



Hardcopy OR #Hashtag?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VISION FOR
A DIGITAL PARLIAMENT

#PSAPW / #DODEMOCRACY



**Political Studies
Association**
www.psa.ac.uk



PARLIAMENT WEEK
OFFICIAL PARTNER



“Hardcopy or #Hashtag?” is a culmination of the most innovative ideas from young people on how digital technology can increase youth engagement with Parliament and the political process.

Between 8 September and 20 October, 2014 the **Political Studies Association (PSA)** and the **PSA’s Parliaments and Legislatures Specialist Group** organised a series of workshops in schools and universities across the UK asking young people to explore how youth engagement can be enhanced through digital means.

Students will showcase their ideas to an audience of young people, digital experts and academics, before **“Hardcopy or #Hashtag?”** concludes with an interactive vote from the audience for the best overall idea.

The ideas discussed form a key part of the theme of this year's Parliament Week and will be fed back to the Digital Democracy Commission set up by the Speaker of the House of Commons earlier this year.

With special thanks to Dr Cristina Leston-Bandeira (Hull) and Dr Louise Thompson (Surrey), Co-convenors of the PSA’s Parliaments and Legislatures Specialist Group, and architects of “Hardcopy or #Hashtag?”: young people’s vision for a digital parliament.



Hardcopy OR #Hashtag? PANEL OF EXPERTS

FEMI OYENIRAN is a British actor and director, notable for his role as "Moony" in the 2006 film *Kidulthood* and its 2008 sequel *Adulthood*. Femi is also a Commissioner for the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy.



EMMA MULQUEENY is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Young Rewired State. She is also a Commissioner for the Speaker's Commission on Digital Democracy and a Google Fellow.

AILEEN WALKER has over 30 years experience at Parliament and is currently Director of Public Engagement coordinating: Parliament's Education Service, Visitor Services, and the recent TEDxHousesofParliament series.



DREW THOMSON is the Founder of Starcount - an award winning and pioneering new way of understanding people, communities and demographics through their passions using a new platform called 'Social DNA'.

1.

Sebastien Rocks and Daisy Bamfield (Oakwood School, Kent)

Canterbury Christ Church University (Dr Mark Bennister)

Vloggers: With YouTube as one of the biggest sources of entertainment for young people and the huge success of vloggers like Zoella who has 2.45 million followers, we decided that the way to get 16-24 year olds involved in politics would be by getting celebs and vloggers to do a 1 minute talk about a political issue that affects them. This could be why VAT affects their fashion choices or the way their local sports teams are funded. Vloggers could even follow in Tyler Oakley's steps by interviewing top politicians. We have already contacted some of the best known vloggers and we have already started this project by interviewing some of our local politicians ourselves and uploading the videos on the PSA Storify project and also on their website. Check it out!

2.

Ryan Martyn and Parinita Swarnkar (St John's College, Cardiff)

Cardiff University (Dr Stephen Thornton)

PolitApp: At a time when young people are turning away from main-stream politics, the mass appeal of apps is undeniable in this age of social media and technology. The best solution to combat disaffection is a free, accessible and engaging politics app, which communicates to young people on their terms. As a relief from the usual dry, jargon-filled political commentaries, our app will speak to young people in their language and will be entirely relevant through personalised content filters. It will feature a 60-second snapshot of the day's political news, a summary of each party's view on important issues and will offer user interaction through polls and live stream Q&As with politicians. Our attractive and informative format will make politics relevant and essential, not a bore.

3.

James Stout and Kane Moffat (University of Strathclyde)

University of Strathclyde (Dr Mark Shephard)

The G-forum is an official forum and petition site set up by parliament to breach the gap between representatives and the electorate. It allows the UK public to discuss topics in a safe and educated environment, taking away petty and aggressive insults found on social media. The site will enable debate and solidarity for those who may wish to start e-petitions. The site will advertise e-petitions more efficiently attracting more signatures, therefore allowing more debate in the Commons. Also, not only this but the site will provide regular news in a straight forward and easy to understand way, appealing to parts of the public who do not feel as confident engaging in politics - which can be complicated.

4.

Thomas McEachan and Nicola Pringle (Scottish Youth Parliament)

SYP with University of Strathclyde (Dr Mark Shephard)

ParliMap: The first idea we have established was to allow the public to track parliament activity and restore the trust that MPs are making positive change. The App would show when an MP enters a session, what surgeries they are hosting and what is happening in the constituents' area. The second idea is to create a channel on the YouTube platform which will include interviews and discussions with political figures. This Channel will be maintained regularly and will have lots of content to offer such as: educational videos about how parliament works, short videos of what a certain young person thinks is important, videos reacting to certain news events that affect Parliament and a Young Person's Question Time.

5.

Liam Slater-McGill (Wiggeston QE College) & Nuran Balande (Regent College)

De Montfort University (Dr Clodagh Harrington)

The Politics App: In an effort to get young people more involved with Westminster politics, we came up with the idea of a smartphone app. The idea is that users of the app would be able to type in their postcode, which would bring up their local MP, and provide information on their voting habits, political leanings and other important information. It would also provide a service in which upcoming elections, whether local or general, would be detailed, as well as people running for the election. Users would also be able to type in something they had opinions on politically, such as fracking, and see how their MP, an election candidate or political party felt about it.

6.

James Mills and Grace Mountain (Pocklington School)

University of Hull (Dr Cristina Leston-Bandeira)

"YouthMatters" is an app that provides the youth with a reliable source of information on how politics affects them and how they can make a difference in politics. It includes several functions: 1) Mini-broadcasting platform: displays issues and current affairs concerning the youth, with associated discussion forums. Young people can also be linked to their MP to post questions about these concerns and get information in their area. 2) E-petition platform: users can start and sign petitions. A system of petitions' "up-voting" allows the most important matters to be discussed and voted on. 3) Live streaming feature: directly links young people to current parliamentary events. 4) Links to party websites: increasing knowledge of parties' policies and enabling young voters to make an informed decision.

7.

De'vante Smith Purge and Kortney Johnson Blake (SFX College)

St Francis Xavier College, London (Femi Oyeniran)

"4 The Youth": We have designed a website and phone app, which will discuss issues affecting youths using a live podcast, an online suggestion box and up-to-date news of legislation, policies and issues that will involve young people. 4 The Youth will be run by young people, encouraging young people to get involved in not only politics but journalism and media-based careers. 4 The Youth will allow young people to subscribe to news updates on a range of different topics, featuring a daily poll on matters discussed in parliament and live topic based group chats. The podcast will be streamed live every two weeks on the website, phone app and on our YouTube channel with regular visits from MPs. We are 'with the youth, about the youth, 4 the youth'.

8.

Isaac Hydleman (Blundell's, Devon)

University of Exeter (Dr Ekaterina Kolpinskaya)

Public participation in the legislation process: Bills which are narrowly rejected in the House of Commons should be placed on to a social media platform (such as 'Facebook') where the public can view it. If the voters approve it then they could 'like' the bill but if they wanted to make amendments they could 'comment'.

The results from this would then be sent to an independent committee of experts on the issue in question who would come up with a variation of the original bill for it to then be debated and voted upon once again in the House of Commons/ by Parliament.

9.

Nicholas Sly (Colyton Grammar, Devon)

University of Exeter (Dr Ekaterina Kolpinskaya)

Incorporating Twitter into Prime Minister's Questions: In order to make Parliament more accountable and in touch with the people, my idea is focused on allowing Twitter users to submit questions to the Prime Minister via a Twitter hashtag. The top questions, once reviewed for suitability, could be answered during Prime Minister's Questions with runners-up receiving a written response directly from the PM. The guarantee would function in a similar way to e-Petitions. This would allow for a more direct form of accountability and would help combat political apathy and the participation crisis, especially amongst young people who frequent the site.

10.

Chelsea Todd and Orla Connelly (St. Dominics', Belfast)
University of Ulster (Prof Cathy Gormley-Heenan)

"MyPolitics" is a multi-lingual, educational and most importantly, free app that allows us to relate to politicians and politicians to relate to us in this social media revolution of the 21st century. MyPolitics allows users to subscribe to different politicians, understand politics through a politics dictionary, hear political broadcasts, vote for policies, give their opinion and just be heard through one unique and simple app. We hear your voices, now we want you to hear ours. We believe wholeheartedly we can do this effectively through the MyPolitics app. Forget television - smartphones and tablets are here to stay, and through this medium, politicians and the public can work together to benefit our nation.

11.

Toby Taplin and Rachel Ewing (Godalming College)
University of Surrey (Dr Louise Thompson)

Opinionated: Politics is important for young people even if they may not be engaged with issues. Everybody has an opinion on the ways in which Parliament affects their lives, but feelings of disenfranchisement mean that people do not see politics as an answer to this; Politics is instead seen as an out-of-reach body of knowledge that has little impact on the way we live our lives. Opinionated will give a legitimate voice to people's feelings of dissatisfaction in a structure that represents and explains Parliament and the political system. This website would function as a forum with separate pages for regional and national issues being discussed in Parliament. The site's goal would be to take the feelings of dissatisfaction and ideas for change that young people have, explaining the link with Parliament and how it can be used to change this.

12.

Sam Townsend and Jason Heffron (County Upper School)
University of East Anglia (Suzanne Derks-Van Damme)

Speak Up: An independently run app and website that would encourage engagement with politics at a local level, on local issues, both for MPs and their constituents. Users would be able to pose questions, start polls and begin debate through moderated forums, which could then be up-voted by their fellow constituents to show the majority opinion displayed in 'Hot Topics'. The app would inform users when their local MP is active on the site, allowing for live debate and engagement, increasing accountability and scrutiny. This also gives the opportunity of increasing knowledge of politics through pages on local and national events. 'Speak Up' is a simple platform for people's voices to be heard, with a vast amount of possibilities.

13.

Timothy Potter and Robert Morris (Kirklees Youth Council)
University of Huddersfield (Dr Andrew Mycock)

Parlichtat: Our idea is the creation of a new 'app' for mobile phones and other platforms called 'Parlichtat' which would allow individuals and groups of young people to connect with MPs, local councillors, journalists and others involved in policy-making through social media. Parlichtat would provide a 'one-stop' resource that allows young people to easily connect with elected representatives. Politicians would be expected to host regular 'video' constituency meetings with local schools at set times via Skype. Young people would also be able to discuss policy issues that affect them in a dedicated 'ParlichtatRoom' and take part in weekly 'policy votes' that would provide politicians with evidence to help inform decision-making.

14.

Rana Bellem-Hussein and Beth Pollard (Queen Elizabeth SFC)
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Darlington (Josh Newton)

"Digital Demos" aims to get younger people more politically educated and active. Every weekend a poll is published across social networking sites to decide an issue of the week wherein an MP of a certain party answers questions based on this topic in a live YouTube video. These are decided by viewers tweeting questions and this video will last 5 minutes and conclude with a challenge that the MP undertakes. The three main parties are allocated Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the smaller parties are allocated Thursdays and Fridays but they vary every week. It answers young people's questions in a suitable environment and it benefits Parliament by helping them see what topics young people are interested in. It becomes a political conversation and not a debate.

15.

Students from Crest Academy, London
Birkbeck, University of London (Dr Ben Worthy)

"Peoples' Parliament" is a TV show where each week a new celebrity would be 'taught' an aspect of politics or political issue. The show would be supported by a smartphone app aimed at young people. The show would begin with a 'lesson' from two appointed special panellists (e.g. MPs, Peers or journalists) and then end with a discussion, led by the show's celebrity presenter Russell Brand. Questions and comments would be fed in 'live' from the young audience, in the studio or at home, via the Peoples' Parliament app. When 'off air' the app would link to a forum where various experts and politicians would be available (on a rota) to discuss and answer any questions that users were interested in.



Political Studies Association

#PSAschools

Although our membership is primarily drawn from institutions of higher education we have a growing number of teacher members.

We have been working hard to expand and enhance our offering to schools through the provision of resources and activities such as workshops, lectures, competitions and teaching resources.

Additionally, we are dedicated to making the case that the study of politics prepares students for many forms of employment, as well as further study, and are working hard behind the scenes to ensure Government and Politics is a valued and important element of sixth form study.

Please visit our website where you will find the PSA's speakers programme for schools, competitions and events, teacher resources, useful articles and our Teachers' E-Newsletter archive.

Joining the PSA as a Teacher Member entitles all your students to use our services for schools - just one teacher membership effectively delivers membership to your whole school. The easiest way to become a PSA member is online.

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