Catalyst

catalyst-fp7.eu

Project Acronym:	**CATALYST**
Project Full Title:	**Collective Applied Intelligence and Analytics for Social Innovation**
Grant Agreement:	**6611188**
Project Duration:	**24 months (Oct. 2013 - Sept. 2015)**

D4.2 Argument Mapping and Deliberation Analytics

Deliverable Status:	**Final**
File Name:	**CATALYST_ D4.2.pdf**
Due Date:	**August 2015 (M23)**
Submission Date:	**September 2015 (M4)**
Dissemination Level:	**Public**
Task Leader:	**Purpose**

The CATALYST project consortium is composed of:

SO	Sigma Orionis	France
I4P	Imagination for People	France
OU	The Open University	United Kingdom
UZH	University of Zurich	Switzerland
CSCP	Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production	Germany
Purpose	Purpose Europe	United Kingdom
Wikitalia	Wikitalia	Italy

D4.2- Argument Mapping & Deliberation Analytics ■ August 2015 ■ Purpose
The CATALYST project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n°6611188

Page **2** of **17**

Revision Control

Version	Author	Date	Status
0.1	Lee-Sean Huang, Purpose	August 30, 2015	Initial Draft
0.2	Marta Arniani, Sigma	August 31, 2015	Quality check
0.3	Anna de Liddo, Michelle Bachler, OU	September 8, 2015	Draft
0.4	Lee-Sean Huang, Purpose	September 21, 2015	Final draft
1.0	Marta Arniani, Sigma	September 24, 2015	Final Draft reviewed and submission to the EC

Table of Contents

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).

In the course of the Catalyst project, we conducted two tests of the two mechanisms included in Task 4.2, "idea mapping" and "collective debate and decision making." Throughout the testing, we found that user recruitment and engagement was extremely challenging, but we also gained valuable insights about online deliberation and debate for future development and study.

Euclid Network, former members of the Catalyst Consortium and the original task leaders for this portion of the Catalyst project, conducted the first pre-test in months 9-15. After Euclid's departure from the Consortium due to internal changes in leadership and institutional priority, Purpose took over as the leaders of Task 4.2. We have since conducted subsequent a second round of tests in months 20-23.

The technology platform we used in both test was DebateHub, a tool for online communities developed by fellow Consortium members at the Open University's Knowledge Media Institute. DebateHub gives online communities a place to:

i.   Raise issues,
ii.   Share ideas,
iii.   Debate the pros and cons, and
iv.   Vote contributions in order to collectively organize and progress good ideas forward

A recurring issue in both testbeds lay in recruiting users to sign up and engage in discussion and debate on DebateHub. Organic, large-scale online civic deliberation and debate requires a set of social behaviours that remain elusive, but our experience with DebateHub participation has taught us valuable lessons about what does not work. We have learned that the user acquisition funnel for online debate can be narrow very quickly—in this project, only 0.5% of impressions converted to DebateHub visits—and we have observed a shift in the ways in which strangers engage in online discussion with content and with each other.

Though more work needs to be done to research ways to spark and sustain these forms of deliberation before we can successfully tackle ambitious goals such as crowdsourcing a future EU constitution, we have a sense of future directions. We should pursue tighter alignment of tools for communities of online debate and the communities themselves; building on existing communities, rather than attempted to invent them whole cloth; and varying the subject matter of the discussion prompts to be more directly relevant to contemporary civic issues.

Module Description

For reference, we republish the description for this module set forth at the start of the project:

Focus of the testing task: Giving a global view to individual users via a human-assisted/machine-assisted mapping of ideas.

Testing Partner: Euclid Network / Purpose (Collective writing of the European Constitution)

Following the European Year of Citizens (2013) and the upcoming European Parliament elections (2014), Euclid Network wants to test human- and machine-assisted tools to empower citizens to draft a European constitution for citizens, by citizens.

The objective is to test tools that allow large numbers of participants to collaborate online, providing mechanisms for effective and democratic decision making. To achieve this, two sets of mechanisms will be tested: the first related to the mapping of ideas, the second to the collective decision making mechanisms.

1. Idea mapping: We will test tools that are able to get people to come up with ideas for a European Constitution and cluster them in categories. We will test how powerful the tools are to categorize ideas and therefore make them accessible to the entire community.

2. Collective debate and decision-making: once ideas have been created, we expect having diverse views on issues, due to the wide sample considered. Therefore, we want to test decision-making tools that allow for informed and democratic decision making through reflective, online debate, testing whether the Deliberation Analytics can support the moderators and participants in improving the quality of analysis.

The first test will run for seven months (Months 9-15) followed by the second test, which will run for four months (Months 20-23). The test will involve a community of 1000 contributors, covering the various demographics of Europe. During the test-period the tools employed will evolve according to user-feedback.

1. The First Test: Euclid and Civil Society

For the first test, Euclid Network sent an email invitation out to its community of approximately 1500 civil society professionals from across Europe. The question for this debate was "How could civil society organisations attract more people to work and volunteer with them?" We decided to pose this question for the initial test because Euclid's constituency is made up of civil society organizations. We thought that a question directly related to the sector would be a small, relatively concrete question to spark the first debate. The Euclid team determined that a question about the civil society sector would be more appropriate as an initial debate topic than a broader philosophical question about European identity and the European constitution.[1]

We amplified Euclid's initial email blast through channels like Purpose's social media (roughly 10,000 Twitter followers at the time of the test), internal staff list (approximately 50 staff members), and other word of mouth channels to spread the word.

We ultimately recruited 20 test users for the first test bed. We then randomly segmented the test users into two groups of 10 participants, who were directed to either DebateHub or a standard discussion forum based on WordPress, a popular open-source content management system. The idea behind this random segmentation was to test whether debate behaviour would be different between DebateHub, which allows users to semantically structure and organize their debate, and a standard online forum that simply threads debates in chronological or reverse chronological order.

There was not enough user engagement in either the WordPress or the DebateHub group to come up with any statistically significant insights about user behaviour.[2]

Due to the low user engagement rate from this initial test, we began devising a new approach for the second test. We postulated that users would need a bit more context and structure to help spark debate, beyond just an initial question for debate. This insight sparked what would become #StoryEurope, the campaign concept for the second round of testing for Task 4.2.

During the period of the second test, Euclid Network informed the Consortium that they would be withdrawing from the Catalyst project, citing changes in leadership and strategic direction within their organization. Subsequently, Purpose stepped up to take over the leadership of Task 4.2 as we moved forward with formulating and implementing the second test.

2. The Second Test: StoryEurope

Based on the learnings from the first testing period, we devised a change in approach for the second test that has been running from month 20 to 23. We came up with the idea for the #StoryEurope campaign with the goal of using curated content to drive debate. We had found from the first round of testing that just asking a question or giving a debate prompt alone was not enough to capture an audience and drive participation.

We decided that we needed to host the content separately from DebateHub because the user interface of DebateHub is optimized for debate and discussion, and not for displaying and hosting longer-form content.

---

[1] An archived version of the initial email can be found here: http://euclidnetwork.cmail1.com/t/ViewEmail/d/F6E653467960A55D

[2] The archived version of the DebateHub part of the debate can be found online here:
https://debatehub.net/group.php?groupid=1371081761300975416001395225816&isgroupadmin=false&start=0&max=20&orderby=date&sort=DESC&filternodetypes=Issue#-1

We chose Medium.com as a platform for hosting content to spark debates. Medium has been emerging as a powerful platform for self-publishing content, and already had an existing user base and audience, which is why we chose it over creating our own blog or website. Using Medium also allowed us to focus on content creation and curation, rather than diverting resources to build, optimize, and promote a new site. We would then redirect users from curated content on Medium to DebateHub, where they would have the opportunity to discuss and debate the material in more depth.

We put out an open call on Medium[3] on 6 April 2015, asking writers and researchers to submit articles to spark debate about issues of European identity and narrative. We thought that this would be a more inclusive and open-ended question than a debate narrowly about the European constitution. In addition to the open call, we engaged individual outreach with our professional and personal networks to recruit writers for the StoryEurope collection.

For practical and logistical reasons, we could only conduct the StoryEurope campaign in English. This language restriction may have limited the diversity of authors represented, although we were able to secure authors hailing from the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, the United States, Germany, and Switzerland. Regrettably, all of the published StoryEurope authors were male. We had three female authors commit to authoring stories, but, due to professional and personal commitments, each of these prospective authors had to recuse themselves from the content series.

The content-centred approach is like a kind of marketing funnel. We used email and social media to drive visitors to the StoryEurope content on Medium. Then we directed readers to DebateHub to discuss and debate the content that they have just read.

We promoted StoryEurope through a combination of the following channels. Here is a snapshot of some of the audience reach data from our primary dissemination channels:
- Catalyst Project email list (143 subscribers)
- A professional newsletter mailing list assembled by Lee-Sean Huang from Purpose (443 subscribers)
- We also promoted StoryEurope through conference appearances, and in-person word-of-mouth, although we do not have comprehensive data for these offline channels
- @Catalyst_FP7 Twitter account (577 followers)
- @Purpose Twitter account (13.8K followers)
- Contributing authors to the StoryEurope project also shared content through their own channels.

In order to provide a more seamless user experience, we looked into ways to better integrate Medium and DebateHub. The Open University developed an iframe-based widget that would allow us to embed a DebateHub debate into a webpage hosted on an outside server. In the testing phase, we discovered that Medium.com had disabled the use of third-party iframes, with the exception of a small number of select commercial services like YouTube video, Twitter, and Soundcloud. We contacted a staff member at Medium.com, who explained that the policy to disable iframes was a deliberate design choice meant to keep the reader experience as consistent and clutter-free as possible. Without the ability to embed DebateHub on Medium, we settled on the compromise of hosting StoryEurope content on Medium, while directing debate to DebateHub. This certainly was not the optimum situation from a user experience perspective, but Medium.com was unwilling/unable to assist us in making the DebateHub iframe work on Medium, and the Catalyst team did not have the design or development resources necessary to radically redesign the interface of DebateHub to optimize it for more narrative editorial content.

---

[3] https://medium.com/story-europe/introducing-storyeurope-ad4bf05aca38

D4.2- Argument Mapping & Deliberation Analytics ■ August 2015 ■ Purpose
The CATALYST project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n°6611188

Page **8** of **17**

Using Medium to host the StoryEurope content enabled us to collect detailed analytics about how much traffic the content generated. As of 29 August 2015, all of the StoryEurope content combined generated the following amount of engagement:

- 1,587 total views
- 524 total reads
- 16 recommends

On Medium, "views" are defined as the number of page views to a given post, whereas a "read" denotes a longer engagement with a post that is calculated algorithmically by Medium. A post earns a read when a user spends more than a certain amount of time on a given post, calculated as a function of the total word count of the article. A "read" is not a foolproof measure of engagement, as it does not take into account readers who read faster than average, or users who "clip" posts with services like Evernote or Pocket to read later. However, a read is a helpful rough indicator of the general amount of user interest that a given post generates. A "recommend" is equivalent to a "like." Only registered users of Medium can recommend a post, although Medium posts are available for all users, registered and unregistered to read.

We can visualise the stages of user engagement as a funnel. The initial stages of user engagement reach a large number of people, but fewer users trickle through to each subsequent stage. Figure 1 represents the funnel for user engagement with the StoryEurope series. Note the very rapid taper as we move from impressions down to DebateHub visits—the overall conversion rate from impression to DebateHub visit is roughly 0.6%. Indeed, Figure 1 likely underrepresents the narrowing of the funnel, as i) StoryEurope authors likely promoted their pieces over their personal channels, and ii) this accounting does not include in-person mentions of the project.

Figure 1. User acquisition through quantifiable channels
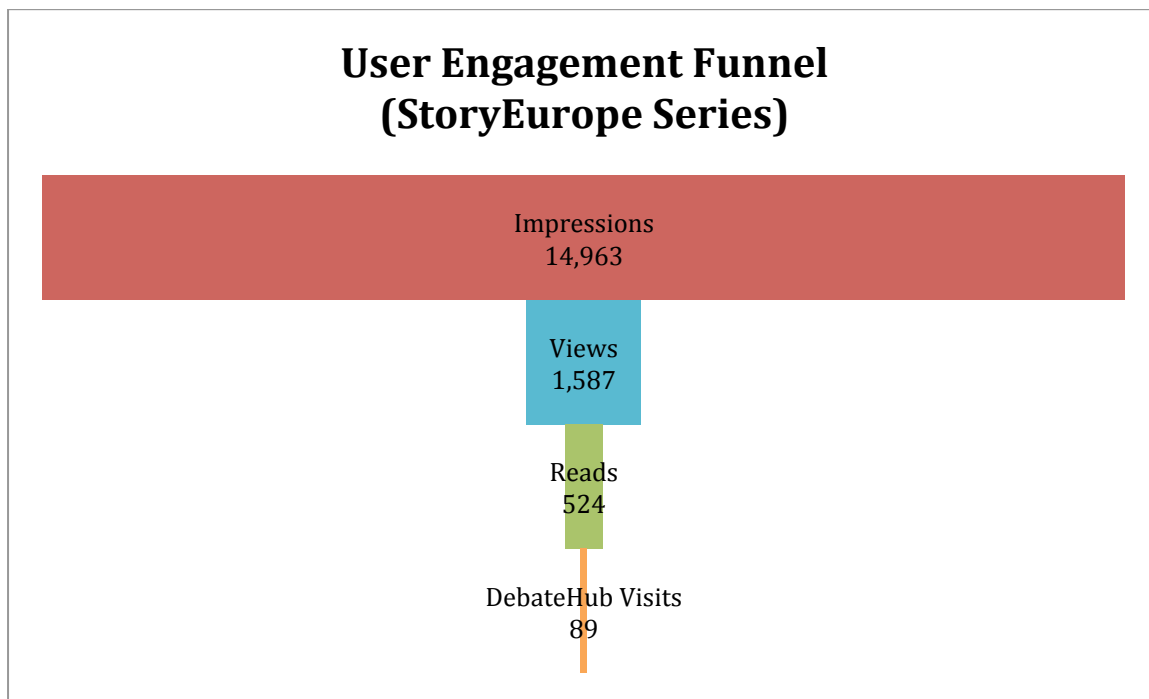
	Impressions	Views	Reads	DebateHub Visits
People Engaged	14,963	1,587	524	89

A closer look at the metrics for the StoryEurope series on Medium is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. StoryEurope Medium metrics, as of 29 August 2015

Story	Views	Reads	Read Ratio	Recommends
Introducing: StoryEurope	759	243	32%	5
The Euro Is Not Our Only Shared Currency	323	47	15%	1
It's Time for a European Dream!	147	71	48%	1
Euroskepticism--A Matter of Opportunity	34	22	65%	1
Plato's Basement: (Mis)perceptions about the Greek Crisis	87	28	32%	1
A European Union Needs European Media	74	31	42%	4
Greece: It's All Going with the Flow	104	64	62%	1
"We don't change policies depending on elections."	59	18	31%	2

Drilling further downstream in the user journey funnel, we received a total of 182 visits to the StoryEurope-related pages on DebateHub between 6 April and 30 August 2015. This count of visits is derived from DebateHub's built-in page view counter.

An examination of the DebateHub metrics provided by Google Analytics reveals that the StoryEurope content on Medium drove a total of 89 visits to DebateHub between 6 April and 30 August 2015. Here is a detailed view of these analytics:

Table 2. DebateHub traffic driven by StoryEurope series on Medium

Referral Path	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Sessions ↓	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	89 % of Total: 2.64% (3,365)	29.21% Avg for View: 86.36% (-66.17%)	26 % of Total: 0.89% (2,906)	49.44% Avg for View: 75.01% (-34.09%)	4.43 Avg for View: 2.10 (110.91%)	00:04:39 Avg for View: 00:01:23 (237.84%)
1. /story-europe/it-s-time-for-a-european-dream-27d589935042	45 (50.56%)	17.78%	8 (30.77%)	46.67%	4.87	00:05:59
2. /story-europe/the-euro-is-not-our-only-shared-currency-92c3bc3fdfa	15 (16.85%)	33.33%	5 (19.23%)	46.67%	5.20	00:03:49
3. /story-europe/introducing-storyeurope-ad4bf05aca38	11 (12.36%)	72.73%	8 (30.77%)	63.64%	2.36	00:00:45
4. /story-europe/greece-it-s-all-going-with-the-flow-2f0333b003a3	10 (11.24%)	50.00%	5 (19.23%)	70.00%	2.10	00:00:13
5. /story-europe/plato-s-basement-mis-perceptions-about-the-greek-crisis-46bdb61ed225	7 (7.87%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	14.29%	7.00	00:11:00
6. /story-europe/a-european-union-needs-european-media-787b968ac5a4	1 (1.12%)	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	100.00%	1.00	00:00:00

In this second round of testing, we demonstrated that we could generate an audience around an issue related to European narrative and identity and subsequently drive awareness and traffic to DebateHub. However, as in the first

test, we were unable to create the adequate conditions for organic deliberation and debate on the platform. In the next section, we will examine lessons learned and recommendations for further experimentation and research.

3.   Reflection: How do we drive deeper engagement?

Why was it so difficult to engage users on DebateHub? We have postulated a number of possible factors and offer up some suggestions for further study.

3.1   Factor 1: Size of the user acquisition funnel

In a standard marketing or user acquisition funnel, potential user or customers drop off with every stage. Out of every 10 readers of a StoryEurope article on Medium, only 1 or 2 of them ever clicked through to DebateHub after reading the article.

What if we increased the number of content readers by a factor of ten or of one hundred? Perhaps if we had more time and resources for marketing and could reach a larger audience base, then we could reach a critical mass of users large enough to induce an organic discussion and debate.

From our observations, commenting as a user behaviour is already rare in proportion to the total number of readers of a given piece of content. As a comparative example, Lee-Sean Huang from Purpose published another article on Medium unrelated to Catalyst or StoryEurope.[4] The article received just over 3000 views as of 30 August 2015. The article was recommended 34 times on Medium, and generated 32 comments in response, including the author's own replies to user comments. Out of those 32 comments in response, there were only 6 unique users engaging in comments. This is just one illustrative example to demonstrate that only a small number of content readers go on to comment on a given content.

If commenting on content is already relatively rare, then debate and deliberation, which require even more social and cognitive engagement, may be even rarer. Further studies could examine how large of a community is necessary in order to have enough motivated users to debate.

3.2   Factor 2: Difficulty of engaging strangers in online civic debate

A study conducted by Pew Research in 2014[5] demonstrated the online social phenomenon called a "spiral of silence." A spiral of silence is when people choose not to speak about their political views in public if they feel like friends, family, or colleagues do not share them. The study, which was focused on people in the United States, found that people were actually less likely to discuss controversial political topics in an online forum than they would be in person. In other words, people are more likely to discuss political issues in person with people they know, or at least could talk to face-to-face, than with faceless strangers online.

Further study could be conducted to see if a "spiral of silence" applies in European cultural contexts as well. If this were the case, future research could explore ways to connect and coordinate online and offline debates. The online portion could be a coordinating tool to help people meet in person offline to engage in political and civic debates. An

---

[4] https://medium.com/foossa-files/wewashing-cda86eeb39c7

[5] http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/08/26/social-media-and-the-spiral-of-silence/)

example of this kind of initiative is Table Tribes, based in Washington DC, which is building an app to help civically-minded strangers to meet in public to have in-person discussions about important social and political issues.[6]

3.3 Factor 3: Declines in online commenting itself as a mode of engagement

In late 2014, publications like the Guardian,[7] CNN,[8] and Mashable[9] reported on the trend of media sites abandoning their online comments sections. One major factor in this trend is the perceived decline in quality of anonymous online comments.

At the time of writing, plenty of media sites continue to operate comments sections. It is probably still too soon to tell if online commenting is really on the decline as a user behaviour. These articles point out that the "conversation" around a given article or other piece of content has often shifted to social media, rather than directly on the comments sections of a publication. Popular publications like the Huffington Post actually use Facebook to power their article comments and then disable commenting after an article has been published for a month.

At the same time, there has been a trend toward more annotation-like, in-context comments wherein readers can unobtrusively insert their comments directly on a paragraph of text, and they can engage with other users around that specific excerpt. Medium.com and Quartz[10] are examples of publication platforms that permit this type of in-context commenting, and excerpts from a Medium piece[11] on Medium itself are included as Figures 2 and 3. These platforms have provided a kind of melding of online publication and social media channel wherein readers can engage directly.

Figure 2. In-context commenting (a): Comments are unobtrusively marked

For content websites (e.g., the *New York Times*), you want people to read. And then come back, to read more.

A matchmaking service (e.g., OkCupid) attempts to match partners. The number of successful matches should give you a pretty good sense of the health of the business.

What about a site that combines both of these ideas? I sometimes characterize Medium as content matchmaking: we want people to write, and others to read, great posts. It's two-sided: one can't exist without the other. What is the core activity that connects the two sides? It's reading. Readers don't just view a page, or click an ad. They *read*.

At Medium, we optimize for the time that people spend reading.

D4.2- Argument Mapping & Deliberation Analytics ■ **August 2015** ■ **Purpose**
The CATALYST project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n°6611188

Page **12** of **17**

Figure 3. In-context commenting (b):

The marker can be expanded to reveal exchange between readers and authors

For content websites (e.g., the *New York Times*), you want people to read. And then come back, to read more.

A matchmaking service (e.g., OkCupid) attempts to match partners. The number of successful matches should give you a pretty good sense of the health of the business.

What about a site that combines both of these ideas? I sometimes characterize Medium as content matchmaking: we want people to write, and others to read, great posts. It's two-sided: one can't exist without the other. What is the core activity that connects the two sides? It's reading. Readers don't just view a page, or click an ad. They *read*.

At Medium, we optimize for the time that people spend reading.

NOTES

Pete Davies
There's a flaw in this metaphor: participants in a successful OkCupid transaction are unlikely to return to do business. We're fine with readers discovering lots more posts!

@ChicagoGupta
Good point—I track % successful matches for AlumTalks and find that in a professional networking scenario people do tend to come back for more.

Owen Blacker
I'd mainly agree, except that OKCupid has a disproportionately high number of polyamorous types (myself included). We're often willing to come back again, even as successful, satisfied customers :-)

Tommy J. Charles
How many dating site relationships are "successful," though? And for how long?

Reply to conversation

Leave a note for Pete Davies

Measuring reading time

TechCrunch's Gregory Ferenstein wrote:

Future research could explore what implications this perceived decline or shift in online comments and migration of online conversation to social media might have in relation to online deliberation and debating behaviours.

3.4   Factor 4: Interaction design of DebateHub

In the field of user interface design, it is never the "fault" of users if they are unable or unwilling to use a given tool. It is ultimately the role of designers to enhance and optimize the usability of a given tool so that users are more likely to use it.

Future work could be done to further develop the usability of DebateHub in order to convert more users.
It is important though to underline that during the second phase of testing with other Catalyst's community partners DebateHub was successfully used by large number of people (up to 150 of active debaters) and no usability or UX issues have been identified which prevented tool usage and participation to the debate.

UX improvements, while very often useful, are not controlling factors if the underlying user interfaces of a platform are sound for its intended uses. Consequently, UX enhancements to DebateHub may not be the most effective lever for deepening user engagement.

Conclusions

Our experience with community engagement in civic debate suggests several directions for additional research and experimentation in building on extant communities, user motivation, topic curation, and the tighter mapping of tools to the communities of anticipated users.

Research Direction 1: Building on existing debating communities

As we have noted earlier, online civic debate seems to be a relatively rare phenomenon. In both of our tests, we found it difficult, if not impossible, to convert an audience of readers into an engaged community of debaters. We were trying to both create a community and audience from scratch and seed a new and elusive behaviour of debate into a brand new and poorly-defined community. What if future tests focused on existant communities truly engaging in online debate?

In future studies, perhaps it would be more effective to test new debate platforms with existing communities explicitly focused on debate, such as Debating Europe,[12] a platform that regularly generates dozens to over a hundred comments per post. Debating Europe uses a standard chronological threading interface for user comments and debate, without the semantic markout and visualization tools offered by a platform like DebateHub.

We only learned about Debating Europe once preparations and implementation of StoryEurope, the second test was already in motion, and outreach and partnership was not possible due to this timing.

Research Direction 2: Better motivating users to engage in debate

Besides the intrinsic motivations of personal and civic interest in taking part in an online debate, how else might we design incentives for future user participation? For StoryEurope, we offered potential participants in the debate the opportunity to be acknowledged as co-authors in an e-book that would aggregate and synthesize all of the content from the campaign.

There were not necessarily any "real world" political stakes either. The debates we tried to host were ultimately just tests for DebateHub and in the service of research. What if there were political stakes in a future debate that would have an impact on European decision-making? How could these future debates feed into the broader political process?

Research Direction 3: Spurring debate with the selection of different topics

While the StoryEurope campaign was running, the Greek/Eurozone debt crisis was dominating the European news cycles. Now, at the conclusion of the StoryEurope test period, the issue of refugees and migrants entering Europe is now at the fore of public media awareness.

Given the immediate and visceral nature of these current events in the news, and given, abstract and philosophical debates about European identity may not have been the most suitable topic for debate generating robust online debate.

---

12 http://www.debatingeurope.eu/

D4.2- Argument Mapping & Deliberation Analytics ■ August 2015 ■ Purpose
The CATALYST project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n°6611188

Page **14** of **17**

For future testing, how do we best identify the kinds of topics that could generate the greatest quantity and/or quality of debate?

Research Direction 4: Securing tighter alignment of collective intelligence tools and communities

How can we find the most suitable communities and contexts for Catalyst tools like DebateHub? From our experiences in experimentation, we think that future testing and outreach should focus on mature communities that already have high levels of peer-to-peer interaction including debate and discussion.

Catalyst consortium partner Purpose is a consultancy and incubator that hosts and convenes a number of cause-based "movements." However, we were not able to successfully test DebateHub with existing communities within the Purpose network, which is why we chose to create the StoryEurope campaign and build a new community around it.

For example, AllOut.org, an international LGBT equality movement founded by Purpose in 2011, and which currently has just over 2,2 million "members" and 150.000 thousand followers on Facebook. Membership in AllOut is defined as being subscribed to one of AllOut's email lists, which are broadcast distribution lists, not listservs. While AllOut's members do comment and interact with the campaign on Facebook and Twitter, their "membership" consists primarily in signing online petitions, writing emails/letters to politicians and corporate leaders around campaign issues, and donating money to the campaign.

Each Purpose movement functions autonomously, meaning that each movement has its own dedicated campaign managers who make decisions about the choice of campaign subject matter and use of technology. Catalyst gave a demonstration of DebateHub and other Catalyst tools to all Purpose staff members, presenting it as a potential platform for the communities managed by Purpose's campaign managers. None of the campaign managers elected to deploy DebateHub within their communities. In conversation with Purpose staff, the lack of adoption was explained as a consequence of the fact that there were no immediate Europe-focused campaigns among Purpose's movements at the time of demonstration and testbed community recruitment.

An alternative explanation for the lack of uptake of the tool is that it assumes a model of activity that differs subtly from the campaign archetype. In the campaign context, the velocity of content tends to flow from the campaign organizer to campaign members. When working well, the tools of collective intelligence and online debate should spur a velocity of content that tends to flow between campaign members and up to policymakers. Large-scale deliberation does not appear to be an existing behaviour that is natively occurring in Purpose's movement communities, which focus on collective action rather than collective deliberation and decision-making.

For future exploration, we suggest building deliberation into the "DNA" of a community from the beginning, in order to grow the community and the collective intelligence tools together. Or, in a similar spirit, if opposite direction, it may make sense to focus on very mature communities that already have existing deliberation and debate behaviours.

References

Collected footnotes:
1   An archived version of the initial email can be found here:
    http://euclidnetwork.cmail1.com/t/ViewEmail/d/F6E653467960A55D
2   The archived version of the DebateHub part of the debate can be found online here:
    https://debatehub.net/group.php?groupid=13710817613009754160013952258168&isgroupadmin=false&start=0&max=20&orderby=date&sort=DESC&filternodetypes=Issue#-1
3   https://medium.com/story-europe/introducing-storyeurope-ad4bf05aca38
4   https://medium.com/foossa-files/wewashing-cda86eeb39c7
5   http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/08/26/social-media-and-the-spiral-of-silence/
6   http://www.tabletribes.com/
7   http://www.theguardian.com/science/brain-flapping/2014/sep/12/comment-sections-toxic-moderation
8   http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/21/tech/web/online-comment-sections/
9   http://mashable.com/2014/12/17/no-comment/
10 http://www.qz.com
11 https://medium.com/data-lab/mediums-metric-that-matters-total-time-reading-86c4970837d5
12 http://www.debatingeurope.eu/

List of Tables and Figures