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# Develop your internet dream place [starter activity]

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In this activity, participants consider elements of an online space where their community can thrive. Depending on the goals of the group and workshop, facilitators can prompt participants to consider possible activities and ways of being in online spaces.

This is a visioning exercise and can lead into a discussion about the online spaces where participants are most often and the possibilities and limitations of using these platforms in alignment with the ideal space they have envisioned.

## Learning objective this activity responds to

- Come up with some strategies to create safe online spaces for themselves and their networks.

## Who is this activity for?

This activity is for people who participate in online spaces. It may be a good activity for a group to address redesigning a space that is not currently serving the group, or for a group who is establishing new online spaces together.

## Time required

**Total suggested time** for a standard workshop with 12-15 participants: **2.5 hours**

- 30 minutes for discussion on Why are we online? Why is it important to us?
- 45 minutes minutes for the group work
- 30 minutes for the presentations (4-5 groups at 5-6 minutes each)
- 45 minutes for debriefing and plenary discussion.

# Resources needed for this activity

- Flip chart paper
- Markers

# Mechanics

## Discussion: Why are we online? Why is it important to us?

Because we will be looking at the many ways that the internet is not designed for our safety or privacy, ground this conversation in the reasons participants are online. If you are familiar with the group already, you may be able to give examples of the work they are doing online. If you are less familiar with the group, ask the participants for examples of things they are doing online that are significant to them.

Make space for discussion about different facets of people's lives.

Some guide questions for this discussion:

- What spaces do you use online? What for?
- What are the limitations of the spaces that you use? It would be a good idea to tackle this per platform.
- Have there been incidents when you felt unsafe in the spaces that you use? Again, tackle this per platform / tool.

- Are you using different spaces for different aspects of your lives? How? And how do you decide which ones to use for which.

> **Facilitation Note:** It is a good idea to stress the point that the internet dream space is for personal and political / activist work. So, depending on how the participants are responding to the guide questions, challenge them to think about their personal and their activist work and their use of the internet.

Write down the highlights of the discussion.

# Small group activity

With the discussion in mind, form small groups (3–5 participants) to develop their internet dream place.

During the small group discussion, ask them to reflect upon and answer the following questions:

- What is it called?
- Why is this space significant?
- Who is it for? Who is it not for? How can you make sure?
- What kinds of things do people do in this space?
- What are the rules in this place?
- Who can join? Who cannot join?
- What will the space look like?
- How will people find each other in this place?
- What topics can people talk about in this place? What can they not talk about?
- Who has responsibility for managing the space?

Have the groups draw out this space as creatively as possible, and get them to prepare a creative presentation for the rest of the group.

# Shareback

To process the presentations, have the other participants ask clarification questions after the presentations, and list down more strategic/ethical/substantive questions, and hold those off until after all the groups have presented their ideas.

# Debrief

To end this learning activity, discuss the following:

- What are critical things to consider when designing safe spaces (go back to the insights from the Shareback).
- Safe for whom? Ourselves, but we are also part of others. So where are the potential moments where we have to care for our own safety as well as others and vice versa (you might want to check out Online Safety Rules for reference).
- What are some limitations to this online space? Can a space be totally “safe”? What may result in a shift in safety?
- In understanding #3, bring home the point that we need to understand who has control over the shaping of a space and how, how the space works, where the space is embedded within other spaces (link also between online and offline), and if safe spaces are important to us, how we can strategise/design them more consciously in our activism?

## Notes for the facilitator

1. Ask questions around other considerations in creating safe online spaces:
    1. Who are the ones that will threaten the safety of this space? Internally and externally? How can they protect the space?
    2. Where are the spaces hosted (i.e. national laws have an impact on whether or not these spaces can even exist, as well as redress if the space is abused)?
    3. Are there legal considerations in creating such a space for the target group?
    4. What are the responsibilities and liabilities of social media platforms when things go wrong? What are they in reality? And what should they be? You might want to read up on the Manila Principles on Intermediary Liability.
    5. What are the international and national human rights standards on privacy? What are the legal privacy considerations?
2. This could directly lead to an input/lecture on the principles of online safety, or a lecture on the privacy issues in social media.

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