

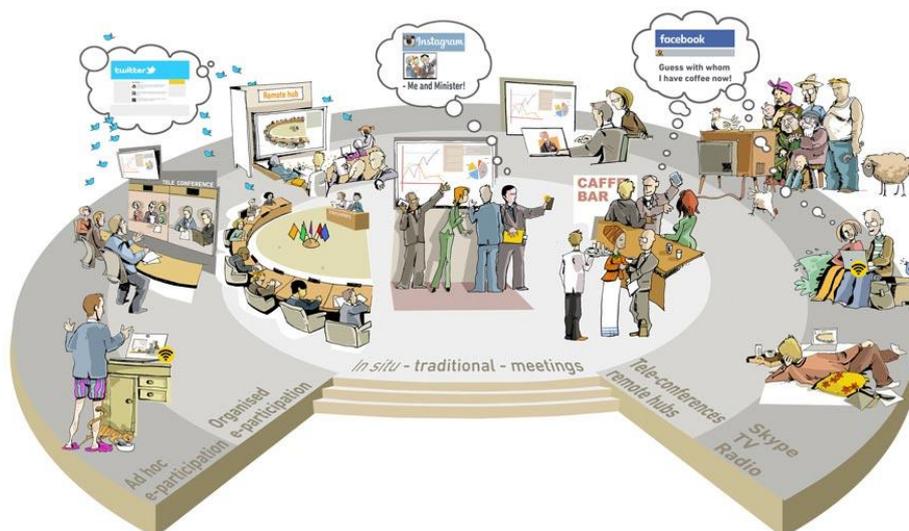
MENU FOR INNOVATIVE E-PARTICIPATION

Toward an e-participation typology



In situ perspective: Geneva Engage conference room

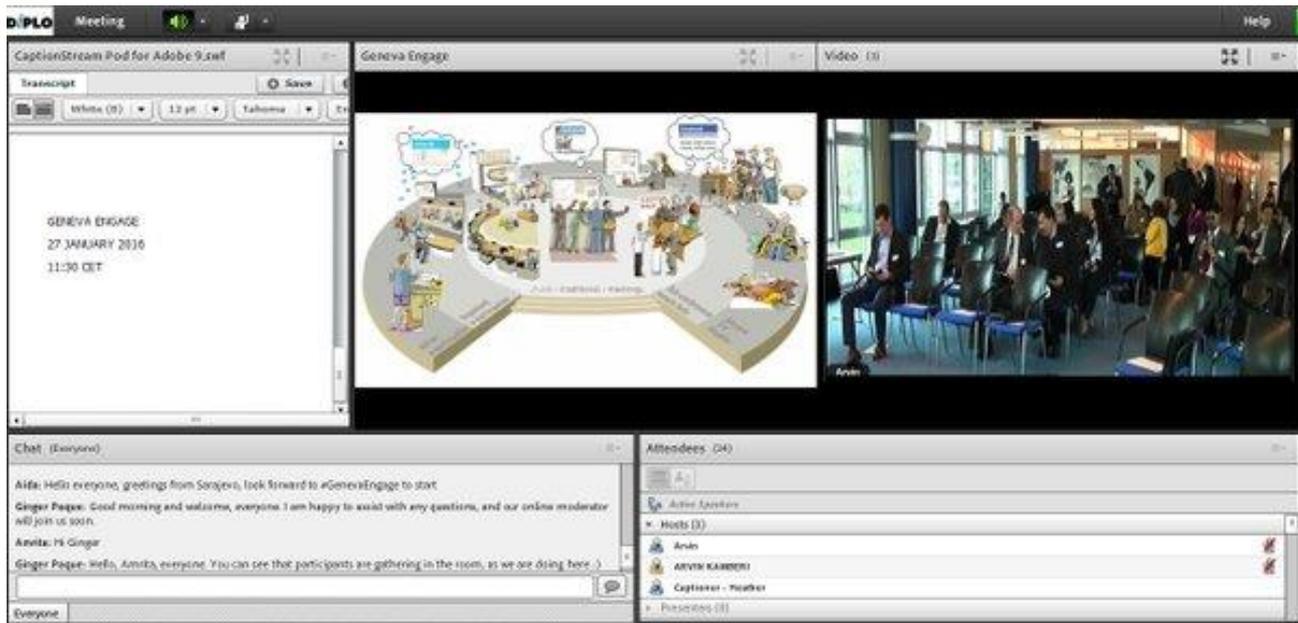
This document provides an e-participation typology based on Diplo's background research, interviews, and conference deliberations. E-participation techniques and methods are analysed through looking at the interplay among three circles: *in situ* events, organised e-participation, and *ad hoc* e-participation, as illustrated below.



E-participation tools and approaches

The first part of this document addresses e-participation techniques using examples from the Geneva Engage conference, held on 27-28 January 2016 in Geneva. The second part offers general reflections and insights.

I) SURVEY OF E-PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES



Online perspective (e-participation platform)

The Geneva Engage conference walked the talk by discussing e-participation while using e-participation tools and platforms. The following summary of e-participation techniques follows the sequence of the conference sessions.

1. Traditional session with webcast

First Conference Day

11.30 - 11.45

Welcome address by

- **Ambassador Alexandre Fasel**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva | [Speech](#)
- **Olivier Coutau**, Delegate for International Geneva, Republic and State of Geneva | [Speech](#)
- **Jovan Kurbalija**, Director of DiploFoundation and Head of Geneva Internet Platform

11.45 - 12.10

Keynote address and presentation of awards

- **Michael Møller**, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) | [Speech](#)



Opening panel



Web-casting for online audience

The conference opened with a panel consisting of three statements and one keynote address. It set the stage and provided overall context for the conference discussions. The session was webcast, with real-time captioning (verbatim reporting) and Adobe Connect audio, video, and captioning access. The four presentations were Twitter-friendly (short, to the point) and generated the first series of tweets from the conference. The keynote address by Michael Møller provided in-depth analysis of the interplay between *in situ* and online meetings in the Geneva context.



- @eDiplomat: Welcoming address by Amb. Alexandre Fasel, Mr Olivier Coutau & @jovankurbalija | [#GenevaEngage](#) | [ow.ly/XAq0I](#)
- @eDiplomat: #GenevaEngage - A knowledge-sharing space which will blur traditional line betw participants & speakers, & betw online & in situ

2. Pecha Kucha presentations with webcast

12.10 - 13:00 **Geneva Engage Award** to the most effective users of social media among Geneva Missions, International Organisations, and NGOs

Why are we so good? Highlights, tips, and tricks from the four winners (Geneva eStars)

- **Thomas Wagner**, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of France to the UN
- **Dave Drodge**, Head of Digital, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) | [Presentation](#)
- **Sari Setiogi**, Head, Media Monitoring and Social Media, World Health Organization (WHO) | [Presentation](#)
- **Ilaria Paolazzi**, Policy and Programme Manager, Child Rights Connect



Permanent Mission of France, WWF, and WHO presenting at Geneva Engage Award session

During the award session, Geneva Engage Award recipients delivered presentations in the [Pecha Kucha](#) format, consisting of 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each, for a total of 6.4 minutes. Two of the presenters used the Pecha Kucha approach to deliver dynamic and informative presentations. In the third presentation, the representative of the French Permanent Mission delivered a modified Pecha Kucha. He stayed within the time limit of 6.4 minutes, while using fewer slides, and providing an impromptu presentation. Each presentation was impactful and engaging in different ways. They reconfirmed that a diversity of approaches could meet different needs.

The use of Twitter during the award presentations confirmed that Twitter reporting is one of the main methods of e-participation in international meetings. Twitter, for example, is frequently used as an additional channel through which participants can not only follow an event, but also intervene by posing questions or making comments. At Geneva Engage, Tweets about the conference were displayed in the online conference room, feeding this input into the debate.



@[loyoladotcom](#): "For international organization like us, it's always like a learning experience every day"
@[WHO](#)'s @[setioji](#) #GenevaEngage

3. Facilitated introductions

14.00 – 14.20 Introductions, greetings, and informal networking



Participants introduced themselves to each other both online and *in situ* through three iterations of five minutes each in different groups, to increase interaction. Personal introductions are important for developing trust and opening a communication space for discussion. It is easiest to develop this social space among *in situ* participants. It is more difficult to achieve it in an online space. The biggest challenge is to develop understanding and communication between *in situ* and online participants. The introductions activity at Geneva Engage only partially succeeded in creating online – *in situ* dynamics. Merging the two communication spaces proved to be difficult, almost impossible, due to social and psychological limitations (preference for face-to-face communication, and the creation of local and group dynamics which resist external suggestions).

4. Online presentation

14.20 - 14.40 **Why are we so good?** Highlights, tips, and tricks.

Richard Boly, Mind The Bridge Foundation and Former Director of the US Office of eDiplomacy



@JovanKurbalija: Diplopedia passed the text of time [@Beaurichly](#) at [#GenevaEngage](#). Still used (mark A-)

Richard Boly delivered his presentation online from his office in the United States. His contribution was designed to be effective for online presentation medium: it was well-organised, with many graphics, and frequent summaries. Effective presentation techniques are especially important for presentations which are delivered online.

Boly's description of the use of scorecards to measure the success of projects, initiated five years ago, when he started the e-diplomacy project, was successful in focusing attention during the online presentation. It was the underlying theme of the presentation and communicated a complex analysis of success/failure in a simple way.

5. Shift and share conversations (online and *in situ*)

14.40 - 16.00 How can we implement remote participation well?

What can we learn from the experience of key players in the Internet governance process? Contributors from the ITU, ICANN, the IGF Secretariat, and the Internet Society

- **Luis Bobo**, Associate Information Systems Offices, Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) | [Presentation](#)
- **Nigel Hickson**, Vice President, Global Stakeholder Engagement, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
- **Edmund Tam**, Head, Conference Technology Support Division, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- **Todd Tolbert**, Senior Director of Information Technology, Internet Society (ISOC)



*@eDiplomat: [#GenevaEngage](#)
[@ToddMTolbert](#) giving hints about [#eparticipation](#): don't overcommunicate, don't focus more on tech than on content [#theGIP](#)*

The technique of 'shift and share conversations' was inspired by the knowledge café approach. Using this method, participants joined one of four conversation tables to discuss how Internet governance organisations developed their own brand of e-participation as a global public resource in the making. Each table had a facilitator to host the discussion. After 60-second introductory statements, each of the four table facilitators led discussions at their conversation tables. Three of the facilitators were physically present in Geneva (ITU, ICANN, and the IGF), while the fourth, from ISOC, facilitated his table conversation online from his office in the United States. After 20 minutes, *in situ* participants shifted to the next table. Online participants followed the same pattern, moving between online rooms in Adobe Connect. There were three rounds of discussion at each table. The methodology aimed to provide substantive conversation in small groups of a maximum of 15 participants, and to allow participants their own choice of three of the four discussions.

Methodologically speaking, the session was very demanding. It involved four stations, each with an e-participation set-up (computer, screen, and Adobe Connect software), four facilitators in the *in situ* room and four moderators online. This method was used in a few other sessions as well.

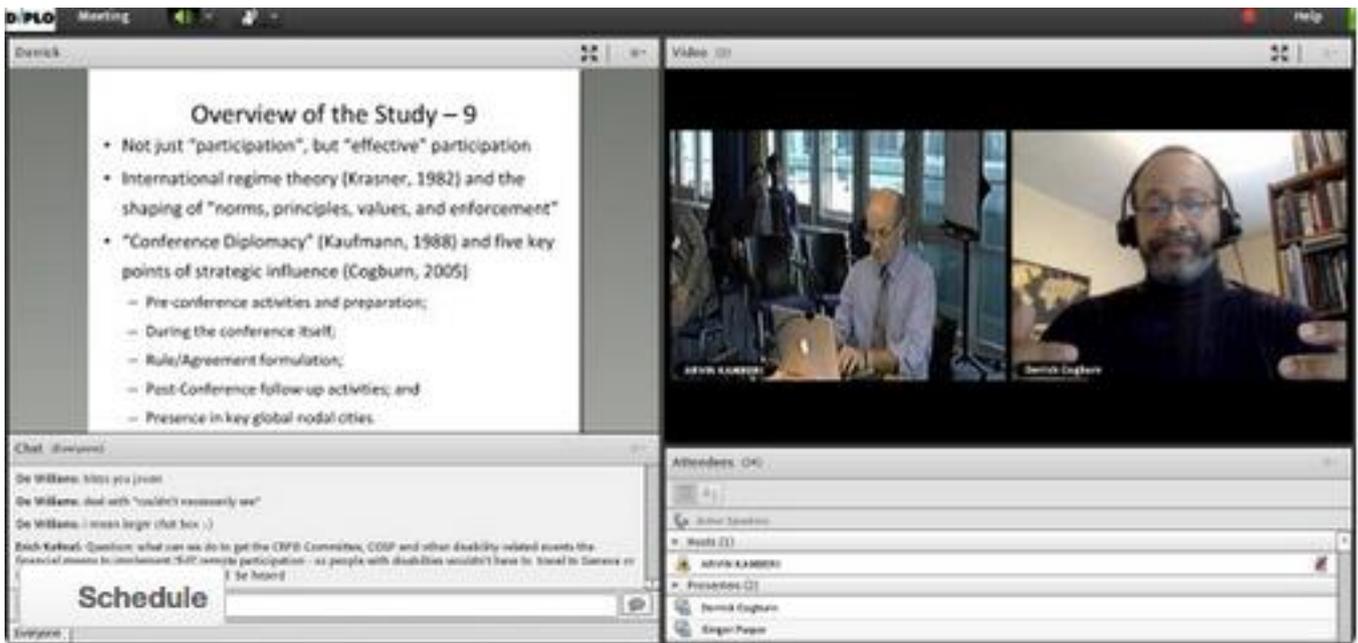
The experiment resulted in the following insights:

- Given the high organisational complexity and cost (technological support, online and *in situ* moderation), this approach should be used only when there is a strong, specific need for it. For example, it should be used when geographically dispersed participants need to have complex brainstorming in a limited time-span.
- The coherence of overall event discussions should be ensured by selecting one underlying issue (topic) for the whole event, with specific (different) questions to be addressed at each conversation table.
- Traditional facilitation techniques also serve well for online facilitation (avoid a long introduction by facilitators, prepare in advance, etc.).

6. Peer-assist workshop: participant questions addressed in small groups online and *in situ*

16.15 - 17.30 **How can we implement remote participation well? What to do when it goes wrong – stories of disaster and recovery**

- Designing events for persons with disabilities | **Derrick Cogburn**, Executive Director of the Institute on Disability and Public Policy, American University
- Designing large events and preparing effective remote moderation | **Diplo e-participation team**
- What to do when it goes wrong – stories of disaster and recovery | **Diplo e-participation team**



Online presentation by Derrick Cogburn

This session was facilitated by two online presenters, and featured interactive discussions both *in situ* and online. During the debriefing, one of the presenters indicated that for online presenters, it is essential to have high-quality video of the *in situ* participants. This way, the remote presenter can follow the audience’s body language, and talk to real people, instead of speaking to the computer screen. By seeing the audience, the online presenter can perceive nodding or shaking heads, boredom, and other signals that can help them to adjust the presentation.

7. Online presentation

Second Conference Day

09.15- 09.40

Why are we so good?

E-diplomacy highlights, tips, and tricks

Stefano Baldi, Training Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy



@JovanKurbalija: [@diplosor](#) (S.Baldi, head of Italian diplomatic training) speaks on acquiring soft skills in diplomacy at [#GenevaEngage](#)

Stefano Baldi’s online presentation was concise and effective, consisting of a few well-explained points. It reconfirmed that effective online participation should rely on core principles for effective presentations.

8. Speed geek format for knowledge exchange

09.40 - 11.20 **How can we implement remote participation well?**

Speed geek format: knowledge exchange on key questions for engaging remote participants

- **Fabrice Boudou**, Director of Information Technology, World Trade Organization (WTO)
- **Rolf Landua**, Head of Education and Public Outreach, CERN
- **Edmund Tam**, Head of Conference Technology Support Division, ITU

Discussion questions: What support exists for e-participation, in Geneva and online? How can we share resources and experience? How can we manage multilingual participation?



Presenters from CERN, ITU and WTO focused on organised e-participation (the second circle in our illustration). These three organisations all can count on a solid technical infrastructure and the commitment of their leadership to strengthen e-participation (in ITU it is part of official decisions). At the same time, they face different challenges. For CERN, e-participation is one way to handle the huge demand for awareness-building and educational activities from the global public. CERN faces limitations in how many visits they can organise on site. Thus e-participation can help in addressing communities that cannot be hosted at CERN in Geneva. In addition, e-participation is in the DNA of CERN. It operates through research networks with scientists and researchers located worldwide. They have been using e-tools for a long time. A lot can be learned from CERN's experience in e-participation.

ITU and WTO face different types of challenges, which are common for most international organisations. While e-participation is used intensively in public events and activities (e.g. WSIS Forum, WTO Public Forum), it is used much less in operational activities. The principle is that the closer the activity is to decision-making, the more difficult it is to use e-participation due to formal reasons (procedures) and informal ones (*modus operandi*).



@JovanKurbalija: at [#CERN](#) 100 video conferencing per day [#GenevaEngage](#) | 6 persons support eparticipation at CERN

9. Appreciative interviews (*in situ* and online)

11.20 - 12.20 **Widening e-participation**

Sharing ways to make remote participation more inclusive

Ilaria Paolazzi, Policy and Programme Manager, Child Rights Connect



The main aim of this session was to share ideas on how Child Rights Connect could improve its e-participation with children in its child rights event in Geneva on 23 September 2016.

The session experimented with using appreciative interviews *in situ* and online. It started by giving each participant a few minutes to think of how to facilitate e-participation for children. After individual reflections, participants formed groups of three, where they discussed their individual ideas and then created a group conclusion, which was carried over to the next level (groups of 12). The same gradual build-up was facilitated online as well.

The session resulted in a list of concrete proposals for Child Rights Connect to improve the e-participation of children in Geneva policy processes on children's human rights. It was a highly interactive and effective session. Logistically speaking, facilitation was more challenging online (moving participants from one online room to another).



@StephBorgPsaila: Challenge: how to ensure 23 Sept conference has open doors to children in Geneva & online - @Ilaria_Paolazzi @ChildRightsCnct #GenevaEngage

10. *In situ* presentation with webcast

12.20 - 13.00 **Deepening e-participation** Digital storytelling

Kuno Schläfli, Head of Knowledge and Learning Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



@Roxana_Georgy: RT @ritusharma1: Kuno Schläfli on the importance of storytelling, seeing beyond the frame & evaluation masterfully @ #GenevaEngage

This presentation was highly visual, featuring three videos combined with interactive discussion. The presenter engaged participants both online and *in situ*. The session demonstrated the effectiveness of video for deeper and more emotional engagement both *in situ* and online.



11. E-participation using a conference robot

The Geneva Engage conference robot was operated by Vladimir Radunović from Diplo’s office in Belgrade, triggering much interest and curiosity. His robot persona attended the conference sessions, and then chatted with participants during the lunch break.



Selfie with e-diplomat robot



E-diplomat robot at lunch with ‘virtual food’



E-diplomat robot addressing conference participants

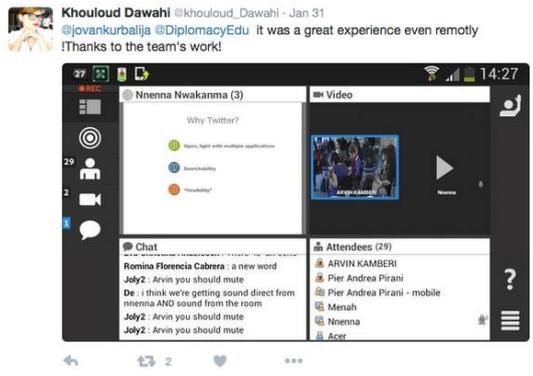


@paqueg: Waiting for the robot to arrive at [#GenevaEngage](#)

12. Knowledge café (*in situ* and online)

14.00 - 15.15 **Deepening participation**

- **Nnenna Nwakanma**, Africa Regional Coordinator, World Wide Web Foundation
- **Isabelle Gattiker**, Director General of International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH)
- **Kuno Schläfli**, Head of Knowledge and Learning Division, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- **Roland Schatz**, Founder and CEO of Media Tenor International AG
- **Jevan Zan**, Founder Metazone – Singapore



Online perspective tweeted by online participant



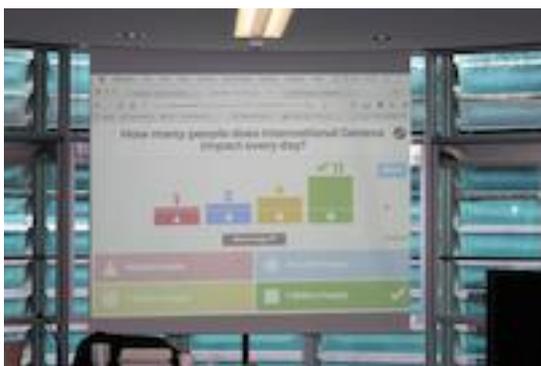
In situ discussion at conference table

This knowledge café session combined a short plenary introduction with by knowledge café discussions at three tables. Participants moved from one table to another, after each discussion session. Each table was hosted by a presenter, most of them *in situ* but one online (Nnenna Nwakanma delivered her presentation from Addis Ababa). One challenge for this type of session is that presenters must repeat the same presentation with each new group. One possible approach to this challenge is to include a gradual build-up by the table host who can summarise previous discussions. In this way, arguments could be developed gradually, adapting a technique from the ‘flying flip chart’ method.

13. Gaming

15.35 - 16.30 Inclusiveness and e-participation in pursuit of sustainable development goals

Carolina Rodriguez, Coordinator of Perception Change Project, United Nations Office at Geneva



Games online and in situ

This session invited participants to join in playing two games. In the first game, *in situ* and online participants took part in a quiz. It was an effective and fun way to build a common understanding about the main issues of the session.

In the second game, participants tried to solve a sustainable development riddle. Both *in situ* and online participants received hints for the riddle via Twitter (see illustration). In the last phase, the sustainable development riddle game was more of an *in situ* activity. However, it is clear that gaming techniques can contribute to the stronger blending of *in situ* and online communication spaces.



II) GENERAL REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS FOR E-PARTICIPATION

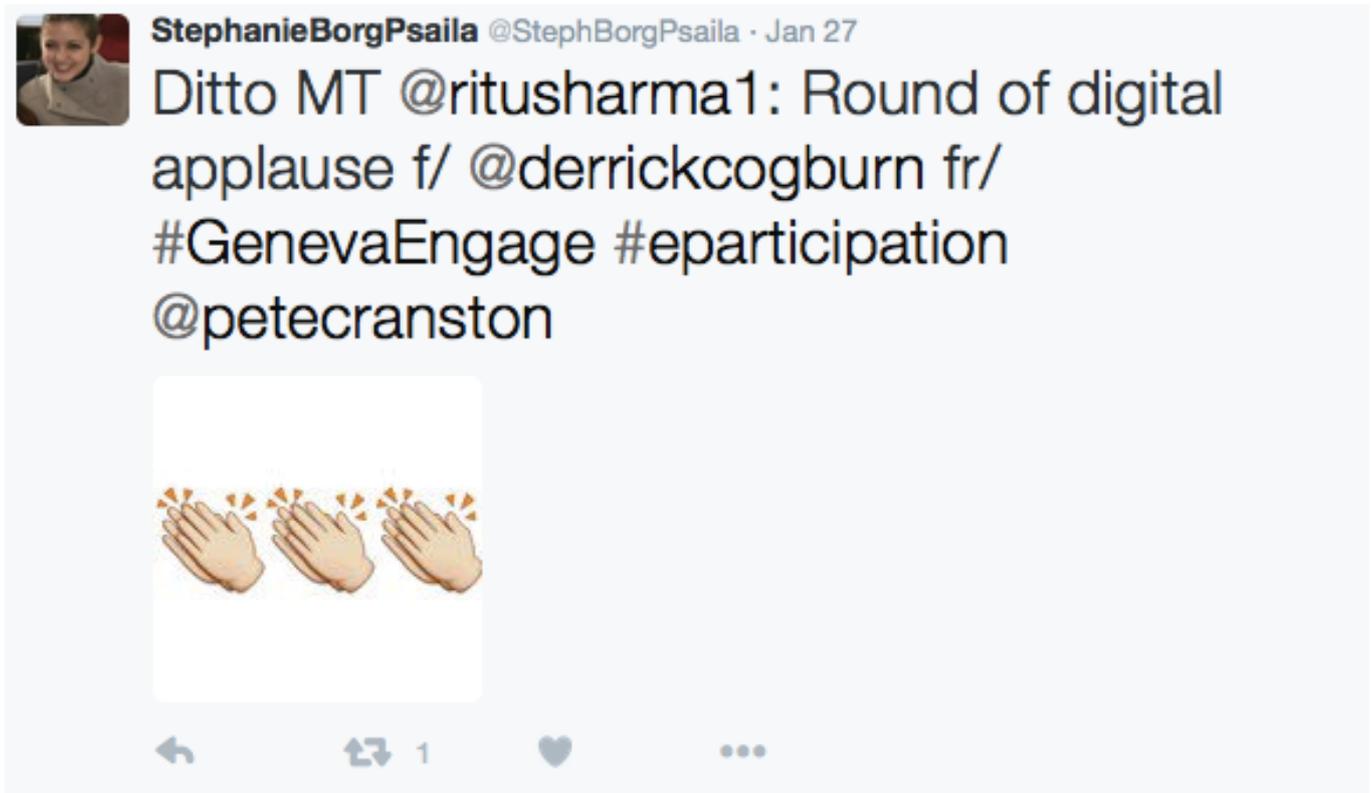
The following reflections are based on the Geneva Engage experience, as well as Diplo's previous experience and research on e-participation.



@eDiplomat: Cost-benefit analysis of innovation in [#diplomacy](#) should not be based solely on monetary considerations - [@UNOG_DG](#) [#genevaengage](#)

- Reducing costs and travel is often an initial motivation to use e-participation. However, the history of innovation teaches us that the impact of technology is rarely simplistic (e.g. replacing traditional meetings with e-participation). New technologies offer new possibilities and often result in unplanned developments far beyond those initially envisaged. For example, e-participation may reduce some travel, but ultimately the effect is that it creates more inclusive meetings which may, paradoxically, increase travel. This phenomenon, where online dynamics have an impact on physical dynamics, was noted in Silicon Valley, where e-development ultimately led towards more people coming to Silicon Valley. Among other consequences, today, more people live in Silicon Valley and the cost of real estate is much higher than before.
- Technology is a basic but insufficient condition for the success of e-participation. While technology is a given in any conference today, organisers still need to invest time and human resources in the successful management of the technology (e.g. at the Geneva Engage conference, we had a team of four people at the event with exclusively technological tasks, and a team of moderators with mixed technological and facilitation assignments).
- Good moderation online and in situ can make or break an event which includes e-participation. In situ moderators must ensure that online participants are included in the activities as fully as possible in the given set-up. Small gestures, like turning towards the camera, make a big difference for online participation. The other side is the moderation of the online space, including moderation of a live text chat (if available), facilitation of speaking order, etc.
- While technical problems are not an issue for in situ participants, issues such as sudden connection drops, difficulties with connecting to the remote platform, temporary interruptions in audio/video, and other unavoidable problems, can easily disrupt the participation of online participants. While some technical issues are unavoidable, moderators can help online participants catch up quickly by repeating instructions, the aims of certain exercises, the name of the speaker, or the focus of a particular session. Repetition can bridge temporary gaps which online participants may experience from time to time.
- One e-participation solution does not fit all needs. For each event, the organisers must select an appropriate format. In some cases, such as delicate diplomatic negotiations, e-participation should not be used at all. A recent diplomatic breakthrough, including Myanmar, Iran, and Cuba was achieved without Internet access in the room. In such delicate negotiations, the presence of the public in the room would tempt negotiators to speak to the public back home, instead of searching for compromise and solution. However, in many other negotiations, inclusion is essential. This is particularly the case for negotiations directly affecting people worldwide (climate change, food, Internet governance, to name a few).
- Verbatim transcripts during the plenary sessions facilitate better remote participation. These are particularly important for the involvement of participants with disabilities.

- Remote participants are often ‘forgotten’ by in situ presenters and participants who get carried away by the dynamics in the physical room. One possible solution would be to have large screens with videos and photos of remote participants, which could be a visual reminder of their participation in the session. Participants suggested that a Twitterfall (i.e. a live projection of Tweets in the conference room) and large text projection of online participant chat might be an effective way of bringing online participants into the in situ conference room. Some critical views indicated that a Twitterfall could distract from in situ dynamics by having people following Twitter rather than in situ discussion due to our limited attention span (finite resource).



- The immediate availability of photos on the conference website makes a huge difference to remote participants. Photos convey the atmosphere of the in situ room.
- Remote participants should be clearly informed about in situ dynamics. For example, coffee breaks can be indicated by using screen messages such as ‘Coffee break; event resumes in 15 minutes’.
- The social media space (Twitter) is an effective way of engaging online communities. During Geneva Engage, the most retweeted tweets came from the award ceremony.

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The Geneva Engage conference was organised by DiploFoundation and the Geneva Internet Platform, in co-operation with the Republic and State of Geneva, the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in Geneva and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).