



**DEMOCRACY
XCHANGE**

Democracy Futures Workshop Report

March 24, 2023

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCADU CO

DemocracyXChange is the annual summit for Canada's emerging democracy sector and leaders from across Canada who want to help build democratic resilience.

Since 2019, DemocracyXChange has brought together researchers, practitioners, civil society and leaders to connect, learn and emerge with new partnerships, plans and actions to reinforce democratic institutions and civil society. The opportunity to gather in person strengthens the community of practice that already exists and provides new opportunities for people who would like to become more effective leaders, advocates and activists.

The Democracy Futures Workshop was a full-day session of the summit that brought together more than 80 attendees to collaboratively consider how we might create a resilient, successful and sustainable democracy.

This report details the findings from the Democracy Futures Workshop, held on March 24, 2023.

For all inquiries about this project, please contact:
contact@democracyxchange.org

DemocracyXChange is jointly presented by Open Democracy Project, Toronto Metropolitan University and OCAD University.



Open Democracy Project is working to strengthen and evolve the practice of democracy in Canada through contributing to the growth of Canada's democracy sector.

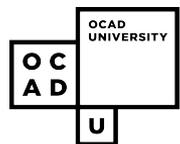
OpenDemocracy.ca



Toronto Metropolitan University is Canada's leader in innovative and career-oriented education.

The Leadership Lab is an action-oriented think tank at Toronto Metropolitan University that develops leaders and solutions to make progress on our most pressing civic challenges.

[Leadership Lab at TMU](https://Leadership.Lab.at.TMU)



Ontario College of Art and Design University is the largest and most comprehensive art, design and media university in Canada.

[OCAD University](https://OCAD.University)

Workshop Partners

SUPER ORDINARY LAB

Super Ordinary Lab at OCAD University looks at emerging technologies to understand their social significance and tracks broad-based trends for the purposes of meaningful innovation in technologies, ethnographic methods and cultures of production as well as potential users of these technologies.



OCAD U CO is the co-design and innovation studio of OCAD University. We're on a mission to help industry leaders and their teams build the capabilities to be more human-centred, empathetic, and systems-oriented in order to uncover the insights required for a resilient future.

Project Leadership

Suzanne Stein

Director, Superordinary Lab

Emily Krause

Managing Director, OCAD U CO

Facilitators and Contributors

Molly Connor

Ziyan Hossain

Christopher Wilson

Nadia Abuseif

Sonia Chwalek

Buffy Childerhose

Diane Lai

Stephen Fernandes

Selin Yalcin

Amelie Morrow

Ahnaf Nafis

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	8
2. Methodology	12
3. Drivers of Change	18
4. Future Scenarios	23
5. Actions & Insights	34
Appendix A: Drivers of Change	41
Appendix B: Actions	46

DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

Executive Summary

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs Summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADU **CO**

Executive Summary

There are numerous drivers of change that are challenging the foundations of democracy in Canada today. Understanding how these changes are continuing to evolve, at what speed, and to what end are critical aspects of anticipating how we might help shape a better future for democracy.

The Democracy Futures Workshop convened participants from many diverse backgrounds to collectively consider **how we might create a resilient, successful, and sustainable democracy** in Canada.

The workshop was structured around three critical factors that are considered to be foundational and powerful in shaping democracy today, and into the future. These critical factors are: **trust in governance, social equity, and integrity of information.**

As it stands today, each of these three critical factors are decreasing¹. Across Canada we are facing decreasing trust in governance and governing bodies at large. We are experiencing decreasing social equity across urban and rural geographies. And integrity of information continues to decline as there is ongoing proliferation of misinformation, fake news, and even malinformation. If we continue on this current trajectory, our probable future will be shaped by the ongoing decline of these three factors.

The Democracy Futures Workshop was predicated on the understanding that the future is unknown and change is inevitable. To this end, workshop participants considered eight unique scenarios, each a result of different combinations of the three critical factors increasing or decreasing and the follow-on effects for democracy.

Notably, the most preferred future would be one in which trust in governance, social equity and integrity of information all begin to increase significantly.

Throughout the workshop, participants considered the numerous drivers of change that are pushing on democracy in different ways today. Looking across their work, nine forces were identified as being significant in helping reverse the current trajectory of the critical factors. These forces are:

Trust in Governance

1. Energy Transition
2. Open Data and Transparency
3. Decolonization and Reconciliation
4. Shift to Local

Social Equity

1. Social Justice Movement
2. Literacy

Integrity of Information

1. Data Literacy
2. Information Literacy
3. Data-Informed Decisions

At the end of the workshop, participants prioritized a list of actions that can be undertaken today to move towards a more desirable democracy. Taken together with the above forces, we can start to build an integrated plan of action for how we might organize towards a brighter democratic future for our communities today, and for generations to come.

¹ Edelman. 2023 *Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report*. 2023.

Top 6 Actions

Working towards a democracy that is resilient, successful, and sustainable is no doubt an ambitious goal. In considering what we might start doing today to help us move closer, workshop participants ideated a long list of possible actions, based on multiple possible future scenarios. Once these actions were stress-tested, six actions emerged as being highest priority to start pursuing today.

The top six actions are:

1. Regulating Capitalists and Capitalism

Having to do with decentralized capital, competition laws, limiting lobbying and better regulations that don't preclude innovation.

2. Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers

Having to do with better collective action, portable pension plans, and moving from a minimum wage towards a thriving wage.

3. Combating Misinformation

Having to do with funding and supporting local and non-profit media, and pursuing information and data literacy.

4. Meaningful Action on Climate

Having to do with introducing incentives for climate action, lowering the voting age and increasing media and information literacy training across all ages.

5. Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power

Having to do with education about different systems of power and having decision-making tables be representative of electoral reform.

6. Holding Tech Companies Accountable

Having to do with incentivizing more transparency, breaking down monopolies, shifting business models, and overall making tech companies more accountable.

All actions are described in Appendix B as developed by workshop participants.

DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

1. Introduction

democracyxchange.org

@dxcsummit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCADU**CO**

Workshop Overview

On March 24, 2023, 80 participants convened in Toronto, Ontario to consider the critical question:

How might we create a resilient, successful, and sustainable democracy?

Participants were presented with a body of research reflecting the vast and significant changes that are occurring in Canada today as it relates to the future of democracy.

Participants drew on their own areas of expertise, spanning policy, governance, economics, environment, technology, culture and more, and worked through a series of structured activities grounded in strategic foresight to consider multiple possible scenarios of how these changes may evolve over time and precipitate different futures.

Throughout the process, participants noted key actors and stakeholders of democracy and identified various factors working to support and also threaten democracy in Canada.

By the end of the workshop, participants had developed a prioritized list of possible actions that we might take today to mitigate emerging threats for democracy as well as how we might optimize for possible areas of opportunity.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Foster cross-sectoral understanding and discussions on priority issues;
1. Create a kinetic space of lasting positive impressions and catalyze further democratic futures inquiries and actions forward;
1. Deepen collective insight on the connected factors threatening or supporting a resilient democratic future;
1. Identify pathways forward to supporting a resilient democracy into the future – and organizing for DXC24.

Critical Factors

The workshop was structured around three critical factors that guided the participant's inquiry and deepened the collective understanding of democratic resilience. These critical factors were identified through a multi-year horizon scan and validated in a participatory session on the Future of Democracy in 2020.

1. Trust in Governance

The confidence of the public and key stakeholders in the governing bodies and authority structures to uphold what is right and fair for all.

2. Social Equity

The disparities across race, ethnicity, gender (and more) that refer to the varied access and use of a variety of resources that enable a healthy society and resilient democracy.

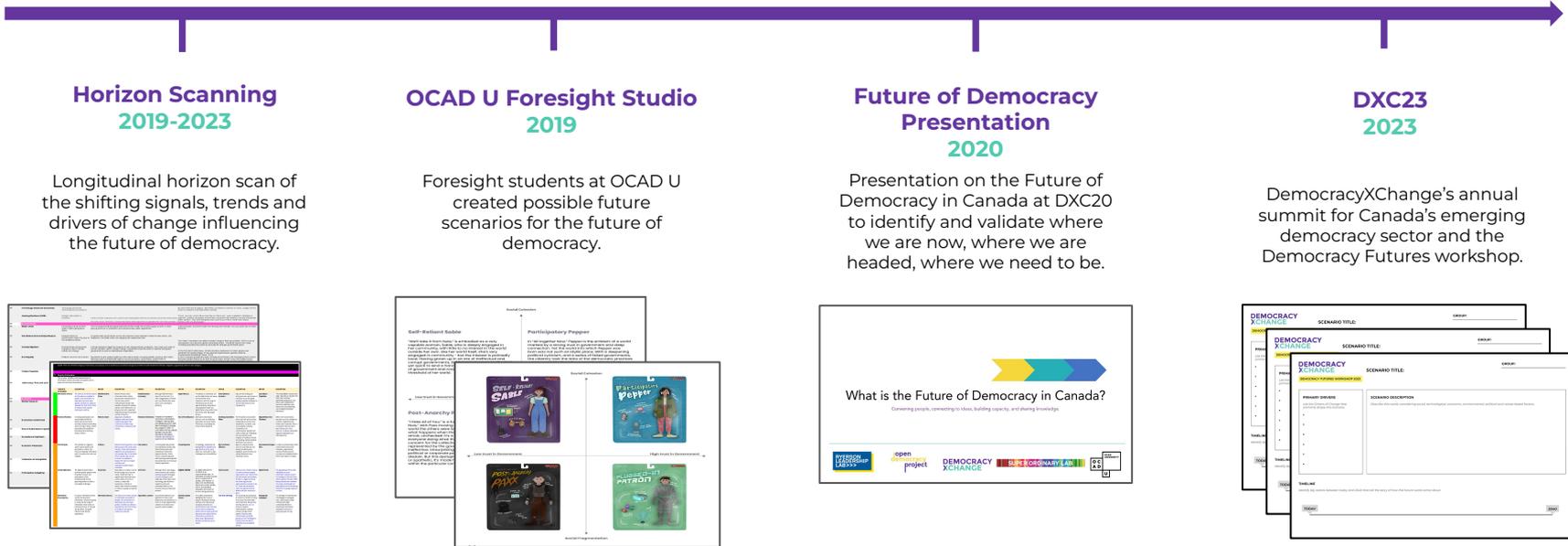
3. Integrity of Information

The accuracy, reliability and trustworthiness of information content, processes and systems and its impact on the future of democracy.

The Road to DXC23

Workshop inputs and design were informed by three years of research that paved the way for DXC23 and the Democracy Futures Workshop.

Research timeline



DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

2. Methodology

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADU CO

Methodology

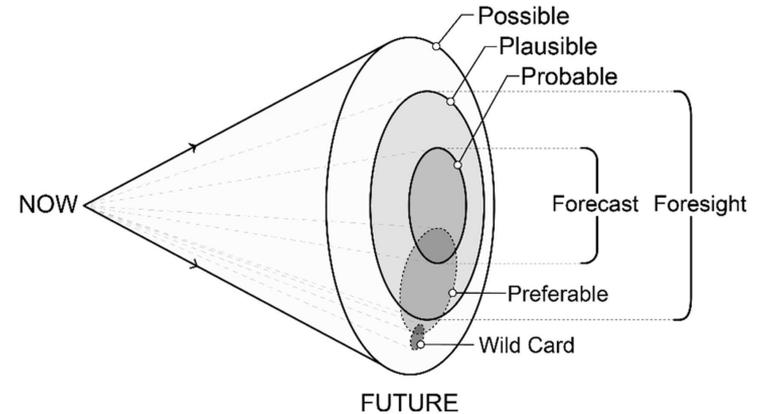
Strategic foresight is a way to imagine what might be.

Strategic foresight is an approach to rigorously look at different possibilities of how the future may unfold over time, given the changing and dynamic drivers of change at work in our world today. Foresight is used by governments, enterprises and academia around the world to explore shifts in the global landscape and identify possible ways forward.

The use of foresight enables rich ways of thinking about the future, informed by research on today's trends and grounded in human-centred design methodologies.

For the Democracy Futures Workshop, this approach was used to identify causal factors, implications, and actions that might allow us to move towards a preferred future of a democracy that is resilient, successful, and sustainable.

Cone of Possible Futures²



Horizon Scan

Horizon scanning is a strategic foresight research method that considers changes happening across social, technological, environmental, economic, and political domains and works to categorize these changes as either newly emerging signals, trends that are gaining momentum, or drivers of change with significant force.

Close to 100 drivers of change were identified as part of the horizon scan for the Democracy Futures Workshop. These drivers were categorized within the themes of the three critical factors, namely: trust in governance, social equity and integrity of information. A fourth category of climate change was also identified as significantly formative and critical to the conversation of what the future of democracy in Canada might look like.

Additional subthemes were identified within each of these categories to further understand and categorize the drivers of change. All of the drivers of change are detailed in Appendix A.

The horizon scan research informed all of the activities of the Democracy Futures Workshop.

Drivers of Change Cards



Workshop Methodology

The Democracy Futures Workshop followed a strategic foresight workshop approach, starting with horizon scanning, moving into scenario development, and then action ideation and windtunneling. The time horizon for the futures work was 2040. Each of the activities that participants undertook are described below.

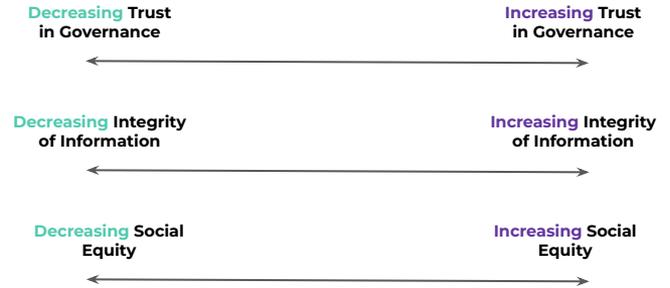
Activity 1: Gap Analysis

Participants started the workshop in small groups of six and were assigned to one of the critical factors as well as a polarity– either increasing or decreasing.

Each of the critical factors were considered within the extremes of whether they would continue to decrease (that is, continue on the trajectory that we are seeing today) or whether we might begin to see them increase as we move into the future and towards the year 2040.

Within these small groups, participants discussed the drivers of change relevant to their theme and identified whether there were any drivers of change not accounted for.

Polarities of the Critical Factors



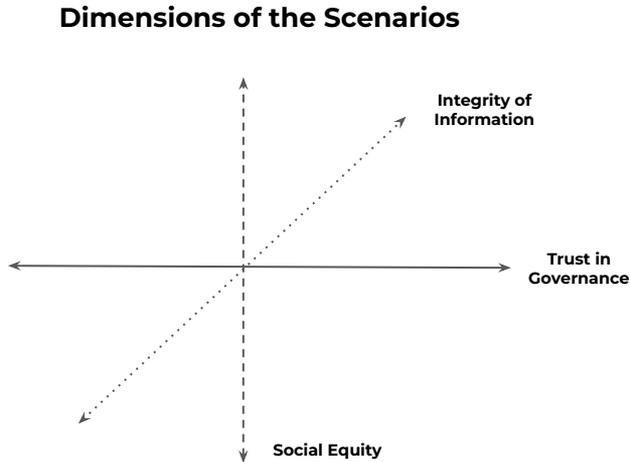
Activity 2: Driver of Change Analysis

With an understanding of the broad range of drivers, participants worked in their small groups to prioritize the top four most significant drivers of change for their context and described how these drivers might change between today and the year 2040.

Activity 3: Scenario Development

Once participants were familiar with the key drivers of change for their particular polarity, they were shuffled into eight groups, each representing a unique combination of the six different polarities.

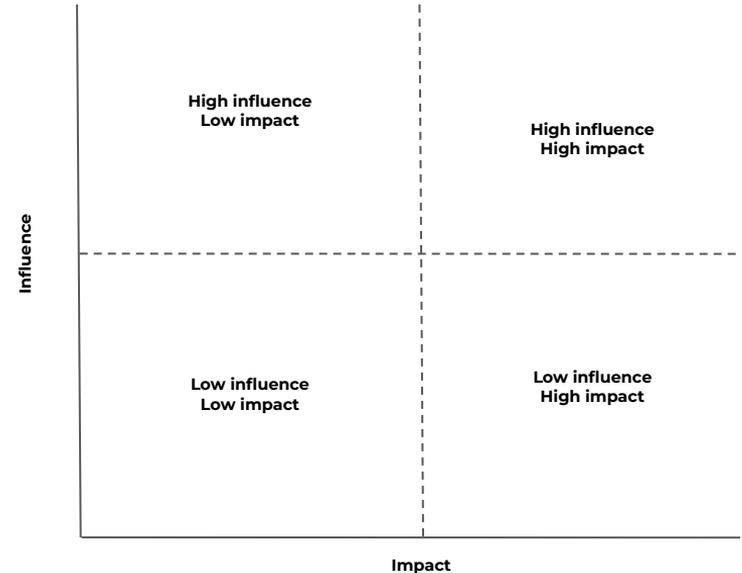
In this way, participants were able to consider eight distinct possible scenarios for the future of democracy, each informed by the convergence of different critical factors moving in either opposing or aligned directions.



Activity 4: Stakeholder Analysis

With a description of different possible future scenarios, workshop participants listed various stakeholder groups within their scenario and mapped the stakeholders onto a matrix according to their ability to influence democracy and the degree to which they were impacted by democracy.

Impact x Influence Matrix



Activity 5: Stakeholder Actions

Once participants mapped stakeholders according to their impact and influence, they returned to the critical research question of how we might create a resilient, successful, and sustainable democracy in light of the multiple possible futures.

Working in their scenario groups, participants ideated different actions that could be taken today to either move more quickly towards desirable aspects of democracy as seen in their scenario or mitigate anti-democratic possibilities from occurring. Each group developed 2-3 possible actions (see Appendix B for details).

Activity 6: Windtunneling

With a long list of possible actions, workshop participants worked through a methodical approach to stress-test the actions against all other scenarios. Since an action may be feasible and desirable in one scenario does not mean that it would have the same effect or even be plausible in a different scenario. Through this “windtunneling” approach, workshop participants considered each action in light of each of the scenarios to determine whether it was a good fit, moderate fit, or undesirable or unfeasible to pursue. Details of this approach and the outcomes are described in Section 5: Actions & Insights.

DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

3. Drivers of Change

democracyxchange.org

@dxcsummit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADU**CO**

Drivers of Change

There are innumerable forces at work in our world today, exerting pressure on the status quo and resulting in both small and significant changes at all scales.

As we've established, when we consider the future of democracy, some of the most critical factors underpinning a favourable future are trust in governance, social equity and integrity of information. But as we start to unpack each of these factors, we begin to understand that there are important forces that are converging and as a result, influencing each.

In *Activity 2: Driver of Change Analysis*, workshop participants examined drivers of change that are either supporting or undermining each of the critical factors. Working in small groups, they prioritized the top four drivers of change that they believed to be the most significant and influential for each critical factor. Comparing these prioritizations, we can see several commonalities and themes emerge. These themes have been categorized as “forces” and are described in this section. Some are working to increase the critical factors, and some are working to support the decline we are currently seeing.

Looking across the three critical factors, it is notable that literacy is a significant force increasing both social equity and integrity of information. Literacy is a broad term that can encompass all or any of: data literacy, digital literacy, civic literacy and more. No doubt, working to increase literacy in many domains will have a number of follow-on impacts for positively impacting democracy as it relates to civic engagement, increased comprehension of policy implications, and general well-being for societal outcomes.

Overall, it's important to understand the forces at play that are working for and against a resilient, successful and sustainable democracy in Canada. **With the knowledge of these forces, we can then begin to devise supporting actions that can help move us closer to a desirable democracy** where there is greater trust in governance and institutional leaders, greater social equity for Canadians, and greater integrity of information across the board.

Trust in Governance

Forces **INCREASING** Trust in Governance:

1. Energy Transition

Shifting priorities, investment in innovative solutions and economic tensions are empowering renewable energy sources in Canada and around the world. Workshop participants felt this transition to a greener future could inspire greater trust in governance.

2. Open Data and Transparency

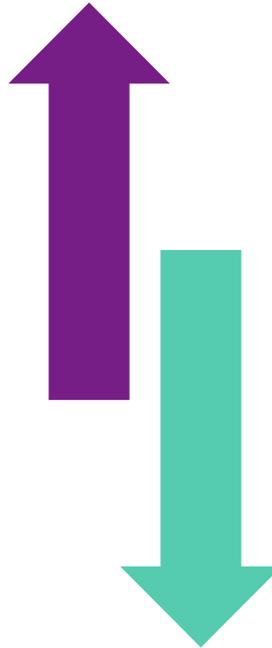
Demands for greater transparency and access to data may push governments towards a more agile and modern institutional structure and support a better public image.

3. Decolonization and Reconciliation

Challenging colonial approaches and mindsets, Indigenous governance models are becoming more understood and respected.

4. Shift to Local

Shifting to a localized approach to governance may help facilitate greater connection to political leaders and lead to greater proximity to the lived experiences of constituents.



Forces **DECREASING** Trust in Governance:

1. Economic Pessimism

Outlook on the economy is grim as concerns loom over economic inflation and recession cycles. Although perceived economic health may impact democratic outcomes and confidence, new economic models are being explored, including evaluation models beyond just financial. Participants felt that economic pessimism was a key force undermining trust in governance.

Social Equity

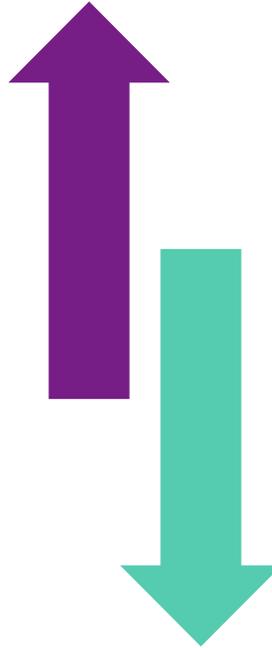
Forces **INCREASING** Social Equity:

1. Social Justice Movement

The rise of social movements predicated on principles of justice and equality applies to social problems which have been propelled by social media and are fueling solidarity movements. Participant groups identified greater solidarity and support for these social justice movements as key to increasing social equity in the future.

2. Literacy

Literacy, cited across a range of groups, included digital literacy, information literacy, and civic literacy. Literacy is often used as a wide ranging term to encapsulate an increased understanding of a subject and can span understanding and the development of skills within a medium, to mastery through transformative creativity and innovation of the subject matter.



Forces **DECREASING** Social Equity:

1. Healthcare

A range of health- and care-specific drivers were identified across groups and, although the vertical within healthcare may have changed between groups (ie. some chose mental health, some eco-health) the commonality was found in the wide range of concerns over population health as it relates to access to healthcare, increased environmental health concerns and healthcare system and infrastructure concerns.

2. Wealth Inequality

The gap between the richest and the poorest continues to widen dramatically, squeezing out the economic middle class. The top 1% continue to have great power in shaping our futures, while others have broadened the definition of equality to incorporate greater agency of the natural world, which may help counter climate change threats and rebalance or restore ecosystems.

Integrity of Information

Forces **INCREASING** Integrity of Information:

1. Data Literacy

Participant groups all listed Data Literacy as an important aspect helping to increase integrity of information. As we move into the future, generations and populations with less digital literacy may suffer more than those with high digital literacy.

2. Information Literacy

The influx of and sheer amount of information accessible to people, and consumed on a daily basis has never been greater, all while our ability to separate the truth from fiction or research from opinion continues to decline. A key future factor for increasing integrity of information will be the ability to discern fact from opinion and make informed responses.

3. Data-Informed Decisions

Data and technology are driving decisions and actions in industries across the globe, leading to greater emphasis on ethical data practices and transparency. With a greater expectation for a sustainable, resilient and successful democracy, decisions should be made through data-informed decision making processes.

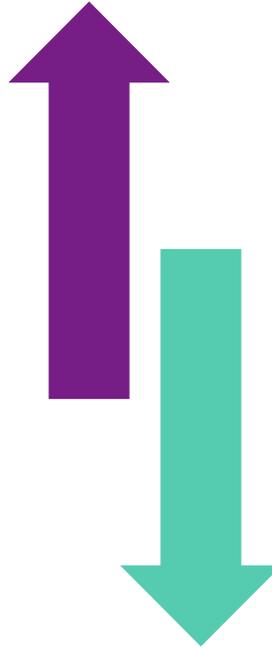
Forces **DECREASING** Integrity of Information:

1. Misinformation and Malevolent Actors

Misinformation, false information that is either spread intentionally or not but does result in misleading the viewer, and malinformation, which is information intentionally shared to cause harm, are important factors to consider addressing in the fight against decreasing information integrity, as are the malevolent actors and organizations leading the spread of this harmful information.

2. Technology's Role

Big tech companies have access to user data and can impact everything from legislation and economies, to societal behaviours and individual choices. The key factors to consider across participant groups was the power these institutions hold and the lack of accountability.



DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

4. Future Scenarios

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs Summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADU CO

Future Scenarios

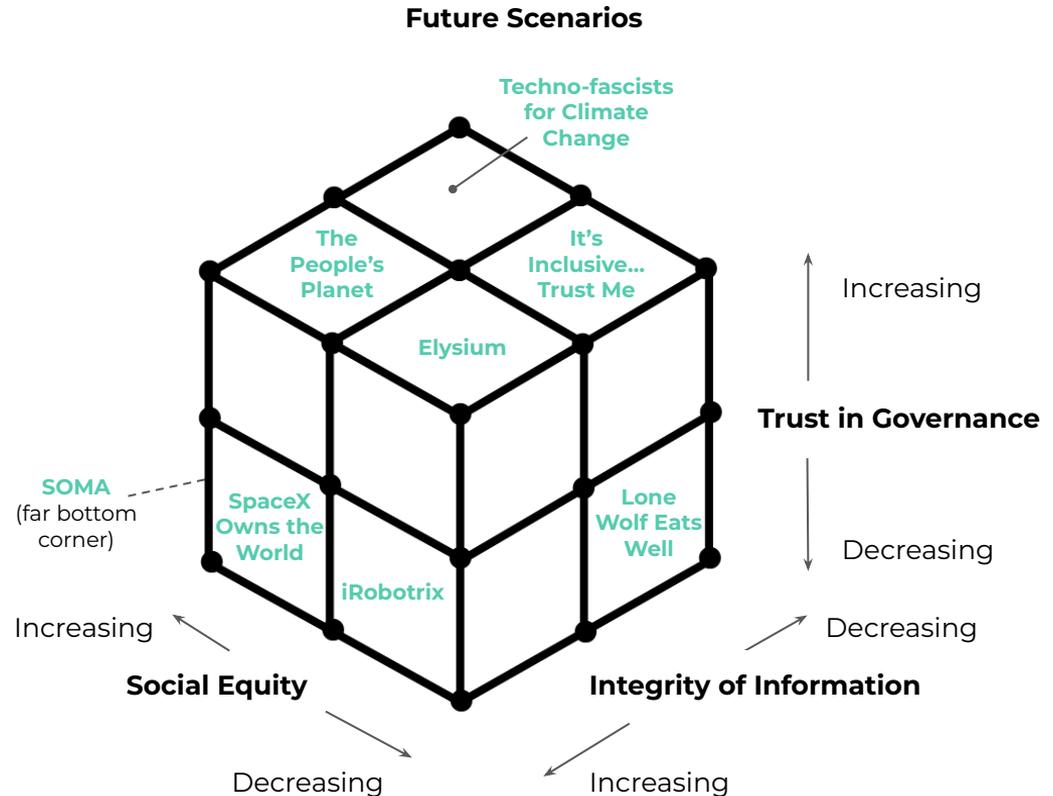
The eight scenarios described in the workshop were developed by orienting the three critical factors, trust in governance, social equity, and integrity of information, at cross-sections to become the axes of a cube.

By labeling each polarity of the critical factors as either increasing or decreasing, the eight corners of the cube emerge as being defined by unique combinations of the polarities.

Each of these corners represents one of the scenarios.

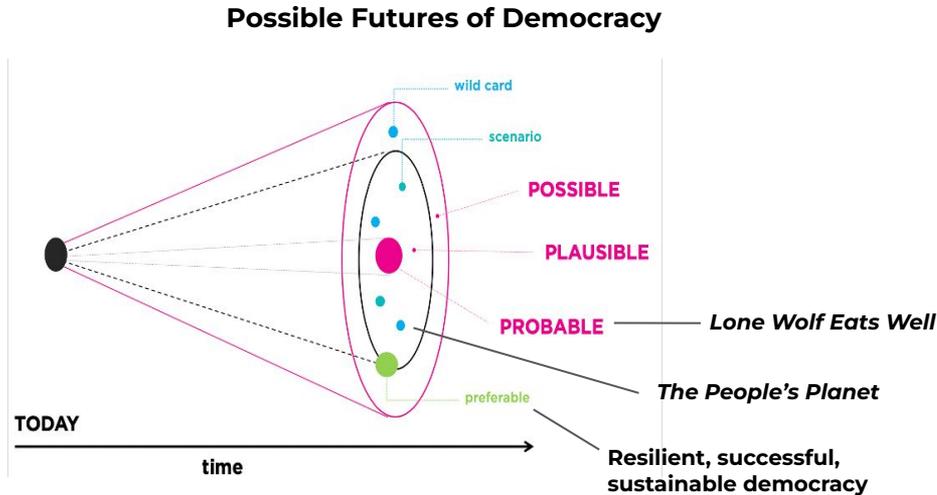
The 8 future scenarios are:

- Elysium
- The People's Planet
- It's Inclusive... Trust Me
- Techno-fascists for Climate Change
- iRobotrix
- SpaceX Owns the World
- Lone Wolf Eats Well
- SOMA



Notably, the scenarios *The People's Planet* and *Lone Wolf Eats Well* are scenarios positioned at the extremes of the scenario spectrum.

The People's Planet is a scenario in which all of the critical factors are increasing, and which arguably is closest to a world in which democracy is fully resilient, successful, and sustainable. We can understand that the ***The People's Planet* scenario is closest to our most preferable future.**



In contrast, the scenario *Lone Wolf Eats Well* is defined by a significant decrease of all of the critical factors. A world in which there is decreasing trust in governance, decreasing social equity and decreasing integrity of information is arguably a future that is furthest away from a sustainable, successful and resilient democracy.

Our research indicates that this is the future that we are on a trajectory towards. That is, most signals, trends, and drivers of change are indicating that trust in governance is decreasing, integrity of information is decreasing, and broadly speaking, that social equity is continuing to decrease across Canada. In this way, we can understand that **the *Lone Wolf Eats Well* scenario is the most probable scenario.**

Taken together, it is important to consider that there are many *possible* futures that lie between the most probable future and the most preferable future. This range of futures are considered *possible* futures. Examples of the possible futures are described in this section, as conceptualized by workshop participants.

Each of the scenarios was initially defined by the parameters of the critical factors, and then further developed with details of various drivers of change. Notably, the health of democracy varies across each one.

Elysium

Scenario Dimensions

- Increasing Trust in Governance
- Decreasing Social Equity
- Increasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Mismanagement of alternative energy resources
- Rise of micro-governments
- Information is more transparent but less accessible
- Food inequality has become more extreme
- Inequality is a primary driver

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

Elysium is a world in which there is widespread increase in trust in governance, but polarizing issues have encouraged the rise of micro-governments within localities and communities.

There is a general trend of increasing integrity of information, open data and more significant transparency of information but because of the widespread decrease in social equity this has effectively made vulnerable communities and minorities more aware of the rising inequality and has led to more social unrest. Nevertheless, in many circles, this unrest is placated by immersive entertainment experiences and alternative realities in the metaverse made possible by hyper-growth of high tech.

On the climate front, alternative energy sources are on the rise and becoming decentralized, but governments at all levels are managing them poorly and in ways that do not benefit everyone equally. One significant outcome is poor food security for all communities across Canada, except the ultra-rich.

Overall, democracy in *Elysium* is faring well although there are undercurrents of impending threat due to continued rise of inequality.

The People's Planet

Scenario Dimensions

- Increasing Trust in Governance
- Increasing Social Equity
- Increasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Data / Education
- Decolonization
- Decommodification
- People-led

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

The People's Planet is a world in which there has been significant progress made on decolonization and there is widespread and equitable access to literacy and resources. As a result, social equity and integrity of information is on the rise.

In terms of governance, there has been a marked shift to local-led representative governments. There is considerable civic engagement across the country and in general, communities and societal initiatives are very much considered “people-led”. Overall, trust in governance is steadily increasing.

Economically, there has been an important shift towards decommodification. This is in large part due to how youth and young people have stepped up and demanded greater action to mitigate climate chaos. Increased access to and understanding of data, paired with new models of education have helped facilitate this direction.

Overall, democracy in this world is doing very well.

It's Inclusive... Trust Me

Scenario Dimensions

- Increasing Trust in Governance
- Decreasing Social Equity
- Decreasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Malinformational algorithmic echo chambers
- Rise of digital world
- Open data and transparency

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

It's Inclusive... Trust Me is a world defined by increasing trust in governance but decreasing social equity and integrity of information. Digital technologies and social media are being used to confuse people and to promote mis- and mal-information. As a result, certain communities with high digital literacy are having their needs met while others are facing hardship and polarization.

Across the board, society is facing a total loss of integrity of information. Collective action, dialogue and working through differences to find common solutions are no longer possible as everyone has a different version of reality and truth.

Locally, there are primarily smaller government powers across Canada. On an international scale, capital has co-opted many governments leading to compromised decisions that primarily serve the interests of large corporations.

Overall, democracy in this future is functioning but struggling and lacking resiliency.

Techno-fascists for Climate

Scenario Dimensions

- Increasing Trust in Governance
- Increasing Social Equity
- Decreasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Energy transition
- Big tech / markers
- Housing / health / UBI
- Role of literacy
- Education / propaganda
- Consumer mindset
- Solidarity

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

Techno-fascists for Climate is a world in which there is increasing trust in governance as well as an increase in social equity, but significant decline in integrity of information.

In Canada, governance has become authoritarian. There has been significant crackdown on and removal of any channels of dissent as well as overwhelming deterioration in the ability for individuals to think for themselves. Across the board, there is reduced agency and autonomy.

At the same time, there are basic universal supports in place so that Canadians have all of their core basic needs met in terms of housing, food security, and more. Society is not as hyper-connected as it was in the 2020s. Instead, there has been a rise in hyperlocal communities, initially spurred by the Covid-19 global health pandemic in 2020. Nevertheless, there are many individuals who are generally disengaged and distracted.

Because of its authoritarian government, Canada has been able to take significant action on climate change and has seen successful energy transition in many sectors.

Overall, democracy is not faring well in this world except in Indigenous communities where Indigenous sovereignty has been restored.

Scenario Dimensions

- Decreasing Trust in Governance
- Decreasing Social Equity
- Increasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Echo chambers
- Trust without data
- Wealth inequality
- Polarization
- Dishonesty
- Poor resource management
- Ethical data practices
- Integrity of data
- Data policies

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

iRobotrix is a world defined by social inequity and high economic disparity. Across Canada, there are significant concentrations of power, while decreased social capability has led to reduced social capital and a lack of community structures.

In terms of governance, the Canadian government is lagging behind in all measures of democracy, resulting in continued lack of trust in governance across the board. At the same time, there is an increase in integrity of information and ethical data practices. This has evolved in parallel with advances in AI which has enabled sophisticated social organizing and rebellions. Of course, there are also instances of nefarious outcomes including technology-controlled crime.

Overall, democracy in *iRobotrix* is fractured. Across the country, there is a presiding pessimism and lack of hope that we will realize a better future.

SpaceX Owns the World

Scenario Dimensions

- Decreasing Trust in Governance
- Increasing Social Equity
- Increasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Literacy (Civic information and data)
- Government inaction, especially on economy and climate change
- Strong social movements
- Economic pessimism
- Increased trust in data over other knowledge systems

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

In the scenario, *SpaceX Owns the World*, we see continued decreasing trust in governance with increased social equity and integrity of information. As a result, there is poor trust in organizations broadly speaking but more trust in data. Data is prioritized over other ways of knowing, meaning certain communities of people are trusted over others and over other knowledge systems. There continues to be significant polarization because everyone uses their own data, but AI is capable of comparing data extremely quickly.

In terms of government, Canada has seen an increase in populism. Corporations are also significantly influential which has had a detrimental impact on the environment. Climate chaos is wreaking havoc on communities across the country. There is generally poor government action so communities themselves are organizing in various ways to meet their own needs.

Overall, democracy in *SpaceX Owns the World* is fragile and experiencing many fractures.

Lone Wolf Eats Well

Scenario Dimensions

- Decreasing Trust in Governance
- Decreasing Social Equity
- Decreasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Atomization
- Concentration of power
- Collapse of social systems
- Unaccountable tech
- Increasing accountability of governance
- Wealth inequality

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

Lone Wolf Eats Well is a world in which trust in governance, social equity, and integrity of information have all continued to decline. There are significant concentrations of power, both within governing bodies and corporate entities. Notably, there is no accountability for large tech companies.

Across Canada, there is increased violence and polarization and significant collapse of social systems. There is no public access to data. There is a lack of access to healthcare and adequate housing across the country, causing intersecting and rolling crises. Overall, there is a loss of trust in institutions and leaders, due in part to unmatched manipulation from seemingly anyone in power.

Generally speaking, there is no sense of solidarity which has led to deeply entrenched individualist mindsets and a vilification of any type of group action.

Overall, democracy in *Lone Wolf Eats Well* is barely functioning.

Scenario Dimensions

- Decreasing Trust in Governance
- Increasing Social Equity
- Decreasing Integrity of Information

Key Drivers of Change

- Social justice movement
- Governance and policy reform for wealth distribution
- Unaccountable actors
- Lack of critical thinking and engagement
- Dishonesty and corruption

Health of Democracy:



Scenario Description

SOMA is a world akin to what Aldous Huxley described in *Brave New World*. There continues to be declining trust in governance and poor integrity of information and as a result, there is effectively no critical thinking across the population.

The government is thoroughly corrupt but the general public are unaware. This is in part because of how embedded corporations are with the government, working to prop up narratives that support their own interests. Society at large is complacent and the elite rule. And yet, there has been a general increase in social equity.

In terms of technology, the metaverse has proven critics wrong and is well-established in day-to-day life, working to facilitate the necessary facade for government and corporations.

Democracy in SOMA is functioning on the surface but for anyone with a critical eye, it is evident that it is fraught with issues.

DEMOCRACY XCHANGE

5. Actions & Insights

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADU CO

Taking Action

Once workshop participants had developed the details of how their scenario could unfold in the year 2040, they began to consider what actions we might take today to move closer to a more resilient, sustainable, and successful future democracy.

The actions presented in the following pages reflect how we might mitigate the risks and threats to democracy that arose in some possible futures as well as actions that would amplify the opportunities for moving closer to a preferred state of democracy.

In order to prioritize the long list of actions that were developed, participants “tested” them against each of the other scenarios. For example, each of the actions that were developed in response to *Elysium* were held up against each of the other scenarios and then judged to determine whether taking that action today would indeed move us closer to a more desirable democracy.

Participants then assigned one of three labels to each action, depending on their assessment of whether the action would help bring us closer to a resilient, sustainable, successful democracy.

Possible labels for each action:

- **Green:** This action is a good fit and helps to move us closer to a more desirable democracy.
- **Yellow:** This action *could* be a good fit to help move us closer to a more desirable democracy but some modifications are needed.
- **Red:** This action would not be a good fit.

The visualization of how each action fits within each scenario is compiled in the next slide as a heatmap.

Heatmap of Actions

		Elysium	The People's Planet	It's Inclusive...Trust Me	Techno-fascists for Climate	iRobotrix	SpaceX Owns the World	Lone Wolf Eats Well	SOMA
Elysium	Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Electoral Reform & Data-Based Decision Making	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
The People's Planet	Indigenous Groups Are Self-Governing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Local Citizens Assemble (Reform Gov. Structures)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Shift Power Away From Capitalist Groups to Individuals	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
It's Inclusive...Trust Me	Regulation & Governance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Combating Misinformation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Education & Skills Training	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Technofascists for Climate	Neuter Big Tech	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Meaningful Action on Climate	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Institutionalized Citizen's Assembly	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
iRobotrix	Full Education	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Ability to Flourish	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Opportunity for Voice	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SpaceX Owns the World	Movement Towards Localized Governments	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Governments Increase Corporate Regulation	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Big Tech Corp Hold Themselves Accountable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lone Wolf Eats Well	Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Holding Tech Companies Accountable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
SOMA	Regulations & Accountability for Media, Tech, & Government	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Free Education	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

NOTE: Descriptions of all actions are compiled in Appendix B: Actions.

Emerging Themes

Looking across all of the actions that were developed for the scenarios, five themes start to emerge.

These themes represent types of actions that should be thoughtfully considered in terms of how they may help us take advantage of present opportunities for improving democracy, as well as how they may help us mitigate future threats for democracy in Canada.

These themes include: increasing regulation for corporations, greater accountability for tech companies, strengthening local governance structures, increasing access to education, and shifts in who holds power. Each of these themes represents a cluster of specific actions that are described in detail in Appendix B.

Emerging Theme

Supporting Actions

Increasing Regulation for Corporations

- Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism
- Regulation & Governance
- Governments Increase Corporate Regulation
- Regulations & Accountability for Media, Tech, & Government

Greater Accountability for Tech Companies

- Big Tech Corp Hold Themselves Accountable
- Neuter Big Tech
- Holding Tech Companies Accountable

Strengthening Local Governance Structures

- Local Citizens Assemble (Reform Gov. Structures)
- Movement Towards Localized Governments

Increasing Access to Education

- Full Education
- Free Education
- Education & Skills Training

Shifts in Who Holds Power

- Shift Power Away From Capitalist Groups to Individuals
- Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power

Prioritized Actions

Looking across the heatmap, there are **four actions that appear to be a good fit regardless of which scenario they are tested against** (voted green by all scenarios). These actions are: *Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism*, *Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers*, *Combating Misinformation*, and *Meaningful Action on Climate*. At a baseline, these actions can be understood as those that are highest priority. That is, regardless of whether the critical factors continue to decrease or some begin to increase, these actions will help us move closer to a democracy that is resilient, successful and sustainable.

There are three actions that were determined to be a good fit in all scenarios except one. These actions are very high potential in terms of moving us towards a more desirable democracy, but require further consideration in order to understand whether any of the critical factors are beginning to shift from decreasing to increasing. These actions are: *Education & Skills Training*, *Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power*, and *Regulations & Accountability for Media, Tech & Government*.

Additionally, **there were another three actions that were determined to be a good fit in all scenarios except two.**

Good fit in all scenarios

- Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism
- Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers
- Combating Misinformation
- Meaningful Action on Climate

Good fit in all but one scenario

- Education & Skills Training
- Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power
- Regulations & Accountability for Media, Tech, & Government

Good fit in all but two scenarios

- Neuter Big Tech
- Governments Increase Corporate Regulation
- Free Education

These actions can also be considered as high potential but again, require closer consideration before pursuing to determine the changing nature of the socio-political landscape. These actions are: *Neuter Big Tech*, *Governments Increase Corporate Regulation*, and *Free Education*.

Overall, it is critical to keep a pulse on whether trust in governance, social equity and integrity of information are continuing to decrease or whether there are signs and signals of change that indicate one or all are starting to increase. If we begin to see significant change in one of these factors, we can look to the corresponding scenario to better understand which actions we can begin to prioritize.

An Indirect Approach

Recall that the scenario *The People's Planet* is arguably closest to the most preferred future in terms of democracy as it is predicated on increasing trust in governance, increasing social equity, and increasing integrity of information.

In studying the heatmap, it is notable that the actions developed in response to this world did not seem to fit well in many of the other scenarios. This seems to indicate that these actions, namely: *Indigenous Groups Are Self-Governing*, *Local Citizens Assemble (Reform Gov. Structures)*, and *Shift Power Away From Capitalist Groups to Individuals* would face many barriers if we pursued them directly today, with the understanding that we are in the extreme opposite of this scenario in terms of the direction of the critical factors.

Alternatively, if we look at the actions developed in response to *Lone Wolf Eats Alone* (recall that this is the most *probable* scenario), we can see that these actions were determined to be fairly high potential across all other scenarios in terms of helping us move closer to a more desirable democracy. With this insight, **we should consider acting on these two areas, namely: *Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power and Holding Tech Companies Accountable.***

In his book, *Obliquity: Why Our Goals are Best Achieved Indirectly*³, economist John Kay argues that, paradoxically, our objectives are best achieved by taking an indirect approach. He posits that taking an oblique approach to lofty objectives is the best course of action in order to realize real success in solving complex challenges.

No doubt, democracy is a complex issue, and to achieve a democracy that is resilient, sustainable *and* successful is an ambitious objective. To take an indirect approach would suggest that we focus our efforts on shorter-term goals to address our current realities rather than putting our energies into actions to directly bring about our most desirable future.

This indirect approach aligns with the results of the windtunneling exercise as well. That is, instead of prioritizing the actions that were developed in response to *The People's Planet* (closest to our preferred future), we should instead focus on the actions that were developed in response to *Lone Wolf Eats Well*, the scenario that we are currently on the trajectory towards.

Summary

In summary, there are six high potential actions that we should consider prioritizing today to help us move closer to a more desirable democracy. Actions 1-4 reflect work that workshop participants deemed to be high potential regardless of what the future holds. Actions 5 and 6 reflect work that we can do today to mitigate the negative impacts that may be a result of continuing towards the most probable future.

These actions are:

1. Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism

Having to do with decentralized capital, competition laws, limiting lobbying and better regulations that don't preclude innovation.

2. Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers

Having to do with better collective action, portable pension plans, and moving from a minimum wage towards a thriving wage.

3. Combating Misinformation

Having to do with funding and supporting local and non-profit media and pursuing information and data literacy.

4. Meaningful Action on Climate

Having to do with introducing incentives for climate action, lowering the voting age and increasing media literacy and training for all ages.

5. Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power

Having to do with education about different systems of power and having decisions tables be representative of electoral reform.

6. Holding Tech Companies Accountable

Having to do with incentivizing more transparency, breaking down monopolies, shifting business models, and overall making tech companies more accountable.

Beyond these six actions, there is a considerable amount of further inquiry to be done to probe deeper into the details of the proposed actions and the optimal timing for pursuing these actions in earnest. Additionally, some actions may be facing a closing window of opportunity. Meaning, if we delay in addressing these actions, we will face increasingly significant barriers in future. Overall, more work is required to better understand how we might collectively realize a fully resilient, sustainable and successful democracy in Canada.

**DEMOCRACY
XCHANGE**

Appendix A

Drivers of Change

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADUCO

Subtheme: Institutional Reparations

Calls for governing bodies to answer for past injustices have become mainstream, especially in the wake of greater awareness of institutional racism and Indigenous injustices, shaking the foundation of government and trust in the traditional institutions responsible.

Institutional Racism Called Out

Institutional racism and harmful societal systems including education, housing, health and employment have been called out and challenged across the country.

Increasing Unhoused Populations

As the cost of living and housing prices have reached critical levels, so too have the number of people experiencing homelessness in urban centres and economic hardship across the country. Greater awareness of the realities and root causes of homelessness and advocacy to move away from enforcement approaches leveraged by police have dominated the narrative.

Government Spending Constraints

Government spending and budgets are highly scrutinized as healthcare, education, arts, culture and community services continue to be constrained while infrastructure, police and transportation budgets grow year over year.

Youth Demand Agency

Younger generations are getting involved in politics and demanding a voice in the digital and political spheres. They are voting in record numbers, while many find themselves divided along political lines.

Reconciliation

An ongoing practice of constant evolution and acknowledgement of institutional harms towards Indigenous peoples and the move to correct the past, present and future wrongs.

Subtheme: Institutional Capacity

The "slow and steady" and resource constrained approach of the public sector has some turning to alternative stakeholders for action, namely corporate entities.

Corporations Filling the Gaps

The growing frustration with governing bodies' cautious and bureaucratic approach to actions around climate, social issues and the pandemic have shaken the public trust in governance and shifted support and responsibility to non-traditional, non-state actors.

Indigenous Forms of Governance

Challenging colonial approaches and mindsets, Indigenous governance models are becoming more understood and respected. These include collective governance, syncretic democracies with 'two-eyed' seeing, and seven generations principles.

Global Health

Global health concerns continue to challenge governments and the public around the world, while healthcare systems and infrastructure are struggling to provide care to those in need.

Open Data and Transparency

Demands for greater transparency and access to data may push governments towards a more agile institutional structure, one where proactive action is taken in fast-moving areas such as technology, security, health and sustainability.

Pandemic Restrictions

Freedom of movement restrictions, enforcement strategies, tracking apps, and delayed elections have been leveraged to manage the spread of COVID-19 since 2020, forcing a debate between science and alternative information sources, and calling into question of civil liberties.

Subtheme: Political Polarization

The perceived and/or real ability for Canadians to trust in their government, its actions and its elections and ability to tackle the big, complex, long-term challenges facing the nation.

Partisan Media

Organized competition between media and news outlets along party lines continues to divide views, communities, institutions and nations.

Rise of the Influencer

Alternative information sources, such as celebrities, podcasters and social media influencers are shaping the minds of their followers.

Traditional Community Institutions Struggling

Many of the organizations that bond communities together are in decline, leaving fewer opportunities for local connection, discussion, and civic participation.

Foreign Nation Influence

Electoral fraud, cronyism and bribery continue to shake individual perceptions of and trust in government and the influence of foreign nations on government operations.

Economic Pessimism

Outlook on the economy is grim as concerns loom over economic inflation and recession cycles. Although perceived economic health may affect democratic outcomes and confidence, new economic models are being explored, including evaluation models beyond the financial.

Subtheme: Trust in Institutions

Trust in traditional societal institutions, such as government, finance, media, and public health, have been on a decades-long downward spiral.

Conspiracy Theories Take Hold

Once existing on the fringes of society, conspiracy theories and adjacent are seeing greater public acceptance and penetration of the mainstream via the endorsement of public figures and influential social media personalities.

Decentralized Finance

Circumventing banks, insurances and clearing houses, DeFi offers an alternative to centralized financial institutions. While blockchains and cryptocurrencies may be improving transparency, traceability and offering cost savings, they may also open new pernicious activities such as money laundering and illegal exchange.

Civic Participation Transition

As social fragmentation increases, community organizations are struggling to bring in new members. Civic participation is on the decline at the community level, while online engagement is finding better reception in some areas.

Self-Determination

The inherent right of Indigenous peoples to self-govern and the support, recognition and implementation of this right by other governing bodies has challenged laws and policies.

Big Tech Power Influence

Big tech companies have access to user data and can impact everything from legislation and economics, to societal behaviours and individual choices.

Subtheme: Geopolitical Constraints

Geopolitical tensions, including armed conflict, access to resources, production and supply of energy and control over territory, may seem far away, but have very real implications on Canadian soil.

Emerging Markets

A new multi-polar world is emerging, one which is defined less by military might alone and more by an ever-shifting set of allegiances and agreements between wealthy and emerging countries seeking to benefit from global trade, shared values, and might.

Energy Transition

Shifting priorities, investment in innovative solutions and economic tensions are empowering renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydrogen, who are now poised to compete at par in global energy markets with non renewables like oil and gas.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity models continue to evolve to protect people, organizations and nations from the ever present and evolving threats in a digital world. As the world digitizes and advancements are made in AI, IoT, cloud use and remote work, the opportunities for attacks will also continue to grow.

Fourth Industrial Revolution

Representing a shift in the way companies create, exchange and distribute value, the Fourth Industrial Revolution will merge our physical, digital and biological worlds into one, calling for governing bodies to empower collaboration across nations.

Surveillance State

The rise of government (in partnership with commercial entities) monitoring of the populous, especially in the digital realm has some concerned.

Subtheme: Social Connection

Rising isolation, digital influences and fragmentation of society continue to fray the threads of community and social connection, while communities advocate for greater opportunities to bring people together and digital spaces pop up to create social connection online.

Rise of Digital Worlds

The growing presence of digital worlds (via social media, video gaming, VR/AR, etc) can simultaneously create connection between strangers, while also drastically reducing in-person human contact and connection as many are reaching their "social quotas" online.

Urban Decay

With many people moving away from the city, the political power map may potentially change and services (including funding for education and infrastructure) might diminish in the core, leading to the erosion of agency within marginalized and lower income groups.

Greying Populations

As society ages, governments need to balance increasingly diverse needs of younger and older populations. A large older adult population may dominate politics and elections, shaping government to align with desires and needs of their generations.

Traditional Community Institutions**Struggling**

Many of the organizations that bond communities together are in decline due to lack of funding, leaving fewer opportunities for local connection, discussion, and civic partnership.

Spaces to Foster Community

New or renewed spaces to encourage social connection and community continue to be critical, including physical hubs with programing, services, and amenities such as libraries, that may also function alongside or in addition to other growing online / digital creative, activist and social communities.

Subtheme: System Reform

In every walk of life—from work to governance, sports to media— organizations are being held to account for how they've failed to reflect the diversity of the broader societies in which they exist.

Social Justice Movement

The rise of social movement demanding principles of justice and equality applied to social problems. Of late, these movement have been propelled by social media.

Decolonization

Colonial ideologies about the superiority and privileges of Western thought and approaches, which often exclude rather than include, are being deconstructed and challenged in systems and institutions. Power, dominance and control are rebalanced and returned to Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are perceived, presented, and practiced as equal to Western ways of knowing and doing.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The number of diversity, equity and inclusion policies have grown over the past few years, leading to greater representation, inclusion and protection of marginalized workers, while many have struggled with the implementation and impact of these policies.

Living Wage

The rising cost of living, inflation and labour shortages have brought the need for a living wage to the forefront of labour discussions. The 'living wage' is a contrasting concept to minimum wage, which is increasingly does not afford basic needs of workers.

Youth Fear No Future

Young people are increasingly disturbed about the environmental crisis they are growing up in, resulting in existential anxiety and trauma. Many feel let down by their governments for not taking actions to secure a viable future for them.

Subtheme: Global Health

Global health concerns continue to challenge governments and the public around the world, while healthcare systems and infrastructure are struggling to provide care to those in need.

Mental Health Crisis

With the isolation of the pandemic and the rise of social media, there's been a marked decline in mental wellbeing and rise in awareness and need for greater mental health supports, which were already scarce and difficult to access.

Increasing Climate Emergencies

The rise in frequency and intensity of catastrophic climate events disproportionately impact people of colour, increasing homelessness and contribution to the perpetuation of generational economic trauma.

Declining Access to (Universal) Healthcare

Globally, the ability to access essential health services continues to be a challenge. In Canada, access to family physicians continues to decline, resulting in long waitlists and Emergency Room visits. Privatization moves forward threatening a larger economic and geographic health divisions.

Rise of Virtual Care

The ability for healthcare practitioners to provide access to care virtually increased dramatically over the pandemic when it was a necessity. Many practitioners continue to offer this service, reducing the barriers to accessing care as long as individuals have digital access.

Rolling Pandemics

The increased imminent risk of recurring global pandemics is stimulating rapid production of new technologies and interventions, while the impacts of ongoing fear and uncertainty continue to be widespread.

Subtheme: (Resource) Scarcity

High demand and use of basic necessities - such as clean water, housing, food and more - are leading to greater resource scarcity and rising prices.

Clean Water Emergency

Nearly 1/6 of the planet cannot easily access clean water, a number that is steadily rising, and disproportionately impacts low-income and Indigenous communities in Canada.

Economic Pessimism

Outlook on the economy is grim as concerns loom over economic inflation and recession cycles. Although perceived economic health may affect democratic outcomes and confidence, new economic models are being explored, including evaluation models beyond the financial.

(Affordable) Housing Crisis

Growing housing interest and utility rates are leading to generational shifts in home affordability, as many young adults are being outpriced. The increasing cost of ownership along with new monetization services such as AirBnB have created a crisis in many Canadian cities, leading to greater housing precarity and houselessness.

Food Insecurity

Lack of access to, or ability to afford, enough food for every person in a household has grown drastically as cost of living increases, especially impacting healthy and high protein foods, and disproportionately affecting low income and marginalized households.

Eco-Equality

A movement to encourage political agency to the natural world, including plants and animals, informed by the notion that all natural beings and elements have the fundamental right to survive and thrive. Systemically, this may help counter climate change threats and rebalance or restore ecosystems.

Subtheme: The Great Divide

The gap between the world's wealthiest individuals and everyone else grows dramatically larger.

Wealth Inequality

The gap between the richest and the poorest continues to widen dramatically, squeezing out the economic middle class. The top '1%' continues to have great power in shaping our futures.

Universal Basic Income

Growing advocacy of universal basic income, where every adult resident of a country or locale is given an unconditional monetary allotment, has led to multiple pilot programs across the globe.

Cost of Living

The rising cost living, including skyrocketing housing and food prices have drastically pinched budgets, creating a deeper divide between those worried about the 'making ends meet' and those who aren't.

Digital Divide

The gap between those with affordable access to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and those without grows, the latter often being underserved members of society, even though civic participation and a functioning livelihood increasingly depends on them.

Labour Shortage

Labour shortages have been felt across almost every industry, prompting innovative solutions in some areas (such as remote drive-thru workers) and a call for increased pay, benefits and job security in others.

Subtheme: Information Literacy

The influx of and sheer amount of information accessible to people, and consumed on a daily basis has never been greater, all while our ability to separate the truth from fiction or research from opinion continues to decline.

Misinformation Grows

Misinformation, false information that is either spread either intentionally or not but does result in misleading the viewer (and possibly causing harm people, systems and institutions), is a growing concern, especially amplified during the pandemic and the Trump era.

Malinformation Increasing

Although Malinformation stems from the truth, it is often exaggerated to mislead and may intentionally cause harm, such as doxing or phishing.

Digital Literacy

The ability to understand and use the digital tools and spaces has never been more important, with the range of information sources and agenda pushing. Generations and populations with less digital literacy may suffer more than those with high digital literacy.

Data-Informed Decisions

Data and technology are driving decisions and actions in industries across the globe, leading to greater emphasis on 'ethical' data practices and transparency.

Surveillance Capitalism

The exploitation of personal data, typically by big tech for their own revenue-generating purposes, but which also undermines personal autonomy and democracy by predicting and shaping individual behaviour.

Subtheme: Polarized Positions

Increasing polarization and social divides inhibit the democratic process from reaching consensus and taking action on major issues, further exacerbating the problems themselves and inflaming division further.

Partisan Media

Organized competition between media and news outlets along party lines continues to divide views, communities, institutions and nations.

Pandemic Restrictions

Freedom of movement restrictions, enforcement strategies, tracking apps, and delayed elections have been leveraged to manage the spread of COVID-19 since 2020, forcing a debate between science and alternative information sources, and calling into question of civil liberties.

Rise of the Influencer

Alternative information sources, such as celebrities, podcasters and social media influencers, are shaping the minds of their followers.

Declining Journalistic Pillars

The five pillars of journalism ethics are truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity, and accountability. Growing competition and misinformation spread from media outlets are challenging the very definition and integrity of traditional media and pushing viewers towards alternative new sources.

(Algorithmic) Echo Chambers

When one's social media becomes an echo chamber as content is algorithmically tailored and curtailed, often in accordance with the user's past choices and online searches. It de facto eliminates opposing viewpoints and differing voices.

Subtheme: Data Integrity

The realities of a digitized world require systems and processes to control, fact check and regulate information (and it's sources) for truth and integrity.

AI Biases

Machine learning and AI is now being used across nearly every industry. These data informed algorithms are everywhere in our everyday lives. If and when these massive data sets are incorrect, incomplete or biased, the result can target and harm and disproportionately impact minorities.

Data Policies

Current global data policies and regulations protect data within private and public institutions, limiting the opportunities for a more human-centered approach, while working towards greater data protection and necessary security regulations.

Cloud Migration

Increasingly, companies are leveraging the scalability and agile services of the cloud, which can come with its own challenges and vulnerabilities.

Big-Tech Power Influence

Big-tech companies have access to user data and can impact everything from legislation and economics, to societal behaviours and individual choices.

Environmental Impact Data

In order to achieve impact with environmental and social initiatives, organizations require ethically sourced, accurate and complete data to inform and report on impact.

Subtheme: Global Digitization

The digital transformation provides greater opportunities for global inclusion and participation, while simultaneously forcing governing bodies to react to new digital challenges.

Deep Fakes

Deep fakes are videos in which AI technology uses a process called, "deep learning" to digitally alter media (pictures, audio, videos, etc.) and, in essence, create false quotations, incidents or events, often intend to mislead or influence people on political topics.

AI for Hire

Although still in early stages, some industries are actively working towards leveraging artificial intelligence and replacing human labour with technology, specifically for repetitive and easily automated tasks such as manufacturing and fast-food workers.

Digital identity

As digital interactions increase at an unprecedented rate, an estimated one billion people have no legal proof of identity, and another 3.2 billion are not effectively able to prove their identity online, exacerbating inequality and issues of access and governance.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity models continue to evolve to protect people, organizations and nations from the ever present and evolving threats in a digital world. As the world digitizes and advancements are made in AI, IoT, cloud use and remote work, the opportunities for attacks will also continue to grow.

Digital Divide

The gap between those with affordable access to Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and those without grows, the latter often being underserved members of society, even though civic participation and a functioning livelihood increasingly depends on them.

Subtheme: Information Dissemination

In today's information-driven society, the sharing of information continues to grow in scope and the range of information (from useful, to harmful) and how it is shared and by whom, has great influence and divisive implications.

Information Literacy

The influx of and sheer amount of information accessible to people, and consumed on a daily basis has never been greater, all while our ability to separate the truth from fiction or research from opinion continues to decline.

Algorithmic Curation

Social media platforms use algorithms to track users preferences and tendencies, in order to curate targeted feed content and channel users towards content bubbles.

Backlash Against Science

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the cracks in today's information sharing realities (and implications). Conspiracy theories and disinformation have informed an anti-science movement, where science ceases to be the objective and trusted field for information and direction. Some worry 'Big Business' benefits are behind science claims.

Fact Flow Checking

The screening and evaluation of content to confirm or refute its accuracy has never been more important. Neutral fact checking services, such as Snopes to explore misinformation, address rumours and gut check memes. Flows are also monitored by non-profit groups such as The Rappler's newly formed The Nerve consultancy to understand spread.

Propaganda Campaigns

The strength and divisiveness of propaganda campaigns rises, continuing to divide individuals through coordinated efforts to disseminate information intended to entrench a particular point of view.

Subtheme: Shifting Business Values

Recent awareness of the harm cause by previous, extractive and growth-centric operating models are under scrutiny and new models built on the values of resilience, sustainability and human-nature relationship are growing.

Stakeholder Capitalism

Stakeholder capitalism is designed to benefit and provide value to all stakeholders and environment, as opposed to simply benefiting shareholders. A version of this is triple bottom line valuation and b-corps. Advocates believe true change and progress in this realm could mean healthier nations, greater sustainability, and equality.

Circular Economy

Circular economy narrative offers the opportunity to rethink and reconceptualized the current economic approach, which relies heavily on hyper-consumption and waste, and redesign it to better address human and environmental needs.

Arctic Passage Opens

Melting ice may open new main trade routes in the Arctic reducing shipping distances, and enhancing commercial relationship with countries around the world, while some are concerned for the environmental and Indigenous community impacts of these trade routes and the potential for sovereignty-based conflicts in the Arctic.

Fourth Industrial Revolution

Representing a shift in the way companies create, exchange and distribute value, the Fourth Industrial Revolution will merge our physical, digital and biological worlds into one, calling for governing bodies to empower collaboration across nations.

Environmental Impact Data

In order to achieve impact with environmental and social initiatives, organizations will require ethically sourced, accurate and complete data to inform and report on impact.

Subtheme: Critical Energy Needs

The impacts of climate change and weather emergencies are being felt around the world and impacting society at all levels. The need for resilient, resilient and sustainable energy has never been higher.

Power Out

Climate-related weather events have increased the number, spread and duration of power outages across the globe, with implications spanning the economic, social, technological and geopolitical. As outages continue to disrupt everyday life, more sustainable and innovative solutions are being prioritized.

Renewable Energy

Shifting priorities, investment in innovative solutions and economic tensions are empowering renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydrogen, which are now poised to compete at par in global energy markets with non renewables.

Cryptocurrencies

Mining cryptocurrencies requires around the clock, high intensity energy usage, which has many criticizing its vast server "mines," while others believe that crypto mines could be powered by clean power (such as hydro) and help drive the global adoption of renewable energy alternatives.

Infrastructure Concerns

Critical health, communications, safety and transportation infrastructure are feeling the effects of climate change. New infrastructure builds must prioritize sustainability and climate resiliency, while applying those mindsets to existing infrastructure can support a more resilient and sustainable future.

Net Zero Cities

Urban centers could be key players in the net-zero transition, considering that much of today's energy usage and carbon emissions originate in global cities. Innovative technologies, transportation, waste reduction and partnerships could be vital to moving the needle.

Subtheme: Ecosystem Collapse

The health of earth's biodiversity and ecosystems are vital to healthy future for all species on the planet and have social, economic and political implications.

Biodiversity Concerns

Biodiversity is the life-supporting systems and life on earth that support clean water, air, soil, food and more, and it is under threat. Millions of species are at risk of extinction and, yet, extraction continues.

Ecosystem Health Awareness

The loss of natural habitats is a key driver of diseases, while forest and farm practices impact water and food supplies and trees alleviate pollution and heat islands. The relationship between humans and nature is deeply intertwined and a healthy ecosystem can boost human mental and physical well-being.

Agri-Innovations

Smart technologies, such as CRISPR, can help reduce agricultural emissions, make crops more resilient to future climate events and help every global nation grow food at a local level to feed generations to come.

Extreme Weather Events

The increase in frequency and severity of extreme weather events have repercussions across social, environmental and political systems and, without drastic intervention, will only continue to worsen.

Nature-Positive Practices

Nature-positive is a goal, approach and business model to halt destructive practices and shift to an operating model of regeneration, resilience and recirculation, aiming for a resilient biosphere recovery by 2050.

Subtheme: Human-Nature Relationship

The relationship between humans and nature is interdependent and, as climate impacts increase around the globe, so too will the impacts on humans.

Food Shortages

Flooding, droughts and unseasonable weather have cause drastic food shortages with soaring costs around the world and many Canadian food banks are seeing unprecedented demand.

Climate Impact Inequality

Climate risk disproportionately impacts marginalized communities and nations in the Global South. An intersectional approach is required to understand the realities of inequality, biodiversity loss and climate risk and pave a way forward that takes into account all people and nations across the globe equally.

Sick Cities

Urban populations increasingly contend with climbing food costs, air pollution, rapid loss of green space, and crumbling infrastructure.

Climate Politicization

With greater global cohesion and commitment to climate action, the topic of climate change and action continues to divide along party lines.

Mass Migrations

Climate disasters trigger the majority of new displacements worldwide. The scope and scale of human migration due to climate change is predicted to test the limits of national and global governance as well as international cooperation.

Find the sources for all drivers of change [HERE](#).

**DEMOCRACY
XCHANGE**

Appendix B Actions

democracyxchange.org

@dxcs summit #DXC23

SUPER ORDINARY LAB



OCAD
UNIVERSITY

OCADUCO

Elysium

Regulating Capitalists / Capitalism

Stakeholder to take action:

- Capitalists

Action description:

- Decentralized capital
- Competition laws/antitrust laws and collusion
- Regulatory distributions stock by backs
- Limit lobbying
- Director liability for corporate malfeasance
- White collar crime enforcement
- Eliminating shareholder privacy
- Better regulations that don't stifle innovation

Better Labour Laws & Organizing Workers

Stakeholder to take action:

- Workers

Action description:

- Organizing, collective action
- Labour laws: amend ESA to protect informal and exempt workers
- Portable pension plans
- Training for newcomers or eliminated professions
- Move from minimum wage to a living wage to thriving wage, universal basic income

Electoral Reform & Data-Based Decision Making

Stakeholder to take action:

- Government

Action description:

- Regulation: Capitalism; Environmental protections; Accountability
- Electoral reform: Ranked ballots; Eliminate FPTP; Remove money from elections
- Data Board: Driven by data not populism; Equity lean to policy makers
- Civic federation: Teaching more about government; Drives passion towards democracy; Democracy is not passive
- Reconciliation: Give the land back/reparations

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

The People's Planet

Indigenous Groups Are Self-Governing

Stakeholder to take action:

- Indigenous people

Action description:

- Funding Indigenous-led self-governing structures
- Integration into leadership systems

Local Citizens Assemble (Reform Gov. Structures)

Stakeholder to take action:

- Workers

Action description:

- End private corporate ownership in favour of worker coops. Through LCA
- Workers drive this change

Shift Power Away From Capitalist Groups to Individuals

Stakeholder to take action:

- Local citizens assembly

Action description:

- Give constitutional power to municipal/local bodies
- Increase citizen participation/engagement
- Start with local community groups
- Increased data transparency/literacy to drive data-informed decision-making

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

It's Inclusive... Trust Me

Regulation & Governance

Stakeholders to take action:

- Government
- UN
- OECD
- IMF
- Lawyers

Action description:

- Breakdown monopolies
- Align tax policy + business regulations globally
- Strengthen unions/labour rights
- Data equity/ decommodifying/opening up data
- Funding open source/non-profit data +AI development

Combating Misinformation

Stakeholders to take action:

- Media
- Government
- Educational institutions

Action description:

- Fund support for local journalism and non-profit media
- Information + data literacy
- Decentralized technological content moderation
- Breakdown monopolies
- Align tax policy and business regulations globally
- Decommify data
- Implement experiential learning
- Expanded models for citizens to contribute to decision making

Education & Skills Training

Stakeholders to take action:

- Educational institutions
- School boards
- Think tanks

Action description:

- Build critical thinking skills
- Civic engagement, how to participate
- Civic literacy in public education
- Media literacy skills education

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

Techno-fascists for Climate

Neuter Big Tech

Stakeholder to take action:

- Big tech

Action description:

- Data stewards
- Locally owned media
- Regulation of platforms
- Prevent monopolies
- Strategy to encourage own decision making

Meaningful Action on Climate

Stakeholder to take action:

- Policy makers
- Educators
- Youth

Action description:

- Real incentives for climate action
- Lower the voting age
- Increase media literacy
- Training for all ages

Institutionalized Citizen's Assembly

Stakeholder to take action:

- All government everywhere

Action description:

- Implement and institutionalize citizens assemblies to increase citizen engagement and opportunities for active participation
- Institute a public learning and strategy for all

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

iRobotrix

Full Education

Stakeholder to take action:

- Young people

Action description:

- Education that includes:
 - Wisdom
 - Critical thinking
 - Intergenerational dialogue
 - Learning to listen
 - Conflict resolution
 - Diversity of views
 - Civic programs
 - Care of planet
 - First Nations

Ability to Flourish

Stakeholder to take action:

- Nomads

Action description:

- Living wage/universal income
- Jobs with a purpose
- Give food and shelter
- Decentralization of ownership and control
- Competition process
- More co-operative business models

Opportunity for Voice

Stakeholder to take action:

- Nomads

Action description:

- Create opportunities for agency
- Support arts
- Proportional representation
- Knowledge of civic right
- Programs to support elections process
 - More engagement in elections
- Volunteer in political campaigns

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

SpaceX Owns the World

Movement Towards Localized Governments

Stakeholder to take action:

- Community groups

Action description:

- Organized movement for localized government- more responsive
- Express discontent with corporations- destruction on environments
- Movement to make government more transparent and accountable; government is reflective of people's voices
- Advocacy for pluralistic systems representative of diversity
- Give people bigger platforms

Governments Increase Corporate Regulation

Stakeholder to take action:

- Government and multilateral international bodies

Action description:

- Break up Big Tech monopolies
- Hold companies accountable to their environmental and social impact / harm
- Legislate good corporate citizenship
- Take back social services from corporations
- Activate nested democracy systems to push for equity
- Present: Green New Deal

Big Tech Corporations Hold Themselves Accountable

Stakeholder to take action:

- Big technology corporations

Action description:

- Put in place strong ethics protocols, compliance, mechanism, rewards
- Systems to incentivize responsible development and positive use of technology
- Develop inclusive products; promote digital literacy
- Promote the use of data for societal good (as opposed to just consumerism)
- Big tech voluntarily puts caps on size, reach, geographic scope, etc.

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

Lone Wolf Eats Well

Creating More Responsive & Representative Systems of Power

Stakeholders to take action:

- Social groups/a advocacy
- Education system
- government/politicians
- 'voters

Action description:

- Disseminating thoughtful, accurate, inclusive information about systems of power
- Educating people with different systems of power
- Ensuring decision tables are representative of electoral reform
- Funding arts and culture, which can talk about political issues and can open people's minds

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.

Holding Tech Companies Accountable

Stakeholders to take action:

- Government
- Tech companies

Action description:

- Incentivizing more transparency
 - Legislation
 - Frameworks
 - Regulations
- Breaking down monopolies
- Shifting the business model
 - Companies are driven by ad revenue, contributing to pushing radical content
 - There are companies that are committed to disruption (i.e. even big tech companies like Microsoft)
 - Ensuring that decision makers are staying engaged with ethical/researched based organizations/ tech companies
- Managing big tech companies (make accountable)
- Robustly funded media
- Representatives more responsive systems of power

SOMA

Regulations & Accountability for Media, Tech & Government

Stakeholders to take action:

- Technology and media
- Regulators
- Media CO's

Action description:

- Regulators have to ensure truth, good faith
- CO's have transparent structure and the will to do it
- Research and analysis to inform policy
- Reparation for doing harm

Free Education

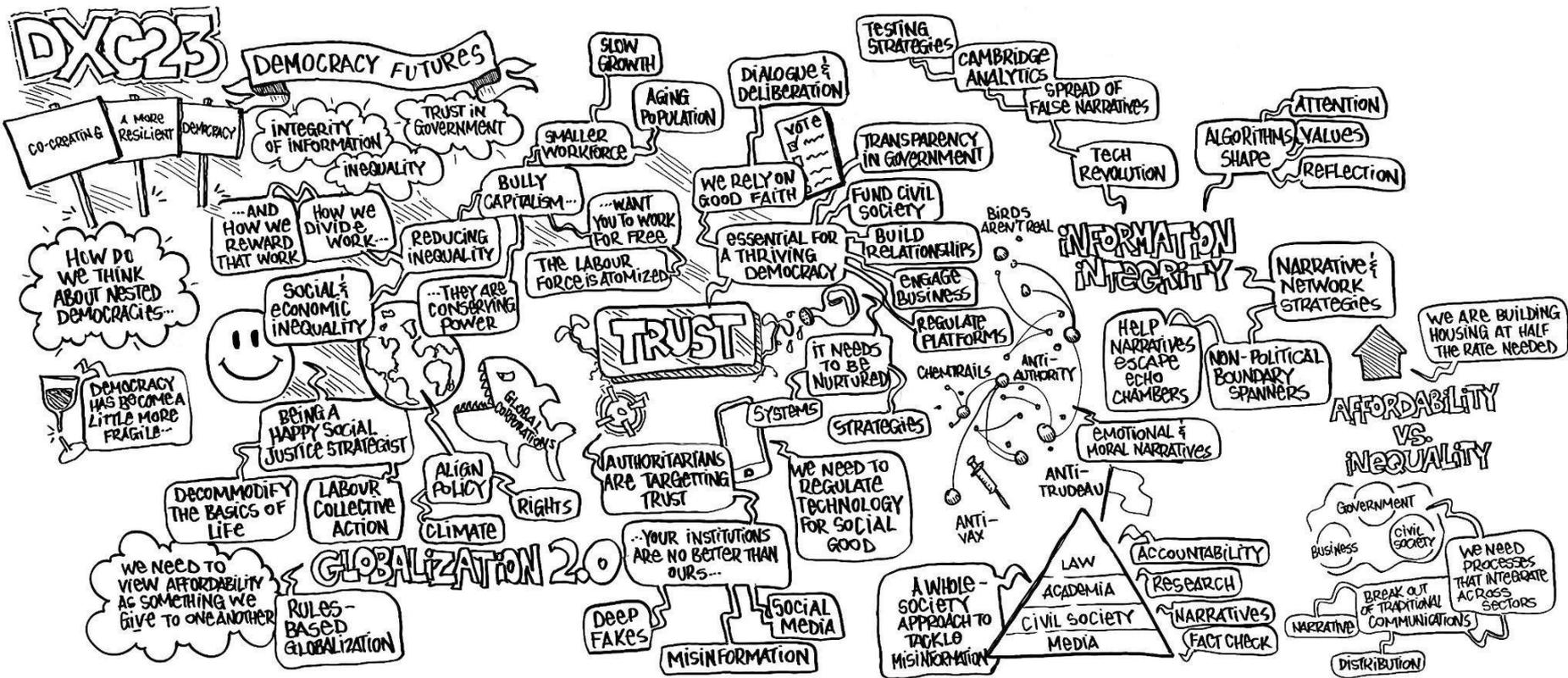
Stakeholders to take action:

- Citizens

Action description:

- Informed education/critical thinking
- Media literacy
- Education
- Electoral reform/referendum
- Regulation of mis/disinformation
- Inclusive democracy -> culturally diverse
- Strong support for NGOs
- Obligation to citizenship (Citizen Charter)

NOTE: Actions are described verbatim as written by workshop participants.



Visualization created by Aaron Williamson during the Democracy Futures Workshop.