Contributions from StJohn Deakins, citizenme

Hi, I'm the founder of citizenme. We're about to launch a service that gives all digital citizens visibility and control of their digital identity – and the ability to transact it as they choose. One aspect of the service provides citizens with a summary of Terms of Service for all apps and internet services used – in laymans terms. Changes to ToS are identified and provided as push notifications to our 'citizens'. Citizens then have the ability to take action based on the changes noted. The overall citizenme service terms are decided on by a separate foundation which incorporates liquid democracy for governance. I have a Politics and Economics degree and did my dissertation on electoral reform of the upper house in the UK. Some comments:

- **Could technology improve the access to and usability of both legislation and the law-making process for the citizen, representatives and professionals (such as lawyers), and if so do you have any suggestions?**
  Liquid (or delegative) democracy should be adopted for the second chamber (House of Lords) to improve participation

- **Should you need to be a lawyer to understand and use an Act?**
  There is an opportunity to provide a citizen service which summarises important prospective legislative changes – in simple terms – and allows citizens to register their opinion or complaint. The same service could allow a citizen to delegate decisions on specific areas (e.g. primary education) to a proxy (friend, family member, trusted 'expert', MP or indeed any other citizen) – and only receive notifications to comment (and vote?) on areas that they specifically care about (e.g. healthcare)

- **Should technology be used to integrate citizens' views better into the legislative process? At what stage of the legislative process would this work best? How could the Public Reading Stage be improved?**
  As above – citizens should be actively encouraged to comment or provide qualitative and quantitative opinion - either in person or through proxies - at key gate and review points in the legislative process. This does not compete with the existing system – but evolves it.

- **Are there any examples from other parliaments/democratic institutions in the UK or elsewhere of using technology to enhance legislation and the legislative process, which the Commission should consider?**
  The Green Party in Germany is incorporating some aspects of liquid democracy as part of their internal election process.

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Further contribution received:

I just read my response and am not sure how helpful it is to you as I realise it's not simply tinkering with existing process. However, please do take a look at ways that delegative or liquid democracy could help.

1) We know that there is a growing political disconnect especially among Gen Y's

2) We currently choose geographic 'representatives' to 'go up to Westminster' (very 17th century!)
3) By using liquid democracy in the second house people could delegate a vote to someone they respect/trust to represent their view on an issue (rather than based on party lines).
4) Areas of interest (and the corresponding votes) could be aligned with organisation of issues (i.e. along the same categorisation as government ministries – so, say, 6 individual 'liquid' votes for: foreign Affairs, home affairs, education, defence, NHS, money/business etc.)
5) Allowing people to delegate their votes based on interests (via individuals in the second chamber), would reconnect citizens with the issues.

Take a look at this video http://youtu.be/fg0_Vhldz-8

I'm happy to discuss more – but understand if this lies outside your project remit

Cheers

StJ