

## Chapter 49

# Implementation of Social Media Concepts for E–Government: Case Study of a Social Media Tool for Value Co–Creation and Citizen Participation

**Raimundo Díaz-Díaz**

*University of Cantabria, Spain*

**Daniel Pérez-González**

*University of Cantabria, Spain*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Some governments have proven social media's potential to generate value through co-creation and citizen participation, and municipalities are increasingly using these tools in order to become smart cities. Nevertheless, few public administrations have taken full advantage of all the possibilities offered by social media and, as a consequence, there is a shortage of case studies published on this topic. By analyzing the case study of the platform Santander City Brain, managed by the City Council of Santander (Spain), the current work contributes to broaden the knowledge on ambitious social media projects implemented by local public administrations for e-Government; therefore, this case can be useful for other public sector's initiatives. The case studied herein proves that virtual social media are effective tools for civil society, as it is able to set the political agenda and influence the framing of political discourse; however, they should not be considered as the main channel for citizen participation. Among the results obtained, the authors have found that several elements are required: the determination and involvement of the government, a designated community manager to follow up with the community of users, the secured privacy of its users, and a technological platform that is easy to use. Additionally, the Public Private Partnership model provides several advantages to the project, such as opening new sources of funding.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7030-1.ch049

## **INTRODUCTION**

The integration of social media into the personal and corporate environment has occurred very quickly (Soto-Acosta, Perez-Gonzalez, & Popa, 2014; Wamba & Carter, 2014). Their importance and recognition as value creation tools are thoroughly accepted (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2009; Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012; Mucan & Özeltürkay, 2014; Padilla-Meléndez & Del Águila-Obra, 2013; See-To & Ho, 2014).

Public organizations have been some of the earliest adopters of information technologies (IT), with local governments being at the peak of that trend (Kamal, Weerakkody, & Irani, 2010). More recently, the use of IT by local authorities to improve the efficiency and quality of public services has turned into a concept referred to as “smart city” (Pattaro & Tripi, 2013). Smart cities use platforms like Websites and social media to involve key stakeholders in governance processes and to seek solutions to complex social problems (Anttiroiko, Valkama, & Bailey, 2014). These platforms render possible value co-creation within the public administration environment (Wachhaus, 2011).

Social media are some of the technologies that are usually attributed to smart cities (Johnston & Hansen, 2011; Mechant, Stevens, Evens, & Verdegem, 2012; Pattaro & Tripi, 2013), and the smart cities initiatives are growing around the world (Neirotti, De Marco, Cagliano, Mangano, & Scorrano, 2014). Additionally, citizen expectations have forced authorities to make frequent use of social media (Bertot, Jaeger, & Hansen, 2012).

Nevertheless, politicians are afraid of social media risks and, therefore, public administrations have not been adventurous in the use of these tools (Effing, Hillegersberg, & Huibers, 2011). Social media’s potential for value creation in public service management still exceeds its current level of implementation (Karakiza, 2015; Mergel, 2013).

The faint approach with which public administrations take advantage of social media has brought about a gap in the number of case studies in the research literature (Lilleker, Pack, & Jackson, 2010). In this context, the objective of this work is to analyze the Santander City Brain initiative in Santander, Spain, a social media tool that is being used for value co-creation and citizen participation within the smart city environment. This case study will serve to analyze value co-creation in cities, and it may thus be used as an example for other municipal initiatives.

The current article has been structured in the following order: The ‘Literature review’ section provides a comprehensive analysis of the available information for several key issues relevant to our research, such as smart cities, smart government, social media for citizen participation, value co-creation, and crowdsourcing. Below, we detail the methodology chosen in order to collect the evidence, and we also describe the analytic strategy of the current case study research. Subsequently, there is a comprehensive description of the Smart City Brain platform regarding its scope, aims, stakeholders engaged in its development, as well as several aspects of its use. In the ‘Analysis of results’, we weigh all of the data collected from the platform for its analysis. The following section, ‘Discussion’, provides an analysis of both the strengths and weaknesses of the project, which have been highlighted in our research. Finally, the key findings of the current case study are stated in the ‘Conclusion’ section, along with suggestions for further lines of research.

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:  
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/implementation-of-social-media-concepts-for-e-government/211334](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/implementation-of-social-media-concepts-for-e-government/211334)

## Related Content

---

### Strategies for the Cooperation of Higher Education Institutions in ICT

Juha Kettunen (2007). *Information and Communication Technologies for Economic and Regional Developments* (pp. 22-38).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/strategies-cooperation-higher-education-institutions/22508](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/strategies-cooperation-higher-education-institutions/22508)

### E-Participation in Urban Planning: Getting and Keeping Citizens Involved

Maud Donders, Thomas Hartmann and Anita Kokx (2014). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 54-69).

[www.irma-international.org/article/e-participation-in-urban-planning-getting-and-keeping-citizens-involved/114161](http://www.irma-international.org/article/e-participation-in-urban-planning-getting-and-keeping-citizens-involved/114161)

### From Analysis to Action With PESTEL Insights Into Izmir's Sustainable Urban Logistics Plan

Olcay Polat, Akner Güngör, Soner Haldenbilen and Halim Ceylan (2024). *Theories and Practices for Sustainable Urban Logistics* (pp. 108-127).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-analysis-to-action-with-pestel-insights-into-izmir-s-sustainable-urban-logistics-plan/345718](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/from-analysis-to-action-with-pestel-insights-into-izmir-s-sustainable-urban-logistics-plan/345718)

### Building Resilient, Smart Communities in a Post-COVID Era: Insights From Ireland

Aoife Doyle, William Hynes and Stephen M. Purcell (2021). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 18-26).

[www.irma-international.org/article/building-resilient-smart-communities-in-a-post-covid-era/262505](http://www.irma-international.org/article/building-resilient-smart-communities-in-a-post-covid-era/262505)

### On-Line Approaches to Data Delivery and Visualisation in Landscape Planning and Management

Ian D. Bishop (2012). *International Journal of E-Planning Research* (pp. 31-41).

[www.irma-international.org/article/line-approaches-data-delivery-visualisation/62038](http://www.irma-international.org/article/line-approaches-data-delivery-visualisation/62038)