

Progress Report

AI For Democracy

Democratic Commons Global Research Programme

March 2025

The [AI For Democracy - Democratic Commons research programme](#) is a collaborative initiative led by Make.org, SciencesPo, Sorbonne University and CNRS, aimed at leveraging generative AI to enhance democratic processes and citizen engagement. This two-year multidisciplinary project brings together over 50 experts in data science and social sciences to develop ethical AI applications for democracy. Democratic Commons is one of seven winners of Bpifrance's 'Digital Commons for Generative AI' call for projects.

This progress report provides an overview of the work and outputs accomplished during the first six months of the Programme (September 2024 - February 2025).

This is the early start of our program. We have been building our team during this time, and the current results show our first work steps. The following key results have been achieved:

- Groundwork layout of the programme
- Recruitment, coordination and communication activities
- Comprehensive literature review related to political biases in LLM
- Research exploration of Make.org data
- A first draft on the determination of the Democratic Principles applied to generative AI
- The release of an upgraded version of Make.org Panoramic participation platform

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1. Finale outputs expected at the end of the Programme

- Social sciences publications identifying democratic principles applied to AI and characterizing LLM democratic biases
- Technological protocols for evaluating and correcting LLM regarding these biases
- Open-Source Bias-Corrected LLM
- Three Make.org open-source participation platforms using these corrected LLM
- The Dissemination of the Digital and Academic Democratic commons

A 3-page summary of the ongoing research programme can be found [here](#).

2. Recruitment

Core team: 12 new talents have joined the Democratic Commons (DC) core team, including 5 members in the tech and coordination team, 4 PhD Students, and 3 junior researchers:

- Make.org: *Hugo Massis, Thomas Moreau, Sébastien Cabel, Colin Davidson, Clarie Alspektor ; Julie Tytgat;*
- Sorbonne University and CNRS: *Pierre-Antoine Lequeu, Nazanin Shafiabadi, Paul Lerner, Laurène Cave;*
- SciencesPo Paris: *Salim Hafid, Manon Berriche.*

Two researchers and one PhD student are also collaborating to the Programme: Andrei Mogoutov, Hal Daumé III and Leo Labat.

Scientific Supervisory Board: Four new renowned figures have joined our Board :

- *Audrey Tang (Cyber Ambassador of Taiwan)*
- *Constance de Leusse (Senior Advisor, AI & Society Institute)*
- *Josef Lentsch (Founder and CEO of the Political Tech Summit)*
- *Martial Foucault (SciencesPo researcher).*

The full list and bios of our Board's members can be accessed [here](#).

Expert Partners: AI & Society Institute has endorsed our Programme.

The full list of our expert partners can be found [here](#).

Preliminary consultative meetings with the Board and expert partners were conducted to collaboratively define their technical and academic support roles.

3. Coalition activities

Research collaboration: The Research Committee has organized monthly meetings and its first in-person research seminar to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration between team members. Following presentations of Make.org platforms and its current available datasets, the organization compiled researchers' insights and feedback facilitating fruitful discussions. Participants identified preliminary datasets needs, and engaged in initial strategic planning on experimental research protocols needs (AB-testing, etc.).

Data sharing: Make.org has shared with the researchers the following datasets:

- Panoramic platform: 780 interactions between the users and the LLM, users asking questions about the Citizen Panel on the "end of life" bill;
- Dialogue Platform: 8010 comments submitted by citizens to improve the government bill to regulate the work of influencers ;
- Citizen Consultation Platform: 4312 proposals submitted, their translation and the votes cast during the consultation with young Europeans in 27 countries and in 22 languages before the 2024 election "EurHope";
- Qualitative and quantitative user surveys and analysis about the new IA platforms under development.

Shared scope Statement: Team members have reached a consensus on a preliminary scope statement. Key takeaways:

- DC Programme will focus on three key sociocultural and political contexts: France, Germany, and the United States as a starting point.
- DC will focus on 13 democratic uses, including elections, local and national governance, legislative processes, and participatory mechanisms. These democratic uses are defined in a shared working document titled 'Overview of Democratic Uses'.
- The approach will blend theoretical and pragmatic methodologies.

- Democratic principles will be composed of a consensus-based foundation while highlighting application biases of the principles.
- Democratic biases are identified under normal AI conditions of use.

4. Research and Development Activities

SciencesPo (Medialab, Cevipof).

Cevipof:

- The **General Framework - Democratic Principles applied to AI** was drafted: This document presents a preliminary version of the collective work, which has been endorsed by the entire consortium. It starts with a focus on several pertinent democratic principles that are applicable to the project, thus providing a comprehensive framework. The primary scope of the research is as follow:
 - *Artificial intelligence (AI), and more specifically Large Language Models, must be subject to democratic principles, on the one hand, to evaluate the models themselves as well as their current uses, and, on the other, to propose new resources so that LLMs can serve democracy, or even help to realize some of its promises.*
 - The project has identified **five principles**:
 - 1) **Participation**, 2) **Political and ethical pluralisms**, 3) **Deliberation**,
 - 4) **Responsibilities** (e.g., capacity and accountability),
 - 5) **Agreements/disagreements**.
 - The project has extracted 19 indicators to be translated into standards according to the disciplinary practices and objects studied. To facilitate interpretation of these indicators, sub-questions have been identified to enable evaluation using more detailed standards for **five roles of AI: moderation, translation, summarization, writing assistant (formulation and reformulation), facilitation**.
 - In the course of the project, these indicators will be interpreted to assess 13 different types of democratic uses in four phases of political life: elections, the exercise of power, the legislative process, and participation in mini-publics.

Medialab:

- A comprehensive literature review was conducted on debate quality metrics (such as the Discourse Quality Index (DQI)), as well as on analyses of human-LLM interactions and political biases in generative AI.

- The research identified existing datasets that capture debate dynamics, including data from platforms like Make.org, IBM Debater, Pol.is, and the grand/vrai débat. An in-depth exploration of the make.org data was undertaken. Additionally, Medialab examined datasets reflecting everyday interactions with conversational agents, such as Wildchat and SYS-LLM.

Sorbonne University (STIH, ISIR) :

The scientific activity has been focused on:

- thoroughly analyzing the existing literature related to biases in representational, predictive, and generative AI. A large bibliography has been shared between partners on this issue;
- studying the available datasets and metrics that are used to evaluate political biases on LLMs, most of which rely on questionnaires (e.g. the political compass);
- developing initial attempts to quantify the consistency of Large Language Models (LLMs) with respect to linguistic transformations such as notably translation, automatic or manual - this has been done both on a multilingual stance dataset and a multilingual survey dataset;
- finetuning a first multilingual model based on a large multilingual collection of stances associated with political discourse. This multilingual model computes representations for chunks of text in a vector space structured in such a way that distinct political stances are well separated, enabling us to relate any political opinion (in any language) to known stances.

Make.org:

- **Key innovations on the Panoramic Platform:** Panoramic is an AI-powered platform whose goal is to provide better access to citizens to complex information. During this first period, crucial improvements have been made by Make.org Product and tech teams, including making the platform multilingual and improving the management of the source reference to improve both the reliability of the answer and the ability of the user to access and cross-check the sources used to generate the answer.
- Here are some **examples** of Panoramic prototypes launched during the period :
 - One at the [European level for the EuroPcom conference](#)
 - One in [Germany about the February 2025 elections](#)
 - One in [France about Nuclear Energy](#)

5. Dissemination Strategy

The team has collaboratively been drafting a **strategic dissemination plan** to maximize DC's impact and outreach. The document, which will be shared with the Board for inputs, describes the Programme's dissemination goals regarding its commons, targeted communication channels towards expert and citizen audiences, and related KPIs. The Board's suggested actions will be integrated into the document.

Main communication tools and actions to date:

- A [3-pager](#) providing an overview of the ongoing research programme
- An [official website](#) describing the project and the Coalition.
- A **Newsletter** for the “friends of the Democratic Commons” to highlight the key milestones achieved in the program and to showcase outputs and events related to the project. The newsletter has already garnered 209 subscribed members, including researchers, practitioners and AI and democracy experts.
- The Programme has been showcased at over **10 events**, including during research seminars, conferences, workshops and expert roundtables, across France, Germany, Belgium and the United States. A few notable **examples**:
 - In **Strasbourg**, the [World Forum](#) for Democracy, organized by the Council of Europe. The Democratic Commons was preselected to compete for the prestigious Democracy Innovation Award.
 - In **Brussels**, at the Fari AI For the Common Good Institute. The roundtable, led by Make.org and Ifok on “[AI & Democracy](#)”, gathered a diverse group of stakeholders including European institutions, private companies, Belgian and international organizations, and research associations.
 - In **Berlin**, during the [Piazza conference](#) workshop AI4Democracy, which brought together the German civil society, academia, and public administration.
 - In **Paris**, during the AI Action Summit, the programme was showcased during 4 side events, in front of an audience that included academics, policymakers, democracy practitioners, civil society and citizens:
 - As part of the Worldwide Initiatives AI & Democracy Mapping at the AI & Democracy at the official Welcoming Event “[AI & Democracy](#)” organized by Make.org and its academic partner Ecole Normale Supérieure;
 - At “[AI, Science, and Society: Connections, Collectives, and Collaboration](#)” international conference, hosted by Institut Polytechnique de Paris ;
 - At “[Compar:IA](#)” Day, a side event organized by the Ministry of Culture on [AI biases and challenges](#);

- at the international conference “[Participatory AI Research & Practice Symposium](#)”, led by Connected by Data, at SciencesPo Paris.

6. Scientific Supervisory Board Inputs

Overall, the Scientific Supervisory Board found the proposed **conceptual framework** and **results** both interesting and stimulating. Several members encouraged the consortium to consider developing solutions to address certain threats and constraints on democracy.

More specifically, during the first Board Meeting in February, members raised several topics that will inform the consortium's reflections and potential amendments to its program:

- The notion of truth in a democratic framework ;
- Operationalizing democratic indicators ;
- Strengthening civic education via AI and Developing “AI companions”;
- The role of AI in addressing systemic issues;
- Fighting disinformation and information manipulation;
- Deliberative democracy and pluralism;
- Roles of AI in a deliberative framework;
- Identification systems, anonymization, massive participation, and the risk of trolling.