City Connections LLC

INNOVATION IN MUNICIPAL WEBSITES

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How Do New Jersey Sites Rate on the Innovation Scale?

- 566 Municipalities

- 329 Official Municipal Web Sites = 58%

- 74 Unofficial Municipal Web Sites = 13%

- 35 Have at least one innovative feature = 6%

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What are Basic Features?

- **Governing Body**
- **Departments, Boards, Committees, Commissions**
- **Agendas & Minutes**
- **News, Events, Calendars**
- **E-Mail & Telephone Directory**
- **Forms, Permits, Licenses (typically PDF)**
- **Photos & Photo Albums**

Still Basic, but less common

- **Search Engines**

- **Privacy Statements**

- **Site Registration for E-mail Updates**

- **Code Book online**

- **Emergency Information**

- **Master Plan with Maps**

- **Public Bid, RFP and RFQs**

What is considered innovative?

The answer changes as the Internet changes.

- **GIS Mapping**
- **Online Payment of Taxes, Utility Bills, Recreation**
- **Online Polling, Public Questionnaires**
- **Guest Books, Message Boards, Blogs, Forums**
- **Public Auctions**

What is considered innovative?

The answer changes as the Internet changes.

- **Message integration with TV Public Access Channel**
- **Video – streaming and static**
- **RSS News aggregation**
- **Language Translation and Handicapped Access**
- **Calendar downloads**

How do we manage innovation?

- **Take care of the Basics first. Don't try to add everything at once.**

- **Create a Website Innovation Map that identifies:**

  - • **identify specific functions**

  - • **time frames (be realistic)**

  - • **establish a website enhancement budget**

  - • **management implementation plan**

  - • **resources (internal and vendor)**

Sample Website Innovation Map

Basic Information Done	Polls & Surveys	Target Forums	Online Payments	GIS

- **Begin with Polls & Survey to determine sequence of introduction**

- **If not in-house resource, work with website vendor to identify vendor (the vast majority of web companies will not possess ability to do specialty functions such as online payments & GIS, but they should be able to recommend vendor and manage implementation)**

A Few Caveats to Remember

- **RULE 1: Check References (1 is not enough)**
  Ask about cost, satisfaction before and after implementation, how long did it take, describe the working relationship (The higher the cost and more complex the implementation the more important reference checks become)

- **RULE 2: Message Boards and Forums should not be open-ended. They should have specific targets for identified time frames. Spell out the rules for language and requirement that comments be on topic up front.**

- **RULE 3: Guest Books and Blog responses should not allow advertising. Spell out the rules for language and on topic up front.**

Where Can I See Examples?

- **GIS:** **Chatham Twp, Mendham Twp, Middletown Twp, Montgomery Twp, Stafford Twp**

- **ACH Payments:** **Bernards Twp, Chatham Boro, Old Bridge Twp, Princeton Twp, Wall Twp, Sparta Twp**

- **Credit Card:** **(Officialpayments.com and localpayments.com) Ewing Twp, Hardyston Twp, High Bridge, Mendham Boro, Stone Harbor, Wall Twp**

- **Search Tax Records:** **Morris Twp, Wantage Twp**

- **Search Utility Bills:** **Seaside Heights Boro**

Where Can I See Examples?

- **Online Auctions:** Cherry Hill (e-bay.com)
- **Polls/Surveys:** Franklin Twp (Somerset), Rockaway Boro, Shamong Twp, , Sparta Twp, Westfield Twp
- **Public Access Channel Integration:** Hackensack City, Hopewell Twp
- **Video:** Bernards Twp, Eatontown Boro, Plainsboro Twp, Warren Twp
- **Guestbooks, Blogs, Message Boards:** Hanover Twp, Medford Lakes, North Brunswick Twp, Spotswood Boro, Waldwick Boro
- **Language Translation:** Passaic City

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