



Democracy Lab Barcelona 17-19 September 2024



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Nets4Dem



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Ajuntament de
Barcelona



Pla Estratègic
Metropolità
de Barcelona

Democracy Lab Barcelona

Democracy Innovation in Digital Transformation

Draft agenda June 2024

Background

The rise of digital technologies brings opportunities and threats to local democracies, making safeguarding and exercising citizens' digital rights a key challenge of our time. The right to privacy, freedom of expression, access to information and open digital infrastructures are fundamental in the digital age. The first edition of Nets4Dem's Democracy Lab will focus on enhancing democratic processes in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Hosted by Barcelona, the European Capital of Democracy 2023-2024, the Lab will leverage the city's extensive experience and innovative practices in this area, providing a rich context for addressing multifaceted urban challenges. Discussions, speakers' presentations and group work will revolve around four main focus areas.

Civic Tech: Linking Online and In-Person Participation

Participants will explore the potential of civic technology to support citizen engagement through digital platforms like Decidim. They will learn why Decidim was deployed as a free/libre open-source infrastructure, how it supports online and in-person participation, and the capacities it builds. Civic technology can support various city participatory processes, such as participatory budgeting, urban planning, and crowdsourcing. Participants will gain insights into the political framework, multiple uses of hybrid participation, and the effective implementation of these tools.

Open Data, open technologies and Smart City

Participants will learn how open data and smart city solutions can drive democratic decision-making. This area focuses on how the Municipal Data Office uses data to make informed and tailored decisions that improve urban life. The concept of a 15-minute city, applied as a digital twin, allows for real-world improvements in neighbourhoods. Participants will also understand how democratising data helps citizens engage with local issues. Discussions will include the ethical use of data and its role in building democratic infrastructure, enhancing transparency, and fostering community-driven problem-solving.

Artificial Intelligence in Government and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Participants will engage with Barcelona's AI Strategy, a collaborative effort between government, academia, and civil society. The strategy focuses on implementing algorithmic systems at the municipal level in accordance with legal, ethical, and technical standards. Participants will learn about the AI Advisory Council and citizen committees that design and evaluate AI policies and explore the process of building these committees with diverse expertise.

Democratic Culture in the Digital Era

This focus area emphasises the importance of building digital literacy and ensuring that technology is accessible and beneficial to all citizens, thus strengthening democratic engagement. Participants will address the need for fostering a democratic culture around technology. They will learn how municipal platforms such as Decidim and other initiatives strengthen digital literacy among different population groups and develop strategies for bridging the digital divide and integrating digital education into community practices.

Draft agenda

Time	Session	Speakers
Day 1 – Tuesday, 17 September		
9:30-10:00	Registration and welcome coffee	
10:00-10:15	Welcome and introduction	
10:15-10:45	Keynote address	TBA
10:45-11:30	Setting the scene – Democracy innovations in digital in Barcelona	TBA
11:30-12:00	Coffee break	
12:00-13:30	City challenges presentation – clear presentation on how this will work	Challenge owners
13:30-14:30	Lunch	
14:30-16:00	Teams formation and problem-framing	Facilitators and mentors
16:00-16.30	Coffee break	
16:30-18:00	Ideation session	Facilitators and mentors

18:00	Wrap-up	
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Day 2 – Wednesday 18 September		
9:30-12:30	Site visits – <i>see descriptions below</i>	
	Site visit 1 Barcelona Supercomputing Centre	Site visit 2 Cibernarium – a centre for training citizens’ digital literacy
		Site visit 3 Decidim – exploring the potential of hybrid public participation
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-14:00	Teams reconvening and wrap up the work	Facilitators
14:00-15:30	Prototyping workshop 1	Facilitators and mentors
15:30-16:00	Coffee break	
16:00-16:30	Guest intervention	TBA
16:30-18:00	Prototyping workshop 2	Facilitators and mentors
20:00	Official dinner	

Day 3 – Thursday 19 September		
9:00-9:30	Welcome coffee	
9:30-10:00	Teams reconvene and finalise their prototypes	Facilitators
10:00-11:00	Prototypes presentation and feedback 1 Each team presents the outcomes of their work and receives feedback from colleagues and mentors	Challenge owners & mentors
11:00-11:30	Coffee break	
11:30-12:30	Prototypes presentation and feedback 2 Each team presents the outcomes of their work and receives feedback from colleagues and mentors	Challenge owners & mentors

12:30-12:45	Event conclusion	
12:45-14:00	Lunch and departures	

Site visits

1. **Barcelona Supercomputing Centre (BSC)**, hosts MareNostrum, the most powerful supercomputer in Spain. MareNostrum is fully dedicated to knowledge generation. It is used in virtually all scientific disciplines - from astrophysics and materials physics to biomedicine - and in engineering and industry. Projects being carried out on MareNostrum 4 include research on climate change, gravitational waves, the AIDS vaccine, new radiation therapies for cancer and simulations of fusion energy production, among others.
During this visit, we'll learn about the collaboration project between Barcelona City Council and the BSC in the framework of a [digital twins programme for cities related to the 15-minute city](#).
2. **Cibernarium**: on the first floor of the MediaTIC building in Barcelona's 22@ district is [Cibernàrium](#), the Barcelona City Council's technological training and dissemination programme. It offers training for professionals and companies, as well as Internet initiation and/or in-depth activities for all citizens.
3. **Department of Urban Planning Participation, Ecological Transition**
Exploring the potential of hybrid public participation. The Barcelona Superblock project proposes an important challenge: to achieve changes in the city's design and uses that will bring us closer to a more sustainable and resilient city while also working with existing resistance to the changes in habits that this new urban model implies.
This participatory process consisted, on the one hand of working sessions that combined technical presentations with group discussions to facilitate debate on the content presented and, on the other hand, of exploratory walks with neighbours and workshops in schools. These sessions were based on a hybrid model of participation (digital and face-to-face) that deployed a multiplicity of channels to participate. Barcelona digital platform [decidim.barcelona](#) has been used to structure the axis of the process and also to document it.