

# Online Deliberation

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June 4, 2026

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammad looti (2026). *Online Deliberation*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=38386>

Online deliberation is a term associated with an emerging body of practice, research, and software dedicated to fostering serious, purposive discussion over the Internet. It overlaps with, but is not identical to, e-democracy.

Online deliberation is very interdisciplinary, and includes practices such as online consultation, e-participation, online deliberative polling, online facilitation, online research communities, interactive e-learning, civic dialogue in Internet forums and online chat, and group decision making that utilizes collaborative software and other forms of computer-mediated communication. Work in all these endeavors is tied together by the challenge of using electronic media in a way that deepens thinking and improves mutual understanding.

Open international conferences on online deliberation have been held at Carnegie Mellon University in 2003, Stanford University in 2005, and the University of California, Berkeley in 2008. The most recent conference was held at the University of Leeds, June 30-July 2, 2010. Attendees of the 2005 conference voted to create an international society for online deliberation, but no formal organization has yet been established. Other events of interest have been sponsored by the Online Deliberative Democracy Consortium.