City Hall

From: Mike Strasser [mstrass@uwhpwatertown.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 4:31 PM
To: City Hall
Subject: For CDA Meeting Tonight
Attachments: Apps for Citiy.docx

Hi Mo,
Can you please print this material for the meeting this evening. Thanks

Mike

From: Mike Strasser
Sent: Monday, February 17, 2014 10:48 PM
To: Mike Strasser
Subject: App for city

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What features does a City Mobile App offer?

- Map - map of city locations based upon the proximity of the user
- 'Near Me' GPS Functionality - A listing of locations based upon distance from the App user
- Index-cards - Categories
- Tabs for categories of city services, businesses, etc.
- Send Alerts to Users - Alert users of news, events, and important information
- Shared Content - Share app content via Twitter, Facebook, and Email
- Driving Directions - Users can get directions to local buildings, businesses, etc.
- Image galleries
- Links
- YouTube Videos
- Geo-Location Directory
- Forms
- Maps
- Social Media
- RSS Feeds
- Navigation Widget
- Custom HTML
- Custom Icons

Vendors:

http://www.mycityapp.com/

Want to Improve Your City? There's an App for That

By Amy FeldmanTuesday, Dec. 21, 2010

http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2026474_2026675_2039309,00.html

In San Francisco, you can use your smart phone to hail a cab, track a bus and pay a parking ticket. There's even an app for the most ardent of tree huggers: with SF Trees, approach any tree in the city and you can find out its type. Like nearly everything else in the Bay Area these days, the info is available on your cell.

It's not surprising that the northern terminus of Silicon Valley is leading the nation in adapting consumer technologies to improve the way citizens interact with their metro areas. Since March, San Francisco residents have been able to let city hall know about potholes, trash and graffiti problems by using mobile apps or the Web, as well as through the more traditional (and expensive) call centers. Perhaps more important, the city encouraged developers to dive into its trove of data. The results: more than 50 privately produced mobile apps, which work on gadgets such as iPhones and Android cell phones, that track everything in San Francisco from restaurant health codes to the most popular biking routes.

The idea is to use the data the city has always collected, as well as what it gathers from residents' complaints, to increase civic engagement and improve urban life. And San Francisco's leaders aren't the only ones delving into data. New York City — whose mayor, Michael Bloomberg is, after all, an information entrepreneur — has been analyzing its voluminous 311 data since the call line was launched in 2003. And seven cities — Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, New York and Washington, in addition to San Francisco — have banded together to brainstorm, with the blessing of White House appointee Vivek Kundra, whom President Obama named the nation's first chief

information officer in March 2009. The first thing to emerge was the cities' promotion of the development of smart-phone apps that allow individuals access to info that until recently was warehoused at city hall. The mobile apps are also creating new data sets that could allow officials to get a better handle on how citizens use their cities and what troubles them.

The development of mobile apps is in part an effort by cities to attract and retain a desirable workforce by upping the livability quotient. It is also designed to allocate resources more efficiently at a time when money is tight. San Francisco's budget deficit, for instance, has surpassed $400 million, and many of the easy cuts have already been made. "We have to fundamentally rethink what services to provide, how to provide them and how to measure their efficacy," says Chris Vein, San Francisco's chief information officer. "Everything that we are talking about is [part of] this big experiment."

The experiment includes seeing how much of San Francisco's mobile growth can happen organically. While other cities have hired developers, San Francisco has promoted its mobile experiment mostly by opening up nearly 200 data sets, of potentially tens of thousands available, to smart-phone programmers. So far, crowdsourcing has been a more successful and less expensive approach than outsourcing. In November, the city codified its open-data efforts into law, designed to ensure that the movement doesn't stall when Mayor Gavin Newsom — who's been behind the openness push — goes to the statehouse as lieutenant governor in early 2011.

The new city apps run the gamut. Crimespotting maps point out potentially dangerous locations; EcoFinder helps you figure out what to do with your old appliances, car batteries and other unwieldy recyclables; CycleTracks plots your bike rides and sends the data to the San Francisco Transit Authority so city planners can "better understand the needs of cyclists."

Steven Peterson is a 29-year-old software geek who gave up his car and developed an iPhone app called Routesy as a side project to get the information he wanted. The app integrates real-time data from all the city's transit systems, letting riders know when a service is available so they won't have to wait on street corners in the rain. "My passion is taking things that are annoying to people and making them less irritating," Peterson says. He's now looking to expand Routesy to Boston, Washington and perhaps New York.

It's less expensive for the city to have citizens interact through their mobile phones — just as mobile banking is less expensive than the operation of bank branches, which require employees — but it also helps people feel more connected to their neighborhoods and to their city. "Once people get into 311, it's almost like Facebook — they really get into it," says Daniel Homsey, program manager of the San Francisco–run Neighborhood Empowerment Network. In the Bayview–Hunters Point area, for example, residents have become tenacious about alerting the city to illegal dumping, he says.

Critics worry that a move to mobile apps could leave behind residents who can't afford smart phones. Proponents, though, argue that the prices of these devices are declining so rapidly that it won't be long before everyone has one. In the meantime, San Francisco is making moves to bridge the digital divide for the neediest populations — for example, by getting broadband into housing projects. "It represents a different way of thinking about how government can provide services," says Jay Nath, San Francisco's director of innovation, who runs the data clearinghouse program. "It's not the model that we have to create the service and deliver it. We are opening ourselves up to the community to co-create. It represents something fundamental that is changing in government."

What might come next? Perhaps an amplifying the feedback loop that combines data from the city with data from residents, and ways of analyzing them that both make life easier and enhance revenue. Consider that San Francisco is currently installing a smart parking system. App developers like Peterson and Parkzing developer Aren Sandersen are watching closely, interested in building new apps that could notify drivers when nearby parking spots are vacant or that could pay a meter via phone. The city, meanwhile, could ultimately use data from parking patterns to raise parking rates based on demand for specific spots at specific times.

What's happening in San Francisco and other cities "is the same crowdsourcing trend that has happened elsewhere, and it's good because government can't afford to pay for all this," says Peter Hirshberg, chairman of Re:Imagine Group, which works with corporations and cities on their digital and social-media strategies. "If you make information available to people, you can create a better quality of life.

Omaha launches app for city complaints

By Erin Golden WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

http://www.omaha.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120816/NEWS/708169893/1694

Want to tell the city about a pothole, abandoned car or overgrown tree on your street? Now — if you're in Omaha and you've got a smartphone or tablet — you don't have to make a call.

On Thursday, the City of Omaha unveiled a new, free app that allows people to report problems in seconds by snapping a photo and answering a couple questions. The app is called the Omaha Mobile App.

The program is operated by CitySourced, a Los Angeles-based company, and already is used in several other cities around the country. It identifies the sender's exact location and provides the report directly to the department that will tackle it, from public works to police.

In a news conference at Essex Park in South Omaha, near South 36th and Washington Streets, Mayor Jim Suttle tried out the system for himself. He pulled out his iPhone, snapped a photo of black graffiti scrawled on playground equipment, and pressed "send." Almost instantly, the report was on the CitySourced website.

Suttle — and anyone else who submits reports — will receive updates when a city official receives the information, when it's being handled and when the work has been completed.

"I am hopeful that this application will bring Omahans closer to their government" and decrease the city's response time, Suttle said. The free app is available for iPhone, Blackberry, Android and Windows 7-based smartphones, along with tablets, and can be downloaded on iTunes.

The Mayor's Office said the program typically costs between $27,000 and $30,000, but the company offered it to the city for a better price because it wants to expand to the midwest. With savings from taking vacant Mayor's Hotline jobs out of the budget, the net cost for the city is about $5,000, according to the city.

CitySourced says cities that offer the app see the number of phone requests drop by 20 to 30 percent and email requests drop by 10 to 20 percent.

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http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/12/28/government.web.apps/

(CNN) -- Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist and a customer-service guru, was riding on a public train in San Francisco, California, recently when something common but annoying occurred: The railcar filled with people and became uncomfortably hot. If the inconvenience had happened a few years ago, Newmark said he would have just gone on with his day -- maybe complaining about the temperature to a friend. But this was 2009, the age of mobile technology, so Newmark pulled out his iPhone, snapped a photo of the train car and, using an app called "SeeClickFix," zapped an on-the-go complaint, complete with GPS coordinates, straight to City Hall.

"A week or so later I got an e-mail back saying, 'Hey, we know about the problem and we're going to be taking some measures to address it,' " he said. Welcome to a movement the tech crowd is calling "Gov 2.0" -- where mobile technology and GPS apps are helping give citizens like Newmark more of a say in how their local tax money

is spent. It's public service for the digital age. A host of larger U.S. cities from San Francisco to New York quietly have been releasing treasure troves of public data to Web and mobile application developers. That may sound dull. But tech geeks transform banal local government spreadsheets about train schedules, complaint systems, potholes, street lamp repairs and city garbage into useful applications for mobile phones and the Web.

The aim is to let citizens report problems to their governments more easily and accurately; and to put public information, which otherwise may be buried in file cabinets and Excel files, at the fingertips of taxpayers. By some accounts, the trend is turning the government-voter relationship on its head and could usher in a new era of grassroots democracy.

"I see [these applications] as the death of a passive relationship with government," said Clay Johnson, director of Sunlight Labs, a group promoting Gov 2.0 apps. "Instead of people saying, 'Well, it's the government's job to fix that' ... people are taking ownership and saying, 'Hey, wait a minute. Government is us. We are government. So let's take a responsibility and start changing things ourselves.' "

Residents of Washington, for example, can use the DC 311 iPhone app to take photos of graffiti, potholes and other trouble spots. The photos are paired with GPS locations and then uploaded straight from the street into a database that local officials can see. The mobile phone app tells officials where the graffiti is. It also tells citizens which spray-paint murals, potholes, dying trees, broken parking meters and tipped-over street signs the city is aware of, which it plans to fix and which it may be ignoring.

Brian Purchia, spokesman for the San Francisco mayor's office, said reports like those from "SeeClickFix" and a city Twitter account make it easier for the city to prioritize spending by addressing problems its citizens care most about. He cited an example in which a Twitter user named @bolinasgirl reported a broken streetlight on the micro-blogging site. The city responded to her on Twitter and sent a note within 24 hours saying the light had been fixed.

The complaints don't always results in fixes, of course, because cities have limited resources. But Purchia said some problems that the city wouldn't otherwise know about are being addressed because of mobile applications and its Twitter program. Some of the apps are simply handy. Newmark, for example, checks an iPhone app called "Routesy" before going outside to look for city buses. The app tells him where the nearest bus is and what time it will arrive at his stop.

An app called "Stumble Safely" tells bar-goers in Washington the safest walking routes home from local pubs. "Are You Safe" uses a person's GPS location and municipal crime data to tell residents of Atlanta, Georgia, about the crime history in their immediate vicinity. These sorts of apps tend to pop up only in places where the municipal government has released its data sets in a format that can be easily crunched. That public data is the fuel that makes these applications work.

So far, local government making the push for public data sets are usually large and fairly tech savvy: San Francisco, Washington, New York and the like. San Francisco, for example, posted 100 data sets on the Web site DataSF.org in August. Within weeks, Purchia said, dozens of apps were being developed.

Once the data is out, cities wait for someone else to use it. Both Washington and San Francisco have held contests for local Web developers to turn their data into applications. The idea is that tech communities are better able to make government data useful than the governments themselves, said Peter Corbett, CEO for iStrategyLabs and organizer of a contest called "Apps for Democracy" in Washington.

"I think the government realizes that they don't have all of the money to do things people want them to do," he said. "Government forgot that the biggest asset that they have are actual citizens."

The second "Apps for Democracy" contest in Washington awarded $20,000 in prizes for mobile phone developers. But many developers work free. Alan Wells is the co-founder of Haku Wale, a San Francisco company that

developed an a app called "EcoFinder," which helps residents find places to dispose of e-waste and other hazardous materials.

He said his company spent $20,000 developing the application, but hasn't charged the city or app users a dime. He was just happy the city's trash data was available.

"For us, as a company, we're really interested in the convergence of technology and sustainability and social impact," he said. "So it's just something we wanted to provide for the city of San Francisco."

Other cities may resist the transition, however. Some people worry that these tech applications wouldn't take off in smaller municipalities, even if governments can afford to make the data available.

"For small governments ... it's really challenging to get data sources that are deep enough, that are robust enough to do something that's interesting," said Corbett. Purchia said San Francisco incurred few costs when it put its first 100 data sets online. "A lot of this is just man hours," he said. "It's getting different departments to realize this is an important aspect of governing."

He said the city is working with others to develop a national standard for municipal government data sets and the programs that make them useful. That way, an app that tracks trash in San Francisco could be used by people in Bismarck, North Dakota, as long as the city's public data is posted online in the right format.

That could enable cities without big tech communities to benefit from the trend. "For some cities and for some governments I could understand that transition can be a scary thing," Purchia said. "But we feel like it makes governments more accountable, and it makes them function better." He added: "What I really see is a monumental change for how government works. This is just really the starting point."

4 Ways Citizens Are Using Mobile Apps to Contribute to Local Government

Citizens are tapping into the power of mobility to serve and be served by their cities and states.

Mobile apps are proving to be useful tools for city and state governments looking to engage and inform their citizens.

The explosion of mobile devices across the country has saturated the general population sufficiently, so governments can now reliably communicate with its residents.

Here are a few of the ways that local governments are using mobile apps in their organizations:

1. **Report Outages, Road Kill and Other Local Hazards**

Mobile devices are great tools for capturing and sending information. Everyone is a reporter now, and citizens can use mobile apps to report potholes, downed power lines or dead animals in the street.

The city of Riverside, Calif., has deployed a 311 mobile application for precisely this purpose. Steve Reneker, the city's CIO, told StateTech that Riverside currently receives 10 to 15 percent of its reports through mobile apps, but that it's seeing a growth rate of about 30 percent per month.

2. **Access Local Election Results**

One of the most important functions that a local government can perform is to run and tabulate local election results. This includes everything from openings on the city council to the stats on the big race for mayor.

Since many voting machines are already collecting data electronically, it's now possible to provide voters with real-time data as the votes are counted. In Jefferson Parish, La., voters are able to follow election results as they come in on their mobile devices with the parish's iOS app, Election Results.

3. **Uncover Local Treasures**

Have you ever lived in a city and felt like tourists know more about local treasures than you do? When you live and work somewhere, it's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day events that consume your life. But mobile apps can help spread the good word about things like free public art or a great spot to eat.

Mobile app developer John Mertens helped build a mobile site called Art Mapper for the city of Philadelphia using the open data from MuralFarm.org, a database for art murals in the city. With Mertens's app, Philly residents can now find and visit public murals in the city with ease, and it has since been rolled out to other cities by other developers.

4. **Welcome and Orient Visitors**

Visiting a new place can be a disorienting experience when a visitor has no clue where or how to get started. That's why many states deploy welcome centers along interstate highways to help guide and inform visitors about the region.

So why not take that experience and translate it into a mobile app? That's what Sparks, Nev., did with its mobile app, plainly called Sparks, NV. The app serves up places to visit and local events to attend, and it even boasts an augmented-reality feature for select events and venues.

COST TO DEVELOP AN APP:

What is the cost of an average app, and why?

Matzner says "you're likely looking at around $120-150k to do that. So if you break it down, it's basically 120 hours of work per week, times an average of 8 or 10 weeks. You have two developers working full time (that's 80 hours), and then you have a designer and art director working half-time (that's about 20 hours), and then you have a product manager and an account manager coordinating. And that's the another 20 hours. And so that's where you get 120 hours from."

If that sounds unfeasible, you can always go a cheaper route and hire a freelance developer, though quality can be highly variable and anyone unfamiliar with programming may have a difficult time properly assessing the quality of a developer.

"Anyone who's saying that you need less time than [8-10 weeks], or can do it significantly cheaper is cutting corners somewhere," says Matzner. "Hiring a freelance developer online who's in some far-off land and you've never met can be tempting, but will they really be able to properly interpret your vision and build the app you're expecting? I've met a lot of people with stories of heartbreak and frustration with time and money wasted."

But that's not to say success is impossible. However, expectations should be tempered. According to Matzner, the most common success story involves a good beta-test or proof-of-concept that is good enough to get another round of funding and maybe even attract some press, but ultimately needs to be rebuilt from the ground up by a more experienced team.

Costs can depend on the type of project you wish to complete. Games are consistently among the most expensive products, since they usually require the most complex coding. The cheapest apps

often fulfill one specific purpose, such as a calculator or flashlight. Other complexities are apps that require multiple interfaces for different users (think drivers, passengers, and admins on a taxi app, for example). Is your app tying into a third-party API? Are you using standard iOS elements or something completely custom? Ae you leveraging existing technologies or inventing completely new ones from scratch? Building a robust social network can be incredibly complex (just think of how many employees Facebook has!). But if you start with a proper MVP (minimally viable product) many of these issues can be mitigated, but it often means putting rand plans and expansive feature sets on hold for an initial launch.

There is a negligible difference in price between the construction of iOS and Android apps, although Android can sometimes cost a little more. This is due to the wider range of devices and operating system versions that an app needs to be optimized for.

Of course, there's nothing stopping you from getting a tech-savvy friend to do this kind of work for cheap or free. However, odds are it will be incredibly difficult to find someone willing to ignore the tens of thousands of dollars they could be making for a single app working for someone else.

"A lot of people say, 'Oh no, that's kind of crazy. It shouldn't cost more than 50 grand to build an app'," says Chawla. "Well, go ahead and try and hire two developers, one back end, one front end. With even $50k, if you're paying a competitive salary, you'll last two and a half months, maybe less."