Civic Spark

Sunday is an unconference – what does that mean??

In a sentence – it's a conference where the participants make the conference!
Attendees (like you!) submit sessions they'd like to host throughout Day 1 – these sessions form the agenda on Day 2. It's a creative and empowering way to share, problem solve, and make long lasting connections with like-minded folks!

Whether you'd like to have an open discussion, show something you've been working on, deep dive on a problem, share some learnings with the folks in attendance, or bring people together in any other way – the unconference is your canvas, your fellow participants are your materials, and we're excited to see what you paint!

Guiding Principles

Here are a few principles to keep in mind as both a session host and participant, alongside the Civic Tech Toronto Code of Conduct.

- **Grounded –** build on lived experience and real needs.
- **Collaborative –** make sessions participatory whenever possible.
- **Inclusive** – share what you know, ask when you don't, and don't judge in either case.
- **Focused** – you don't need a defined ending point, but a shared starting point helps.
- **Law of Two Feet** – if you're not into a session, leave and no one will take it personally.

What Is A Session?

A session is whatever you want it to be! Whatever you think could connect, inspire, organize, educate, or enrich attendees towards a better civic future is on the table.

- **Name** – name your session such that attendees know the topic and gathering style.
- **Length –** 45 mins! If you need much more than that, ask – we'll figure it out together.
- **Materials** – all 8 rooms have whiteboards/chart paper/sticky notes and writing materials, seating for 30-80 attendees, a microphone, and AV access upon request.
- **Co-Hosting** – you don't have to do this alone! Feel free to host as a group, bringing who and what you need to have an awesome session.
- **Facilitation Support** – if you would like help facilitating/running your session, we will connect you to an experienced facilitator to back you up.
- **Attendees** – expect min. 20 attendees, but feel free to cap attendance past that!

As a rule of thumb, sessions follow this rough structure:

1. **Introduce** – yourself, the session's core challenge, and outcomes you're hoping for.
2. **Diverge/Discuss** – discuss the challenge, engaging the room's collective intelligence.
3. **Converge/Share** – consolidate learnings/work and share with the group.
4. **Conclude** – thank attendees, and set out any next/post-conference steps!

Here are some possible session types to choose from to get started:

Share:
1. **Show & Tell**: demo/discuss projects you're involved in and lessons learned
2. **Skill Share**: share practical tools/methods, and let participants give them a try
3. **Fireside Chat/Q&A**: share your story conversationally, then open up for discussion
4. **Speed Geeking**: speed dating, but people sharing their work/thoughts on a topic

Co-Create:
1. **Design Sprint**: you scope a "how might we" problem, participants prototype potential solutions individually or in small groups, then share their ideas with the room
2. **Deep Dive**: explore a complex problem space, map it out and share useful approaches
3. **Groupmind**: share and collaborate on a real challenge you're facing in your work
4. **Future Visioning**: pick a topic, develop multiple future scenarios, and share/discuss

Connect/Discuss:
1. **Birds of a Feather**: define a topic/interest, and host a room for interested folks to talk
2. **Fishbowl**: a 5 person conversation with an audience, where participants and audience swap out over time
3. **World Café**: participants rotate every ~10-15 minutes between conversation areas that have an assigned scribe, building on prior conversations and sharing at the end

I want to run a session, but I might need some help!

1. **At The Conference** – there will be a group training session the morning of the unconference to go over this document and answer any questions.
2. **During Your Session** – a few experienced facilitators will be available on request to join you for your session to help everything go smoothly.