



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NDItech Launches Powerful Open-Source Online Applications for Political Organizing and Communication**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A set of four open source, web-based software applications that can be easily and cheaply rolled out to help civic groups organize, connect government with constituents, manage election data, and foster civic debate will be unveiled next week by the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The new Democracy Toolkit — DemTools, for short — will launch Tuesday, Aug. 12. DemTools give civic groups around the world the ability to use powerful organizing and communication software previously inaccessible due to lack of money or sophisticated technology staff. The launch will include a panel discussion on the challenges of using technology for international development and how tools such as DemTools can change the way political parties, activists, elected officials and others organize and communicate.

The panel will be made up of political and technology experts including

- [Macon Phillips](#), coordinator for the Bureau of International Programs at the U.S. Department of State;
- Rose Jackson, special advisor to the Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL);
- Merrick Schaefer, lead of the Mobile Data Team at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and
- Doug Van Dyke, general manager of civilian government and nonprofits for Amazon Web Services (AWS).
- [Nancy Payne](#), deputy director of the PeaceTech Initiative at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) will moderate the panel.

The DemTools suite will launch with four powerful tools: CiviMP, which connects legislators with their constituents; CiviParty, organizing and communication tools for political parties and civic organizations; The Issues, for online video debates; and Elections, for sophisticated election monitoring data collection and analysis. These apps solve some of the most common issues NDI programs and partners face year after year.

“We want our partners and political activists around the world to be able to focus on what they’re good at - political organizing and working for change,” said Chris Spence, chief technology officer at NDI. “Democratic activists aren’t necessarily technologists, and they shouldn’t have to be.”

Users can download the ready-to-use software, share it, or change it to suit their needs. For NDI partners, the Institute’s software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform allows organizations to easily use sophisticated software systems without the burden of setup, hosting costs and maintenance.

Following the panel, guests will have the opportunity to participate in a live demo to test the new web applications.

The event will stream live at [www.ndi.org/live](http://www.ndi.org/live).

WHAT: NDItech Launch of DemTools

Featuring panelists:

- Macon Phillips, Coordinator, Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State
- Rose Jackson, Special Adviser to Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
- Merrick Schaefer, Lead of the Mobile Data Team, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Doug VanDyke, General Manager of Civilian Government & Nonprofits, Amazon Web Services (AWS)

Moderated by:

- Nancy Payne, Deputy Director of the PeaceTech Initiative, U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP)

WHEN: Tuesday, August 12, 4-6 p.m.

WHERE: National Democratic Institute, 455 Massachusetts Ave, NW, 8th Floor, Washington, D.C.

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