

Advocator - Web Application
(Technical Report)

How Taiwan used digital tools to enhance democracy
(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis Portfolio
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Bachelor of Science in Major

by

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Preface

To promote an inclusive society, communication is key. When civil society participates in policymaking, citizens are better served. With effective communication, policymakers can better address public needs and develop constructive relationships with citizens.

A digital platform serves as one the best ways for people to communicate and gather information. Thus, the platform under research allows users to debate between diverse opinion groups on a specified issue to foster consensus and facilitate constructive conversation. Few public agencies effectively use digital platforms to address disinformation, political division, or slow government responsiveness to name a few. A platform is proposed with which users may access information and post and vote on public issues. A prototype was developed and user tested. Most of the small test group reviewed the prototype favorably.

Since 2016 Taiwan has used digital tools to enhance democracy. Digital tools can democratize public policy by increasing transparency, thwarting disinformation, and extending public participation. In Taiwan, platforms such as vTaiwan, I-Voting, g0v, and Join have shifted authority from digital minister Audrey Tang and interest groups to citizens. Through these platforms, Taiwan's government increased its transparency, improved responsiveness, and strengthened its capacity to regulate corporations. Though skeptics such as Yamamoto and Kushin have contended that digital platforms tend to fragment society, Taiwan's experience proves that they can improve democracy.

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