DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT IN AN ANALOG WORLD

Creating Equal Access for Communities Old and New

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Part 1

COMMUNITY REDEFINED

Source: Evelyn Williams, “Face in the Crowd”
“When I started in this business, people wanted help with parking tickets, with moving violations, they wanted a job for their kids.

These [new] people, most of them don’t even drive. And if they get tickets, they just pay them.”

— Frank DiCicco, 16-year Philadelphia Councilman
THE NEW COMMUNITY

It’s a mix of local, city-wide, and far-flung groups.
COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

Technology can hold groups together, even when they’re geographically dispersed
What makes me take out my phone?

URGENT NOW
What’s the meeting address?

REPETITIVE NOW
Checking email, weather

BORED NOW
Waiting for train, airplane, friend

— Google’s Mobile Use Cases
Part 2
IMPLICATIONS FOR PLACEMAKING
INPUTS begin offline
What makes me visit that URL?

Keep OUTCOMES analog
1 law or 50 volunteers vs. 500 tweets
**Powerful + scalable** for administrators

- Schedule reminders
- Automate check-ins
- Track outcomes

**Simple + convenient** for end users

- 4 secs avg. time-to-read
- 71% respond within 1 hour
Location, Data, Bikeshare
AN OPEN DATA CASE STUDY
90 stickers
Textizen text feedback

Website
Shareabouts web feedback
Timeline

Speed due to pre-existing API and integration spec

APR
Textizen & OpenPlans create blueprint for integration

AUG
Project proposal
Project kickoff

SEPT
10,500 comments from 6,000 individuals in 30 days
Mural Arts partnership
Press push

OCT
Reports in 5 formats
Site visits & stakeholder meetings

NOV
Station map v2
Data is a great “bad cop”

To configure software, work backwards: what data matters for decision-making?

Bonus: Public input has impact in 2–8 weeks
5-8 questions. What’s most important?

Question: Are there any better spots for stations in the immediate area?

Format:
- Yes
- No

Followup: Where would you suggest a station? Why?

Question: What is your race/ethnicity?
Documented APIs and standard data formats enable integrations

Multi-platform applications; beautiful & useful data viz
Structured data enables real-time analysis and response

2 weeks after launch, bikeshare team holds focus groups in under-represented neighborhoods.
Structured public input
Automatic graphing and decision-making
Structured public input
Automatic graphing and decision-making
Anti-density Map
See underrepresented areas, run focus groups

Site Report
Take to stakeholders (Nat’l Parks Service)

Visit & evaluate better sites nearby (many suggestions for NE corner @ B&N)
“Any better spots?”

We are leaning particularly heavily on the ‘any other spots’ data…. it offers ideas for possible locations that we would otherwise take a lot more time to identify (by site visits, interviews, etc).

— Cara Ferrentino @ MOTU
Governments that meet people where they are can inform students about college prep resources.
Governments that meet people where they are can grow participation at events via invites + reminders
Governments that meet people where they are can **DIVERSIFY INPUT** for decision-making.
Governments that meet people where they are can **INCREASE ATTENDANCE** at classes and workshops based on text reminders.
Governments that meet people where they are can FOLLOW UP on the outcomes of their public services
40+ cities

Appointment reminders · Transportation feedback
Vacant lot ideation · Business corridors · Kid friendliness
Live council meetings · Parks usage · School districts · Customer feedback · Park improvements · Visitor surveys
Thanks

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