Open Government and the Voice of e-Democracy: Harnessing the power of digital technologies to engage citizens in public policy

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What Does Successful Open Government Look Like?

Best Practice Review Found…

There are a set of rules of engagement that makes some more successful than others:

- **Importance of an integrated approach**
  across four pillars of Open Government: Open Engagement | Open Data | Access to Information | Open Governance

- **Supportive Cultures**
  (leadership | public service employees | community)

- **Shared Ownership**
  (leadership | public service employees | community)

- **Test and Learn Culture**
Collaborative Consultation

**Legend**
- City Assessment & Consultation
- Community Assessment & Consultation
- Community & City Assessment & Consultation

**Organizational Environmental Scan**
- 55 internal stakeholders interviewed
  - 1 Councillor survey & consultation
  - Policy Review

**Experiential Online Survey**
- ~1000 views
  - ~500 civic respondents
  - 46 employee respondents

**Stakeholder Pre-Consultation**
- ~60 ideas
- ~100 interactions
- ~800 page views

**Community Scan**
- ~20 community groups to collaborate with

**Online Ideation**
- Numerous Round Tables and Community Led Meet Ups

**City Assessment & Consultation**
- Current State

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Internal Organizational Gaps

• Require more open and collaborative organizational culture

• Need clear definition of the Open Government initiative at the City

• Need corporate resource management and prioritization framework informed by citizens

• City data not ready for public use

“We have a lot of data that doesn’t talk to each other. I go to open a file and am told I don’t have permission to access it.”  
- City Staff
Voice of e-Democracy
Experiential Online Survey

Tell Us What You Know About Open Government

The City of Guelph wants to work with you to become a more ‘open’ government to deliver better public service. Open Government means being able to meet the needs of the Guelph community — by providing people that live and work in Guelph greater access to government information, more opportunities for political engagement and increasing transparency and accountability in government.

This survey is an opportunity to voice your opinions and ultimately help create a plan that will make the City of Guelph a more Open Government. It will also give you an indication of how ready you are for Guelph’s Open Government. Your answers will be anonymous.

Share your perspective and be a part of the plan! The entire experience should take about 10 minutes of your time.

Please ensure you do not use your browser’s back button during the survey.

Please click on the video to begin.

Read Transcript ▼

This experience is best viewed with:
Internet Explorer 9+, Firefox 20+, Chrome 25+, Safari 4+

www.openupguelph.ca
Voice of e-Democracy

The Process

Stage 1: Awareness
Community Outreach & Recruitment

Stage 2: Feedback
Engagement through video and survey (consistent experience on tablet & mobile devices)

Stage 3: Ongoing Dialogue
Opt-in for future activities

Community Outreach Partners
Website

Existing Email List
Mailings

The Voice of Guelph database
Powered by AskingCanadians eDemocracy platform

Visit www.delvinia.com for more information.
Open Government Readiness*

* Readiness encompasses skillset, resource level and attitude.
Community Gaps - Awareness

While less than half of the community population is familiar with the Open Government concept, there are sufficient champions in the community to help mobilize.

Familiarity with Open Government
Before today, what did you know about Open Government? (n=478)

Open Government Readiness Score (n=478)
Community Stakeholders Highly Interested

Community members are highly interested in key benefits brought forth by Open Government.

Q: What's your level of interest in the following Open Government goals? (n=468)
Source: Open Guelph Survey, 2014
The Guelph community is interested in more than consuming services. The Guelph community is interested in being part of the solution.
Where Does Guelph Stand Today?

- **High interest across the board**: From City leadership team, employees, and the community, making Guelph primed for Open Government

- **City in the position to lead** the community in adopting Open Government

- **Community Gap**: Trust in the City

- **Internal Organizational Gaps**: Organizational culture, governance, and communication

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**Open Government Readiness**

- **Catch up, City of Guelph!**
- **Let’s change the world!**
- **Let’s open our minds to change**
- **Guelph is here!**

* Readiness encompasses skillset, resource level and attitude.
Open Government Vision

To create a fully transparent and accountable City which leverages technology and empowers the community to generate added value as well as participate in the development of innovative and meaningful solutions.
Open Government Stories:

Engaging Citizens in Government Decisions

e-Service: Working Together to Improve Service Levels

Smart City: Making our City Accessible Together
Engaging Citizens in Government Decisions

Key Benefits

- Improved access to information for residents through new online channels
- Coordinated, streamlined ability for staff to consult/engage with community stakeholders on a wide range of topics
- New tools for council/staff to view aggregated, geographic input across city (e.g. heatmaps)
- Improved transparency and accountability (e.g. budget priorities) by opening up and simplifying access to key processes
The Changing Role of Government

The role of government in 2020 moves away from the traditional ‘vending machine’ model of service delivery to ‘government as a platform’ that enables community stakeholders to fully participate in developing new solutions, redesigning services and determining priorities.
CDO Research Questions

• Role of Digital Technology in building intelligent communities
  – Develop better sense of what an intelligent community is

• Consider a range of factors
  – Levels of citizen engagement
  – Trust and responsiveness in the community & local government institutions
  – Capacity of citizens to contribute to decisions
  – Other elements of ‘civic capital’

• Help determine how communities can harness digital technology
  – To deliver social and public services
  – Meet challenges and overcome complex policy problems
Focus on Research Issues

• Specific Research Questions
  – To what extent are Canadian communities using digital technology to become intelligent communities?
    • Employing e-health, e-work, education & e-government
  – What measures best assess community intelligence?
    • Role it plays in building local democracy or e-democracy
  – Assess the degree to which local and municipal governments are employing digital technology to deliver programs and services.
Research Methodology

• Survey of citizens in Canadian CMAs
  – Draw on questions from Guelph study and i-Canada’s community assessment tool
  – Contain both quantitative & qualitative questions
  – Use novel survey technique developed by Delvinia
  – Collect socio-demographic data to compare to profiles of city-regions in Local IDEAs database
Research Methodology 2

• Survey of Local Government Administration
  – Online survey to gauge perceptions regarding intelligent communities, bureaucratic culture & willingness to innovate
  – Opinions & policy regarding local business & economy
  – Willingness to incorporate digital technology into service delivery

• Survey of Industrial Partners & Technology Companies
  – Survey companies to probe extent to which businesses are using digital infrastructure
  – Perceptions of government support for infrastructure
  – Conceptions of intelligent community
    • How they envision use, barriers & strategies to promote adoption
WELCOME TO THE CENTRE FOR E-DEMOCRACY

An independent research hub at the intersection of democracy and digital technology

Our Purpose
To shed light on the ways that digital technologies are transforming opportunities for information, participation, citizen conversations and relationships with government.

Our Story
The first of its kind in Canada, the Centre will be a hot spot for e-Democracy research dedicated to studying the impact of digital technology on politics and democracy.

Our Vision
Through the translation and dissemination of knowledge, the Centre will have a real, practical impact on our knowledge and understanding of the use of technology in society and politics.

www.centreforedemocracy.com
THANK YOU.

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To find out more about Guelph’s Open Government Action Plan:
www.guelph.ca/opengov

To check out AskingCanadians’ Voice of e-Democracy survey:
www.openupguelph.ca

To find out more about the Centre for e-Democracy:
www.centreforedemocracy.com