



POLICING IN THE WEB 2.0 WORLD »»

New citizen-centric services for the Dutch Police

The possibilities of personal communication provided by the Web 2.0 world are completely changing the way people share information with one another. Social networking, semantic searches and self-selecting virtual communities are just some of the ways in which citizens can now choose to interact, using any number of fixed or mobile devices.

For police forces, these technologies pose a significant challenge because they exist outside both the traditional methods of contact and established relationships with citizens. But they also offer powerful new ways to engage with communities, provide new services and speed up planning, scheduling and administration duties.

Working with Atos Consulting, the Dutch Police have enhanced their ability to harness Web 2.0 benefits and demonstrate a pro-active and inclusive engagement with the citizens they serve, across demographics and, in particular, with younger Web-savvy members of society.

THE DUTCH POLICE

The Dutch Police (DP) serves over 16 million people across 16,000 square miles of one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. The DP has 55,000 employees working in 25 regional forces as well as the National Police Services Agency and the Royal Marechaussee.

THE CHALLENGE

The Dutch Police were well aware of the importance of Web 2.0 technologies; they were using them to collate information and to share it with both online and physical communities. In order to take that work forward, the DP wanted a more accessible police presence on the Web. The objective was to be more open about, and to promote, information sharing, whilst also helping communities to take on the responsibility of engaging with the police who serve them.

OUR SOLUTION

We worked with the Dutch Police to assist them in understanding more about how Web 2.0 technologies are changing the social landscape and what they have to offer in terms of response. We then went on to assess which commonly available Web 2.0 tools could be used to update police services and to deliver ongoing efficiency benefits.

We started by interviewing selected members of the DP, from both ICT and policing roles and from different regions in The Netherlands. This first step was designed to help us understand how the police themselves viewed the challenge in the context of their own work. The interviews showed awareness of the threat to traditional policing methods posed by Web 2.0 and general agreement that Web 2.0 potential was not being used to its full advantage in a unified way.

Relevant tools and techniques

We then recommended a series of organisational changes and quick wins to drive forward the opportunity Web 2.0 represents. We selected and analysed 26 relevant and emerging tools to provide the DP with options for new policing methods now, and to show what needs to be monitored for future developments.

Tools were analysed against the police requirements and then measured on a scale of effectiveness to ensure recommendations were taken up and acted upon.

The range of tools provides a fascinating insight into how police forces can benefit from taking full advantage of what Web 2.0 offers:

- » **Virtual town halls:** The ability to host virtual meetings with communities to discuss issues and initiatives
- » **Semantic searches:** Searching social networking sites using specific phrases and keywords
- » **Social networking:** Police officers joining online communities in their official capacity, but with personal details protected
- » **Facial recognition technology:** Transmitting electronic images to ask for and gather information from the Web
- » **Persona management:** Electronic business cards for police officers, posted online to give citizens contact details but with officers' privacy protected
- » **Location-based services:** GPS services that allow beat police officers to start using location data
- » **Video mapping:** Matching videos with location information
- » **Virtual assistants:** Electronic scheduling and diary tools for meetings and appointments that allow beat officers to manage their movements both in the virtual and real worlds
- » **Demographic videos:** For example, sending a video cartoon strip to children's mobile phones that shows them the safe way to cross busy roads
- » **Email blog responding:** Responding to and managing online communities using simple-to-use systems.

THE BENEFITS

Deploying these new technologies clearly delivers benefits for both the Dutch Police and society at large. The tools reach out to and into communities across the social spectrum, speed up administration duties and provide much better communications and information-sharing, with citizens and within the force. By fully embracing the Web 2.0 world, the Dutch Police and its officers are proactively demonstrating their willingness to adapt to social changes and provide services via the communication technologies citizens now use as a matter of course in their daily lives.

NEXT STEPS

If you would like to know more about Atos Consulting and the services we offer, please call 0207 830 4444 or visit www.atosconsulting.co.uk



We selected and analysed 26 relevant and emerging tools to provide the DP with options for new policing methods now, and to demonstrate which developing technologies and tools need to be monitored to deliver strong benefits.

“Our work with Atos Consulting has deepened and spread knowledge about Web 2.0 potential for the whole of the Dutch Police force, and we now have the opportunity to introduce innovative and far reaching initiatives that will bring significant benefits to citizens and communities right across The Netherlands.”

Huub Stiekema, Director ICT, Dutch Police and author of 'Break out! Living in the new unreality'
<http://interimpoinblog.wordpress.com/boek/>