

# Enriching Community Networks by Supporting Deliberation

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## Abstract

The increasing shift of attention from e-government to e-governance, even at the local level, requires technological solutions designed to support deliberative processes. We believe that to answer the request for local governance it is necessary to put at stake the background accumulated by community networks for undertaking the development (the design, implementation and testing) of a socio-technical, computer-enabled, trusted environment for e-participation enriched with deliberative tools. We call this environment Deliberative Community Networks, in order to stress that its main goal is to overcome the intrinsic limits of community and civic networks, by introducing deliberative facilities that provide support to the decision-making processes.

The paper presents the conceptual framework behind the design of Deliberative Community Networks, their logical architecture and a first prototype developed for supporting public dialog in the occasion of the 2006 Municipal Elections in Milan, Italy. The feedbacks from this experience, presented in the conclusions, are the input for the next release of the system currently under development.