Involving the public in AI governance

A guidebook for the public sector
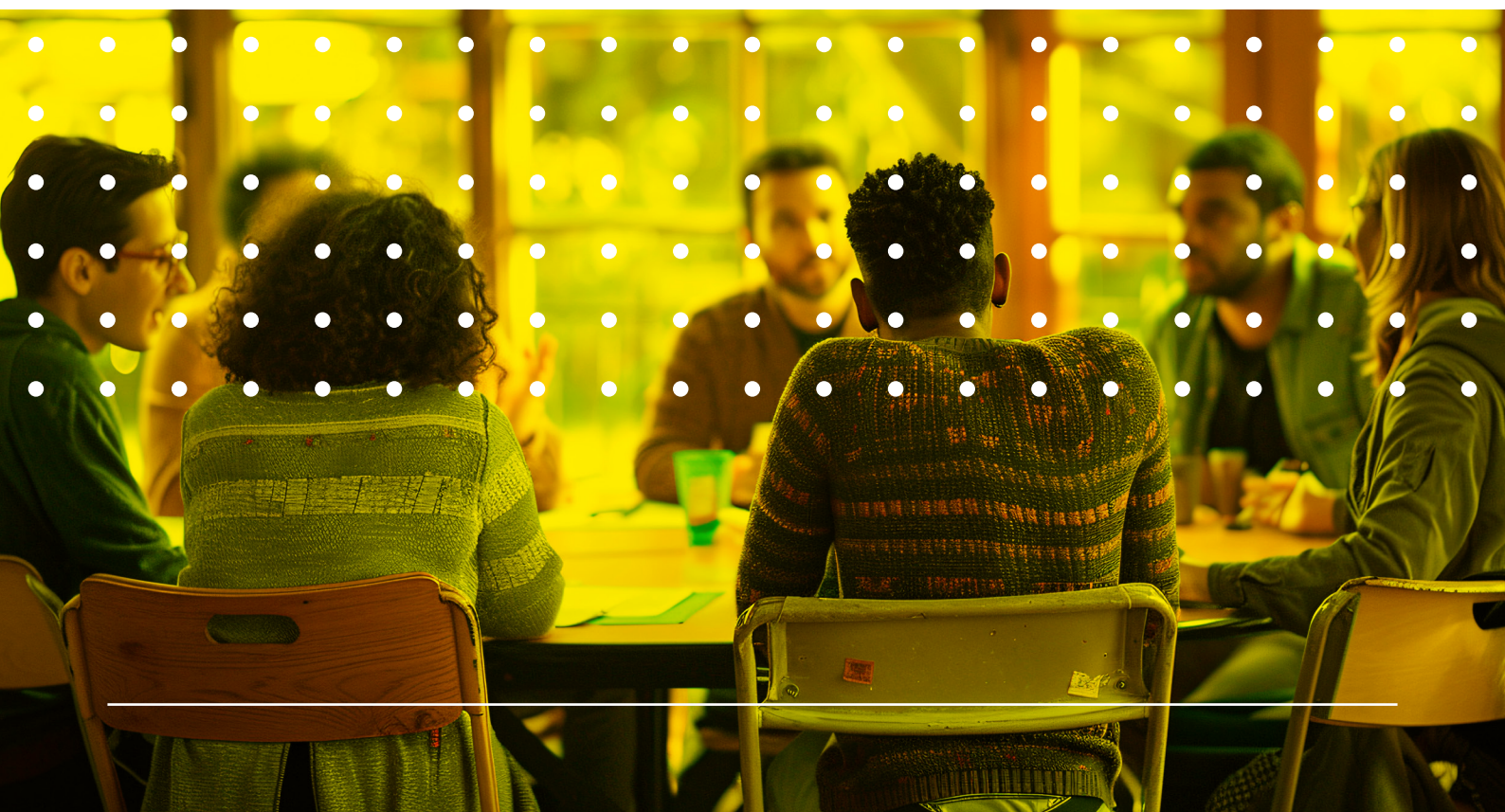
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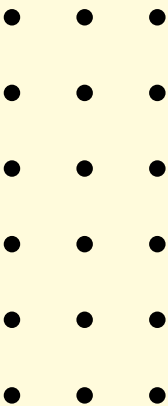
Introduction

The use of data analytics, algorithmic decision-making and artificial intelligence (AI) is growing in the public sector. Public authorities are facing significant pressure to automate services and introduce AI across government. The UK Government's 2025 AI Opportunities Action Plan states that the government must "push hard" on AI adoption, and that the "public sector should rapidly pilot and scale AI products and services". A 2025 Local Government Association (LGA) survey of one third of UK councils found that 95% were using or exploring AI for public service delivery.[1] This may include public-facing chatbots, AI assistants for caseworkers (e.g. in social care), image recognition to tackle fly-tipping and littering, AI-enabled sensors in adult social care, but also the use of data-driven predictive analytics to support criminal justice and allocate social services.[2]

The adoption of data- and AI-based decisions can have significant implications for how people experience and engage with public services. Yet citizens, residents and affected communities are often left out of the debate about the development, implementation and uses of these technologies, while public concerns regarding data and AI are growing and experts are calling for the inclusion of more diverse perspectives on AI in order to garner trust and support adoption.[3]

This guidebook sheds light on some of the ways the public can be involved in decision-making about data, algorithms, and AI in the public sector. It focuses on deliberative practices allowing citizens and residents to participate in debates on, and policymaking for, the deployment of data and AI systems. It offers extensive case study examples, addresses common challenges, and provides a library of further resources. While it cannot cover all possible strategies and responses, we hope it can offer starting-points and provide inspiration for participatory and inclusive approaches towards data and AI use in the public sector.

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1.   Local Government Association, *State of the Sector: AI - Update (2025)*, 5
2.   Local Government Association, "Artificial Intelligence Hub," n.d., https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/cyber-digital-and-technology/artificial-intelligence-hub.
3.   Roshni Modhvadia et al., *How Do People Feel about AI? Wave Two of a Nationally Representative Survey of UK Attitudes to AI Designed Through a Lens of Equity and Inclusion* (Ada Lovelace Institute; The Alan Turing Institute, 2025), https://attitudestoai.uk/assets/documents/How-do-people-feel-about-AI-2025-Ada-Lovelace-Institute.pdf.

01 Who is this guide for?

Who is this guide for?

The guidebook addresses leaders and practitioners across public sector bodies who are exploring or are already using data and AI for the provision of public services. It was made for officers developing AI strategies or managing pilots of new tools and services; service managers considering adoption or overseeing roll-outs; technology specialists supporting colleagues or setting policy; procurement professionals engaging with suppliers; engagement officers involving residents; councilors or board members providing scrutiny and strategic direction. The guide is designed for anyone interested in strengthening the role of the public in decisions about AI, data, and automated decision-making.

It builds on research by the *Data Justice Lab* into the datafication of public services and the scope for civic participation.[4] While our focus here is on opportunities for involving the public in decision-making around uses of AI, much of what follows can apply to other areas, from more general uses of data and algorithms to wider areas of governance, from procurement to budgeting.

We recognise that there are significant constraints on public engagement and we do not claim to have all the answers. Our aim is to provide practical examples and insights which can be adapted to a range of contexts, sparking ideas, discussion, and plans for increased civic involvement. The hope is that this can help catalyse new approaches for enhancing local democracy. At a time of rapid technological development and proliferation, involving the public has become more important than ever.

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4. Arne Hintz et al., *Civic Participation in the Datafied Society: Towards Democratic Auditing?* (Data Justice Lab, 2022), https://datajusticelab.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/CivicParticipation_DataJusticeLab_Report2022.pdf; Lina Dencik et al., *Data Scores as Governance: Investigating Uses of Citizen Scoring in Public Services* (Data Justice Lab, 2018) https://datajusticelab.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/data-scores-as-governance-project-report2.pdf; Data Justice Lab, *Advancing Civic Participation in Algorithmic Decision-Making: A Guidebook for the Public Sector* (2021), https://datajusticelab.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PublicSectorToolkit_english.pdf.
    Also see: www.datafiedsociety.org.

02

Why the public needs to be involved in decisions around AI

Why the public needs to be involved in decisions around AI

Involving the public in decision-making is important for understanding needs, fostering trust, and enhancing the accountability of public bodies. Whilst this can be difficult, it has well established upsides. As the charity *Involve* has noted, participation can create "new relationships of trust between government and citizens, partly as a result of improved communications and greater understanding on all sides".[5] The think tank *Nesta* has argued that "public participation in policymaking is likely to result in policies — and outcomes — that are fairer and more responsive to people's values and aspirations".[6]

> Public involvement is a core component of nurturing a 21st century democratic culture able to deal with the pressing issues which face us, big and small.

Today, few issues confront societies more than the opportunities and challenges of data and AI. In the public sector, the use of these technologies can enhance the speed and evidence base of service provision. But the rapidly growing focus on resident data, predictive analytics and automation can change residents' experience of, and engagement with, public services in significant ways. While AI-based automated processes may improve some services, they may also reduce accountability and responsiveness, and thus provide a challenge to key features of democratic governance. Citizens and residents are increasingly assessed, profiled, categorised, and serviced by (or with the help of) systems that are applied without their knowledge and understanding, and often without avenues for redress. Public scrutiny of and influence over AI and other forms of public automation are therefore necessary for democratic accountability.

> Misinterpretation of data, insufficient processes, and the inherent limitations of data-driven and automated decision-making can have severe impacts on citizens.

A wide range of documented cases have shown that, for example, benefits claimants have been falsely denied vital support; facial recognition systems have led to wrongful arrests; and sensitive data about people has been widely shared and exploited. Survey data shows the public are increasingly concerned about these issues.[7]

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5.   Involve, *The True Costs of Public Participation* (2005), 71, https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docuemnt/True-Costs-Full-Report_2.pdf.

6.   Isobel Scott-Barrett et al., *Net Zero: The Ideas* (Nesta, 2024), 12, https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/Net-zero-_the-ideas-2024.pdf.

7.   "The rise in concern is particularly notable for the use of AI in assessing welfare eligibility." Modhvadia et al., *How Do People Feel about AI? Wave Two of a Nationally Representative Survey of UK Attitudes to AI Designed Through a Lens of Equity and Inclusion*, 4.

> **Does public engagement constitute a barrier to the rapid deployment of AI?**

Research by the *Data Justice Lab* has shown that the rushed roll-out of AI systems, as well as disregard for public concerns, can have serious consequences. We analysed 61 occasions where public sector automated decision systems (most of which would now broadly be called 'AI') were paused or cancelled, and found that this often followed legal challenges, media scrutiny, and even national scandal regarding their deficiencies, or simply the realization that the system did not provide any benefits.[8] Proactive transparency and public engagement can harden projects against reversal and reveal where a particular AI system may not be the right system for the job. They can chart a way forward through complex issues and challenges.

> **Do people have the necessary knowledge and skills to assess the implications of complex technical systems such as AI?**

As research has shown (and as the examples below will demonstrate), citizens have been able to investigate even highly technical and expertise-driven topics around data and AI, develop detailed policy proposals, and contribute usefully on controversial issues.[9]

> **Do people care?**

While AI is now widely debated, its specific uses and impacts remain obscure, its technical nature suggests it is removed from public scrutiny, and citizens have few avenues to engage meaningfully. As research has shown, however, a lack of proactive engagement is less a result of public apathy than of the obscurity of processes surrounding public sector technologies, and a sense of disempowerment.[10] When given the opportunity, assistance, and a possibility for genuine influence, members of the public exhibit great interest in complex public sector technologies, as the examples below illustrate.

> **Public engagement can allow decision-makers to tap into the expertise contained within the communities and individuals who are impacted by technology.**

The public's experiences represent a rich vein of knowledge which should be a key resource for the effective adoption of data and AI systems.

Finally, an approach of deliberation, cooperation and participation helps citizens and residents understand a changing environment and thus strengthens the democratic nature of the public sector overall. Many public bodies already have measures for involving stakeholders and have expressed commitments to public engagement, and these can be built upon to enhance further public involvement, as the following examples demonstrate.

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8.   Joanna Redden et al., *Automating Public Services: Learning from Cancelled Systems* (Data Justice Lab, 2022), 10, https:// d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/pex_carnegie2021/2022/09/21101838/Automating-Public-Services-Learning-from-Cancelled-Systems-Final-Full-Report.pdf.
9.   Hintz et al., *Civic Participation in the Datafied Society*, 5.
10. Lina Dencik and Jonathan Cable, "The Advent of Surveillance Realism: Public Opinion and Activist Responses to the Snowden Leaks," *International Journal of Communication* 11 (2017): 763–781, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/5524/0

03

What public involvement in AI deployment can look like

What public involvement in AI deployment can look like

In this section we provide short introductions to methods and practices that bring the public into conversations around the deployment of data and AI systems. Many of them relate to what is discussed in academia as "democratic innovations". These exist in different shapes and forms, responding to specific challenges and circumstances. As a result, there is no "correct" methodology for engaging the public. However, we hope that the following examples may serve as inspirations and starting-points.

Mini-publics

The concept of "mini-publics" refers to a family of popular deliberative methods. Typically, they bring together a group of citizens (as few as 10 or as many as 1000) to debate an issue of societal relevance and develop guidance, such as policy proposals or an advisory report. Participants are often selected randomly to generate a degree of representativeness of the population (for example, chosen by lot from the electoral roll). Stratified random sampling is often used to ensure diversity across characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, income, geography, education, and religion. The goal is to assemble a microcosm of a wider public.

Discussions are generally facilitated, and experts provide evidence and present on different positions vis-à-vis a given issue in order to equip participants with a knowledge base for their deliberations. Mini-publics are usually convened for a specific time and topic, and disbanded once deliberation ends.[11]

They come in many flavours, with citizens' juries and citizens' assemblies having emerged as the two most popular forms. Citizens' juries (and similar initiatives) are often smaller and have addressed a wide variety of specific and/or local topics, such as health and wellbeing in Scotland[12] and heatwaves in Hackney.[13] Citizens' assemblies are larger and usually explore themes of regional, national or transnational importance. For example, citizens' assemblies have been run in Canada on voting reform,[14] and Ireland on constitutional change.[15]

Citizens' Juries on AI and Explainability

In 2019, the NHS' *National Institute for Health and Care Research* (NIHR) and the *Information Commissioner's Office* (ICO) co-funded citizens' juries in Coventry and Manchester on the topic of AI and explainability. The deliberations centred around the question of the extent to which an AI system should provide an explanation of its outputs.[16]

Each jury consisted of 18 participants, deliberating for five days. They heard from expert witnesses, carried out group exercises, and were polled on their individual opinions at the beginning and end of the process. Participants were recruited to be a "broadly representative sample of resident adults of England", with screening carried out to exclude those with professional expertise in AI or data protection. They were paid £500, plus a £25/day cash expense allowance.

11. Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar, "Forms of Mini-Publics," *New Democracy*, May 8, 2017, 1, https://www.newdemocracy. com.au/2017/05/08/forms-of-mini-publics/.
12. Our Voice, *Our Voice Citizens' Jury on Shared Decision-Making* (Scottish Health Council; Shared Future CIC; Realistic Medicine, 2019), https://www.hisengage.scot/media/1170/citizens_jury_final_report_mar19.pdf.
13. Local Government Association, "London Borough of Hackney: Citizen's Jury on Heatwaves," April 16, 2025, https://www.local. gov.uk/case-studies/london-borough-hackney-citizens-jury-heatwaves.
14. Mark E. Warren and Hilary Pearse, eds., *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); Participedia, *Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform*, 2020, https://participedia. net/case/46.
15. Michela Palese. "The Irish Abortion Referendum: How a Citizens' Assembly Helped to Break Years of Political Deadlock." *Electoral Reform Society*, May 29, 2018. https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/the-irish-abortion-referendum-how-a-citizens-assembly-helped-to-break-years-of-political-deadlock/.
16. Citizens Juries c.i.c. and Jefferson Center, *Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Explainability — Citizens' Juries Report* (NIHR Greater Manchester Patient Safety Translational Research Centre; Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust; Information Commissioner's Office; The University of Manchester, 2019), https://web.archive.org/web/20190705092559/http://assets.mhs.manchester. ac.uk/gmpstrc/C4-AI-citizens-juries-report.pdf.

The juries focused on how explainable AI decisions should be across domains, including medicine, job recruitment and criminal justice. The findings underlined the importance of context: Jurors placed more weight on accuracy (at the expense, potentially, of explainability) in medical contexts, and regarded explainability as more crucial in the non-medical scenarios.

This process largely followed a traditional citizens' jury format, although the use of polling before and after the process is reminiscent of a deliberative poll.[17] It is an example of how deliberative exercises can be run in tight collaboration with expert bodies and national organisations, feeding directly into their ongoing work.[18]

Citizens' Biometrics Council

The "Citizens' Biometrics Council", organised by the *Ada Lovelace Institute*, aimed to bring the public's voice into the debate on biometric technologies, such as facial recognition and digital fingerprinting. In a series of online and in-person meetings between February and October 2020, 50 participants took part in 60 hours of deliberative workshops. Participants "considered evidence about biometric technologies, heard from experts from a range of backgrounds, and participated in facilitated discussion".[19]

The Council recruited participants via a market research recruitment agency, aiming for a demographically sensitive representation of the UK population. They selected for categories such as gender, age, and ethnicity, as well as "urban or rural place of residence" and "attitudes to the use of data". In addition, they ran two "Community Voices workshops" for members of the LGBTQI+

community and for people with disabilities, as earlier research had shown that "these groups are often disproportionately impacted by biometric technologies, and face unique challenges in response to them but are too-often underrepresented in debates about technology."

This experience highlights the limits of an approach that seeks to achieve representativeness, and it demonstrates the need to adjust models of random selection — particularly on issues such as data and AI use, as marginalised and minority communities are often affected in specific ways.

The Council produced a substantial list of recommendations, ranging from the need for new legislation and oversight mechanisms, to limiting commercial uses of data and ensuring the highest levels of accuracy for police uses of biometrics.

The "Lockdown Debate"

While the Citizens' Biometrics Council is an example of a big picture exercise, carefully planned over a longer period of time, the "Lockdown Debate" highlights how mini-publics can be spun up quickly in response to rapidly evolving and novel situations. In May 2020, the *Ada Lovelace Institute*, *Traverse*, *Involve*, and *Bang the Table* brought together 28 participants for a "rapid online discussion" guided by the question, "Under what circumstances do citizens think that technological solutions like the COVID-19 contact tracing app are appropriate?"

Deliberations took place over three weeks, via Zoom, with participants offered opportunities

17. Stanford University Deliberative Democracy Lab, "What Is Deliberative Polling®?" n.d., https://deliberation.stanford.edu/what-deliberative-pollingr.
18. For an academic reflection, see: Sabine N. van der Veer et al., "Trading Off Accuracy and Explainability in AI Decision-Making: Findings from 2 Citizens' Juries," *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association* 28 (2021): 2128–2138, https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocab127.
19. Ada Lovelace Institute, *The Citizens' Biometrics Council: Recommendations and Findings of a Public Deliberation on Biometrics, Policy and Governance* (2021), https://www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Citizens_Biometrics_Council_final_report.pdf.

to ask subject experts questions in online chats and engage asynchronously via an online platform.[20] Participants were selected from one urban (Camden) and one rural (Kent) location. The process was promoted through mutual aid groups and local community organisations, and participants were paid £150.[21]

The exercise proposed four requirements: "Provide the public with a transparent evidence base"; "Offer independent assessment and review of the technology"; "Clarify boundaries on data use, rights and responsibilities"; and "Proactively address the needs of, and risk relating to, vulnerable groups". According to the *Ada Lovelace Institute*, the debate "demonstrated that if you give groups of people time to talk to experts on an equal footing, they respond with very nuanced and contextualised opinions. The views participants shared weren't just about technology, but were also about the social, behavioural and governance systems which technologies are embedded in."[22]

People's Panel on AI

As part of a series of "AI Fringe" events alongside the UK Government's AI Safety Summit in 2023, the civil society organisation *Connected By Data* organised the "People's Panel on AI". The panel brought together an 11-person mini-public. Participants first met on Zoom, prior to the AI Fringe, and then reunited for four days in person, attending events and workshops with expert speakers at the Fringe, and deliberated at the end of each day. In this way, the Fringe programme itself served the function of the expert presentations which are a foundational feature of mini-publics. Members of the panel were oversampled from ethnic minorities "because past research [had highlighted] disproportionate AI impacts on ethnic minorities".[23]

Participants produced a set of recommendations aimed at government, industry, civil society, and academia, including representatives who attended the main Summit. The panel offered a series of "red lines" on AI, demanding that AI should not increase social inequalities, that it should not profile (based on gender, ethnicity, etc.), that it should not have unrestricted access to people's data or creative outputs, amongst other points.[24]

The People's Panel on AI is an interesting example of how a democratic exercise can be run alongside an existing event, giving it the opportunity to draw from and feed back into the conversation around parallel activities.

British Columbia's Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform

Mini-publics have been used to address a wide variety of societal concerns and controversies, including changes to a country's constitution (for example, in Ireland and Iceland) and electoral system. In 2004, the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in British Columbia was charged with investigating and recommending changes to the Canadian province's electoral system. 160 citizens were recruited at random, and deliberated, approximately every other weekend, for one year.

20. Ada Lovelace Institute et al., *Confidence in a Crisis?: Building Public Trust in a Contact Tracing App* (2020), 3–6, https://www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Ada-Lovelace-Institute_COVID-19_Contact_Tracing_Confidence-in-a-crisis-report-3.pdf.

21. Traverse et al., *Leaving Lockdown Public Debate: Rapid, Online Deliberation on COVID-19 Technologies* (2020), 11, https://web.archive.org/web/20220703134939/https://traverse.ltd/application/files/6715/9290/3370/Lockdown_Debate_methodology.pdf.

22. Ada Lovelace Institute et al., *Confidence in a Crisis?*,

23. Tim Davies, *Involving the Public in AI Policymaking — Experience from the People's Panel on AI* (Connected By Data, 2024), 2–4, https://connectedbydata.org/assets/projects/peoplespanel/2024 - Peoples Panel on AI - Final Report (10 Pages).pdf.

24. Hopkins Van Mil, *People's Panel on AI: A Summary of the Key Points Made* (Connected By Data, 2023), 5–13, https://connectedbydata.org/assets/projects/peoplespanel/Peoples Panel on AI Summary Findings - Final.pdf.

The Assembly recommended that British Columbia's First Past the Post voting system be replaced with a Single Transferable Vote system. This choice was put to a subsequent province-wide referendum, held alongside the 2005 provincial elections. The proposal received 57.4% of votes cast, just short of the 60% required for it to be enacted.[25] A similar process was run in Ontario, Canada.[26]

As an early example of a citizens' assembly, this initiative demonstrated the use and feasibility of mini-publics and showed how deliberation can feed into high-stakes, high-profile conversations. The chaining of a citizens' assembly and a referendum further highlighted how mini-publics (or any type of democratic innovation) do not need to be considered in isolation.

25.   Lucy J Parry et al., "British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform," Participedia, April 12, 2021, https://participedia.net/case/1; Warren and Pearse, *Designing Deliberative Democracy*.
26.   Participedia, *Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform*. https://participedia.net/case/46.

Distributed and community based approaches

Deliberative democratic processes can run in aggregate over more than one location, as we have already seen with the citizens' juries on AI and explainability. The following examples foreground their distributed and place-based nature even further, sometimes departing from the mini-public format. The term "distributed dialogue" has been used to refer to a decentralised approach to deliberation, "based on the idea that complex issues need to involve a range of conversations that happen in different spaces."[27]

Community Data Conversations

The *Liverpool Civic Data Cooperative* has run a distributed engagement programme across the Liverpool City Region, aiming to bring discussions about data closer to residents. Their Community Data Conversations project engaged community groups in several towns across the region to co-host conversations on how data should be used locally. The *Civic Data Cooperative* provided training for community leaders to co-host the local conversations, facilitating the involvement of individuals who may not have prior knowledge about data issues but a prominent role in the community. It covered event costs, vouchers for participants, and payment for hosts.[28]

In a further project ("Round 'Ere"), the Cooperative recruited 14 community researchers in a particular region who were then trained to carry out research interviews in their own communities. The community researchers completed 207 interviews, with the resulting data processed and analysed by the *Civic Data Cooperative*.[29] Democratic innovations seek to empower ordinary citizens. Training citizens to work on such initiatives can be a useful approach to advance conversations and engage the public.

GwyrddNi Community Assemblies

GwyrddNi, an initiative stretching across five areas of Gwynedd (northwest Wales), ran a number of community assemblies in 2022-23, aiming to produce local action in the face of the climate crisis. The goal of these assemblies was to produce Community Climate Action Plans to inform further local work.[30]

While the assemblies themselves were comparable to a citizens' jury, particular features of GwyrddNi included its network-based approach and its grounding in communities. As a report from GwyrddNi frames it, "we believe that those best placed to shape the future of a community are the people who live there; people who know their patch, their neighbours, the area's history, its greatest needs and its strongest assets."[31] The assemblies were coordinated by a network of social enterprises and community organisations, such as renewable energy enterprises and community hubs.

GwyrddNi demonstrates an attempt of involving communities in the operation of the process

27. Involve, "Methods: Distributed Dialogue," n.d., https://www.involve.org.uk/resource/distributed-dialogue.
28. Civic Data Coop, "Community Data Conversations," n.d., https://civicdatacooperative.com/project/community-data-conversations/.
29. Civic Data Coop and Capacity, *Final Project Report: Round 'Ere Widnes* (2023), https://civicdatacooperative.com/app/uploads/2023/11/Round-Ere-Report.pdf.
30. GwyrddNi, *GwyrddNi: From Assemblies to Action* (2023), https://www.gwyrddni.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GwyrddNi-From-Assemblies-to-Action.pdf; GwyrddNi, "About GwyrddNi.", https://www.gwyrddni.cymru/en/about-gwyrddni/.
31. GwyrddNi, *GwyrddNi*, 3.

itself. While organisers of mini-publics typically invite citizens to voice and contribute their views during a citizen jury or assembly, a distributed and locally-bound initiative such as GwyrddNi can allow citizens and participants to exert greater control over novel democratic exercises.

Government may have a role in helping catalyse and nurture local social enterprises and community organisations and thus enabling initiatives such as GwyrddNi. Wales' Communities First scheme had helped seed some of the social enterprises which were involved.[32] Equipping communities to empower themselves may be an important step beyond the existence of sometimes isolated and one-off deliberative events and towards more sustained efforts of democratic innovation.[33]

Bioenergy Distributed Dialogue

From September 2012 to December 2013, the UK Biotechnology and *Biological Sciences Research Council* (BBSRC) operated the "Bioenergy Distributed Dialogue" in order to seek the perspectives of UK residents on the topic of bioenergy. It invited interested institutions and individuals to run their own dialogue events in different locations, rather than commissioning a single contractor to run the process.[34]

The organisers behind the process produced a toolkit with guidelines on how to run an engagement event, a set of scenarios and associated discussion materials, and a card game. The main mechanism for collecting feedback from the distributed processes were feedback forms which were submitted to the

organisers. Participants expressed both hopes for and concerns about bioenergy, for example on how it may reduce reliance on fossil fuels but also how it could be used as "greenwashing".

This distributed dialogue approach showed similarities with the *Civic Data Cooperative's* work. Through this approach, the BBSRC were able to engage a larger number of members of the public in a more cost-effective way. However, compared to more tightly controlled exercises, this distributed dialogue did not have the even demographic spread of a typical mini-public.

32.   Harry Warne, "Democratic Decline and Democratic Innovation" (PhD thesis, Aberystwyth University, forthcoming 2026).
33.   Selwyn Williams, "'Vulture Capitalism' Versus 'Communitisation'," *Municipal Enquiry*, June 20, 2024, https://www.municipal-enquiry.org/post/vulture-capitalism-versus-communitisation.
34.   Marta Entradas et al., *Bioenergy Dialogue: Final Report* (BBSRC, 2013), https://sciencewise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/bioenergy-dialogue-report.pdf; Jaskiran Gakhal et al., "Bioenergy Distributed Dialogue," 2020, https://participedia.net/case/bioenergy-distributed-dialogue.

Permanent mini-publics

The growing popularity of mini-publics has led to considerations of institutionalising them as permanent assemblies. The members of this assembly would be citizens and, as with regular mini-publics, selected to be representative of the wider 'public'. Membership would be limited to a particular period of time.[35] There are few examples of permanent mini-publics and they constitute an ambitious approach. However, with huge challenges posed by AI for many aspects of our societies, permanent institutions may help navigate this complex world. As the examples below demonstrate, democratic innovations can take place at different scales and allow for further innovation.

The Ostbelgien model

Ostbelgien's (East Belgium) "Permanent Citizens' Dialogue", or simply the "Ostbelgien model", is perhaps the most prominent implementation of a permanent mini-public. Members of a Citizens' Council are appointed for 18-month terms and are paid a modest fee for attendance. A handful of non-member administrative positions help guide the process, including a Permanent Secretary, the Secretary General of Parliament (who appoints the Permanent Secretary), and the relevant Ombuds(wo)man. The Council also appoints a president, with their term limited to six months and rotated between men and women.

The Council can establish citizens' assemblies on a given subject. The resulting recommendations are then discussed in a joint committee made up of members of the particular citizens' assembly, (ordinarily) elected representatives, and the minister most relevant to the topic at hand. The latter two parties must indicate where and how the recommendations of the assembly will be implemented, and any grounds for rejecting the recommendations must be justified. Public meetings follow up the process to guide and report on the implementation of the recommendations.[36] Citizens' assemblies have been conducted on diverse topics including healthcare and education.[37]

Scholars have attributed the success of the model partly to Ostbelgien's relatively small size. The region has around 77,000 inhabitants and its own federal status and parliament.[38] This example demonstrates how even highly novel democratic innovations can become part of the mundane functioning of government.

Madrid and Paris

In 2019, Madrid's *Observatorio de la Ciudad* organised a group of 49 randomly selected citizens alongside the City Council. This was set up to be a permanent organ of citizen participation, augmenting standard local democracy. The *Observatorio* had three main

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35. Larry Patriquin, *Permanent Citizens' Assemblies: A New Model for Public Deliberation* (Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd, 2020); Sortition Foundation et al., A "House of Citizens" for the Scottish Parliament (2020), https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx. cloudfront.net/sortitionfoundation/pages/685/attachments/original/1607691418/Scotland_House_of_Citizens_v1-1. pdf?1607691418.

36. Christoph Niessen and Min Reuchamps, "Institutionalising Citizen Deliberation in Parliament: The Permanent Citizens' Dialogue in the German-Speaking Community of Belgium," *Parliamentary Affairs* 75 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/ gsaa056: 2 & 8-15.

37. Maaike Geuens, "The Conference on the Future of Europe: Bringing the EU Closer to Its Citizens?" in *The Changing Role of Citizens in EU Democratic Governance*, ed. Davor Jančić (Hart, 2023), 155–156.

38. Geuens, "The Conference on the Future of Europe," 154–155; Ann-Mireille Sautter and Min Reuchamps, "The Belgian Experiments of Deliberative Democracy — an Analysis of the Institutionalisation of Deliberative Citizen Participation in Multi-Level Belgium," in *Jahrbuch Des Föderalismus: Föderalismus, Subsidiarität Und Regionen in Europa*, ed. Europäisches Zentrum für Föderalismus-Forschung Tübingen (EZFF) (Nomos, 2022), 94.

functions: To analyse citizens' proposals via the city's digital participation platform (decide. madrid) and decide if they should go to a public vote; to analyse municipal policies; and to deliver reports on particularly significant issues. The initiative was short-lived due to a change in the city's government, but it set an interesting precedent.[39]

From September 2023 to April 2024, a 100-member citizens' assembly in Paris deliberated on issues suggested by the mayor and executive (such as policing, homelessness, and advertising in public places) and developed policy recommendations. Those recommendations informed a Citizen Bill which was adopted by the city. The initiative demonstrated the impact a citizens' assembly can have on legislation.

The General Secretary to the assembly remarked that, "For this to be a success, you need a strong political will. ...The executive was really involved. The mayor was very supportive and has followed really closely."[40] Both Madrid and Paris demonstrate that agile and ambitious local government actors can push the envelope of what is possible for democracy.

39. Lyn Carson, "Learnings from Madrid: Institutionalising Deliberative Democracy Through It's *Observatorio de La Ciudad*," newDemocracy, May 5, 2020, https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/RD-Note-Learnings-from-Madrid.pdf; Participedia, Case: El Observatorio de La Ciudad (the City Observatory), 2020, https://participedia.net/case/el-observatorio-de-la-ciudad-the-city-observatory.
40. DemocracyNext, "How a Permanent Citizens' Assembly in Paris Passed a Bill into Law," *DemocracyNext (Substack)*, July 25, 2024, https://demnext.substack.com/p/how-a-permanent-citizens-assembly.

Participatory and equitable procurement

Procurement "presents a unique chance to incorporate public perspectives and promote social justice".[41] Organisations and projects such as *ParticipationAI* have provided starting-points and recipes for involving the public in the procurement of AI.[42] In this section we will outline approaches and resources regarding equality and data protection in the context of AI procurement, algorithmic impact assessments, and participatory budgeting.

Equality and data protection in AI procurement

Equality impact and data protection represent particular risks in AI procurement. Public bodies have obligations, such as eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity for persons with protected characteristics, and making sure personal data is processed on a lawful basis. Guides on responsible procurement — e.g., by the *Local Government Association* — offer advice for staff in various roles, from commissioners and project managers to procurement officers.[43]

AI must process data according to obligations under GDPR. Procurement teams need to assess how an AI system may affect people with protected characteristics and consider whether mitigations are needed to prevent discriminatory outcomes. Due diligence must be taken with regard to suppliers, including checks on how they test for bias, to ensure data minimisation and provide mechanisms for individuals to challenge decisions.

Impact assessments for responsible AI procurement

The various (potential and actual) impacts of data and AI systems require robust assessments. Guidance by organisations such as the *Institute for the Future of Work* (IFOW) offers frameworks for effectively designing, developing, and deploying algorithmic (and AI) systems.[44] Their Good Work Algorithmic Impact Assessment (AIA) is composed of several steps that include the identification of relevant actors at all levels within an organisation; the proper documentation of design and deployment choices; the identification of individuals who may be impacted by a new AI system; appropriate action in response to the analysis; and continuous evaluation to ensure this action is ongoing and responsive.

Crucially, this approach calls for engaging directly with potentially impacted individuals and recruiting them by methods such as sortition (as practiced in mini-publics). It highlights the possibility of incorporating not only an assessment of risks of new AI systems, but involving those who stand to be impacted, whether inside or

41. ParticipationAI, *Narrowing Our Focus: Bridging Public Participation and AI in Public Procurement*, September 19, 2024, https://medium.com/@Participationai/narrowing-our-focus-bridging-public-participation-and-ai-in-public-procurement-449276af4708.
42. ParticipationAI, *Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in Public Procurement for Artificial Intelligence: A Mission-Oriented Playbook* (2025).
43. LGA et al., *How to Build Quality & Data Protection into Your AI Commissioning and Procurement Processes: A Guide for Councils in England* (Local Government Association, 2025), https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/responsible-buying-how-build-equality-data-protection-your-ai-commissioning.
44. Abigail Gilbert et al., *Good Work Algorithmic Impact Assessment: An Approach for Worker Involvement* (Institute for the Future of Work, 2023), https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/64d5f73a7fc5e8a240310c4d/64f84ef8384be3768d948f5d_GWAIA-(v7)-06.09.23.pdf.

outside an organisation. Comparable resources include the UK *Department for Science, Innovation & Technology*'s Model for Responsible Innovation,[45] and the *Ada Lovelace Institute*'s work on Algorithmic Impact Assessments.[46]

Participatory budgeting

A further prominent practice of democratic innovations offers particular promise in involving the public in procurement decisions: participatory budgeting (PB). Developed in Brazil in the late 1980s,[47] PB opens up some proportion of a public budget, or decision-making over spending priorities, to public vote. A public body earmarks a pot of money for PB and then invites proposals and discussions on how to spend it. Citizens typically have the opportunity to vote on proposals and specific resource allocations. Most often, PB is run at a local level, such as a town or city borough, but it has also been implemented for larger cities and entire states.[48] It has been partially institutionalised in Scotland[49] and deployed in major cities including Paris and New York City.[50] The Local Government Association has published guidance on using PB,[51] and various resources exist to help guide interested public employees.[52]

Participatory budgeting "can range from being purely consultative to fully binding, depending on the place and time" and combined with other methods (like mini-publics),[53] thus demonstrating the flexibility available to public bodies in designing their procurement processes. Processes like these could be adopted to give the public a choice over what sorts of AI systems are or are not implemented. PB exercises can also be combined with mini-publics and/or distributed dialogues to explore a wider set of choices around the use of AI systems.

45.   Department for Science, Innovation & Technology, *The Model for Responsible Innovation* (2024), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-model-for-responsible-innovation/the-model-for-responsible-innovation.
46.   Ada Lovelace Institute, *Algorithmic Impact Assessment: User Guide* (2022), https://www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/resource/aia-user-guide/.
47.   Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Ernesto Ganuza, *Popular Democracy: The Paradox of Participation*, [EPUB edition] (Stanford University Press, 2017).
48.   Involve, "Participatory Budgeting," n.d., https://www.involve.org.uk/resource/participatory-budgeting.
49.   Scottish Government, "Community Empowerment: Participatory Budgeting," n.d., https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participatory-budgeting/.
50.   Participedia, *Participatory Budgeting in Paris, France*, 2021, https://participedia.net/case/5008; Participedia, *New York Participatory Budgeting Pilot (2012-2013)*, 2021, https://participedia.net/case/469.
51.   Local Government Association, "Participatory Budgeting," n.d., https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-online-hub/public-service-reform-tools/engaging-citizens-devolution-5.
52.   e.g. The PB Unit, *Participatory Budgeting in the UK — a Toolkit (Second Edition)* (2010), https://library.uniteddiversity.coop/Decision_Making_and_Democracy/Participatory_Budgeting/Participatory_Budgeting_Toolkit.pdf; *Participatory Budgeting Project, PB Scoping Toolkit: A Guide for Officials & Staff Interested in Starting PB* (2017), https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ScopingToolkit2017_v1.1-1.pdf.
53.   ParticipationAI, *Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in Public Procurement for Artificial Intelligence*, 69.

Data governance, ownership, and commons

Alongside deliberative approaches that emphasise public voice in policy, other models and practices are concerned with how resources are stewarded. Concepts such as community wealth building, the foundational economy, and digital or data commons all point to ways in which collective ownership, cooperative governance, and local economic models might be brought to bear on the challenges posed by new technologies.

Digital commons and data stewardship

In a political-economic context in which data about people, their habits and their lives is held and acquired by commercial entities (such as platform providers and data brokers) and, to some extent, by government and political institutions, the notion of the "commons" has emerged as an alternative approach. Digital commons are understood as digital resources that are collectively created and maintained, governed by communities, and made openly available for reuse and adaptation. They may include a common repository of knowledge like Wikipedia; the common technical standards which the internet requires to operate; and data trusts that steward data on behalf of a community.[54]

Commons-oriented approaches establish governance structures and stewardship practices to ensure that resources are sustained over time and remain aligned with public benefit goals. For example, the DHIS2 health information system, overseen by the *University of Oslo*, is employed in over 80 low- and middle-income countries to manage public health data.[55] Data trusts, such as the UK Biobank, which stewards genetic data and samples, serve as public-oriented data governance frameworks[56] while data cooperatives seek to maximise member participation in governance structures.[57]

Organisations such as the *Liverpool Civic Data Cooperative* (CDC) have been exploring the prospect of a practical implementation of "data commons". Working with residents, the CDC has initiated a digital platform to allow organisations and individuals across the city region to share, link and aggregate data, perform their own analytics upon their data, and to develop stories from the data which help residents and service providers better understand local communities and their needs.[58]

Digital platforms for citizen participation

Digital platforms have been developed to lower the barriers to democratic participation and make public involvement a more routine practice. One of the most widely recognised is Decidim, an open-source participatory framework created in Barcelona. It supports a wide range of participatory processes, including citizen

54. Mélanie Dulong de Rosnay and Felix Stalder, "Digital Commons," Internet Policy Review, 2020, https://policyreview.info/concepts/digital-commons.
55. Jan Krewer and Zuzanna Warso, *Digital Commons as Providers of Public Digital Infrastructure*, 51–54. https://openfuture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241113_Digital-Commons-as-Providers-of-Public-Digital-Infrastructures.pdf
56. Jack Hardinges, "Explainer: What Is a Data Trust?" Open Data Institute, July 10, 2018, https://theodi.org/insights/explainers/what-is-a-data-trust/.
57. Modhvadia, Roshni and Octavia Field Reid. "Participatory and inclusive data stewardship: A landscape review" A*da Lovelace Institute*, 2024. https://www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/report/participatory-inclusive-data-stewardship/.
58. Civic Data Cooperative, "Digital Commons," n.d., https://civicdatacooperative.com/project/digital-commons/.

proposals, debates, participatory budgeting, and public consultations, and has been adopted by municipalities, regions, and civil society organisations around the world.[59]

CONSUL is a comparable platform associated with Madrid. It was developed by the Madrid City Council and has since been deployed by many governments globally. It provides a similar suite of tools to Decidim. While its origin is linked to Madrid, its open-source nature means it is now used broadly, with deployments scaling to reach many millions of citizens in dozens of countries.[60] Both platforms are open for any public body to adopt and use.

Local and foundational economies

While commons-oriented approaches typically seek to advance non-commercial models and public involvement, often through the creation of member communities, locally bounded institutions and economies may serve similar purposes. The "Preston Model", named for the English city where it was developed, leverages procurement to keep wealth circulating within a community. It does this by selecting "anchor institutions" — local, public sector or adjacent institutions like councils, universities and hospitals, which have a vested interest in a community's continued prosperity. This model advocates that anchor institutions procure goods and services from local firms and/or worker-owned cooperatives. The model prioritises small, local enterprises over attracting national or international capital.[61]

Locally-rooted, circular economies have been advanced elsewhere, too. The Welsh Government has published extensive guidance and case studies on supporting what they call the "foundational economy": the services and businesses which people rely on for the foundation of their lives, from health and care services to food and public transport.[62] The foundational economy approach also informs extra-governmental efforts, such as the network of social enterprises associated with the above-mentioned community assemblies in Gwynedd.

Naturally, a resource-intensive industry like AI cannot easily be sourced locally. However, its need for vast data resources requires sourcing and processing on the ground and in close relation to local communities — as the proliferation of data centres demonstrates. The growth of open-source models,[63] moreover, offers opportunities for diverse types of entities to develop AI products and services beyond Silicon Valley.

59. Decidim, "Decidim Website," n.d., https://decidim.org; Barandiaran et al., *Decidim, a Technopolitical Network for Participatory Democracy: Philosophy, Practice and Autonomy of a Collective Platform in the Age of Digital Intelligence* (Springer, 2024), https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-031-50784-7.pdf.
60. CONSUL Democracy, "CONSUL Democracy Website," n.d., https://consuldemocracy.org/features/.
61. CLES and Preston City Council, *How We Build Community Wealth in Preston: Achievements and Lessons* (2019), https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CLES_Preston-Document_WEB-AW.pdf.
62. Welsh Government, "Guidance: The Foundational Economy," May 21, 2025, https://www.gov.wales/foundational-economy.
63. Klint Finley, "Open Source AI Is Already Finding Its Way into Production," *GitHub Blog*, January 28, 2025, https://github.blog/ai-and-ml/generative-ai/open-source-ai-is-already-finding-its-way-into-production/.

04 Challenges — and strategies

Challenges — and strategies

As we have seen in the previous sections, the methods and practices of public involvement in debates on AI deployment vary and face diverse sets of challenges. Scarcity of resources in the public sector is a major obstacle, of course, but there are also other issues that need to be considered, as the examples above have shown. Here we briefly summarise some of the challenges that deserve further attention on the way towards public engagement and the democratic governance of data and AI use.

Representation and inclusion

A key challenge for public engagement lies in ensuring that those most affected by AI are adequately represented. Mini-publics generally aim to mirror a cross-section of a wider population, such as a local authority or state. Yet, as research and practical experiences have shown, the impacts of datafication and AI use are not evenly distributed.

Impoverished communities, ethnic minorities, and other marginalised sectors of society can face disproportionate harms as datasets and automated systems often do not consider their specific circumstances and may thus cause serious hardships. While the impacts of datafication and AI use on more affluent sectors of society can be moderate, we need to consider specifically the implications for minorities, deprived populations, migrants, etc. Yet if participation is based only on broad demographic representation, those who are most affected remain under-represented.

To address this, some deliberative initiatives have oversampled participants from affected populations to ensure their voices are heard and their experiences are considered. Others (such as the Citizens' Biometrics Council) have complemented the method of mini-publics with dedicated workshops and conversations to account for its shortcomings. While these efforts maintain the goal of representing the wider public, they recognize that "the public" is not a uniform category. Careful design can balance demographic representativeness with targeted inclusion. Embedding such considerations in public sector practice helps guard against reproducing existing inequalities and makes engagement more responsive to the effective distribution of risks and impacts.

Internal institutional support

In times of tight resources and strong mandates to expand AI uses, public engagement initiatives may lack sufficient institutional backing and generate limited buy-in from leadership. Moreover, the procurement and deployment of technological systems, such as AI, are often treated as a technical and administrative matter that does not necessarily require democratic input. Officers who seek to advance public engagement initiatives may therefore struggle to convince their institutions of the importance of public involvement.

Ideally, public engagement should be embedded firmly within decision-making structures, with a clear mandate for participation established and supported by leadership. Successful pilots can be a useful step forward towards shifting institutional processes and cultures. Civil society organisations such as *Involve*, think tanks

such as the *Ada Lovelace Institute*, and public sector bodies such as the *Local Government Association* have developed significant expertise and experience to offer useful starting-points (see also the Resources section at the end of this guidebook).

Invited and claimed democratic innovations

Mini-publics and other forms of democratic innovations can allow the public to raise their voice, contribute concerns and proposals, and affect policy. One of their strengths is that they do so in a highly structured and outcome-oriented manner. This typically requires a larger institution with sufficient resources to design the exercise (i.e., the forum, assembly or jury) and then "invite" participants. Participants are often not involved with planning and designing the exercise, nor with formulating the questions that are to be discussed or inviting the experts that inform and guide the debate.

However, democratic innovation may also be "claimed" through public pressure from citizens, communities and social movements.[64] Examples, such as Iceland's assemblies, forums and popular protests which initiated and developed (and then continued to advocate for) a new constitution, demonstrate how citizens themselves can force open new spaces for participation and press government to act in response to grassroots demands.[65]

The question, then, is how to integrate and connect "invited" and "claimed" forms of public involvement. Models such as the digital commons, or indeed the continued mobilisations in Iceland around constitutional change, point towards ways of shifting from episodic, invited exercises to ongoing forms of shared ownership. This means moving beyond consultations towards structures that give citizens a continuous role in shaping how AI and related technologies are adopted. In this way, claimed forms of democratic innovation should be recognised not as threats, but as opportunities to deepen democratic practice.

Further, the recognition of citizen claims points to the need for deliberative and participatory exercises to be truly democratic by allowing them to explore outcomes that organisers and commissioners might not have anticipated (or hoped for). A mini-public or similar process must constitute a genuine opportunity for the public to influence governance – even if it means to move in different directions than originally envisaged – in order to deliver robust results.

Institutionalisation and continuity

Many of the democratic innovation practices that we discussed above are temporary initiatives. A citizens' jury or citizens' assembly is typically set up for a particular point in time and with a specific end date. Neither are its outcomes always followed up (and perhaps overseen) by continued deliberations, nor are its practices necessarily expanded and incorporated into ongoing governance models. The challenge is therefore to ensure that engagement does not remain ad hoc but becomes a more permanent feature of how decisions are made.

Addressing this would require moving from isolated exercises to more durable structures. Permanent mini-publics and "data commons" infrastructures point towards ways of embedding participation in the long term. Such approaches

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64.   Graham Smith, "Reflections on the Theory and Practice of Democratic Innovations," in Handbook of *Democratic Innovations and Governance*, ed. Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar (Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2019), 578.
65.   Donatella Della Porta, *How Social Movements Can Save Democracy: Democratic Innovations from Below* (Polity Press, 2020).

are harder to establish than single events, but they hold great potential for the future robustness of technological change that is geared towards the needs of citizens and residents. Building participatory mechanisms into the fabric of governance helps ensure that public voice has a continuous presence in shaping how technologies like AI are deployed.
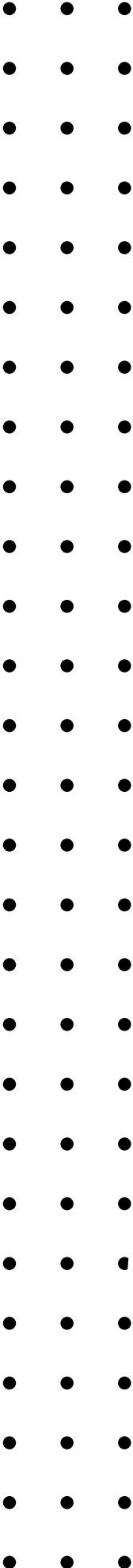
05 Resources

Resources

Below you find a library of materials providing guidance on and examples of democratic innovations.

General resources

- **Participedia**, a popular database of examples of democratic innovations — https://participedia.net

- **Involve's Knowledge Base**, a collection of guides on participatory and deliberative democracy — https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/knowledge-base

- **Involve's Methods archive**, a database of methods — https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/methods

- **Latinno**, similar to Participedia, focusing on Latin American examples — https://www.latinno.net/en/

- **OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation's (Toolkit Navigator)**, a library of innovation toolkits and guides — https://oecd-opsi.org/toolkit-navigator/

- **OECD Report "Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions"**, a widely cited report providing an introduction to using deliberative processes in government — https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/innovative-citizen-participation-and-new-democratic-institutions_339306da-en.html

- **People Powered's resources library**, a curated selection of materials on participatory democracy — https://www.peoplepowered.org/resources

- **Connected By Data's Good Governance Game**, a card game for conceptualising how to design public engagement around AI for the public sector — https://connectedbydata.org/game

Mini-publics

- **The Innovation in Democracy Programme**, a DCMS and MHCLG programme which produced a guide on how to run citizens' assemblies, along with UK case studies — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/innovation-in-democracy-programme-launch

- **DemocracyNext's "Assembling an Assembly Guide"**, a resource for institutions interested in running citizens' assemblies — https://assemblyguide.demnext.org

- **European Alternative's citizens' assembly guide**, a guide justifying and detailing how to run citizens' assemblies — https://euroalter.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Guide-to-citizens-assemblies-for-citizens-assemblies-2.pdf

- **Local Government Association guide**, on citizens' assemblies and citizens' juries, including case studies — https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution/devolution-online-hub/public-service-reform-tools/engaging-citizens-devolution-3

- **"Evidence vs Democracy"**, a Nesta published report on using mini-publics in the public sector — https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/evidence-vs-democracy/

- **Citizen Network's "How to Run a Citizens Jury"**, — https://citizen-network.org/uploads/attachment/889/diy-democracy-a-guide-to-citizens-juries.pdf

- **"Forms of Mini-Publics: An introduction to deliberative innovations in democratic practice"**, a short overview of mini-publics by Oliver Escobar and Stephen Elstub — https://www.newdemocracy.com.au/2017/05/08/forms-of-mini-publics/

- **"A House of Citizens for the Scottish Parliament"**, a report reflecting on the possibility of a permanent citizens' assembly in Scotland — https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/house_of_citizens_scottish_parliament

Distributed and community based approaches

- **Involve's "Talking for a Change"**, an in-depth guide to the distributed dialogues approach — https://www.involve.org.uk/resource/talking-change

- **Civic Data Coop's Community Data Conversations**, detailing their innovative approach to facilitating local conversations on data and AI — https://civicdatacooperative.com/project/community-data-conversations/

- **GwyrddNi**, the website for the latest developments regarding a collection of climate assemblies organised by a network of social enterprises in North Wales — https://www.gwyrddni.cymru/en/

Responsible and participatory procurement

- **"How to build equality and data protection into AI commissioning and procurement"**, a guide by the Local Government Association — https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/responsible-buying-how-build-equality-data-protection-your-ai-commissioning

- **Ada Lovelace Institute's Algorithmic Impact Assessment guide**, on using AIAs in healthcare — https://www.adalovelaceinstitute.org/resource/aia-user-guide/

- **Participatory budgeting guides and toolkits**, collected by the Participatory Budgeting Project — https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/asset-type/guides-toolkits/

- **"Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in Public Procurement for Artificial Intelligence"**, a playbook by ParticipationAI — https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IRJv08KAVJZcQip7Ves1iY2vJFNr5b_5/view

Digital commons and community wealth

- **Commons Network's "Explaining Digital Commons"**, guidance on various aspects of the digital commons approach — https://www.commonsnetwork.org/explaining-digital-commons/

- **"Best Practice Guide for Digital Commons – Government Relations"** by Digital Commons Policy Council (2024) - https://dcpc.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/DCPC2024_BEST-PRACTICES-GUIDE-1.pdf

- **Liverpool's Digital Commons**, further information on the Civic Data Cooperative's digital commons efforts in Liverpool — https://digital-commons.civicdatacoop.uk

- **The foundational economy**, resources compiled by the Welsh Government on the foundational economy approach, including case studies and an online module — https://www.gov.wales/foundational-economy

- **The Preston Model**, resources from CLES on their work with Preston City Council on the Preston Model — https://cles.org.uk/the-preston-model/

- **Decidim and CONSUL**, two popular and free-to-use platforms for engaging citizens via the internet, from setting up online voting to facilitating participatory budgeting exercises — Decidim: https://decidim.org, CONSUL: https://consuldemocracy.org