

Some conclusions

Governments should use social media to engage with citizens and explain how administration works and why, in some cases, citizens have to swallow bitter pills and engage in citizens led service design in order to provide services that meet citizens' needs whilst inviting their constructive involvement and harnessing local knowledge.

Strategies for effective engagement is necessary, it's important to; be-, credible, consistent, responsive, integrated and transparent. New forms of participation have some differences from our traditional democratic structures and processes; they are open, personalised, direct and immediate.

Be yourself, remain authentic and be honest about your weakness and mistakes. Target your audience proactively, don't assume they will be interested and come to you.

Examine forms of participation which are growing and ask whether these can be used to reconnect citizens to formal decision making.

Exploring more direct forms of communication between Citizens and Representatives can also help to bring the gap between old and new ways of working and can be done without the need to do anything other than change the approach taken when training politicians.

By reframing the debate about the use of ICT in Government as a cultural and social rather than technological question allows us to address some of the fundamental structural and behavioral issues which inhibit the effective use of technology in Government.

By making this change we can create a platform for the systemic process reform which is needed alongside technology design in order to create a system of government which is relevant for a networked society.

“Doing digital” without thinking about the right type of intervention and the aims to be achieved is similarly oversimplified and undifferentiated. Government and public authorities need to think about whom they are working with and select the right tools.

In some cases, for example, anonymity can be extremely important; in others, it can be a barrier.

Keep empowerment of citizens at the center of your work and invest in strategies with civil society that continues to build this. The more specific aspect to keep in mind is the need to ensure that minority citizens are given special consideration. It is crucial to see that the voices of those on the fringe of society are brought into the conversation. This task is shared with civil society and grassroots movements and initiatives.

It is also important to have a clear strategy for community engagement which recognizes that it is the long-term journey that moves from information sharing, through consultation to dialogue and partnership working. A good democratic experience is one where you are happy that the outcome is fair even if it isn't your preferred outcome.