non-English speaking countries
- Create appropriate political constructs and decision-making levels to support governance