

## Overview of e-democracy space

The common threads of online e-democracy sites appear to be:

1. Online news reporting
2. Professional commentary
3. User commentary (frequently in blog format)
4. Use of targeted online petitions and letter-writing tools

The e-democracy space is changing, although most people are not aware of these sites. People who do not pay much attention to news or politics still get most of their information from TV and the tabloid press.

### Major e-democracy sites in Australia

Site	Main political spectrum	Core content statement
<b>Media organisations</b> These organisations are partly news, partly blogs, and other content. While some are print-based, while others are new online operations, they are effectively all media organisations. They combine online news reporting and professional commentary. They all have areas for user comments – this is more significant in the newer locations.		
<a href="#">Crikey</a>	Centre?	“Independent news, blogs and commentary on politics, media, business, the environment and life”  The best-known online political commentary site.
Comments pages – <a href="#">the Australian</a>	Right wing	A lot of rubbishy rants on some of these pages
Comments pages – Fairfax	Right wing – centre	SMH & The Age
ABC – <a href="#">the Drum</a>	Centre	Range of comment by journos, a bit of user comment, plus some humour.
<a href="#">Indymedia</a>	Left	
<a href="#">New Matilda</a>	Centre	“Launched in August 2004, <i>newmatilda.com</i> is an Australian website of news, analysis and satire. Believing that robust media is fundamental to a healthy democracy, <i>newmatilda.com</i> is fiercely independent — it has no affiliation with any political party, lobby group or other media organisation.”
<a href="#">The Tally Room</a>	Centre?	“Commentary on elections and politics in Australia and around the world”
<b>Lobbying groups</b>		
<a href="#">Getup</a>	Left	“GetUp is an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation giving everyday Australians opportunities to get involved and hold politicians accountable on important issues”
Oxfam and Wilderness Society	Left	Conduct major petition and letter-writing campaigns online

Site	Main political spectrum	Core content statement
<b>Blog and commentary</b>		
<a href="#">World e-Democracy Forum</a>		
<a href="#">Ambit Gambit</a>		
<a href="#">Quiggin</a>		“Commentary on Australian & world events from a social-democratic perspective”
<a href="#">Blogotariat</a>		
<a href="#">Pollytics</a>		
<a href="#">Intelligence Squared Australia (IQ2)</a>		“IQ <sup>2</sup> occupies a unique position in Sydney’s social and intellectual landscape. It is the only institution in town - aside from Parliament - to provide a forum for debate on the crucial issues of the day. But unlike Parliament, its debates are consistently exciting, witty, provocative - and comfortable, held as they are at the <a href="#">City Recital Hall Angel Place</a> in Sydney and the <a href="#">Melbourne Town Hall</a> in Melbourne.”
<a href="#">OzPolitic</a>	range	
<a href="#">OpenForum</a>		
<a href="#">eGov AU</a>		
<b>Policy</b> (More policy than democracy)		
<a href="#">Australian Policy Online</a>		
<a href="#">Policy Pages</a>		
<b>Uncategorised</b>		
<a href="#">New democracy</a>		Fred Chaney & others <waiting on newsletter for details>
<a href="#">What would you like to change?</a>	Centre	General with a range. Good feel but not well-organised; half the comments are from “anonymous”, and don’t connect with each other. And part of an advertising campaign by PWC!
More...		

The above does not include a wide range of thinktanks which (although not e-democracy sites, are worth connecting with as potential supporters.

### Some E-democracy sites overseas

Site	Based in	Focus
<a href="#">Factcheck.org</a>	USA	Has paid staff to independently check claims made by politicians.
<a href="#">Politifact.com</a>	USA	

<a href="#">Center for Media and Democracy &amp; Sourcewatch</a>	USA	Tracks and responds to anti-democratic activities and practices. It also cofounded Sourcewatch, a directory of front organisations, thinktanks, etc
<a href="#">Avaaz</a>	various	
<a href="#">Progressive Punch</a>		Record of voting record of US federal politicians
<a href="#">Tell My Politician</a>	USA	
<a href="#">Project Vote Smart</a>	USA	
<a href="#">The Public Whip</a>	UK	These four sites appear to be similar and work together. They offer an interesting idea of other possible directions for e-democracy in Australia.
<a href="#">TheyWorkForYou.com</a>	UK	
<a href="#">WriteToThem</a>	UK	
<a href="#">HearFromYourMP</a>	UK	
<a href="#">Undemocracy.com</a>	UK	
<a href="#">MediaMatters</a>	USA	
<a href="#">Fair</a>	USA	
<a href="#">RethinkAfghanistan</a>	USA	
<a href="#">Colorofchange.org</a>	USA	
<b>Non-political sites</b>		
<a href="#">Keystone Feedback App</a>	USA	Organisational feedback application for accountability and transparency