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Convergence Collaborative on *Digital Discourse for a Thriving Democracy and Resilient Communities* Challenges Diverse Leaders to Tackle their Political, Ideological, and Sectoral Divides

Discovery Report Highlights Tensions Between Participants Working to Stem Digital Disinformation and Those Seeking to Prevent “Cancelling” Online Voices

Washington, D.C., January 26 – [Convergence Center for Policy Resolution](#) (Convergence), the leader in building collaborations across political, ideological, sectoral, and cultural divides to solve intractable issues, today released the [Discovery Report](#) for its newest project, the [Convergence Collaborative on Digital Discourse for a Thriving Democracy and Resilient Communities](#). The report lays out the primary conflicting perspectives around the causes and potential solutions to the insidious online trends that are driving increasingly toxic levels of divisiveness, partisanship, hate, and unreliable information.

In today’s digital culture, most Americans get information from online sources. However, about [71% of Americans say the internet does more to divide us than bring us together](#), and [72% believe that disinformation is a threat to democracy](#). Further, institutional and social trust has sunk to a historic low; no institution is perceived as honest by more than [25% of Americans](#), and less than [40% of Americans](#) feel most people can be trusted.

“This challenge has languished too long as a result of competing perspectives and interests not coming together,” said David Eisner, CEO of Convergence. “We can’t let our digital ecosystem, which holds the potential to increase understanding and strengthen relationships across divides, to instead fatally exacerbate the damage caused by small numbers of ‘conflict entrepreneurs’ who seek to divide, demonize, and build political and cultural wedges for their own purposes.”

As a neutral convenor, Convergence directs an inclusive process, informed by social science and more than a decade of practice, to drive solutions for intractable issues. Based on the Discovery Report analysis, [Convergence Collaboratives](#) engage groups of leaders and experts first to find common ground and build trust, and then to develop actionable, consensus solutions, and move forward in unlikely alliances to achieve constructive change on intractable issues.

The [Discovery Report](#) on Digital Discourse builds on more than six months of engagement with differing experts and leaders, and synthesizes a literature review, an analysis of more than 580 enacted and proposed legislative solutions, outputs from three expert workshops, and more than 200 stakeholder interviews, among others. The report documents a particularly challenging conflict between leaders who most fear the harms associated with online “mis- and dis-information” and others who see greater danger in giving people or groups the power to diminish free speech by removing voices and perspectives from digital discourse. Other conflicts addressed stem from differing perspectives about the level of accountability digital platform companies should assume for user content on their sites and for their distribution algorithms.



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Monika Glowacki, Director of the Convergence Collaborative, said, “Our participants represent some of the most diverse perspectives to come together to mitigate the harms of digital media while also reimagining how technology can better serve our society and wellbeing. We hold high hopes that this Collaborative will help our stakeholders build trust and construct actionable consensus solutions that can both address the issues and generate widespread support among and across diverse policymakers, technology leaders, local communities, and everyday citizens.”

Convergence gratefully acknowledges support for this project from [The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), which promotes informed and engaged communities and believes that providing people with information is essential so that they and their communities can make the best choices. This work was also made possible through the support of [New Pluralists](#), a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and a collaborative of diverse funders and field leaders (practitioners, storytellers, researchers, and innovators) working together to catalyze a culture of pluralism, belonging and respect in America.

As an extension of the Collaborative, Convergence will host a virtual event, as part of its “Convergence Live: Debate Without Hate” series, on [Digital Information and Toxic Polarization](#) on Friday, January 27, 2023, at 12:00 pm ET. Hosted by Convergence President and CEO David Eisner, this lively event will feature a discussion with notable experts [Ari Cohn](#), Tech Freedom, and [Heidi Legg](#), Harvard University IQSS, about misinformation and conflict online. *Convergence Live* is a series of far-ranging discussions with leaders in their fields about finding lasting solutions to problems in American public life with civility and humanity. Additional information about this free event and a link to register can be found [here](#).

About Convergence Center for Policy Resolution

Convergence is the leading organization bridging divides to solve critical issues through collaborative problem-solving across ideological, political, and cultural lines. For more than a decade, Convergence has brought together leaders, doers, and experts—many who never thought they could talk to one another—to build trusting relationships, identify breakthrough solutions, and form unlikely alliances for constructive change on seemingly intractable issues. Our process is improving the lives of Americans and strengthening democracy for a more resilient and cooperative future. To learn more, visit convergencepolicy.org.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

We are social investors who support democracy by funding free expression and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy, and in the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once had newspapers. Learn more at kf.org and follow [@knightfdn](https://twitter.com/knightfdn) on social media.

About the New Pluralists Collaborative

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