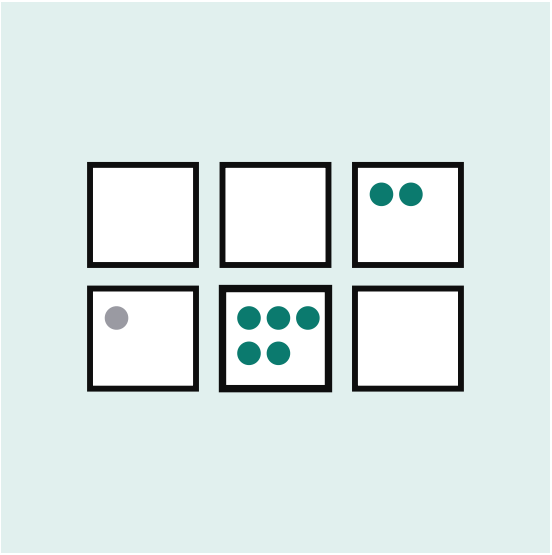
Method

Dot voting

Each person spreads a limited number of dots (stickers or marks) among the displayed options; those with the most dots move on to the next phase.



In Spanish

Votación con puntos

Origin

No single author; often linked to the nominal group technique (Delbecq and Van de Ven, 1971)

Output

A selection of ideas ranked by support

What it's for

Helps a group go from many options to a few quickly and visibly, without only the loudest voices deciding.

Key elements

Few dots

Having fewer dots than options forces you to choose.

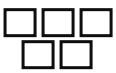
Everyone at once

Voting silently and at the same time avoids copying what others do.

A signal, not a verdict

The dots show preferences; the decision is discussed afterward.

How it's done

1 

Display all the options in view.

2 

Vote with a few dots, in silence.

3 

Count and discuss the most voted ones.

Applications in design

When to use it

To narrow a brainstorm down to a few ideas when the group needs to keep moving.

Avoid

Voting in turns and in full view, because the first dots sway everyone else.

Don't fall for it

The most voted is not necessarily the best: also review ideas with few votes but a lot of potential.

Connections

Builds on

- Bandwagon effect

Related to

- Crazy 8s
- Brainstorming
- MoSCoW method
- Six Thinking Hats
- Design sprint

Authors and works

1971	**André Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven**	Proposed the nominal group technique, in which each person generates ideas silently, the ideas are shared, and they are prioritized with an individual vote.
2023	**Kate Kaplan, Nielsen Norman Group**	Describes three common problems with dot voting in design, including too many options and the influence of how others vote.

Sources

Original sources

- Delbecq, A. L., & Van de Ven, A. H. (1971). A group process model for problem identification and program planning. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 7(4), 466–492. View source (https://doi.org/10.1177/002188637100700404)

Secondary sources

- Kaplan, K. (2023, November 15). Dot voting: 3 common problems [Video]. Nielsen Norman Group. View source (https://www.nngroup.com/videos/dot-voting-problems/)

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