

# ***THE DILEMMAS***

*A.k.a. Open Source Ethics*

*A.k.a. Ubuntu*

**A television show format proposal by**

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## TV FORMAT PROPOSAL

**PROGRAMME TITLE:** *The Dilemmas (or Open Source Ethics, or Ubuntu)*

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** 15+; A,B,C1,C2 & D

**SUGGESTED TIME-SLOT** Friday 8pm, weekly

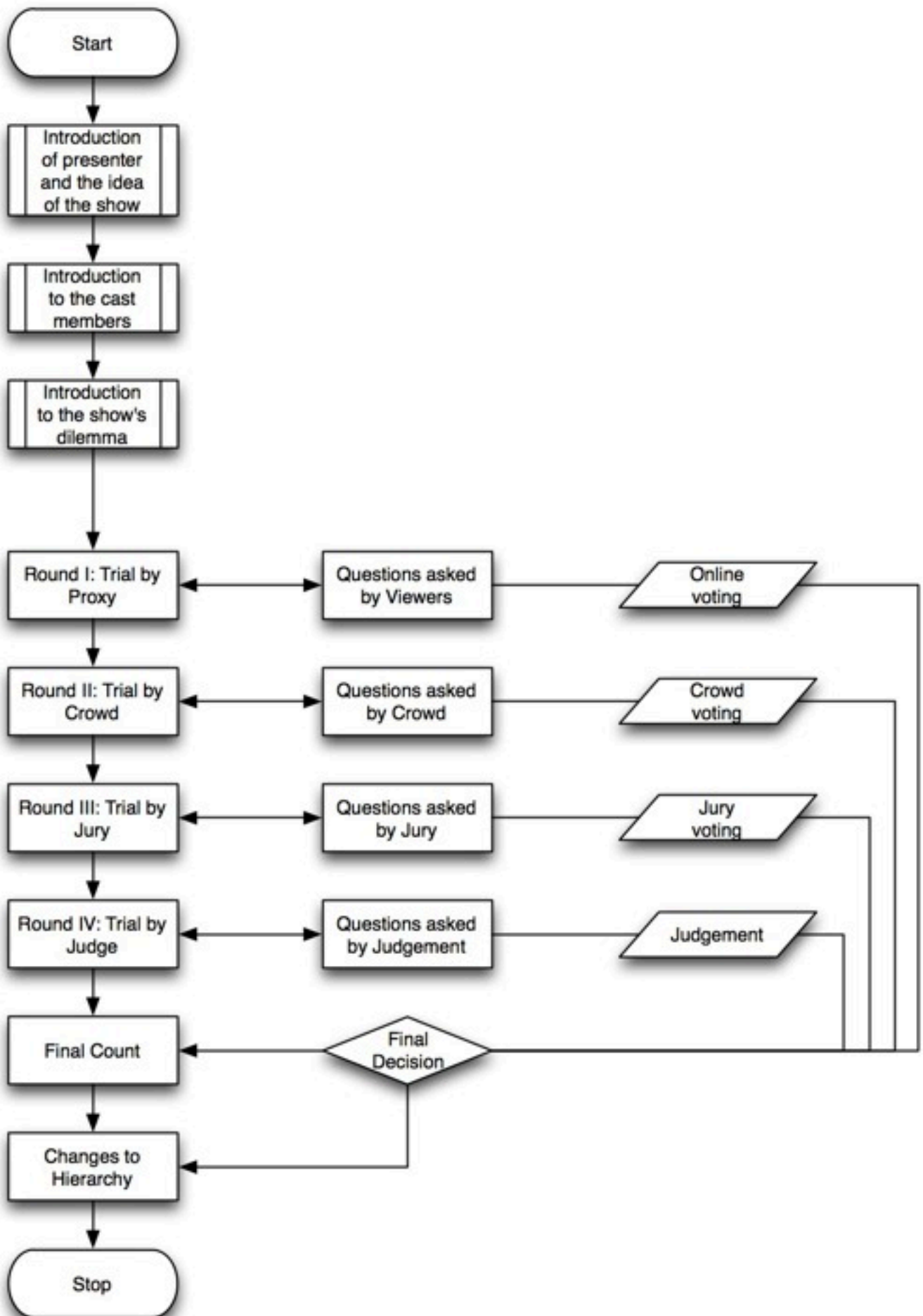
**LENGTH** 60 minutes

### BRIEF OUTLINE

*The Dilemmas* is a weekly live broadcast based on the idea of *open source ethics*: the determination of rules and conduct in society as deemed appropriate or correct in the views of the population at large. It is both a setting for serious debate and a game show with two threads running through it: one is the weekly competition between two players who must argue their side of a particular dilemma; the other is a series long competition to become the best judge of public opinion. Proceedings take place in four different debating environments, with access to the content of the other proceedings limited for each.

## **RUNNING ORDER**

- I. Introduction to the idea of the show, briefly.
- II. Introduction to the cast members (audience, panel, judge, protagonist and antagonist)
- III. Introduction to the show's dilemma, which changes every week.
- IV. Round I: Trial by Proxy**
- V. First poll
- VI. Round II: Trial by Crowd**
- VII. Second Poll
- VIII. Round III: Trial by Jury**
- IX. Third Poll
- X. Round IV: Trial by Judge**
- XI. Final Poll
- XII. Summary of show and reactions
- XIII. Change of hierarchy
- XIV. Introduction to next show



## **DETAILED SYNOPSIS**

### **A Brief Introduction to Open Source**

Based on the concepts underpinning open source creation of software, *The Dilemma* is a game that sources public opinion on particular issues and polls their views.

The open source philosophy promotes freedom of speech, freedom of access, transparency in proceedings and the elimination of copyright. The open source movement first developed in computer programming and grew out of the free software movement of the 1980s. In computing it describes the process of software creation by unpaid collaborators and hobbyists working over the internet to write, test and maintain programs for which users would not be charged and on which they are able to collaborate. The Linux operating system, the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia and the Mozilla Firefox internet browser are all open source: created by many users, governed by not-for-profit organisations and free to all to use.

Whilst open source suggests a non-hierarchical structure, weighted positions are necessary within the dispersed organisations. The internal hierarchy is deeply meritocratic; the more one member contributes and the higher the quality of their contribution, the greater their responsibility and their say in development decisions. For example, an open source software programmer who has been coding for a few years will have more say on new software features than a newcomer.

### **Open Source Ethics**

Ethics is constantly in flux; *The Dilemmas* aims to record these changes and promote ongoing debate through the idea of open source ethics. Open source ethics is a (new) term to describe the open and transparent documenting of opinion and its utilisation to determine the answer to a particular dilemma. Each person who wishes to contribute has an equal right to opinion stating and an equal level of access for their opinion to be heard.

However, there is a hierarchy at the high end of the ethics field. The hierarchy is used to help guide the deliberations but also to pass final judgement and make concrete decisions. The positions in the hierarchy are determined by the performances and efforts of the participating judges and the game mechanism is structured to allow changes in positions over time. The hierarchy also permits material privileges to those at the top as an incentive to further contributions.

## The Game

There are two threads running through the game:

- I. the **dilemma** between the two players - one a protagonist and the other the antagonist - concluded over the course of a single show, and
- II. the **hierarchy** of the judging participants, concluded over the course of a series/season.

For each show the dilemma, the players and the judging participants are introduced and the game proceeds through four rounds, as described below. Each round is a different setting for debate and judgement: the first is a question and answering session with a large public audience at a distance; the second is a studio audience debate; the third is a committee hearing; the fourth and final setting is in front of a single judge.

The object of the game for the players is to make the most convincing case in each debate setting. Both the popularity of the argument and the swing in vote over the course of the show determine each player's success.

The object of the game for the judging participants is to rise up the hierarchy from viewer to studio audience member to juror to judge. Both the final positions and the performance over the course of a series determine the successes of the participants.

## Rewards and incentives

There are both rewards for the players and for the hierarchy.

The players receive prizes (cash or otherwise) for winning their battle of hearts and minds. There are two types of prize: one for the side of the argument that wins out in the end and one for the argument that has improved most over the course of the show, i.e. has the biggest swing of vote from the start to the finish.

There are rewards for rising through the ranks of the hierarchy:

- I. The studio audience are provided with a meal at the studio, are entertained there for the evening and leave with a goody bag
- II. The jury are provided with a meal at a high-quality restaurant, are kept overnight in a hotel, have their travel expenses paid and are presented with a gift
- III. The judge has access to all information and content, as well as having equal say with the producers of the programme on the issues to be dealt with for the following weeks show. They are also housed in an luxury hotel and have access to a range of activities and goods.

Over the course of a series, the person who stays judge for the longest or, in the event of a tie, has stayed at a high level in the games hierarchy for the longest, wins the Series Prize, a much larger offering to reward continuity.

## **ROUND STRUCTURE**

### **Round I - Trial by Proxy**

*Participants: 1000 members of the virtual audience, interacting via television and online, selected through a lottery system.*

First, questions submitted by the viewers prior to the show, ranked according to their popularity, are asked to the protagonist and antagonist, which they must then answer in turn. After a set number of questions, viewers at home and on the internet would be able to vote through the show's website/application or via interactive 'red button' services.

### **Round II - Trial by Crowd**

*Participants: 100 members in the studio audience, promoted from the virtual audience through the game algorithm.*

First, questions are taken from the floor, the presenter acting as chair and the protagonist and antagonist respond in turn. A vote is taken place by members of the audience passing through one of two gates into separate rooms.

### **Round III - Trial by Jury**

*Participants: 10 jury members, a panel of experts, promoted from the studio audience through the game algorithm.*

In turn, the protagonist and antagonist face an interrogation by the jury for an equal period of time. The jurors vote by giving scores on their performance and how much they agree with them, with one sum total versus the other to decide the winner.

### **Round IV - Trial by Judge**

*Participants: 1 judge, promoted from the jury through the game algorithm.*

The protagonist and antagonist together meet with the judge, who in turn asks each to explain their side for a set period of time. The judge makes a set of decisions on the presented dilemma, and predicts the results of the other polls in the game.

## **The Final Count**

The virtual audience, real audience, jury and judge round scores are aggregated, weighted and manipulated in the game algorithm to determine the final result, presented to the protagonist and the antagonist. The restructuring of the hierarchy is then determined.

## **SAMPLE DILEMMAS**

The production team filter suggestions for dilemmas either sent in by viewers or suggested by studio audience members, members of the jury or the judge. The team then meet with the judge to decide the following weeks show, with both parties having equal say.

The dilemmas could be topical or general, and would be binary in form, i.e. can be answered 'Yes' or 'No'. Examples could include:

- Is absolute power in the hands of a wise Monarch preferable to the British system of Government, under the perversion of a corrupt Parliament?
- Is the present alarming increase of divorces to be attributed more to neglect in the male, or levity in the female sex?
- Is it more painful to a Woman of Sensibility, to be obliged to marry the Man she dislikes, or debarred the man she loves?
- Has Political Prejudice been productive of more real injury to Society than Religious Prejudice?
- Is the man who deliberately seduces a female, and then deserts her more blameable than the father who abandons his child so seduced?
- Do Theatrical Entertainments tend more to improve or deprave the Morals of Mankind?
- Is the the surly old Batchelor of more contemptible character than the peevish old Maid?
- Is Wit in the Male more dangerous to the possessor than Beauty in the Female Sex?
- Is being subject to the caprice of a Coquet before marriage a more disagreeable situation to a man of sensibility than to be obliged to live with a Scold afterwards?
- Does that Infamy which follows a Female's first deviation from Chastity, operate more to keep the sex Virtuous; or to render the Seduced more desperate in Vice?

[NB: the examples above were taken from London debates from 1787.]

## **ILLUSTRATIONS**

(Coming shortly...)

## **SUGGESTED PRESENTERS**

A current affairs presenter of sufficient gravitas to ensure the show retains the seriousness of its arguments. Someone with a sense of humour would also help. For example, David Dimbleby, Jeremy Paxman or Sir David Frost.

## **SET DESIGN**

To be discussed in detail in thesis documentation.

## **OUTLINE BUDGET**

To be discussed in detail in thesis documentation