Document-Centered Discussion and Decision Making in the *Deme* Platform

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## Four Forms of Communicative Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Dimensions</th>
<th>Preference Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belief Conflict</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>argumentation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Two Common Effects of Online Text Dialogue

Biased recasting

Lack of resolution
Biased Recasting

Participants with conflicting perceptions and goals often misunderstand and/or misrepresent the positions of others.

Problem is exacerbated by message-thread systems that encourage statements by others to be recast, through paraphrasing, summarizing, or interpreting, often in a biased way.
Addressing Biased Recasting in Asynchronous Text Discussion

What You See Is What I See (WYSIWIS) [Stefik et al. 1987, “Beyond the Chalkboard”]

Flexible covisibility of target text and comments [Davies et al. 2006, “Displaying Asynchronous Reactions to a Document”]
Lack of Resolution

Discussion between people with different opinions often fails to settle these differences, or to identify areas of agreement.

Can be a problem when collective action/agreement are in the interests of both sides.

Threaded conversation can lead to lack of resolution --- generally does not impose common goals or deadlines.
Addressing Lack of Resolution

Require a decision with a deadline, e.g. voting/polling with a decision rule

Support project creation integrated with other parts of the deliberation
The "Deme" Platform: Deliberation and Content Management

Project began in 2003 (PHP prototype)
Current version in PythonDjango (2008- )
Free/open source – Affero GPL
Currently in use for…

– Website hosting (e.g. symsys.stanford.edu)
– Community Forum experiment (AHRQ)

See www.stanford.edu/~davies for papers
Demo