De Cindio F., Peraboni C. (2009). **"Are Online Communities Good for the Accountability of Public Spaces, Services, and Officers?"** . Proc. of 3rd Int. Conf. on Online Communities and Social Computing, San Diego, California, July 2009 (to appear).

While, the need of assessing public spaces, services and officers becomes, always more urgent and mandatory, a wide literature and extensive field experience show that internal audit by the public sector itself is not sufficient. There is the need to foster the civic accountability by integrating an independent external evaluation in the audit process.

The paper investigates the possibility that online communities provide a suitable framework for carrying on this external audit by supporting the so-called voice strategy in the contexts (such as the public sector) where the exit strategy does not hold. After envisaging the potential advantages coming from involving online communities of users in the assessment of a public space, service or officer, two early pilot experiments carried on to validate this assumption are presented and discussed. They are neither sufficient to validate the assumption nor sufficient to invalidate it, but provides hints helpful to pursue the investigation.