

Mission Statement

DigiCiti.org will create a fun and efficient online environment for the public to engage in politics. Filling a void in the niche of political social networking and offering a collection of tools enhancing the public's ability to interact with government, DigiCiti will make being politically active an easy daily activity and stop it from seeming like a daunting, pointless, or taboo effort. It will draw audiences of all ages and welcome the increasingly internet savvy generations to the political sphere on familiar terms. Over time, increased participation translates into a more effective democracy with an active and informed citizenry. Having low voter turnout rates and limited issue awareness, the US has great room for improvement in voter participation. The broad mission of the site is to enhance democracy in the US by improving the quality and frequency of political activity using modern technological solutions.

Users start by discovering and refining their own political identity with simple "DC" account creation tools. They move on to express themselves, and discover the views of their peers. They find other like-minded users, but more importantly, they are encouraged to interact constructively with people of opposing views through debates and a section called "The Counterweight". To improve the quality and frequency of political interaction, we have to reduce partisan divisiveness, and nuanced discussions between people of differing views will show us that we have more unifying characteristics than we do opposing ones.

The site combines a variety of existing resources to improve access to public info, but more importantly, it adds great opportunities for getting involved, rather than just being another source of top-down leadership. For example, a robust debate section empowers users to express their views in a respectful and constructive way with features to help prevailing arguments rise to prominence by sorting them based on popular vote. Ideas flourish in the debate section based on their merits and popularity. Another example of how the site breaks the mold of top-down governance is the "Open-Source Legislation" section. This is one of the most innovative features, granting the public a collaboration tool for drafting revisions to existing bill text, or creating their own from scratch. Revisions can be voted on right down to specifics of line item changes, sending a clear message to our leaders about public preference. All of the public info elements of the site can be easily applied to debate, wiki, and open-source legislation type functions to help users express themselves with evidence supporting their position. There is no reason to leave law making in the hands of the few, given that we have a society with so much expertise, and the powerful collaboration tools of the information age. Many of the greatest software innovations are done with open-source collaboration, and by adopting this same model, we can produce innovative laws in a more democratized way.

The entire site will be tied into a compelling game that rewards users for civic participation with "honor badges", which are decorative icons appearing on their profile, earning them social clout. The site also rewards users with control over the development of a customizable city. As they perform various activities on the site, they will see their city grow, and if they choose, they can take control over its development by spending earned points toward infrastructure and caring for their digital populace. To create their city, users add content on the site, and by expressing their views in posts, creating debates, calendar events, polls, wiki entries, or legislative text through the Open-Source Legislation feature, they will be able to customize and watch their city become a thriving utopia of their own design.

As members of a community, a proud nation, and a rapidly globalizing world, we each need to recognize the challenges faced by humanity and the opportunities we have to use technology for securing a better future. In this complex world, more than ever before, we have the responsibility and the capability to be increasingly active and informed Digital Citizens.