

Why your  
community  
doesn't know  
what you're  
doing

★  
Communication in the  
Modern Era

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## The New Age for Cities



- The importance of communications is at an all time high with the advent of social media.
- More and more people utilize the internet as their source of information.
- Because of this cities must be adapting to capitalize on the popularity of the internet to reach residents and create a dialogue.

## Why Cities Are Afraid of New Communications Tools



- Often, cities are afraid of venturing into new mediums of communications.
- The internet leaves little room for error because virtual footprints are permanent.
- Traditional institutions have more difficulty implementing sweeping procedural changes.
- Increased mediums of communication leave cities more vulnerable to criticism.

## Communication Tools to Utilize



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There are various ways to utilize the internet to create a more informed community. Because the internet's vast capabilities, there are numerous tools at a city's disposal.



## Interactive Websites



- Traditional websites don't make the cut anymore.
- In order to get traffic on a website it must be aesthetically appealing, have easily digestible information, and be easy to navigate.
- A city's website is the main resource residents use when interacting with their community. A good website ensures residents find what they need when they need it.

## Newsletters



Newsletters are a more traditional outlet communities have utilized as a way to disseminate information, however, with the rise of digital communication newsletters should be used as a complement to a robust communications strategy includes varied sources of information.



## Town Halls



- Although digital communications is the preferred medium of contact, face-to-face communication is still the most effective way to interact with a community.
- Town Halls give residents an opportunity to directly voice their opinions and to connect with leaders.



## Internet Forums



- Internet Forums are a digital extension of town halls that similarly provide citizens with a voice and an outlet to voice concerns in the community.
- Moving into the digital age, the importance of establishing online forums streamlines the process by which residents can give feedback to their city.

## Text Alerts



- Mobile communication is becoming the more preferred form of communication.
- Text message alerts allows cities to relay important emergency information quickly and efficiently directly to the residents who might be impacted.
- People in this day and age are never without a phone and therefore it is important to utilize this communication medium for important and timely information.

## Virtual Records



- Providing virtual records is a way cities can establish transparency with the community.
- By providing records online, it makes it easier for interested citizens to find out how their government works and holds the government accountable.

## Feedback



- Providing multiple outlets for feedback for residents ensures as many voices are heard.
- Feedback makes residents feel like they're making a difference in their community and allows them to better understand how their government operates.



## Social Media



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- Social media is the newest and most significant form of communication.
  - In the last few years we have seen a surge in outlets through which people can connect and share information – Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Periscope, Instagram to name a few.



## The Power of Social Media



- Companies and corporations have already begun utilizing these outlets to promote their brand and products.
- Social media targets a different generation, one more connected to the internet than to traditional forms of communication such as television, radio, and newspaper.
- Social media gives you the best opportunity to inform citizens about policies affecting the community in a simple way.

## Social Media Guidelines



- Posting on social media does not require a lot of detail. It's always best to keep your message as simple as possible – short, clear, and catchy.
- Less is more – the more simple the message, the easier to understand which makes it more likely residents will read it.
- Use a variety of multimedia such as photos and videos, visuals are more likely to be shared and liked than wordy messages.
- Post frequently and keep social media up to date and relevant.
- Use hashtags when possible, this allows your message to become more visible through trending terminology.
- Make your social media interactive - ask questions, live tweet, hold a Q+A.

## Cities Adapting - Bexar County, Texas



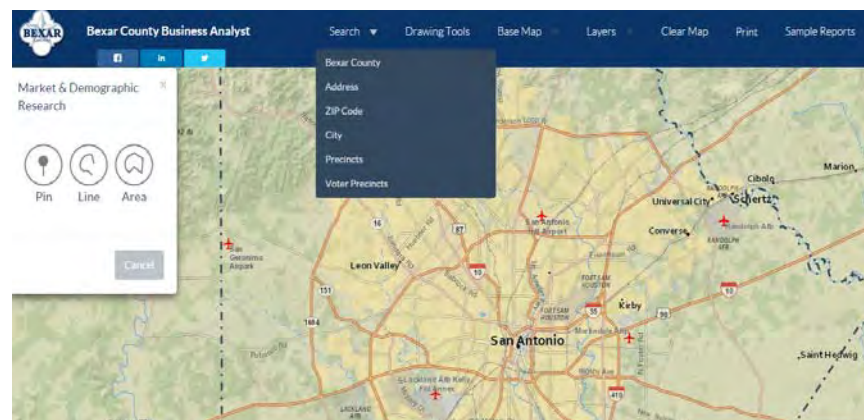
“Bexar County Business Analyst” online database offers a succinct tool

- It is an online interactive map designed for anyone interested in the county’s current demographics or market-related data.

Benefits/Success of Approach:

- Transparency/Open Data—ensuring that any county data is easily accessible.
- Online integration—ensuring that data is presented in a succinct way and that it reaches a wide audience (via online posting, rather than having to go through a record hall like in the past)
- Need for interactivity in websites.

## Bexar County Business Analyst





## Cities Adapting – Wellington, New Zealand



- Democratic Services Department offers “Have Your Say”—an online forum set up by the city government to solicit input on specific issues.
- Residents do not see comments as they are received, but the city prepares a summary report of the results of the consultation process.
- The city also offers e-petitions and monthly surveys online.

### Benefits/Success of Approach:

- Accessibility—makes government activities more accessible to citizens, more transparent.
- Interactivity—allows citizens to more easily have a say in their government.

## “Have Your Say” Wellington, New Zealand



The screenshot displays the 'Have Your Say' website interface. At the top, the title 'Have Your Say' is centered. Below it, there are several menu items, each with a right-pointing arrow:

- Consultations**: Giving us your submission on an issue is one way to help us make fair and effective decisions. Closed consultations.
- ePetitions**: ePetitions allow people to petition the Wellington City Council, via the internet, on matters relevant to the city. Sub-items include: ePetitions Explained, Create an ePetition, Open ePetitions, Closed ePetitions, Declined ePetitions, Withdrawn ePetitions, and Paper Petitions.
- Public notices**: You can make a submission or object to applications for notified resource consents, road stopping notices, etc. Closed public notices.
- Contact us**: Contact the Council with a question, comment or complaint, or to report something that needs fixing.
- How to participate**: To make the best possible decisions, the Council relies on participation and feedback from Wellington. Sub-items include: About public participation, Contacting Councillors, and Speaking at meetings.
- Elections**: The next local authority election will be held on 28 November 2013.

## Cities Adapting – Austin, Texas



- The City of Austin uses its YouTube channel, which features several types of videos and clips, to keep citizens educated and informed.
- “CityView”—a bi-weekly news magazine showcases the latest happenings in the City of Austin.

### Benefits/Success of Approach:

- Importance of using different, interactive multimedia to connect with citizens.
- Importance of putting out regular updates via the web.

## AustinTexasGov YouTube – Austin, Texas



The screenshot displays the YouTube channel for AustinTexasGov. At the top, the ATXN logo is prominent, with the text 'City of Austin On-Air, Online, Anytime' and 'atxn.tv' next to it. The channel name 'austintexasgov' is visible in the top left. The main content area features a video player for 'September 11, 2015 CityView', which includes a description: 'CityView Episode of CityView: Oak Market (Oak Boardwalk), Council Update (Meeting Connected), Regal Publishing and Web and Draw'. Below the main video, there is a 'CityView' section with a grid of video thumbnails for previous episodes, including 'September 11, 2015 CityView', 'August 28, 2015 CityView', 'August 14, 2015 CityView', 'July 24, 2015 CityView', and 'July 10, 2015 CityView'. On the right side of the page, there is a 'Parks and Rec' section with a link to 'AustinCityParks' and a 'Related channels' section listing other local channels like 'East & Light Product...', 'Austin', 'PeacefulStreets', 'Jeff Favignano', 'SafetyTV', and 'Austin Transit Crowd...'.

THANK YOU!

