

# CPSR, LaborTech, and the Challenges/Promise of Online Deliberation

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# Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility (CPSR)

Founded 1981-1983

My view of the mission: To connect computer professionals (broadly defined) with

- progressive and civil-libertarian policy advocacy related to computer technology
- progressive and civil-libertarian development and applications of computer technology

# Focus trajectory (CPSR)

Founding issues: “Launch on Warning” and Strategic Defence Initiative (1980s)

Later foci (examples):

Community networks

Electronic privacy

Participatory design

Electronic voting

Internet regulation and governance

Election integrity monitoring

# Organizational trajectory (CPSR)

Founded by a small group of researchers in and around Stanford and MIT, with a paid Executive Director

Became a membership organization with a small staff, elected board, and member-driven activities and sparsely functioning chapters and working groups (cf Iron Law of Oligarchy?)

Incubated initiatives (e.g. CFP, EPIC, Public Sphere Project)

# Recent example activities (CPSR)

Participatory Design and Directions and  
Implications of Advanced Computing  
Conferences

Working Group on Internet Governance

Election Incident Reporting System

Save the Internet Coalition

Campaign to require paper ballots

# LaborTech conferences

Began in early 1990s

Connect labor activists to communication technology use and policy and each other

Example activities incubated: LaborNet, Labor Video Project, Union Producers and Programmers Network (UPPNet), Workers Independent News Service (WINS)

# Common challenges/opportunities

Limited collective and individual time for synchronous planning and communication among members/conference participants

Inadequate free/low-cost tools for online deliberation by nonexpert computer users

Online deliberation systems could make participation broader, deeper, and more long-term