



All About PlaceSpeak

November 2014

PlaceSpeak connects residents with their address online so they can voice their opinions in real life.

Claim your Place. Speak your Mind.

PlaceSpeak is a location based platform that is revolutionizing online public consultation. Our platform enables evidence-based decision-making by allowing residents to influence the process in an open, safe, secure and transparent manner. We encourages inclusive, informed and authenticated public participation in a moderated environment while producing dynamic feedback informed by geography.



Our goal is to bring power back to the people, but do so in conjunction with proponents. This will ensure that the directions and the decisions that we are making as a community are made on an informative basis. Because it is not anonymous, our platform encourages civility and mutual respect. This is what consultation is all about.

PlaceSpeak provides an innovative solution to an increasingly demanding public involvement process. Public consultation is required broadly as part of the democratic process. Governments at all levels directly or indirectly require consultation on a range of issues, most of which are geographically defined. We takes the guesswork out of online consultation by generating verifiable data to support public policy development and local decision-making. PlaceSpeak is a transparent service that contributes valuable information to enhance decision-making. As an online platform, we encourage 24/7 participation for those who are not able to—or interested in—attend public meetings in person. Once registered with PlaceSpeak, residents can choose to be notified of other consultations in their area.



What makes PlaceSpeak unique

PlaceSpeak provides tools for online public consultation that overcome many of the current shortcomings of traditional methods. Our unique feature is geo-authentication. In simple terms, we focus on participants geographic location. This means that in whatever form consultation takes—whether it’s polls and surveys or discussion forums—it is based on your neighbourhood, and your place within it. There is nothing else out there online that ties residential location to public engagement.

Depending on the nature of the consultation, proponents want to know that the people that they are talking to are the ones that are affected. For example, if it is a real-estate development that is going to affect people in a specific neighbourhood, the developer will want to know if they are hearing from residents in that area. Our location-based technology enables and encourages inclusive, informed resident participation in policy development and decision-making. By connecting participants’ online identities to the real world, PlaceSpeak enables people to genuinely affect outcomes of decisions in their neighborhoods.

When participants register they are geo-verified as being residents of their neighbourhood. By signing up and being verified, our members have proven that they are real people. Additionally, as they are authenticated by the platform; their comments are not anonymous. As a result, there is a disincentive to spam or post unproductive comments. So when people connect with topics, the consultations are more meaningful.

PlaceSpeak also leverages the “network-effect” to encouraging civic engagement, notifying residents of relevant consultations in their area and providing them with the opportunity to contribute direct, meaningful feedback.

PlaceSpeak
allows
participants to
enter authentic
conversations
with topic
proponents.





PlaceSpeak
promotes
efficiency and
effectiveness
by reducing
transaction
costs.

How PlaceSpeak works

PlaceSpeak works by authenticating people to their residential addresses. We use a simple—yet secure—digital identity verification process to authenticate participants to their residential address.

When participants sign up, they are asked to verify that they are who they say they are and live where they say they live. Once validated, they can connect with local issues to keep informed, speak your mind and know that you're making an impact. This allows residents to enter authentic conversations or consultations with topic proponents.

The Benefits of PlaceSpeak *For participants*

PlaceSpeak is a bi-directional mode of communicating with participants, generating meaningful consultation as it closes the gap between citizens and their government. Near real-time communication and freedom from the constrictions of time and place all lend to the ease of availability of information to you and decision-makers.

By connecting their digital identity to the real world, PlaceSpeak transforms the way residents interact with “location-based issues” through facilitating conversations relative to proximity. It enables people to connect with the decision-makers of their city and provide feedback to local governments, property developers, and location-based corporations on issues happening in their neighborhood.

PlaceSpeak provides residents with a chance to learn about, and speak their minds about issues that affect them locally. It provides a simple means of locating information regarding your neighbourhood, as well as large-scale issues that affect the entire city. It also provides a platform for residents to speak their mind regarding issues taking place in their neighbourhood.

With PlaceSpeak, residents can engage with topics from the comfort of their workplace or home, in a forum where they feel secure. This allows participants to make decisions based on shared goals and common interests, fostering a sense of community and ownership.



“Building community in Fort St. John is critical to our success. PlaceSpeak has made a meaningful and measurable difference in our capacity to engage our citizens, explore new ideas and generate valuable information for decision makers.”

– Lori Ackerman, Mayor, City of Fort St. John - “BC’s Energy Capital”

For proponents

PlaceSpeak is a cost-effective tool designed to help achieve local objectives, promote informed outcomes, and foster long-term engagement with the neighbourhood and community. PlaceSpeak offers a mechanism to effectively engage residents and participants digitally, bringing online activity from passive to active, and has the potential to reach a larger, more diverse, and representative sample of respondents.

Unlike closed panel discussions, email or surveys, PlaceSpeak builds instant trust through dynamic, real-time and transparent dialogue among verified participant. The online platform enables and encourages inclusive, informed participation, policy and decision-making. Proponents are able to create an issue for something they wish to foster awareness or discussion of. They can then connect and consult with residents within specifically defined areas to solicit feedback and seek authenticated support for their proposed projects.

PlaceSpeak is a value-added tool for proponents looking for a way to get residents to interact and engage with their websites and consultations. We offer the ability to increase traffic on organization websites and social media channels via 3rd party widget and social media integration.

Proponents can be any organization that is seeking to engage with the public on issues that are linked to geographical location; including community and transportation planning, infrastructure and resource development, school, community, parks & recreation, and rezoning and development permits. When you need to know what a community needs, wants, thinks or expects, PlaceSpeak informs your decision-making with real-time, geo-accurate data.





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We have identified four basic categories based on their use of conventional consultation methods:

1. Local governments: Includes cities, towns, villages, regional districts, unincorporated areas and tribal councils and the service areas within those organizations (e.g. engineering, planning, education, health & community services, emergency operations, police, fire).
2. Public and Regulated Agencies: Includes—but is not limited to—agencies, federal and provincial government ministries and crown corporations, public/private partnerships with responsibilities in the public transit, universities and colleges, emergency services, health, transportation, utility, housing, and insurance sectors.
3. Private-Sector Firms: Includes development corporations and other professional members of the real estate sector involved in land use decisions that require public consultation, resource sector & infrastructure management.
4. Location-based Organizations: Includes private/public entities including rate-payer groups and community-based organizations.

PlaceSpeak also offers the ability for third party applications and websites to verify the location of its users, through a geographic digital identity authentication application programming interface or GeoID API. Called **PlaceSpeak Connect**, this interface tests a user's address or location against a predetermined area of interest, producing geographically relevant results. This may be of interest to organizations who want to be informed by the location of third party survey respondents, or to authenticate online petition 'signatures.'



PlaceSpeak
is a Privacy
by Design
ambassador
- meaning
privacy is our
default setting.

Our Business Model

PlaceSpeak’s mission is to empower people everywhere to provide their verifiable feedback on public consultations, and we believe the best way to achieve that mission is by combining the values of a non-profit with the flexibility and innovation of a tech startup.

We’re a new kind of company: a “social enterprise,” using the power of business for social good. Like most companies, PlaceSpeak has a business model that allows us to grow rapidly and be financially self-sustaining, providing thousands of people with a free public consultation platform. But unlike many companies, our business is social good.

We fund our free public participation platform by charging proponents of consultations a license fee. We do not sell advertising and we do not sell our participants’ personal information. We recognize that privacy is mission critical. Of course, resident participants engage for free!

What about privacy?

Participant privacy matters—and PlaceSpeak protects it, by design. Participants’ address, phone number and email are never shared. Only the feedback they provide is available to the proponent. This provides verifiable and defensible data to whomever is conducting the consultation.

Our platform seeks to enhance participatory democracy, civic engagement, and improve the public consultation process, while preserving the privacy of our users.

Learn more at PlaceSpeak.com.

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