



**The People Speak**

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# **The People Speak Participation Toolkit 2008**

*Tools for the world to take over itself*

**<http://thepeps.net>**

## ***Tools for the world to take over itself:***

*The People Speak Participation Toolkit* is a set of ideas, technologies and strategies we've developed for bringing people together to have conversations and make decisions in an open-ended and fun way. We create events, software and processes in which people are encouraged to express themselves, share ideas, and being as creative as possible. For example:

- **Who Wants to Be:** Using a simple computer-vision 'ask the audience' system, this spontaneous democratic show gets crowds of people to suggest ideas and then vote on *anything*: from how to spend a shared cash pot, to what the rules of the show should be!
- **Talkaoke :** Our hugely popular open-mic televisual talk-show, in which the host passes the microphone to anyone who wants to come and talk about whatever they want to talk about. Talkaoke gets people talking at festivals, brainstorming, conferences, consultations and more.

## ***Participation should be seriously fun.***

*The People Speak* events are accessible, engaging event formats that foster shared public spaces through public communication. We like ways of bringing people together that are easy to explain: a chat show, a public vote, or even a football kick-about. No instruction manual is required and everyone can get involved spontaneously. We think that people participating in everything from town planning to running cultural events is how the world should work!

## ***How we work***

All our formats are available for hire for events, festivals, local broadcast or Internet channels, training and education events. We are also always interested in the challenge of creating new *People Speak* projects for new situations and environments.

- email: [ms@thepeps.net](mailto:ms@thepeps.net)
- phone: Saul on 07941255210 or Mikey on 07961365375

## ***Working with us***

We have a fantastic team of highly skilled technologists, media producers, educators, strategists, programmers and creative people – and we are always looking for more.

if you have great ideas about how to get people speaking – please get in touch, or just come to one of our events.

## ***Who Wants to Be? - the 'ask the audience' game show***

*Who Wants to Be* enables large groups of people to make creative suggestions, discuss their ideas, and then vote on each step in a decision making process. From participatory budgeting to deciding on the design of a community mural, *Who Wants to Be* has been hugely successful at generating passionate participation, great entertainment and wonderfully innovative ideas.



Participatory budgeting in the Deptford Albany

### ***The Creativity of Crowds***



Mural design ideas from the people of Bow

Crowds don't just have wisdom. When diverse groups of people communicate, discuss and modify each other's ideas live, even the most controversial subjects can find highly creative compromises.

During one *Who Wants to Be* event titled '*Chapelfield of Dreams*', part of *Contemporary Art Norwich*, over 300 members of the public assemble in the much-loved but dilapidated *Chapelfield Gardens* to suggest improvements to all the ideas for renovation that had been contributed over a month of lively public consultation,

which *The People Speak* had done in collaboration with three local schools and colleges. The final decision: to showcase young talent on a newly renovated bandstand was immediately put into practice by some local beat-boxers.



Crowds get drawn into the voting in Norwich



The voting system picks a winner: Green!

### ***Who Wants to Be next?***

We are currently working on a 3 year Thames Gateway development in Basildon, using 3d visualisation of spaces undergoing public consultation for town planning, as well as integrating on-line voting and streaming of the *Who Wants to Be* event. We are looking for opportunities to develop and adapt it for all kinds of decision-making processes. If your community has a decision to make, and want a decision-making process that people will really get excited about, we can help you.

More information and videos of previous events are available on the website:

**<http://whowantstobe.co.uk>**

## ***Talkaoke - the flying saucer of chat***

During this dynamic, participatory talk-show, the host sits on a swivelly chair wielding the microphone and facilitating a flow of discussion about whatever the participants bring to the table.

The conversation is projected live from the table's internal broadcast system into whatever environment it lands in. Internet streaming capability also makes Talkaoke the perfect way to get everyone's points of view across to the world.



Talkaoke at the Tate Modern, London



Talkaoke at Earlham School, Norwich

### ***The agenda is – there is no agenda.***

Talkaoke is a great way to invite people to bring their own agenda to the table. Letting go and inviting people to decide what's relevant to them makes for spontaneous and inclusive entertainment, evaluation, facilitation and learning.

From youth training and enterprise events, to gallery openings, street corners, nightclubs and music festivals, Talkaoke is a tried and tested way of discovering what is on people's minds.

## ***New developments:***

Talkaoke is always developing new features and technologies. Talkaoke can now be mixed with live TV-style captions and 'tagged' with keywords, topics and visual cues from the 'net to let passers-by know the current subject of conversation and encourage them to join in. Tagging also enables participants to review their Talkaoke online, finding video clips about particular topics by keyword.

## ***Do your own Talkaoke.***

As more people use the 'net to broadcast local media, we are designing a training programme to train more hosts in more communities to use Talkaoke to stimulate debate about locally relevant issues and create exciting local radio and internet TV shows.

If you would like to train as a Talkaoke host, or you know someone that should - get in touch to find out about when the next training sessions will be held. We are also looking for partner organisations who are into public participation and would like to run their own Talkaoke. You can find out more about talkaoke and sign up for regular announcements and updates at the website: **<http://talkaoke.com>**



A young Talkaoke host wields the mic.



## ***One Night Grandstand: stadium for a night!***

One Night Grandstand infuses a normal kick-about with the media-rich glamour of Emirates Stadium or Stamford Bridge. Players can have a kick-about as normal, but add One Night Grandstand and the game is commentated, flood-lit, filmed, and projected onto stadium-style screens above the pitch, complete with stadium sound effects, live motion graphics and action replays.

### ***add the magic of commentary...***



BBC's Phil Parry training a new commentator

Each game, however formal or informal, is commentated live through the PA system by a dynamic and exciting football commentator. For the first One Night Grandstand, we had the good fortune to work with the brilliant Phil Parry of BBC London Sport.



One Night Grandstand, Bow,

### ***find some new talent...***

We are currently developing some workshops to train young commentators with different styles and influences than 'normal' commentary to begin commentating at many different levels of sport. If you would like to try being a commentator, or would like to talk about organising some workshops for your group or community, check the workshops page on the website.



A game in full swing, projections overhead.

We are now working on bringing One Night Grandstand to new areas. We are developing and refining the affordable technology that provides the sound effects, motion graphics, and action replays for One Night Grandstand into a package that can be developed and run by any group or community.

More information about the project, news and videos of previous events are available on the website: **<http://onenightgrandstand.co.uk>**

## Feedback from recent projects:

### *People we've worked with say:*

'Having worked with The People Speak for several years now I can confidently say that have developed some really great and innovative approaches for working in the public domain. They provide dynamic contexts that animate audiences and get people thinking outside of the box. Their work provides a refreshing take on contemporary culture that can stand alone outside of the confines of a gallery and other cultural Institutions.'

Emily Druiff : Peckham Space , Talking about our Peckham TV Project with Harold Offay

"The People Speak offers an extraordinarily innovative and technologically exciting approach to socially engaged public art that enables ordinary people to feel energised, excited and fully involved in the process. Our 'Chapelfield of Dreams' project in Norwich gripped 300 people, most of them under 25, for nearly four hours in an open air game of 'Who Wants To Be' that allowed them to imagine their own vision for the park. Highly recommended!"

Nicky Adamson, Arts Project Manager and Consultant, Director of The Garage, Norwich

"We've had the sorts of discussions that most youth workers would kill for!"

Sacha Edwards, Youth Worker, Circle Anglia Housing

### *Some links:*

Ed Gillespie's (Futerra) write-up of a recent Talkaoke: <http://www.futerra.co.uk/blog/328>

Or just google us! <http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Talkaoke> has a wealth of information.

### *The Press Say*

"This new concept in interactive entertainment looks set to sweep London's clubs and bars: bar-stool philosophy zapped up with a spot of chat-show glitz." (Evening Standard on Talkaoke)

"All over London hip young things are getting together for a heated debate. So check it out - go on it's good to talk." (Time Out on Talkaoke)

"...talkaoke could soon see off pool, live music and televised football as the nation's favourite pub pastime." (Radio 1 on Talkaoke)

"While broadcasters are being fined for misleading viewers over telephone voting, and enterprising art collective – The People Speak, has put together a show that promises the ultimate in public accountability: it allows the audience to decide to do whatever they want!" (The Guardian on 'Who Wants to Be'.