



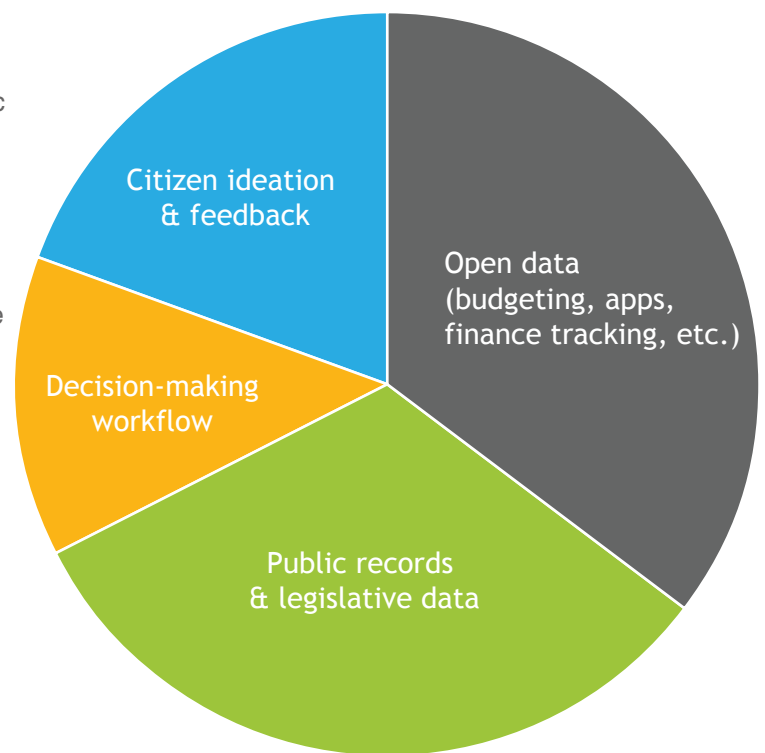
Transparency 2.0:

The Fundamentals of Online Open Government

Open government is about building transparency, trust, and engagement with the public. Today, with 80% of the North American public on the Internet, it is becoming increasingly clear that building open government starts online. Transparency 2.0 not only provides public information, but also develops civic engagement, opens the decision-making process online, and takes advantage of today's technology trends.

While open data comprised much of what online transparency used to be, today, government agencies have expanded openness to include public records, legislative data, decision-making workflow, and citizen ideation and feedback.

This paper outlines the principles of Transparency 2.0, the fundamentals and best practices for creating the most advanced and comprehensive online open government that over a thousand state, federal, and local government agencies are now using to reduce information requests, create engagement, and improve efficiency.



The developing elements of open government

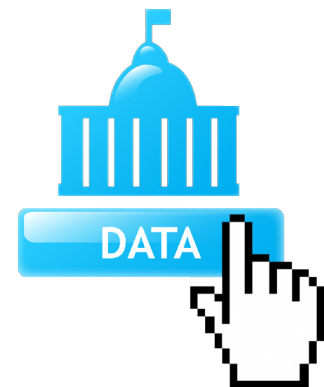
Goals for Online Open Government

Our experience has shown that Transparency 2.0 initiatives are more successful with a unified vision and guidelines for determining what features are needed and how they work. Here are three goals to help unify any online open government solution:

1

Accessibility & Usability

Freedom of information laws require the availability of public data, but do not ensure an ease-of-access. People choose convenience*, and to follow suit, online solutions are designed to be easier than calling or visiting an office to request information. Intuitive design leads people more quickly and precisely to their answers, making data more accessible and usable.



2

Complete and Uniform Information

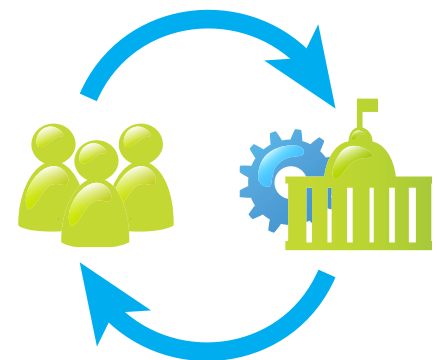
Incomplete data can lead to more questions. Publishing all information, from the primary documentation to metadata, and even video of public discussion on a topic, will create the biggest impact in satisfying public inquiry. Uniformity in presentation of complete data allows users to verify completeness on their own, and makes the data easier to use.



3

Two-Way Communication

Dispensing information is only one half of the potential of a website. Take advantage of the ability to collect public feedback and complete the communication cycle. Do not overlook the value of having a way for citizens to feel heard, engaged, and participatory, by letting them comment on agenda items or submit ideas for community improvement.



* Tierny, T. F., 1993 - The Value of Convenience: A Genealogy of Technical Culture

12 Key Components for Online Open Government

Through interviews and hands-on discussions with government agencies, Granicus has identified the following 12 key components of a Transparency 2.0 solution. Today, more than 1200 government agencies* across North America depend on these components to achieve leadership in open government.

1. Complete Meeting Calendar

Having a calendar of past and upcoming meetings scheduled for the year is great for the city council or other primary legislative body, but listing all committee and board meetings creates a more aware and connected community. Comprehensive calendars like this need search and filtering tools to ensure ease of access; date range and meeting body selection are a must-have. This becomes a landing point for where most people will want to go to find agendas and minutes.



2. Agenda Item DNA

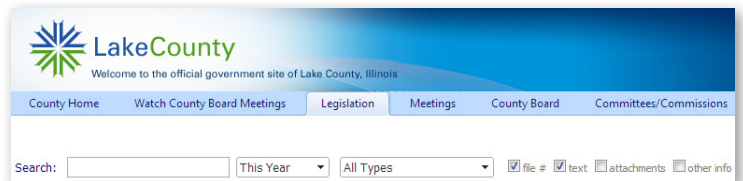
More than a paragraph on a page, agenda items are the sum of their history. As an agenda item goes through revisions and committee referral cycles, everything that happens to it is a critical part of the record. These histories, as well as supporting documentation and video clips of discussion on the item, create the DNA of the item on the agenda. This is completeness of data.

3. Legislative Data Granularity

Large documents full of information for many different agenda items are bulky and contain more information than is needed. When data is separated into smaller pieces (e.g. titles, recommendations, actions, movers, votes, etc.), they can be reused, organized, searched, shared, and displayed in many different ways. Chicago did this with ChicagoCouncilmatic.org, a website designed for people to keep track and comment on everything the city council does. This creates more than accessibility, it creates usability.

4. Robust Search

A simple search box that will accept and look for a word or phrase, such as a certain topic at a recent meeting, is perfect for quick and convenient searches. More complex searching options are necessary to easily find pertinent information within a broader range. Being able to search specific data elements, or using combinations of search filters (such as looking for all local beatification resolutions, sponsored by a particular board member in the previous year) creates accurate and efficient search results.



* Source: 2013 Granicus, Inc. client list

5. Hyperlink Organization

The convenience of legislative data granularity allows for smart hyperlink organization. Users should be able to read the vote on an item and click on a voter's name to see his complete voting record or other items the elected official has sponsored. Clicking on an agenda item should provide extensive details about that item – the agenda item DNA. Cross-linking data like this increases accessibility. See how Long Beach, CA, does it below.



Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Action Details	Meeting Details	Video
12/14/2010	2	City Council	approve recommendation and adopt	Pass	Action details	Meeting details	Video
11/30/2010	1	Economic Development and Finance Committee	recommend	Pass	Action details	Meeting details	Video

7. Indexed Meeting Video

Video of meetings is long and cumbersome to work through. The most effective way to take advantage of the massive and growing popularity* of online video technology is to index meeting videos with agenda items. This means that people will be able to click on an agenda item and will see the recorded discussion about that item. No skipping, scrubbing, fast-forwarding, or rewinding, users can immediately jump to the discussion of a downtown plaza development, or right to the public comments. The City of Round Rock, TX, links directly to their video index points in their public notices so the community can click and watch discussion related to the decision or project.



6. Notifications

People often want to know when something new happens to a particular piece of public data without having to check up on it regularly. The convenience of RSS, email alerts and other notification subscriptions - solutions that push the data out directly to interested people - are critical to keeping people engaged and informed.



* Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) Forecast (2012-2017)

8. Downloadable and Shareable Data

There may be some people who want raw data, which you can provide safely through a web-service or API, but for the most part, citizens want data in an easily consumable format, filtered specifically to their interests. Providing reports in spreadsheet and common document formats means users can download the data for their own uses. Users also want to be able to easily share what they've found with others through email or social networking. Like all forms of data, video needs to be optimized for embedding in social streams, as well as direct URL linking.

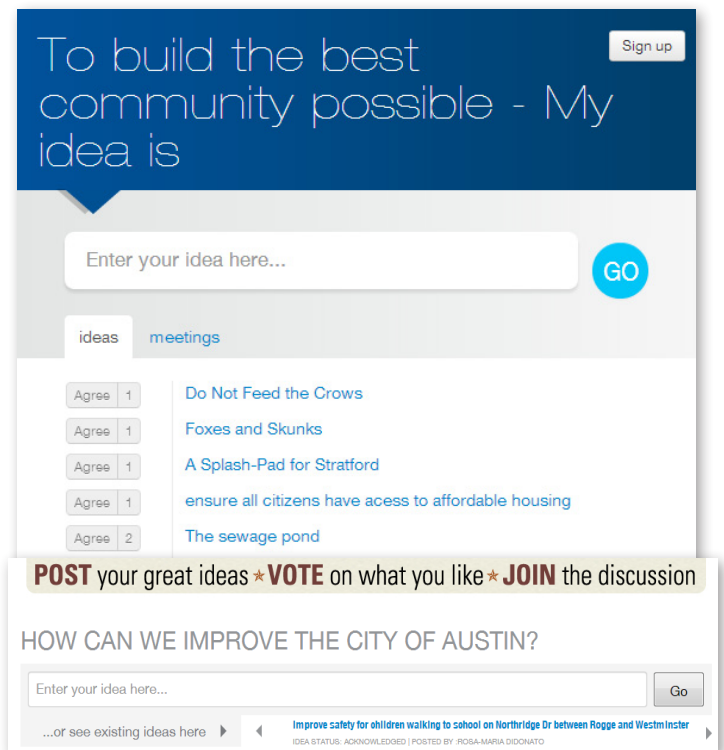
9. Agenda Feedback

Providing a way for citizens to easily offer personal insight and opinion on all public business completes transparency with a two-way communication cycle. Let public comment happen online as well as in the meeting hall. To improve responsiveness and efficacy with a broader spectrum of constituents, elected officials need tools to hear and understand what citizens are thinking.



10. Citizensourcing

What if, instead of legislation being generated from business and personal interests, communities got together to discuss improvement ideas, problems, solutions, and priorities before the legislative process even begins? This is the next logical step of online open government: open discussion. The City of Austin, TX, has been winning multiple awards, including 1st Place in the Best of the Web awards*, and a GovFresh award for citizen collaboration. With their CivicIdeasSM site, SpeakUpAustin, the government has been on a roll improving the city with ideas and meaningful discussion from the public, such as a plastic bag ban and a bicycle sharing program.



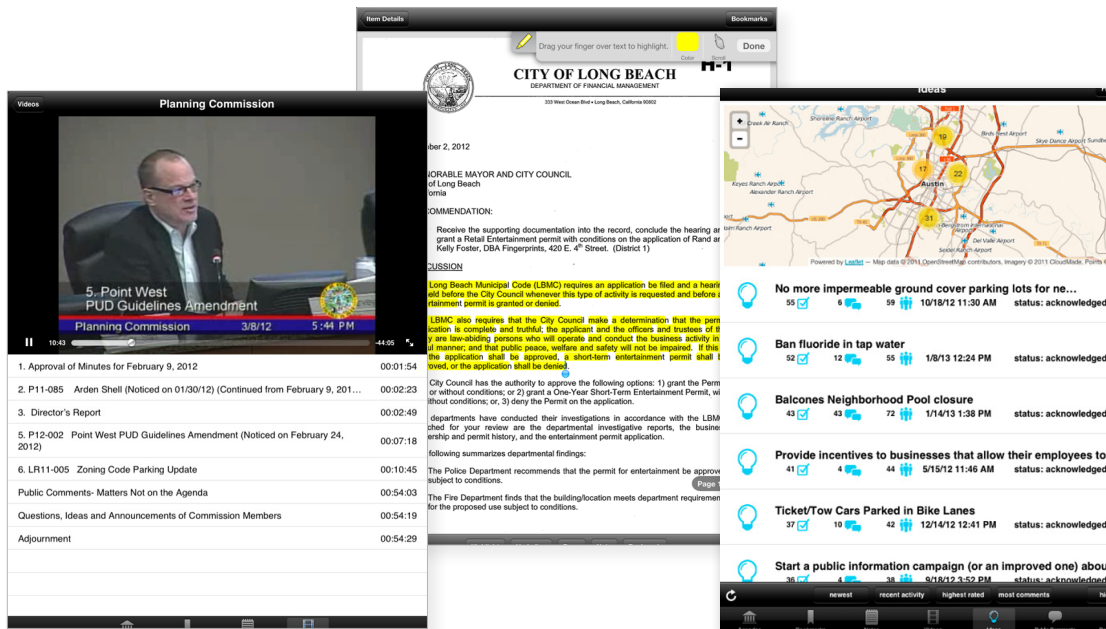
* GovTech & Center for Digital Technology 2013 Best of the Web Awards

11. Mobile Paperless Agendas

The accessibility created through Transparency 2.0 can make paper agenda packets obsolete. The same legislative data automatically published online can be used in mobile efficiency tools for elected officials and staff. The City of Azusa, CA, uses the iPad agenda app, iLegislate. With it, they have reduced packet distribution resources by 75% and now save over \$24k per year, while making their councilmembers better informed and connected to Transparency 2.0 data that helps them make decisions.

12. Civic Feedback at Your Fingertips

Another outcome of civic engagement online is that this data becomes available to help public leaders make better decisions through metrics and reporting on mobile devices. Imagine being able to instantaneously generate a report of comments submitted on an upcoming agenda item before the meeting, or understanding what ideas and priorities matter most to your community. This is pretty powerful information access all made possible because of online open government tools.

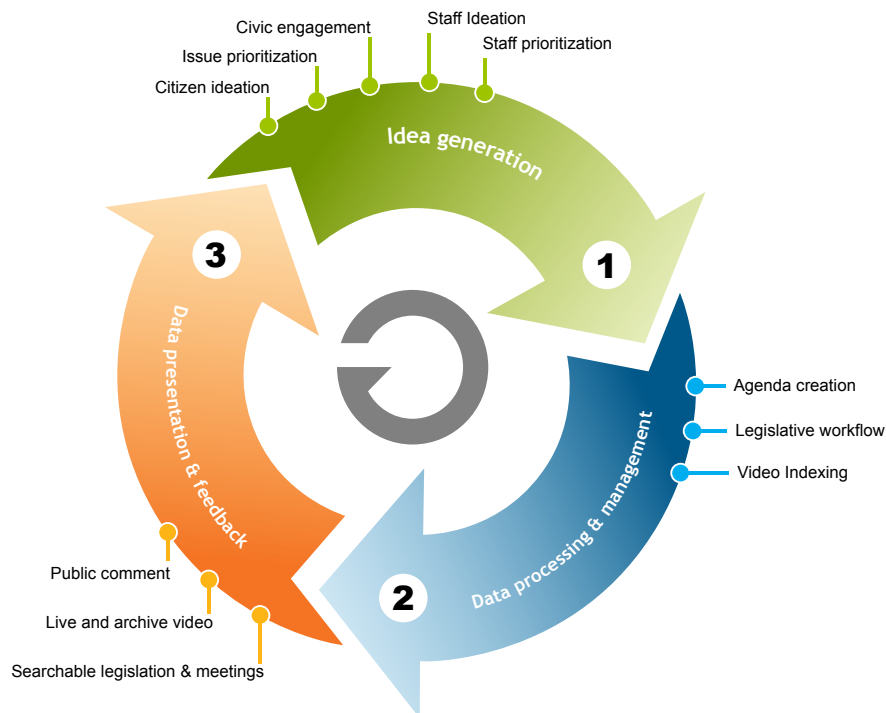


These twelve key components for Transparency 2.0 can revolutionize the effect and purpose of open government from a matter of policy to a central point of communication and engagement, creating more connected, informed, and interactive communities.

Discovering the Right Transparency 2.0 Tools

In Transparency 2.0, there are a number of important pieces that must all work together. An all-in-one solution that manages the workflow of ideation to publication, rather than a piecemeal solution, will not only ensure component synergy, but will save far more money, time, and peace of mind. Solutions built in cooperation with government agencies help to better define and shape the technology requirements for an all-in-one approach. Here are some important areas that Transparency 2.0 solutions should cover:

- ✓ A complete package for uploading and presenting meeting video online through a secure government-only cloud, as well as a mobile agenda tool.
- ✓ Tools for bringing in the ideas and sentiments of the community and connecting it with the legislative process.
- ✓ Tools for live meeting and event video streaming, video indexing and search capabilities, and an integrated public record.
- ✓ A system for efficient workflow management of the data: build agendas with the click of a button, record all minutes data, and present the data to the public in a searchable and usable fashion.



Transparency 2.0 is about bringing the most effective data and engagement strategies to life online. This can be a big job. Fully tested, proven, and perpetually developed and improving services tend to be far more cost effective than developing full solutions in-house. Solutions with open API's for custom in-house development are a great consideration for tailoring Transparency 2.0 to the uniqueness of your community.