

Supplementary Information 1. Details about *Debate.org*

To help the readers better understand the source of the data, we provide more information about *Debate.org*. It provides an English-based online platform where users can engage in debates, share opinions, and create polls. The following information is obtained from the website (www.debate.org/about/company) before it ceased operations. We directly quote the main text but made stylistic changes by using a different font and deleting hyperlinks that are no longer available.

About Debate.org

Let Your Voice Be Heard

Debate.org is the premier online community where intelligent minds from around the world come to debate online and read the opinions of others. To encourage discussion we have built our website around these core features:

Debates

Challenge members to one-on-one debates on specific topics, with several rounds to make your case. The side with the most votes from the community wins the debate.

Opinions

Pose a question to the community and allow members to pick a side and provide their opinion. Members can chime in and reply to each other's arguments and attempt to sway those on the opposing side.

Forums

Start an open format discussion with the community on any topic. Subscribe to posts, and keep the conversation going when there is more to say.

Community

Make friends from around the world based on the issues that matter to you most. See where members stand on the Big Issues, and create new relationships through passionate debate.

Interested in joining our community? Sign up and start voicing your opinions now.

Company History

Debate.org was founded by Phillip & Crystal Ferreira in the summer of 2007 out of a special passion for politics and debate. The premise of the website was to enable a person of any creed, nationality, gender, or sexuality to have a platform to voice their opinions and to share ideas on any topic they choose. Open dialogue and honest debate are how great ideas are created, how democracies are developed and thrive, and how Debate.org came to life. Debate.org was acquired by Juggle, LLC in the winter of 2010. Juggle creates websites heavily focused on engaging users with quality content, organized information and useful features.

Supplementary Information 2. Debate Process of *Debate.org*

Each debate includes two users taking opposing sides to discuss a certain controversial topic. The debate process can be divided into five different periods:

Challenge Period: A user initiates the debate by selecting the debate topic. This user is referred to as an instigator. The instigator also selects either pro- or contra-stance on the debate topic. The other user who takes the opposing side to the instigator is also selected during this period. This user is referred to as the contender.

Debating Period: The instigator and contender exchange rounds of arguments.

Voting Period: Other users read and evaluate the debate on several criteria, including whether the instigator or the contender made a more convincing argument.

Post Voting Period: The winner of the debate is announced. Users are no longer allowed to vote on the debate.

Supplementary Information 3. Descriptive Statistics on Data

Table 1. Categorization of Debates Using Debate Categories on *Debate.org*

Debate Category	Number of Debates	Percentage (%)
Places-Travel	44	0.17
Cars	77	0.30
Fashion	79	0.30
TV	112	1.43
Movies	126	0.48
News	211	0.81
Music	262	1.01
Arts	432	1.66
Funny	476	1.83
Games	493	1.89
Technology	493	1.89
Sports	682	2.62
Economics	685	2.63
People	785	3.01
Health	1008	3.87
Entertainment	1348	5.17
Education	1573	6.03
Science	1588	6.09
Philosophy	2031	7.79
Miscellaneous	2410	9.25
Society	2476	9.50
Religion	3796	14.56
Politics	4880	18.72

Table 2. Categorization of Users Using Ideologies on *Debate.org*

Ideology	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Anarchist	105	2.25
Apathetic	69	1.48
Communist	55	1.18
Conservative	578	12.37
Green	35	0.75
Labor	3	0.06
Liberal	455	9.74
Libertarian	381	8.16
Moderate	294	6.29
Not Saying	1358	29.07
Other	238	5.09
Progressive	161	3.45
Socialist	133	2.85
Undecided	273	5.84

Table 3. Categorization of Users Using Gender on *Debate.org*

Gender	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Agender	2	0.04
Androgyne	1	0.02
Bigender	4	0.09
Female	597	12.78
Queer	7	0.15
Male	2604	55.74
Prefer not to say	919	19.67
Transgender Female	2	0.04
Transgender Male	2	0.04

Table 4. Categorization of Users Using Education on *Debate.org*

Education	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Associate's Degree	102	2.18
Bachelor's Degree	302	6.46
Graduate Degree	129	2.76
HighSchool	1110	23.76
NotSaying	1791	38.33
Other	120	2.57
Post Doctoral Degree	56	1.20
Some College Degree	528	11.30

Table 5. Categorization of Users Using Ethnicity on *Debate.org*

Ethnicity	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Asian	191	4.09
Black	137	2.93
East Indians	22	0.47
Latino	133	2.85
Middle Eastern	35	0.75
Native American	35	0.75
Not Saying	1368	29.28
Other	162	3.47
Pacific Islander	10	0.21
White	2045	43.77

Table 6. Categorization of Users Using Income on *Debate.org*

Income	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Less than \$25,000	431	9.23
\$25,000 to \$35,000	75	1.61
\$35,000 to \$50,000	92	1.97
\$50,000 to \$75,000	77	1.65
\$75,000 to \$100,000	53	1.13
\$100,000 to \$150,000	37	0.79
More than \$150,000	101	2.16
Not Saying	2998	64.17
Other	274	5.86

Table 7. Categorization of Users Using Party Affiliation on *Debate.org*

Party Affiliation	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Not Saying	1584	33.90
Undecided	521	11.15
Democratic Party	485	10.38
Republican Party	471	10.08
Other	284	6.08
Independent	181	3.87
Peace and Freedom Party	105	2.25
Libertarian Party	89	1.91
Tea Party Patriots	45	0.96
Green Party	42	0.90
Independent American Party	40	0.86
Constitution Party	32	0.68
Reform Party	32	0.68
Democratic Socialists Party	29	0.62
Communist Party	26	0.56
Socialist Party	26	0.56
Independence Party	23	0.49

The Revolution	20	0.43
Pirate Party	15	0.32
American Independent Party	13	0.28
American Nazi Party	11	0.24
23 Other Parties with Less than 10 Users	64	1.37

Table 8. Categorization of Users Using Religion on *Debate.org*

Religion	Number of Users	Percentage (%)
Not Saying	1255	26.86
Atheist	725	15.52
Christian	459	9.82
Agnostic	431	9.23
Christian-Catholic	245	5.24
Other	182	3.90
Christian-Baptist	133	2.85
Christian-Protestant	86	1.84
Christian-Latter-Day Saints	58	1.24
Christian-Lutheran	58	1.24
Pastafarian	48	1.03
Deism	34	0.73
Christian-Methodist	32	0.68
Christian-Presbyterian	32	0.68
Buddhist	27	0.58
Christian-Pentecostal	25	0.54
Christian-Church of Christ	24	0.51

Secular	23	0.49
Muslim	22	0.47
Jewish	21	0.45
Pagan	21	0.45

Table 9. Categorization of Users Using Religion on *Debate.org* (Continued)

Unitarian Universalist	18	0.39
Jewish-Reform	17	0.36
Muslim-Sunni	16	0.34
Christian-Greek Orthodox	12	0.26
Christian-Assemblies of God	11	0.24
Christian-Seventh-Day Adventist	10	0.21
Hindu	9	0.19
Islamic	9	0.19
Daoist	8	0.17
Christian-Anglican	7	0.15
Jewish-Conservative	7	0.15
Buddhist-Mahayana	6	0.13
Christian-Episcopalian	6	0.13
23 Other Religions with Less than 5 Users	61	1.31