

Abstract

Cyberdemocracy, Equity and Sustainable Development

Advances in information & communications infrastructure and applications are moving forward, albeit more slowly during the economic down turn. These advances provide a backdrop for enhanced political participation – both organized and informal, an aspect of Cyberdemocracy. The internet, mobile communication, social media, networks and networking, personal coaches/avatar use, polling, games and simulations, news, editorial opinion/blogs, and personal information gathering are evolving. These advances and their use will affect how people participate and influence policy making and elections. Simultaneously and globally there are growing calls for sustainability and equity (health equity, eliminating poverty). This is taking many forms, from the creation of the Millennium Development Goals, corporate social responsibility, the ISO 26000 Social Responsibility Guideline, and the UN Global Compact, as well as the emerging health equity movement and pro-poor foresight. Society is changing its mind, as it did with slavery, women's rights, and the environment. Each of these areas remains at least partially unfinished, but there has been great movement on each of them. Sustainability and equity, including health equity and poverty, will be among the next causes that define "the next civil rights movement". There will be reversals and backslides in this movement. For example, climate change and the economic downturn will place disproportionate burdens on the poor. But the movement toward sustainability and equity will grow. Cyberdemocracy enhanced political participation will ultimately support the "next civil rights movement".