

# Instructions for using Polis

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## What is Polis?

Polis enables members to ‘discuss’ issues by sharing and ‘voting’ on ideas, opinions, reasons and proposals.

[Tom Atlee](#), the founder of the [Co-Intelligence Institute](#), describes Polis this way:

Polis might at first look like a fancy online opinion polling tool. But it can more accurately be described as an evolving, lively, artificially intelligent, interactive “suggestion box” that can realize consensus around a controversial question. It works like this: Dozens or thousands of participants submit short statements expressing their views on the question. They also respond to other participants’ statements with Agree, Disagree, or Pass.

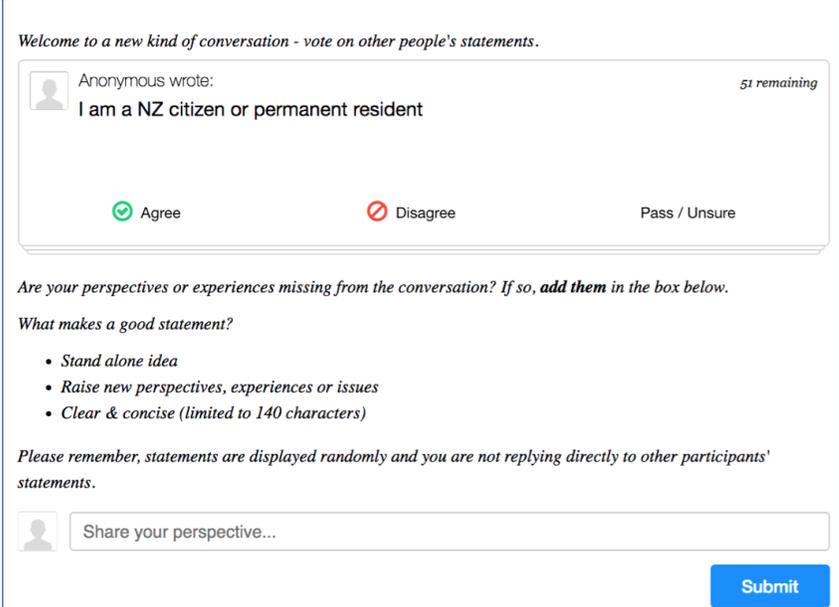
As hundreds of these statements and evaluations accumulate, a behind-the-scenes algorithm sorts participants into diverse clusters of like-minded responders. The algorithm then identifies “consensus statements” about which all the diverse clusters agree. At any time, participants can view graphics revealing the whole ecosystem of perspectives as it evolves. If they wish, they can create new statements that respond to what they see in that overview. Over time their statements tend to become more specific and practical.

After days or weeks of this activity, the results - both consensus statements and divisive statements - are usually turned over to a dialogue among diverse stakeholders, citizens or decision-makers to inform and stimulate their creative responses to the question. Activities can be organized through which views from polis exercises and dialogues feed back and forth into each other to generate deepening insight and/or specificity.

Polis has been used with populations ranging from 40 to 40,000 people. It is ideal for discovering unrealized possibilities in complex, conflicted situations involving widely diverse perspectives.

## Getting started

Polis works best on big screen devices such as tablets, laptops and desktop. However, if you are using a small screen device like a phone, scroll down until you find the Polis window - it'll look something like the image below.



Welcome to a new kind of conversation - vote on other people's statements.

Anonymous wrote: 51 remaining  
I am a NZ citizen or permanent resident

Agree  Disagree  Pass / Unsure

Are your perspectives or experiences missing from the conversation? If so, **add them** in the box below.

What makes a good statement?

- Stand alone idea
- Raise new perspectives, experiences or issues
- Clear & concise (limited to 140 characters)

Please remember, statements are displayed randomly and you are not replying directly to other participants' statements.

Two callout boxes with arrows pointing to the interface:

- Vote by clicking Agree, Disagree or Pass/Unsure.
- A new statement is presented after you vote.
- Add a statement for other people to 'vote' on.
- Click Submit.

There's a pane for:

- voting on statements, and
- a box for adding your own statements for other people to vote on.

## Voting

In the voting pane, you vote by clicking 'agree', 'disagree' or 'pass/unsure'. As soon as you vote, a new statement will be presented to you.

 Anonymous wrote: 51 remaining  
**I am a NZ citizen or permanent resident**  
  
 Agree       Disagree      Pass / Unsure

In the top right-hand corner of the voting pane, you can see how many statements remain for you to vote on. You don't have to vote on them all at the same time. When you return to the Polis, you will only be presented with statements you haven't voted on.

After you vote on the last statement, you will be presented with the option of providing an email address and being notified when there are new statements to vote on.

## Adding statements of your own

If you think something is missing from the Polis discussion - it might be an issue or a perspective or solution, or you might disagree with the reasoning in a statement - please correct that by typing in your own statement by clicking on 'Share your perspective...' and then clicking 'Submit' as shown in the image below.

*Are your perspectives or experiences missing from the conversation? If so, **add them** in the box below.*

*What makes a good statement?*

- *Stand alone idea*
- *Raise new perspectives, experiences or issues*
- *Clear & concise (limited to 140 characters)*

*Please remember, statements are displayed randomly and you are not replying directly to other participants' statements.*



The College's moderation will moderate your statement into the Polis as long as it is on topic, makes sense as a standalone statement and is significantly different from other statements in the Polis.

# Exploring opinion

If you are using a large-screen device - a tablet, a laptop, a desktop - the Polis window gives you a bit more information. In addition to being able to vote on and add statements, you can explore opinion in real-time, as it evolves.

Welcome to a new kind of conversation - vote on other people's statements.

Anonymous wrote: 26 remaining  
The environment (water quality, smart green economy, climate change) should be in Scoop's Top 10 issues for election 2017

Agree  Disagree  Pass / Unsure

Are your perspectives or experiences missing from the conversation? If so, add them in the box below.

What makes a good statement?

- Stand alone idea
- Raise new perspectives, experiences or issues
- Clear & concise (limited to 140 characters)

Please remember, statements are displayed randomly and you are not replying directly to other participants' statements.

Opinion Groups  
People who vote similarly are grouped. Click a group to see which viewpoints they share. [...more](#)

Majority Opinion Group: A B

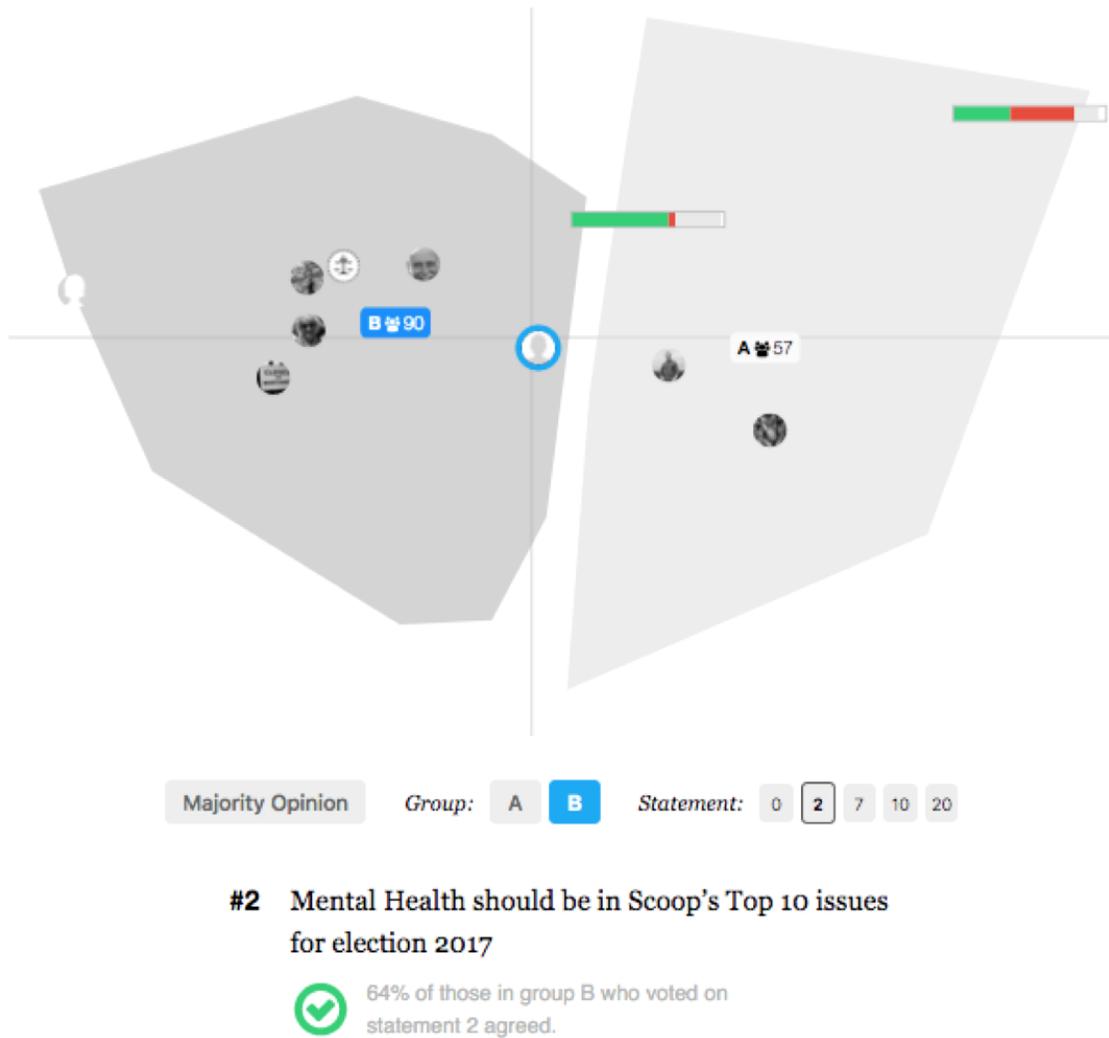
The visualization shows two distinct clusters of participants. Group B, on the left, is a larger, more irregularly shaped cluster containing 90 participants. Group A, on the right, is a smaller, more triangular cluster containing 57 participants. A blue circle highlights a participant within Group B.

**Annotations:**

- Vote by clicking Agree, Disagree or Pass/Unsure.
- A new statement is presented after you vote.
- Add a statement for other people to 'vote' on.
- Click Submit.
- Explore the opinions of participants.

Polis groups people who voted in similar ways together. In this case, there are 2 groups. The 57 people in Group A have similar opinions to each other but significantly different opinions from the 90 people in Group B. You can explore the differences by clicking on the group you are interested in or on the Group Identifier at the bottom of the window.

In the image below, Group B has been selected - its colour has changed to dark grey. The main statements that people in that group agreed or disagreed similarly with have buttons across the bottom. Click on a statement number to find out more. In this image, Statement 2 is selected and the statement and levels of support for it are displayed towards the bottom of the window.



There are also graphic summaries of voting in Group B and Group A. The green represents the proportion of people in that group who voted on Statement 2 and agree with it, the red is the proportion who disagreed and the grey, the proportion who passed. Lastly, you might see a small white segment, this is the proportion of people in Group B who did not vote on Statement 2.

You can see that people in Group A voted very differently from those in Group B - far fewer agreed with Statement 2 and many more disagreed.

In addition to this, Polis lets you explore statements that are broadly agreed by everyone - you do this by simply clicking the 'Majority opinion' button.

## Comeback every few days

Polis enables dynamic 'discussions'. Participants are encouraged to come back every few days to vote on new statements, review opinion as it is emerging and to add new statements for others to consider. In this way, you and the other participants can control and shape the 'discussion' and develop better, shared understandings of an issue and how it might be addressed.