

FUND MANUAL Version 4.2

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this handbook

This handbook is for people using the playdecide.eu webtool to develop new Decide kits. It is an evolving, working document: we hope it captures the learning from our experience so far.

We also hope that some of the users of the webtool will go beyond current practice, tweaking the format for their own ends. We hope furthermore that we will be able to include such experiments in future editions of this handbook.

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1.2 The history of Decide

The history of the Decide discussion tool falls into three phases:

1. 2000 – 2004: Democs

The Democs conversation kit was developed in the UK by **nef** (the New Economics Foundation) a London-based think-tank. The aim of the kit was to make it possible for people to organise their own events to discuss and have their say on complex public policy topics. A range of kits were developed for use in public deliberation in the UK, such as for the 2003 *GM Nation?* national debate, where Democs was the only element that did not require people to travel to public meetings. Democs kits were developed on a wide range of topics from affordable housing and climate change to sustainable enterprise and xenotransplantation

2. 2004 – 2008 – Playdecide.org

The Decide project, with funding granted by the EU’s FP6 stream, adapted Democs for use across Europe. Decide built on Democs in a number of ways but a strong ‘family resemblance’ remains. Decide kits on seven topics are made available on a website (currently visible at http://www.playdecide.org/index_old.html) which also allows users to upload their results. 20,000 kits are downloaded in the first two years. Decide was

aimed primarily at science centres across Europe, but has been used by many other organisations as well, such as universities, publishers and government agencies.

3. 2009 onwards – Playdecide.eu

With further funding from FP7, the FUND project is working to create a web tool which lets users create new Decide kits and adapt existing ones for their own purposes. The web tool is part of a wider project to build city-networks of science discussions and actions.

1.3 The elements of a Decide kit

Most Decide kits are built around a standard set of components - information, issue and story cards – and a standard set of processes – selecting cards, finding patterns and recording views. However, there is also a great deal of scope for customisation.

The standard elements of a Decide game

The design of Decide kits varies widely, but some elements remain constant. These elements are:

Numbers and context

Decide is generally played by 4-9 people (5-7 works best) sitting around a table. (A pile of coats has been used, but this cannot be recommended!) For larger events, you can run many games simultaneously on separate tables.

A Decide discussion is for everybody – not just experts. It doesn't require prior knowledge of the issues or other sources of information like expert witnesses.

The standard duration of a game is around 90 minutes, though it can be reduced to as little as 30.

The cards

The heart of the Decide kit are the cards which contain information, opinions and ideas about the topic. Generally, the cards are divided into three sets:

- story cards, which show how individuals are affected by the issue (typically 70 words or 500 characters);
- information cards, which give the basic facts (typically 30 words or 250 characters);
- issue cards, which raise issues for people to think about and to agree or disagree with as they choose (also 30 words or 250 characters).

The processes in a Decide game:

1. Selecting the most important cards

The cards are used to create a shared pool of information. However, there are too many cards to work with all of them. So, in turn, each set of cards is dealt out to the participants, who choose one or two cards that will best help them discuss the topic. They do this individually with the information and issue cards, usually as a group in relation to the story cards.

2. Finding Patterns

Once the pool is selected, players explore it to make sense of the information in order that they can develop or refine their opinion. The cards that have been selected are usually put in the middle of the table. The members of the group discuss the topic. As they do so, they notice connections between the cards, put such cards together and gradually form clusters of cards. Usually there are between 1 and 4 of these. Each cluster represents a key theme or argument. The details of the cluster, such as its name and the cards in it, are noted on a cluster card to provide a record.

3. Recording views

The final stage does not involve the cards. How this works depends on the context of the exercise and so what the organiser wants to find out. Most often, though, there are around four ready-made policy positions. People vote on each. They then try to construct a shared position that they can all live with. This may be one of the ready-made positions, a combination of elements from more than one position, or new.

Variations

The table below shows some of the main variations in the design of the Decide kits.

Element	How it varies	What to think about
Format	It can be downloaded (as with playdecide) or printed	The more kits you need, and the more professional you want it to look, the stronger the case for getting it printed.
Time taken	Nef's climate change kit has instructions for a 30 minute as well as a 90 minute version. There's no point in having less than 30 minutes, and even that is barely worthwhile. Two hours is about the upper limit.	The less time there is, the less discussion there tends to be, so the less opportunity that people have to work through their ideas. If people are going to have significantly less than 90 minutes to use the kit, you can simplify things by reducing the number of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets of cards • cards in each set • information and issue cards they choose from two to one.
Is there a	Sometimes, especially for	

<p>facilitator?</p>	<p>larger events, there is an outside facilitator. They will often ask one person at each table to act as dealer and timekeeper. Obviously, if a small group is using a kit in someone's home, usually one member of the group will lead the process.</p>	
<p>Where there isn't a facilitator, how does the leader know what to do?</p>	<p>Most people can lead a Decide event if they have taken part before. But what if they haven't? It's quite hard to look through the kit and get a feel for what happens when. Three solutions to this are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. kits downloaded from playdecide.eu have 2 instruction pages that describe all the steps of a session; 2. nef's Who Sees What kit on electronic patient records uses a film of a Democs game on the topic – see http://whoseeswhat.org.uk/ 3. Eurordis has created a short film on how to play Decide: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Yti2qMkFV4 	<p>Can you arrange for everyone who leads an event to take part in Decide beforehand, or do you need to find some other way to support them?</p>
<p>How many sets of cards?</p>	<p>Decide always has cards in two formats – longer story cards and shorter info/issue cards.</p> <p>It is usually worthwhile to divide the shorter cards into two sets: information and issue cards, to highlight what is fact and what is opinion. People need to be sure that they can trust the information cards. Equally, they should be clear that the</p>	<p>This depends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much time you have • how much material you have to draw on <p>Emphasise the difference between the two categories by having information cards as statements and issue cards as questions or quotes.</p>

	<p>issue cards are not necessarily to be taken at face value and that they are there to be challenged.</p> <p>However, this is not always the case. In a nef kit on empowerment we combined the information and issue cards into a single set of 40 cards.</p>	
How many cards in each set?	<p>There should be enough story cards for the likely number of participants, so there are usually eight or nine.</p> <p>There tend to be between 24 and 40 each of the information and issue cards.</p>	How many information and issue cards you have will depend partly on how much material you have and partly on how much time you think your Decide events will last.
What are the story cards about?	<p>They are usually about individuals and how they are affected by the issue. They often feature a dilemma, to encourage the reader to think about it. They sometimes include a question. (See Claire and Patricia's stories in section 3.2 below, 'Drafting the cards', for examples.)</p> <p>Sometimes the stories are about real people, sometimes they are based on real people but the names are changed, and sometimes they are completely fictitious.</p> <p>Not all the stories are primarily about people. In one kit on synthetic biology are about the dilemmas thrown up by developments such as a new treatment for malaria.</p>	<p>Concentrate on getting a good balance of stories. What is the range of issues that you want to cover?</p> <p>It can be valuable to use the story cards to highlight the conflict between different considerations – for example a kit on genetically modified food could have a farmer who wants to use less pesticide and an environmentalist who is concerned about bio-diversity.</p>
What are the short cards about?	There is a standard division between the more factual information cards and the	What cards are relevant to what you are trying to achieve? For instance, a kit to help

	<p>more speculative issue cards, which often feature people's attitudes and opinion, on which participants in Decide can make up their own minds. But there may also be differences of emphasis. For example, in some cases the first set is mainly about the problem, while the second set concentrates on possible solutions.</p>	<p>decide what a local council's climate change strategy should be had different issue cards from another one to help individuals to work out what their response to climate change should be.</p>
<p>Whether people can share their cards</p>	<p>It is simplest if people just choose, say, two information cards from the hand that they have been dealt. But sometimes people are invited to put their discards in the middle of the table for others to pick up and perhaps choose instead of their original choices.</p>	<p>The second version will get the cards read by more people. But it is an additional instruction for the facilitator/dealer to explain. It also takes more time.</p>
<p>If the kit is being used in different areas, should you adapt the cards?</p>	<p>The nef kit on electronic patient records has two versions of 16 of the cards , one set for use in Scotland and the other for use in England. This reflects the different systems in place in the two countries.</p> <p>The kit on Climate Change has been localized in 4 regions (South America, North America, Europe and Australasia). In each kit there are about 5 short cards and 3-4 story cards that differ.</p> <p>On the other hand, the same kit on synthetic biology is being used in Scotland and in England, because there are no significant relevant differences.</p>	<p>Participants like to feel that a kit is relevant to them. But too many variations create enormous problems in terms of making sure that the right place has the right kit.</p> <p>Provided the kit feels relevant, experience suggests that people will contribute local knowledge (e.g. by using the blank cards) to supplement the kit.</p>
<p>Whether to have titles for the cards</p>	<p>On the PlayDecide website, you can leave the card title box empty if you don't want</p>	<p>Titles have the advantage of summarising the card, so helping recall. The</p>

	titles.	corresponding disadvantage is that the title might impart a meaning different from the one that the participant would otherwise have made.
Whether to have pictures	<p>The Decide kits have pictures on the story cards only. They are royalty free stock photos.</p> <p>Democs kits usually have pictures on the information and issue cards as well. Sometimes there is a separate picture for each card, sometimes a collage of four pictures which appears on all the cards in a set.</p>	<p>Whether to have pictures, and, if so, how many and what sort, depends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much time you have • how much money you have • the topic. With the nef kits on synthetic biology or electronic patient records, it would not have been possible to find individual pictures for all the cards. <p>Remember the power of images. They may introduce bias. For instance, no amount of pictures of happy animals will offset the effect of an animal with say its brain cut open. Even using portrait pictures, a lot can be implied with facial expressions.</p>
Elements of the kit apart from the cards and the mechanism for voting	<p>Kits may include all or some of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A box – to put everything in • An instruction booklet • Conversation guidelines (either in the instructions or on a separate card) • Yellow cards (for people to wave if they are confused or think the guidelines are being broken) • Challenge cards, to stimulate conversation • A placemat for each participant, which introduces the issue and has spaces for 	<p>The general point is that the more different elements there are, the more complicated the kit is to understand. This matters less if there is a facilitator, but it does matter if someone new to Decide has to work out how all the elements fit together.</p> <p>Against this, most of these elements provide added structure which makes it easier for whoever is running the game.</p> <p>Other factors to consider in making this trade-off are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How contentious is the topic? The more contentious it is, the

	<p>people to place their cards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank cards on which people can write facts or ideas to add to the pre-prepared cards • Feedback forms on which people can say what they made of the event and of the Decide kit. 	<p>greater the case for the conversation guidelines and the yellow cards in particular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural factors. We found for example that the yellow cards were almost never used in Finland, but all the time in Italy!
How people vote	<p>There are two ways to vote on the policy positions. Usually people rate options by saying whether they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree with any position, • can live with it, • disagree with it, or • don't know/abstain. <p>They can also put the positions in order – rank them.</p> <p>For a complex topic, it may be useful to have more than one policy question to avoid conflating multiple issues. This was tried with the kit on Electronic Patient Records, where four separate questions were asked, each with four policy options.</p>	<p>There's not much to choose between rating and ranking. The first version introduces the idea of being able to live with a policy position, which leads naturally on asking the group to construct a position that all the members of the group can live with. The second can be more easily summed up numerically.</p> <p>Voting on more than one question can be time-consuming. If you do decide to go with multiple issues, it may be helpful have a simple 'first choice' voting system but this will mean getting much less rich views on each issue.</p>
Alternatives or additions to voting	<p>A kit on synthetic biology has five ready-made policy positions, with space for the group to add a sixth of their own. It also has a second voting form, with copies for everyone, on which people are asked to vote on which applications of synthetic biology are acceptable.</p> <p>The climate change kit designed to help people work out their responses to the issue has a simple individual action planning</p>	<p>Think hard about what your purpose is and what you want to find out. Don't make things too complicated.</p>

	sheet.	
Adapting the kit for particular groups	<p>Nef has adapted the basic Democs kit for two particular groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools – we made the kit look more like an educational resource, with clipart on the cards • People with learning difficulties. Here, the stories cards were replaced by videos of actors, the number of information and issue cards were reduced and the language was changed to an 'easy-read' format. 	<p>Inevitably, making the kit more accessible means simplifying some issues or reducing the amount of content that's included. There is a trade-off, therefore between accessibility and accuracy.</p>

1.4 The steps in creating a kit

The procedure that we use most often is:

- Design the kit in general. Decide where you stand in relation to the variables above.
- Write a 'long list' of possible cards.
- Get people, preferably representing as many perspectives as possible, to vote on which they like.
- Use the votes to put together a draft set of cards.
- Edit them to produce a final draft. Check for bias. Check that you have covered all the angles.
- Test them out and revise them if necessary.
- Design the elements
- Produce and distribute and distribute.

There is more detail in section 3.

1.5 Two examples

In 2006 the Decide team created a new kit on "HIV/AIDS and criminal responsibility". The purpose of the kit was to facilitate discussions on the issue, rather than to address an actual, specific policy process.

To develop the kit, the team used about 10 documents and reports from organizations such as UNAIDS, the Dutch and UK HIV associations, and advocacy groups, covering both specific issues related to HIV and criminal liability and general information and statistics about HIV/AIDS. The information

and issue cards were generated from these documents; the story cards were actual cases: because of the notoriety of such cases, the team decided to use the real names of the people involved. The policy positions were initially developed based on the current legal frameworks on the subject in different parts of the world at the time the kit was developed.

The initial long list of cards had more than 100 items. These were voted by a group of 6 people which included science communicators and HIV prevention professionals. We made sure that both HIV positive and negative people reviewed the cards.

The kit was tested several times before reaching the final stage. The policy positions were the most difficult aspect to finalize, and the testing phase was very useful to generate policies that could be easily formulated and yet specific enough. The whole process took about two months.

In 2009 Eurordis, the European network of rare diseases, developed 4 kits on genetic counselling, neonatal screening, orphan drugs and cross border health care. These topics were selected with a consultation process which included patients' organizations, health care providers, and policy makers.

The content for the kit was initially developed by a science communication professional, who had contact with about 15 people who took part to the consultation process and who provided several documents covering the subject. It took 6 weeks to process the information in the documents and prepare a list of about 80 cards, which were then voted by a smaller group of 8 people.

Also in this case the policy positions were the most difficult to finalize, and the testing phase was essential for this.

The process to develop the four kits took in total 4 months.

2. PLANNING THE PROJECT

2.1 *Our advice*

The best piece of advice that we can give is to clarify your purpose, produce a prototype and test it. The FUND web platform makes developing a prototype very easy.

2.2 *What is your purpose?*

Take the time to understand the project at the start. This may involve reining yourself and others in when you are keen to start developing the content. The benefits will be:

- The project will go more smoothly, with, for example, less need for revision
- The result will be more likely to be fit for purpose

Here are four things to think about:

Why are you making a kit?

At one extreme, Decide may contribute to a specific policy decision. nef developed a Democs kit on over-the-counter genetic testing kits to help the UK's Human Genetics Commission (HGC) to decide what to recommend to the government. At the other extreme, the aim may simply be awareness raising.

If Decide is contributing to a specific policy decision, how is this happening? Can you find a decision-maker that will undertake to consider the results of Decide and give feedback on how they were used – as with the HGC? With the kits developed by Eurordis, for example, the organization provides a direct link to the policy makers, thanks to their advocacy role. It is important to know if an individual or an organization can take up this role when planning a Decide kit.

Example

Here is a cautionary tale. In 2004/05 nef developed a kit on affordable housing in rural areas in the UK. The process of developing affordable housing is a lengthy one, involving:

- A group of people expressing an initial interest
- Finding out if the village as a whole is interested, and, if so, what sort of housing they want
- Finding land and someone (e.g. a housing association) to do the development, then deciding who should live there

The Democs kit is actually most useful towards the start, to help people answer the question, “Will affordable housing to meet local needs be good for my community?” This is a vital question, but is hard for people to answer when they don’t know what affordable housing is (there are several common misconceptions) and only know of some of the possible impacts.

Because we weren’t clear on the purpose of the kit, and so on when it would be used, many of our cards were more suitable for later on, with lots of technical details that made them dry and dull. It also shifted the discussion from *whether* to have affordable housing to *how* to do it.

Who is the kit for?

Who has a stake or an interest in the topic? Who will want or need to spend time discussing it?

Example

The kits developed by Eurordis are used mostly by the patients of rare diseases, their families and health care providers. One of the goals of the kits is also to empower the patients and their families with the argumentation skills they gain through the discussion. So in this case the users of the kit have a direct stake in the issue. However, in this case several sessions were planned also with the “general public”, organizing events in museums, public libraries and community centres, in order to create opportunities for broader discussion of the issues at stake.

Example

Nef’s kit on homelessness was originally intended for the general public as well as those more deeply involved. We noticed at the outset that the understanding of people with experience of homelessness or who work in the area is radically different from that of those with no experience of it. We eventually decided that the general public was not a stakeholder according to the criteria we use:

- People who affect what happens
- People who are affected by what happens
- People with good information.

This insight was a helpful guide to the level at which we pitched our content.

How general or specific should the topic be?

The more issues that a kit attempts to include, the less coverage there will be of each topic and the greater the likelihood that different participants will focus on issues with little common ground between them.

For example, the initial Decide kit on neuroscience was too broad. There were three or four major topics contained within it: brain imaging and personal freedom; diagnosis of behaviour and free will; brain enhancement; diagnosis, drugs and memory (e.g. in relation to Alzheimer’s disease); and the

medicalisation of daily life. This was too much for an hour and a half. The revised kit stuck to brain enhancement, which trials had shown was what people were most interested in. (This kit wasn't developed in relation to a specific policy issue, so we had the freedom to choose what to cover.)

The science center in Naples, on the other hand, developed a very "narrow" kit on garbage disposal, to address an urgent crisis that was affecting the city. The kit was developed in a very short time and contained specific references to the current situation. In this case the conversations were focussed and generated several original policy recommendations.

Put what the kit is about in writing

It can be helpful to write a statement of purpose so that you have something to refer to. Be prepared to revise the statement of purpose regularly in the light of your growing understanding of the project.

Example

The initial statement of purpose for a project to use Democs in developing a local climate change strategy said:

“The aim of this project is to secure stakeholder engagement with the climate change strategy.”

Discussion at the first project meeting showed that what was wanted from stakeholders was their contribution to the strategy, not just engagement with a strategy that somebody else had produced. So the statement was revised, so that it for instance included an intent that:

“The strategy itself demonstrably reflects the contributions of stakeholders.”

On the web platform there is a space for “aims of the game”. This can be used to print the statement of purpose onto the placemat.

2.3 Beware bias and stereotyping

With controversial, polarised, topics, it is of course vital to work at avoiding bias. This desire underlies many of the quality control procedures (see section 5.1). Since Decide kits cannot shy away from addressing controversial areas where there are many competing views, an aim is to fairly represent all of the important view points on a topic and give participants the resources to decide which they find more convincing.

Not every kit should reflect all views, however. nef's climate change Democs kit is biased in the sense that it focuses less on the question: “Is climate change happening?”, and more on the question: “If climate change is happening, what do we do about it?” This is fine, provided we make our bias clear.

In most cases, where you will want to avoid bias, we recommend having a broad range of people both to supply potential cards and to review the long selection of cards.

Turning now to stereotyping, a Democs kit on homelessness needed to incorporate a range of perspectives. A list of required story cards was developed, including:

- Rough Sleepers
- Councillor
- Refugee etc.

At a trial, people liked the funny names and pictures in the story cards covering these perspectives, but they found the characters very stereotyped. Their advice was to describe these people in specific situations e.g. B&B, traveller site, hostel, or on the streets. Again, it can be helpful to engage with outside experts or people with first hand experience of the topic to build up a more complete and rounded picture.

2.4 How long will it take?

In general, we favour producing a draft kit as quickly as possible, and then taking time to refine it. In practice, though, there is a wide range in how long kits take to prepare. Here are two examples.

- Quick

For example, although animal experiments are a delicate area, there was one book and a House of Lords Select Committee Report which seemed to be widely accepted as both balanced and covering a lot of the ground. These two sources provided the bulk of a first draft that was developed in-house. Also in the case of the HIV kit, there were a handful of documents from international organizations that provided the necessary content to develop the kit.

- Slow

A Democs kit on Electronic Patient Records was developed over a six month process. This included desk-based research, stake-holder interviews, two rounds of user-testing and an expert review stage.

Sometimes the timescale is imposed by outside deadlines. The Democs kit for the UK's GM Nation? debate in 2003 was developed in three weeks, which was all the time that was available between getting the go ahead and the start of the debate. All that was possible was to get the kit developed by one expert, with no checking by others – not ideal.

2.5 Who to involve and how?

There are three main roles in creating a democs kit. They can all be undertaken by the same person or divided between different people. Decide who will do each one. They are:

1. Generating material. This could range from printed summary reports to a range of people each providing material for one or more cards.
2. Editing for length, grammar and style. This includes taking a block of text and editing it to say 30 words.
3. Checking that the content is accurate and balanced

It's also vital to recruit appropriate expert advisors. There are two aspects to 'appropriate'. First, do they cover the ideological spectrum? The more contentious the topic, the more important this is. For example, a Democs kit on animal research drew on experts from the Boyd Group, which includes both animal rights activists and researchers.

Second, do they cover all the angles? For example, when nef was a long way into developing a kit on nanotechnology, it was realised that the experts know a great deal about the social implications, but were less good on the science. Fortunately, the Institute of Nanotechnology helped out at short notice.

It isn't only experts who have useful material. Be aware of what is appropriate in each case. For instance, a kit on waste for a UK council was designed for use by their Community Involvement (CIGs). Many of the issue cards were based on comments made in earlier meetings of the CIGs. This helped to ensure that we captured the issues that mattered to the community. The testimony of people with lived experience of issues can also be of value in teasing out the issues which are most likely to touch people's lives.

3. CREATING THE CONTENT

3.1 Producing a long list of cards

There are two main approaches to generating a set of information and issue cards:

1. Generate as many cards as possible, vote on them to produce a first draft, then check that the selected cards cover the angles. This is the approach used most often.
2. Build up the set of cards by:
 - Developing a set of headings. This provides a check as you go along that you are covering the right areas.
 - Drafting cards for each heading.

It's more common to produce a single long list of cards and to divide them into information and issue cards later on. But you could write a long list for each type.

3.2 Drafting the cards

Story cards

The characters in the story cards are like witnesses in a trial or interviewees on radio or television. The cards show how issues that can seem abstract or remote affect people's lives. We think the stories work best if they are put in the first person. This makes them sound like a witness.

Story cards, especially, can and should help people to answer the questions, "What does this issue mean to me?" As an evaluation of Democs said, "The more the game can focus on the core values and belief systems that underpin the issue at stake, the greater the level of emotion that will be created within the game." A participant in a focus groups held as part of the evaluation said that there was a need to link some of policy debates to, "What does this mean to me, in my life?"

The website has a limit of 800 characters for story cards.

There is a spectrum for how true the cards are:

- True, with people's real names
- True, with identities hidden
- True, but some details changed
- Pure fiction

It is best to be consistent between cards over things like this. Inconsistency complicates life for the facilitator, giving them something else to remember.

Stories often work best if they embody a dilemma. It's hard for a reader to dismiss the story if the person it's about holds two attitudes that pull in different directions.

Example 1

Here is a story about waste with a clear dilemma, showing the trade-offs to be made:

Jessica Murray says: "For years I've been campaigning against incineration, writing letters and so on. I have young children and I'm worried about the damage it could do to children's health. If it comes down to choosing a site though, I'd fight tooth and nail not to have it near my children and I – even though this would mean it was near someone else's children. But I know that their parents will feel just what I do. We'll end up fighting ourselves, which is horrible."

Example 2

Notice the changes between the first and second versions of the story card below, designed to bring out the dilemma (as well as to simplify the card):

Version 1

Tuvalu is one of the world's smallest and most isolated island nations. 'Discover paradise' says the South Pacific islands tourism brochure. The O' Connor family decided to do just that, and escape the winter chill in Herefordshire for a couple of weeks. Mutu, a part-time local farmer and the family's guide for a day, explains how he used to dig pits in the sandy soil, fill them with compost and plant the islands staple root crops, taro. "Now the sea-level is rising, salt water is poisoning our crops in low-lying areas". Reading the paper back at home: "MAUNA LOA OBSERVATORY, Hawaii (AP) -- Carbon dioxide, the gas largely blamed for global warming, has reached record-high levels in the atmosphere after growing at an accelerated pace in the past year, say scientists monitoring the sky from this 2-mile-high station atop a Hawaiian volcano."

Version 2

Tuvalu is one of the world's smallest and most isolated island nations. The O'Connor family decide to 'Discover paradise', as the brochure says. Mutu, a part-time farmer and their guide for a day, explains that "the sea-level is rising and salt water is poisoning our crops in low-lying areas". In their hotel, the television news says that 'carbon dioxide, the gas largely blamed for climate change, has reached record levels in the atmosphere Air travel is a fast growing sector and major contributor to rising levels of greenhouse gases'.

Another alternative is to use two story cards to reflect different sides of a dilemma. For example, in the Electronic Patient Records kit, two cards show two different sides to the issue of researchers having access to patient records:

Claire: I'm a researcher and I'm developing a new drug for people with heart disease. In order to test the drug I need to find 100 people with heart disease to take part in a trial. But to find 100 people I need to look through thousands of records, checking who has the disease. Patients might not want me to look at their records, but GPs don't have the time to do it for me.

Should I be given access to patient records to find people for my trial?

Patricia: I don't have anything particularly unusual in my record, but I believe that what I tell the doctor is private. If someone wants to look at my record – for research or to check up on my doctor or whatever – I think they should ask me first. If people can see my record without my permission, I'll never know who's looking at it or what they are doing with it – it might get leaked and I'd never even know.

Should I be able to prevent people looking at my record without my position?

Case study of a story card 1

This is from the PlayDecide kit on neuroscience. The first go, written by a journalist who specialises in brain science, was adapted from a story in the New York Times:

"Squeeze my hand, David" the surgeon called. In the operating room, doctors watched intently as David N., roused from general anesthesia, gave a squeeze and went back to sleep. Reassured that the electrodes they had just implanted in his brain had done no harm, the surgeons went back to work. The next step was to tunnel wires from the electrodes through David's scalp and neck to a pacemaker-like gadget that would be implanted in his chest. David N., 57, has been suffering from Parkinson's disease for more than 8 years, and has exhausted all kinds of medication. This deep brain stimulation device was his last hope to get rid of his unremitting symptoms.

It wasn't clear if the focus was on David or the surgeon, so a second draft was produced, concentrating on the surgeon:

Professor D. is extremely happy. And proud. As a hand surgeon, he has succeeded in a world premiere: one double hand transplantation on a young guy who had both hands ripped off by the explosion of a home-made rocket. Of course, this had been very carefully planned. It took many years before his team was ready to perform this delicate operation.

It was important to choose the right person too, because such a delicate graft requires a huge participation from the patient himself. But this young guy was very collaborative and motivated. He submitted himself to months and months of intensive training to finally recover the use of his two new hands.

But today, the satisfaction of Professor D. is complete. His colleagues from the brain imaging department have brought the ultimate proof of the success of the operation. They were able to show that the brain cortex area devoted to the control of movement of the hands and fingers had recovered the function and surface they had before the accident. It meant that the brain had 'recognised' the two hands and had integrated them in its functioning. "This is due to we call 'brain plasticity', and this wonderful property of the brain is one of the most promising ways of research for the future" said Professor D. to the press.

The third draft shortened this and put it into the first person

Professor D.

Two years ago I carried out a world first: a double hand transplant on a young guy who had both hands ripped off by the explosion of a home-made rocket. Of course, it only worked because he went through months of intensive training. I have just found out the relevant bit of his brain cortex area is back to the level it was at before the accident. This means that the brain has 'recognised' the new hands and is treating them the same as the original ones.

Case study of a story card 2

This story card was about what the World Trade Organisation is and does. It was intended to show that there were arguments for it and against it. The first two of the three attempts below didn't succeed in balancing the scales. The first seemed too pro-WTO, the second too anti. The third version seemed to get the balance about right. Do you agree?

Version 1

World Trade Organisation (WTO) official

Michel Favreau is proud of the WTO's efforts to reduce barriers to trade between nations. He is proud that the WTO is more democratic than its sister organisations, the World Bank and the IMF. He likes the fact that decisions are taken by consensus and then confirmed in national parliaments.

But he can also see that it's not that democratic. At the WTO meeting in Doha in 2001, he was very aware that the EU's 500 delegates were 500 more than Haiti could afford. He also sees that poor countries' dependence on aid and loans puts them under pressure to go along with what rich countries want.

Version 2

David Wardwood, WTO Campaigner

David Wardwood is a campaigner against the WTO. His goal is to get the WTO to honestly do what they say they do, and offer decisions by consensus and equal negotiating ground for all countries. He is alarmed that the WTO claims to be democratic and transparent, but actually is not in practice. He wishes that it would in fact allow each member country one vote like it says it does, but is disappointed that committees and ministerial statements are formed instead upon persuasion and arm-twisting in unrecorded, closed meetings. He fears that he will no longer be able to campaign so strongly because his name has appeared on many blacklists.

Version 3

Michel Favreau, Trade journalist

Michel specialises in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which works to reduce trade barriers between nations. It is a sister organisation to the IMF and the World Bank, He feels ambiguous about the WTO. It is supposed to be more democratic than the other two. Decisions are taken by consensus and then confirmed in national parliaments. It is also the best forum available to press rich countries to reduce their subsidies. But in practice it isn't democratic at all. The rich countries agree what they want among themselves and then twist the arms of poor countries to sign up.

Information and issue cards

There are seven points to think about while drafting: length, quotations, questions, authorities, explaining concepts, range of issues and 'concreteness'

1. Length

Card titles can be up to 120 characters long body text up to 450 characters. At first draft, it's perhaps to aim a little shorter – perhaps 300 characters as inevitably some cards will need to have content added later.

2. Quotations

Quotations can be a useful way of introducing a controversial or subjective viewpoint. It's important that the card gives enough information to let the player understand the context of the quote – such as the role of the person (eg: patient, scientist, philosopher) and the context in which the quote was given (eg: newspaper, focus group). Where the person quoted is well-known it can be appropriate to give their name (see first example below): where the name adds little to the quote we omit it (see second example below). It is good practice to have available sources for all the cards, so anyone who really wanted to could find out who said them. Sometimes these are included in the kit.

“Jeremy Bentham

Jeremy Bentham, an eighteenth century philosopher, argued that equal suffering should be treated equally, whether human or animal.”

“The visionary view 1

- *‘Nurture will surpass nature, and design will take over destiny.’*
- *‘It would be a marvellous challenge to see if we can outdesign nature.’”*

3. Questions

We use questions to encourage thought. For example, from a kit used in the UK on the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination:

“Should the NHS (National Health Service) be entitled or obliged to give parents a choice?”

4. Authorities

We cite authorities where we think it is useful for people to know who thinks what:

“Public statement by British Medical Association and others 1: Before MMR ‘there were thousands of cases of measles, mumps and rubella and dozens of children died. MMR is scientifically proven to be the safest and most effective way to protect children from the diseases.’”

5. Explaining concepts

We seek to convey concepts by analogy or metaphor:

“What happens at the nano scale? 1

Nanoparticles have different properties to the bulk material. As particles become smaller their surface area becomes relatively greater. That is why icing sugar dissolves more quickly in water than granulated sugar.”

It’s important to remember that people reading any particular card cannot be assumed to have read all the other cards. Therefore each card must be a discrete piece of information which doesn’t rely on the other cards.

6. Range of issues

We try and cover all angles. Here are three cards from a kit on synthetic biology: one is theological, one environmental, one ethical:

Playing God? A Theological Question

If God created everything, including life, is it 'playing God' to think that we can outdo God's age-long processes of evolution, and rapidly design our own organisms? Or is it a good use of God-given skills?

Super-GM Crops?

If the tools of synthetic biology could one day also modify plants, say, to make pharmaceuticals and biofuels, can this also be done without adverse environmental impacts, or displacing food crops?

Justice & Equity

Will these developments make a positive difference to the rich-poor global divide, or will they tend to make it worse?

7. Prefer the concrete to the abstract

Concrete examples of things happening are often more compelling than general statistics and principles. Here is an example from a kit on climate change, about wind power at sea:

The first version was:

A Greenpeace report showed that by 2020 a third of Europe's total electricity demand could be met solely from wind power at sea, enough to meet the electricity needs of 150 million homes.

The revised version was:

The world's commercial first wave-energy generation station is now in operation near the Orkney Islands. Each machine is 120 meters long and 750 tons, and forty are expected to be installed.

3.4 Editing cards

Experts are experts because they know a lot, and they often want to tell their readers a lot of what they know. So it is important to have an editor who can:

- On the one hand understand what the experts are saying
- On the other hand translate it if necessary into language that your intended audience will understand.

Below are some examples of how cards have been edited.

Example 1 – simplification

One MMR vaccination card started out as below, based on some wording from a medical expert:

Parents are travelling abroad to vaccinate their children because they don't trust the MMR vaccine. The importation of single vaccines was restricted as they were unlicensed due to safety concerns. Rubini strain of mumps, efficacy 12% and urabe withdrawn in 1992 as thought to cause serious headaches. Rubella was still available in this country until 2002/3 when the manufacturers stopped production. (61 words)

And ended up as:

Some parents who don't trust MMR are vaccinating their children abroad. There are various reasons why single vaccines are hard to obtain in the UK. Some are not licensed by the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) on safety grounds. Rubella vaccine production ceased in 2002/3. (44 words)

Example 2 – also simplification

This nanotechnology card, with its cumbersome title:

*Will nanotechnologies make as much impact on our lives as electricity or plastic, say?
Some people who promote them think so, but no one knows yet. There's a lot of 'hype' around. It will depend how much of today's nanoscience actually turns into useful things.*

Turned into:

*The impact of nanotechnologies?
Some people think they will affect our lives as much as electricity or plastic, say, but there's a lot of 'hype' around. No one yet knows how much of today's nanoscience will actually turn into useful things.*

Example 3 – clarification

One card on homeless read:

From street to stability

The Mayor's Rough Sleepers Strategy was launched in March 2001 to help tackle the issues faced by people living on the street.

The problem with this is that it doesn't say where the Mayor is from.

Example 4 - Reducing the word count

In the two examples below, the underlined words are redundant:

Energy security

The UK is heading towards being a net importer of energy, but if we act now we can reduce the risks of being vulnerable to price fluctuations and interruptions to supply.

International agreement

Action is futile until enough nations are prepared to embrace international agreements like the Kyoto Protocol. The UK has 1% of the world's population yet emits about 2.3% of the global CO₂. The USA has 4% of the world's population but emits 25% of CO₂.

Example 5 – being radical

Sometimes editing is not enough. One draft card read:

In most local authorities the enforcement of Housing Act accommodation standards is carried out by environmental health professionals. Officers working in the homeless persons unit are less likely to be familiar with the detail of the requirements under this legislation.

This doesn't make much sense as it stands. So the editor went back to the original author and asked for clarification. He then suggested:

In most local authorities the enforcement of Housing Act accommodation standards is carried out by environmental health professionals. Officers working in the homeless persons unit are less likely to be familiar with the detail of the requirements under this legislation if for example a complaint is made.

The editor's version was:

Enforcing Housing Act accommodation standards is usually done by environmental health officers. Officers in the homeless persons unit may not know the Act if a complaint is made.

Example 6 – the title

One card from a kit on stem cells read:

Who is involved?

Who should be involved in developing stem cell technologies and therapies - government, private corporations, foundations or trusts?

We changed the title to 'Who should be involved?' As written, the title is about who is actually involved, whereas the text is about who ought to be.

3.5 Turning a long list into a short list

Voting on the long list

Once you have assembled a long list of cards, it can be helpful to use a voting mechanism to incorporate the views of several different experts and writers on which cards are the most important. Here is an example of the instructions given to people to vote on the long list of information and issue cards:

Electronic Patient Records, February 2009

- There are 186 possible cards below. Please vote on each possible card by inserting into the 'Your vote' column one of the following:
 - '-1' means you would like it **not** to be included

'0' (or leaving it blank) means you don't feel strongly either way

'1' means it is well worth considering for inclusion

'2' means you think it should definitely be included

- Of course, you might disagree with the view expressed on a card, but still feel that it should be included, because it will be informative or promote discussion.
- Not all the material has been properly edited. Vote on whether you think the material could make a good card, not on its current state.
- It may help to have a look through all the possible cards before you start voting.
- Use the 'Comments' column for any other thoughts.
- We'll probably have two sets of 40 cards each, half more factual, half more attitudes and opinions. I'll check the balance of the cards when we add up the votes.
- Do say if you think there are any areas not covered or not fully covered.
- **Please send me your votes by close on Wednesday 19th February.**
- Do email me if you have any questions.
- Thank you!

Analysing the voting

The example of xenotransplantation, in the Decide project

Five people scored 33 possible information cards and 43 possible issue cards H (High), M (Medium) or L (Low). Their votes were copied onto a Word table where each person had been given a column for their votes. Each H scored 2 points and each M scored 1 point, giving a maximum score for each card of 10. In the example below there are two cards, one that scored maximum points, one that scored poorly:

	Info Cards	Perry	Helen	Guglielmo	Andrea	Paula	Score
10.	Pigs are the preferred species as organ donors for humans because their organs are about the right size, they are relatively cheap and they pose fewer ethical concerns than using monkeys or apes.	H	H	H	H	H	10
16.	Transplants can improve quality of life, for example by avoiding the need for uncomfortable and time-consuming kidney dialysis. Some organ recipients take part in the Transplant Games.	M	M	L	M	M	4

The scores were calculated and entered in the table below. The cumulative score shows that the following cards were selected, given that we wanted a total of 24 of each:

- Information cards: all those scoring 10 – 7
- Issue cards: all those scoring 10 – 8, plus three of those scoring 7.

Information cards

Score	Cards with that score	No. of cards	Cumulative number of cards
10	3, 9, 10, 19	4	4
9	4, 13, 18, 20, 21, 26	6	10
8	2, 8, 11, 15, 24, 27, 30, 32	8	18
7	1, 7, 14, 17, 29, 31	6	24
6	5, 6, 25, 33	4	28
5	12, 28	2	30
4	16, 22, 24	3	33
3			
2			
1			
0			

Issue cards

Score	Cards with that score	No. of cards	Cumulative number of cards
10	9, 13, 20, 33	4	4
9	1, 3, 4, 7, 12, 14, 19, 21, 39, 42	10	14
8	5, 10, 31, 32, 35, 41	6	20
7	2, 8, 11, 17, 24, 40	6	26
6	15, 16, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 34, 36, 38, 43	12	38
5	6, 18, 22	3	41
4	27, 37	2	43
3			
2			
1			
0			

Reviewing the voting

Voting is a good way of prioritising cards for inclusion. But it doesn't always create a balanced kit. Where one issue is particularly important, all of the cards on it may rate highly, yet including all of them would be redundant. It is worthwhile for someone to review the overall selection, to check for balance etc. A reviewer of a nef kit on climate change, for example, spotted a gap: "There are no cards about practical actions that people can take."

One review mechanism is to identify the key themes in the topic and to identify the number of cards addressing each one. This can highlight which themes may be over and under-represented.

Procedure after the cards have been selected

- In your table recording the voters and how they rated each card, delete the columns containing the votes (but not that with the totals)
- Use the column containing the scores to delete cards not selected. Start from the end – so that you don't disrupt the numbering of the earlier cards.
- As you go, type the original number of the remaining cards into the start of the body text. This makes it easier to check that you have kept the right cards.
- As you go, make any amendments to the text of chosen cards in the light of comments. Check the word count and make sure each card has a heading. [This is a bit in conflict with what written above about not using headings.]
- Save the result with a new name
- Delete the sources, scores and comments column. Delete any instructions at the top and the sources at the bottom.
- Check that you have the right total number of cards
- Annotate each card, on screen or on paper, as either N (information card) or S (issue card). Adjust this until you have the right number of each. Remember though that information cards should be reliable facts, and issue cards are often questions, so you may need to go back to the scores and pick out a card that wasn't originally chosen, to get up to the right number of each type.
- Re-sort the cards into the correct categories. It is easier to check the cards if you keep them in the original order within each category.
- Check in the card numbering column that there are the right number of information and issue cards
- In the text, replace the original card number with the new card number
- Delete the column with the card numbers in
- Save again with another new name

3.6 Using the *FUND* website

The FUND website (www.playdecide.org) has a kit editor that can be used to generate a kit from existing content. There are different templates that contain the common elements of a kit (such as the name of the cards and the text on the placemat). Using a template, you can create a kit in any language and also modify parts of the structure like the kind and number of cards or the instructions to play. A PDF version of the kit is automatically generated, so you can quickly create a prototype and test it, editing the kit online with the feedback from the trials.

3.7 Presenting the sources

While offering access to sources is important for the credibility of the kit, few people will actually want to look at the information. Therefore, one useful strategy can be to make the sources available online.

Here are two formats for presenting sources:

1. STARTING WITH THE CARDS

References

1. Green Futures, 55, Nov/Dec 2005
2. Green Futures Special Supplement on food, Nov/Dec 2005
3. eg magazine, volume 11, numbers 2 and 3, March/April 2005
4. Sustainable Development Bulletin, WCVA, February 2004
5. Sustainability for Organisations: A Guide to Best Practice in Wales, Wales SCEnE, University of Wales, Bangor, undated
6. Ghost Town Britain 11, Death on the High Street, **nef**, 2003
7. Ghost Town Britain, **nef**, undated
8. The Time of Our Lives: Using time banking for neighbourhood renewal and community capacity building, Gill Seyfang and Karen Smith, **nef**, 2002
9. Clone Town Britain, Andrew Simms et al, **nef**, 2005
10. The Natural Step, David Cook, Schumacher Briefings 11, The Schumacher Society, 2004
11. Taken from stimulus material prepared by Perry Walker for Worcester Young Peoples Conference on European citizenship, November 2005
12. Democs kit on climate change, **nef**, 2005
13. Learning to Work Differently, Welsh Development Agency, 2001
14. Sustainable Development Annual Report, Welsh Assembly Government, 2004
15. Checklist for Sustainable Projects, Sustainable Pembrokeshire Small Grants Scheme, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, undated
16. A Better Indication?, press release by the Sustainable Development Commission on the UK government's Sustainable Development indicators, 2005
17. Sustainable Regions, Volume 2, Issue 2, Oct/Nov 2003
18. Starting to Live Differently, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the National Assembly for Wales, 2004
19. Maximising the Environmental Sustainability of the West Wales and the Valleys Objective 1 Programme, ERM UK, 2000
20. Unidentified newspaper article by Stuart Bond of WWF Cymru and Dr Alan Nethercott, Cardiff council

2. STARTING WITH THE SOURCES

	Information cards	Issue cards
Health Protection Agency	3, 4, 7, 26, 28, 38, 39, 40	6, 13
Health Promotion Agency	6, 11, 15, 24, 25, 32	
'MMR The story so	9, 10, 18, 19, 21,	8, 20, 26, 27, 38, 40

far'	27, 31, 35,	
JABS	12, 14	24
BBC	17	17
Dr Vernon Coleman		34, 36
Dr Michael Fitzpatrick	40	23, 39

4. VOTING AND THE POLICY POSITIONS

4.1 *When to have voting*

Because we see Democs as a political process, we are keen that wherever possible people vote on issues individually and then try to reach consensus as a group. But we have found three sorts of issues for which voting did not seem appropriate:

- Issues where there were clear choices between technologies, where it seemed right to concentrate on the clusters as representing the criteria by which the choice of technologies would be made. We weren't for example proposing any voting in relation to waste in West Sussex, although we are asking people to prioritise the criteria.
- Issues like ambient noise and the GLA, where there were a number of possible strategies/policies that were not mutually exclusive and where what was needed to set priorities between them.
- Issues like homelessness where there was variation between places and where there was nothing like regulatory alternatives or technologies or priorities to vote on.

4.2 *Devising policy positions*

How many?

We have almost always gone for four. Four seems to be a good number because with an odd number people are drawn to the middle one; two are a bit either/or and six is too much to take in. There should be two on the extremes and two in the middle. What is less clear is whether the two outer positions should be:

1. they could be on the outer limits of what people might think, which means that we cover the whole spectrum, or
2. given that there are usually very few people at the outer limits, more people will identify more closely with the positions if we bring them in from the ends of the spectrum

In relation to many scientific topics, the main policy issue is about the degree of regulation. In order to avoid the positions being too dry, we have sought to combine issues of: regulation; ethics; and politics etc.

For instance, here are the four animal experiment positions. They are largely ethical, but to have some context that is both institutional (reference to 'researchers') and regulatory (reference to 'phased outlawing').

1. *Researchers should be able to decide for themselves when to experiment on animals.*
2. *Animal experiments are justified when the benefit (largely to humans) clearly outweighs the harm to animals.*

3. *In addition to 2., introduce a phased outlawing of experiments on animals. The use of alternatives to animal experiments will be prioritised and enforced.*
4. *Animal experiments to benefit humans are never justified.*

What to avoid

1. Double negatives

We have mostly but not entirely succeeded in eliminating double negatives from the policy positions and the voting. One instance where we didn't succeed is policy position 3 on stem cell research. This states, "Stem cell research can be carried out using 'surplus' embryos under 14 days old or using embryos created specifically for research by IVF. We should not allow research by cloning." It is very confusing to contemplate whether *not* allowing something is *not* acceptable. We can tackle this by changing the voting option to 'disagree' as well as by rewording the position.

2. Complex positions

This brings the danger that people agree with one part of it and disagree with another, which makes it hard for them to vote on the position as a whole. Where complexity simply cannot be avoided, you might consider having different questions on different dimensions of the issues.

3. Reference to other policies

Try to avoid policies that refer to other policies, for example: "Policy position n. 2: Like policy n.1, but with a regulatory body in charge". Although they make sense in the kit when they are next to each other, when collecting, analyzing and displaying the results of the PlayDecide sessions the policies might not be together and therefore they become difficult to understand.

5. CHECKING AND TESTING

5.1 *Quality control*

- Three people should check the draft content
- Check against bias by seeing which cards support which policy positions (PPs)
- It is particularly to check when an organisation like CDF has done the research on a topic they have an interest in – equalities – and when nef doesn't know much about it.
- It has the side effect of helping to check/show that cards link to the PPs
- Note by Perry. This can be hard to do. Different people may see it differently. There were some of the story cards that I thought neutral or even against animal experiments: the BUAV thought they were for testing.

[The bit above is difficult to understand, but is a very good point]. Eventually this whole section could be an independent little handbook for those “superusers” who want to check a new draft kit.]

5.2 *Preparing the kits*

Copy and paste the card contents into the online form and the kit can be downloaded.

5.3 *Trials*

We do not believe that the kit is finished when the experts sign it off. Feedback from participants is invaluable. We revise kits in the light of that feedback as and when staff time and funding allows.

The best way to get feedback is to put a kit together and to run a trial. For example, these comments pointed to a gap in the Herefordshire climate change kit:

- “Info on local impact and figures would be helpful”
- “More cards on a domestic level allowing laymen to understand what they can do individually”
- “More facts about the effects of small, individual changes on a local level”
- “More information in terms of what we can do to make a difference would be helpful to go away with.”

Analysing which cards have been used by the participants is also useful. It may show that some cards are less useful than others because they are

seldom or never chosen. They could be replaced, especially if several participants have made similar points on blank cards.