



## Politigram

### *IEE Website Requirements Specification Document*

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## Declaration Cover Sheet for BSHTM4 Project Submission

### SECTION 1 *Student to complete*

<b>Name:</b> Stephen Kelly
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<b>Supervisor:</b> Eugene O'Loughlin

### SECTION 2 Confirmation of Authorship

*The acceptance of your work is subject to your signature on the following declaration:*

I confirm that I have read the College statement on plagiarism (summarised overleaf and printed in full in the Student Handbook) and that the work I have submitted for this assessment is entirely my own work.

Signature: \_\_\_\_Stephen Kelly\_\_\_\_

Date: 10/05/2018

NB. If it is suspected that your assignment contains the work of others falsely represented as your own, it will be referred to the College's Disciplinary Committee. Should the Committee be satisfied that plagiarism has occurred this is likely to lead to you failing the module and possibly to you being suspended or expelled from college.

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## **Penalties for Plagiarism**

If it is suspected that your assignment contains the work of others falsely represented as your own, it will be referred to the college's Disciplinary Committee. Where the Disciplinary Committee makes a finding that there has been plagiarism, the Disciplinary Committee may recommend:

- That a student's marks shall be reduced.
  - That the student be deemed not to have passed the assignment.
  - That other forms of assessment undertaken in that academic year by the same student be declared void.
  - That other examinations sat by the same student at the same sitting be declared void.
- Further penalties are also possible including:
- Suspending a student from college for a specified time.
  - Expelling a student from college.
  - Prohibiting a student from sitting any examination or assessment.
  - The imposition of a fine.
  - The requirement that a student to attend additional or other lectures or courses or undertake additional academic work.

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# Requirements Specification & Analysis Planning

## Introduction

This project includes the documenting and collecting of requirements for the Politigram responsive website. Politics has been around for as long as humans have been in existence and since the introduction of democracy in Greece in 508 BC, it has of course, changed and evolved over time. However, one thing that has struck me since the evolution of digital technology over the last decade is that ordinary people on a day to day basis are as far from and as uninformed about what goes on in their national parliament as they were back 100 years ago.

## Business Need

A common cry I hear from people often is the seemingly age old argument like “ah, sure what can we do about it [the government]?” and “I haven’t a clue what’s going on up there in the Dáil anyway” got me thinking that there is a serious communication black hole that exists between politics and everything else. Yes, there are various media organizations that report on politics and inform us on the latest developments but I’ve noticed that depending on the specific newspaper, TV or radio station you get your information off, the narratives can often be different, sometimes contrastingly. This opens up an opportunity for an impartial ‘one-stop-shop’ website for Irish politics that constituents and the politicians who represents them can visit to better understand the other side.

Proportional representation is an electoral system that depends on high voter turnout in order to achieve the most accurate illustration of the electorate as a whole. According to IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) Ireland’s voter turnout for general elections stands at 65.1% of the voting age population, almost 5% lower than our neighbours in the UK. In terms of demographics, there were more voluntary abstentions amongst young voters, specifically under the age of 35 with these being mostly students or the unemployed. (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018)

This gives a clear indication that there is a disconnect between our elected representatives and young people that potentially could participate in the political process but choose not to. Providing an easy to use platform that these people could and would use, one that provides clear, insightful evidence on what the elected people are doing and how this effects them could go a long way in rectifying the sense of detachment.

## Business Case

The conception of Politigram evolves heavily around servicing both politicians and their constituents in a mutually beneficial environment, with their separate but corresponding needs addressed. These needs are associated with enhanced understanding of the other side, these ‘sides’ being either politicians or constituents. By using readily available data via a variety of different sources and breaking these down in a broad sense, into byte sized information that can be utilized to better understand the views, actions and intensions of the other side. Politigram provides a transparent platform that is mutually beneficial to all who use it for whatever reason they have for using it.

The idea itself has various strands to it and fulfils roles that are already being done by media organizations, however these roles are dispersed across a wide spectrum of political related media. The roles and the areas in which they are being fulfilled are included in the table below:

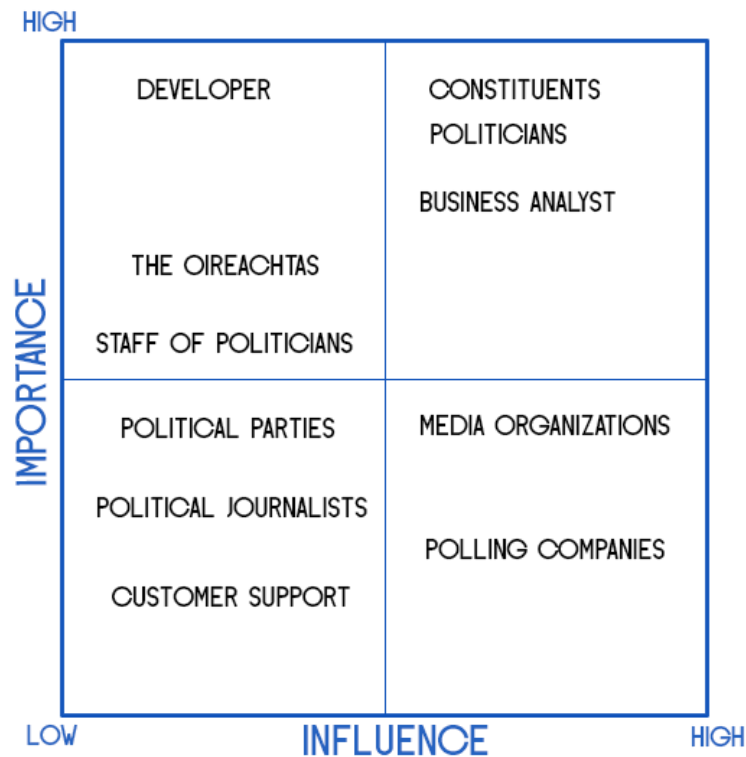
<b>Roles</b>	<b>Areas where roles are fulfilled</b>
Political party positions, policy and list of TDs	Individual Political party websites
Individual TD's positions, views and policy	Individual TD's websites
Promotion of political events i.e. info meetings, debates etc.	Social media/websites/posters/flyers
Ability to see if you are registered to vote	Checktheregister.ie website
Ability to see what constituency you live in	Rte.ie/Citizen's information
Ability to understand your local TD's political activities	Specific TD's social media page/newsletter
Ability to contact your local TD	Via email/phone call/post
Ability to view voting history of TDs	Oireachtas website
Ability to view schedule of the Dail for the forthcoming week	Oireachtas website
Live streaming of Dail proceedings in real-time	Oireachtas website/social media
Political polling	Red C/Print/digital media i.e. Irish Times etc.
Ability to observe your local TD's contributions on TV/radio	Individual broadcasting organizations

The overall goal of my project is to consolidate and streamline the listed roles by eliminating the roaming element associated with pinpointing political information relevant to the person searching for it. By providing a clear and concise overview of the political picture, with more detail available if needed, will provide the user with an information rich, clutter free platform that could potentially re-energise Irish political activity, especially amongst young people. The success of Politigram is based on the principles of impartiality and transparency. Getting the right vendor to develop an application like this will be a challenge, political knowledge in terms of how information is projected is key to ensure the impartial and transparent aspect of the website is enshrined. Once the website is developed there are some risks that will need to be managed carefully such as outside interference including hacking and bribery to portray a certain result in favour of one political entity. Regular firewall and cyber security updates and precautions would be put in place to eliminate the chances of hacking with staff such as administrators working on the website's behalf would be required to provide evidence based reports on how information and data was obtained to website management.

### **Stakeholder List:**

- Constituents (general public)
- Staff of Politicians
- Politicians
- Political Parties
- Houses of the Oireachtas (Irish houses of parliament)
- Polling companies
- Broadcasting/print/digital media organizations
- Political journalists
- Developer
- Customer Support
- Business Analyst

## Importance/Influence Matrix



As per the above diagram the highly important and influential stakeholders are positioned in the upper right quadrant of the matrix. This upper right quadrant consists of Constituents, Politicians and the Business Analyst as these would be considered the main stakeholders in the project with the success of the project highly dependent of their satisfaction with the website. Highly important but less influential stakeholders include the Developer, Political Staff and Houses of the Oireachtas with the Developer obviously being key to the development of the website including support at the back end but nothing more than that, as for the Oireachtas, they will be providing content that we will be using but would not be influential in terms of how the project will proceed with Staff of Politicians providing support to constituents via the website but nothing more than that. Media Organizations would have a high influence in terms of the content they produce that we could use can vary with Polling Companies having a strong influence in terms of the overall polling landscape in Ireland, we would be using this data in tandem with our own polling data. Customer support is of low importance and influence compared to the rest of the stakeholders so too are Political Parties and Journalists who would be observers of the website and nothing else.

## Requirements Elicitation Techniques

### Survey

My first technique to gather requirements will require conducting a survey to gather sufficient information from constituents as stakeholders involved in my project. As politics is an area that affects all of us in some way, I will encourage all people from all age groups to participate, however, I will put extra emphasis on encouraging people between the ages of 18 and 35 to participate as this is the website's target market. The requirements I will gather from this survey will help me understand how much people are involved in politics at present, what areas in relation to their local TD they are familiar with, what issues they would be interested in and what features they would find useful on the website.

#### Survey Participants:

- Constituents

#### Method of Distribution:

- Email to fellow students in NCI
- Share through social media
- Shared amongst family and friends

#### Objectives of the Survey

This survey is designed to gather information from the general public as constituents linked with the Politigram website. It will be used to identify trends in responses and will help identify initial requirements and demand levels of proposed features of the website including an option to provide an answer in relation to features that the participant may feel should be considered that has not already been listed in the survey. A method of identification as a proposed requirement for registration to the website will also be included.

#### Survey Questions:

Link to survey: <https://goo.gl/forms/xHVx3Tu6FFChy2K82>

#### Q1. Please indicate your gender

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

#### Q2. Please indicate your age

Under 18 (*\*NOTE Any answers given with this response will be deleted*)

18 – 25

26 – 35

36 – 50

Over 50

**Q3. What best describes you?**

Student full time

Student part time

Employed

Unemployed

Self Employed

Retired

**Q4. What smartphone would you use?**

iPhone

Samsung

HTC

Huawei

Nokia

Other

I do not have a smartphone

**Q5. What best describes your political interest?**

Very political, I have a very clear idea of who I support in politics

Somewhat political, I have an idea of who I support in politics

Occasionally political, I only take an interest in politics during general elections

Politics doesn't interest me at this time

I don't know/none of the above

**Q6. How likely are you to vote in the next General Election?**

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Not likely

I don't know

I don't know if I'm eligible to vote in general elections

**Q7. How likely are you to vote in the upcoming referendum on the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment?**

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Not likely

I don't know

I don't know if I'm eligible to vote in referendums

**Q8. What best describes your familiarity with your local TDs?**

Very familiar, I know who they are and what party/views they represent

Somewhat familiar, I have an idea of who they are but I'm unsure on exactly what views they would represent

I'm unsure on who my local TDs are and what they represent

I don't know/none of the above

**Q9. How comfortable would you be with verifying your account by uploading a photo of an official ID? (Drivers Licence/Passport/Age Card)**

1 (Not likely)

2

3

4

5 (Very likely)

**Q10. I would sign up to attend political meetings involving TDs/parties of my choice (information sessions/debates/protests etc.)**

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**Q11. What visual features would appeal to you? (if any)**

A clear and concise profile of parties & TDs and their positions/views

TDs voting history/pattern

A constituency hub giving updates on your local TD's activities (bills proposed, voting, debates etc.)

During election time, a special page dedicated to the candidates standing in your constituency and what they will offer

Trending topics in politics and what various TDs are saying about them (via articles, video & audio)

Video highlights of weekly/daily Dail proceedings based on your interests i.e. housing, 8<sup>th</sup> amendment etc.

Latest articles about or containing the name of your local/favourite TDs being available by search function

**Q12. What interactive features would appeal to you? (if any)**

A map, calendar & details of local political events organized by or involving your local or chosen TD

Easy messaging feature direct to your local TD's office to book an appointment or request a query

To see if you are registered to vote and if not, to provide a link + instructions to get registered

Book a tour of the Oireachtas (Irish houses of parliament)

A calculator based on changes government propose or make and how this could affect your income

Using GPS to establish the constituency you currently live in

**Q13. What other possible features do you feel could be included? [If no features come to mind, you can type 'none']**

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**Q14. I follow TDs I find of interest to me on social media**

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**Q15. I am interested in political programmes & podcasts**

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

**Q16. How useful do you feel an in-website polling system to rate politicians and party's performance would be?**

1 (Not useful)

2

3

4

5 (Very useful)

**Q17. I am interested in what my local TDs' views on the following issues**

Topical Issues i.e. strategic communications unit/general news items etc.

Local Issues i.e. local building developments/roads etc.

Social Issues i.e. LGBT rights/abortion etc.

None of the above

**Brainstorm**

Once the project survey is complete, I will then conduct two brainstorming sessions. The brainstorming sessions will help me gather various viewpoints from two groups with two different characteristics. The first group is to have little or no political knowledge or insight (Brainstorming Session #1) and the other to be heavily involved with politics and/or have thorough familiarity with the political landscape (Brainstorming Session #2). The goal of these two brainstorming sessions are to obtain a list of potential features that could be included in the Politigram website. The aim to which I endeavour to meet with the two groups individually with their separate characteristics is to better understand what aspects of political data would appeal and be of use to both.

**Brief Overview of Brainstorming Session #1**

This brainstorming session is devised to gather viewpoints about the desired features including the projected layout of the website by non-political constituents. These views will be proposed by the stakeholders throughout the session.

**Objectives of Brainstorming Session #1**

Documentation of all opinions and ideas will be taken in my minutes of a meeting to avoid the chances of confusion during the process of requirements classification. The goal of this brainstorming session is to obtain a list of features that could potentially be included in the Politigram website. I will document all the requirements specified in this session and rank these in terms of importance.

**Participants in Brainstorming Session #1:**

1. Two students, one full time and the other part time
2. One employed person
3. One self-employed person
4. One unemployed person

**Meeting Location:**

Private meeting area in Northside Civic Centre, Coolock.

**Date & Time of Meeting:**

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, 6:30pm – 8:00pm

## **Brief Overview of Brainstorming Session #2**

This brainstorming session is devised to gather viewpoints about the desired features including the projected layout of the website by politically minded constituents including staff of a political representative. These views will be proposed by the stakeholders throughout the session.

## **Objectives of Brainstorming Session #2**

Documentation of all opinions and ideas will be taken in my minutes of a meeting to avoid the chances of confusion during the process of requirements classification. The goal of this brainstorming session is to obtain a list of features that could potentially be included in the Politigram website but this time with the help of more political experienced people. I will document all the requirements specified in this session and rank these in terms of importance.

## **Participants in Brainstorming Session #2:**

1. One student studying political science
2. One parliamentary assistant to a current minister of government
3. One rep from Houses of the Oireachtas
4. One political party member

## **Meeting Location:**

Private meeting area in St. John's GAA Club, Balinteer.

## **Date & Time of Meeting:**

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

## **Guidelines for Brainstorming Sessions #1 & #2:**

- All participants are requested to arrive at least ten minutes before the brainstorming session commences.
- Mobile devices to be switched to silent to avoid disturbances
- Allocation of specific times for participants to share their thoughts
- When a participant is speaking, all other participants must remain silent and reserve any further comments to after the participant has finished their initial contribution
- All participants should avoid consultation between each other in relation to potential ideas prior to the session taking place
- In the event of any participants being delayed, their contribution slot will be pushed back to the end of the brainstorming session
- Participants we're requested to download and be familiar with the layout of the Oireachtas application prior to the meeting taking place

## **Interviews**

In order to get a closer look at how politicians connect and communicate their message to their constituents I need to conduct interviews with them as stakeholders. I plan to meet with two currently sitting and/or former TDs and get their views on the subject of communication.

### **Interview #1 Participant:**

Brid Smith TD (Constituency: Dublin South Central)

### **Interview #1 Location:**

Brid Smith Constituency Office, 10 Le Fanu Road, Ballyfermot.

### **Date of Interview #1:**

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018

### **Time of Interview #1:**

11am – 12:30pm

### **Interview #2 Participant:**

Richard Bruton TD – Minister for Education (Constituency: Dublin Bay North)

### **Interview #2 Location:**

Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.

### **Date of Interview #2:**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

### **Time of Interview #2:**

11:30am – 1pm

### **Objectives of both Interviews:**

I've based my questions in the interview around the communication aspect of TD's work, how they currently do things and how this could be improved or enhanced by the help of a single platform. The interview procedure itself is designed to gather specific details from these significant stakeholders, it also gives me the opportunity to hear 'their side of the story' in the context of demographic of constituents who get in touch with them on a regular or irregular basis. I hope to learn about their experiences and what they are willing to take on in relation to opening up new avenues of communication with their constituents.

### **Interview Questions (both interviews):**

**Q1.** How would you rank (from the most common to the least common) methods of communication between you and your constituents out of 5?

Not common 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 - 5 Most common

Please place the number out of 5 that applies to you beside each communication method

Email (direct):

Email (via office staff):

Face to face meetings:

Phone calls:

Social media:

**Q2.** In general, do you find there are certain age groups (from 18 yo upwards) that are more likely to contact you in relation to a problem they need resolved than other age groups? If there are, what age brackets would these people be in?

**Q3.** At present, how would you go about understanding your constituent's opinion on areas such as policy and local, topical and social issues?

**Q4.** How would you communicate to your constituents about events that you have organised or are involved in?

**Q5.** In my college survey I asked participants (mostly between the ages of 18 – 35) to describe their familiarity with their local TDs. The subsequent result showed that:

1. 38% were unsure of who their local TDs were and what views they represented
2. A further 37% said they have an idea of who their local TDs are but are unsure on what views they represent.

What ideas (if any) would you have to help improve constituents' familiarity with their TDs?

**Q6.** How easy do you (or your staff) find pinpointing snippets of your contribution in Dáil debates, radio/tv programmes etc. to share with your followers on social media and other digital media? If you (or your staff) find it challenging, what problems do you typically encounter?

**Q7.** During your election campaign, what was your preferred method of communication to your prospective constituents on what you were offering? Do you feel there should be a more consistent/integrated way of doing this via a single platform?

### **Interface Analysis**

Since there is no existing system or website like Politigram it is important that I document and clearly identify how users will interact with the website. Interface Analysis is a useful technique that can do just that, I will be using use case diagrams and wireframes to paint a clear picture of user interactions. This technique also allows me to iron out any potential issues the stakeholders would have with the system by defining these requirements early.

## **Prototyping**

This technique involves creating the website wireframe which gives a visual representation of the website's development progress. The first phase of the prototype will be completed in late March 2018 with two sets of stakeholders having a chance to view progress at that given time. The stakeholders will be given an opportunity to critique the prototype in relation to its layout and usability prior to completion of development. Feedback from stakeholders at a consultation process will be documented, recommended changes or alterations discussed considered and the appropriate practical changes made. An updated version of the prototype after the stakeholder's input will be developed towards the end of the development phase.

### **Resources Required:**

- ASUS Laptop with Gliffy
- Gliffy to be used to create the development prototype
- Results of previous techniques such as brainstorm, survey and interviews will be examined to develop the first prototype of the Politigram website

### **Guidelines for Prototype Development:**

- Make calculations for requirements based on the results of survey analysis
- Views made by stakeholders at brainstorming session will be considered
- Examine interview results and incorporate these features from requirements
- Develop a complete prototype based on all available information obtained
- Implement any modifications necessary based on the preferences expressed by stakeholders during consultation process

### **Participants in Consultation Process:**

1. One staff member of a politician
2. One student
3. One employed person
4. One retired person

### **Prototype Due Date:**

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### **Prototype Completion Date:**

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## **Requirements Workshop**

### **Objective**

The primary objective of the Requirements Workshop will be to discuss specific features that could be included in the Politigram website. These are also features that have not been mentioned in previous sessions regarding requirements specification. Focussing on features and how they could be utilized to ensure the highest quality and usability will help facilitate the development of the project prototype.

**Workshop Preparation:**

- ✓ Identify suitable contributors that could and would attend the session
- ✓ Arrange the date, time and location of where the workshop will be held
- ✓ A description of objectives and anticipated outcomes of the workshop will be created
- ✓ Prepare an agenda for the session
- ✓ Ensure all resources are in place prior to the commencement of the workshop
- ✓ Invitations will be sent via email and/or WhatsApp/Text message
- ✓ The invitations will include details of the session such as location, date, time and agenda
- ✓ Confirm availability with prospective participants

**Participants:**

- Business Analyst
- One former politician
- One Parliamentary Assistant to current politician
- One developer

**Workshop Location:**

Private Function Area at The Black Sheep, Capel Street.

**Date of Workshop:**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2018

**Time of Workshop:**

7:20pm – 8:50pm

**Agenda:**

- Clearly define the purpose and outline the ground rules of the Requirements Workshop to all the participants
- Propose a plan of the final deliverables including what needs to be achieved by the end of the session
- Critically evaluate the first prototype with all participants
- Conduct and present research of similar websites/applications to participants
- Invite participants to share details any other digital platforms that they find applicable to research
- Identify further features which would be required on the new website
- Obtain an agreement, preferably, unanimous, around the design, layout and desired features amongst all participants

**Resources Required:**

- Private Function Area at The Black Sheep, Capel Street
- ASUS Laptop
- Strong Wi-Fi connection
- Other smartphones, tablets used by participants
- MS Word to be used to document any comments made by participants throughout the session
- Gliffy to demonstrate the first prototype for the new website
- Table with 5 chairs

### Workshop Guidelines:

- All participants are requested that they arrive at least 15 minutes before the session commences
- Participants are invited to enjoy some refreshments to facilitate a comfortable but focused-driven environment
- Prior to their arrival, participants were requested to think of any similar websites or applications that could be of use in our research
- Participants are required to remain professional and follow instructions provided to them prior to session commencement
- Collaboration, listening to each other and focusing on the task in hand is a key component of Requirement Workshops, this will be reiterated to all participants

### Workshop Final Deliverables:

- ✓ An MS Word document will include a list of updates in relation to the design of the prototype including an outline of the new website features
- ✓ A Gliffy document that contains the second prototype version of the Politigram website, based on preferences from the stakeholders.

## Requirements Elicitation Techniques – Results

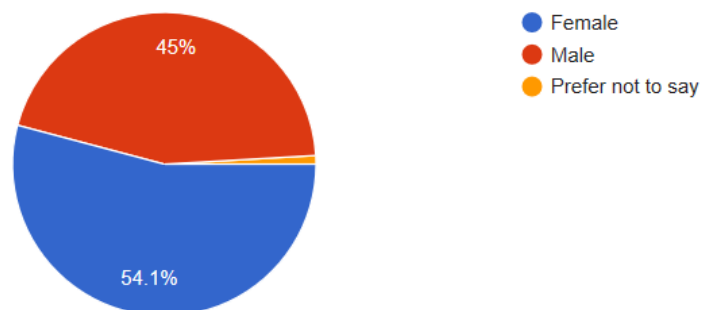
### Survey

Below are the results of my project survey in which I received 109 responses in total.

*Options and answers not clearly displayed on the survey results visual will be detailed below the specific visual. These will be marked with an \*.*

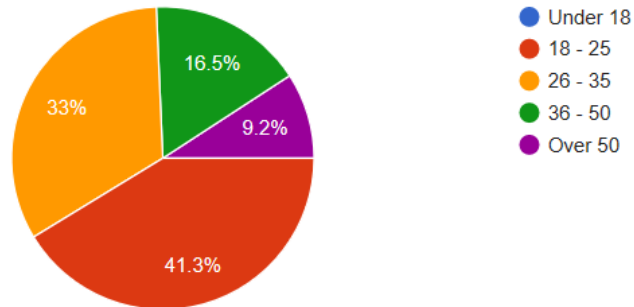
#### 1. Please indicate your gender

109 responses



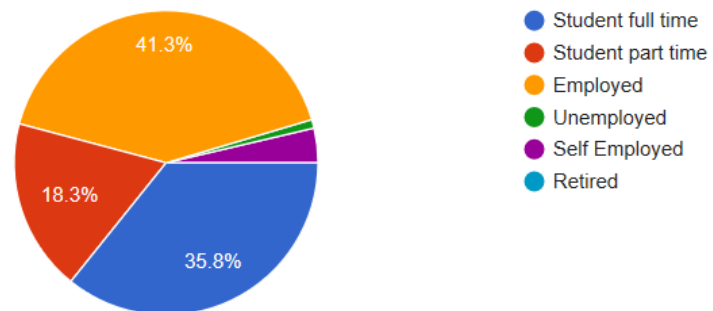
## 2. Please indicate your age

109 responses



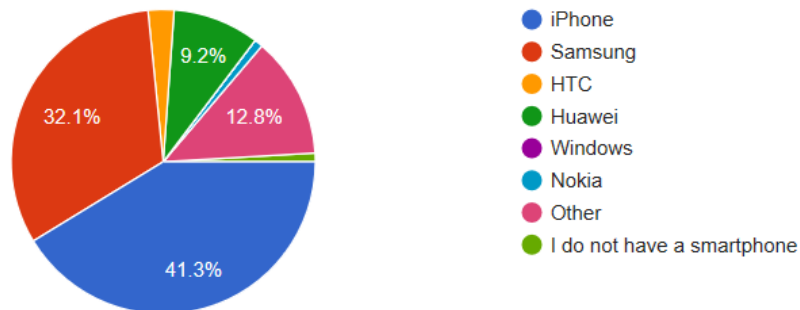
## 3. What best describes you?

109 responses



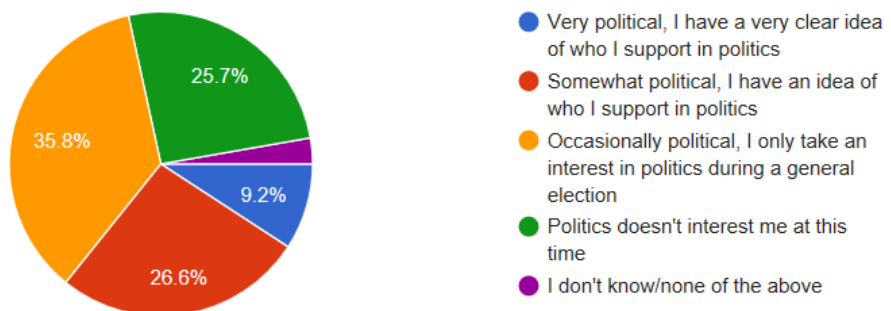
#### 4. Which smartphone would you use?

109 responses



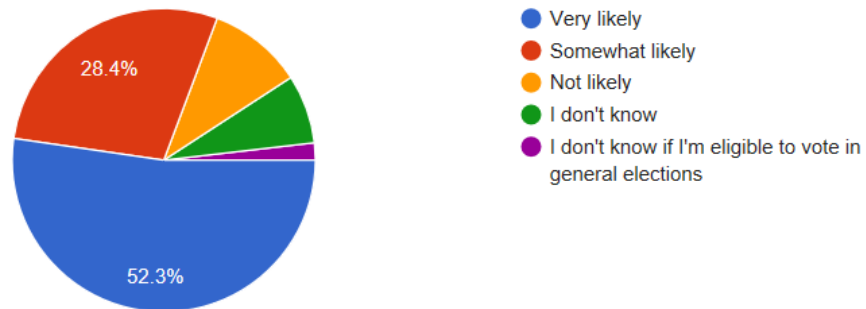
#### 5. What best describes your political interest?

109 responses



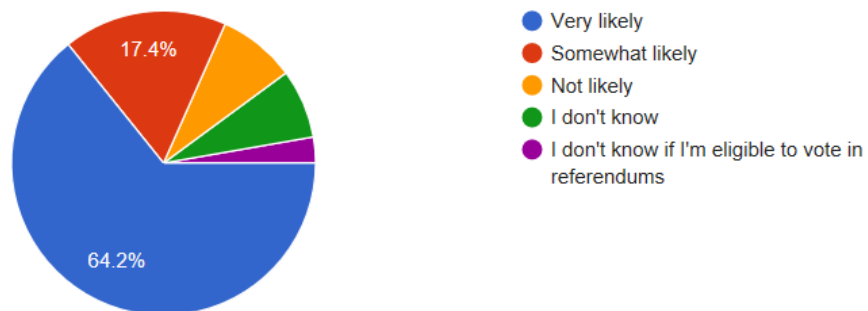
## 6. How likely are you to vote in the next General Election?

109 responses



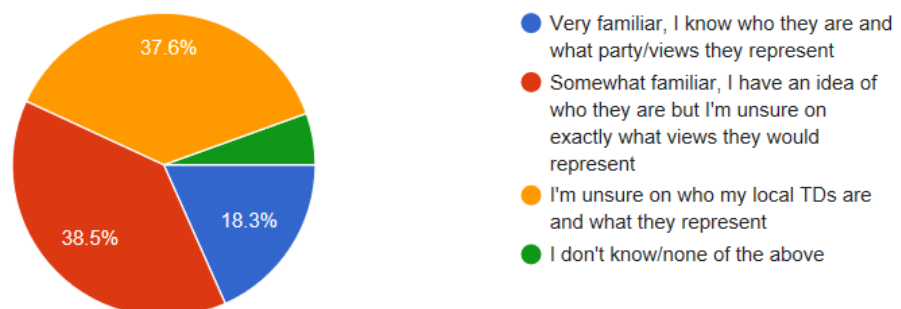
## 7. How likely are you to vote in the upcoming referendum on the 8th Amendment?

109 responses



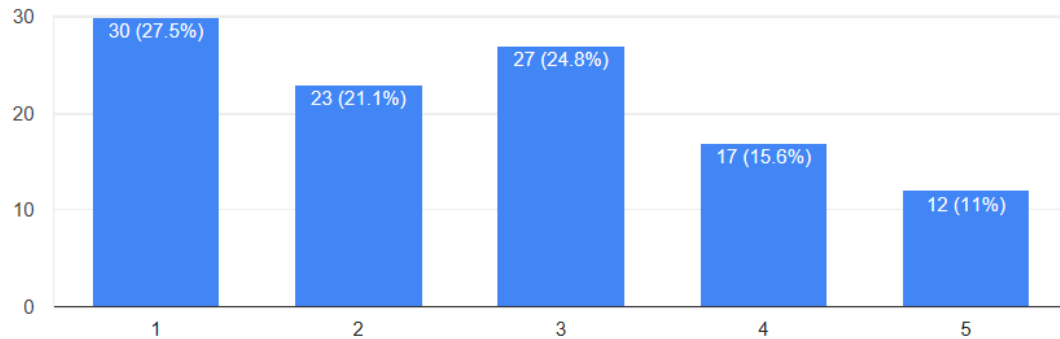
## 8. What best describes your familiarity with your local TDs?

109 responses



9. How comfortable would you be with verifying your account by uploading a photo of an official ID? (Drivers Licence/Passport/Age Card)

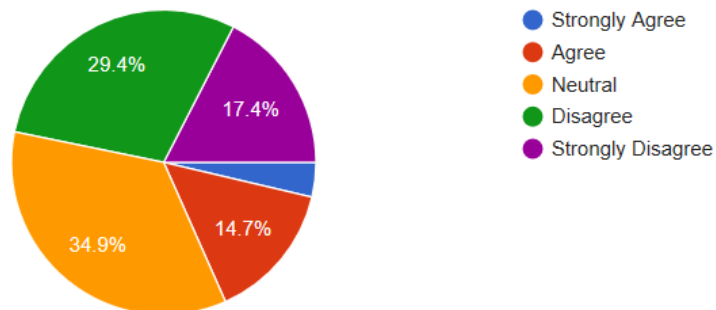
109 responses



\* Not Comfortable 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Very Comfortable

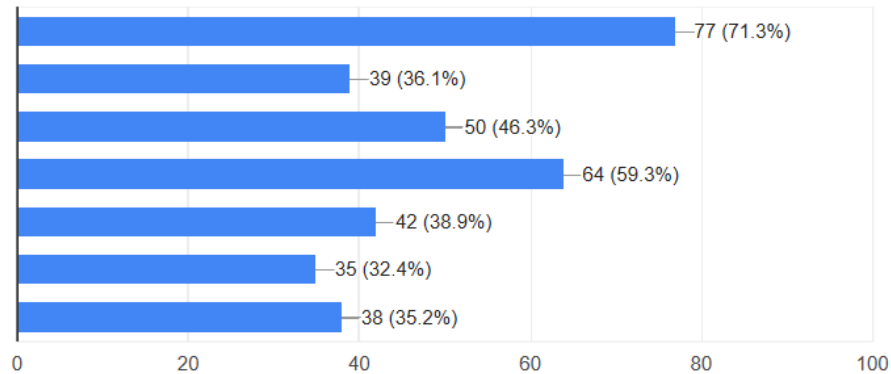
10. I would sign up to attend political meetings involving TDs/parties of my choice (information sessions/debates/protests etc.)

109 responses



11. What visual features would appeal to you? (if any) [Tick as many as you feel are applicable to you]

108 responses



\*'A clear and concise profile of parties and TDs and their positions/views' (71.3%)

'TDs voting history/pattern' (36.1%)

'A constituency hub giving updates on your local TD's activities (bills proposed, voting, debates etc.)' (46.3%)

'During election time, a special page dedicated to the candidates standing in your constituency and what they will offer' (59.3%)

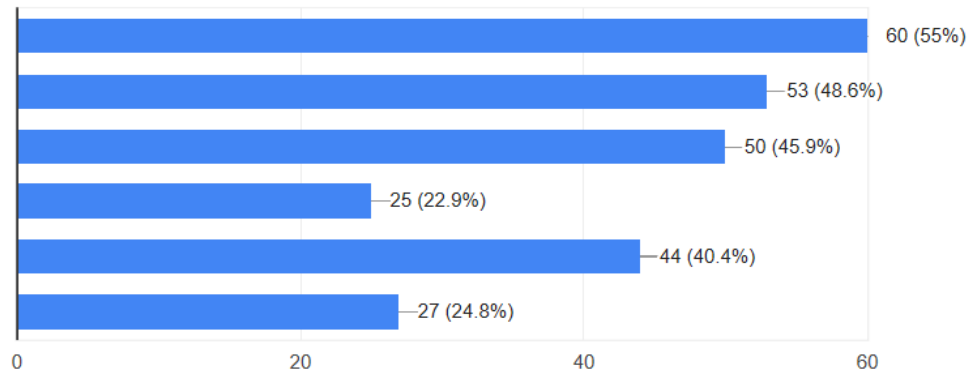
'Trending topics in politics and what various TDs are saying about them (via articles, video & audio)' (38.9%)

'Video highlights of weekly/daily Dail proceedings based on your interests i.e. housing, 8<sup>th</sup> amendment etc.' (32.4%)

'Latest articles about or containing the name of your local/favourite TDs being available by search function' (35.2%)

## 12. What interactive features would appeal to you? (if any) [Tick as many as you feel are applicable to you]

109 responses



\*'A map, calendar & details of local political events organised by or involving your local or chosen TD' (55%)

'Easy messaging feature direct to your local TD's office to book an appointment or request a query' (48.6%)

'To see if you are registered to vote and if not, to provide a link + instructions to get registered' (45.9%)

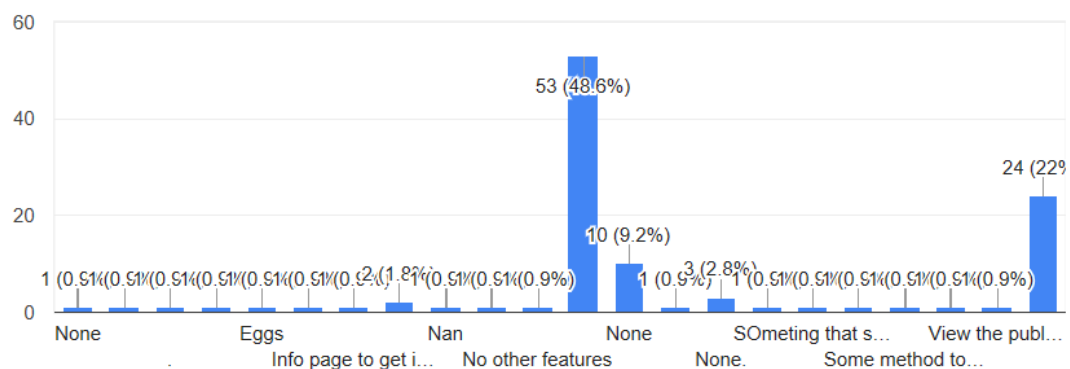
'Book a tour of the Oireachtas (Irish houses of parliament)' (22.9%)

'A calculator based on changes government propose or make and how this could affect your income' (40.4%)

'Using GPS to establish the constituency you currently live in' (24.8%)

## 13. What other possible features do you feel could be included? [If no features come to mind, you can type 'none']

109 responses

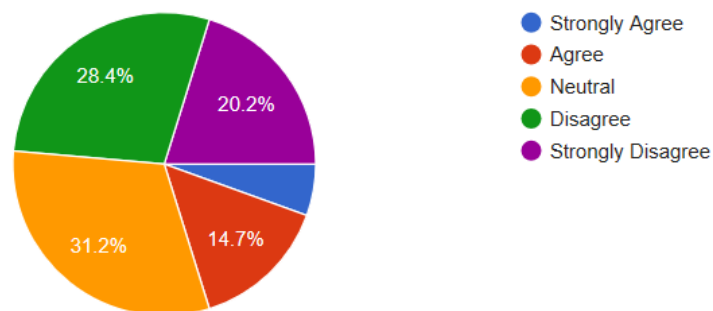


\*Suggested features not entirely visible are:

- “Housing in your area”
- “Info page to get involved in local matters”
- “Rate my TD”
- “Something that shows the work of your TD is doing locally e.g. active on Facebook and Twitter”
- “Showing the work at present being done”
- “Some method to gauge the commitment of a TD to their values, beliefs etc.”
- “Success rate / failure rate of TD’s who do not follow election promises”
- “View the public information regarding the TD’s pay and claimed expenses. Plus if you could compare this over a yearly basis for example 2016 & 2017 that would be great – Unsure if this is public information but it should be”
- All other comments are either “None” or similar responses.

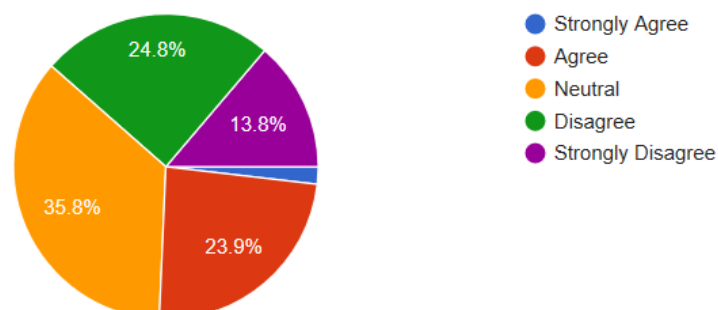
#### 14. I follow TDs I find of interest to me on social media

109 responses



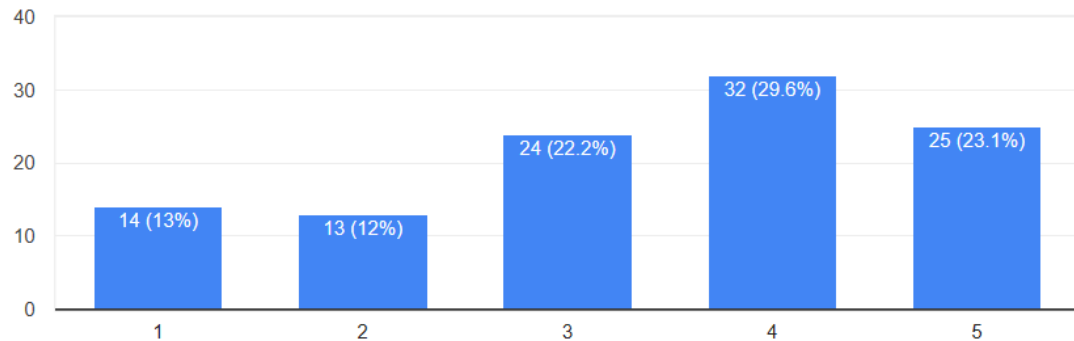
#### 15. I am interested in political programmes & podcasts

109 responses



## 16. How useful do you feel an in-website polling system to rate politicians and parties' performance would be?

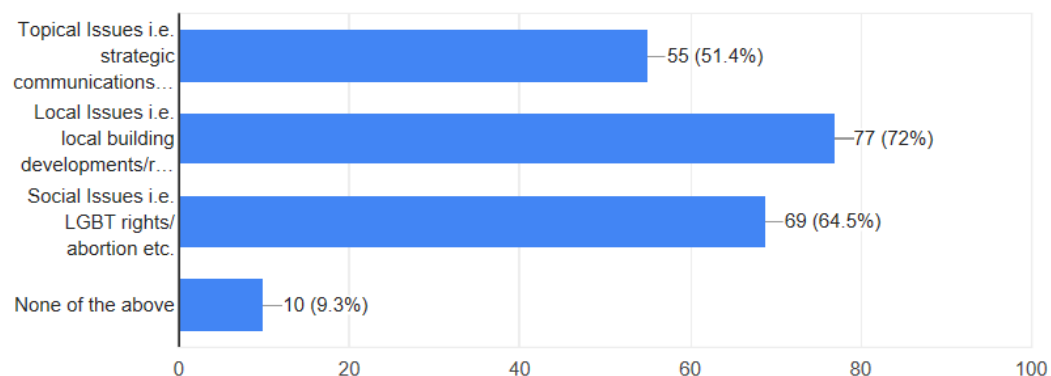
108 responses



\*Not Useful 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Very Useful

## 17. I am interested in what my local TDs' views on the following issues.. [Tick as many as you feel applicable to you]

107 responses



### Survey Conclusion:

This survey was aimed at constituents (the general public) as stakeholders with an emphasis on getting participants between the ages of 18 – 35, this age bracket indeed, was the dominant one with 74.3% of all participants. This was broken down between ages of 18 – 25 and 26 – 35 which resulted in a 41.3% and 33% split respectively. In terms of gender balance, females edged males by almost 5% with one participant choosing the third option 'Prefer not to say'. In terms of employment/education status, the largest group of participants were Employed at 41.3% with the second largest being Full Time Students at 35.8% and Part Time Students being third at 18.3%. I was a bit disappointed as I was hoping to get more views from Unemployed participants. I was not surprised however that a vast majority of the smartphone users used the iPhone and a Samsung device, this shows that dimensional compatibility with these devices is crucial.

Scratching the surface with question 5 asking about the participant's political interest brought interesting results with less than 10% saying they have a very clear idea of who they support in politics. The largest number of participants at 35.8% said that they only take an interest in politics during a general election with the second largest at 26.6% saying they have an idea who they support in politics followed closely by participants who say that politics doesn't interest them at this time at 25.7%. This question was designed to scratch the surface to get an idea of the political interests of participants, it was interesting that large proportion said they weren't interested in politics and that they only take an interest during general elections. Ideas from these participants may help me figure out how to get non-political or occasionally political people on board.

For questions 6 and 7 I wanted to understand if participants were more engaged if it came to a general election or a referendum, specifically in relation to the forthcoming 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment referendum taking place on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018. Observing results of both questions gave positive results in terms of the likelihood of participants voting in both a general election and referendum but with a substantial 10% gap of likely voters jumping from 52.3% for elections to 64.2% for the forthcoming referendum. There is however, a similarly larger proportion of 'Somewhat likely' voters who arise, just the opposite way around with 28.4% for general elections and only 17.4% for the forthcoming referendum. This is not uncommon as a referendum is more straightforward in the binary nature of its execution.

Digging deeper with question 8 I wanted to comprehend how familiar participants were with their local TDs, this question starts to get to the nub of my project's objective with understanding TD's relationship with their constituents. This brought about a very conclusive result that I was anticipating with similar results from participants of almost equal measure with 38.5% answering 'Somewhat familiar, I have an idea of who they [their local TDs] are but I'm unsure on exactly what views they would represent' and 37.6% answering 'I'm unsure on who my local TDs are and what they represent'. Only 18.3% are very familiar with their local TDs and what party/views they represent.

Question 9 was a simple number scale asking how comfortable would the participant be with verifying their account by uploading a photo of an official ID such as a drivers licence or passport etc. This result was somewhat understandable with 53 of the 109 responses being on the 'Not Comfortable' end of the scale with 27 in the middle and therefore unsure. This was an initial feature I was thinking of adding to the mix of possible features but its negative response would cast doubt on the feature being included.

Further on to question 10 and I asked participants on a Likert scale about how likely they would be to sign up to attend political meetings/events involving TDs and parties of their choice. This was to understand more about a likely feature that would involve political events being used. The result was very inconclusive with 34.9% declaring neutral and a further 29.4% saying they disagree. A smaller percentage of 14.7% said they agree.

Question 11 and 12 consisted an 'as many as you like or none at all' option relating to both visual and interactive features. This is to elicit possible features that were discussed and brought forward at the brainstorming session. For question 11, the most popular proposed feature that 77 of the 108 participants who answered this question was 'A clear and concise profile of parties & TDs and their positions/views' with 64 of the 108 participants agreeing during election time, a special page dedicated to candidates standing in their constituency and what they will offer would be a good idea. A constituency hub providing updates on local TD's activities such as voting and debates etc. proved to be somewhat popular with 50 responses. In terms of the interactive features in question

12, the most popular feature was 'A map, calendar & details of local political events organized by or involving your local or chosen TD' with 60 of 109 respondents, the second most popular that 53 respondents chose was a proposed easy messaging feature direct to their local TD's office. The third most popular option at 50 respondents was a feature to see if you are registered to vote and if not, to provide a link to get registered.

Question 13 gave participants the opportunity to recommend a feature they felt could be included in the website. A vast majority of participants, 70%+ said that no other features came to mind in a variety of similar responses. Individual recommendations listed by participants who suggested features they would like to see in the website evolved highly around the work of the politician and a way of understanding & documenting what work they are actually doing on the ground. This point was mentioned in the Requirements Workshop.

Another inconclusive result in Question 14 when I asked about the following of TDs of interest on social media, the largest answer was neutral at 31.2% with 28.4% disagreeing that they follow TDs of interest to them on social media. Only 14.7% agreeing that they do with a larger proportion of 20.2% saying they strongly disagree. This result showed that people are not too bothered about keeping an eye on their TDs on social media, this went against my interpretation of the answer to the previous question regarding understanding what TDs are doing on the ground, this is done by some TDs via their social media platforms.

In Question 15 I queried about participants' interest in political programmes and podcasts with another somewhat inconclusive result but a more general feeling of acceptance than the last question. 35.8% of respondents said they were neutral on the issue with an equal amount of respondents saying they agree (23.9%) and disagree (24.8%) that they are interested in political programmes and podcasts. This gave a result that showed me that an option of including a way to access such material would not be completely ruled out.

The second last question of the survey, Question 16 asked how useful would an in-website polling system to rate politicians and parties' performance would be. This gave a very welcoming result with 52.7% saying it would be useful, 22.2% neutral and the rest saying not useful. This gave a very clear indication to me that a feature like this would be popular for many stakeholders.

Finally, in the last question, Question 17, I asked what views participants were interested in their local TDs' having in terms of topical issues (news stories of the day etc.), local issues (building development in local area etc.) and social issues (LGBT rights, abortion etc.). This was to understand what areas participants were most interested in out of the three main matters of public life. All three answers got positive results with the largest response being local issues with 77 responses, second was social issues at 69 responses and topical issues coming in at 55 responses. Only 10 respondents chose 'None of the above'.

## **Brainstorm**

### **Session #1**

Before officially starting this brainstorm, I asked the group what they thought of the name 'Politigram' for the website. They all agreed that this was a very good name that should appeal to young people, especially with the similarity aspect with the photo application 'Instagram'.

## **Two Students**

In terms of functionality, firstly, it was very important to them that logging on would be a simple process. They said this process should be done by logging in via social platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. This skips the procedure of creating a profile, filling out that profile and uploading a photo, although the option should be there to create a profile from scratch. They wanted an easy way of understanding the political landscape, such as a) parties that are in government b) parties in opposition c) what these parties stand for. They suggested a breakdown of parties into individual pages where party related content could be directed. Party TDs, policies and latest news could be on this page.

They said when you log in you should be able to see your local TDs who represents you and their latest activity, this activity could include voting, media i.e. contribution on radio or TV with the ability to replay their contribution on demand. They said there should also be a share feature so this contribution can be shared on social media.

## **Employed person**

Understanding the concept and how to get involved with politics is and how to get registered was a big part of this participant's contribution. She said that there should be a quick and easy feature to see if you are registered, and if you aren't, to be supplied with simple instructions to do so. She said that there should also be a map to show where your polling station is during election or referendum time.

She added that there should be a 'starter's guide' that goes through the political system and process in plain English. This would include what wording such as 'bills' and 'quorum' mean, the various stages of legislation passing through the Dail means and does, what the Senate does etc.

## **Self-Employed person**

This participant concentrated on the more visual aspect of the website, making references to political parties and their branding and colour, that the colour they use on their branding should be applied to or made very noticeable when TDs of a specific party is mentioned. He also suggested that videos of the Dail when our local TDs are speaking/debating should be made available on a 'constituency hub' page that gives all updates on what your local TDs are doing at any one time. He mentioned in relation to the four tabs on the left hand side when you are logged in should be:

- Political Parties
- Latest in Politics
- My Constituency
- Starters Guide (a page in which users can learn about how the Dáil works, explanation of political jargon etc.)

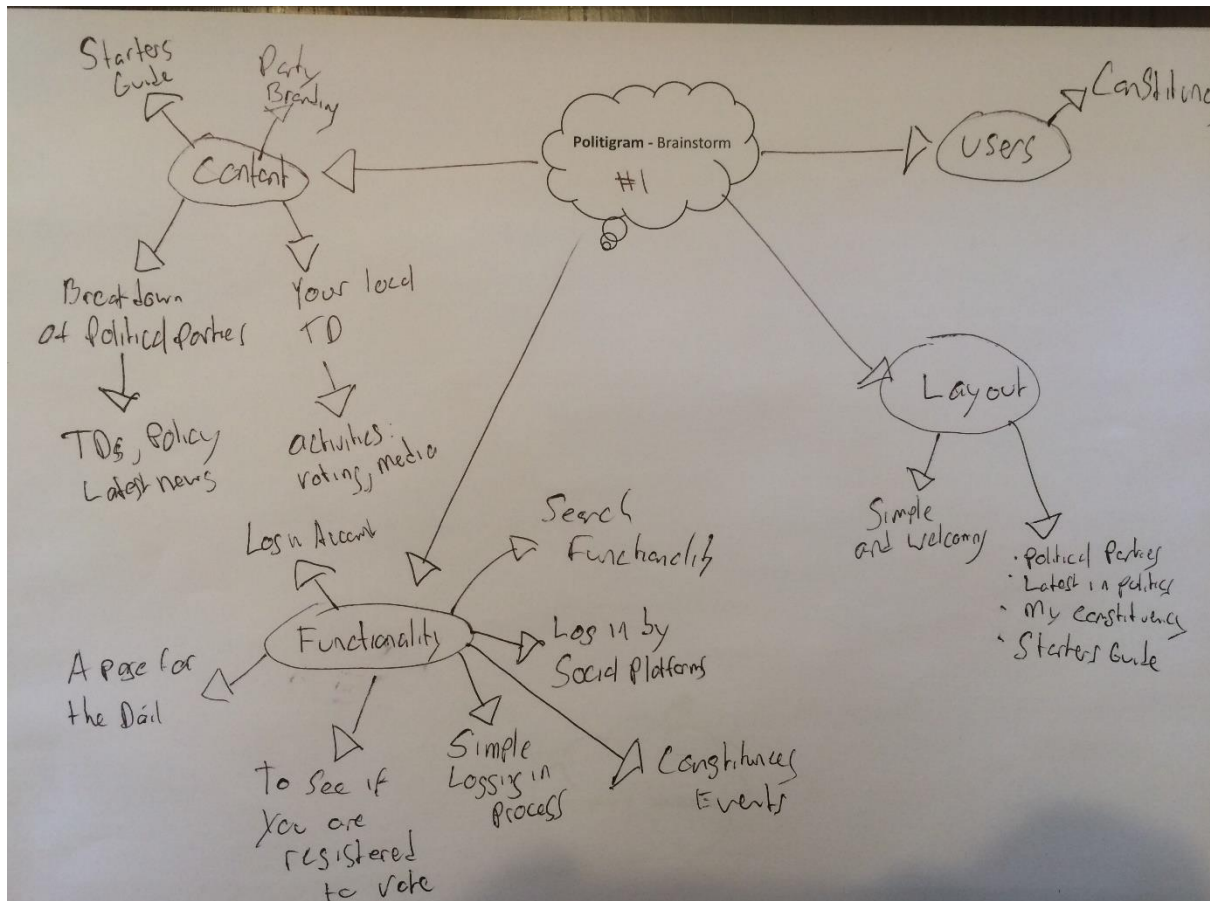
## **Unemployed Person**

Search functionality under 'news/areas of interest' such as foreign affairs, social, local, environmental, budgetary, education, employment etc. is an idea this participant brought forward. Political events calendar in your constituency is another feature that was brought up with the ability to sign up for these events and even locate and direct via Google Maps to the event as well.

### Requirements I elicited from Brainstorming session #1:

Logging in feature via social platforms	Political Party pages/hubs
To see your local TD & their activities incl. share feature	To see if you are registered to vote
Map with polling station	A starters guide to politics
Videos from the Dail	Forum

Photo of brainstorming sheet:



### Session #2

Once more, before officially starting the brainstorming session, I asked all participants what they thought of the name 'Politigram' and they all agreed this was a good and simple name to use for the website.

#### Student (studying political science)

Emphasis on 'byte sized' information is vital according to this participant. He said in relation getting people involved and interested in politics, easy to read, easy to understand, graphical information should be considered and used throughout the website. He said without these components, our target market would not get on board. An in-website polling system would work well and would give users of the website a real interactive tool to use, observe and have the pull factor with users coming back to see an update on the poll. He said this poll could be taken monthly for consistency. This poll could be prompted at certain times when a user logs into the website, it will be a quick and

convenient for the user. The results of the poll each month will be available in the 'latest in politics' page of the website and will also be available to politicians when they log in.

### **Parliamentary Assistant**

This participant gave me a great insight into the day-to-day interactions between constituents and their local TDs as this person's job is middle-person between the two. An easy messaging feature that directs straight to the inbox of the TD's constituency office is something that she feels would help speed up and make it more convenient for constituents to get in touch. The messaging feature would create an option to choose either of two headings – a) book an appointment and b) make an inquiry. When either option is chosen, a heading with either 'Appointment request – [constituent's name]' or 'Inquiry – [constituent's name]' will be created with a blank space underneath with the ability for the constituent to type more details about their request for an appointment or inquiry to help the constituency office staff understand what exactly the constituent needs. This will help with the characterization of emails coming into the specific constituency office's inbox.

Another proposed feature that this participant said that could be useful would be the a specific page for the TD with their latest activity, including available snippets of their contribution on media and in the Dail. These media snippets could be pulled by code automatically to the page of the individual TD in question.

### **Rep from the Oireachtas**

Data flow from the Oireachtas website is going to be a major part of the Politigram website's functionality and transparency. The Houses of The Oireachtas is seen as an impartial institution that provides a vital public service. I was relieved to hear from this participant that the public service aspect of the organization [The Oireachtas] promoted the use of their services by third party applications and websites that help promote politics and the understanding around it. The participant gave their take on how the Oireachtas website would work in conjunction with the Politigram website by feeding data from one to the other. The idea would be that a feature simply labelled 'The Dail' would be an option on the left hand side once the user has logged in. Graphical information in relation the latest votes in the Dail, voting patterns with the colours green = voted yes, red = voted no and grey = abstained. He said an option to click and see what TD voted what way should be incorporated in this in some way. In terms of bills proposed, passing through the houses and enacted, he said there should be a 'byte sized' version of these bills that would fit on one smartphone screen. This version should show an 'easy summary' of the bill in question with an option to 'read further' on the bottom of the page which will direct to the full bill on the Oireachtas website. The bill information should also show where in the legislative process the bill is e.g. committee stage, final stage etc.

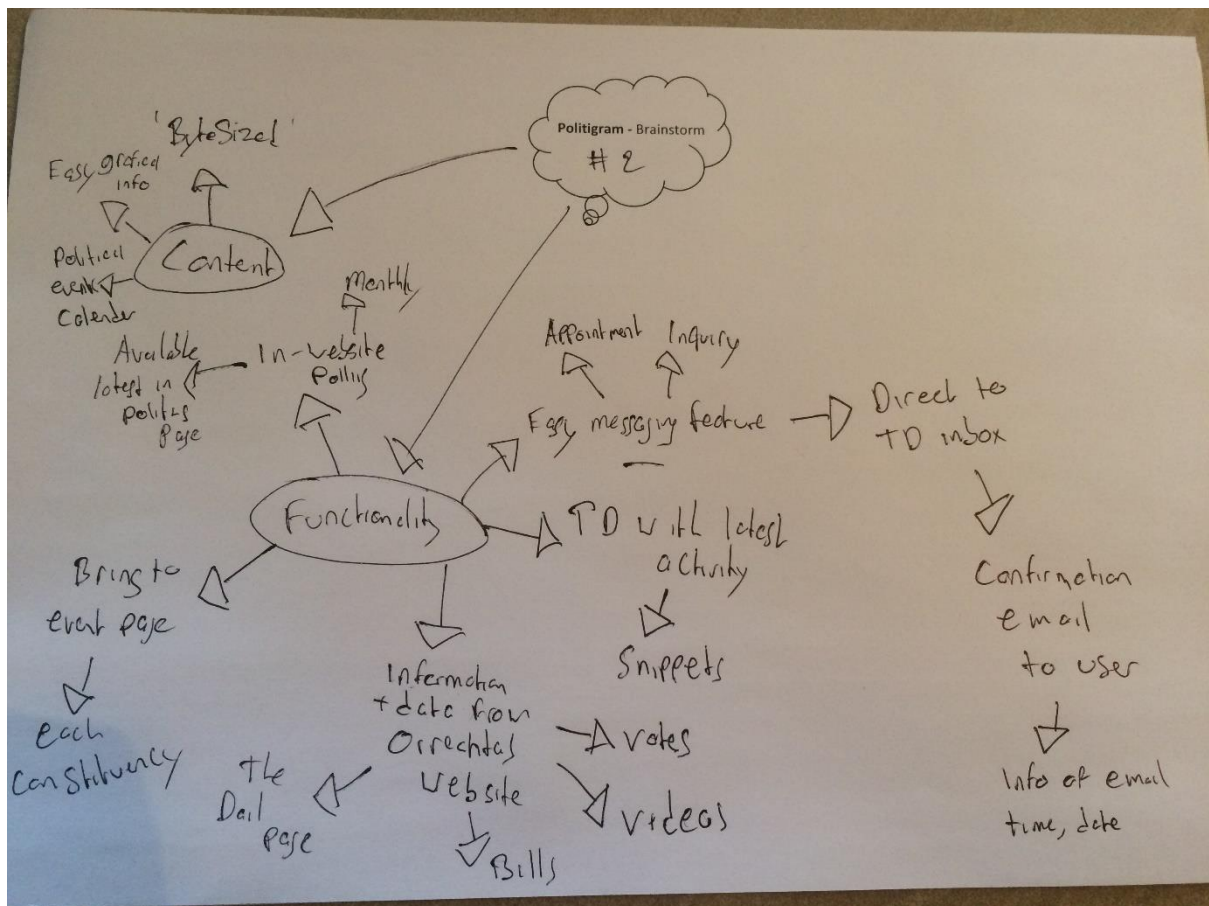
### **Political Party Member**

A recommendation by this participant evolved around political events. She said that a political calendar of events should be considered, these events would be debates, information sessions, ard fheis, political related arts etc. He said these events should have a 'host', 'co-host' or 'contributor' that could be attached to either political parties, or specific TDs. For example: If Simon Harris TD (contributor) is speaking at a 'Wicklow Repeal The 8<sup>th</sup>' (event) this event would be listed in in his page under 'events' which would show information such as event location (and an option to click and get directions there via Google Maps), time, and a link to the page selling or giving away the event tickets (such as Eventbrite).

### Requirements I elicited from Brainstorming session #2:

In-website polling system	Easy messaging feature
Specific TD page	Login page for politicians
'The Dail' feature	Graphical voting information
Byte sized summary of bills with info on stages	Political event calendar

Photo of brainstorming sheet:



## Interviews

### Interview #1: Brid Smith TD

#### Questions asked and Answers given in quotes:

**Q1.** How would you rank (from the most common to the least common) methods of communication between you and your constituents out of 5?

Not common 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 Most common

Please place the number out of 5 that applies to you beside each communication method

Email (direct): "5"

Email (via office staff): "3"

Face to face meetings: "1"

Phone calls: "2"

*Social media: “4”*

**Q2.** *In general, do you find there are certain age groups (from 18 yo upwards) that are more likely to contact you in relation to a problem they need resolved than other age groups? If there are, what age brackets would these people be in?*

*“I’ve found there to be mainly to be a 25 – 40 years old age bracket that would be the most willing to get in contact if an issue arises”*

**Q3.** *At present, how would you go about understanding your constituent’s opinion on areas such as policy and local, topical and social issues?*

*“Depending on the issue I would meet with them privately face-to-face but mainly I would gain an understanding of my constituent’s feelings on issues at public meetings”*

**Q4.** *How would you communicate to your constituents about events that you have organised or are involved in?*

*“I would communicate through Facebook, sending out leaflets, texting people who are on our database and putting up posters in the area”*

**Q5.** *In my college survey I asked participants (mostly between the ages of 18 – 35) to describe their familiarity with their local TDs. The subsequent result showed that:*

- 1. 38% were unsure of who their local TDs were and what views they represented*
- 2. A further 37% said they have an idea of who their local TDs are but are unsure on what views they represent.*

*What ideas (if any) would you have to help improve constituents’ familiarity with their TDs?*

*“I feel more activities on the streets would work well and get more people engaged, such as information stalls and more door canvassing”*

**Q6.** *How easy do you (or your staff) find pinpointing snippets of your contribution in Dáil debates, radio/tv programmes etc. to share with your followers on social media and other digital media? If you (or your staff) find it challenging, what problems do you typically encounter?*

*“We share almost everything that I speak on Facebook, Twitter and my website”*

**[Follow up to Q6]:** *Obviously, you want to a) reach the largest audience as possible and b) inform your constituents and followers as much as possible, what type of content do you find resonates most with your followers on social media? I.e. you would get the most reaction from?*

*“Video from debates in the Dail, especially one on the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment got a really big response, I think short videos that get to the point resonates with people more and is easier to digest”*

**Q7.** *During your election campaign, what was your preferred method of communication to your prospective constituents on what you were offering? Do you feel there should be a more consistent/integrated way of doing this via a single platform?*

*“Leaflets, newsletters and especially canvassing helped but social media was the most effective way of communicating during my last campaign, linking all social media platforms worked best for me”*

**Interview #2: Richard Bruton TD**

**Questions asked and Answers given in quotes:**

**Q1.** How would you rank (from the most common to the least common) methods of communication between you and your constituents out of 5?

Not common 1 - 2 – 3 – 4 - 5 Most common

Please place the number out of 5 that applies to you beside each communication method

Email (direct): “4”

Email (via office staff): “1”

Face to face meetings: “5”

Phone calls: “3”

Social media: “2”

“Leaflets are also an important means of communication although it is more impersonal”

**Q2.** In general, do you find there are certain age groups (from 18 yo upwards) that are more likely to contact you in relation to a problem they need resolved than other age groups? If there are, what age brackets would these people be in?

“I find the age group from 30-40 would be most likely to contact me in relation to a problem they need resolved, also 65+”

**Q3.** At present, how would you go about understanding your constituent’s opinion on areas such as policy and local, topical and social issues?

“I would engage in a personal discussion at my constituency clinic or on the street passing by, by email or contact with community associations”

**Q4.** How would you communicate to your constituents about events that you have organised or are involved in?

“Generally leaflets and social media, both work well for different age groups, with the first being the older and the latter being the younger”

**Q5.** In my college survey I asked participants (mostly between the ages of 18 – 35) to describe their familiarity with their local TDs. The subsequent result showed that:

1. 38% were unsure of who their local TDs were and what views they represented
2. A further 37% said they have an idea of who their local TDs are but are unsure on what views they represent.

What ideas (if any) would you have to help improve constituents’ familiarity with their TDs?

“The age groups which you indicate can only be notified through internet enabled media, the difficulty for individual politicians in accessing younger voters is that the party interests of young people are very wide – international and global issues often being more important than local or related to the work of an individual politician. They will tend to be more interested in broad policy platforms of entire political parties rather than one specific representative”.

**Q6.** How easy do you (or your staff) find pinpointing snippets of your contribution in Dáil debates, radio/tv programmes etc. to share with your followers on social media and other digital media? If you (or your staff) find it challenging, what problems do you typically encounter?

“Identifying snippets isn’t a problem, the difficulty is building adequate reach for such postings. In terms of my social media, my followers would typically be outside of the constituency than within it, this means I am more often communicating on behalf of my Department or of my party than in my personal responsibilities to my constituents.”

***Q7.** During your election campaign, what was your preferred method of communication to your prospective constituents on what you were offering? Do you feel there should be a more consistent/integrated way of doing this via a single platform?*

“While the party has a very strong social media platform for its election campaign, personal social media has to date, played a small role. This will however, change and will be a more prominent feature of the next campaign”

**Prototype**

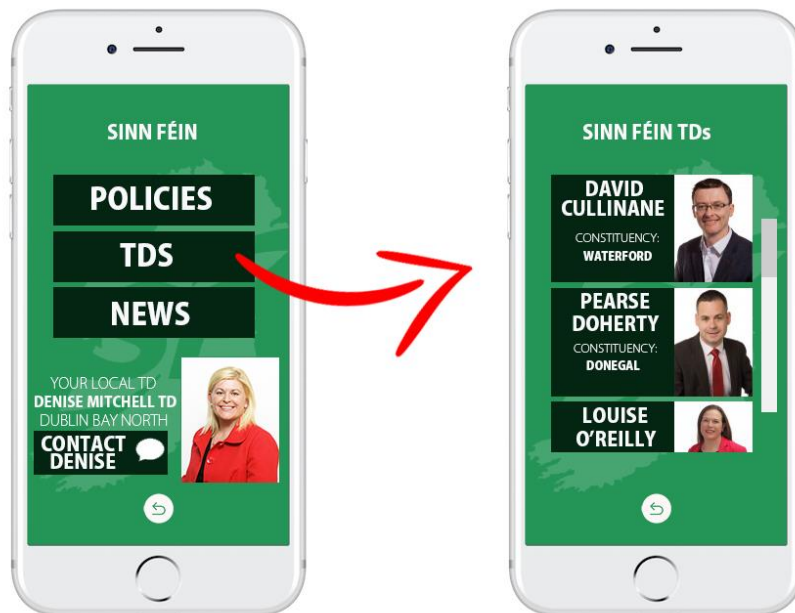
**Login Page:**



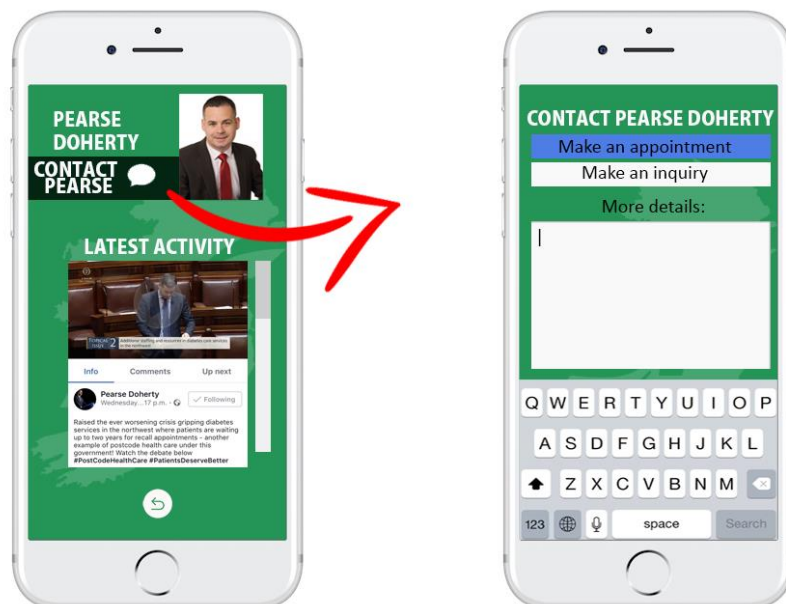
Menu Page > Political Party Choice Page:



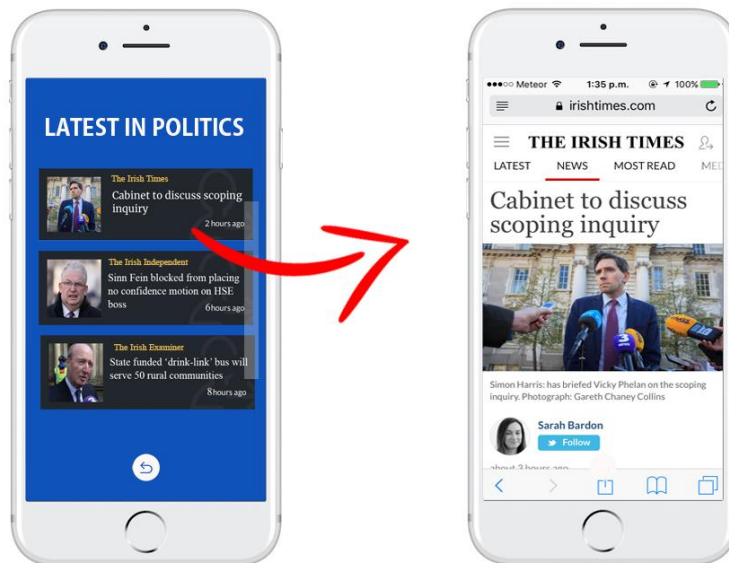
### Specific Political Party Page > List of TDs Page:



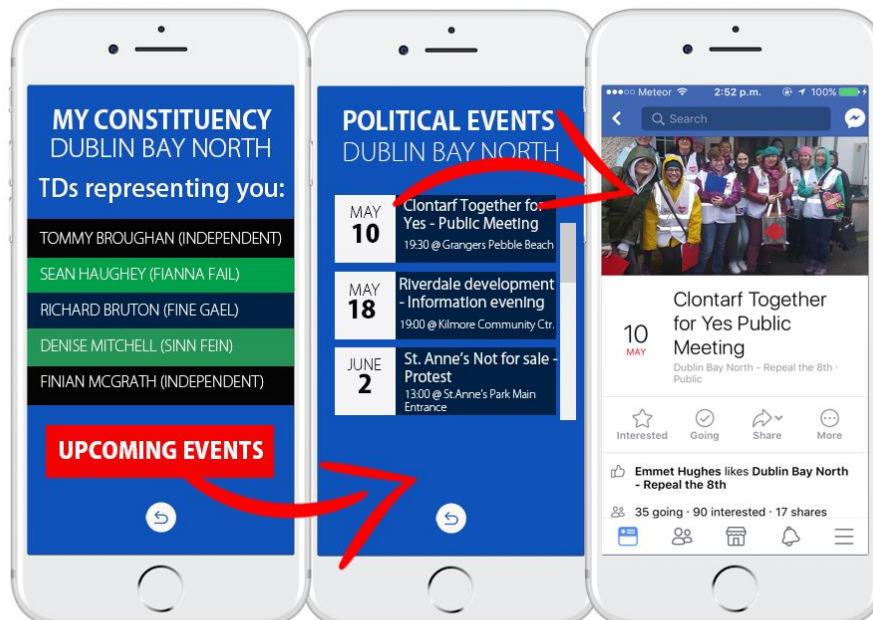
### Specific TD Page > Contact TD Page:



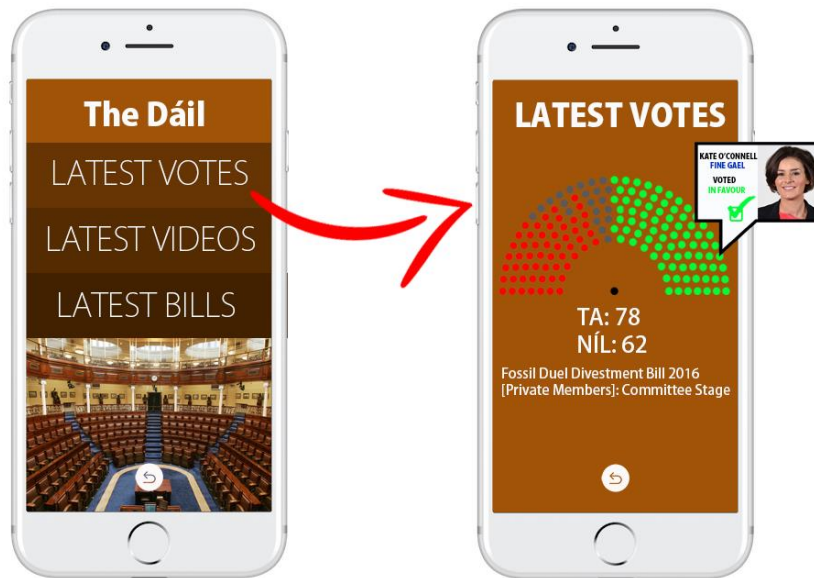
**‘Latest In Politics’ Page > Link to specific article:**



**‘My Constituency’ Page > Constituency Events Page > Link to specific event**



## 'The Dáil' Page > Latest Votes Page



## In Website Polling:

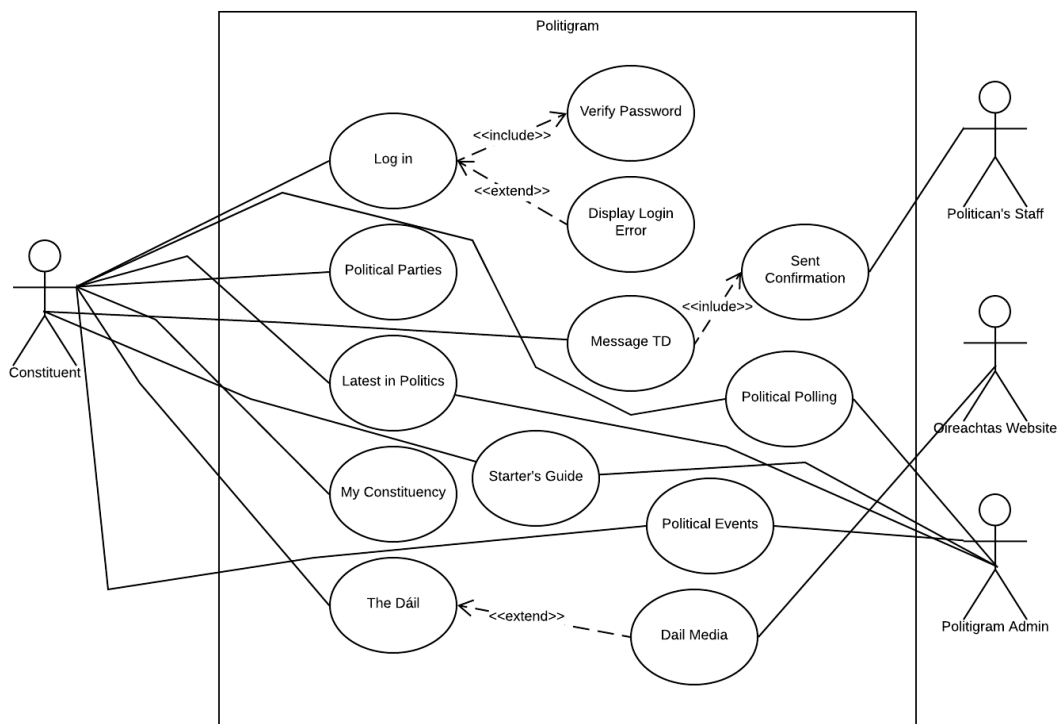


## Requirements Workshop

The requirements workshop I held in a private rented room in The Black Sheep, Capel street included a Business Analyst, a former politician, a current parliamentary assistant to a sitting TD and a developer. I showed the participants my prototype and explained how the different pages worked and interacted with each other. They were collectively impressed with the website with suggested alterations brought up. These alterations were discussed but it was agreed that these changes were mostly add-ons to the website and may complicate the process in the initial phase of development. Changes that were suggested by the Business Analyst were around the 'Latest in Politics' page and the ability to search for the type of news the user was looking for i.e. housing, 8<sup>th</sup> amendment, party polling etc. He said that when the website is functional and a consistent flow is understood in terms of from one page to another, this search function can be added in at a later date. The former politician was very happy with the prototype and he said it is extremely important that the smaller parties get the same page space and options as larger parties, which was the case. The parliamentary assistant complimented the messaging system and said that the binary nature between query and appointment will simplify the process for both the constituent seeking to get in touch and the staff member on the other side. The developer gave his opinion in terms of the usability and page flow aspect of the website, he said once there is a strong followership and user base, this could be incorporated into an application in the future. But for now, a website provides an easy single, platform to perform any changes that may be needed when the website is deployed.

## Interface Analysis

### Politigram UML Use Case Diagram



### UML Use Case Diagram Conclusion:

This diagram gives a visual representation of the associated relationships that will exist involving three of the main stakeholders. These stakeholders include Constituents, the Politician's Staff and the Oireachtas Website. These stakeholders are actors that are placed outside of the diagram with the 'Politigram Admin' being the IT system and website staff deployed to on an ongoing basis. In terms of the process, Constituents will be able to Log in with their password verified by the system automatically, if a wrong password is entered, then the system will display a login error. The customer gains information and knowledge of the various political parties and independent TDs and also can click into the 'Latest in Politics' page, who's data is fed in by the Politigram Admin. Constituents can also enter the 'My Constituency page' and Political Events, the latter of which is also fed by the Political Admin as the events appear. The Constituent can also access the Dáil page which has media and graphical information provided by the Oireachtas website. The Constituent can also message the Politician's staff with a Confirmation email being sent back to the Constituent. Political polling is triggered by the Constituent choosing which party they feel is performing the best at a specific time, and this information is then fed to the Politigram Admin. The constituent can also access the 'Starter's Guide' that gives them an insight into various aspects of politics and how the parliament works etc.

## IEE Requirements Specification

### Introduction

#### Purpose

This IEE requirements specification document is being developed for the Politigram website. This report will clearly specify the key functional and non-functional requirements, which will be associated with the website. This document must be approved by the owner of the business prior to it being passed to the developer. Any changes that are proposed requested by the project stakeholders, must be implemented prior to development of the website commencing.

#### Scope

The Politigram website is being developed for a variety of project stakeholders. It is designed to bring Politician's and their Constituents closer together by providing a 'one-stop-shop' for everything Irish politics in an impartial way. This includes having clear, concise information with an emphasis on graphical imagery that makes it easier for people who are not familiar with politics to learn and understand what is happening inside and outside of our national parliament. Instant contact with the local TDs who represent you will be available by having a page dedicated to your own constituency with immediate access to a variety of political events making it easier than ever to get involved in the political process. The ability to see what is happening in the Dáil, either live or by playback will give Constituents the opportunity to see exactly what is happening at a national level in their parliament including ways of seeing the latest votes, what these votes means and who voted in which way. The ability to access a page dedicated to your favourite political party will skip the locating of manifestos, TDs and party related news.

### Functional Requirements

Requirement	1.1
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Identification Code	FR1.1
Title	Register Link
Description	User should be able to register an account entering their email address, password (twice), their name and constituency (from a list of all constituencies in the country)
Location	Start-up page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	1.2
Identification Code	FR1.2
Title	Social Platforms Login
Description	User should be able to register an account via Facebook & Twitter by using a link to fetch credentials from these networks
Location	Start-up page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	1.3
Identification Code	FR1.3
Title	Constituency Not Known
Description	User should be able to enter their address (in the event they do not know which constituency they are in) to establish their constituency
Location	Start-up page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	1
Identification Code	FR1
Title	Login Link
Description	User should be able to login to their account and be given access to the Menu page by entering their email address and password
Location	Start-up page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	2
Identification Code	FR2
Title	Easy accessible login
Description	The user should be able to be continually logged in from the same device, even though the website has been closed, for ease of access
Location	Login page
Priority	Could Have

Requirement	3
Identification Code	FR3
Title	All required fields
Description	During the signing in process, user must enter a unique email address and password to access the website's features
Location	Login page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	4
Identification Code	FR4
Title	Confirmation Email
Description	An automatic confirmation email should be sent to the user's email address they signed up with to confirm account
Location	Login page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	5
Identification Code	FR5
Title	Photo Upload
Description	User should be able to upload a photo of themselves to their profile page
Location	Profile page
Priority	Should have

Requirement	6
Identification Code	FR6
Title	Changing Email Address
Description	The user must be able to change their email address
Location	Profile page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	7
Identification Code	FR7
Title	Photo Change
Description	The user must be able to change their photo
Location	Profile page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	8
Identification Code	FR8
Title	Name Change
Description	The user must be able to change their name
Location	Profile Page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	9
Identification Code	FR9
Title	Log out
Description	The user must be able to log out of their account
Location	Profile Page

Priority	Must Have
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Requirement	10
Identification Code	FR10
Title	Menu Page Options
Description	The user must be able to view five clickable options for the other pages in the main menu [Political Parties Page, Latest in Politics Page, My Constituency Page, The Dail Page and Starters Guide Page]
Location	Menu page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	10.1
Identification Code	FR10.1
Title	Polling Prompt
Description	The user must be prompted to complete a political poll asking which political party they are most satisfied with at a given time, once a month. The user must be able to choose their party of choice and click submit. The user must also be able to X out of the poll if they do not want to give a response.
Location	Menu page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	11
Identification Code	FR11
Title	Back to Profile Page
Description	The user must be able to access their profile page from the main menu page
Location	Menu page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	12
Identification Code	FR12
Title	Back to Menu Page
Description	The user must be given an option to click back to the menu page
Location	Profile page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	13
Identification Code	FR13
Title	Political Parties Page
Description	On this page, the user should be able to view and click on a list of political parties [Specific Political Party Page] and independent TDs [Specific TD page] that have a presence in the Dáil at that current stage
Location	Political Parties page

Priority	Must Have
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Requirement	14.1
Identification Code	FR14.1
Title	Political Parties Graphics
Description	The list of political parties on the Political Parties Page should be the official logo/colour of the party branding
Location	Political Parties page
Priority	Could Have

Requirement	15
Identification Code	FR15
Title	Specific Political Party Page
Description	On this page, the user should be able to view and click on a list of options, these options include to view party policy[Specific Party Policy Page], TDs[List of TDs Page] and news from the party [Specific Party News Page]
Location	Specific Political Party Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	15.1
Identification Code	FR15.1
Title	Specific Political Party Branding
Description	Each specific political party page should reflect the party branding such as party logo in the background/party branding colours
Location	Specific Political Party page
Priority	Could Have

Requirement	16
Identification Code	FR16
Title	Specific Party Policy Page
Description	On this page the user should be able to read the specific party policies from the specific party's manifesto
Location	Specific Party Policy page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	17
Identification Code	FR17
Title	List of TDs Page
Description	On this page, the user should be able to view the list of TDs that the party has in the Dáil, these should show the photo of the TD on the right with the TD's name to the left and their constituency underneath
Location	List of TDs page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	17.1
Identification Code	FR17.1
Title	Link to Specific TDs Page
Description	Each list of TDs, when clicked, must bring the user to the Specific TD Page
Location	Link to Specific TDs Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	18
Identification Code	FR18
Title	Specific TD Page
Description	This page reflects the characteristic of the specific TD the user chooses, the page is linked through many different areas of the website. The page must contain a photo of the specific TD, a contact link [Contact TD page] and their latest activity [TD Activity]
Location	Specific TD page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	18.1
Identification Code	FR18.1
Title	TD Activity
Description	The user must be able to see a scrolling storyline of various activities the specific TD has been doing. This is presented in various media such as social media posts, articles written by or containing the name of the specific TD, TV or radio contributions and so on. The user must be able also to click whichever activity they wish and this will bring the user to the original page of where the content came from.
Location	Specific TD page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	19
Identification Code	FR19
Title	Contact TD Page
Description	The user must be able to contact the specific TD in which they chose on this page, this contact will be sent from the website to the specific TD's email address
Location	Contact TD page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	19.1
Identification Code	FR19.1
Title	Contact Form
Description	This is the form on the Contact TD Page that will allow the user send the TD in question an email via the website. At the very top of the form will be two options, one to be 'Book an Appointment' and the other to be 'Make an Inquiry'. The form must give the user an option of choosing either one of these options and the chosen option should be highlighted in blue. The user should be able to use the device's

	keyboard to write the message they wish to write below these options.
Location	TD Contact page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	19.2
Identification Code	FR19.2
Title	Contact Form Send
Description	Once the user is finished with writing the Contact Form, the user must be able to click 'Send' and this response must be sent to the specific TD's email address inbox under the following heading 'Appointment Request – [User's Name]' OR 'Inquiry Request – [User's Name]' with the form that the user completed in the body of the email.
Location	TD Contact page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	19.3
Identification Code	FR19.3
Title	Confirmation Code
Description	Once the Contact Form has been completed and Sent, a confirmation email should be sent back to the user's email address. This email should include the time of when the email was sent, the specific TD the email was sent to and the contents of the email itself.
Location	TD Contact page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	20
Identification Code	FR20
Title	Specific Party News Page
Description	This page must show the latest developments from the specific party's page that it was linked from. This page should show the latest news from the specific party in question. This should be a timeline of the latest news from the party via their social media platforms, articles mentioning the specific political party and other media related to or reporting on the party
Location	Specific Party News page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	21
Identification Code	FR21
Title	Latest in Politics Page
Description	The user must be able to view a scrolling list of the latest political related news as articles are uploaded by the news organization.
Location	Menu Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	21.1
Identification Code	FR21.1
Title	Article Information
Description	The user must be able to view the headline of the article that has been written, the owner of the news content and how long ago the article was created. The user should also be able to see the main image associated with the article that has been written.
Location	Latest in Politics Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	21.2
Identification Code	FR21.2
Title	Article Link
Description	The user must be able to click on the specific article they want, this must bring the user to the website where the article was first published.
Location	Latest in Politics Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	22
Identification Code	FR22
Title	My Constituency Page
Description	This page must show the list of TDs that sit in the user's constituency and underneath, must show a link for 'Latest Events' [List of Latest Constituency Events Page]
Location	My Constituency Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	22.1
Identification Code	FR22.1
Title	List of Constituency TDs
Description	The list of TDs that sit in the user's constituency must show the name of the TDs in question, the names of the TDs must be clickable and when clicked they must link to the Specific TDs Page
Location	My Constituency Page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	23
Identification Code	FR23
Title	List of Constituency Events Page
Description	This page must show a list of the latest political related events taking place in the constituency
Location	List of Constituency Events page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	23.1
Identification Code	FR23.1

Title	List of Constituency Events
Description	This list must show a scroll of the latest political related events taking place in the constituency, these events can be advertised on various digital platforms such as social media, third party applications such as Eventbrite and websites. Each event that is listed must be clickable and once clicked, link to the specific event page that is advertising or promoting the event.
Location	List of Constituency Events page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	24
Identification Code	FR24
Title	The Dail Page
Description	This page allows users to browse activities happening in The Dáil with three clickable options: Latest Votes [Latest Votes Page], Latest Videos [Latest Videos Page] and Latest Bills, [Latest Bills Page].
Location	The Dail page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	24.1
Identification Code	FR24.1
Title	The Dail Page Below Image
Description	An image of the Dail could be placed below the three clickable links
Location	The Dail page
Priority	Could Have

Requirement	25
Identification Code	FR25
Title	Latest Votes Page
Description	This page must allow the user to view the latest votes concluded in the Dail
Location	Latest Votes page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	25.1
Identification Code	FR25.1
Title	Oireachtas Website Pull
Description	Information in relation to voting must be pulled in by the system from the Oireachtas website. This information includes: voting patterns by Dáil seating locations, specific TD voting results, abstentions, whether the vote has been carried or defeated, the name of the vote, the date and time of the vote.
Location	Latest Votes page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	25.2
Identification Code	FR25.2

Title	Voting Graphics Visual
Description	Information and Data pulled in from the Oireachtas website will be re-displayed in a more user-friendly model, this model will be a doughnut like semi-circle that show dots that represent every seat in the Dail and therefore every sitting TD. The dots will be either green (the specific TD voted in favour), red (the specific TD voted against) and grey (the specific TD abstained from the vote in question)
Location	Latest Votes page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	25.3
Identification Code	FR25.3
Title	Voting Graphic Interactive
Description	The user should be able to move their finger or mouse over a specific dot in the Voting Graphics Visual to see which TD voted in what way or abstained. When a dot is highlighted, a speech bubble-like graphic should appear with the name of the TD in question with their voting result and photo on the right hand side of the inside of the speech bubble-like graphic. The user should be able to click the speech bubble-like graphic with the specific TD to be directed to the Specific TD page.
Location	Latest Votes page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	26
Identification Code	FR26
Title	Latest Videos Page
Description	This page must allow users view the latest videos of the activities in the Dáil by listing videos trimmed to concise format.
Location	Latest Videos page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	26.1
Identification Code	FR26.1
Title	Oireachtas Website Video Pull
Description	Videos uploaded by the Oireachtas on their website will be pulled by the system and trimmed by administration staff of Politigram for optimal viewing. Popular videos such as leaders questions and debates will be available on the Latest Video Page as the trimming process is complete.
Location	Latest Videos page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	26.2
Identification Code	FR26.2
Title	Video Player
Description	Videos pulled and trimmed by Politigram and made available should be able to be played on an in-website responsive video player

Location	Latest Videos page
Priority	Should Have

Requirement	27
Identification Code	FR27
Title	Latest Bills Page
Description	This page must allow users to view the latest bills being considered by the Dail in a concise, easy to read format
Location	Latest Bills page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	27.1
Identification Code	FR27.1
Title	Bill List
Description	The user must be able to view concise versions of bills currently being considered by the Dail, these bills are read and then summarized by the Politigram admin staff. The list of concise versions of bills with the specific stage it is at in the legislative process will be available as they are uploaded by the Politigram admin staff. The user must be able to view the bill and be given an option to view the full bill on the Oireachtas website if needed.
Location	Latest Bills page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	28
Identification Code	FR28
Title	Starters Guide Page
Description	The user must be able to view basic explanations on how the Dail works, the processes of legislation, the acronyms used, how the Politigram website works and a link to checktheregister.ie to see if they are registered to vote
Location	Starters Guide page
Priority	Must Have

## Non Functional Requirements

Requirement	30
Identification Code	NF30
Title	Full Availability
Description	The system and website must be accessible at all times for the user
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	31
Identification Code	NF31
Title	Capacity
Description	The system must be able to deal with multiple logins by multiple users
Location	Login page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	32
Identification Code	NF32
Title	Response Time
Description	The website must have a fast response time in terms of loading pages for the user regardless of devices used
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	33
Identification Code	NF33
Title	Reliability
Description	The website must be extremely reliable for the users. Inputting information into fields, and emails sending and to the right recipient
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	34
Identification Code	NF34
Title	Security
Description	The website must require the right email address and password for an account in order for it to grant access and for the user to log in
Location	Login page
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	35
Identification Code	NF35
Title	Scalability
Description	The website must have the capability to withstand high volumes of users and it must be able to cope with large demand
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	36
Identification Code	NF36
Title	Security Check
Description	There must be bi-monthly security inspections to ensure security is up to date and ready to deal with imminent cyber-attacks
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

Requirement	37
Identification Code	NF37
Title	Impartiality
Description	Users must be assured that information that arrives onto the website must be impartial and based on facts and balance rather than an agenda driven, objective
Location	All pages
Priority	Must Have

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Houses of the Oireachtas. (2018). *Election Turnout in Ireland: measurement, trends and policy implications*. [online] Available at:

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## Appendix

### Objectives

The primary objective of my final year project is formulate a highly detailed requirements specification document for a new mobile, tablet & desktop friendly website called Politigram. This should be accomplished by utilizing the viewpoints from a variety of the stakeholders associated with prospective users of the website. The project will initially involve gathering requirements from stakeholders which would include: the general public with a special emphasis on (but not limited to) ages between 18 – 30 years old, elected politicians on a) local level b) national level and c) European level and also people involved in the media or otherwise who are involved in politics in a range of different capacities on a day-to-day basis. I will cover aspects such as the website design, layout, navigation, features that are required, content, data gathering, amongst a variety of elicitation techniques. These aspects will all be documented in a highly detailed requirements specification document. Also in conjunction with this report, many other tasks must be fulfilled throughout the project. These would include developing the project proposal, conducting analysis and design of the website, performing the midpoint presentation, submitting the final document, conducting a final presentation and lastly displaying the finalized project website and project poster at the project showcase in May.

The objective of the website is to provide people with an easy-to-use platform that breaks politics down into an easy to read, user-friendly format, giving constituents a clear, non-bias and fact filled picture of what their local representatives, the government and/or opposition are doing to push their cause. This bypasses the famous ‘fake news’ element in politics we all know too well. The website will enable constituents to see how their local TD has voted in the Dáil dating back two years, to watch what they or members of their party (if applicable) or others have spoken about a subject the constituent feel strongly about. (i.e. LGBT rights, repeal of the 8<sup>th</sup> amendment etc.) The website will also give easy access to their local TD & their staff via a communication line

incorporated in the website that can be quoted with a vote graphic, video or indeed any other external articles or media that involves their local TD, this gives the constituent the chance to raise that particular topic with their TD and question it or ask for more clarification. The communication line is also a method in which a constituent can ask for a topic to be raised in leader's questions.

The ultimate objective of the website is to encourage more young (and generally otherwise impassive) people involved in politics by giving a simple overview or a more detailed view if needed. The website will have a login page for both politicians and their constituents, with open pages for the general public or media to observe information they may find interesting i.e. voting results, bills put forward etc.

## **Background**

You don't have to look far to find something that has been affected by politics. The actions of politician's have touched us all in various different ways, some in a positive way and others in a much more negative way. Politics characterizes almost every aspect of our lives because they are the people who run the country from the very top but one thing is for certain though, in a democracy, that very politics I talk about can be shaped by the people of their country. Up to now, politics has been a topic mainly for those who make the effort to sift through all the perplexing fuzz of party policy, bills, interviews, votes, and quotes and manage to come up with their interpretation of what this all means. A lot of this deciphering is done by the media who then analyze this and give their view on what this actually means for me and you. That puts an awful lot of prerogative in the hands and mouths of whoever decides to present this information to you, after all, it is their interpretation of proceedings.

In my view politics and what goes on in our national parliament is too important to just ignore or overlook. This time one hundred years ago there were men and women fighting in the war of independence, they we're fighting for what we have today, a right to vote on our own affairs. A part of me is saddened to understand that less than half of the people in this country that are eligible to vote, didn't, and that I feel if these people took time to do a limited amount of research, registered to vote and actually went out to cast their vote in 2016 that we would have a vastly different Dáil than we have now, in my view anyway. It seems counterproductive for people that hold the view of 'sure what will my vote do, I'm only one?' because I can almost guarantee that there are tens of thousands upon thousands of people that hold this same view.

After gaining increasing familiarity with the political arena over the last two years it doesn't take a rocket scientist to notice that the views of the Oireactas fails to replicate that of the general public at large. It generally comprises of inherited middle-aged men and cohorts, mostly conservative, some more liberal with a few women and the odd rookie. Very different to the young vibrant, progressive Irish society we see every day.

Politigram will hope to help facilitate the Dáil's transition to the modern day by giving people that have no or limited knowledge about politics a chance to better understand the landscape and help bring about a parliament that reflects them better than it does at the moment. It will help people understand the views of their local TD and how they are voting, avoiding the spin that comes with articles and other media to help the constituent make their own mind up. The website hopes to bring constituents and their local representative closer from a communication perspective that will focus on inclusion for many more than there is now.

## Technical Approach

A major part of my approach to the project will involve a plentiful amount of research and gathering specific data from various sources associated with and around politics in Ireland including those on the fringes. The approach will focus on first, the communication (or lack thereof) between the politician and their constituent, how this is being conducted and how it can be improved on both sides by the help of a third party. Secondly, I will focus on that null in the Irish electorate, the people that are eligible to vote but choose not to, have not done before or have done on a previous occasion but are no longer willing to participate in the electoral process.

For this project I will conduct my research in many different areas that will include active politicians (TDs, Councilors, MEPs) retired or previous politicians on the levels mentioned, staff involved with politics (politician's office staff, Oireachtas staff etc.), political journalists and the general public.

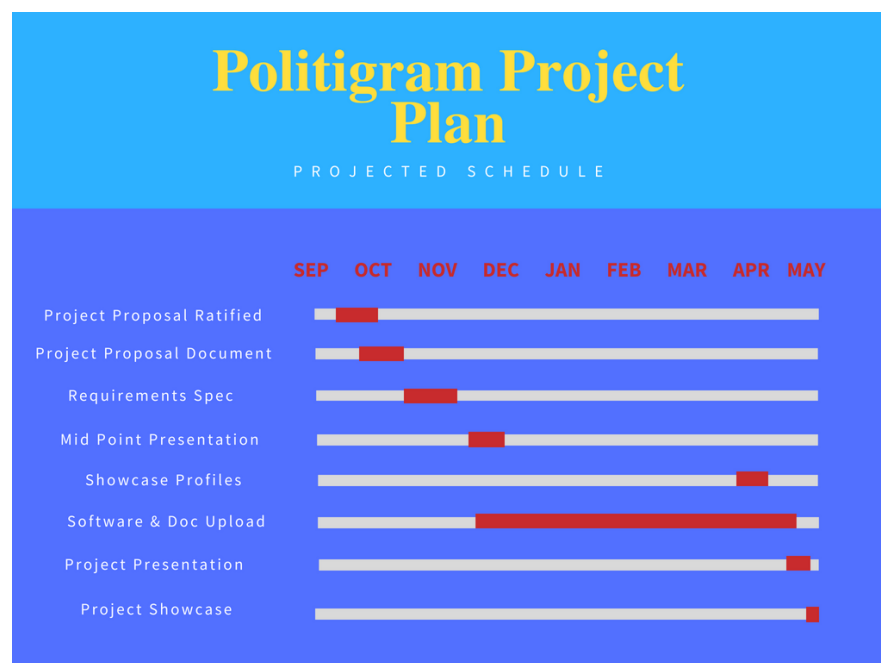
## Special resources required

In order to successfully complete my project there are a number of special resources I will have to utilize. My own laptop and computers in the college will be the hardware I will use to conduct research and develop the project. Microsoft Word, Forms, PowerPoint and Excel will be vital in this regard. The Oireachtas website and video player will also be vital in providing information on the political picture of the country in relation to elected representatives, bills, acts, votes, committees etc. Social media will also be a vital resource for research.

Eugene as my supervisor is another resource, he will monitor my progress and guide me on the right path throughout. Eugene, with a political interest himself will be a key resource in relation to feedback on ideas put forward.

## Project Plan

Below is my Gantt chart with details on the implementation steps and the timeline involved.



Task Name	Start Date	End Date	Duration (Days)
Project Proposal Ratified	20/09/2017	06/10/2017	17
Project Proposal Document	02/10/2017	27/10/2017	26
Requirements Specification	28/10/2017	24/11/2017	31
Mid Point Presentation	27/11/2017	07/12/2017	11
Showcase Profiles	01/04/2018	06/04/2018	6
Software & Doc	02/12/2017	13/05/2018	172
Project Presentation	14/05/2018	23/05/2018	9
Project Showcase	30/05/2018	30/05/2018	1

## Evaluation

I will evaluate the system via a variety of different requirement elicitation techniques. This will be a starting point for my requirements specification document. Techniques that I will use will include surveys, brainstorming, interface analysis, prototyping and requirements workshop. My aim is to develop a highly detailed requirements specification document involving both functional and non-function requirements. I hope to provide a visual insight into the main pages and elements of the website via a prototype. I will aim to meet with my project supervisor prior to major milestones in my project development lifecycle and hope to get a better understanding deliverables as they come around.

Stephen Kelly

\_\_\_\_26/10/17\_\_\_\_

Signature of student and date

## Reflective Journals

### September

This month I started researching how and where people get their political news. I spoke with fellow students about their knowledge and experience of politics in Ireland. Not surprisingly, I came across very few who either knew about politics or wanted to know about politics, as they seen it as quite a boring business. Throughout the month, I also researched websites and applications that have to do with politics. Building thoughts for my initial idea came mid-way through the month after I realised that people get their political news from the same sources every time, with their own narratives shaped by the journalist who wrote the article or is presenting the show on TV or radio. I also asked my friends, inside and outside of college including family did they know their local TDs? Their names? The parties they represent? The views they represent? Did they even know the constituency in which they live?

Unsurprisingly the answer was almost unanimously....no, no they didn't.

My idea, is to bring all the political news to one place, in an impartial way with constituents having closer and easier access to their public representatives and their views. I was thinking of a way to present politics in an easy, concise but interesting way with a chance for the user to have an input in some way, shape or form.

On reflection of this idea I feel that it is indeed unique in many respects, it will provide a single platform that both political enthusiasts and rookies could come and digest their political news and learn about the activities of their local TDs rather than going from one social media page to another and one website to another.

I feel I need to make this website not only unique, but also attractive, especially to the younger eye.

## **October**

At the start of this month, after grasping a more comprehensive idea and thinking a lot about how I go about explaining such an idea I then made a project pitch to Eugene O'Loughlin and Ron Elliot. I explained the main aspects of my proposed project, the features and the objectives. Both lecturers were complimentary about my idea and what I wanted to achieve, however they advised that I should gain a clearer understanding around the scope of the project. They emphasised that the avoidance of scope creep was crucial to the success of my project and indeed to give myself enough time to complete it comprehensively.

This advice was very much welcomed and understood, and it helped me focus more on the stakeholders and their individual characteristics. In order to prepare myself for the deliverables and the timeframe in which I should complete them I created a work breakdown structure that included a Gantt chart. This work breakdown structure will help me keep on top of the project overall.

Towards the end of the month, I created my project proposal and uploaded this to moodle. I was very happy with my progress so far, however, on reflection the next month will be crucial in gaining a deeper understanding of what is ahead of me in terms of the overall project concept, I will need to speak to more people that are involved in politics to learn more about the possibilities of my project's features. These features laid out in my project proposal may indeed change, with more added or some taken away with more emphasis certain features proposed.

## **November**

I started this month learning the news that I got Eugene O'Loughlin assigned as my project supervisor. I was very happy with this news, as I know Eugene well after having him for various modules throughout my 4 years in NCI. During my initial discussions with Eugene I was even more encouraged to hear that he himself, had an interest in politics, this was a big boost for me as I could explain my political related ideas for the project with someone who very much understands the political landscape and process himself.

I spent most of this month researching and talking to people interested and involved in politics in a variety of different ways. I spoke with a Sinn Féin councillor, Louise Dunne about my idea and the various aspects of the features that would be involved in it. She was very complimentary, and said that this idea can work but only if it is easy to use and is impartial. She added that features such as having a profile page for TDs with their information, activities and a feature to directly contact them without fetching for email addresses would be beneficial and more inviting for constituents to get in touch.

This month I also asked questions about proposed features of my project on Twitter, the reaction was very positive and respondents in general backed up Louise's claim that a profile page for TDs would invite many people to get in touch in relation to issues that affect them.

On reflection, this month was very productive with the more flesh being put on the bones of ideas of features for the website, social media really helped me outreach to people that would have interest in politics as well as people who aren't.

## **December**

After focusing a lot of effort eliciting potential requirements for the project and uploading my preliminary requirements specification last month, I caught up on two different assignments I had to complete this month, which took up most of the month's time. In terms of the project I focused on creating the Power Point slides for my midpoint presentation at the start of the month, this presentation went well with a positive outcome. However, my project supervisor Eugene O'Loughlin and Ron Elliot emphasised that there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of focusing the scope of the project but that progress has been made in many areas since the project pitch.

## **January**

At the start of 2018, my focus was mainly on the exams and as I had five to study for I did not get a chance to look at my project again until the exams were finished which was more than halfway through the month. I began thinking about and creating the questions for my project survey, I researched various aspects of communication channels between politician's and their constituents. Throughout my research, I found that the main communication channel to get in touch with politicians is either email, social media or their individual clinics based in the constituency. In the questions, I wanted to learn more about the politician's side of communication and how they get their message across and how they interact with their constituents in private and public way.

## **February**

At the very start of this month, I met with Eugene to discuss my project survey and the questions asked. Most of the questions I asked he was happy about, with small changes to phrasing in two questions. He also recommended areas where I could add more questions. I reviewed the survey and firstly gave it to my sister to answer, she pointed out some areas of questions that needed to be clarified e.g. a question in which the respondent must type an answer, this must be clarified and if the respondent has nothing else to add they can simply type 'none' in the required field.

I sent out the survey once I was happy with all the questions asked. I firstly sent these to my fellow students, to my friends, family and extended family. I also shared the survey on social media and encouraged them to share the survey to get maximum impact, I emphasised that if the respondent is not an Irish citizen, they should answer the survey as if they were and Irish citizen entitled to vote here.

After a week I got a total of 109 respondents with a comprehensive result in most of the questions. During that week sent out an email to a number of sitting TDs asking if they would like to participate in an interview with me to help elicit requirements for my college project. One of the first respondents was Brid Smith, a TD for People Before Profit, her staff member replied saying that she would be delighted to participate in an interview. I responded with recognition and thanks for the willingness to participate and asked what date and location would suit her best to conduct the interview.

The 19<sup>th</sup> of this month was agreed by Brid Smith and myself to meet, the week leading up to the interview I created a number of questions to put to Ms Smith and I met with Eugene to review. The questions were reviewed and authorized and I met Brid on the day and time arranged.

## **March**

I reviewed the answers given to me by Brid Smith in the interview, the interview went well but the answers were slightly less comprehensive than I was expecting. However, this was my first interview and therefore a big learning experience.

At the start of this month, I got a late response by another member of staff of a TD, Minister of Education Richard Bruton's parliamentary assistant got back to me in relation to my request for an interview to help elicit requirements for my college project. The parliamentary assistant said that the Minister would be more than happy to participate in the interview, I got back the parliamentary assistant and thanked them for their response and for the Minister's willingness to participate. We arranged an interview for the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month.

I was quite busy with assignments due for this month and therefore did not have enough time to think of new questions from my last interview with Brid Smith, I therefore used the same questions but marked extra add on questions if a particular response was given to certain questions. I met the Minister for Education on the date arranged and the interview was a lot longer than the previous interview with a more comprehensive response given to my questions, I was a lot more relaxed after knowing what to expect from the last interview. The Minister was very generous with his time and I thanked him for the participation and that it would be a big help in my project.

This month I also started the booklet for the project showcase, I uploaded my LinkedIn profile photo and wrote a quick summary of my project, the technologies used, and uploaded this to a college database

## **Website**

The address for the website explaining the project can be found below.

<https://politigramproject.wordpress.com/>