

The **Informed Discussion** tool is an enriched forum with facilities for sharing information resources to support the discussion and for finalizing the discussion by producing, asynchronously and collaboratively, a summary document. When warranted, facilities for presenting the resultant proposals are also included.

If the Informed Discussion is accompanied by a map (Google Map©), then threads can be located and displayed on that map via an icon that identifies the topic. It can also be possible to use the map to draw lines or delimited areas.

In order to improve the friendliness of the system for common people, so reducing the barriers that hinder their participation, instead of adopting one of the existing software for managing discussions, openDCN has developed a solution which includes some distinguished features for the visualization of the messages in a thread of discussion and supporting different kind of participation.

Every informed discussion is characterized by a debate phase (which involves all its participants) and a closing phase, where select participants collaborate to draft the summary document.

Thee debate phase may include one or more discussions: the opening message should clarify the specific topic and goal of the discussion. Discussions are managed as an a priori moderated forum. Information resources (documents, images, mp3, links to external web pages, and YouTube or Google videos) attached to messages are collected in the information area, which can also be enriched with uploads. People can rate posts and information resources, as in the CityMap, by assigning them a degree of consensus and of relevance. The editing phase is performed by a selected group of participants, called editors, using a collaborative writing tool endowed with nearly the same features as a wiki. It supports document versioning with an option to retrieve and restore prior versions, if necessary. The summary document is included in the public part of the information area (accessible to all participants in the deliberative process) along with information resources that can be useful for other deliberative stages. This public information area constitutes the actual output of the informed discussion: if it has sequential stages, the document represents subsequent input.