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D4.5 Improving Engagement & Pledging

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UZH	University of Zurich	Switzerland
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Executive summary

The present document is a deliverable of the CATALYST project, funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT), under its 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).

This deliverable is an outcome of Task 4.5, whose main goal was to provide an overview of the voting widget both from the perspective of a user and the perspective of an administrator setting up the vote. The focus of this deliverable is on the user journey with some explanation spent on outlining actionable ideas, or ideas on which participants are asked to vote. The engagement dimension of the widget is supported by one criteria in the voting widget: the willingness to commit to an idea.

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1. Introduction

The voting widget is an essential part of moving any collective intelligence activity forward. In any given discussion, however only a select subset of ideas are appropriate for a vote. This subset of ideas has been called the ‘actionable’ ideas.

In using the voting widget, two user journeys emerge: one for participants and one for administrators of the debate. This report details findings about the actionable ideas within the debate, the user journey of the participant using the voting widget, and the user journey of the administrator setting up the voting widget.

2. Actionable Ideas

Not all ideas in a given debate will be suitable for voting. The ideas that can be voted on to advance the debate are called the actionable ideas. The purpose may be to determine overall opinion on an idea, to determine which is the best action to implement, or to evaluate the feasibility, utility or commitment power of an idea.

Actionable ideas must be identified before a vote can take place. Often, the level one ideas within a mind map are not the most actionable: the most actionable ideas are often found further down the Mind Map, at the lower branches of the tree. The ideas in Figure 1 are the sublevel ideas of a debate on digital strategy.

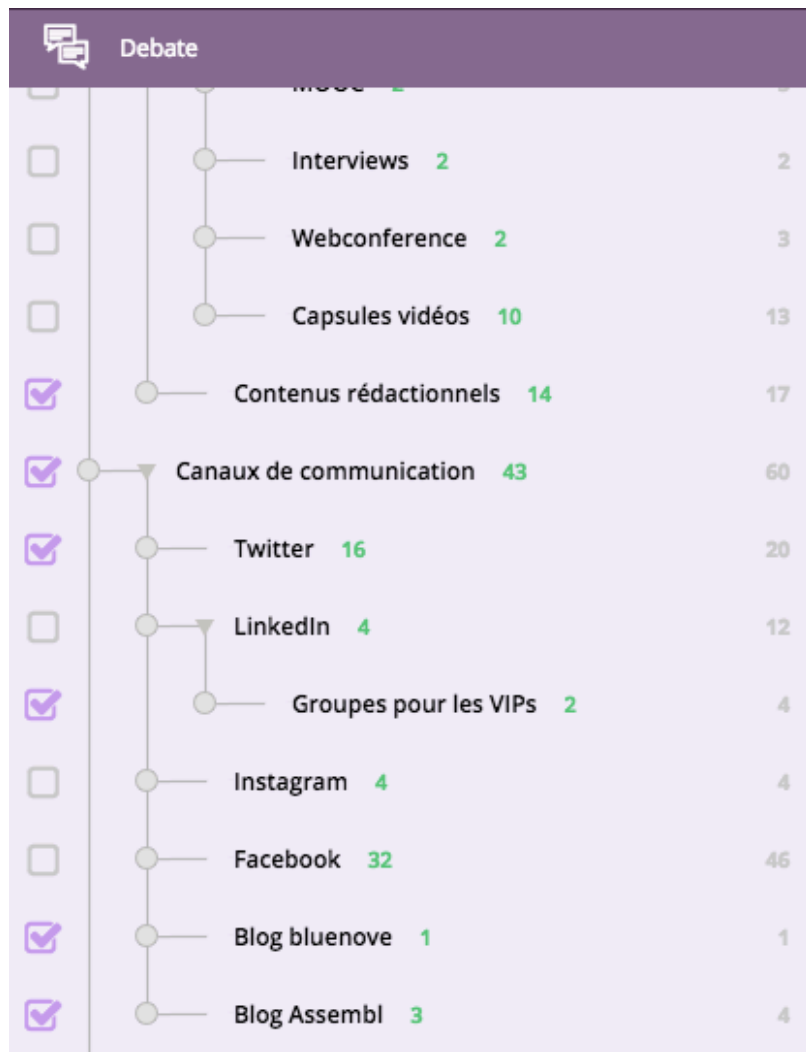


Figure 1: Mind map showing the sub ideas that are actionable

3. Participant user journey

3.1 Finding the vote

The actionable ideas are organised into a separate branch within the Mind Map that shows the key ideas that have been extracted from the debate to be voted on. This is done to ensure these ideas are easy to find, to minimise difficulty for the participants. However, a notification system is being developed to avoid the need for this separate branch.. The ideas that have an active vote going will be marked, and the vote will eventually happen within the ideas of the primary branch.

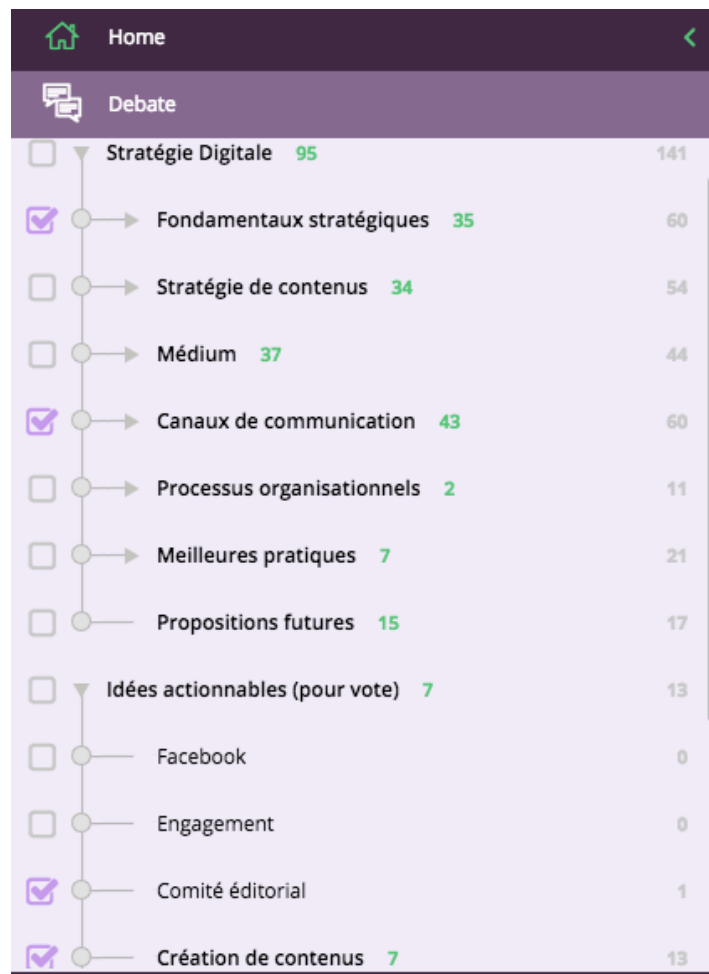


Figure 2: Actionable ideas within a mind map

3.2 Voting

The vote can be found within the idea panel of the interface. Clicking on the idea will open this panel, and users are able to access the vote. The selected idea in Figure 3 has an ongoing vote. Clicking on 'Vote on this idea' will open the voting interface (see Figure 4).

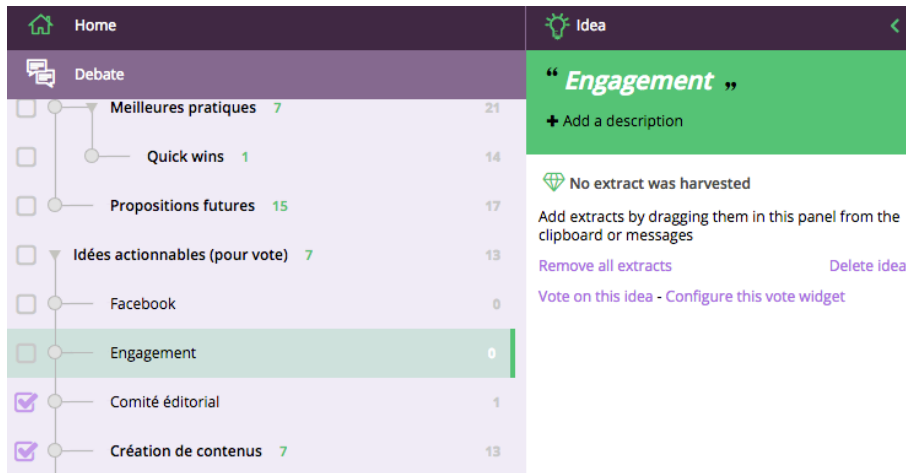


Figure 3: Finding the vote within a selected idea

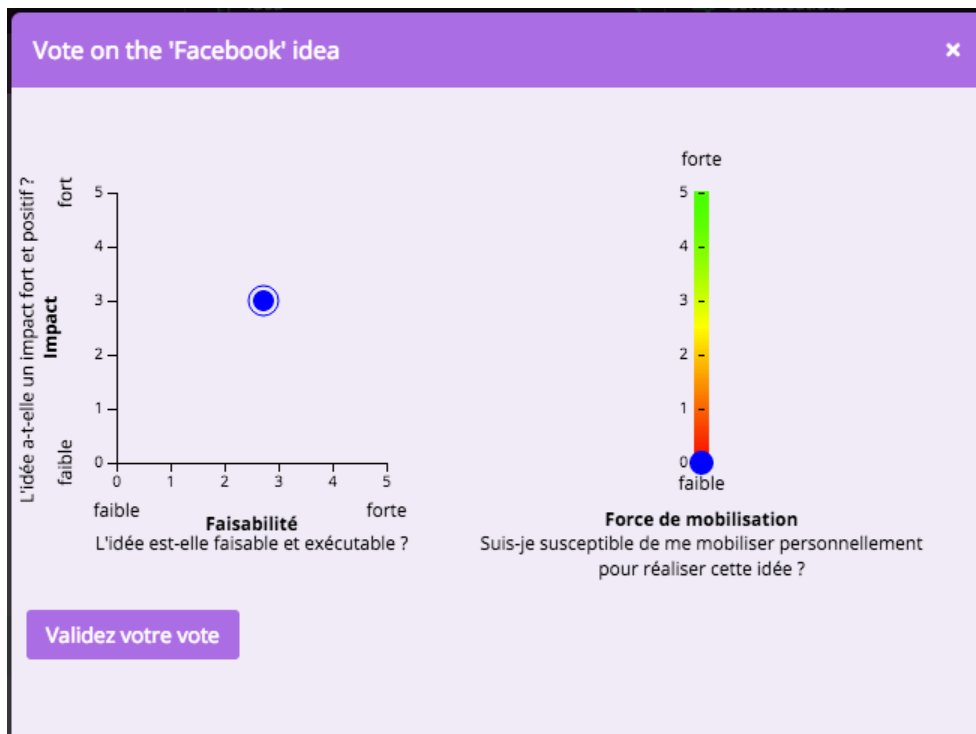


Figure 4: Voting on an idea

Participants can vote on an idea and then click on 'Validate your vote' to submit their contributions. The scale for the likert vote has been coloured in order to make voting as easy as possible. Voting on the two-scale graph helps participants share two opinions in one vote, further easing the voting process.

4. Expert User Journey

4.1 Setting up the vote

Administrators, those who harvest key ideas and create the mind map of ideas, can customise the vote to a high degree. To access the panel, users simply click on the idea on which they would like to activate the voting process, and click on 'Configure this vote widget'. Experts can set the criteria, choose between a graph vote and a likert vote, set the ideas for vote, and see the results within this panel.

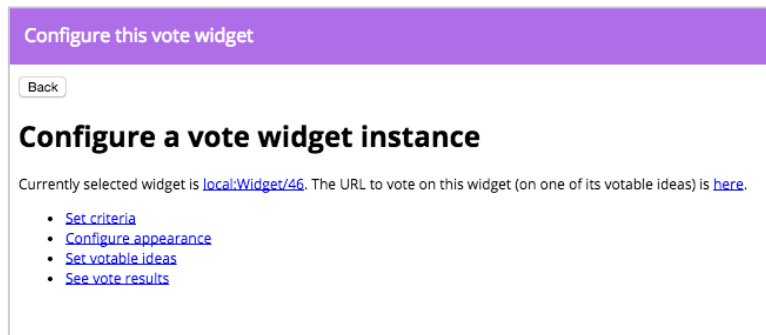


Figure 5: Configuring a vote

To set up the vote, experts must choose the criteria they wish to use for the vote. From here, experts can configure the appearance of the vote.

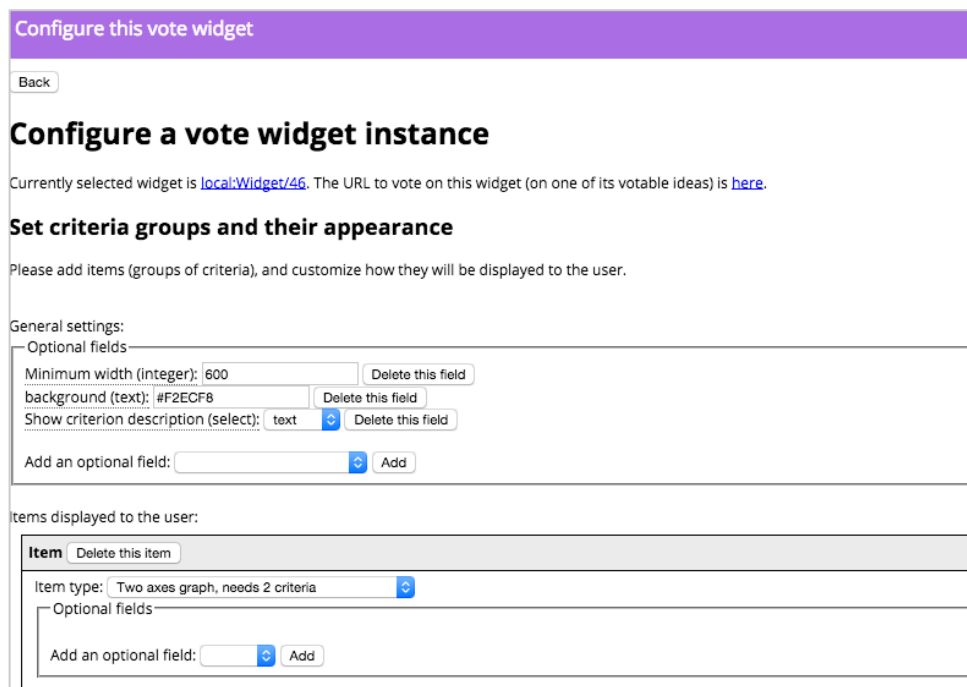


Figure 6: Choosing the axes labels

A description of the vote can be given, the axes labelled, and colours and scale chosen. The vote is then configured.

4.2 Expected outcomes

Results of the vote will be available within the configuration panel. The results will help move the debate forward by identifying ideas that will become “projects”. This creates a new ontology in the system, complementing the IBIS structure. The solution provides a way to define content in 3 different categories: Ideas, Actionable Ideas and Projects.

As an example in the debate on which I4P started its test (digital strategy), a vote is being conducted on the value of creating a Facebook page. Participants are asked to rank the impact of having a Facebook page against the feasibility of creating one. In the second part of the vote they are asked to rank their willingness to commit. If most participants say that having a Facebook page is feasible but has a low impact and a majority say they are not willing to commit to creating content, the vote has proven its efficiency. The debate can move toward a topic people are more committed to.

Voting on the willingness to commit to an idea is key to participant pledging. This is where ideas transform from discussion to an actionable project **as users pledge commitment to action**. In the case of the vote on digital strategy, a vote that shows a high willingness from a large number of participants to commit to writing blog posts shows a high pledge of action.

5. Future improvements

The testing of the voting widget will start on December 15th, 2014. It will be applied to the internal discussion of a company (bluenove) on the design of their Digital Strategy. 35 people will be mobilized around key actionable ideas for prioritization and selection. The test should end mi-January 2015.

Improvements can be made to improve the usability and the usefulness of results for the voting widget. The ability to put a timespan on a vote is being developed as is a notification system for new votes and votes that are near expiration. This will help improve participant engagement, as it will create a sense of urgency to vote.

The ability to verify that participants are following through on their pledge of action would also be useful. This is not currently in development but is something that is being discussed.

In addition, adding several more types of voting mechanisms is being discussed to increase the flexibility of the pledging system.

6. Conclusion

The mind map of ideas from a given debate will generally contain a subset of actionable ideas that participants can vote on or pledge action on. The voting widget helps them do just that by providing a place for participants to share their opinions of the feasibility and the impact of the given idea. It also helps participants pledge action to an idea by ranking their willingness to commit to action on a certain idea. Moving forward, increased ability to verify the results of a vote, and to provide different voting options to increase the flexibility of the widget will be investigated and developed.

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