



Issues DemTools Manual



Introduction

Information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) are powerful tools for organizing and advocacy. The Issues platform was launched as part of DemTools, NDI's Democracy Toolkit. DemTools provides basic and easy-to-use solutions for common technical problems in the democracy and human rights space that are accessible to programs that lack funding for sophisticated software development. Of course, the right political and program factors still need to be in place, along with adequate funding for implementation and partner training.

The Issues platform was originally developed by the NDItech team to bridge the communication gap between governments and their citizens. The vision for the tool is that it will be used by diverse partners (both political and civil) to outline party and candidate stances on key issues, and identify the issues that are of most interest to their constituents. The Issues platform allows political candidates to present their positions on key issues via text, recorded online videos and audio clips, while it allows citizens the opportunity to ask candidates questions about their political platform in the same formats. By engaging in such dialogue and sharing statements via social media, voters can more directly connect with their political leaders, opening new avenues for strengthening transparency and accountability.

A program making use of the Issues DemTool provides civic and political organizations with the opportunity to hone their media skills, tailoring brief video responses to common questions for an online audience. While this platform is relatively inexpensive to set up, understand that quality content creation and promotion will prove very time-consuming.

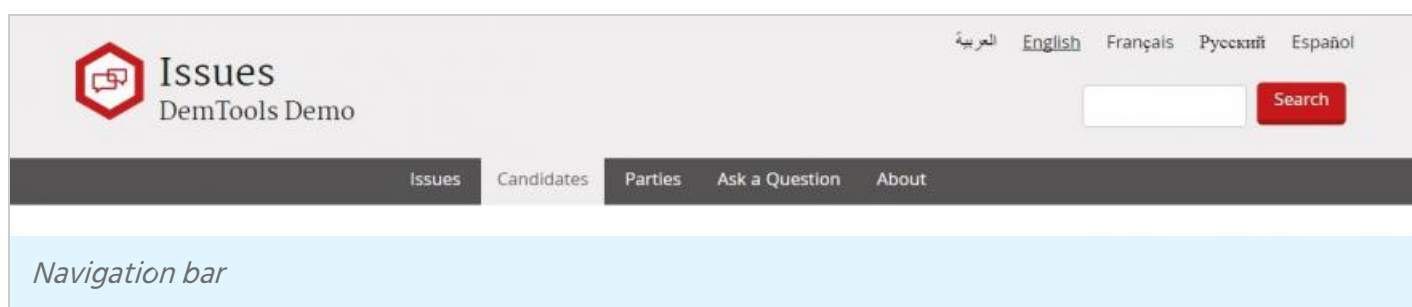
This manual is intended to outline the basic functions of the Issues DemTool and

provide step-by-step instructions on how NDI partners and field organizers can best utilize the platform to better foster civic debate. For more information on using the Issues DemTool effectively in a particular context, please consult our Program Guide.

Overview of Features

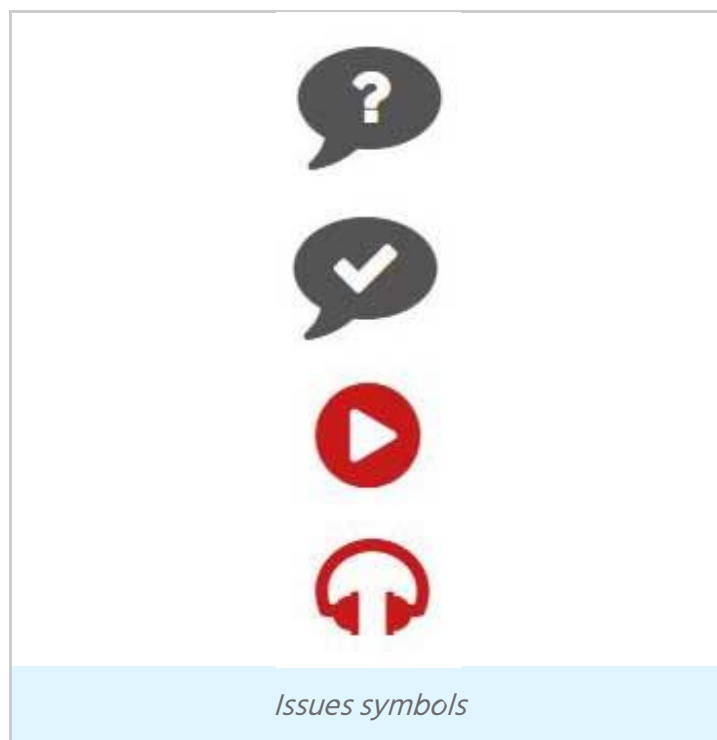
The Issues DemTool presents several options for driving engagement between citizens and political candidates. The main features of the platform are displayed as five tabs on the homepage. Those tabs include the following, which are discussed in more detail in the [Navigating the Site](#) section of this manual:

- The Issues tab categorizes citizen questions based on issue topics, such as women’s health or youth inclusion. Visitors can view recordings of a candidate describing their platform and provide comments in response.
- The Candidates tab provides the name, photo and party affiliation of all candidates running in an election and engaging with citizens using the Issues platform. The tab allows searching and filtering, so that visitors can easily find the information they want on specific candidate stances.
- The Parties tab provides general information about the party to which political candidates belong.
- The Ask a Question tab provides a quick way for citizens to submit questions to political candidates via text, recorded video or audio clip.
- The About tab provides basic information about the Issues platform or the organization managing it.

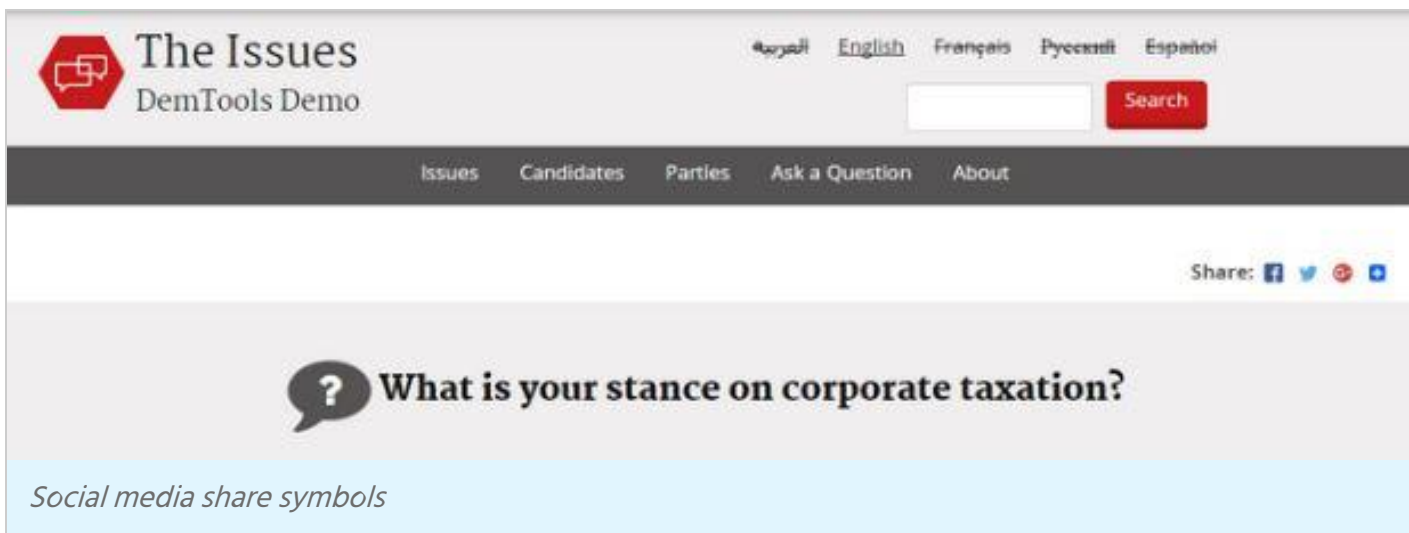


Issues Tab

By clicking on the Issues tab, visitors will be directed to a page that categorizes political issues by topic. Visitors are able to sort these issues alphabetically. They can also sort issues by most questions submitted (by citizens) and most questions answered (by candidates) on that topic. When a topic is selected, you will see a list of questions submitted by citizens, each denoted with a symbol of a question mark in a speech bubble. You will also see a list of answers submitted by political candidates, each denoted with a symbol of a checkmark in a speech bubble. Questions and answers can be submitted as text, audio clips or YouTube and Vimeo videos, which are denoted with a symbol of a play button and SoundCloud audio clips, which are denoted with a symbol of headphones. Questions can also be shared via Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms.



Below, we can see a citizen has posed a question to the candidates about taxing corporations. The user can share this question over many forms of social media. Facebook, Twitter and Google+ are the three defaults, but many more channels are available by clicking the blue and white plus button to the right.



Candidates Tab

The Candidates tab displays the name, photo and party affiliation of candidates who are running in an election and engaging with citizens via the Issues platform. By clicking on the name or photo of the candidate, you can navigate to their profile page, which provides a summary of their political platform and ways that citizens can connect with them via social media. Alternatively, by clicking on the party's name listed below the candidate's name, you can navigate to their respective party's profile page, which provides a summary of the party, how citizens can connect with it via social media, a list of party members, and a summary of recorded answers that members have uploaded in response to citizen questions.

Below, we see a profile created for a fictional candidate. We see his photo, party affiliation, a brief summary of his career, links to connect with her outside of the Issues platform, and answers he's supplied to citizens' questions.

Jackson Smelter

Party: Nationalist Republic Party

I stand for an aggressive foreign policy and total industrialization.

[Read full summary](#)



Answers

Sort by

Most Recent ▾



Question: Does the private sector need more regulation?



Question: Does the legislature need a quota for female members?



Question: How should we educate our children?

Candidate page

Parties Tab

The Parties tab provides general information about the parties using the Issues platform to connect with citizens. By clicking on a party logo, you can navigate to the party's profile page, which provides a summary of the party and its platform, how citizens can connect with the party via social media, a list of party members, and a summary of recorded answers that members have uploaded in response to citizen questions.

Peace and Justice Party

The P&J Party fights to spread peace and justice worldwide.

[Read full summary](#)

Connect: [Website](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)



Party Members



Langston Devereaux



Alanna Mtembe

Party page

Ask a Question Tab

The Ask a Question tab provides a quick way for citizens to submit questions to political candidates. Questions can be submitted as text, by YouTube or Vimeo video, or via a SoundCloud audio clip. Questions can also be shared via Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. When posting a question, citizens are given the option to provide a description of their question and upload a media file of their choosing. They will be asked to specify what topic or issue their question corresponds to before their question can be saved and added to a moderation queue for the site administrators to approve.

Create Question

Share:

Language

Arabic

Your question *

Description

More information about text formats

- No HTML tags allowed.
- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Topics *

Topic 1
Topic 2
Topic 3
Women's Health

Media

Submit either a video or an audio clip.

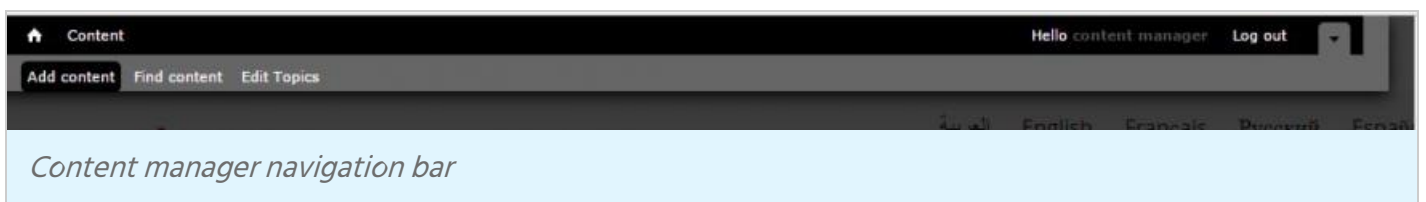
Video

Ask a Question page

Content Management

An administrator of the Issues platform is a person who is responsible for managing information on the platform, including determining who has access to create, modify or delete content. The following sections of this manual will expand on the content manager user role and corresponding permissions.

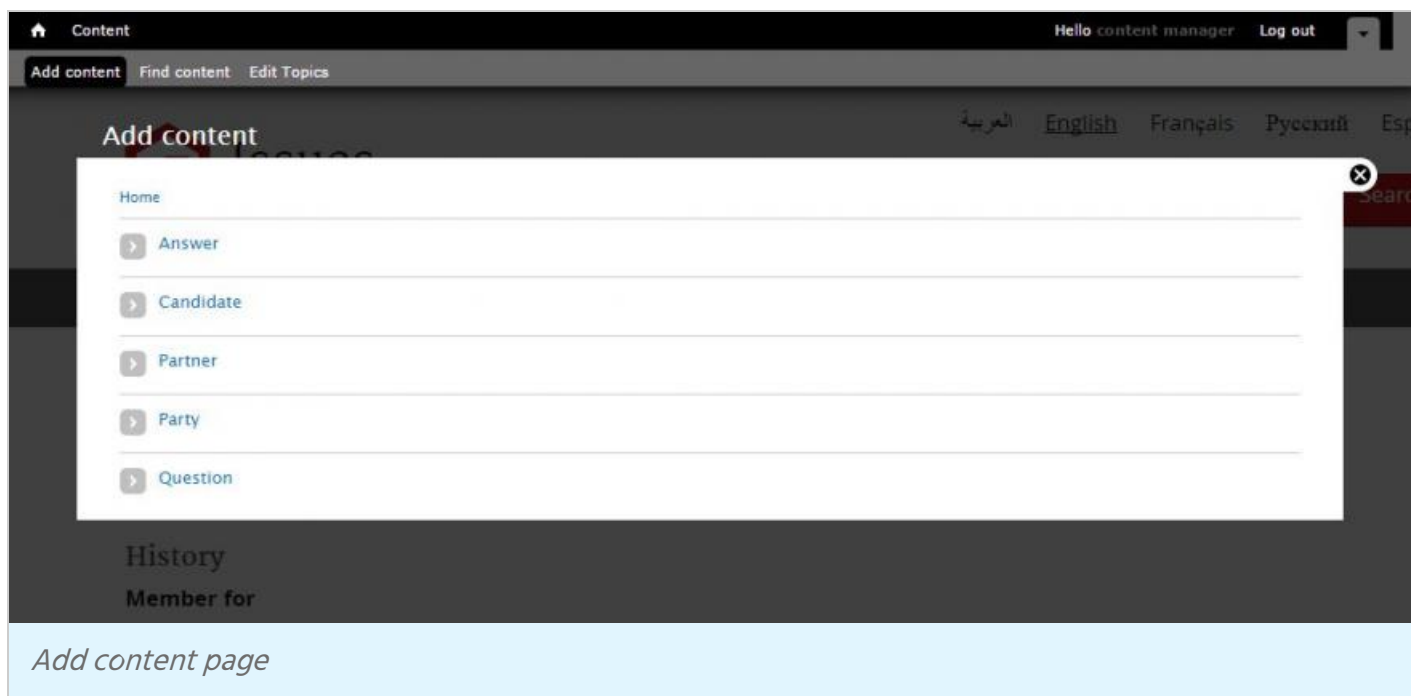
When logged in as a content manager, you will see the navigation bar shown below.



By clicking on Content next to the homepage icon you will see an overview of all the content that has been added to the Issues platform. You can also access this overview

by clicking Find Content, located below the homepage icon. The content is organized by title, type (i.e. answer, question, candidate, party), author, status (i.e. published or unpublished) and language, all of which can be edited or deleted from this page.

To add content to the five tabs displayed on the homepage, click on Add Content, which is located in the navigation bar under the homepage icon and populate the required fields as prompted.



As the content admin, you are tasked with publishing and removing posts on the website. Click on Find Content to access this panel and view all submitted content. You can manage the posts by checking the corresponding box and selecting the desired action in the highlighted drop-down menu and clicking Update.

The screenshot shows the 'Content' management page in a Drupal-based system. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Add content', 'Find content', and 'Edit Topics'. Below this, there are tabs for 'CONTENT' and 'COMMENTS'. A search bar is visible on the right. The main content area features a 'Home' link and an 'Add content' button. A filter section titled 'SHOW ONLY ITEMS WHERE' allows users to filter by status, type, and language, with a 'Filter' button. Below the filter is a table of content items.

TITLE	TYPE	AUTHOR	STATUS	UPDATED	LANGUAGE	OPERATIONS
Peace and Justice Party new	Party	admin	published	10/27/2016 - 16:20	English	edit delete
question	Question	Anonymous (not verified)	published	03/25/2016 - 10:02	English	edit delete
المستوفى الوطني للتبصر الطبية	Partner	admin	published	12/08/2015 - 20:07	Arabic	edit delete
Национальный фонд демократии (NED)	Partner	admin	published	12/08/2015 - 19:59	Russian	edit delete
La Fundación Nacional para la Democracia	Partner	admin	published	12/08/2015 - 19:58	Spanish	edit delete

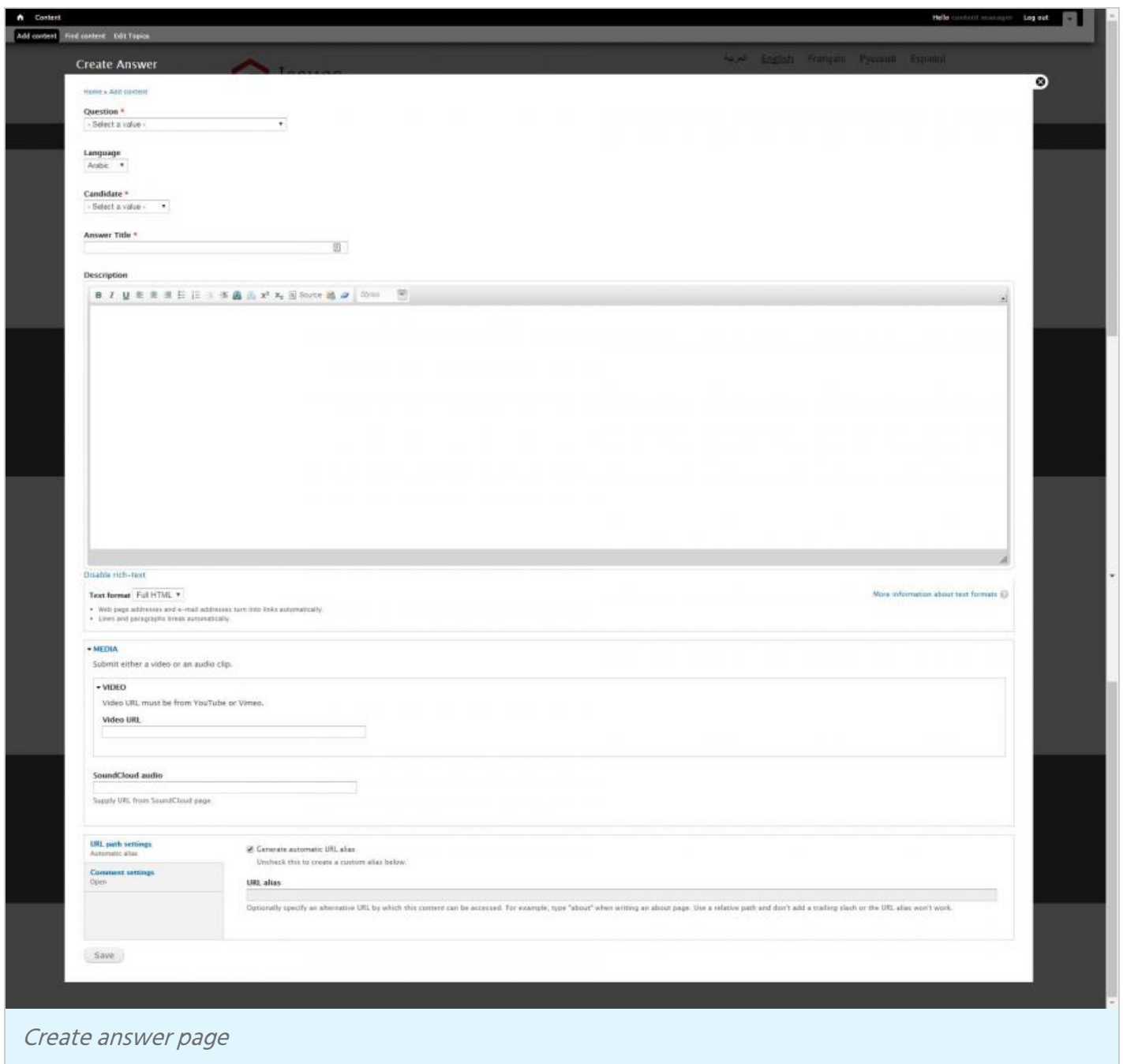
Find content page

For more information on how to administer content on the Issues platform, please see the [Drupal Resource Guide](#).

Adding an Answer

As an administrator, you may want to provide answers to questions that were submitted by citizens over different systems, such as social media, to the Issues platform. This can be done using the navigation bar. Click on **Content > Add Content > Answer** and then fill in each of the required fields before clicking "Save" at the bottom of the page.

You will be asked to select the question for which the answer was provided, in addition to the language in which the answer was provided and the public official it came from. You will also be asked to give the answer a title and given the option to add a short description. Media clips can be submitted as a YouTube or Vimeo video, as well as a Soundcloud audio clip.



Create answer page

Adding a Candidate

Adding candidates to the Issues platform allows website visitors to learn about the candidates that are running in an election. As an administrator, click on **Content > Add Content > Candidate** and then fill in each of the required fields before clicking “Save” at the bottom of the page.

You will be asked to select the language of your content, the first and last name of the candidate, their photo, party affiliation and provide both a short and long summary of their political platform. You will also be given the option to include website and social media links to their page, so that citizens can more easily interact with them.

Content Hello content manager Log out

Add content Find content Edit Pages

العربية English Français Pусский Español

Create Candidate

Home » Add content

Language
Arabic

First Name *

Last Name *

Photo *
Choose File No file chosen Upload
Files must be less than 2 MB.
Allowed file types: png gif jpg jpeg.
Images must be larger than 262x1 pixels.

Party *
- Select a value -

Short summary *

Disable rich-text
Text format: Full HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about text formats](#)

Long summary *

Disable rich-text
Text format: Full HTML

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

[More information about text formats](#)

Website

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Facebook page

Twitter page

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA LINK Show row weights

Title	URL
+	

The link title is limited to 128 characters maximum.

Add another item

URL path settings
Automatic alias

Generate automatic URL alias.
Uncheck this to create a custom alias below.

Custom settings
Closed

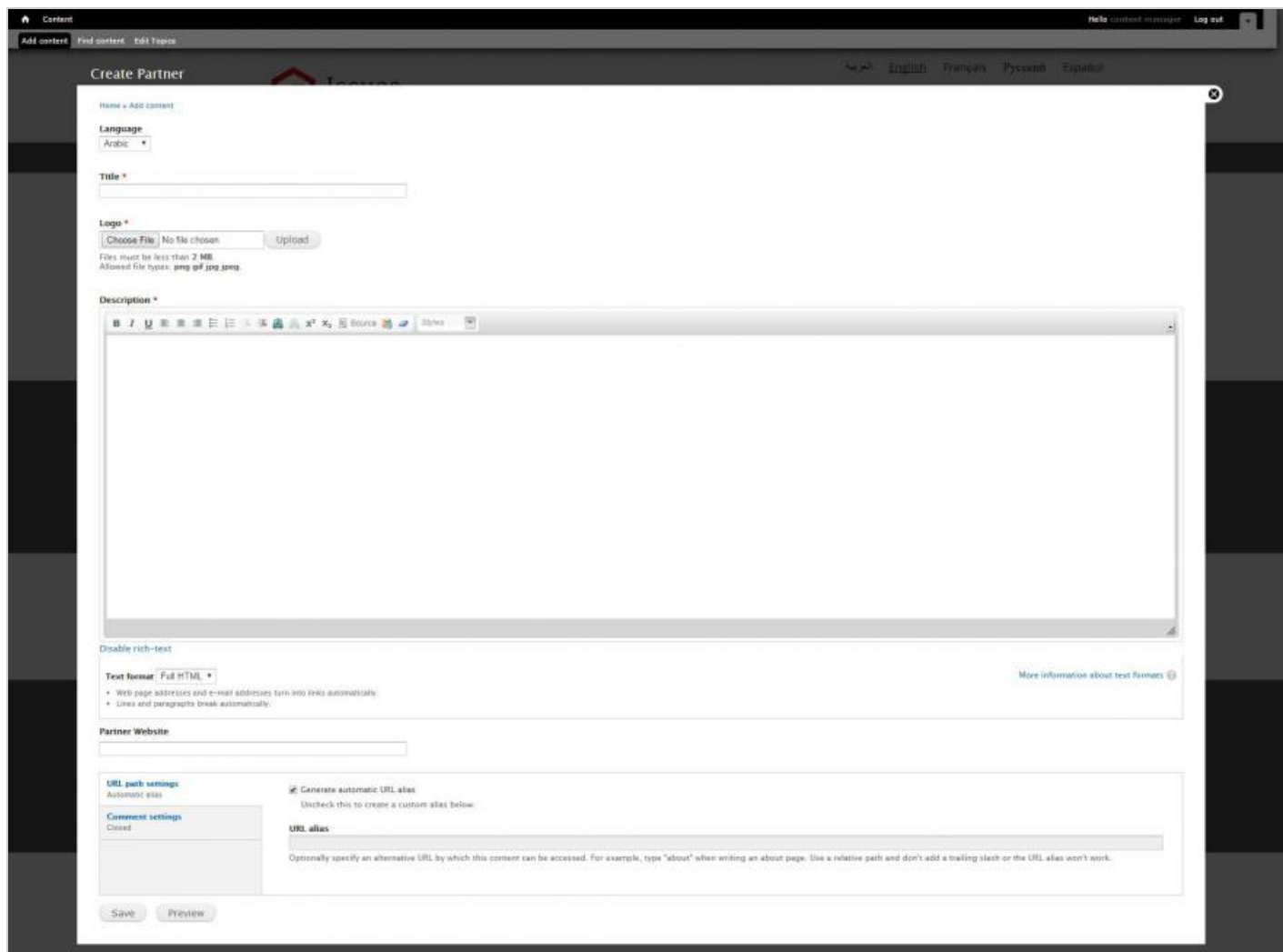
URL alias
Optionally specify an alternative URL by which this content can be accessed. For example, type "about" when writing an about page. Use a relative path and don't add a trailing slash or the URL alias won't work.

Save

Create candidate page

Adding a Partner

As an administrator, you may want to recognize the partners who are helping to facilitate a two-way conversation between citizens and elected officials using the Issues platform. By clicking on **Content > Add Content > Partner** from the navigation bar, you can add the name and logo of a partner, including a description of the work they do and a link to their website.



Create a partner page

Adding a Party

Adding political parties to the Issues platform allows website visitors to learn about a party's political platform, as well as the candidates that represent it. As an administrator, click on **Content > Add Content > Party** and then fill in each of the required fields before clicking "Save" at the bottom of the page.

You will be asked to provide the party's name and logo, in addition to a short and long descriptive summary. You will also be given the option to include website and social media links for the party.

Content Hello content manager Log out

Add content Find content Edit Types

Create Party

Home » Add content

Party Name *

Language

Arabic ▾

Logo *

Choose File No file chosen Upload

Files must be less than 2 MB.
Allowed file types: png gif jpg jpeg.
Images must be larger than 350x1 pixels.

Short summary *

B I U

Disable rich-text More information about text formats

Text format: Full HTML ▾

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Long summary *

B I U

Disable rich-text More information about text formats

Text format: Full HTML ▾

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

Website

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

Facebook page

Twitter page

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA LINK Show row weights

Title	URL
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
The link title is limited to 128 characters maximum.	
Add another item	

URL path settings:

Automatic alias Generate automatic URL alias
(Uncheck this to create a custom alias below.)

Comment settings

Closed

URL alias

Optionally specify an alternative URL by which this content can be accessed. For example, type "about" when writing an about page. Use a relative path and don't add a trailing slash or the URL alias won't work.

[Save](#)

Create a party page

Adding a Question

As an administrator, you may want to add questions that were submitted by citizens over different systems, such as social media, to the Issues platform. This can be done using the navigation bar. Click on **Content > Add Content > Question** and then fill in each of the required fields before clicking “Save” at the bottom of the page.

You will be asked to select the language in which the questions is being asked and given the opportunity to provide an accompanying description of the question. You will also be asked to select the issue topic that best characterizes the question being asked. Media clips can be submitted as a YouTube or Vimeo video, as well as a Soundcloud audio clip.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Question' form in the Issues platform. The form is titled 'Create Question' and has a navigation bar at the top with 'Add content', 'Find content', and 'Edit Topics'. The form includes the following fields and sections:

- Language:** A dropdown menu set to 'Arabic'.
- Your question:** A text input field.
- Description:** A rich text editor with a toolbar and a large text area.
- Disable rich-text:** A checkbox.
- Text format:** A dropdown menu set to 'Full HTML'.
- Topics:** A dropdown menu set to 'Women's Health'.
- MEDIA:** A section with a heading 'Submit either a video or an audio clip.' and two sub-sections:
 - VIDEO:** A section with a heading 'Video URL must be from YouTube or Vimeo.' and a 'Video URL' input field.
 - SoundCloud audio:** A section with a heading 'Supply URL from SoundCloud page.' and a 'SoundCloud audio' input field.
- Answered?:** Radio buttons for 'No' and 'Yes', with 'Yes' selected.
- URL path settings:** A section with a heading 'Automatic alias' and a checkbox 'Generate automatic URL alias' which is checked. Below it is a 'URL alias' input field.
- Comment settings:** A section with a heading 'Open' and a checkbox.
- Save:** A button at the bottom of the form.

Create a question page

Acknowledgements

The National Democratic Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide. NDItech assists NDI partners and staff members around the world integrate technology into democracy assistance programming in innovative and sustainable ways.

The Democracy Toolkit, DemTools, is designed to provide easy-to-use webapp solutions empowering civic groups and political institutions to be more effective at their organizing and communication for democracy and human rights.

The development of the tools described in this manual was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The Issues DemTool manual was written by Meron Menwyelet with contributions from Christine Schoellhorn, Leslie Dudden, Mahvash Taqi and others. Of the many people who contributed to this project, we would like to specially thank Michael Murphy and his team for their hard work, patience and collaborative spirit. Google's excellent YouTube Townhall was the inspiration behind this project.

To learn more about DemTools, please follow us on Twitter at @NDI, @NDItech and @DemTools. You can also read more about the DemTools by visiting <http://dem.tools>.

This content is available under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License. You are free to: Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format; Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. The license terms include: Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use; ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original; No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.

Copyright 2018