Participating in Democracy

THE CHALLENGE

How can we better address the proliferation of disinformation and polarization through the use of 21st century communication technologies and engage students and the public to become more educated and contributing citizens in their democracy?

DEMOCRACY ONAIR MISSION

We have started the nonpartisan nonprofit Democracy onAir to provide a new kind of university-led, online knowledge network of hubs for democracies across the globe. These networks bring together information, experts, organizations, policy makers, and the public to facilitate greater civic engagement and more civil, productive discussions on important issues and governance – A People's Platform for Democracy.
US onAir is our model network with 50 state hubs and a national hub at **us.onair.cc**.

ONAIR PLATFORM

The onAir platform has posts on hub websites that enable onAir members to curate publicly available content. Each post has its own forum to facilitate online discussions, questions, and suggestions. Posts can be shared with other categories within a Hub and between hubs. Hubs include special features including "Who Represents Me" and "My onAir" that provides updated news about issues, politicians, committees and agencies that you choose to follow.

For example, the post on Senator Mark Warner, based in the va.onair.cc hub, is displayed in many categories in the US onAir hub e.g. US Senators, Select Committee on Intelligence, and Regulating AGI. Ambitious members can also start new posts and hubs.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Any US onAir member, as long as they follow engagement guidelines, can participate in an onAir hub in numerous ways. We are particularly interested in giving college students, with faculty, staff, and alumni support, an opportunity to gain experience addressing one or more issues of interest via an issue post and posts on relevant government agencies, legislative committees and their members.

For example, in the Global Affairs category is the Middle East issue (one of 48 US onAir issues). Students can assist with aggregating content for these posts, moderating post forum discussions, and organizing livestreamed and in person events like a Congress Day or hackathon. The goal is to help to clarify the problems and explore how to find various innovative ways legislators and the executive branch might find common ground among their constitutents and best resolve an issue.

COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for a DC area university with a commitment to supporting democracy-related education, research, and service, like Johns Hopkins, along with other universities and nonprofits, like the League of Women Voters and Common Cause, to help us lead the management of the US onAir Network. Universities and nonprofits can also develop custom posts and hubs like this Agora Institute model hub as well as apply the US onAir model to other democratic countries like the India onAir network with 28 state hubs started by one of our interns.

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