

The Rise of the Digital Citizen

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Key message

Social media will transform the way citizens communicate with government and the way politicians relate to their constituencies, and – less exciting but with truly revolutionary consequences – will transform the way government works. This article summarizes global trends and developments and identifies important areas for policy and consulting such as E-Government, social inclusion, economic competitiveness and democratic innovation.

1 Accelerated Change in an Accelerated Time

If Facebook were a country it would have the third largest population in the world. Facebook citizens are from Uganda, Singapore, the US and India and almost everywhere else. Internet use and technologies spread rapidly and touch all aspects of daily life, making communication increasingly virtual. In response, organizations are increasingly using the internet to shape their value chains, and citizens across the globe are quick to connect, mobilize and innovate. New types of social movements are emerging that are based on social media as a key enabler. As never before, citizens are connecting with governments to articulate their views. And in turn, governments themselves are entering a new phase of using technology to provide services and connect with citizens. While they strive to catch up with the level of innovation in corporations and civil society, new innovative ideas are rapidly emerging across the globe around connected government and co-production. The drivers for adopting technology to achieve societal goals differ between types of societies: governments in mature economies are seeking ways to enhance innovation through involving citizens and to substitute multichannel service delivery with more cost effective online models to tackle the depth crisis; in emerging countries political leaders are looking at online service delivery models to increase social inclusion, especially given their often diverse populations (rural/urban, literacy, ethnicity, gender). Both types of countries, however, are experimenting with how best to use social media without losing brand control, while ensuring return on investment, *really* boosting co-production and first and foremost – ensuring security.

2 Meeting the Digital Citizen

Commentators who have already started to write obituaries on the importance of personal dialogue in politics and government are probably far ahead of their time. However, we see some internet enabled socioeconomic and political forms

of interactions which are different from what we have seen before. What do we mean when we talk about “digital citizen”? The “3C” alliteration simplistically shows what it is all about: connection, communication and collaboration. Based on the “3C” new – potentially transnational – communities can emerge around sociopolitical topics as the world witnessed in the Arab spring or the Occupy Wall Street movement.

The term Digital Citizen, in short, has just emerged as a coinage of the increasing political dimension of technology enabled interaction between citizens and government. It typically applies to two different dimensions:

A) Government Service Provision

- From eGovernment to eGovernance: Governments across the globe started to implement the online provision of services since the 2000s. Today, they are cautiously and to varying extends beginning to transform their operations from eGovernment to eGovernance, vertically crossing departmental borders and tailored to the needs of the individual citizen. In order to beat public depth, we can assume that more and more services will be provided fully online without offering access through other channels like phone or walk in offices.
- Co-Production: A new way of planning, designing and delivery public services which draws directly on input from citizens, service users and civil society organizations
- Connected Government: Using the power of technology to transform interaction with citizens and public service delivery. Approaches covered are open data, social media and Government with boundaries between devices, channels and behaviors increasingly blurring.

B) Social Movements

- Digital Activism and Political Protest: In 2011, many countries have experienced social movements which emerged through social media. Not only in the Middle East, but also in Spain, India or Germany, Web 2.0 has played an increasingly important role in mobilizing protest, and enhancing political participation and civic engagement.

3 Governmental Digital Agendas Today

Many examples from across the globe showcase the breadth and depth of applying technology to key areas of service provision, transparency and communication, unleashing the potential for a huge transformation in government. Public institutions increasingly provide access and services to social media platforms like Facebook, use Twitter as an early warning mechanism in Disaster Management or utilize open data

to advance democracy. Brazil is a great example, as it can be considered the best kept secret in utilizing ICT to advance societies: the Brazilian government established a website to submit reports of electoral fraud during the Brazil 2010 elections and offer a tool for political scientists to track the work and effectiveness of the Brazilian congress. A good example for IT enabled co-production is the Health Buddy Scheme in the Netherlands. A partnership with the private sector, the Health Buddy Scheme provides simple-to-use technology – a small device known as a health buddy – in people’s homes. The device provides online decision support tools and can prompt patients to monitor and review their conditions, ensure that medication or treatment is followed, support lifestyle changes such as diet monitoring, or make contact with a professional caregiver. It provides patients with access to their own medical information and can connect to medical professionals as needed. The Arab governments and possibly some Asian ones as well exemplify another group investing in research to better understand the threats of social media to Governments’ shelf live.

Almost every country in the world has developed a view on the role of the digital and has made it to priority to grasp the opportunities provided by the connected world to transform their states into inclusive, yet competitive knowledge economies, with different priorities. The prioritization depends very much on the specific socioeconomic priorities in a particular country.

We can group countries strategies into four main clusters:		
Main objective	Examples	Specifics
E-Nation	Singapore, Korea	Integrated approach, overseen and managed by dedicated institutions
Inclusion	India, Philippines	Closely connected with governments agenda around inclusive growth and the promotion of the ICT sector
Competitiveness	Germany, UK	Closely connected with innovation and competitiveness strategies
Democracy	Brazil, Australia	Groom or revitalize democracy as the basis for economic and social well being

3.1 E-Nation – Korea

Korea ranks No 1 in the latest United Nations E-Government Survey 2010¹ and is considered to be one of the most connected nations in the world. The national portal is an integrated system allowing citizens easy access to government information and contains features for mobile alerts, forms, transactions and online consultation. For e-participation, users are connected to ePeople, a single online service that integrates the e-services of all government agencies.

Korea has connected their E-Government strategies with the objectives of implementing a holistic information society,

touching upon all aspects of life. Since 2009, the activities are overseen by the “Council on Information Society” as the top authoritative body that deliberates on national master – and action plans, adjusts relevant policies, fosters information culture and carries out projects for closing the digital divide. Moreover, it serves as the national ICT control tower by developing and promoting future-oriented policy agenda in order to lead the country to become an advanced knowledge information society. Focus Areas are E-government, information technology in daily life, digital economy, digital convergence infrastructure, information security, global ICT cooperation, and ICT industry.²

3.2 Inclusion – India

The Government of India has approved the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) on May 18, 2006. The Mission mode projects are basically government services, and the objective is to include larger numbers of Indian citizens into public service provision, increase transparency and reduce fraud and bribery. The vision is driven by the intent to increase social inclusion:

"Make all Government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man".³

India has published guidelines on the use of social media in public administration in September 2011 for open consultation, triggered by “issues related to authorization to speak on behalf of department/agency, technologies and platform to use to communicate, scope of engagement, creating synergies between different channels of communication, compliance with existing legislations etc.”⁴

3.3 Competitiveness – Germany

Germany focuses in their digital agenda of technology as an enabler for competitiveness. The strategy formulates an approach to capitalize on the new opportunities in technology.⁵ The program “eGovernment 2.0” introduces the federal governments view on the technological requirements for secu-

1 <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpano38851.pdf> (last accessed December 10th, 2011).
 2 Ministry of public administration <http://www.korea.go.kr/html/files/intro/001.pdf> (last accessed December 10th, 2011).
 3 National eGovernance Plan, <http://india.gov.in/outerwin.php?id=http://mit.gov.in/content/national-e-governance-plan> (last accessed December 10th, 2011).
 4 http://mit.gov.in/sites/upload_files/dit/files/SocialMediaFrameworkDraftforPublicConsultation_192011.pdf (last accessed December 10th, 2011).
 5 “Deutschland Digital 2015” <http://www.bmwi.de/Dateien/BBA/PDF/ikt-strategie-der-bundesregierung> (last accessed December 9th, 2011).

reliability and accessibility.⁶ The “National E-Government Strategy” which was launched in September 2010 provides a roadmap to make public administration on the federal and state level more efficient, cost-effective and first and foremost, nationally integrated from a strategic perspective.⁷ Social media is not mentioned as part of the strategies, overall, Germany’s performance on all layers of government has been assessed as insufficient.⁸

3.4 Democracy – Australia

The blueprint for the public sector modernization program: “Ahead of the Game. Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration” has been developed by a commission with representatives from government, business, academia and the not for profit sector and was published in March 2010.⁹ Their main objective is to initiate a shift in public sector culture and practice to make “government information more accessible and usable; make government more consultative, participatory and transparent; build a culture of online innovation within Government; and promote collaboration across agencies”.¹⁰ They enthusiastically view technology as a key enabler to renew government citizen interaction to build more integrated and innovative communities.

It is obvious – Governments are beginning to realize that the opportunities that digitalization brings to modernize, innovate, and transform the way they interact, operate and govern their countries. Moreover, governments around the world understand that their citizens increasingly want to interact with government agencies online: in the EU 27 the number of citizen online interactions with public authorities has grown year on year by almost 8%. Consequently, Public Entrepreneurship is emerging as a key theme in public administration. Numerous public administrations across the globe have developed ideas about integrating technology and social media into their transformation programs. Some of the most innovative ideas come from the developing world, and are from private and public players alike. For example, the Kenyan site Ushahidi (“testimony” in Swahili) uses mapping technology and mobile phones to help identify sites of post-election violence in 2008. To date, the social enterprise which is investing all their revenues into the combat of HIV in Africa, has been instrumental in a number of cases of humanitarian response. This project is just one illustration from a whole range of truly remarkable projects, about the smart use of data and citizen involvement. In many countries, governments have started to open their data. The UK, for example, has integrated all public data at one place for citizens to participate in decision making processes.

Today, people want governments to do more than put applications for drivers’ licenses and birth certificates online, they want a truly connected government, which is transparent, inclusive and respectful of citizens’ opinion and needs. It is evident, however, that till date, it is rare to find a holistic approach to implement governmental change which fully utilizes the potential of technology.

4 Internet and Society – 21st Century Change Agents: Twitter Tsars and Facebook Junkies

If we consider Facebook as a country, its “population” of almost 700 million active users would make it the third largest country in the world after China and India. It does not stop here – the Facebook population is constantly increasing while the world strives to achieve digital inclusion. In a mere 12 months (from April 2010 to May 2011) Facebook’s active user population grew by an impressive 45% globally (160% in India; and 300% in Russia and Brazil)! It is undisputable that the invention of the Internet, just 20 years ago, has transformed the way our world interacts, works and progresses. The rapid, accelerated speed of Internet adoption and its effect on socioeconomic change is mindboggling – we are living in a world that is changing much faster than we can fully grasp.

In the future, the year 2011 will be remembered for launching Web 2.0 as a game changing political tool. During 2011, the world has been witness to the rise of Twitter and Facebook as powerful communication and mobilization channels in the hands of repressed populations. In probably the shortest time-frame mankind has ever seen, five Middle Eastern and North African governments with unimpressive democratic track records fell. As we speak, other countries are at similar risk of falling. The Egyptian revolution, was sparked by everyday, ordinary people like Asmaa Mahfouz, who passionately called people to join protests through her Youtube Post, spreading the word fast like a wild fire from country to country. This unprecedented eRevolution transcended class, gender and political boundaries – at least for a moment. One has to wonder, is Facebook the 21st century version of the Athenic Agora?

It is even more than that – social media will transform the way citizens communicate with Government, how politicians relate to their constituencies, and – less exciting but with truly revolutionary consequences – transform the way Government works. Without a doubt, both political communication and processes will change. On the flip side, we can expect that digital repression, anonymous whistle blowing and cyber bullying will become more prominent. Social Media will change the areas to consider in consulting work for public affair con-

6 http://www.verwaltung-innovativ.de/cln_108/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/1125281_english_version_egovernment_2_o_templatId=raw_property=publicationFile.pdf/1125281_english_version_egovernment_2_o.pdf (last accessed December 9th, 2011).

7 http://www.it-planungsrat.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Pressemitteilung/NEGS.pdf;jsessionid=41996C75C64865AAB57B921D1A074AF4.2_cid103?__blob=publicationFile (last accessed December 9th, 2011).

8 SWAI – Benchmark 2011: Deutsche Regierungen im Social Web: Bitte, bitte kein Dialog!, http://www.flurfunk-dresden.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/SWAI_Reg_Bericht_Kurzfassung_o8072011.pdf (last accessed December 9th, 2011).

9 http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/docs/APS_reform_blueprint.pdf (last accessed December 9th, 2011).

10 *ibid.*

sultants, campaign managers, advisory councils and experts from academia.

4.1 Social Movements: Digital Activism and Political Protest

In 2011, many countries have experienced social movements which emerged through social media. Not only in the Middle East, but also in Spain, India or Germany, Web 2.0 has played an increasingly important role in mobilizing protest, and enhancing political participation and civic engagement.

- In Spain, thousands of youngsters in almost 60 cities angrily protested against mass unemployment, austerity measures and political corruption. The movement started as a flash mob in Puerta del Sol in Madrid (known as #acampadasol) on May 15th and spread quickly throughout the country. The turnout of the May 22nd elections were significantly affected by the youth protest: The ruling socialists suffered their worst electoral defeat in more than 30 years.
- In India, the social activist Kisan Baburao Hazare started a fast on April 5th to put pressure on the Government of India to enact a strong anti-corruption act. Support spread quickly through social media and only four days later, on April 9th, the Government agreed to form a joint committee (of government and civil society representatives) empowered to draft the act.
- In Germany, Facebook served as the central forum for the debate on the controversial railway station in the city of Stuttgart. ““ has over 100.000 supporters, and the online opposition ““ has mobilized more than 160.000 followers. At one point, Facebook blocked the site "Daimler Kollegen gegen Stuttgart 21" [Daimler colleagues against Stuttgart 21], as it contained humiliating comments against the Daimler CEO.

Obviously, the success of these movements depends whether they truly enable policy change and become part of "mainstream politics". What we can already see is that they are the cradle of a new generation of politicians, Asmaa Mahfouz being just one example. Political consultants and analysts need to be cognizant of this new communication platform and must be able to contextualize and analyze the impact. A combination of analytics and strategic research is needed, to understand players and their interest, and to derive trends and outlook for specific policy fields. However, the time available to do that analysis has decreased significantly – in this Internet age, today's event in one country can potentially become a global conflict tomorrow.

4.2 Political Campaigning: Mobilization and Open Innovation

It is well known that since the last U.S. elections, Web 2.0 has become a fundamental part of voter mobilization. It is widely thought that Obama's success in fundraising and voter mobilization was directly related to his smart usage of the Internet. Without knowing back then, Obama had one supporter, which brought a game change to online campaigning going forward.

In 2007, during the heat of the U.S. primaries, Philip de Vellis, alias ParkRidge47 created the YouTube video, Vote Different. The online ad, which mashed up Apple's iconic "1984" spot with footage from Hillary Clinton's campaign website, has received more than 6 million views to date, and was featured on every major U.S. television network, cable news channel, newspaper, and political blog. De Vellis made an interesting statement about his Sunday afternoon activity: "This shows that the future of American politics rests in the hands of ordinary citizens. The campaigns had no idea who made it--not the Obama campaign, not the Clinton campaign, nor any other campaign. I made the ad on a Sunday afternoon in my apartment using my personal equipment (a Mac and some software), uploaded it to YouTube, and sent links around to blogs." De Vellis, then a campaign advisor with a public affairs company, attributed his anonymity while posting the ad as the reason for not losing his job. He was right – when he was soon discovered he got sacked. Today he is the CEO of his own company and one of the icons of American online campaigning. His contribution: everybody can do it, anytime, anywhere!

The virtual world allows people to switch identity quickly. Within the political arena, this can have a significant impact on credibility of the new communication channel. The recent story around Syrian blogger Amina Abdallah came as a shock to humanitarians worldwide: the 35-year-old woman, an outspoken lesbian, feminist and anti-government protester, posted highly critical entries on the blog, "A Gay Girl in Damascus" and was on the verge of becoming one of the most prominent mobilizing figures of the Arab spring. In mid-June 2011 it was uncovered that the Arabian woman was, in fact, an American male student, Tom MacMaster.

Fake or not, campaign managers and political analysts need to understand online campaigning because it will certainly become mainstream in campaign management very soon. Politicians and companies need to develop the capabilities so they can moderate these discussions, interact with their constituency and clients, and use them as sources of feedback and innovation.

- In the US, the Occupy Wall Street movement had taken over a park in Manhattan's financial district on September 17th, 2011 and turned it into a revolutionary camp. Hundreds of young people chant slogans against "banksters" or corporate tycoons. Similar occupations have been bubbling up in other US cities Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington and numerous cities throughout the world.
- In Germany, a political party with the illustrious name Pirates won 9% of the vote at the state of Berlin elections three weeks ago. – Starting from nothing, they were able to mobilize a socioeconomically diverse electorate under the theme of digital, transparent Government. The liberal party, part of the coalition government with the Christian democrats and therefore critical to fix the current European sovereignty crisis, has been kicked out of parliament. The Pirates, while still searching for their differentiated political

point of view, are preparing to challenge Angela Merkel in the state elections two years from now – to date, it seems to be quite promising. Please note: the Pirates are already campaigning in 14 states outside Germany.

5 What's Next?

Without doubt, the new age of the Digital Citizen has started bringing with it new forms of social movements, different kinds of political campaigning and changing business models for government operations. Online interaction is no longer a “nice to have” – it is a requirement. Governments have come to the realization that their citizens are moving faster in getting digitally connected than the governments are, thus citizens are increasingly defining and pushing the frame for Government action.

Today, political decisions will only thrive with the combination of political support AND citizen “buy in”. Recently, a case in Germany around a government approved new railway station for Stuttgart (“Stuttgart 21”) has resulted in a lack of business community confidence in the reliability of political decisions. Following public approval and private investments, civil unrest put the project on hold. The divisive multi-billion-euro Stuttgart 21 railway station expansion has badly hurt the

then ruling Christian Democrats, which lost political power in the state in the last election in March. After month of protest and moderation, a referendum decided to go ahead with the project.

The Internet has opened up new and exciting communication channels, providing new opportunities *and* threats. Online political communication will not substitute for the physical world in the nearer future, because building sustainable trust is still a face to face undertaking. However, it is inevitable that the Internet will most definitely change the way governments work, we are seeing it now.



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Kritikbereite Bürger – ein Thema für die Politikberatung?

Brigitte Geißel

Kernaussagen

Der folgende Beitrag möchte klären, ob kritikbereite Bürgerinnen und Bürger als demokratieförderlich oder demokratieschädlich einzuschätzen sind. Daran anschließend wird diskutiert, ob und in welcher Weise Kritikbereitschaft ein Thema für die Politikberatung sein kann. Der Beitrag bezieht sich auf eine kürzlich erschienene empirische Studie und zeigt auf, dass Kritikbereitschaft für demokratische Entwicklungsprozesse durchaus sinnvoll genutzt werden kann.

1 Kritikbereitschaft – demokratieförderlich oder demokratieschädlich?

Wutbürger und Mutbürger, kleinteilige Egoisten und ‚good citizens‘. Nicht erst seit Stuttgart 21 muss sich die Politik mit Bürgerinnen und Bürgern befassen, die politische Entscheidungen wachsam verfolgen, kritisieren und manchmal sogar intervenieren. Die Einschätzungen dieser Wut- und Mutbürger sind unterschiedlich. Während einige Politiker sie als Zeichen

für eine lebendige Demokratie und damit als demokratieförderlich betrachten, sehen andere in ihnen eine Gefahr.

Basierend auf zwei umfangreichen empirischen Datensätzen¹ wurde die Frage, ob Kritikbereitschaft² demokratieförderlich oder demokratieschädlich ist, anhand von zwei Dimensionen untersucht: Erstens der Verteilung demokratieförderlicher Merkmale unter (nicht-)kritikbereiten Bürgerin-

1 Die erste Datenquelle ist eine Survey mit über 2000 Einwohnern aus sechs deutschen Kommunen, die im Rahmen des Projekts »Lokale Eliten« des Sonderforschungsbereichs 580 »Gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen nach dem Systemumbruch. Diskontinuität, Tradition und Strukturbildung« an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg durchgeführt wurde. Die zweite Datenquelle ist das International Social Survey Program aus dem Jahr 2004 (ISSP, Modul »Citizenship«, vgl. www.issp.org).

2 Fragewortlaut zur Messung von Kritikbereitschaft: »Auch in einer Demokratie hat der Bürger Verpflichtungen gegenüber seiner Stadt/seinem Kreis und den Mitbürgern. Sagen Sie mir bitte, ob Sie folgenden Aspekt für eine Pflicht der Bürger halten oder nicht... gegenüber den lokalen Politikern wachsam sein. (SFB-Studie) »Was meinen Sie: Inwieweit sind folgende Dinge wichtig, um ein guter Bürger zu sein? ... dass jemand aufmerksam verfolgt, was die Regierung macht.« Antwortvorgabe: Skala von 0 = gar nicht wichtig bis 7 = sehr wichtig (ISSP). Befragte wurden als »nichtkritikbereit« eingestuft, die von 1 bis 4 angegeben hatten. Befragte mit Werten zwischen 5 und 7 wurden als »kritikbereit« kategorisiert.