Needfinding

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Digital Democracy

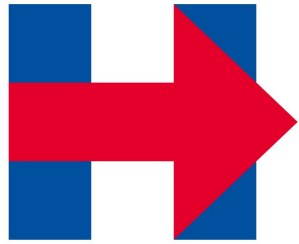How do people view democracy and their role in it?

Methodology: Average Users

- Educated middle-aged voter
- Student who has recently voted

Methodology: Extreme Users

Methodology: Interview Themes

What do you think of when you hear the word 'democracy?'

How do you participate in <your definition of democracy>?

What is your *responsibility* towards <your definition of democracy>?

"It's not just political"

What do you think of when you hear the word 'democracy?'

"I stay engaged"

How do you participate in <your definition of democracy>?

"Citizenship is a job... Most people don't view it that way"

What is your *responsibility* towards <your definition of democracy>?
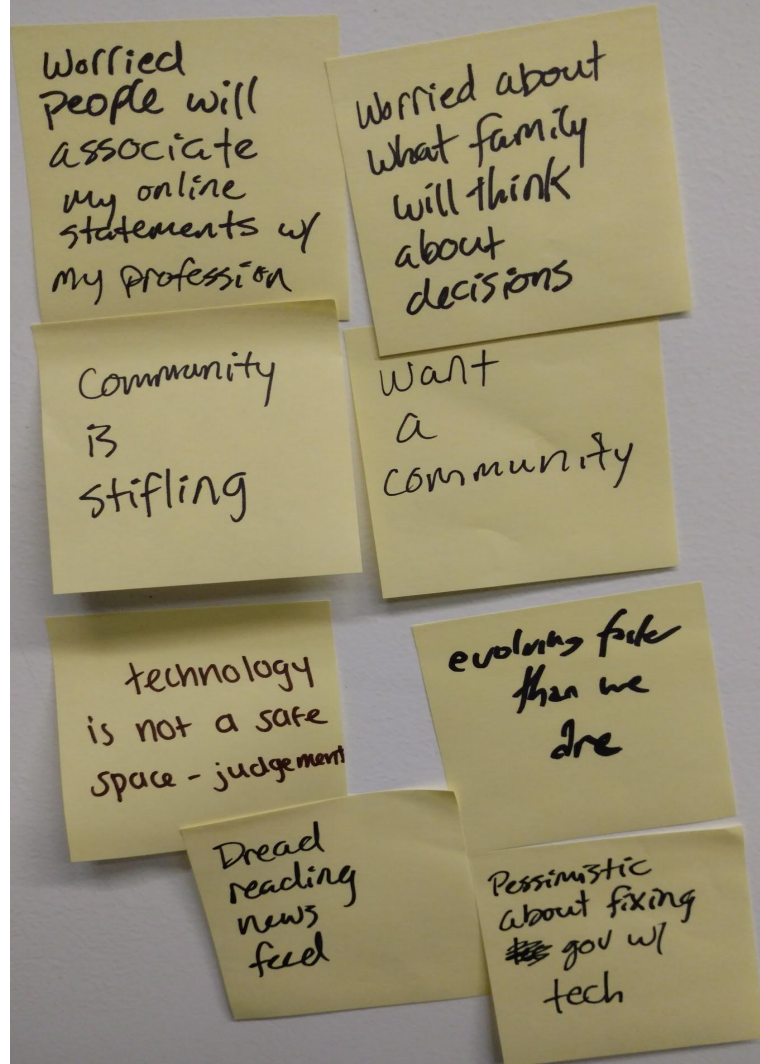
"This job is fulfilling because…you really make change"

"[Our bubbles] are homogeneous"

"I'm sad that my vote doesn't count"

"The Internet is really good at […] having people come together for a very short time, like for an election […] it's not good at facilitating long-term, committed work"
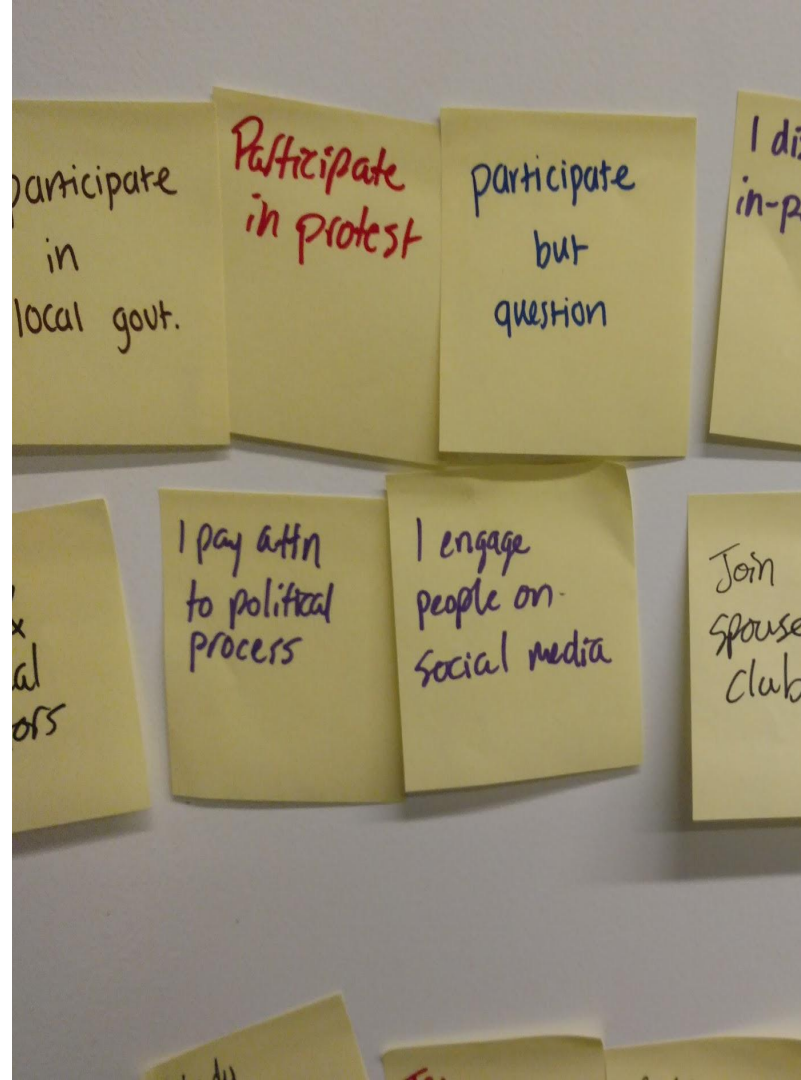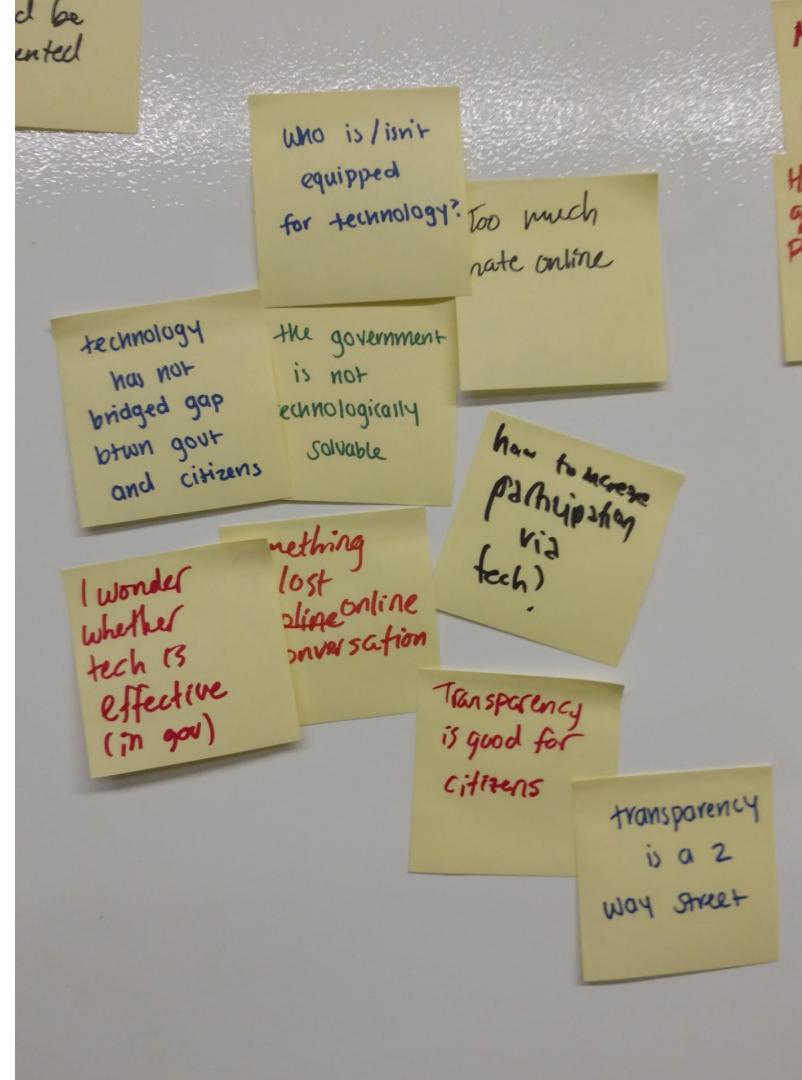
- Skepticism
- Dissatisfaction
- Personal freedom

SAY
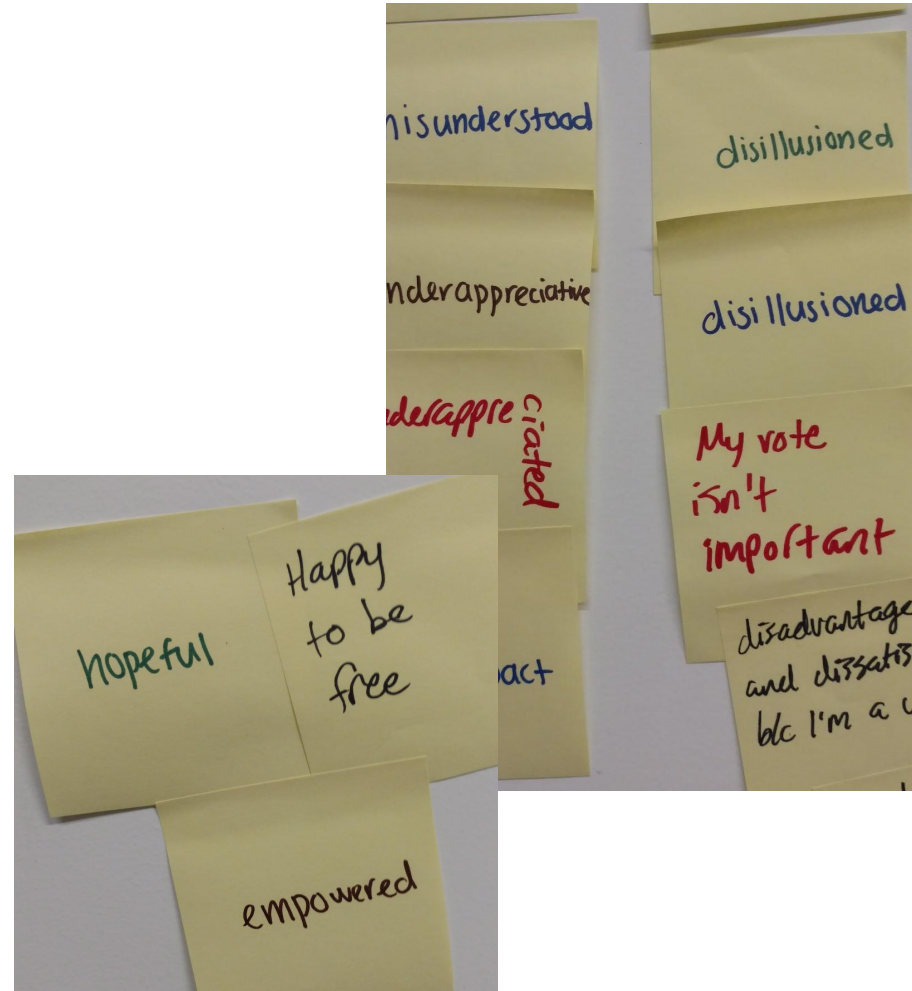
- Participate
- Stay informed

DO

- What can technology do?
- Citizenship is a job
- Politics are too opaque

THINK

- Disillusionment
- Disappointment

- Empathy
- Hope
- Empowerment

FEEL

misunderstood

underappreciative

underappreciated

disillusioned

disillusioned

My vote isn't important

disadvantage and dissatis... b/c I'm a u...
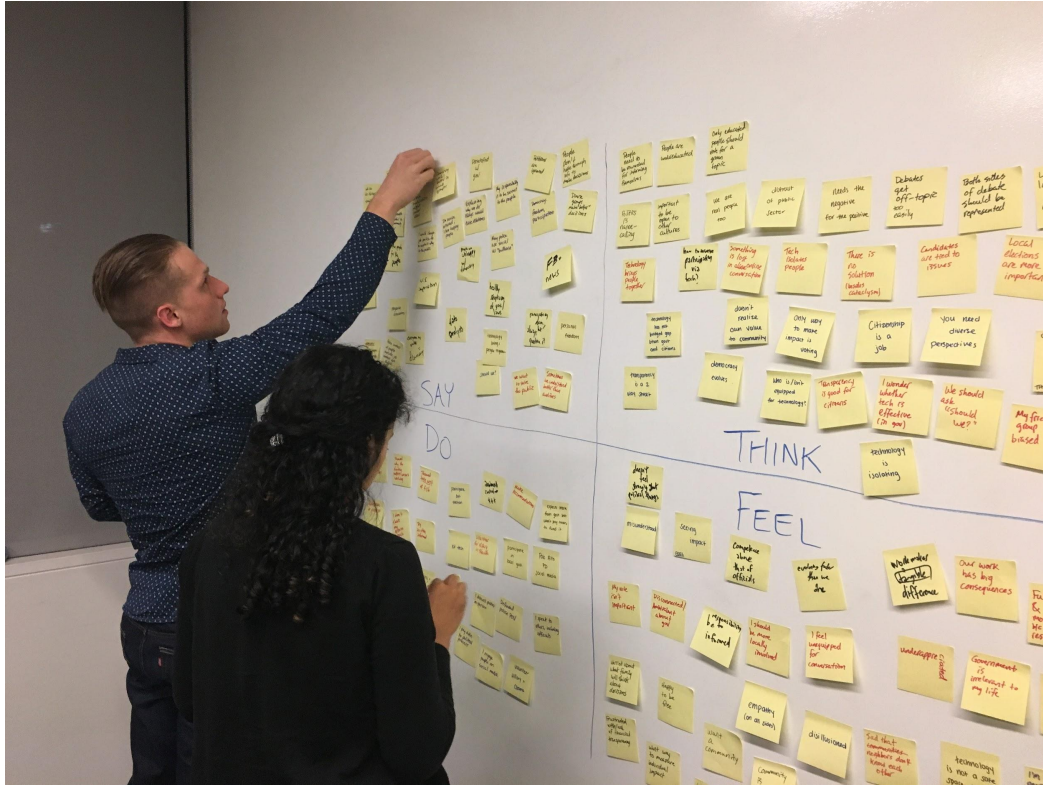
hopeful

Happy to be free

...act

empowered
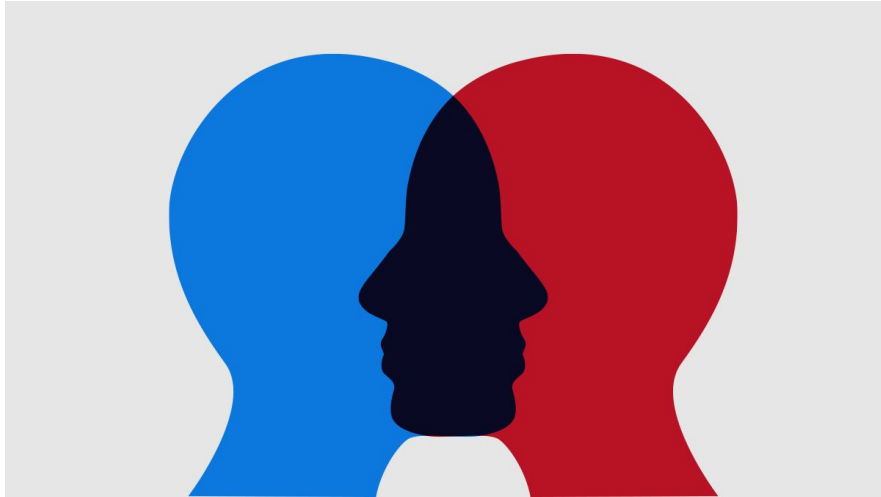
Tensions, contradictions, and surprises

- Technology **connects** and **isolates**
- Community is **comforting** and **stifling**
- People are **unaware** of their **impact**

Needs and Insights

Need: Empathy & Safe Space

People feel
**misunderstood,
disillusioned,
underappreciated**

insight

Need: Long-Term Engagement

Have technological advances **improved** our democracy?

insight

Need: Face Time

It's hard to feel **truly connected** and find **diverse perspectives** online

insight

Need: Visible Impact & Validation

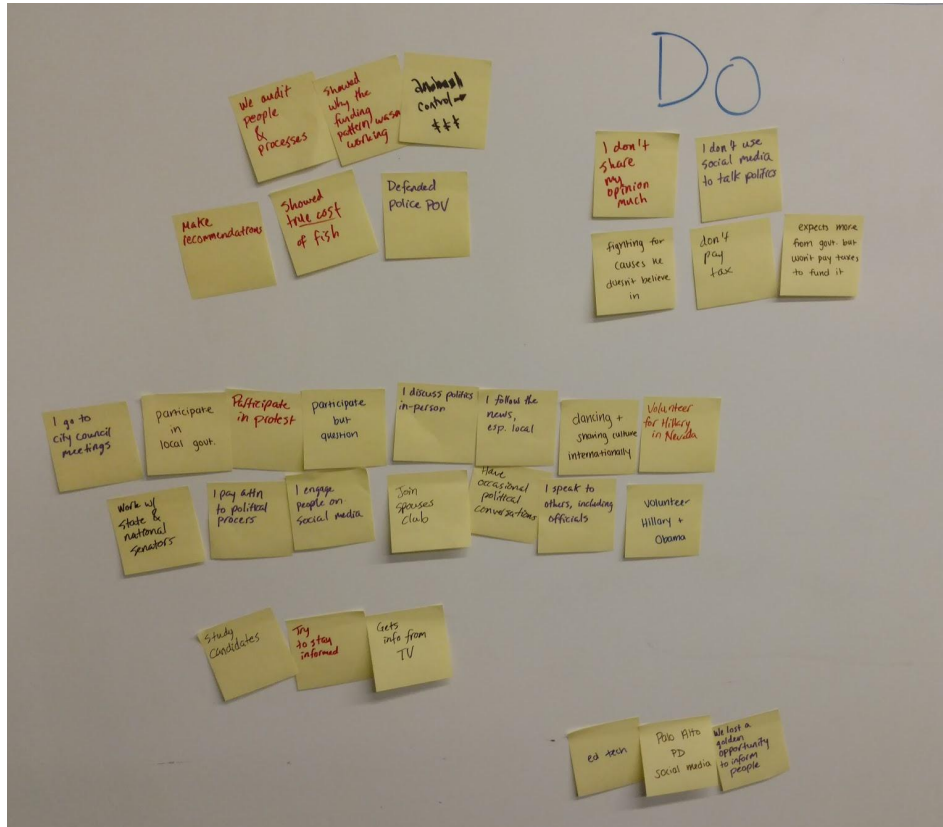I am compelled to participate if I know I am making a difference

insight

Summary

Overflow Slides

Empathy Map
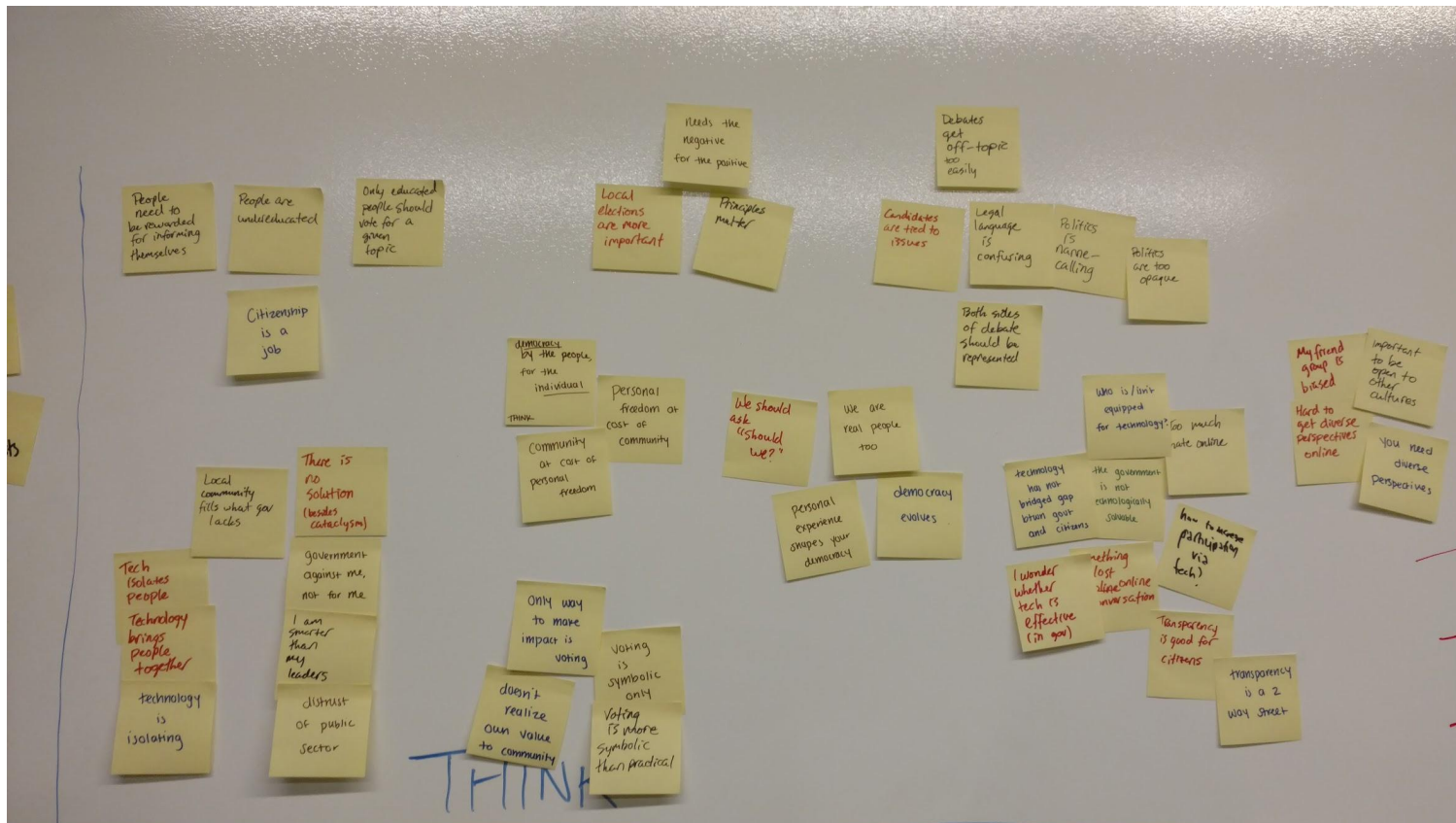
Empathy Map: SAY

Empathy Map: DO

Empathy Map: THINK

Empathy Map: FEEL

Interview summaries

User 1

Educated, middle-aged adult

- Political definition
- Democracy "doesn't work"
- Not many opportunities to engage in democracy
- Democracy problem = people that aren't educated about a topic are voting for that topic
- Maybe something similar to the peer review process in science?

User 2

Recent college grad

- Democracy is "the voice and representation of the people, and how multiple viewpoints are incorporated into one"
- "I take the time to be educated and to read up on the issues of the day"
- Problem with community cohesiveness
- "Citizenship is a job - it's not clear to some people that it is"

User 3

Senior citizen +
Vietnam war veteran

- "Nonmaterialistic professional artist" (freelance oil painter)
- Served in Vietnam for two years
- "Took the two best years of my life and wasted them"
- One year he made $36,000 and paid $8000 taxes - then, he quit paying taxes
- Been on Social Security for nine years
- Believes he has done what he set out to do

User 4

Indian citizen; professional dancer

- Democracy isn't just political; it's also personal
- Politics here are same as they are in India: mud-slinging and name calling
- America lacks the strong sense of community found in India
- In America, you have more personal freedom than you do in India

User 5

Google software engineer;
Campaign worker;
Former government volunteer

- Used to hold a naive view that government was solvable with technology -- disillusioned
- Technology is a segmented megaphone -- the loudest voices get amplified the most
- Doesn't read Facebook news feed because of vitriol
- Despite disillusionment, still convinced that government can do good and make positive impact

Users 6 & 7

City of Palo Alto performance auditors

- This job is fulfilling because you make real change
- Government employees are misunderstood and underappreciated
- Participate in government, but constantly question it
- Democracy evolves and is shaped by personal experience
- Empathy is crucial from both inside and outside the government
- Without citizen participation, how is government different from any other company?

User 8

Recent college grad; software engineer

- Doesn't have strong opinions about government or political topics -- "it's just there"
- Uninformed and doesn't feel qualified to engage in political discourse
- Thinks that vote doesn't count
- Gets information from friends; aware that friends are biased

User 9

Palo Alto police department; Manages Palo Alto PD social media presence

- Wishes encounters with law enforcement weren't mostly negative in public's mind
- Always wanted to do something where he couldn't stop learning
- Important: engagement with local community
- Afraid to express candid political opinions on social media