Project: Civil Pursuit

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Motivation: The people of our country are divided and polarized on many important issues and our political decision making is gridlocked and not responding fast enough or well enough to these issues.

Question: Can we create an online deliberation platform that will unite America, in mass, to find the right direction for our country, one that reverses the division and polarization, brings more efficient and productive political decision making, and makes America awesome.

Next Milestone: Engage 500 participants, 10 from each state, online, in text form, to deliberate within a process designed to find large scale accord, on the question:

> *"*To get our country moving in the right direction, what should *We the People* fix first*".*

Participant Acquisition

Getting people to participate for the length of time necessary for a deliberation like this (20 to 60 minutes) has many challenges. To get around many of these challenges, in order to expedite this milestone of the project, Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) will be used.

AMT is a web market place that connects requesters (such as this) with workers, people who will do online tasks like answer survey questions. When using AMT we are able to specify their state of residence as a criteria, so we will acquire 10 participants from each of the 50 states. Generally, workers expect minimum wage for the time they spend.

Technology: In order to have discussions quickly, across great distances, with little money, the deliberation is carried out online.

In order to make it as easy for busy people to participate, by allowing them to do so when it is convenient for them, the technology is text based and asynchronous (not at the same time)- like email or Facebook. [Recorded video statements are desired feature for the future that will also meet this requirement].

Because large online discussions have been mostly 'unproductive', and because at large scale human moderation becomes a resource limitation, the discussion process is built into a web application utilizing structures based on the practices of human moderated face to face deliberative discussion. [see Structure below]

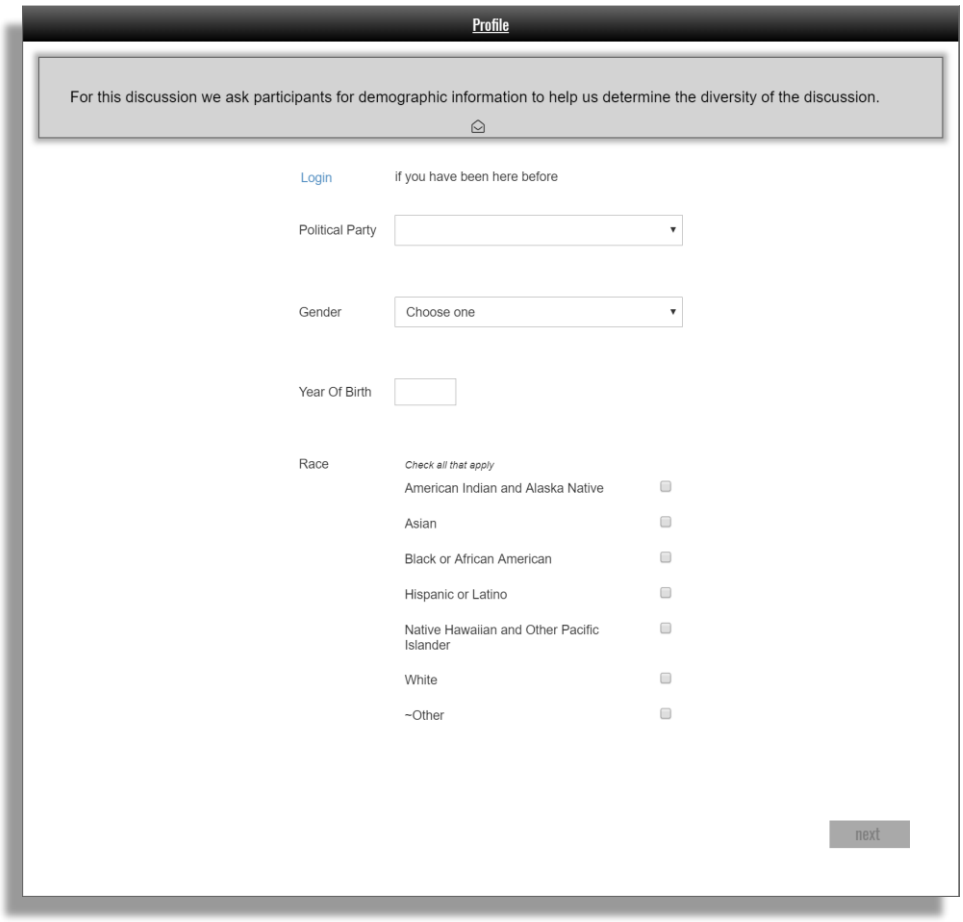
To make it possible for large populations to engage in discussions that converge to a common agreement, each individual will interact with comments from only a small number of others (typically 10) at a time, taken at random, and the questions are designed so that the answers from one round of interaction can be the input to the next. This makes it possible for a population (P) to convergence to a single answer in $1+\log_{10}(P)$ rounds of interaction – meaning 4 in this milestone. [$\log_{10}(P)$ basically means count the number of digits in the number P. example $\log_{10}(500)$ is about 3]

In this way, with a good structure it could be possible for 300,000,000 Americans to find accord in about 10 rounds.

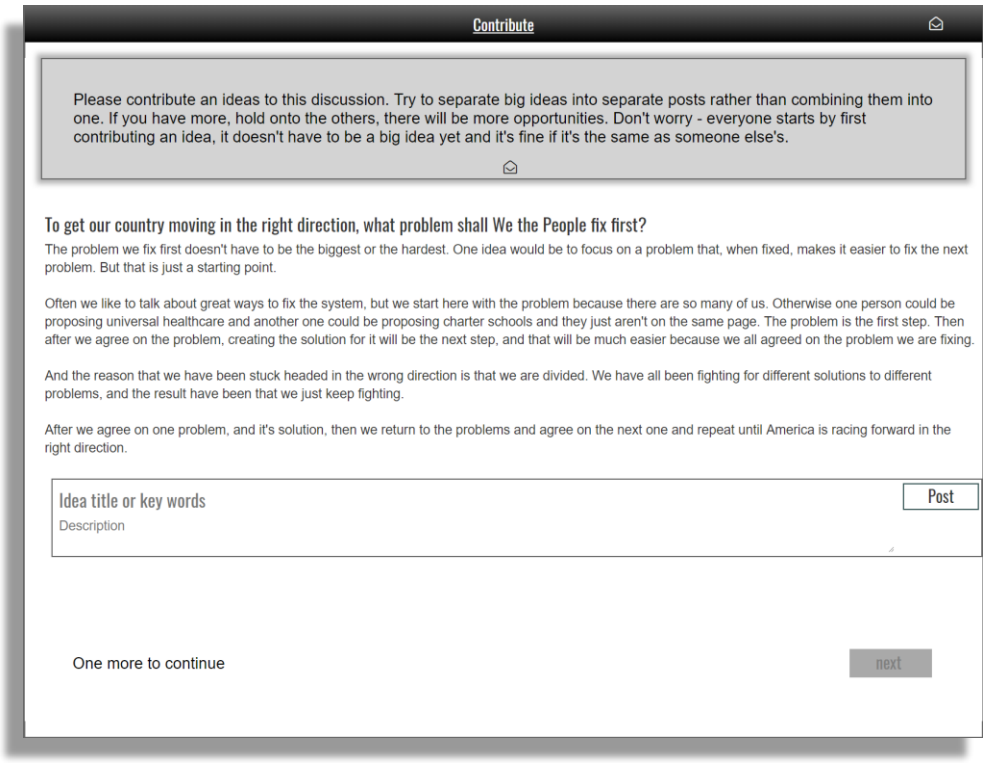
Structure:

The remainder of this document illustrates the steps involved in the structure of the deliberation proposed for this milestone. It is important to point out that the steps here represent software components that can be connected in different ways for different discussions. It is built this way because an important lesson of face to face deliberative discussion is that different topics require different structures. Also, as we learn from the results of each milestone, components can be updated, new components can be created and added, and our goal is to find the structures that achieve the goal.

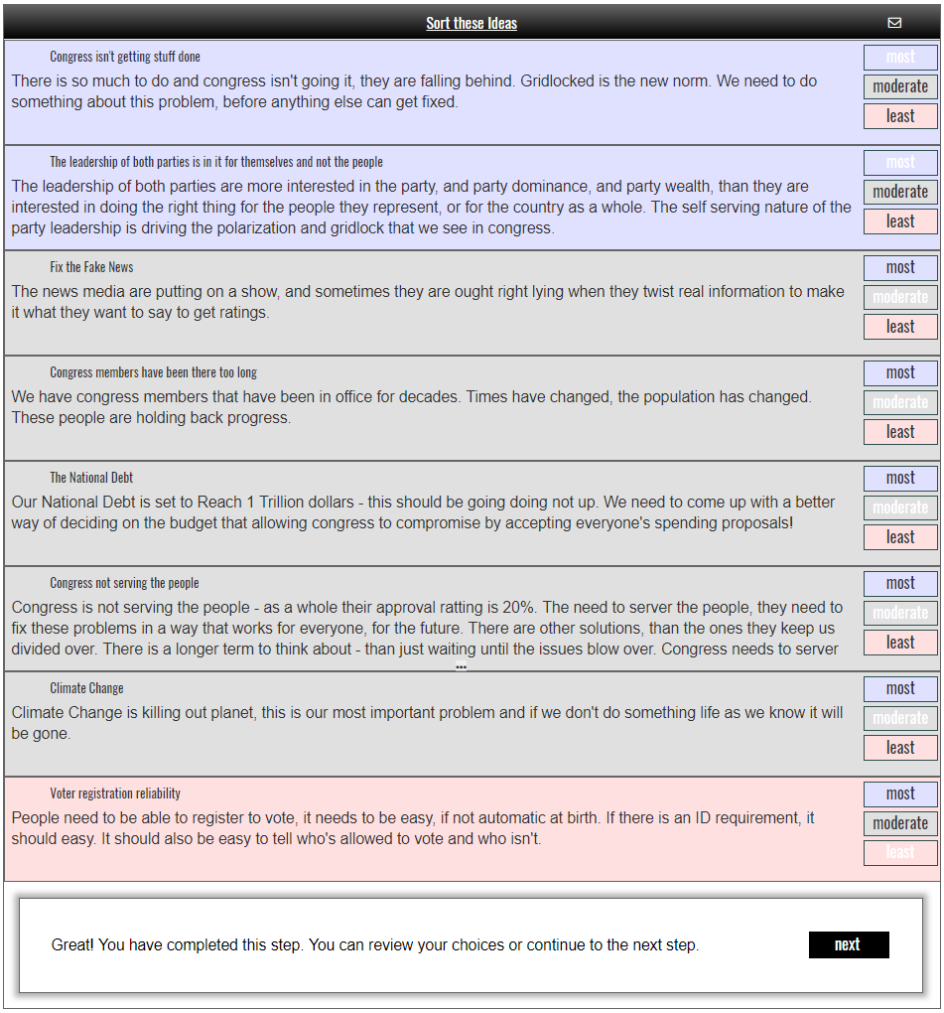
1) Collect demographic information about state of residence, age, political party, gender, and race will be collected.



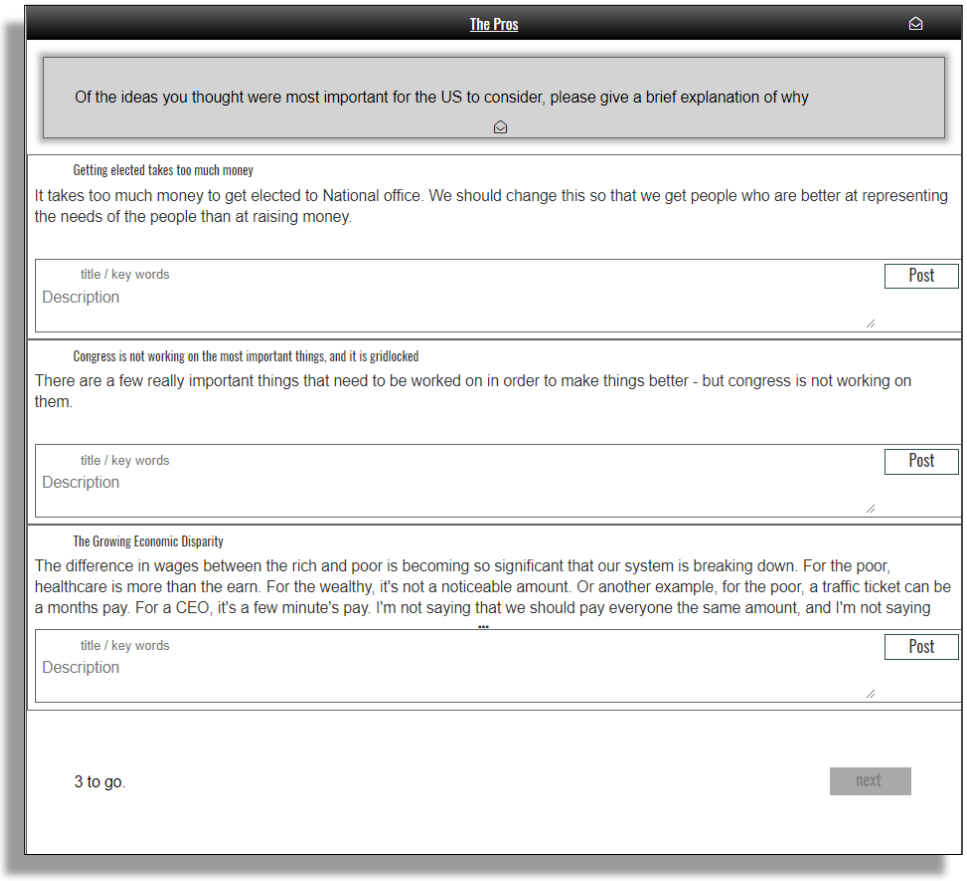
2) Participants will be asked to answer the question. (Without seeing other's answer to the question).



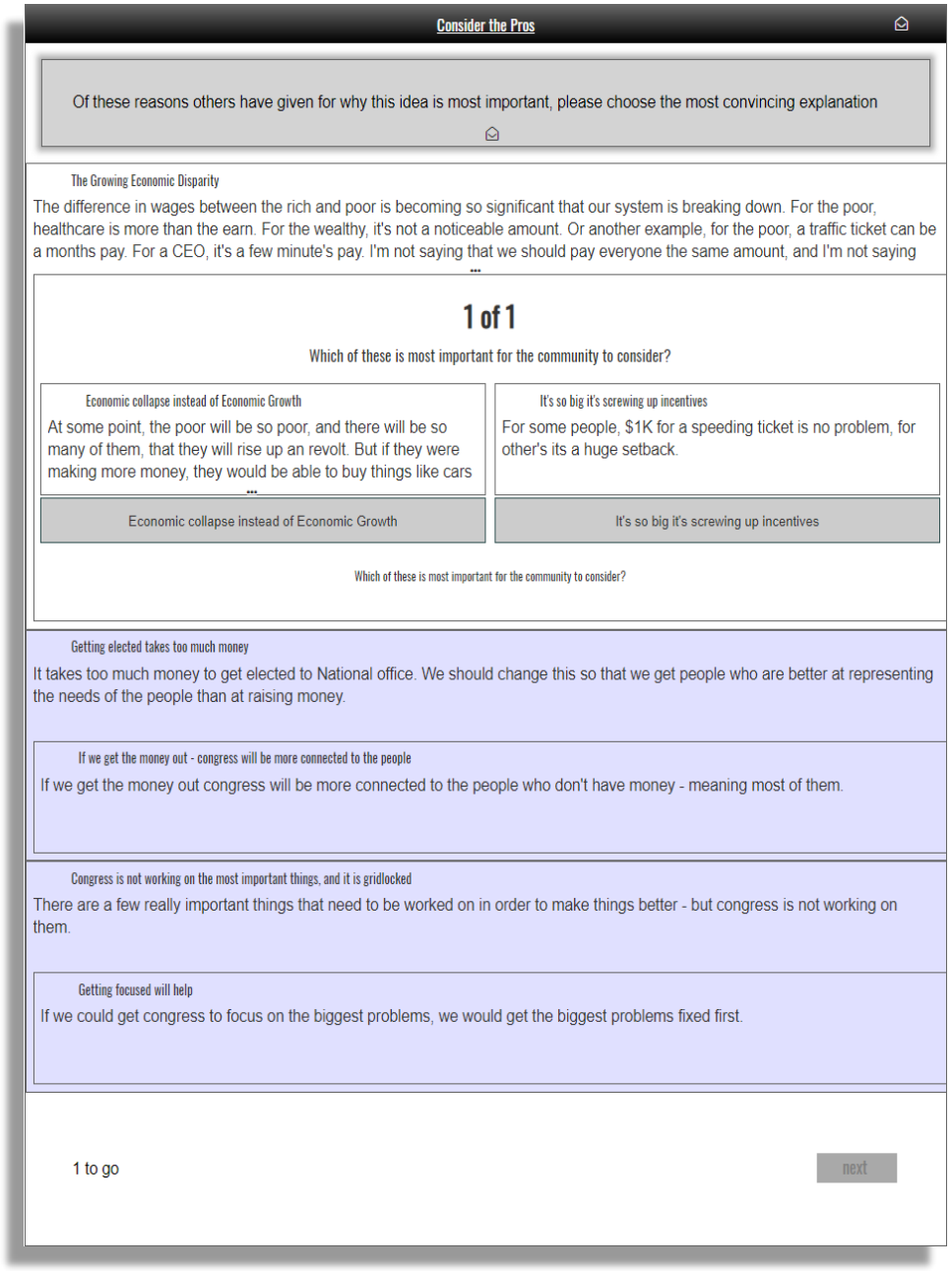
3) Participants will be shown answers from 9 other participants taken at random, plus their own (10 total). They will be asked to go through the list and mark 2 as most important to consider, 1 as least important, and 7 as moderate.



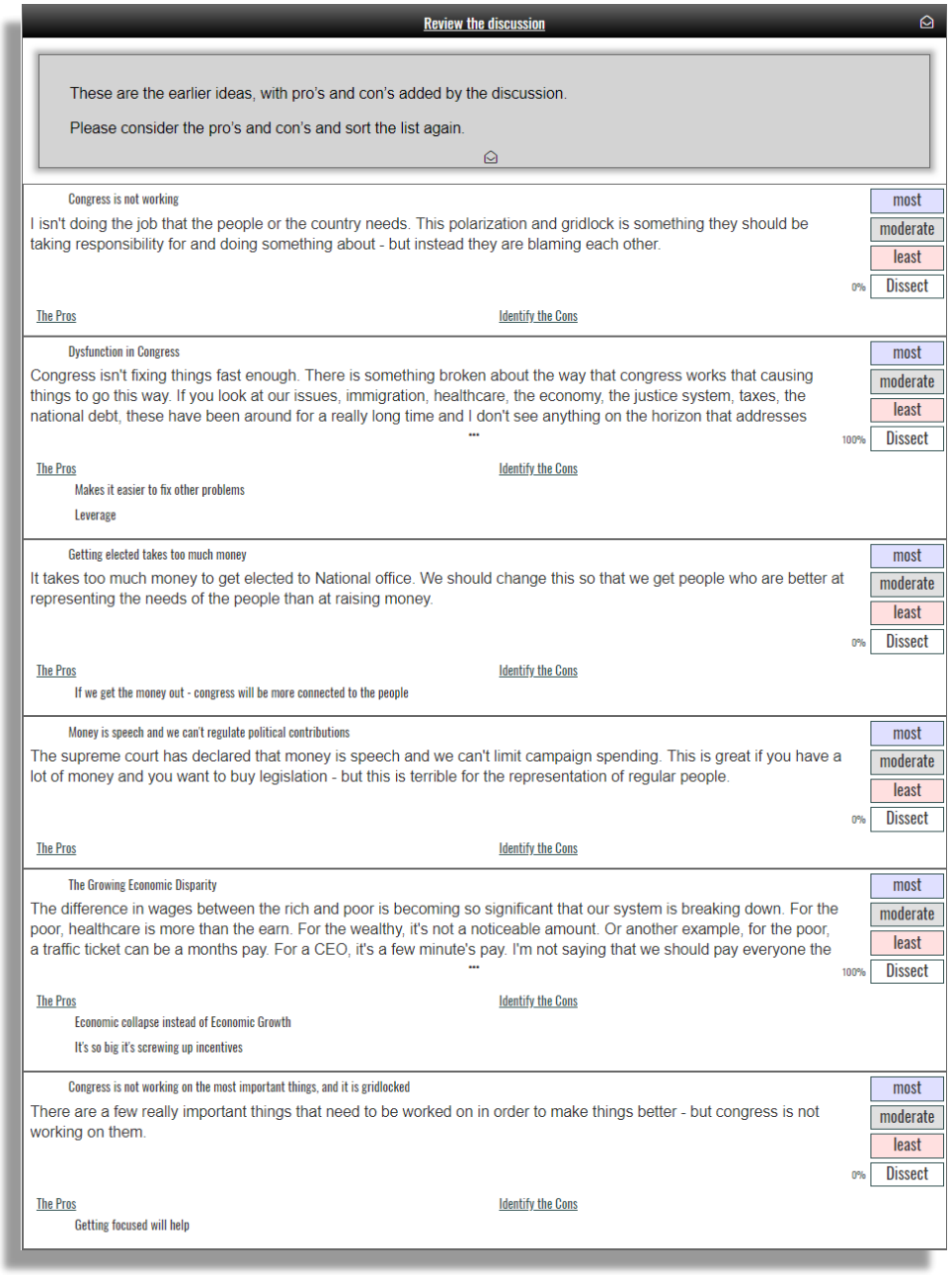
4) For each of the most and least important issues, participants will be asked to give a short explanation of why.



5) For each of the most and least important issues, participants will be shown up to 5 pairs of other participant's explanation why, and asked to pick the best. The last pair will include their own explanation.



6) Participants will be shown the list again, in a random order, with the explanations for most and least important in two column format. Participants will be asked to choose 2 most, and 1 least important to consider.



After all 500 participants have completed these steps, the top 10% of answers (50) will be used for the next round, repeating steps 3-6. After the second round, the top 5 answers will be used for everyone. Finally, everyone will be shown the 1 answer with the most support, and asked if they support, accept, or oppose this answer.

After the process is complete, users will be asked some questions about how they feel about the process.

Summary

During the deliberation, and after, it is possible to review a prioritized list of all the answers, sorted by the number of “Most” important rankings, and including the participant prioritized explanations. Ideally, after the deliberation is complete, there will be one answer with a ranking of 333 or more.