

vNetwork Meeting Notes

7/18/18 - Orbital, NYC

Meeting agenda

- Intros: name, how are you feeling?
 - Kate, Cordelia, Bitsy, Liz, Devin, Casey (via web), CS
- News since June 11-12:
 - Casey submitted to g0v summit on adjacent work at Cooper
 - Devin applied to g0v summit about building out Consul with the Participatory Budgeting Project that works with 17 cities across the US. (where Bitsy works)
- What are we?
 - vNetwork

Inspired by vTaiwan to localize that programming for our own context.

- Nobodies

Train ourselves to facilitate as “nobodies” who can protect minority rights and bring people to consensus.

QUESTION: are we here for the entire English speaking world? Or mostly NYC?

Devin: What is a node?

Devin: If we're a network building nodes than - what does that process look like?

CS: g0v structure is open, not so strictly defined. Why are you here? Over time, evolution

Kate: value in understanding relationships across, and within cities

CS: there's no other city represented here, just NYC

Kate: NYC has lots of connects to Taiwan, is this a pattern going forward? Toronto.

CS: steps have been made toward the entire network, the bridged slacks,

Devin: happy to say what's up NYC, i'm mostly NYC

Bitsy: new here. NYC has lots of work to do. We imagine we're international, but local organizing is missing in a big way. If we can organize locally effectively here lots of lessons could spread widely.

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- What are we interested in doing? Any project updates? Including new projects?
 - Website: <http://g0v.network/> *check it*
 - Fearless Cities July 27
 - Content Meetups?
 - Community, Storytelling, Maps, Data - Free event Bitsy is organizing
 - Devin: introducing Pol.is to local politicians, and we here have exp w this. Question about interfacing with the Spanish model. Lobby City Council to use new methods? PBP lobbies.

- Working with local officials / lobby electeds to use new tools / introduce them to methods
- Who would we reach out to?
 - Electeds
 - Community Orgs
 - Civic servants
 - Media
- Liz: facilitation that breaks gridlock, moving beyond tools themselves. (Magic sauce)
- CS: Facilitation: dynamic facilitation, what Audrey does is in this lineage of emergent facilitation strategies. Beginning last summer with the candidate side of City Council, i'm interested in deepening facilitation practices within this group as a core skill. Then perhaps working with an org facing a tough problem. Test out methods at different scales.
 - IDEA: find a district where there is elected support + local org support and run a process.
- CS: also very interested in learning other cities methods/models, eg., Amsterdam's smart city ordinances and laws are the opposite of Toronto. Knowledge-sharing methods, etc.
- Casey: interested in continuing to learn, translating original sources out of Mandarin and Spanish organizing contexts. Into learning more about facilitation techniques. Generating content resources (tried to go over g0v with friends, but it's not suited to sharing with newcomers because it is not concise). Also moving beyond the tools themselves to see how things there resonate here, it's not 1:1 in terms of adopting tools, e.g. there's such strong multi-stakeholderism there, and in my community here there isn't. Thinking/writing critically about differences, e.g. how design thinking is manifesting in US v diff from Taiwan.
- Kate: relationships with gov and showing them tools and methods, OR finding space to more
- Bitsy: Views participatory democracy as dismantling systemic racism. Helping communities unlearn. Decolonization. Not as interested in reaching out to electeds because participatory tools and process are not in their interest
- Cordelia: There's a reason Black Lives Matter makes participatory budgeting a core tenet of their platform.
- CS: BetaNYC is beginning to use Polis as their listening instrument.
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- Cordelia: Observations on Taiwan:
 - Re: Taiwanese model, they've been doing this for a long time.
 - Audrey and others keep saying: the tools they use depend entirely on the project. Tools don't dictate the work.
 - Learning, inquiry is a key first step to working with communities / knowing boundaries / resources / capabilities.
 - "Starting from the learning here"

- “If we are trying to be practical, elected officials aren’t they way to go. It’s the public servants—the ones already doing public engagement.
 - Bitsy: I also wonder about Design Organizations, ex. Design Organizations. Places where Design Thinking is already in practices
 - Cordelia: Civic Tech org in NYC already working in the space, ex. Housing
 - Devin: does it make sense to try to build betanyc’s capacity (they are using pol.is as a listening tool)
 - Kate: Co-creation. Working with a different community each month to hear out challenges / super lo-fi prototype solutions
 - Bitsy: One issue we have in civic tech is focusing on technology solutions. Working with under resourced non profit organizations and building their capacities in communities.
 - Devin: my exposure to these orgs is through the disaster frame. They definitely exist at all scales
 - Bitsy: Street level actions. Rucus (sp) training that Bitsy is involved with
 - Liz: very much see’s application
 - Liz: People going with tools to Community Board Meetings. It is unclear for people how to participate
 - Kate: Empower people doing the work with tools, ex. Man living in UWS
 - Make flyers, record, accept remote questions—make it transparent
 - CS: why is the ‘home of civic tech’ being placed in union square without consulting civil society?
 - Bitzy: facilitating conversations about these types of issues
 - Listening + Facilitate Sessions
 - Parking day
 - Protests
 - Modeling structured conversations
 - Liz: out of all the noise we can find signals that might even surprise the people who are talking
 - Bitsy: Benefit of exposure to activist
 - Liz: Also behoove as to move beyond the political parties/activity. Ability to work with folks in other fields, ex lawyers,
- Overview of Resources we have available
 - Requests?
 - Desired next steps?

Followups:

- Outreach List for groups that might be interested
- BetaNYC - do we just support their efforts?
- Guerilla Community Board Meeting Intervention

- Monthly hackathons?
 - BetaNYC
 - Prog Hack Night
 - Devin: There's a big diff between political and civic meetup.

Next Steps:

- How could we do a guerilla listening session?
 - Where would want to host one?
- Start a collaborative document to brainstorm ideas in advance
 - Who are the people that we want to enable with these skills?
 - Who are the communities that we want to listen to?

Project notes:

Wants: Agreed upon statement defining what we're doing and the scope of our activities.

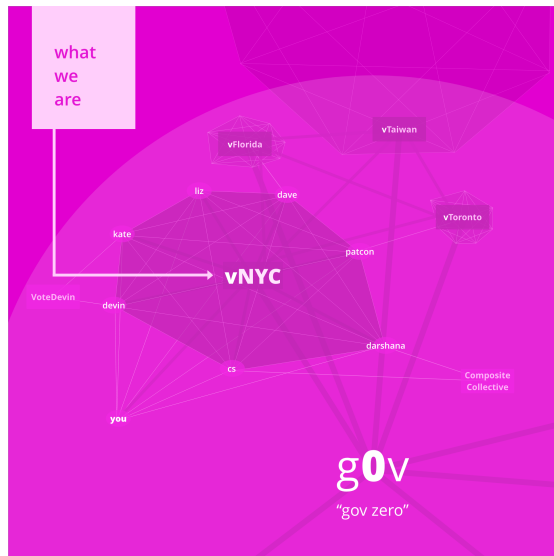
From <http://training.g0v.network/>

vNetwork is a collection of nobodies moved by the work in Taiwan to learn and bring the practices to their cities. Our group meets online and offline. Join us today by signing up for g0v slack.

[From the vTaiwan training sponsorship prospectus](#)

About vNetwork

vTaiwan's successes have inspired many to bring these practices into broader awareness in the West and exchange best practices for localizing these processes to their own areas. People identifying as vNYC, vToronto, and other "v" locations work together as vNetwork: g0v.network



Create the website project group - tbd

- Devin
- Liz