HOW TO MAKE A NET PARTY
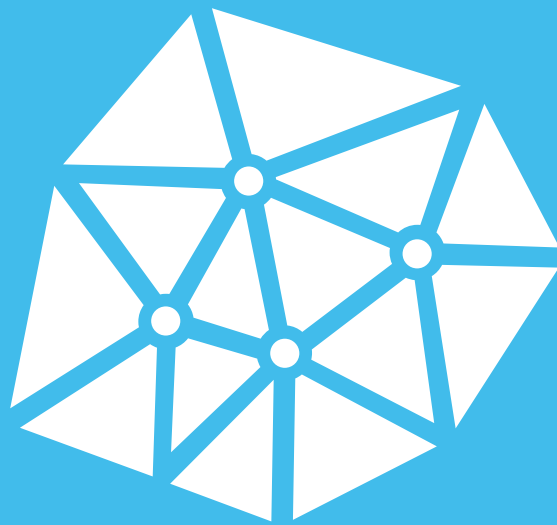
PARTIDO
DE LA RED

A CASE STUDY

The present descriptive paper is exclusively based on an empirical field work realized in Buenos Aires, started in June 2014. Information and datas were gathered through observations and interviews with the PARTIDO DE LA RED members and aficionados. We would like to thank all of them for their warm welcome.

Inspired by the Wiki models, we also imagined for this work to be completed with descriptions of similar political experiences using the internet around the world.

Theoretical analysis will follow.

September 2014, Virgile Deville and Clémence Hallé.

1.   IDEA(S) put in practice

A governmental census for the *Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires* (CABA) registered 2, 891, 082 inhabitants in 2010[1]. If each resident of CABA was asked to express his opinion for ten minutes during an organized meeting to participate in the political life of the City, the meeting would have to last night and day for a little bit less than 55 years in a room big enough to hold 2, 891, 082 chairs.

In **the history of democracy**, a **practical solution** was found to solve this obvious **problem of time and space** that interferes with **direct participation** in **political arenas**: **the election of representatives**, or intermediates of expression. This solution is also applied in the Federal Constitutional Republic and Representative Democracy of Argentina. As its Capital Federal District, CABA has its own government. While the executive power is represented by the chief government, commonly the mayor, the legislative power is comprised out of the sixty deputies composing the *Legislatura*. The chief government is elected every four years and half of the deputies every two years; both by CABA's citizens, usually named the *Porteños* to avoid the juridical confusion with the people living in the Province of Buenos Aires.

In 2012, a group of young *Porteños* started to derive another solution for the time and space problem in **modern democracies**. They are politologists, sociologists, urbanists, communicators, ex deputies, NGO workers, think tank members, product designers, programers, game developers, start-up employees, and so on. However, they identify themselves as **peer citizens**. They had **an idea**, and decided **to put it in practice** instead of deepening the growing void generated by the **loss of information** in political arenas. In October 2014, one of their spokeswoman was invited to the "TEDGlobal 2014: Ideas worth spreading" conferences. The talk she gave is a first overview of this idea and a good standpoint for the descriptive manual that follows.

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[1]   Online, http://www.censo2010.indec.gov.ar/preliminares/cuadro_caba.asp

The **PARTIDO DE LA RED's TED** Global 2014 Talk

Click here to watch the video

"I have the feeling that we can all agree that we're moving towards **a new model of the state and society**. But, we're absolutely clueless as to what this is or what it should be. It seems like we need to have a conversation about democracy in our day and age. Let's think about it this way: We are 21st-century citizens, doing our very, very best to interact with 19th century-designed institutions that are based on an information technology of the 15th century. Let's have a look at some of the characteristics of this system. First of all, it's designed for **an information technology** that's over 500 years old. And the best possible system that could be designed for it is one where the few make daily decisions in the name of the many. And the many get to vote once every couple of years. In the second place, **the costs of participating** in this system are incredibly high. You either have to have a fair bit of money and influence, or you have to devote your entire life to politics. You have to become a party member and slowly start working up the ranks until maybe, one day, you'll get to sit at a table where a decision is being made. And last but not least, **the language of the system** — it's incredibly cryptic. It's done for lawyers, by lawyers, and no one else can understand. So, it's a system where we can choose our **authorities**, but we are completely left out on how those authorities reach their decisions. So, in a day where a new information technology allows us to participate globally in any conversation, our barriers of information are completely lowered and we can, more than ever before, express our desires and our concerns.

Our political system remains the same for the past 200 years and expects us to be contented with being simply passive recipients of **a monologue**.

So, it's really not surprising that this kind of system is only able to produce two kinds of results: **silence or noise**. Silence, in terms of citizens not engaging, simply not wanting to participate. There's this commonplace [idea] that I truly, truly dislike, and it's this idea that **we citizens are naturally apathetic**. That we shun commitment. But, can you really blame us for not jumping at the opportunity of going to the middle of the city in the middle of a working day to attend, physically, a public hearing that has no impact whatsoever? Conflict is bound to happen between a system that no longer represents, nor has any dialogue capacity, and citizens that are increasingly used to representing themselves. And, then we find noise: Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico Italy, France, Spain, the United States, they're all democracies. Their citizens have access to **the ballot boxes**. But they still feel the need, they need to take to the streets in order to be heard. To me, it seems like the 18th-century slogan that was the basis for the formation of our modern democracies, "No taxation without representation," can now be updated to "**No representation without a conversation**." We want our seat at the table.

And rightly so. But in order to be part of this conversation, we need to know what we want to do next, because political action is being able to **move from agitation to construction**. My generation has been incredibly good at using new networks and technologies to organize protests, protests that were able to successfully impose agendas, roll back extremely pernicious legislation, and even overthrow authoritarian governments. And we should be immensely proud of this. But, we also must admit that we haven't been good at using those same networks and technologies to successfully articulate an alternative to what we're seeing and find the consensus and build the alliances that are needed to make it happen. And so the risk that we face is that we can create these huge power vacuums that will very quickly get filled up by de facto powers, like the military or highly motivated and already organized groups that generally lie on the extremes. But our democracy is neither just **a matter of voting** once every couple of years. But it's not either the ability to bring millions onto the streets. So the question I'd like to raise here, and I do believe it's the most important question we need to answer, is this one: **If Internet is the new printing press, then what is democracy for the Internet era? What institutions do we want to build for the 21st-century society?** I don't have the answer, just in case. I don't think anyone does. But I truly believe we can't afford to ignore this question anymore.

So, I'd like to share **our experience** and what we've learned so far and hopefully contribute two cents to this conversation. Two years ago, with a group of friends from Argentina, we started thinking, **"how can we get our representatives, our elected representatives, to represent us?"** Marshall McLuhan once said that

politics is solving today's problems with yesterday's tools. So the question that motivated us was, **can we try and solve some of today's problems with the tools that we use every single day of our lives?** Our first approach was to design and develop **a piece of software** called DEMOCRACY OS. DEMOCRACY OS is **an open-source web application** that is designed to become **a bridge between citizens and their elected representatives** to make it easier for us to participate from our everyday lives. So first of all, you can get informed so every new project that gets introduced in Congress gets immediately translated and explained in plain language on this platform. But we all know that social change is not going to come from just knowing more information, but from doing something with it. So better access to information should lead to a conversation about what we're going to do next, and DEMOCRACY OS allows for that. Because we believe that democracy is not just a matter of **stacking up preferences**, one on top of each other, but that our healthy and robust **public debate** should be, once again, one of its **fundamental values**. So DEMOCRACY OS is about persuading and being persuaded. It's about reaching **a consensus** as much as finding a proper way of **channeling our disagreement.** And finally, you can vote how you would like your elected representative to vote. And if you do not feel comfortable voting on a certain issue, you can always **delegate your vote** to someone else, allowing for **a dynamic and emerging social leadership**.

It suddenly became very easy for us to simply compare these results with how our representatives were voting in Congress. But, it also became very evident that technology was not going to do the trick. What we needed to do to was to find actors that were able to grab this **distributed knowledge in society** and use it to make better and more fair decisions. So we reached out to **traditional political parties** and we offered them DEMOCRACY OS. We said, "Look, here you have a platform that you can use to build a **two-way conversation** with your constituencies." And yes, we failed. We failed big time. We were sent to play outside like little kids. Amongst other things, we were called naive. And I must be honest: I think, in hindsight, we were. **Because the challenges that we face, they're not technological, they're cultural**. Political parties were never willing to change the way they make their decisions.

So it suddenly became a bit obvious that if we wanted to move forward with this idea, we needed to do it ourselves. And so we took quite a leap of faith, and in August last year, we founded our own political party, the PARTIDO DE LA RED, or the Net Party, in the city of Buenos Aires. And taking an even bigger leap of faith, we ran for elections in October last year with this idea: if we want a seat in Congress, our candidate, our representatives were always going to vote according to what citizens decided on DEMOCRACY OS. Every single project that got introduced in Congress, we were going vote according to what citizens decided on an online platform. It was our way of **hacking the political system.** We

understood that if we wanted to become part of the conversation, to have a seat at the table, we needed to become **valid stakeholders**, and the only way of doing it is to play by **the system rules**. But we were hacking it in the sense that we were radically changing the way a political party makes its decisions. For the first time, we were making our decisions together with those who we were affecting directly by those decisions. It was a very, very bold move for a two-month-old party in the city of Buenos Aires. But it got attention. We got 22,000 votes, that's 1.2 percent of the votes, and we came in second for the local options.

So, even if that wasn't enough to win a seat in Congress, it was enough for us to become part of the conversation, to the extent that next month, Congress, as an institution, is launching for the first time in Argentina's history, a DEMOCRACY OS to discuss, with the citizens, three pieces of legislation: two on urban transportation and one on the use of public space. Of course, our elected representatives are not saying, "Yes, we're going to vote according to what citizens decide," but they're willing to try. They're willing **to open up a new space** for **citizen engagement** and hopefully they'll be willing to listen as well. **Our political system can be transformed, and not by subverting it, by destroying it, but by rewiring it with the tools that Internet affords us now**. But a real challenge is to find, to design to create, to empower those **connectors** that are able to innovate, **to transform noise and silence into signal** and finally bring our democracies to the 21st century. I'm not saying it's easy. But in our experience, we actually stand a chance of making it work. And in my heart, it's most definitely worth trying. Thank you."

Pia Mancini, Co-Founder of the PARTIDO DE LA RED, October 2014.

2.   **FOUNDATION(S)** of a Software

On the technological point on view, the idea came to life through the Foundation DEMOCRACIA EN RED (DER), whose ambition is to develop a software to enhance **the participation of a networked citizenry**. DER is responsible for the development of the software called DEMOCRACY OS (DOS), the lead project and **the Operating System (OS) of their idea**. The software is shaped like a platform where users can inform themselves, argue and vote. DER has not a political agenda. However, its existence is possible only if some conditions are gathered. Therefore the foundation lobbies towards the reunion of the conditions that make it possible: **the right to access the Internet, Net neutrality, digital alphabetization and freedom of expression**. In other words, the Foundation's political ideology is what guarantees and justifies its own goal, namely the promotion of a broader participation to public life using digital tools. DER also supports all the projects that share the same objective. International philanthropists and private donators, especially coming from the technological world, finance the Foundation.

The Foundation (Online, http://democraciaenred.org/*)*

DOS is an Open Source (OS) software. An Open Source License means that you can use the source code to build whatever you want with it. The coding is published on GitHub where developers can edit and publish different versions of the codes in order to meet their needs. Since DOS can be easily modified and freely installed, it may appeal to all types of organizations and actors. Currently, the software is used by the PARTIDO DE LA RED (PDR), as well as implemented by the government of Mexico for it's open data policy[2] or even by NGO's like vot-it.org to debate on the new Tunisian constitution[3]. The programming world is dominated by **the network effect**, meaning that **the use value** is king, a principle directly rooted in the amount of people who decide to use the web application.
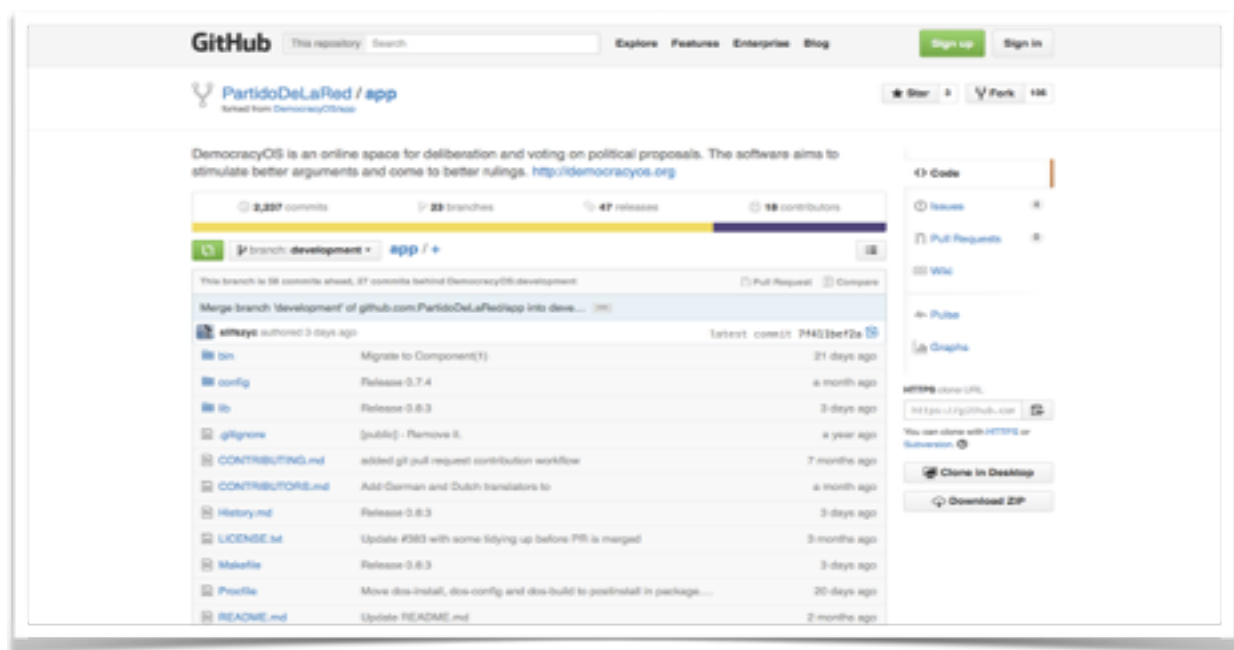
The Open Source code
(Online, https://github.com/DemocracyOS/app/tree/development)

DOS is programed following the model of the **User Experience** (UX). In order to make the platform comfortable, it was important to choose a typography that was already proven to be satisfying for a large number of users. Therefore the team chose to use a police close to Facebook's Lucida Grande. On another hand, the graphics and the interaction designs result from numerous discussions about various prototypes between all the members and the aficionados of the PDR, who have unequal backgrounds in terms of technology. The current version came through with the constant worry to elaborate a platform that both illustrates the

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2   Online, http://politica.datos.gob.mx/

3   Online, http://vot-it.org/

working progress in assemblies and is intuitive in its use. Opposed to the common practice concerning programming, the creation process was fully dependent on the discussions and slowly elaborated according to these different opinions, instead of resulting from the only work of one or few programmers. It es technology that serves interaction and language, not the contrary. Here a programer does not consider itself superior than another concerning his job for the Foundation. Programers certainly are the ones that know better technologies and understand its tools more quickly, but it does not give them a hierarchical position facing the qualities and the capacities of the others. In this project, **technology is subordinated to argumentation and voting**. The Foundation stands for **collective intelligence** and experience. This is why DOS is considered as a **beta version** meant to be constantly improved. The idea behind is that politics here is no longer in the solution: politics is in the process. **A track of every modification** is kept in order to always keep an eye on why things are what they are now.

The platform functions are split in two fundamental mechanisms: **the validation of identity** on one side, and **the voting process** on the other. The latter is legitimated by the former. A full legitimation of the voting process asks to be able to assess with certainty who is who and raises questions about **the platforms's security**. The reality of the informatics is the same than in real life: no system is entirely safe. As a politician can be corrupted, a software can be hacked. If at the moment, the platform uses the traditional identity confirmation system using emails and passwords, the Foundation plans to incorporate the use of NetID which enables the use of any internet ID credentials (email, Twitter, Facebook) and requires the user to provide an official ID document to verify the place of residence. To ensure the highest security on this question, NetID hosts authentication data on a dedicated server which has no connection with the one that runs the DOS application. Communication between the two servers are encrypted because a violation of this identity module would generate problems not only for the platform, but also for all the other users of the same module. The developers of the Foundation are also thinking about decentralized identification models, like the peer-to-peer ones, following the path of Bitcoin for example, which uses the BlockChain protocol. In that case, it is not a third party that checks identities, it is the internet itself that says who is who, using a node system where each node identity validates and is validated by the others ones in a decentralized architecture.

This **decentralization of the identification process** through authorization technologies has a lot in common with the way the voting process is tailored on the platform. There is a programming code on one part, and there is a social one on the other. If who you are and what you vote is private data, on DOS, your arguments about your vote are public.
The use either votes directly on an open issue…

… using one of the three buttons, Affirmative, Abstention or Negative.
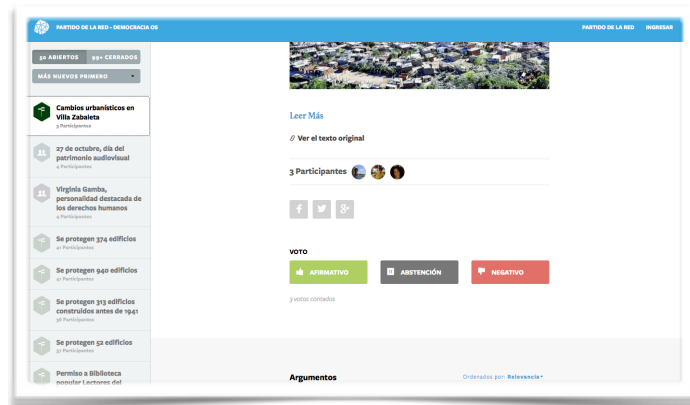
… or delegate his vote to another user which he trusts and considers to be more informed or more competent about a specific topic or issue. Again, this highlights the preference of the platform for **collective intelligence** rather than **personalization of interest and individual opinion**. The delegation of the vote is **contextual**, it is applied only to an issue elected by the user and is everything but automatic.
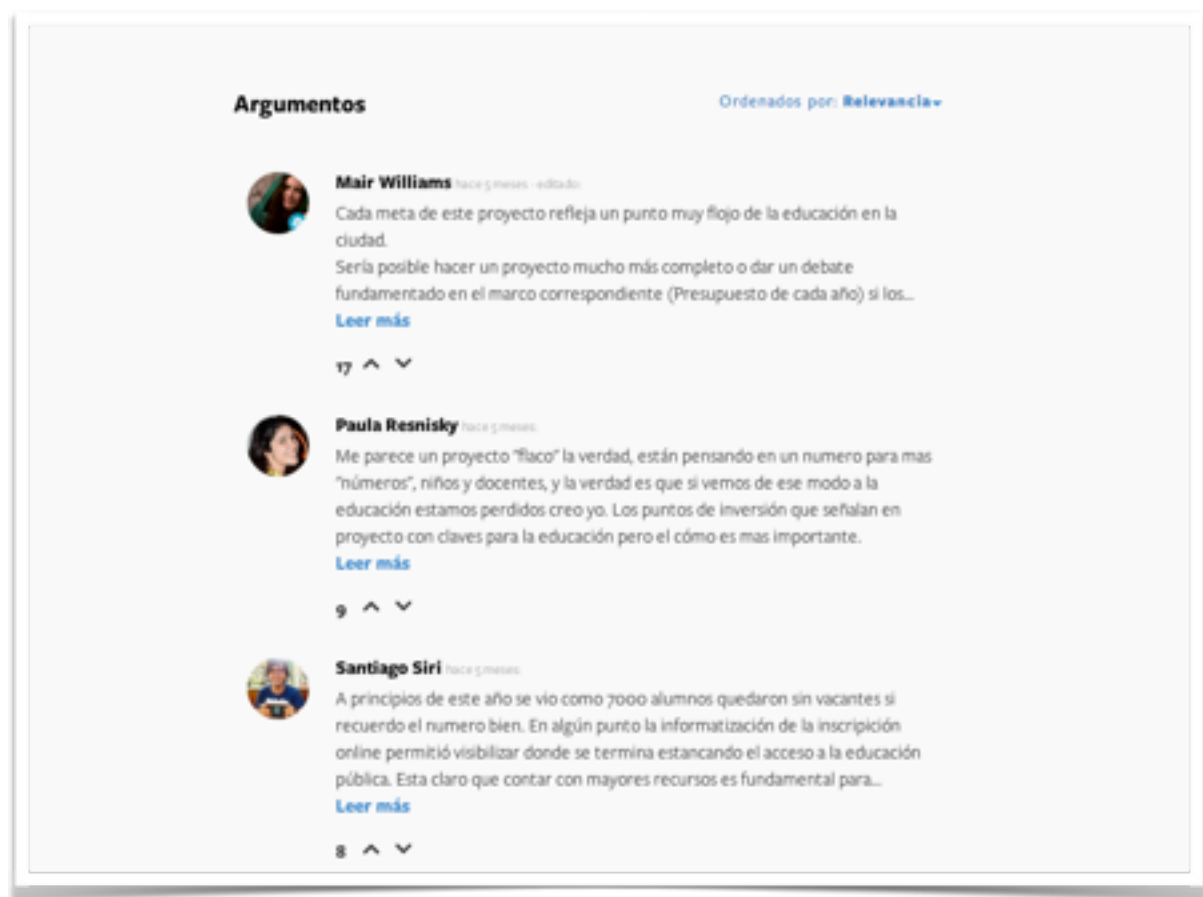
It is only when the issue is closed that all the participants can have access to the chart showing the proportion results respecting **the secret voting principle**.
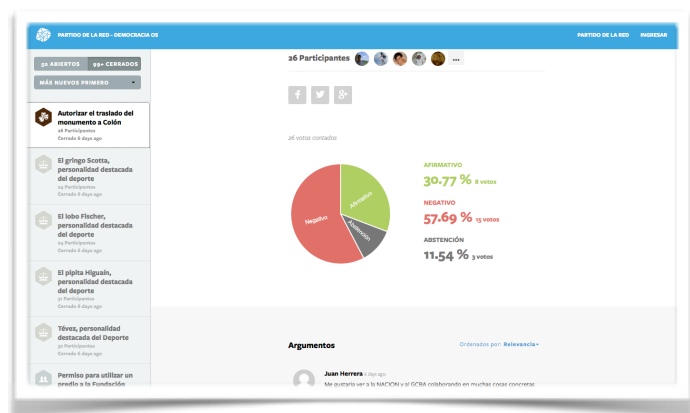
An example of the results (Online, http://dos.partidodelared.org/)

Users can post arguments on every law project than is uploaded to the platform. They can also upgrade or downgrade the arguments of the others, which results in displaying the most relevant arguments at the top of the page.

An example of the arguments treatment (Online. http://dos.partidodelared.org/)

Argumentos   Ordenados por: **Relevancia**

Mair Williams hace 5 meses · editado.
Cada meta de este proyecto refleja un punto muy flojo de la educación en la ciudad.
Sería posible hacer un proyecto mucho más completo o dar un debate fundamentado en el marco correspondiente (Presupuesto de cada año) si los...
Leer más

17 ∧ ∨

Paula Resnisky hace 5 meses.
Me parece un proyecto "flaco" la verdad, están pensando en un numero para mas "números", niños y docentes, y la verdad es que si vemos de ese modo a la educación estamos perdidos creo yo. Los puntos de inversión que señalan en proyecto con claves para la educación pero el cómo es mas importante.
Leer más

9 ∧ ∨

Santiago Siri hace 5 meses.
A principios de este año se vio como 7000 alumnos quedaron sin vacantes si recuerdo el numero bien. En algún punto la informatización de la inscipición online permitió visibilizar donde se termina estancando el acceso a la educación pública. Esta claro que contar con mayores recursos es fundamental para...
Leer más

8 ∧ ∨

What matters here is what one thinks and how he justifies what he thinks: this is why there is no comments but only arguments on DOS. **Moreover, the dialogue between the users may help to enlighten the collective discussions and sharpen the individual opinions.** To improve the treatment of these various arguments in order to constantly provide a better tool for better interactions stays one of the main future challenges for DOS. Finally, DER's challenge is more cultural than technological. The Foundation ought to constantly explain how its software works, and get us used to this **disruptive way of dialoguing**. **It oughts to prove that everybody's equality on the internet is not only a normative standpoint, but may become a fact.**

3. **ACTION(S)** through a Party

The relationship between the Foundation DEMOCRACIA EN RED (DER) and the PARTIDO DE LA RED (PDR) is very special. Both entities share the same ideas but differ in practice. All the documentation related to both are public and available **on the Party's Wikipage**[4] Moreover,they both result from the redaction a **Manifest written in hashtags**[5] defining the concepts of *#DemocraciaEstancada* (#StangantDemocracy), *#Red* (#Net), *#Pares* (#Peers), *#DemocraciaEnRed* (#NetDemocracy), and *#PartidodelaRed* (#NetParty). The *Manifest* is the expression of new ways of communication on the Internet. With political ideas expressed in hashtags, thoughts become connected objects.

Furthermore, as stated in the **Fundamental Agreements**[6], the PDR members, "like the first adventurers of yet unvisited destinies, need to constantly ask themselves if they are on the good path". This means that the DER and the PDR are not set in stone. Similarly to the platform, the PDR is **the beta version of a political party** subject to continuous improvement.

The DER and the PDR differ on the institutional and the juridical level: the PDR has its own official **Base for political action**[7] — explaining its political line about democracy and citizen participation, state administration, urbanism, health, education, economy, justice, international relations, environmental and cultural issues — as well as its own **Declaration of principles**[8]. However, on the human level, both entities are managed by almost the same people. The PDR represents the most complete political application of the software DEMOCRACY OS (DOS). If a candidate gets elected he or she will always vote according to the platform's results. Consequently, **the PDR represents the politicization of the DER's Operating System.** Indeed, the Foundation DER develops a digital tool that can be modified by any potentially interested person or association, which opens up the way to plenty of alternative use, but the PDR applies the software DEMOCRACY OS (DOS) in its purest form. The Foundation does not advocate for a full

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4   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/P%C3%A1gina_principal

5   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/Manifiesto_de_la_Red

6   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/Acuerdos_Fundacionales

7   Online, https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3Iyi9THwePEUlE1Z2ItOXFtQmM/edit

8   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/Declaraci%C3%B3n_de_Principios

replacement of traditional politics with technologies, but the PDR concretely shows how **a hybrid model between direct** participation and traditional representation could operate. The PDR aims to connect a networked citizenry and traditional politics, a disruptive model and a decadent one.

On the operating part, there is **no hierarchy** within the party; its internal organization is horizontal. In practice, the decision making center gravitates around **weekly reunions,** meant to be democratic spaces. Every friday reunion is **ritualized**. First, each member reports to the assembly on his or her physical and mental well-being, and how many people he or she managed to interest in the party throughout the week, in order **to strengthen both group cohesion and individual responsibility towards the peers**. Then, the activity of the party is brought up through **the bulletin** to inform all the members about the progress of each node, the unit of its structure. Finally, every reunion is guided by a specific **agenda**. The party often organizes **brainstorming exercises** to deal with the issues at stake on a certain agenda. The process-making is transcribed on memorandums and publicly documented along with the financial accounts. To improve productivity, the party uses different **sided digital tools**, like **Slack**[9] to facilitate internal team communication, or **Trello**[10] to assign tasks.

An example of a brainstorm (Offline, Internal documentation)

As all decisions relevant to the party's activity, the first **party's head-list** during the 2013 legislative elections was **collectively chosen** during one of these reunions. The head-list publicly represents the PDR and owes a fiduciary duty to honor this mandate. He is assisted by all members to accomplish his main tasks as a deputy in case of favorable election results for the party. The tasks include:

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[9]   Online, https://slack.com/

[10]   Online, https://trello.com/

- to ensure a free and fair access to the bills in the assembly and translate them in a colloquial language;
- to define the period of time during which the bills are up for vote on the software and submitted for the debate in the *Legislatura*;
- to debate in the *Legislatura* according to the citizen's participation on the software;
- **to vote in the *Legislatura* according to the results of citizen's decision-making on the software.**

As already pointed out, the PDR's structure is not hierarchical but organized as a decentralized network of nodes. There are several opened, dynamic and independent nodes, created or dissolved depending on the party's needs. **A node can be subordinated to another one, but both independence and productivity are issues when it comes to define its operating rules.**

The logo of the PARTIDO DE LA RED

*(Online, https://www.facebook.com/PartidoDeLaRed*

The **ORGANIZATION** Node

or the intern rules

From the external point of view, the party follows the electoral rules of the *Capital Federal* district (CABA). Internally, the party has its own *Organic Chart*[11]. On these two angles, the party aims to build **its organization and methods both on the traditional and the disruptive**, slowly constructing and solidifying them in **the light of experience**. All the decisions are taken collectively and horizontally during the Friday reunions, which implies a lot more discussions than in traditional parties. The weekly encounter ensures a good dialogue between the different nodes. There is no assigned coordinator: coordination is based on **trust, sharing and the complementarity of talents**. The body of the party is a collegial assembly composed of **peers**. This form of organization may be frustrating for some. It requires **patience and compromise**, but promotes the advantages of **slow rhythms** and **team working**.

The **BANCA 61** Node

or the implementation of the software
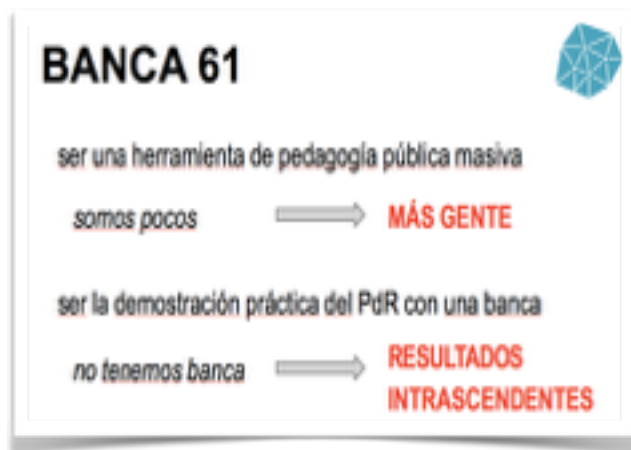
The *BANCA 61* node is the PDR's main political tool to politicize and educate the citizens. It is the colloquial language adaptation of the law projects that are debated in the *Legislatura*.

An example of the working process in BANCA 61
(Offline, Intern documentation)

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[11] Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/Carta_Organica

The PDR aims to make the bills comprehensible in order to facilitate the discussions about it. *BANCA 61* writes the platform's explicative texts about the bills in order to enlighten people's opinion and votes. Its objective is for the texts to be simple, short, democratic, and everything but oriented, in order to make it accessible enough for people who can barely read or write to be able to give their political opinion on the platform.

The members of the node are slowly developing a writing methodology. They even aim to publish on the PDR's WikiPage **a style manual** to help others who would like to replicate their experience. At the moment, the texts are based on the procedure and structured in three paragraphs:

- a brief description of the content of the bill;
- a brief sum up of the pros arguments;
- a brief sum up of the cons arguments.

However, the questions of **the actual neutrality and objectiveness** of this structure is inevitable; BANCA 61's writing methodology is meant to be constantly improved. They also intend to centralize citizens political opinions about given bills disseminated on Twitter, Facebook or Forums, using a treatment of hashtags. For example, they invited people that expressed themselves on social media about a bill on the subway schedule to do the same on DOS. This type of Net actions demonstrates actual **digital activism**.

An example of the PDR's street activism
(Offline, Intern documentation)

The **COMMUNICATION** Node

or a new communication paradigm

For the french DigiLabs Magazine, hackathons are new recruitments strategies
(Online, www.digilabs.fr)

The communication node manages the public messages released on Facebook, Twitter; Youtube, the party's WikiPage and so on. One of the main challenge the members of this node have to face is the fact that the party does not have any target audience. Usually, such political projects try to catch-all a relatively homogenous audience by formulating a message attractive for the center of its target. However, the PDR's audience is not homogenous. Its political message attracts a lot of different profiles like elder leftist intellectuals, young anarchists, trendy hipsters or obsessed computer scientists. Moreover, the geographical distribution of this audience is patchy. The aim of the communication node is to connect with these dispersed targets. To do so, its members decided to organize a communication **hackathon: a communicathon**. They asked to a sample of 35 to 40 people, responding to various socio-professional groups from CABA's neighborhoods, to help them to formulate an attractive message for an essentially dispatched audience. These people had to pretend explaining the PDR to a friend in a short video, and this is how the party's communication strategy came through.

The New Marketplace

Head

Long Tail

Popularity

Products

The PDR ought to talk about itself keeping in mind what Chris Anderson calls **the long tail theory**, that is to say it to interest the people expressing this new form of culture the traditional political parties do not connect with.

Chris Anderson's long tail theory
(Online, http://www.longtail.com)

The **CAMPAIGN** Node

or the street strategies

The campaign node can be divided into two arms. The first is permanent and is actually more about **the affiliation process**. There is a set of rules that divise the path to becoming a Capital Federal's official political party. The formation is validated by a short-term permit asking for 4000 signatures, or simple supporters of its official documents. This is how the PDR was allowed to run for the 2013 legislative elections of the CABA's Federal District. However, to establish its institutionalization, from now onwards the PDR is legally obliged to be fully supported by 4000 affiliations. To be an affiliate implies a higher level of compromise towards the party than simple signatures. Once the PDR is elected, the affiliates direct the Legislator's choice by participating on DOS. This signifies for everyone to demonstrate a fair behavior on the platform: one may be asked to leave by openly acting unreasonably. Furthermore, an affiliation is automatically suspended after three months of inactivity. So to become an affiliate, a person must.

- fill in the online personal data form;

- scan the DNI (*Documento Nacional de Identidad* : National ID Card) proving its quality of being a CABA citizen;

- provide an electronic signature;

- later on, appear in person in the PDR's office to confirm the validation of its

identity as a registered *Porteño*.

4000 affiliations is a lot. To give an order of value, Christina Kirshner's party approximately gets 3700 affiliates per year. Thing is, the party is definitely established if it reaches this minimum threshold just once. Since the party needs to fulfill these requirements in order to run in the legislative elections a second time in 2015, it launched *4000fundadores* **campaign**.

The affiliation campaign

(Online, http://4milfundadores.com/)

This strategy can be credited for being not only electorally oriented but also a direct application of the PDR's Manifest, which says that all the CABA citizens can be peers on the Internet. 4000 founders means that anyone signing for an affiliation automatically becomes a co-founder of the PDR. Indeed: without them, the party's institutional recognition cannot be confirmed.

The second arm of the campaign node is specific to **the electoral campaign period.** It is only active during the official campaign in a stricter sense. During the 2013 campaign, an example of the PDR's militant actions was to literally **hack the** *Legislatura* using a large-scaled Trojan Horse. The meaning is metaphoric: the horse is meant to represent the break of the popular siege around the *Legislatura*. With the help of the PDR's horse, the CABA citizens may finally get in. Once inside, the members of the party proposed to engage a joint project between them and the president of the *Legislatura*. The president accepted to launch the project, called DEMOS, after the electoral campaign period. They all agreed to officially test the treatment of three bills on DOS, in order for the opinion of the CABA citizens to count in the deputies voting process on these given subjects. This action has various positive impacts: it gives a lot of publicity to the party's ideas, it creates a link between the *Legislatura* and its citizens through **the third party** represented by the PDR, and it practically shows how the party's platform may function with its pros and cons.

El caballo de Troya del Partido de la Red ante el Congreso de Argentina.

International press report on the PDR's Trojan Horse hacking

the Legislatura Porteña (Online, http://www.eldiario.es/)

To get more affiliations and at the same time to promote citizen participation in the CABA's political arena, the PDR's main goal is **to engage in politics, meaning to go out on the streets**, to talk with the people. The PDR must engage in digital alphabetization. Even if 69% of the *Porteños* have access to the Internet and 88% of them have a cellphone[12], there is still **a digital divide**, not only in the CABA but all over the world.

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[12]   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/Esta%C3%ADsticas_sobre_la_Red

The **ACADEMIC** and the **ART** Nodes
or the implication of the civil society

The PDR also thought about nodes that can link the party with the non political part of the civil society, or at least, the indirectly political part, through the art node and the academia node. The art node organizes diverse performances, like plays for example, to stimulate the members creativity and group cohesion, and to open the doors for the party to the public in a non-political manner. The academia node's goal is to contemplate the PDR's ideology and political ideas in a theoretical manner. The node gathers once a week to discuss books, articles, documentaries, and movies, and spread their conclusions to the rest of the PDR's members and to the public. It aims to progressively elaborate the party's political line and philosophy. For example, one of the main challenges of the PDR in its whole is to slowly develop the defining structure of **a Net Democracy**, a brand new concept that can be found in various articles in the academical and political world. DEMOCRACIA EN RED still lacks a precise answer.

An example of a performance

(Offline, Internal documentation)

4. IMAGINATION(S) "what's Ne(x)t?"

"What's next" for a Net party in a liberal democratic frame, is a question that may yield several avenues. We derived to main direction. The first is the figurative spatial sense, the second is the literal temporal one. The former poses the question "what is next" ? The answer is multiform:

- Next to the PDR is **the press**. It is predominantly covered by international or local journals, but barely surfaces in national publications. The coverage is mainly positive. The international journalists are interested in **this new way of defining a political position**. The most skeptical journalists tend to conclude that current representative politics could not be worse. In that sense, they seem to give the PDR a try. The local journalists, who face the most rigorous barriers of entry to the political scene, are openly enthusiast about the party. They often want to participate but cannot, and for this reason, tend to fully support the PDR's ideas.

- **The other politicians and opinion leaders** can be classified as the traditionalists. Stereotypically speaking, those that are more than forty years old either do not understand or turn their ideas into derision, whereas those that are less understand and may even like it.

- Furthermore, next to the PDR is the **associations issued form the civil society.** They show the biggest attraction towards its digital tool. In the first place, **NGOs and think tanks** express critical thoughts on the disruptiveness of the party's ideas. However after a second round of reflexion, and especially when they learn how to use DOS for their own interest, they tend to develop higher expectations about the platform.

- Finally, **the citizens reception**, the ones to whom the PDR is dedicated, is in general either good in the sense of enthusiast or bad in the senses of skepticism or stoicism. What happens is that *Porteños* mainly became disengaged with politics. The party's mission largely depends on political pedagogics. This is why education, about both politics and digital technologies, remains one of its principal functions and challenges.

From the temporal point of view, "what's next" carries a literal sense. With time, the question becomes: **what is next *for* the PDR?** The answer is about **imagination**. We asked the members of the PDR to tell us if they like to imagine a legislative world where all the deputies would belong to a plurality of Net parties. What they answered is interesting to note. They do not stand for a replacement of the whole political system, because even for them this stand seems to be a potentially dangerous utopia. Rather than changing fundamentally the institutions,

the cultural movement they tend to support is more about planting deliberation spaces in an already build representative system. To the PDR, it would be more accurate to imagine a future that would look more like that:

- At the local level, instead of extending one political party's capacity to deal alone with all the City's issues, the new scheme of representation proposed by the platform could organize into multiple separate political factions. For example, the **Green parties** may unify into one of these Net factions, and take care of the treatment of all the environment-related issues. The only extension that may be accurate is the delegation of the vote. The party members like to imagine that the dissociation between citizenry and representation tend to be more and more bridged, especially with delegation and the renewal of trust into the citizens qualifications.

- **At the national level**, there is little to be imagined. To the PDR, the main objective is to convert to **the regional level**, not the national one, for the only reason that they think the platform is still not pertinent to deal with national issues, but is more adequate for either local or extra-national ones.

- At the international level lies the core of the DEMOCRACIA EN RED, or NET DEMOCRACY project. The PDR is participating in the formation of a network gathering all the people sharing the same ideas about the to-be-made relations between powers and technologies. It aims to open-up spaces where participation can become possible.

In the end, as paradoxical it may seem when talking about a Net party, the PDR is **a human experience** that can be linked to other ones all around the world. The PDR's WikiPage provides a list of all similar Net parties experiences they registered to date[13]. When we scroll down the list, it is interesting to note the common soul these different projects seem to share, despite their obvious geographical, political, cultural, sociological, and every -al word distinctions. These associations, think tanks, parties, NGOs, consortiums, and so on, raise new concepts, to be explained, to be defined, and in the end, to be told, in order to tell the story of this Digital New World we are digging in. When it comes to the theoretical crosswords between digitals and politics, the PDR, again in its WikiPage, already raised conceptual binomials and built the premisses of a concept glossary. In this manual, we **bold** another few to be defined too. Speaking of "what's next" for a Net party, a conceptual work defining this new form of democracy for the political theories of representation is still to be done. This is when we leave you for now.

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[13]   Online, http://wiki.partidodelared.org/index.php/La_Red_en_el_Mundo