E-Democracy at the Transnational Level: Innovation and Disillusionment in AccountAbility's Second Wiki-Based Consultation Process

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Introduction

The emergence of the Internet has provoked heightened hopes about the capacity of information and communications technologies ("ICTs") to re-invigorate democratic processes. The hope was that the Internet, and the plethora of technologies associated with it, would provide a basis for a more deliberative democracy in which citizens are given extensive opportunities to take part in the work of the polity (Blumler and Coleman 2001; Shane 2011). The Internet was designated as the ultimate 'fix' to the well-known maladies of twentieth-century representative democracy. The need for such 'fix' became especially accentuated by the globalization process, which created new transnational centers of norm-making, which are not supported by the conventional means of representational democracy (Perez 2011) and are not subject to the kind of accountability mechanisms that exist at the domestic level (Castells 2005; Keohane 2003). The legitimacy of this emerging network of transnational governance depends, according to the critiques of globalization, on the creation of institutional mechanisms that will allow the global civil society to participate in the creation and implementation of global norms and policies, transcending national boundaries (Castells 2005; Keohane 2003).

The capacity of the Internet to short-cut barriers of space and time makes it, at least prima facie, an ideal medium through which the challenge of transnational democratization could be met. As Manuel Castells notes, the "Internet as a global, horizontal means of communication provides a public space, both as an organizing tool, and as a means for debate, dialogue, and collective decision making. Wireless communication increases autonomy of networks of communication" (Castells 2005; Keohane 2003).

Whether the Internet can realize this potential and actually contribute to the development of inclusive and non-hierarchical decision-making structures at the global level is still an open question. Indeed the initial 'cyber optimism', which characterized some of the early discussions on e-democracy, has been replaced by a more skeptical and cautious approach regarding the potential contribution of the

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1 I would like to thank AccountAbility for their cooperation in this research. In particular I would like to thank Tania Gobena, Christina Enotiades, Francesca Sharp and Kurt Ramin who provided invaluable help in various phases of this project. Thanks also to John Scade who provided detailed comments to a previous version of this paper. I would also like to thank Tammy Shterental, Ariel Naftaly and Amir Falk for their valuable research assistance.
Internet to democratic life. Indeed, there is a strong sense of disillusionment in the current literature on e-democracy (Ostling 2010; Kotsiopoulos 2009, : 65, 68). The earlier arguments with respect to the capacity of ICTs to transform the way governments and citizens interact, enhancing the dialogical and deliberative qualities of these interactions, were proven to be based on naïve ideological commitments, which were not grounded in solid psychological and sociological models of web-based social interactions and were not supported by robust empirical work (Coursey and Norris 2008, : 523-24). Contemporary studies on e-democracy provide a more somber picture: despite widespread experimentation with various e-democracy tools, such as on-line consultation, 2 e-Wikis, e-forums and more, the influence of ICTs on political decision-making structures has been quite negligible (Kohler-Koch 2008; Dahlberg 2011, : 6; Grönlund and Åström 2009). To a large extent the early optimism of cyber-democrats could be attributed to technological determinism, which assumed that merely putting e-tools in place will guarantee civic participation in the scale and depth of involvement imagined by the ideal model of electronically-mediated deliberative democracy.

This article seeks to develop a better understanding of the limits and potential of the Internet to foster democratic processes by taking a closer look at a Wiki-based consultation process which was conducted by AccountAbility, a transnational NGO dealing with corporate responsibility and sustainable development, during 2009-2010. Theoretically, the article draws on a more nuanced approach to the question of the potential impact of ICTs on democratic processes, giving closer attention both to the micro details of the technological design and user-interface (Wright and Street 2007; Perez 2003) and to the social dynamic in which e-democratic processes are embedded – in particular to the linkage between offline and online processes (Grönlund and Åström 2009). Helbig et al offer the notion of E-government enactment in this context, arguing that e-democratic processes are enacted by the complex relationships between social actors and the context in which they are embedded (Helbig, Ramón Gil-García, and Ferro 2009). This unique case study, which examines real-life transnational e-democracy project, seeks to shed further light on this complexity.

2 “Online consultations” refer to Internet-based discussion forums that represent government-run or at least government-endorsed solicitations of public input with regard to policy making (Shane 2011; Blumler and Coleman 2001).
Looking closely at a real political process could generate insights that may not be available in more controlled experiments.

The article's first section offers some theoretical reflections and predictions regarding the use of wiki platforms to facilitate democratic deliberation. The second section examines the dynamic of AccountAbility's consultation process. The empirical analysis includes a study of the Google analytics data of the Wiki website and a survey of the Wiki potential participants. The final section concludes with a theoretical discussion exploring the future use of wikis in consultation processes and some policy recommendations.

I. Wikis as Deliberative Mechanisms: Theoretical Reflections and Predictions

The idea of using wikis as a medium for deliberative consultation was proposed by several writers and practitioners of e-democracy (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010; Glassey 2010; Laura Sommer 2009). Beth Noveck used the term 'Wiki-Government' as a general term to describe the concept of collaborative democracy, which for her realizes the ideal of legitimate governance in the twenty-first century (Noveck 2009: xiv). The social interaction facilitated by Wiki platforms such as Wikipedia, can realize some authors argue, the epistemic and procedural aspirations of deliberative democracy (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010).

The wiki platform allows multiple users to jointly create one hypertext, thus creating a forum in which to undertake dialogue. By facilitating debate-based learning experiences and by allowing visitors to engage in dialogue and share information wikis’ encourage collaborative learning and knowledge production (Cress and Kimmerle 2008; Parker and Chao 2007). As demonstrated by Wikipedia, (Rehg, McBurney, and Parsons 2005: 216)Wiki processes can be highly flexible and are capable of responding quickly to social transformations (Lih 2004). The Wiki platform fulfills several functions, which contribute to the rationality and reflexivity of public dialogue. First, by creating a formal protocol in which any discursive contribution needs to be made, Wiki platforms provide a structured space for the dialogue. In that way, wikis ensure that the discursive contributions satisfy certain rules, pertaining, to their form, relation to other contributions and possibly their justificatory style. Second, wikis enable the participants to monitor the deliberation process as it unfolds, keeping track of the issues and arguments that are raised, and
sorting the different issues into distinct threads. In keeping track of the argumentation process the wiki system plays a record-keeping role, providing a complete description of the deliberation process; in that way wiki technology can assist participants to overcome the problem of information overload as they struggle to deal with the information generated through the deliberation process (Schuff, Turetken, and Zaheeruddin 2010; Ennals, Trushkowsky, and Agosta 2010). Some argumentation systems can also fulfill a more problematic function of evaluating the justification status of the statements made, either by reflecting the conclusions reached by the participants or by using certain rules of inference that are built into the system (Yearwood and Stranieri 2009, 2010). In Wikipedia for example, there is a somewhat similar process that allows for the deletion of articles through a structured deliberation process (Taraborelli and Ciampaglia 2010).

In order to evaluate the capacity of wiki platforms to facilitate democratic processes of deliberation and reflection two key criteria can be used. The first involves the question of inclusiveness: to what extent the political discussion has considered all the relevant issues and provided a voice for all the relevant stakeholders. “Relevance” can be defined in this context either through the perspective of the participants or in view of some external normative criteria. The second criterion refers to the responsiveness of the dialogical process (Rehg, McBurney, and Parsons 2005, : 216). “Responsiveness” refers to the extent to which the discussion addressed all the relevant questions and objections that were raised by the participants, leading to a decision that is reasonably justified and not arbitrary. Reasonable justification is not a measure of logical correctness, but rather represents the decision’s cogency or reasonableness, which in turn is a reflection of the decision’s discursive responsiveness. Responsiveness also includes the issue of the impact of the deliberation process on the ultimate political decisions (rules, policies etc.).

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3 Ideally, argumentation systems should allow participants, with respect to each issue-thread, to keep track of the exchange of arguments and counter arguments, the reasons offered for each argument and the conclusions drawn. However, this is not one of the strongest points of the Wiki architecture, because, while possible, tracking the history of the conversation may not be a simple exercise. Other deliberation support systems, like Zeno, can also support a human moderator or mediator, who takes part in the debate as external observer, by identifying common assumptions across different arguments. Rehg et al (2005, : 209).


5 Id. Arbitrary decision would be a decision that disregards some considerations or voices which were relevant to the decision.
There are however several reasons to be skeptical about the capacity of wikis to generate the kind of ideal democratic processes imagined by Noveck and Klemp and Forcehimes. The first potential barrier is the high cognitive costs associated with organizing and updating content on wikis (Chi et al. 2011; Kong et al. 2011). The wiki interface is still unfamiliar for most internet users for whom email and social media like facebook and twitter, constitute a more natural route for web-based interaction. These cognitive difficulties may be coupled by what the literature has termed wiki or computer anxiety – referring to the anxiety experienced by users who have to cope with unfamiliar or cognitively complex technology (Cowan and Jack 2011; Beckers, Wicherts, and Schmidt 2007). Wiki anxiety can also be associated with the unique social dynamic of the wiki architecture which subjects each contribution to peer evaluation (Cowan and Jack 2011). The fear from negative evaluation by peers may create additional barrier for individuals with high level of social anxiety (García-López et al. 2001; La Greca and Lopez 1998). While allowing participants to maintain anonymity may provide a possible solution to this anxiety (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010, : 27), this is only a partial solution, especially as the size of the group decreases. First, because anonymity does not completely resolve the fear of negative peer evaluation (as the self remains fully conscious of its own identity); second, because anonymity may bring about other negative effects, such as contributions that are epistemically shallow or abusive (as the experience of talkbacks in online journals demonstrates) (Diakopoulos and Naaman 2011; Thurman 2008).

This discussion suggests that wiki technology can facilitate deliberative processes that come close to our ideal democratic intuitions only when they are embedded in an environment of social and political cohesiveness, which can support such cognitively complex and emotionally laden social interaction. Indeed Klemp and Forcehimes argue that the architecture of anonymous online interactions that characterizes the Wikipedia model will not be able to cultivate the kind of social capital and solidarity that is associated with real-world politics (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010, : 29). This argument seems to expose a deeper problematic (which is not given sufficient attention in Klemp and Forcehimes argument): can wiki structures facilitate online deliberative process absent an already existing political bonding. There is something missing in the dynamic of web-mediated human interaction which cannot generate the vitality associated with real-life social
interactions. Pimo Levi referred to that enigmatic quality of face-to-face group interaction in one of his works when describing his experience of working in a laboratory as a student (Levi and Regge 1987, : 20):

"I remained friends with all my laboratory colleagues. It was the team work… Making mistakes together is a fundamental experience. One participated fully in the mutual victories and defeats. Qualitative analysis, for example, in which they gave you a bit of powder and you were supposed to tell what was in it: not to realize there was bismuth or to find chrome that wasn't there were adventures. We gave each other advice, we sympathized with each other. It was also a school of patience, of objectivity, of ingenuity, because the methods they suggested to you to perform an analysis could be improved: it was up to you to take a step forward on your own, to simplify"

Indeed, Klemp and Forcehimes recognize these difficulties, noting that the procedural and epistemic virtues of Wikipedia tend to decline along with the size of the interactive community (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010, : 27). Klemp and Forcehimes further raise the question of whether the Wikipedia model - which evolved as a collective epistemic-encyclopedic enterprise - is suitable to the political domain in which the conversation is not just about questions of fact but also about normative and ethical questions. When deliberations turn from the epistemic to the normative level, face-to-face deliberation may be better they argue, because it "enables participants not merely to exchange information but to transform their existing beliefs and values – to arrive at a more reflective set of beliefs through discussions with others" (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010, : 29). They conclude the argument by stating that that the mode of interaction within Wikipedia may supplement face-to-face deliberation: "the Wikipedia model promotes inclusion and accuracy when used at a large scale, while the face-to-face model promotes solidarity and social capital and excels in conditions of localism" (Klemp and Forcehimes 2010, : 2).

But in Klemp and Forcehimes model the Wiki space and the face-to-face interaction are postulated as separate socio-political universes. The question is whether these different universes of social interaction processes can be brought together in a co-enhancing, synergetic way?
II. AccountAbility's Wiki Experiment

AccountAbility transnational e-democracy project can shed light on some of the theoretical questions discussed above. AccountAbility introduced the Wiki as part of a consultation process, which was meant to support the revision of AccountAbility AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard ("AA1000SES"). Stakeholder Engagement is defined as "the process used by an organisation to engage relevant stakeholders for a clear purpose to achieve accepted outcomes" and as "a fundamental accountability mechanism, since it obliges an organisation to involve stakeholders in identifying, understanding and responding to sustainability issues and concerns, and to report, explain and be answerable to stakeholders for decisions, actions and performance" (AccountAbility 2011, : 6). AA1000SES seeks to provide a basis for designing and implementing stakeholder engagement in a credible way (AccountAbility 2011, : 8).

Given AA1000SES subject matter it was particularly important for AccountAbility to develop the standard revised version through a credible consultation process. The consultation process was based on two main deliberative mechanisms: a Wiki (drawing on the earlier experience of AccountAbility with the revision of the AA1000 Assurance Standard)\(^6\) and face-to-face consultations groups, which met at different countries and discussed the draft standard in the first phase of the consultation process.

By drawing on a Wiki platform to facilitate the collaborative drafting process AccountAbility sought to address two challenges: access and transparency (AccountAbility 2011, : 4). The deliberation process was not completely open and non-hierarchical. It was governed by AccountAbility Stakeholder Engagement Technical Committee, which reviewed and revised the drafts after each consultation phase. The final draft was agreed by the Technical Committee and submitted to the AccountAbility Standards Board, which approved it for publication (AccountAbility 2011, : 4-5).

The consultation process was conducted in three phases of public review of 60-90 days each, followed by a final 30-day exposure period of the final draft. This

\(^6\) See, (Perez 2009).
allowed AccountAbility team and the technical committee that was established to this end to take stock of the comments received during each interval. These were the dates of the different consultation periods:

Phase 1: 6.10.2009 – 10.3.2010  
Phase 2: 4.5.2010 – 27.6.2010  
Phase 4: 15.1.2011 – 15.2.2011

This article offers an analysis of the consultation process undertaken by AccountAbility, focusing on the Wiki segment. AccountAbility's attempt to incorporate advanced web technology with face-to-face meetings in its global consultation project provides an interesting opportunity to try and assess the challenge of using web-based democratic tools and also to draw conclusions from an actual democratic experiment – not one forged in a political-science lab. The goal of the study was to try and generate better understanding of the difficulties underlying such projects as well as the potential that they hold for reinvigorating democratic praxis – especially at the transnational domain.

The study draws on two main sources of data. First, I was given access to the Google statistics of the Wiki website. I monitored, with my research team, the data related to the website during the first phase of the consultation process. I focused on the first phase because this stage involved the face-to-face consultation meetings and I wanted to explore the interaction between the two deliberative forums. Second, I conducted a survey of the participants in the Wiki drawing on a list of names given to us by AccountAbility. This survey was supplemented by an interview with key people from AccountAbility team.

A. The Google-Statistics Analysis of the Wiki Website

(1) Method and Findings
We analyzed the Google Analytics data-set of the first Phase of the consultation 6.10.2009 – 10.3.2010.\(^7\) We had data of daily visits, distributed by countries from which the visitors arrived. At the first stage we examined the data using basic descriptive statistics looking for general patterns. The first figure provides data of the mean number of visits to the site per day, ordered by month.

**Figure 1 - Mean number of visits to the site per day, ordered by month**\(^8\)

The high mean of visits to the site in November 2009, might be attributed to the large amount of consultation group meetings conducted during that month (7 consultation groups out of 20).

The next figure shows the percentages of visits from states in different regions on the globe. It shows that the majority of visitors came from the UK (17%) (where AccountAbility's headuwarters is located), Europe (42%) and North America (13%).

**Figure 2: Percentages of visits from states in different regions on the globe**\(^9\)

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\(^7\) We started monitoring the website before the formal opening of the consultation on 23 September 2009. A comment we received from one of the AccountAbility suggests that it would have been interesting to continue monitoring the next phases of the consultation process. We wanted to focus however on the interaction between the offline and online consultation. Further, the discussion we had with AccountAbility team confirmed that the pattern we found of lack of external use of the Wiki itself continued till the end of the process.

\(^8\) Including all days in proximity to workshops.

\(^9\) Israel, Russia, and Turkey are included at the European category. The Asian category includes states from east-Asia such as Japan and China, as well as states from central and south-Asia, such as Kazakhstan, India, and Pakistan. The Middle East category includes Iran and Arab states.
At the second stage of the analysis we wanted to examine whether there was any linkage between the offline consultation workshops organized by AccounTability and the Wiki process. Overall AccountAbility organized 20 consultation workshops, starting on 1.10.2009 in South Africa and ending on 16 March 2010 in Frankfurt. The workshops took place all around the globe from Argentina, to Israel, India, UK and Australia. The full list of meetings and their dates is included in Annex A. We expected to find a positive correlation between the dates in proximity to the meetings and the activity on the Wiki website. All the workshops produced a written feedback which was based on a structured form prepared by AccountAbility. Most of the responses were detailed, with an average length of seven pages.

Table 1 - Descriptive statistics for days in proximity to consultation group meetings and for days not in proximity to consultation group meetings, during the dates 23/9/2009 to 10/3/2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Visits per day - M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>169</td>
<td>31.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The workshop in Frankfurt was not included in the analysis, since it was conducted after the end of the first phase of the consultation process. We also excluded from the analysis an additional meeting in Hungary, Budapest because we could not verify its exact date.
11 We defined days to be in proximity to consultation group meeting, in case the meeting was scheduled for that specific day, or for the following two days.
Visits per day - S.D 18.78

**In proximity to meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>46</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - M</td>
<td>46.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - S.D</td>
<td>19.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - Min</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - Max</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Not in proximity to meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>123</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - M</td>
<td>25.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - S.D</td>
<td>15.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - Min</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits per day - Max</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean number of visits for days in proximity to consultation group meetings was significantly higher than the mean number of visits for days not in proximity to consultation group meetings.\(^\text{12}\) This pattern is reproduced in the following graph.

**Figure 3: Total visits in the site for each date, from 23/9/2009 to 07/03/2010**

\(^{12}\) Independent samples T-test revealed – T (167)=7.12, p<0.001. Cohen’s d=1.23, as calculated by subtracting the means and dividing the result by the pooled SD. For various reasons, recent social science literature recommends the use effect size measures (such as Cohen’s d), in addition to significance testing – see Cohen, J. (1994). The earth is round (p<.05), American Psychologist, 49, 997-1003; Cohen, J. (1988). Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences (second ed): Laurence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New Jersey. As explained by Cohen (1988), an effect size of 1.35 indicates for a large difference between the means of both groups.
As is evident from table 2 below, in almost all countries (apart from Hong Kong) the mean number of visits to the Wiki website was substantially higher for days in proximity to the consultation meeting, than for days which were not in proximity to the meeting. This result is also apparent if we sum up the results for the 17 countries that had a consultation meeting: while the mean number of visits for days in proximity to meetings was 4.89 (SD=3.27), the mean number of visits for days not in proximity to meetings was 1.15 (SD=1.32).\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Table 2 – Mean number of visits per day for each country that had a consultation group meeting, separately for days in proximity to the consultation group meeting\textsuperscript{14} and for days not in proximity to the meeting, during the dates 23/9/2009 to 10/3/2010}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>country</th>
<th>Date for the consultation group meeting</th>
<th>Days not in proximity to the meeting - mean visits</th>
<th>Days in proximity to the meeting - mean visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 South Africa</td>
<td>01/10/09</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Argentina</td>
<td>21/10/09</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Italy</td>
<td>04/11/09</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Israel</td>
<td>09/11/09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 India</td>
<td>11/11/09</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Brazil</td>
<td>13/11/09</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 S. Korea</td>
<td>18/11/09</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Greece</td>
<td>20/11/09</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Australia</td>
<td>24/11/09, 30/11/09</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>8.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{13} A dependent-samples t-test confirmed that the difference in the mean number of visits between days in proximity and not in proximity to the meetings, was statistically significant - T(16)=5.45, p<0.001.

\textsuperscript{14} We defined the day as “in proximity” to a workshop, if that date was scheduled for a meeting, or was 1-2 days before the meeting was about to take place.
In addition to the technical analysis of the website activity we also analyzed the use of the editing function by visitors. This analysis showed very little use of the wiki functions. We found almost no evidence of stakeholder engagement in either the editing or comment functions. The editing of the text within the wiki platform was used predominantly by the AccountAbility team which supported the wiki.

(2) Interim Reflections

Our findings suggest that there was some traffic in the Wiki (although not huge), but it was not translated to actual interaction with the Wiki. The Wiki operated in effect as an information hub (a Web 1.0 structure) instead of a web application that facilitates interactive information sharing and collaborative knowledge production (Web 2.0) (Chadwick 2009 ). We explored the reasons for this result in more detail in the survey which will be discussed in the next section. However at this point it is already possible to make several comments. First, the relatively weak usage of the Wiki seems to be consistent with the skepticism raised above about the capacity of Wiki technology to facilitate deliberative process without the appropriate social conditions even though the data does not allow me to pinpoint the exact reason for this result.

Second, the significant correlation between the consultation workshops and increase in the website activity suggests interesting association between the two processes. It is possible that the Wiki have contributed to the operation of the offline meetings by providing participants with easily accessible information. While the Wiki may have acted as a valuable information source, it did not serve as a deliberative

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15 We received further confirmation to this finding from the in-depth interview with AccountAbility team.
This finding also highlights the importance of integrating the Wiki process with the offline consultation activity. Such integration could have generated more participation in the Wiki process. This argument is consistent with the argument that mixing online and offline methods are institutional factors positively contributing to the success of e-democracy projects (Grönlund and Åström 2009) and with the idea that wikis can only succeed as deliberative forums if they are supported by other social-political processes.

B. The Survey

(1) Introduction
The survey sought to shed light on several questions related to the Wiki process. First, what motivated people to take part in the consultation project? Second, what can explain the relatively low level of actual participation in the Wiki? Third, what is the e-literacy profile of the participants?

(2) Method

Procedure
An invitation to participate in the survey was sent by AccountAbility team to all the people who registered to the Wiki. The survey itself was posted on "Survey Monkey". Respondents received e-mails requesting them to answer the survey through attached link. When a participant was done with the survey, answers were automatically transferred to the "Survey monkey" dataset. I also conducted an interview with two members of Accountability team and a member of the Technical Committee in September 2011 in which we discussed the findings of this study.

Participants

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16 Grönlund and Astrom measure success in terms of high participation, deliberative mode of discussion, and impact on policy (2009).
17 A copy of the questionnaire that was distributed to the survey participants is included in Annex B.
18 The response rate was relatively low. Out of 218 registered Wiki participants 13 have participated in the survey. The low response rate may be attributed to a lack of direct contact between the research group and the target community (more reminders could have generated more responses) and may also be indicative of a lack of sufficient interest in the Wiki project as a whole. It is also possible that the timing of the survey with an internal crisis in AccountAbility’s contributed to the low response rate.
The final sample included 13 participants, 6 male and 4 female, aged 21-59 years. Five participants had Masters or a professional degree and 4 had an advanced graduate degree or Ph.D. The majority of participants were employed, 5 were employed for wages and 5 were self-employed. Among the participants who were employed for wages, 2 were employees of a for-profit business, 1 was an employee of a not-for-profit charitable organization, 1 was an employee of an Academic or Research Institution and 1 was an employee of state government or local government. The majority of participants (66.7%) stated that the region of their state of residence was Europe; other came from Asia, Middle East and Australia.

The relatively small size of the sample means that we should be careful in drawing conclusions from the survey and should consider it as exploratory pointing to directions for future research.

(3) Findings

Basic characteristics of the wiki process

Table 3 presents the distribution of items measuring the social dynamic underlying the Wiki process.

Table 3

The social dynamic of the Wiki process: basic characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you register at the AA1000SE Wiki?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where did you first hear about the AccountAbility AA1000SES Wiki?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AccountAbility website</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AccountAbility Email list</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct invitation from AccountAbility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google search</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you participated in one of the workshops organized by AccountAbility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often (approximately) did you visit the AA1000SES Wiki?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figures presented in Table 3 show that eight Participants (61.5%) were registered users of the AA1000SE Wiki and 5 (38.5%) were non-registered users. The majority of participants reported that they first heard about the AccountAbility AA1000SES Wiki by means of AccountAbility website (38.5%) or a direct invitation from AccountAbility (30.8), a smaller percentage via an AccountAbility Email list (23.1%) and none by means of a Google search. This finding indicates the cohesiveness of the sample in terms of their linkage with AccountAbility.

The online consultation was accompanied by off-line workshops organized by the AccountAbility. Seven subjects (53.8%) reported participation in one of these workshops. The vast majority of participants reported that they visited the AA1000SES Wiki once a month (75%), with 66.7% reporting that they visited the AA1000SES Wiki more extensively in the period prior and during the workshop.

The vast majority of registered users reported that they rarely participated in the actual editing of the AA1000SE draft text, with 50% reporting that they never participated and 37.5% indicating that they participated once a month. This finding is inconsistent with our direct observation of the Wiki, in which we found no evidence of external editing of the Wiki and thus may reflect misunderstanding of the question.\(^{20}\)

---

\(^{19}\) The figures are based on merged data of registered and non-registered users.

\(^{20}\) However, comments were sent directly to AccountAbility staff (comment from a member of the Technical Committee).
Participants were asked to rate how easy it was to find information within the Wiki on a 1 (easy) to 10 (Difficult) point scale. The mean was 3.25 (sd=2.38) indicating that participants did not face major difficulties whilst searching within the Wiki. This finding is again inconsistent with the lack of actual editing of the Wiki, which seems to be indicative of technical and informational difficulties. In addition, registered users were asked to rate the registration process in terms of ease of use on a 1 (extremely easy) to 10 (very difficult) point scale. The mean was 1.62 (sd=1.41) indicating that participants did not face major difficulties during the registration process.  

Attitudes and perceptions of the wiki process in general

The study examined individuals' attitudes and perceptions toward the Wiki process in general. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with four statements on a 1 (low) to 10 (high) point scale. Table 4 presents basic descriptive statistics for these items and for the composite score, measuring support for the use of Wikis in consultation processes in general.

Table 4
Attitudes and perceptions toward the value of the Wiki process in the context of consultation and rule-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you think that the Wiki-based consultation process would contribute to the broad acceptability of the ultimate standard among its potential users</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you think the Wiki-based consultation process would improve the quality of the ultimate standard</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend other international organizations such as the Global Reporting Imitative to use Wikis as part of their consultation processes</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you recommend a more extensive use of Wiki tools in national consultations about national laws and regulations?</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the use of Wikis in the consultation processes in general</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures are based on merged data of registered and non-registered users.

One of the study's objectives was to explore why people did not register to the Wiki and with respect to the registered group - why people did not participate in the actual editing. One segment of the survey asked the participants to rate several reasons which explain their decision on a 1 to 10 point scale, where 1 means that the reason does not explain the decision at all and 10 means that the reason fully explains the decision. Unfortunately we had 70% missing values among both registered and non-registered users and this data could not be used.
The figures presented in Table 4 show that the means ranged from 5.00 to 5.65 indicating an intermediate and above level of support for the use of Wikis in consultation processes – but not a very enthusiastic support. This result may reflect the intuition that wikis can function well and generate democratic legitimacy only when conducted together with offline political processes.

**Measures of Web-Oriented Digital Literacy**

As part of the section looking at people’s online activities and internet uses, the survey included questions asking respondents about their familiarity with six computer and internet-related terms. Participants were asked to rank their level of familiarity with the terms on a 1-5-point scale, from 1 (not familiar) to 5 (very familiar). The items were *Advanced search, PDF, Spyware, WIKI, Cache, RSS*. Based on the high internal consistency of the six items (Cronbach's alpha=0.95) a composite score was also computed measuring the participants' Web-use skills. Table 5 presents basic descriptive statistics for these six items and for the measure of e-literacy. The means are presented in a descending order. I relied in this context on the work of Eszter Hargittai (2010) on measures of e-literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced search</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiki</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spyware</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-literacy (composite score)</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>5-point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's alpha</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures presented in Table 5 show that the means ranged from 3.30 to 4.70 indicating that all six terms were relatively familiar to the participants. The mean of
the measure of e-literacy was high (m=3.88, sd=1.23) indicating that overall participants in the study had a high web-oriented digital literacy. It is clear that whereas PDF was the most recognized term among the six included items, Cache was the least recognized term. The terms PDF, Advanced search and WIKI were ranked higher than the terms RSS, Spyware and Cache, suggesting that the former terms may be relatively easy and respondents reported high scores for them. Given that using browsers is a common way of going online, it is not surprising that respondents had a high-level of understanding of related terms. However, concepts like RSS, Spyware and Cache are difficult to understand for the average Web user.

The survey included three additional questions asking respondents about the approximate time they spend online each day, whether they have a Facebook or Twitter accounts and their self-perception of their internet skills. We found that the majority of the participants (70%) spent approximately more than two hours online each day, had a Facebook or Twitter accounts (70%), and exhibited a high-level of self-perception of their internet skills, with 60% rating themselves as very skilled and 30% rating themselves as experts.

Table 6 presents inter correlations for the composite measure of e-literacy (table 5 above) and three distinct measures of internet related skills. Pearson correlations were used for interval measures and Spearman correlations for ordinal measures. Given the small sample, correlations above the absolute value of 0.20 were considered as statistically meaningful even though they did not reach statistical significance.

**Table 6: Inter correlations for the composite measure of e-literacy and distinct internet related skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>e-literacy (composite measure)</th>
<th>Time spent online</th>
<th>Having accounts</th>
<th>Self-perception of Internet skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e-literacy (composite measure)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent online</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having accounts</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perception of internet skills</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>-0.59*</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05*
The figures in Table 6 show positive correlations between e-literacy and the measures of internet related skills: Having accounts \( (r=0.42) \) and Self-perception of internet skills \( (r=0.37) \), that is, higher e-literacy is associated with higher level of these internet related skills. However, negative correlations were found between the measure of time spent online and the measures having accounts \( (r=-0.27) \) and Self-perception of internet skills \( (r=-0.59) \), that is, the more time participants spent online each day, the lower the level of these internet related skills. This seems to indicate that time spent on-line is not a good indicator of e-literacy.

**Measures of voice and expertise**

Another objective of the study was to analyze the respondents’ perceptions of the underlying reasons for the legitimacy or acceptability of global standards such as the AA1000SES. Participants were asked to rate their agreement with six statements on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (fully agree) point scale, measuring the value of participation in creating legitimacy (Voice) and the importance of expertise in establishing legitimacy (Expertise). Two composite scores were computed measuring these factors (i.e voice and expertise). Table 8 presents basic descriptive statistics for the items and for the composite scores, measuring voice and expertise.

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics for the items measuring voice and expertise**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items measuring voice</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The broad acceptability of global standards depends on the inclusiveness of the consultation process that preceded their publication</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The broad acceptability of global standards depends on the establishment of mechanisms to ensure that the voice of the public is being heard and given appropriate weight in the standard-setting process</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The broad acceptability of global standards depends on whether the standard enjoys the support of a broad, transnational community of stakeholders</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice (composite score)</strong></td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items measuring expertise</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The broad acceptability of global standards depends on the standard being endorsed by reputable professional International Organizations such as the International organization for Standardization or the World Bank</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The broad acceptability of global standards depends on whether the standard-setting process took into account the opinions of experts in the field</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The broad acceptability of global standards depends on whether the organization behind the standard has the necessary expertise. The figures presented in Table 6 show that the means for the items measuring *Voice* ranged from 6.60 to 7.30 and the means for the items measuring *Expertise* ranged from 6.10 to 7.40, indicating high and similar levels civic participation and expertise in establishing legitimacy.

**Qualitative measures**

Respondents were asked to suggest how they would improve the AA1000SES Wiki in a way which would have allowed more active participation by external stakeholders. The question was phrased as an open-ended question, adding a qualitative aspect to the research. The respondents suggested several ways of improving the AA1000SES Wiki. First, they highlighted the importance of making it more user-friendly. One participant noted in that context that he has recently "been involved in a debate in LinkedIn and I found it much more easy to use and the traceability of the comments". Another suggested "using a special online platform similar to Facebook social platform" because "for many people, it is more intuitive". Another participant noted the importance of more involved central mediation: "To receive invitations more often from the organizations that is in charge of the process; to organize specific working groups that could work online, in order to work in a specific issue or part of the standard/project". One participant was worried though that opening the standard-setting process to multiple stakeholders could generate a standard that is too complex for some of the users: "Another reservation I have is that more participants may result in a more complex standard. I am interested in use of the standard with SMEs and the existing standard is useful for its embodied principles, but the processes are too complex, potentially diverting scarce resources from front-line engagement initiatives".

The issue of the user-friendliness of the Wiki-interface was also raised in the interview I conducted with AccountAbility (by a member of the Technical Committee). He noted that thought that the Wiki was not very user friendly and that this could constitute significant barrier for intensive participation given the time
constraints of potential participants. He further noted that The Wiki was important for ensuring legitimacy for the whole process as anyone could participate. However, with the benefit of hindsight, that doesn’t mean people will participate, especially considering the nature of the emerging topic under consideration which in itself is very complex. The Wiki does not facilitate exchanging ideas. Also because of the transnational character of AccountAbility's work language was a big obstacle for many people in his opinion.

III. Discussion and Conclusions

AccountAbility invested substantial resources and collective thought into the consultation process regarding the AA1000SES Stakeholder Engagement Standard. This study focused on the online facet of this effort – the Wiki. Its findings highlight two different problematic of using wikis to facilitate on-line consultations: the cognitive difficulties generated by this instrument and its embedment in off-line socio-political processes.

The study's findings show that the Wiki operated primarily as an information hub (a Web 1.0 structure) instead of a Web 2.0 structure that facilitates collaborative knowledge production. There was almost no use of the Wiki's editing and commenting functions by the external people who registered to the Wiki. Because the Wiki did not give rise to true dialogical process within its boundaries it did not meet the criteria of inclusiveness and responsiveness. This result is not a deterministic outcome of the Wiki technology. In other contexts – such as in Wikipedia – Wiki processes can demonstrate high reflexivity and a capacity to respond quickly to social and political events (Lih 2004). Thus for example a Wiki value describing the tent protest, which took place in Israel during the summer of 2011, has been written only few days after the protest erupted and was continuously updated during the protest.23

We also found significant correlation between the dates of the consultation meetings and increased visits to the Wiki. This finding indicates, first, that the Wiki

23 Thus for example a Wiki value describing the tent protest, which took place in Israel during the summer of 2011, has been written only few days after the protest erupted and was continuously updated. See, Tel Aviv's 'tent city' protesters dig in to demand social justice, The Guardian, 4 August 2011 and http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/מחאת_האוהלים.
may have contributed to the operation of the consultation meetings by providing participants with easily accessible information. Second, it also points to the importance of integrating the wiki process with off-line political processes. Such integration seems to be necessary in order to facilitate vibrant deliberative process within the wiki domain. This conclusion is consistent with the lessons from other e-democracy projects (Grönlund and Åström 2009). This could be achieved for example by encouraging participants to conduct online discussions prior to the meeting and maybe to return to the Wiki with some ex post reflections. One can also imagine the group as a whole posting a collective response on the Wiki as a kind of summary to the meeting. Overall such integration could have provided the necessary peer support needed to counter the technical and sociological barriers involved in wiki environment. This policy conclusion is also consistent with studies exploring the motivation of individuals to contribute to open source data-bases such as Wikipedia. These studies identify a plethora of motivations which can be associated with contributions to Wikipedia, including both utilitarian motivations (driven by an expectation for external reward) and altruistic (driven by concern for others) (Rafaeli and Ariel 2008, : 250). But the literature also highlighted Wikipedians’ sense of community as one of strongest motivations to participate and contribute to the growth of Wikipedia (Rafaeli and Ariel 2008, : 257-258). Altruistic motives seem to play an important role in the Wikipedia context (Oreg and Nov 2008). However, for altruistic motives to arise and to make sense, the deliberative process needs to take place within the context of a community.

One puzzling result in our study was that that although our sample was relatively e-literate this was not translated to stronger levels of activity in the Wiki among the participants. Further the respondents’ open-ended responses seem to indicate that the interface was not user friendly. This seems to suggest that the cognitive barriers created by the wiki architecture are larger than commonly assumed. Potential responses for this problematic, which were suggested by the survey participants and the interviewees from AccountAbility include integration with social media platforms (Facebook or LinkedIn) and more intensive mediation by AccountAbility team (e.g. by sending more frequent reminders and invitations).

Overall, there seems to be a great potential in integrating Wiki processes, which are relatively complex and challenging from a cognitive perspective, with
social platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn. These platforms can also operate as a bridge between offline processes – such as the consultation workshops in our case – and the Wiki process. As the recent Arab uprisings of 2011 demonstrate, social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter has the capacity to reflect the vitality of the social processes taking place outside the 'Web' (Cottle 2011; Challand 2011). Many international and governmental agencies already use Facebook in order to connect with the civic society (Coglianese 2011, : 12). Examples include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the European Environmental Agency, United National Environmental Program and the Global Reporting Initiative. These Facebook pages usually contain general details about these organizations activities. The model suggested here is to create a dedicated Facebook pages which would be directly associated with the wiki process. Such linkage could have a dual role: first, it could facilitate a bonding social dynamic necessary for lively deliberation; second it could alleviate some of the technical-cognitive difficulties associated with Wiki technology. There are similar works that seek to cope with these cognitive difficulties by developing tools that could allow users to post their contributions to wikis through their email software (Chi et al. 2011; Kong et al. 2011).

Finally, another way that could be used to reduce some of cognitive barriers associated with wikis is to use some form of mediation. To some extent this possibility was open to AccountAbility, which already had a team in place that was responsible for coordinating the consultation process. However, this option was not incorporated into the Wiki structure. A good example for a project that seeks to develop such mediation services is Regulation Room, which was designed by the Cornell eRulemaking Initiative. Regulation Room seeks to provide an online environment for people and groups to learn about, discuss, and react to selected rules(regulations) proposed by U.S. federal agencies; as such it seeks to complement the official Regulations.gov portal (Coglianese 2011, : 16).

Should transnational organizations continue experimenting with wikis as part of their attempt to garner legitimacy for their norm-setting activity? In terms of a general support for the use of Wikis in consultation processes we found an

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intermediate and above level of support. This result may reflect the intuition that Wikis can generate democratic legitimacy only when conducted together with offline political processes. We also found high and similar levels of support for the significance of civic participation and expertise in establishing legitimacy. Together these two findings suggest that transnational organizations should not rely exclusively on their expertise and continue to invest in developing consultation mechanisms. In our context this account suggests that AccountAbility was justified in investing substantial resources in the consultation effort rather than relying exclusively on the expert advice of the Stakeholder Engagement Technical Committee.

The findings of this study demonstrate that constructing on-line deliberative mechanism constitutes a non-trivial challenge. It is not enough to produce an innovative platform with reasonably friendly interface to produce deliberation process that can meet democratic expectations. Substantial thought should be given to the technological interface and the integration between offline and online activities. Nonetheless AccountAbility's effort to create a deliberative framework that combines Wiki with offline consultation meetings constitutes a bold and innovative experiment, which could constitutes a template for other transnational groups.
Bibliography

Glassey, Olivier. 2010. A Survey on Participation at Geneva’s Constituent Assembly


Annex A

The Consultation Workshops dates and locations

1. South Africa, Johannesburg (1/10/2009)
2. Argentina (21/10/2009)
3. Hong Kong, (29/11/2009)
5. Israel (9/11/2009)
7. Brazil, Sao Paulo (13/11/2009)
8. South Korea (18/11/2009)
10. Australia, Sydney (24/11/2009);
11. Australia, Melbourne (1/12/2009)
12. Romania, Bucharest (3/12/2009)
13. United Kingdom (15/12/2009)
14. Denmark, Copenhagen (2/12/2009)
15. Spain, Madrid (14/1/2010)
16. Poland, Warsaw (22/1/2010)
17. Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (27/1/2010)
18. United States, San Francisco (5/2/2010)
20. Hungary Budapest
**Annex B**

**The AccountAbility AA1000SES questionnaire for Workshop Participants and Registered users**

**Accountability2010**

The Accountability AA1000SES questionnaire, for workshop participant and registered users

Dear Workshop Participant and Registered Users,

The third phase of the AA1000SES consultation process has just ended and we wanted to hear your view about the Wiki site which was established to support the revision and consultation process. As someone who has taken part in a workshop and/or in the Wiki process we thought your view could be especially important, as we try to draw lessons from the consultation method.

This survey focuses purely on the wiki and will only take few minutes of your time at most, and we guarantee full anonymity. The survey was created by Prof. Perez from Bar Ilan University, Faculty of Law, Israel, with assistance of Mr. Ariel Naftaly, as a part of a research project on e-democracy (Email: perezo@mail.biu.ac.il). In return for your participation we will be happy to send you a highlights report of the findings.

1. **Where did you first hear about the AccountAbility AA1000SES Wiki?**
   - AccountAbility website
   - AccountAbility Email list
   - Direct invitation from AccountAbility
   - Google search
   - Some other way

2. **Have you participated in one of the workshops organized by AccountAbility?**
   - Yes
   - No

3. **Did you register at the AA1000SE Wiki?**
   - Yes
   - No
   **For non-registered users**

4. **Please rate the reasons which you think explain your decision not to register (1-10 ranking):**

   (Please choose a number between 1 and 10 where 1 means that the reason does not explain your decision at all, and 10 means that the reason fully explains your decision)

   **I had technical difficulties with the registration process**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (Not) (Very)

   **I felt my privacy could be at risk**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (Not) (Very)
I had doubts about my technical ability to use the Wiki (e.g., using the edit function and following the edits of other participants)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

I was concerned about the reactions of other participants to my edits (or comments)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

I was concerned about the reaction of my employer to my edits (or comments)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

I didn’t think that my edits (or comments) within the Wiki would have an impact on the final standard

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

The design of the Wiki made it difficult to use (e.g., in terms of navigating and editing)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

The design of the Wiki made it difficult to find the information needed to make an informed comment

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

I felt I did not have the support of my peer group to make this effort

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

5. How often (approximately) did you visit the AA1000SES Wiki (during all the consultation phases)?

Once a month  Once in two weeks  Once a week  Once a day

6. Did you visit the AA1000SES Wiki more extensively in the period prior and during the workshop?

Yes
7. How easy was it to find information within the Wiki?

(1 means that it was extremely easy and 10 that it was very difficult)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Easy) (Difficult)

For registered users

4.1. How would you describe the registration process in terms of ease of use?

(Please choose a number between 1 and 10 where 1 means that it was extremely easy and 10 that it was very difficult)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Easy) (Difficult)

4.2. How often (approximately) did you visit the AA1000SES Wiki?

Once a month  Once in two weeks  Once a week  Once a day

4.3. How easy was it to find information within the Wiki?

(1 means that it was extremely easy and 10 that it was very difficult)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(Easy) (Difficult)

5. How often (approximately) did you participate in the actual editing of the AA1000SE draft text?

Once a month  Once in two weeks  Once a week  Once a day

6. Did you visit the AA1000SES Wiki more extensively in the period prior and during the workshop?

Yes

No

7. Please rate the reasons which you think best explain your decision not to use the edit function (1-10 ranking)?

(Please choose a number between 1 and 10 where 1 means that the reason does not explain your decision at all and 10 means that the reason fully explains your decision)

I felt it was technically too complex

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I felt my privacy could be at risk
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I had doubts about my technical ability to use the Wiki (e.g., using the edit function and following the edits of other participants)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I was concerned about the reactions of other participants to my edits (or comments)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I was concerned about the reaction of my employer to my edits (or comments)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I didn't think that my edits (or comments) within the Wiki would have an impact on the final standard
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
The design of the Wiki made it difficult to use (e.g., in terms of navigating and editing)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
The design of the Wiki made it difficult to find the information needed to make an informed comment
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
I felt I did not have the support of my peer group to make this effort
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
8. To what extent do you think that the Wiki-based consultation process would contribute to the broad acceptability of the ultimate standard among its potential users?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)
9. To what extent do you think the Wiki-based consultation process would improve the quality of the ultimate standard?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

10. Would you recommend other international organizations such as the Global Reporting Imitative to use Wikis as part of their consultation processes?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

11. Would you recommend a more extensive use of Wiki tools in national consultations about national laws and regulations?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

12. How would you improve the AA1000SES Wiki in a way which would have allowed more active participation by external stakeholders?

__________________________________________

13. Please let us know how you feel about the following statements:

The broad acceptability of global standards such as the AA1000SES or the Global Reporting Imitative Sustainability Reporting Guidelines depends on:

(Please choose a number between 1 and 10 where 1 means that you strongly disagree and 10 means that you fully agree with the statement)

The inclusiveness of the consultation process that preceded their publication

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

The establishment of mechanisms to ensure that the voice of the public is being heard and given appropriate weight in the standard-setting process

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

The standard being endorsed by reputable professional International Organizations such as the International organization for Standardization or the World Bank

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not) (Very)

Whether the standard-setting process took into account the opinions of experts in the field

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Whether the organization behind the standard has the necessary expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Not)</td>
<td>(Very)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Whether the standard enjoys the support of a broad, transnational community of stakeholders-

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14.1. How much time do you spend online each day approximately?

- Less than half an hour
- Half an hour
- An hour
- 1-2 hours
- More than two hours

14.2. Do you have a Facebook or Twitter accounts?

- None
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Facebook and Twitter

14.3. In terms of your internet skills, do you consider yourself to be:

- Not skilled at all
- Not very skilled
- Fairly skilled
- Very skilled
- Expert

14.4. How familiar are you with the following computer and internet-related items?

Advanced search

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<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Not)</td>
<td>(little)</td>
<td>(Some)</td>
<td>(Good)</td>
<td>(Very)</td>
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</table>

PDF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Not)</td>
<td>(little)</td>
<td>(Some)</td>
<td>(Good)</td>
<td>(Very)</td>
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</table>

Spyware

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<tr>
<td>(Not)</td>
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<td>(Good)</td>
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Wiki

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Not)</td>
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Cache

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>(Some)</td>
<td>(Good)</td>
<td>(Very)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

RSS
15.1. My age is between:
21-29  30-39  40-49  50-59  60-

15.2. Gender:
Male     Female

15.3. What is the highest level of education you completed?
High school  A Levels  Bachelor degree  Masters or professional degree
Advanced Graduate work or Ph.D.  None of the above

15.4 Employment Status: Are you currently...?
Employed for wages  Self-employed  Out of work  A homemaker
A student  Retired

15.5 Employer Type: Please describe your work.
Employee of a for-profit business
Employee of a not-for-profit charitable organization
Employee of an Academic or Research Institution

State government or Local government employee

Self-employed (e.g., professional practice)

15.6. Please state the region of your State of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>North America</th>
<th>South America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>Middle East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.7 If you would like to receive a highlights report of the findings please leave your email address (it will not be shared with any third party):

________________________________________

Thank you very much.