

# Governance Process: Stanford Crowd Research Collective

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## The Collective

“Stanford Crowd Research Collective”, also referred to as “The Collective”, or “Collective”, represents the group of people in the Slack group: [Crowd Research](#). Each member of the Collective, referred to as a “member”, is bound by this governing document. When new

members join the Collective, they need to agree following and upholding the Collective principles and governing rules. Once added to the Slack group, no member can be removed from the Collective or the platforms it manages unless he/she express formally to be removed or are mutually decided by the Collective to be removed as described in [Code of Conduct](#) (work in progress). The Collective owns and operates the [Wiki](#), [Github organization](#), all Daemo servers, and other platforms used to manage the Collective. Jointly with workers and requesters of Daemo as described in the [Daemo Constitution](#), the Collective owns and operates [Daemo](#), the [Daemo Forum](#) and any platforms retaining the name “Daemo” or under the domain “daemo.org”.

## Goal

We bias toward action while exercising collective determination. We govern ourselves through a regular process of collective prioritization, decision-making, implementation, quality review and iterations.

## Creating a proposal

Each week, members of the Collective can submit a proposal. A "proposal" is any detailed change plan for the platform or for how the Collective focuses its efforts and resources. Example proposals include: creating a requester onboarding process, a concrete change to the task design interface, an update the worker feedback process, a new process for onboarding new members, a suggestion that the Collective begin holding town halls biweekly with workers, or a decision on whether we should send a delegate to attend a conference or respond to a media inquiry. All proposals must be made through our tool (TBA). Submitting a proposal indicates a commitment to engage with any deliberation about the proposal and the problem it is solving, join the execution of the proposal, and join any efforts understanding and addressing to the proposal's downstream implications on workers, requesters, and the Collective. No changes are made without a proposal, irrespective of how urgent or important it is — see blanket approvals for specific exceptions. All proposals and their state are maintained on our tool (TBD).

## Proposal process outline

Consensus decision making means that we work together in good faith to find solutions that are in the best interest of the whole Collective. Consensus does not mean that the decision is everybody's top choice: it means that it is the one that everyone can agree to go with. If a member of the Collective wants to raise issues with a proposal, they can break consensus, indicating that they do not support the proposal in its current form. Once the consensus-seeking process has moved forward and the person has been convinced or the proposal has been improved, that person can indicate that they now support the consensus. Likewise, if members

feel they are not fully knowledgeable about the context of the proposal, they can seek this information from the submitter.

In situations where members are satisfied with whatever other members think about the proposal and they are willing to let the Collective decide without their participation, they can decide not to participate. If they had previously broken consensus on a proposal, but no longer wish to, they can “stand aside”, which allows consensus to move forward. Standing aside indicates that the person no longer wishes to log a disagreement that blocks consensus. This, however, doesn't stop them from seeking more information about the proposal. Details of this process appear in the Proposal Process section.

## Proposal process

1. A member of the Collective submits a Proposal. There is a weekly deadline for achieving consensus on the proposal, currently Wednesdays at 10am Pacific time. Proposals considered for that week's consensus deadline are accepted until 48 hours before the weekly consensus deadline, so currently Mondays at 10am Pacific time. Submitting the proposal after that deadline automatically moves the proposal into the next week's consideration period. This creates a fixed period where people can see the complete set under consideration that week. Urgent proposals follow a separate schedule (see Urgent Proposals section).
2. The proposal enters a consensus-seeking period.
  - a. Members of the Collective express their agreement or disagreement for pursuing the proposal. Members of the Collective who wish to help work (e.g., support with design or code), express this in comments on the proposal.
  - b. If someone wishes to disagree with the proposal, they leave a comment on the proposal expressing this disagreement, which breaks consensus. Just saying “I do not agree” is not enough: disagreement requires an argument as to why they cannot support the proposal, and ideally what changes would enable it to secure their support. The argument should be evidence-based: anchored in prior research; research-grade experiments, quantitative or qualitative data. Specifically, it should offer verifiable and falsifiable claims that are central to the proposal's content.
  - c. If there is disagreement, the proposal submitter and other members of the collective evaluate any arguments disagreeing with the proposal and try to alter the proposal to incorporate the feedback. The goal is to achieve a consensus on the proposal to move it forward through iteration.
3. If a proposal has achieved consensus by the deadline, it is approved: it changes (e.g., design, code, process) are in effect once it has achieved quality control sign-off (see Sign-off Quality Review section).
4. If there is no consensus on a proposal, the proposal remains open and the deliberation process continues in the subsequent weeks. In the worst case, the discussion has had

no activity between two weekly deadlines, and no consensus has been achieved. In such a "deadlock" situation, a majority voting process is pursued for resolving the decision by all the members of the Collective. Votes are taken for one week, from weekly deadline to weekly deadline. The decision is made by a majority vote: breaking consensus requires a strict majority (>50%). In other words, voting in favor of breaking consensus — typically, not making the change the proposal is suggesting — requires greater than half the votes. If breaking consensus acquires fewer votes than a strict majority, then the consensus passes: the proposal is approved. Voting records will be made public so that there is accountability.

5. Inactivity is an implicit sign of consensus:
  - a. If a member of the Collective does not participate in a proposal, they are assumed to be in implicit agreement to the proposal. For example, if a member focusing on design does not participate in a code proposal, their agreement is assumed and the proposal moves forward. Likewise,
  - b. If a member of the Collective previously expressed disagreement, which led to a lack of consensus, but then has not replied for an entire weekly cycle — from weekly deadline to weekly deadline — their disagreement is considered resolved and consensus is assumed.
6. Each proposal will be documented on our proposal tracker (TBD) with following information:
  - a. Title
  - b. Name and Slack username of the person or people who created the proposal
  - c. Proposal details:
    - i. What problem is being solved? If feasible, specific evidence or examples (e.g., screen shots, data) in support of the understanding of the problem
    - ii. Short-term (and, if relevant, long-term) implications of executing this proposal
  - d. A thread containing the names of the Collective members engaged in the proposal's consensus process, and their reasons for support or non-support
  - e. Formal statement of anybody breaking consensus, rejoining the consensus, or standing by (TDB depending on platform)
  - f. Links to any relevant materials regarding the proposal's execution after it is approved, for example pull requests
  - g. Names and comments from any quality control reviewers
  - h. State of the proposal: active, approved, declined, voting
  - i. New proposals must also be cross-posted to the Collective's Slack space. (Ideally, this will happen automatically.)

## Proposal Quality Review

After a proposal has achieved consensus and is complete (e.g., a pull request has achieved consensus), it must go through quality review to approve the final deliverable as achieving the

goal it set out to accomplish. Quality review will be performed by review teams that are nominated and elected by the Collective for specific domains. If a proposal involves a domain, it must be reviewed by that team. These volunteers can be members of any existing quality review team. For example, the design team might verify that a new requester onboarding design is complete and achieves the goals that the proposal set out. If no team has jurisdiction, an ad-hoc team of at least three people is formed from volunteers. Once this approval is received, the proposal is marked as closed. If discrepancies are found, they are documented and passed on to the team for completion. By signing-off a proposal, it goes into effect. For example, an engineering proposal will be pushed to the production platform only after the sign-off.

Review team privileges are assigned to members who have demonstrated ability and responsibility to do so. [The process for this nomination is listed in the operational guide](#), and [current members of each group are listed in the group membership document](#).

## Blanket Approval for Proposals

[Our operational guide](#) specifies specific cases where a consensus for a operation has been previously established and action can be taken immediately without requiring a new consensus. This could include: fixing live bugs, addressing problems with the server, and helping requesters with their tasks. These blanket approval proposals each can be executed without pushing a proposal by a group of members of the Collective who have been voted via a proposal to have the power to do so. Actions taken with blanket approval should be logged somewhere public to other members of the Collective, for example on GitHub if it is a code change or our group's email or forum if it is communication. Bug fixes occurring under blanket approvals still require proposals that stay open for the weekly cycle: the goal is to achieve consensus on whether any larger systemic changes need to be made to address it in the future.

Read the operational guide for more details on which proposals fit under this heading.

## Urgent proposals

Proposals may arise with deadlines that cannot accommodate the weekly schedule. For example: media requests with 24 hour response windows, or forum questions from workers that fall outside our operational guide and need a response the same day. In this case, we create a proposal as usual, but with the shorter deadline giving as much time as is reasonable, ideally at least 24 hours. The process operates with the same framework as above, just with the amended deadline instead of the weekly meeting. If an urgent proposal cannot achieve consensus by the deadline, it automatically goes to a vote for at least a twelve hour period. Urgent proposals still require that the proposal stay open for the weekly cycle: the goal is to achieve consensus on whether any larger systemic changes need to be made to address it in the future.

## Strategic planning

Quarterly, we will have a similar proposal process that runs over a two-week period with a specific focus on identifying strategic proposals for the next three months. These quarterly proposals are larger-scale efforts and frame our weekly proposals: they are how we decide what to focus on. For example: a Python scripting client for AI applications, a UI-based experience, opening to workers (or not). Strategic proposals can be revised through the weekly proposal process if needed. Once a month, we will review progress toward our strategic goals in our weekly meeting.

The quarterly proposal process will follow the same process as the usual weekly one, with the exception that the consensus deadline is placed two weeks away, not one week. In other words, on Day 1, proposals can begin getting submitted and gathering consensus. The submission deadline is Day 12 (deadline-48 hours): proposals submitted after this deadline won't be considered for that quarter's strategic planning. Proposals that achieve consensus by the deadline on Day 14 are executed. Proposals that cannot achieve consensus automatically go to a one week vote following the deadline.

Strategy proposals feature the same requirements as weekly proposals in terms of documentation (e.g., names, formal support). In addition, whereas long-term implications of the proposal are only if necessary for weekly proposals, they are required for strategy proposals.

## Code of Conduct

All members of the Collective abide by our [Code of Conduct](#) (in progress). The Code of Conduct specifies expectations, as well as ramifications for members who break it.

## Revising this document

Documents governing the Collective can be revised through the proposal consensus process. The Daemon Constitution is not under the purview of this process.