MOBILE AND APPS
HANDY TOOLS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
- Mobile websites are good for information, whereas apps are **tools**
- Apps are ideal for combining several **datasets,** plus smartphone functionality
- Develop apps to provide services for citizens away from their homes and be a **facilitating government**

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- Read more about our Open Data projects
- Watch the ComProNet video: http://youtu.be/v5ZRUHQRUYQ

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Citizens in the North Sea Region love smartphones. According to the latest market research more than half the population – nearly 200 million people – now have smartphones. And it is easy to understand why: you have immediate access to a **powerful toolbox**.

When smartphones first came out, people marvelled at how they could browse the web and send emails. With voice calls and texting, this seemed to be the ultimate way to connect. Who could ask for more than on-the-move web access?

But the real revolution came in the form of apps, mini programmes and tools which combine the full functionality of mobile devices with online data transfer. There are apps for buying products, checking the whereabouts of public transport, tracking your movements, identifying your location, stargazing, business productivity – the list is endless. Who would have thought less than a decade ago that citizens would soon be making use of location services and big data with a single tap on a palm-sized screen.

By making your mobile phone a **platform for third-parties** to create apps on, the question arises whether public sector institutes have to develop apps for citizens. Academic research in open data insists on the theory of the **facilitating government**. By this theory a government should offer the data and means for citizens, start-ups and other businesses to develop apps.

The development of apps and mobile web services have proven to be **a challenging role for a government** during the Opening Up project. We have combined social media and open data to deliver new and improved public services to citizens and businesses. The combination of multiple datasets with smartphone functionality (most typically location services) offers opportunities, but the question remains if this could be done better by the private sector. The best apps and mobile websites are simple to use, so people can find out and share information in just a few taps, but they are also updates frequently.

Municipalities are excited about providing – and collecting – information about public services on a street-by-street basis. There are already great examples: sending the council photos of fly-tipping and graffiti, providing directions to the nearest library or tram stop, directing drivers to available street parking spaces, providing details about the local councillor for your street.

Think about how you can offer citizens enhanced services that are useful when they are out and about in your town. Above all, don't try to be all things to all people; an app is not an alternative or replacement for your municipal website.

NAME: Renske Stumpel
MUNICIPALITY: Groningen, Netherland
AND
NAME: Wouter Degadt
MUNICIPALITY: Leiedal, Belgium

ATTENTION!

The 'A-district' of Groningen is a well-preserved historic quarter in the city centre where beautiful old mansions overlook the river. Sitting alongside a residential area of student flats, renovated warehouses and new build family homes, the A-district is also the city's oldest red light zone.

This area was fast becoming our **problem district**, becoming a centre for drug dealing and drugs-related crime, much to the frustration of local residents.

As part of Opening Up our municipality worked in partnership with the local police to pilot a new smartphone app. Meld! encouraged residents to report any **suspicious behaviour** or activities. The information is shared in real time with the city council, the police and – most importantly – other Meld! users. The idea is that if other app users are aware of a disturbance or crime nearby, they can take precautions or look out for suspects as they leave the scene.

The police continuously monitored the Meld! platform so they could respond quickly if required. Our testers really valued this direct contact with the police. Although the pilot was only short, we recorded 117 incidents where a report via Meld! led to direct action from the police. This new level of cooperation and real-time reporting between citizens and the police is now being explored at a national level.

As a transnational result, the ComProNet (Community Protection Network) technology was tested in **Kortrijk**, Belgium. The pilot was given the name *Aandacht!* or Attention!
In Kortrijk, the police and the prevention service chose not to involve the citizens, but they used the app as a dispatching and communication tool. The app lowered the barrier for prevention workers to report suspicious behaviour, additionally it shows the location of your colleagues, which offers a sense of security.
https://vimeo.com/95402152

CITY OF KARLSTAD

CAPTION: Karlstad, Sweden

The "MyKarlstad" app allows residents to make contact with the most appropriate team in the municipal administration. It makes the most of smartphone functionality: citizens can send pictures of problems they are reporting, such as uncollected rubbish, search job vacancies or find out about weekend events at the museum. Citizens can customise their apps to include just the categories that they are interested in.

The app also provides the city with capacity for push notifications – instantly alerting all app users to urgent issues such as power cuts or major road closures.

As part of Opening Up the city also trialled an app for parents with children in pre-school. Integrating with a pre-school web portal, it gave parents easy access to their child's attendance records; they could also contact the school if the child was sick. For pre-schools, the app offered an excellent platform for sending out reminders and messages to parents.

When the page reached 1000 'likes' the news was widely publicised in internal newsletters and presentations, and in the local press.

Groningen MELD Stad app

Groningen has developed its own app for "fix your street", potholes etcetera.

But that is not all. On the website we have an interactive map on which citizens can reports what needs to be done in public space.

We have twitter as well: @stadsbeheer050: ment for these kinds of reports.

http://fleximap.groningen.nl/gnmaps/melding-en/

Meld Stad

Boom omgewaaid? Stoeptegels verzakt? Straatlantaarn stuk? Geef het door aan de gemeente. Doe online een melding of doe een melding met je smartphone.