17 examples of social media and government innovation

CITIZEN 2.0

SeeClickFix / Ushahidi / GovLoop / EveryBlock / Zonability / CultureNOW / YouTown / Votenaweb / Vancouver Greenest City / NYC Simplicity Idea Market / Localocracy / US Embassy Jakarta / Experience Grand Rapids, MI / PopVox / Manor, TX & Manorlabs / Yammer/ Turkayfe

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the following people for taking the time to talk to us about their projects and experiences: Ben Berkowitz (SeeClickFix), Conor White-Sullivan (Localocracy), Marci Harris (PopVox), Leigh Budlong (Zonability), Michael Riedyk (YouTown), Luke Fretwell (GovFresh), Mari Fonseca (Webcitizen/Votenaweb), Patrick Meier (Ushahidi), Andrew Krzmarzick (GovLoop), Adrian Holovaty (EveryBlock), Abby Suckle and DavidGiglio (CultureNOW), Hamilton (Vancouver), Dustin Haisler (Manorlabs and Spigit/NYC Simplicity), Bryony Cole (Yammer), Amanda Mitchell (City of Vancouver), Efe Sevin and Gizem Silcifil (Turkayfe).

Thanks to Kathryn Nassberg, Lia Breunig, Pascal Marmier, Ted Schadler, Olivia Goebl, Angelika Wittek and Bernard Simonin for their support in starting, researching and editing this paper.
Internet has changed the way information is relayed and how people use it. We have gone from an era of broadcast dominated by passive reception to an era of digital natives, where communication is interactive and instantaneous. This new generation has grown up with the Internet and expects continuous participation.

This evolution towards new communication patterns provided governments with an opportunity to function in a more innovative, engaging and cost-effective manner. In recent years, many businesses have integrated tools such as Facebook and Twitter in their marketing efforts to reach customers more directly. In a government context, such tools can be similarly used to engage with citizens with the goals of collecting their feedback and ideas, making them aware of public services at their disposal and reaching out to broader audiences through non-traditional channels.

Social media have also returned power to citizens. By providing inexpensive and widely-available tools that make it easier to organize and voice challenge, new technologies have contributed to empower citizens while improving governments’ responsiveness and accountability. A new citizen is emerging.

The convergence of these trends has generated a number of innovations presented in this paper. From ideation to agenda setting, from branding to crowdsourcing... the examples show that it is not about the tools, but about why and how we put them to work.

The purpose of this paper is not to serve as a template, but to provide highly successful examples of social media and government innovation that can serve as inspiration. In a time or rapid tech-driven innovation, no one example is fundamentally unique, but new technologies are providing a unique opportunity to make governments more innovative and cost-effective and to make citizens more engaged and goal-focused for the common good.
SeeClickFix
Using Social media to improve the local community

Keywords: Non-emergency Issues Reporting, Crowdsourcing, Ideation, Agenda-Setting, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

SeeClickFix is an interactive website that enables users to report non-emergency issues in their communities, such as broken street lights, needed crosswalks, potholes, graffiti, and trees that need trimming. The site notifies local officials and plots of issues to be discussed on Google maps. Community and local government responses are reported and tracked by users. SeeClickFix is free to use for citizens. There are currently 50 US cities equipped with back-end tools and mobile apps that make the process of fixing issues easier.

THE STORY

SeeClickFix was born when co-founder Ben Berkowitz became frustrated by a graffiti on his street in New Haven, CT. When he got city officials on the phone, they weren’t able to help him. He began to wonder if other neighbors felt the same way. His idea was to build a platform that lets anybody click on a map and report an issue. Three years later, the company has reported over 110,000 issues including 60,000 that have been fixed by local authorities.

A notable story in the site’s history took place in New Haven’s Western Square neighborhood when 150 people who were discussing issues online on SeeClickFix got together offline to fix traffic safety hazards and to lobby the city to put solar lighting on a dangerous bridge in their area. In early 2011, a California-based investor decided to fund the business $1.5M when an issue he reported on SeeClickFix was fixed a few days later.


Also in this space: FixMyStreet (UK) / CitySourced (USA) / Lagan (Northern Ireland) / PublicStuff (USA)
Ushahidi
Mapping a crisis with inputs from the field

Keywords: Crisis Management, Crowdsourcing, Mobility, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

Ushahidi is a non-profit company providing mapping software. Its tools enable citizens to report about their situation in times of humanitarian crisis. Individuals and organizations can instantaneously share stories and testimonies using text messages, emails or traditional web platforms. By aggregating these reports, Ushahidi is able to create a comprehensive mapping of any situation. The goal of this data visualization is to facilitate the development of warning systems and hence to better respond to a crisis-related event. Ushahidi relies on the viral engagement of the crowd and on a global community of volunteers that spreads the word on how to use technology and monitors the flow of inbound information. Interestingly, Ushahidi’s technology has also been used to monitor bikers’ security situation in LA as well as to map restaurants in Texas. This shows how versatile and easy to use it is.

THE STORY

Ushahidi was born out of the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008 when Ory Okolloh and several other bloggers launched an online platform to encourage Kenyan volunteers to report eyewitness testimonies of violence via email and text-message, with the information then placed on Google maps. The use of the platform quickly went viral, especially when international media and NGOs started to collaborate with the Ushahidi team to report and verify information. From this initial success that showed the power of SMS-based communication in developing countries, Ushahidi’s open source tools have been used all over the world. It has provided tremendous value through its ability to closely track developments during crises such as in Haiti following the earthquake, in Japan after the tsunami, in Egypt and Kenya during the disputed political events. For Patrick Meier, director of Crisis Mapping and Partnerships, “Ushahidi’s mapping technologies can be used in many different contexts – and not only for crisis management or projects with social impact, even if it has been the core mission of Ushahidi so far. Recent initiatives have showed that Ushahidi platforms can be leveraged for marketing purposes as well or for projects that will eventually generate revenue.”

Manorlabs & Manor, TX

The poster child of a tech-driven city makeover for effective and playful city governance

Keywords: Crowdsourcing, Non-emergency issues reporting, Ideation, Nation/City Branding, Open Data, Agenda-Setting, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

ManorLabs is a platform that allows the citizens of Manor, Texas to generate new ideas with the ultimate goal of solving urban public policy issues. In order to capture ideas and information, ManorLabs has implemented an online game where citizens can earn and trade a virtual currency called “innobucks”. Participants can then use the online money to buy real prizes provided by local businesses and partners, or even to become mayor for a day. The platform has a track record of implemented innovation, such as the QR-code program, a citizen idea portal and a pothole reporting system. The overall initial budget was small but the returned value has been enormous. Manor’s tech-driven city makeover has also been successfully applied to De Leon, TX in under a month and with manageable operational monthly costs instead of large-scale investment.

THE STORY

When Dustin Haisler was hired as the city’s finance director, he was surprised by the lack of infrastructural technology in place. In 2008, he began implementing barcodes that were readable by cellphone cameras to share historical information and background stories on the city. The initiative’s success became a digital touchstone for Manor and paved the way for ManorLabs, which launched in October 2009 as a tool able to turn civic participation into an interactive online game. People enjoy using a playful platform to engage with civil servants and share ideas.

Vancouver Greenest City
Sourcing ideas for a greener city

Keywords: Ideation, Agenda-Setting, Crowdsourcing, Nation/City Branding, Transparency, Advocacy

THE INNOVATION

The city of Vancouver used a feedback-gathering web-based software to solicit ideas, votes and comments (a process called “ideation”) on how to make the city more environmentally responsible. The site called “Talk Green to Us” was active for a year. The results are visible online and include such ideas as a high-speed rail line to Seattle or food-waste collection programs expanding from homes to apartments. Citizens were able to vote and comment on entries. City officials followed up on each entry to discuss possible outcomes. The project team engaged over 10,000 people from Vancouver and 35,000 people from cities around the world to develop its plans.

THE STORY

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson was elected on a platform that included making the city the greenest in the world by 2020. The process of fulfilling this electoral promise included the creation of a team that ran an engaging crowdsourcing project. This effort influenced the creation of a plan that was submitted to the Council for approval in July 2011. The plan takes people’s ideas into account, as well as the economic resources and costs involved in delivering the promises made.


Ideation technology solutions: GetSatisfaction / IdeaScale / UserEcho / BubbleIdeas/ PubliVate / Spigit / UserVoice
NYC Simplicity Idea Market

City employees’ ideas for a more customer-focused, innovative and efficient New York

Keywords: Ideation, Crowdsourcing, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

In February 2011, the city of New York launched “NYC Simplicity Idea Market,” where employees of all levels and agencies are invited to share their ideas on how the city government can work more effectively. Each employee can post ideas, comment on the ideas of others, and vote for those they like best. The most popular submissions that rise to the top will be reviewed by experts in agencies and the Mayor’s office, and the best ones will be implemented. Typical discussions have revolved around education, safety and maintenance of infrastructure. To date, 15,000 City employees have participated in a pilot that is now being extended to 70 agencies and 300,000 employees.

THE STORY

Inspired by the city of Manor’s success and other stories of city innovation initiatives, NYC Mayor Bloomberg announced in January 2011 the launch of project “Simplicity”. Its goal is to streamline operations, weed out unnecessary regulations, and encourage innovation at every turn. The IdeaMarket project is part of this initiative, and is being implemented internally first in order to teach employees about social media and open collaboration before extending the initiative more broadly to other agencies and eventually to the public.


Projects with similarities: Manorlabs (USA) / Vancouver Greenest City (Canada)
GovLoop
A Social Network for Government

Keywords: Social Network, Ideation, Crowdsourcing, Open Data

THE INNOVATION

GovLoop is a social network similar to Facebook and LinkedIn for people involved in and around government. It is a US-focused site with a global reach that hosts more than 45,000 personal profiles. In addition to connecting people, the platform provides all the necessary tools for information sharing, such as blogs, newsletters, podcasts, videos and wikis. The goal of the site is to build a community of innovators in federal, local and international governments to share best practices. Content spans a diversity of issues such as social media, open government, careers, local police departments, cyber security and emergency management. GovLoop runs on Ning technology, a paid platform for people to create their own social networks and has inspired similar communities in the Netherlands, Brazil and Israel.

THE STORY

GovLoop was founded as a hobby in 2008 by Steve Ressler, then a 28-year-old information specialist working for the government. The site quickly grew to 20,000 members through a straightforward combination of viral growth, conference talks and media attention. However, growing to 45,000 members has required considerably more community management efforts by Andrew Krzmarzick and the development of new integrated tools to facilitate information sharing, such as data.govloop, ideas.govloop, and tools.govloop. GovLoop has also added regular hosted free online training sessions, online chats and meetings in 15 cities around the US.


Also in this space: Apsozlook (Australia) / Ambtenaar (NL) / GCPEDIA (Canada) / FedSpace (USA)
Yammer
The Enterprise Private Social Network

Keywords: Social Network, Ideation, Mobility, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

Think of Yammer as an office version of Twitter/Facebook that forms a private network of coworkers. The network’s privacy is ensured by a filter that limits access to valid company email addresses only. Numerous governments have also used Yammer to make their employees comfortable with social media; the most common benefits for users include crowd-sourcing ideas, creating an internal who’s who and who’s working on what, as well as connecting formally and informally with coworkers. There are over 110 government Yammer networks in Australia, and the service is used globally by more than a million users and 100,000 companies.

THE STORY

Before joining Yammer, Bryony Cole was in charge of introducing social media to the Victorian Department of Justice in Australia. Her first observation was that 85% of the workforce was digital immigrants who did not see the business value and did not know why it was important to use social media. Before committing to doing a long-term project with social media externally, she saw the need to train people internally on what is appropriate to share, privacy issues, and personal benefits of social media. That was when Bryony came across Yammer and began using it to school coworkers on social media. In addition to educating users on how to use the tools available, the platform has helped with the next phase – participating in social media. Public servants were involved in forming the Social Media Policy via crowdsourcing on Yammer. Employee usage of Yammer also unearthed key social media leaders, often working in unrelated areas, that could serve as official spokespeople on digital campaigns and participate in Gov 2.0 initiatives. Other Yammer uses around the globe include crises communications in the US, field updates to HQ in Belgium, live traffic communities in the UK.

Experience Grand Rapids
A community-created YouTube video promoting the city of Grand Rapids, MI

Keywords: Nation/City Branding

THE INNOVATION

The city of Grand Rapids, Michigan (188,000 people) managed to create a promotional lip synced music video that has been watched close to 4 million times on YouTube in less than 3 months since Memorial Day weekend 2011. The cost of producing the video was $40,000 and its distribution done for free on YouTube. The 10-minute video features hundreds of the city’s residents in the street lip synching to Don McLean’s classic song “American Pie” and has served to enhance Grand Rapids’ sense of community and the pride of its residents, including local entertainers, political figures or media celebrities. Grand Rapids recently launched a website - experiencegr.com – that is also an example of the city’s shift towards a digital and social media-integrated communication able to trigger thousands of new posts and comments - a far cry from the image of a dying city that the media had recently painted.

THE STORY

In January 2011, Newsweek and MainStreet.com published a list titled “America’s Dying Cities: Cities with Bleak Futures Ahead,” featuring 10 US cities that had experienced declines in population between 2000 and 2009. Grand Rapids, with its population of 188,000 came in at number 10. Soon after the publication, the plans for the video were laid by Grand Rapids residents and movie directors Rob Bliss, as well as his friend Scott Erickson. With a limited budget of $40,000 for the production, the hope was to reach 1 million views within a year. The buzz generated by the video has worked to change the original perception of the city by stressing a sense of collaboration and goodwill.

Turkayfe
A grassroots nation branding initiative promoting Turkey

Keywords: Nation/City Branding, Social Network, Public Diplomacy

THE INNOVATION

Turkayfe is a grassroots public diplomacy initiative and community focused on sharing what Turkey has to offer. Its social network website turkayfe.org provides a simple interface with all the web 2.0 bells and whistles. The community is also engaged online through social media tools (Twitter, Facebook) as well as offline through events like the ones held in New York and Washington DC in June 2011. The site’s early adopters have been Turkish expats living abroad and foreign expats living in Turkey. Since then, Turkayfe’s member base has now expanded to scholars and people visiting or planning to visit Turkey either for leisure or business. Members can share articles, photos, audio clips, videos, presentations, resources and other personal experiences to create positive associations with Turkey.

THE STORY

Turkayfe was founded in May 2009, by Gizem Silcigil and Efe Sevin, two young Turkish entrepreneurs living in the US. The site started out as a reaction to the lack of government presence on social media and as entrepreneurs, they took the initiative to fill the gap and to promote a Turkish brand online. In June 2011, the founders held two events in NYC and DC on the history of Turkish coffee culture. The primary goal was to show how social interaction revolved around coffee and how coffee houses have had an impact on both American and Turkish culture. Turkayfe was presented as a “virtual coffeehouse”. Following the events, the founders were asked by Turkish official to host events in Turkish consulates in the United States, in addition to being approached by US entrepreneurs looking for connections to Turkey.

www.turkayfe.org | Country: Turkey/USA | Founded: 2009
US Embassy Jakarta
Using Facebook for Public Diplomacy

Keywords: Public Diplomacy, Social Network, Nation/City Branding, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

The US Embassy in Jakarta has succeeded in creating an engaged Facebook fan base that is larger than all other US Embassies combined (330,000 fans vs. 8,000 for the US Embassy in the UK). A four-person team composed of an American officer and three local staffers posts news mostly in Indonesian and roughly once a day. Updates span the promotion of cultural events, quizzes, tourist promotional videos of US states subtitled in Indonesian and pictures of the Embassy’s batik collection. Light moderation encourages freedom of expression and team interventions are limited to removing disrespectful or hateful comments, or redirecting people who ask questions that are beyond their expertise.

THE STORY

Tristram Perry (who has since moved on to Pakistan) and his team started the Embassy’s Facebook Page in January 2009 with the goal of engaging newer and larger audiences that aren’t informed through traditional mainstream media. Indonesia’s Facebook base is the second largest behind the US. This unique approach showed a more down-to-earth side of the embassy and the USA. The site’s team of moderators is composed of social media users who treat the page as a community and not as a website.

One of the embassy’s most successful postings involved President Obama’s visit to Indonesia, which was announced on Facebook a few hours before a press release was issued. The page quickly had over a thousand posts, “likes” and positive comments. People invited Obama to their home or asked him what Indonesian meal he was going to eat, etc. The overall experience underlined the growing success social media has had as an efficient tool of public diplomacy, enabling a country to improve its perception abroad.

Zonability
Leveraging open data for better zoning information

Keywords: Open Data, Transparency, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

Zonability is designed to make zoning regulations easy to understand for people involved in buying property or starting a business. The ultimate goal is to create a solution to the tedious and time-consuming process of sifting through local, state and federal zoning rules to understand the requirements and limitations of land use. Zonability spells zoning regulations out on an individual basis and can explain how the particular land of interest can be used. By pairing the data with open geographical information, the information is presented in a much more visual and easy-to-grasp manner.

THE STORY

Leigh Budlong, CEO and founder of Zonability, used to work on commercial real estate proposals dealing with zoning codes. She set out to find a way to use technology to simplify the zoning check process. Zonability became the first company to attempt to overcome this challenge. The White House showed its confidence in Zonability’s potential in June 2011 when it named the site as one of its Champions of Change in technology. Zonability is a concrete illustration of the efficiency of open-data initiatives supported by the Government – that have been in many regards a catalyst for innovation.

www.zonability.com | Country: USA | Founded: 2010
CultureNOW
“Museums without walls”

Keywords: Mobility, Nation/City Branding, Open Data, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

CultureNOW is a smartphone application that allows citizens to explore their cultural environment as a gallery that exists beyond museums. The site guides people through cities and provides maps, tour routes, and historical information, as well as architectural analysis, photographs, and podcasts recorded by cultural practitioners. From New York to Los Angeles, Albuquerque to Toledo, Portland to Providence, 35 cities have partnered with cultureNOW to showcase their artwork and create a digital National Gallery. All entries are searchable by category, location, item and artist.

THE STORY

President of CultureNOW Abby Suckle spent much of her career working as an architect. After 9/11, she designed and distributed cultural and historical maps of New York for the “New York / New Vision” initiative to rebuild lower Manhattan. From this, she started CultureNOW and created other mapping projects. In 2010, the team consolidated its maps and began experimenting with iPhone apps to show people the culture that exists in their own backyard and get them to explore using technology. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg recognized CultureNOW as one of the Best Overall Apps in the NYC BigApps contest, where they won the prize for Best Apps of 2011 in the culture category.

YouTown
Making local governments mobile

Keywords: Mobility, Non-emergency Issues Reporting, Open Data, Transparency, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

YouTown is a smartphone application platform that allows local governments to go mobile and reach citizens on a highly-popular medium. As soon as a city creates an account, it can start adding their open data feeds (such as RSS feeds, Calendar feeds, Maps and Services). By downloading the app, citizens have access to all published information and can interact with their government from any mobile devices. This approach is well-suited for small-to-medium size communities that want the advantages of going mobile while avoiding the costs of developing an in-house solution.

THE STORY

In 1998, Dutch native Michael Riedyk founded Green Valley, a successful European e-government content management solution provider. He recently moved to North America with the idea of reselling similar products and services, but quickly realized that the approach used towards an open government was entirely different in North America: it was focused on outreach as opposed to internal business process efficiency. He saw three important trends worth leveraging: social media, mobile and open data. At the outset, Michael simply sent a tweet asking for 5 cities willing to participate in a development and testing program.

One successful example is the city of Enid, Oklahoma (40,000 inhabitants) that signed up on YouTown and was able to go mobile within a single day, giving it a better mobile presence than most larger cities. Using this platform, YouTown will soon reach 100 cities.


Also in this space: Blockboard / EveryBlock
Localocracy
Constructive and transparent community-focused discussions

Keywords: Agenda-Setting, Ideation, Crowdsourcing, Advocacy, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

Localocracy is a platform that gathers citizens, government officials and journalists to learn and exchange ideas about local community-focused topics. On Localocracy, users are able to influence issues that matter to them while local governments gain an opportunity to engage with their constituents and create greater transparency on a public platform, as well as be able to tap into citizens’ ideas and skills. Users must use their registered voter names, since, according to co-founder Connor White-Sullivan, anonymous comments weren’t generating the kind of constructive participation needed. Additionally, Localocracy has partnered with traditional media such as the Boston Globe to provide stories on the community.

THE STORY

Connor White-Sullivan and Aaron Soules founded Localocracy in September 2008, when the two University of Massachusetts students wanted to change the way citizens engaged with local political issues. When they started Localocracy, the goal was to have a simple way to go online and bring political issues in front of a local audience. Six cities in Massachusetts currently enjoy the service. The Amherst site features topics, such as “Should Amherst build a solar farm on the old landfill?” or “Should town schools start purchasing food from local farms?” The first “issue of the week” in Amherst was launched in 2010. The question “Should Amherst elementary schools continue to be a part of Union 26” had 98 votes and 60 comments and counted 53 supporters and 45 opponents. The initiative showed a lot of citizen participation and was a big success for the community. Localocracy is one of 16 winners of the “Champions of Change”, a contest hosted by the White House to showcase the potential of open data made available by federal, state and local agencies.

www.localocracy.com | Country: USA | Founded: 2010
Votenaweb
Promoting transparency and civil engagement in Brazilian politics

Keywords: Transparency, Agenda-Setting, Advocacy, Community Information

THE INNOVATION

Votenaweb is a Brazilian platform that provides citizens with an easy and straightforward way to follow government activity. The site simplifies congressional bills that are being voted on, no matter how complex or obscure. Registered members can unofficially vote on a bill with a single click. The Website shows dynamic and visual maps where users can compare their votes with those in Congress. In reaction, users post comments, start debates and look up politicians’ backgrounds and voting histories. The site is fully integrated with all social media and appeals to a younger audience, making it a valuable tool for building a more positive and involved democracy.

THE STORY

Votenaweb was launched in November 2009 during the São Paulo TEDx conference as a joint-venture between Fernando Barreto, who has experience working directly in politics and with government, and Helder Araujo, a famous Brazilian graphic and web designer. They wanted to bring politics and citizens together with the help of the web and disseminate information, as well as promote engagement. After almost two years, Votenaweb has 16’000 members, 4’000 uploaded bills, 400’000 computed votes and 10’000 comments. People’s views on politics could be changing thanks to Votenaweb.


Projects with similarities: Smartvote (CH) / Votainteligente (Chile) / PopVox (USA) / Localocracy (USA)
PopVox
A platform to bridge the communication gap between parliament, advocacy groups, and the people

Keywords: Advocacy, Agenda-Setting, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

Popvox is a non-partisan advocacy platform that aims to improve communication between US Congress, and trade and union organizations, as well as the general public on specific pieces of legislation. Popvox lists every bill that is introduced to Congress and creates an Action Page where individuals can vote, comment and describe their positions. Advocacy organizations can post their statements and congressional staffers can track constituents’ opinions and votes.

While the Brazilian Votenaweb is meant to be an independent platform for tracking government activity geared towards constituents, PopVox is meant to be a tool for Congress staffers and for agenda setting.

THE STORY

Members of the US Congress have understood the need to use social media to better understand its constituents. However, the high influx of Facebook and Twitter, along with the 3,000 emails received daily, created a build-up of citizen input that was left unheard. Marci Harris, CEO and founder of Popvox, used her experience as a congressional staffer to create a platform that bridges this communication gap. The site’s success became apparent when a featured bill, suggesting state licensing for internet poker, gained 93% of the users’ votes and was assigned to a congressional committee in June 2011. The committee will consider sending the bill to the Senate to be voted on, showing that Popvox has created a more effective way for constituents to make their voices heard in Congress.

www.PopVox.com | Country: USA | Founded: 20010
EveryBlock

“Making your neighborhood a better place”

Keywords: Community Information, Crowdsourcing, Social Network, Agenda-Setting, Transparency

THE INNOVATION

On EveryBlock, users are invited to enter their zip code to follow their block’s news and connect with neighbors. The site combines different types of local news, including neighbor messages, public records such as street closures and crime reports, restaurant inspections and reviews, media mentions, apartment listings and school reviews. The information is sourced equally from private websites such as Yelp and Flickr, as well as from public data sources. Of the 15 communities featured on EveryBlock, that of the Chicago community is the most developed and most used to date, with other cities following Chicago’s lead. EveryBlock is working to live up to its motto, “making your block a better place.”

THE STORY

In 2005, EveryBlock founder Adrian Holovaty launched chicagocrime.org where users could find out about criminal activity in their neighborhood. Having been successful with his first venture, he decided two years later to expand on the concept to do more than “only Chicago and only crime”. EveryBlock was born with the original idea of providing users with local news in real time. In March 2011, EveryBlock underwent considerable redesign, shifting from being newsfeed-oriented towards community discussion and user-generated content. As a result of the new platform roll-out, neighbors began online discussions to better organize the community life from scheduling street cleanups to hosting block parties. EveryBlock is becoming a social network with a purpose.


Also in this space: Blockboard / YouTown
The Big Picture

SeeClickFix / Ushahidi / ManorLabs / Vancouver Green City / NYC Idea Market / GovLoop / Yammer / Experience Grand Rapids / Turkayfe / US Embassy in Jakarta / Zonability / CultureNow / Localocracy / Votenaweb / PopVox / EveryBlock / YouTown

Crowdsourcing is the act of outsourcing tasks, traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, to an undefined, large group of people or community.

Ideation is the creative process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas.

Open data is the idea that certain governmental data should be freely available to everyone to use and republish as they wish.
MORE TO EXPLORE

This selection of inspiring examples is not comprehensive. In the process of writing this paper, we came across the case of the city of Saint Charles, Missouri (img. A) that substituted its traditional local TV channel for an integrated broadcast television program on Youtube. The website recovery.gov (img. B, C) enables US taxpayers to track how recovery funds are spent. The company NationBuilder (img. D) has built an amazing community building platform ideal for political campaigns. The Brazilian state of Minas Gerais (img. E) has launched an ideation platform to solve its 10 biggest problems.

For more on the topic, we can recommend visiting all the websites mentioned in the paper but also www.govfresh.com (img. F), a blog that works to inspire government-citizen collaboration and to build a more engaged democracy.
ABO UT THE AU TH OR S

Hadi Barkat is the CEO and Founder of RedCut, a company improving the world’s IQ with games. Hadi got the idea for founding RedCut when he was applying for citizenship in Switzerland. He built a game to learn about Switzerland while having fun. Hadi also had the idea for this paper for three reasons: learning more about crowdsourcing and other tech-based innovations that are applicable to RedCut, providing valuable information to government officials interacting with RedCut on citizen games, and curiosity+serendipity.

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Graphic design by Elena Covalciuc (www.ElenartStudio.com).

This article is written in partnership between RedCut and swissnex Boston.