

# SOUTH BAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## Social Media Working Group

### Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2014

**Attendees:** Alexander Gurfinkel (Hawthorne), Leilani Emnace (Manhattan Beach), , Jesse Reyes (Redondo Beach), Kit Fox (Rancho Palos Verdes), Khaled Tawfik (County of Los Angeles), James Waterman (Google), Travis Scott (Nixle), Chandler Sheilds, Marilyn Lyon, Kim Fuentes and Jacki Bacharach (SBCCOG)

### ---- AGENDA ----

#### I. Introductions

- New attendees provide a brief overview of their services
  - **Travis Scott** – VP relations for Nixel
  - **Khaled Tawfik** – IT Chief for L.A. County
  - **Pauline Chow** – CRG project manager
  - **James Waterman** – Google representative

#### II. Guest Speakers:

- **James Waterman** – *Regional Manager (State, Local and Education) for “Google for Work”*
  - Lived in San Clemente for a couple of years working for a number of IT companies based in southern California.
  - Google and other like-companies are in the “cloud”.
    - Cloud: IT systems are already built—a third of the IT activity around the world takes place on Google data centers.
    - Government creates an RFP to solve a problem and if everything works out, the problem is solved in a few years.
    - Using social media to solve a myriad of problems: regional governments should not worry about scale being an issue in regards to their constituencies.
    - How can we rapidly communicate through disaster management to constituents by pushing a button on a smartphone?
      - The system for this capability is already built (Google Maps).
      - Google worked with the City of Chicago to develop a similar system, started from scratch, saved the City millions of dollars in a process that took just 60 days.
        - Portland has a million dollars to analyze the “Chicago” project model.
        - Chicago spent a quarter of Portland’s budget to create the model in the first place, and saved 14 million dollars in the first year.
    - Crowd-sourcing for reporting potholes is an example of constituents communicating with their municipal agencies to fix things.

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- Which ones matter most?
  - Use Google Maps to determine which potholes are being encountered the most through “heat maps”.
  - Generate discussion about infrastructural issues that need the most/immediate attention.
  - Leverage social media to spread/proactively communicate with a community, relaying when fixes will take place—all in real time.
- Innovation labs: bring citizens and employees together and to create solutions:
    - i.e. “Hackathons”
  - What’s the problem?
    - Can we organize IT solutions to solve the problem?
  - Google coordinated meet-up: Colorado and Wyoming came together to discuss challenges faced in the past—how can they develop IT solutions to solve these problems?
  - All the I.T. is built and ready to be utilized—all that is needed is a structured plan and approach to harness the technology.
  - Prioritizing what you want to do and being proactive about doing it is the answer—it does not have to be a timely process (i.e. “2 years”).
  - Uber is a good example of service that leverages Google’s IT services to reach large populations and coordinate transportation.
    - Google Maps can log drivers’ mileage and other analytics for thousands of drivers across a broad range.
  - **Kim Fuentes** – Many do not know how to use social media/IT services, even though they know that they are out there—how do we fix that?
    - **James Waterman** – Don’t set out to solve the world’s problems, set out to get started and “iterate”:
      - Pick a small project with a small group, and build a solution that can function as a “template” for others to use.
      - The pieces are there, you just have to sit down with the team and assemble them.
      - Must be willing to fail—once you get something that works, raise the scale and promote the success.
      - Khan Academy, an educational partner of Google, is a good example of innovative solutions provided at no cost to anyone with internet access.
  - **Pauline Chow** – CRG builds on Google Base Maps while working with client cities; IT services are becoming “digital products”, a different way of packaging a goal/solution to an IT problem.
    - **James Waterman:** Proof that these projects do not have to take a lot of time.
  - Transparency example: posted a million maps for a specific project and looked at what people were clicking in order to determine the way the data was conveyed to the end user.
  - Bring together small groups of IT personnel and additional partners to create solutions to municipal problems (as opposed to hiring a consultant firm to do the work)—cost-effective and resource-efficient.
  - **Jacki Bacharach** – How do we leverage analytics to our benefit?

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- **James Waterman** – Use data scientists to unravel the goals and interpret the analytics that matter.
  - **Leilani Emnace** – Google Maps and Esri, what is the relationship between the two?
    - **James Waterman:** Google does not seek to replace Esri, but rather provide complementary services.
  - Google is using Google Drive to track the homeless:
    - i.e. Where is the last shelter that they stayed at, who are their family members?
    - Costs practically “nothing”.
- **Travis Scott** – *VP, Agency Relations for Nixle*
  - Nixle’s concept: there is no “silver bullet” to emergency or day-to-day notifications—looking to optimize solutions based on individual agencies.
  - Using the ubiquitous social media platforms can be limiting; Nixle seeks to reach everyone, not just those who are on social media (i.e. via text messaging and email).
    - Nixle wants to identify which medium/platform is best to reach the end user.
  - 3 levels of services provided:
    - Nixle Connect: basic free notification platform.
    - Nixle Engage: uses social media integration and updates the website as well.
    - Nixle 360: premium package that offers previously mentioned services as well as “Reverse 911” - end user can receive voice messages.
  - Network Effect: signing up for a region entails that you are getting notifications from municipal agencies from within that region.
    - Municipalities can tap into a population of already-subscribed users that they might not be reaching.
  - **Marilyn Lyon** – Will users get bombarded with messaging from multiple agencies?
    - Travis Scott: End users can customize settings to receive only specific alerts/messages; typically end users enjoy the collective messaging from all of the different agencies.
  - **Leilani Emnace** – How can you turn off or change the zip code that the end user is subscribed to?
    - Text the zip code to Nixle, accompanied by the word “off”.
  - Up to 20,000 characters of information in the body of a text message is permissible, depending on the end user’s liking.
  - Partner networks: Google “Public Alerts”, FEMA “IPAWS”, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and NOAA.
    - i.e. If NOAA releases a weather advisory, this message will reach Nixle users as well.
- **Khaled Tawfik** – *LA County (App: “The Works”)*
  - Built an app for the iPhone called Social Network App (SNAP) – the idea was to do something different.
    - Flexibility to deal with member cities, departments and neighborhoods individually.
    - Redirect constituents if they are not responsible for the service requested to the appropriate agency.
  - GIS mapping used to determine where the constituent is located: the City of Los Angeles or somewhere else within the County.

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- The public does not necessarily know which department is responsible for what—this app directs them accordingly.
- The data reported by the end user is crunched analytically by the app, providing useful community insight:
  - i.e. Tracking gangs by geographically plotting locations of graffiti—this information is then given to the Sheriff’s department, helping them identify gangs and track their movement.
- App overview:
  - 20,000 end users
  - Internal and External customers
  - Began work 3 years ago
- 6 core services that the County offers each have Twitter handles.
  - These handles feed info to the main account (@LAPublicWorks).
  - They also feed SNAP.
- Social media policy stemmed from creating fake accounts to train employees in order to get them familiar with Twitter.
  - Tried it in a safe environment, and then expanded it to a live environment once the County felt that employees were ready.
  - Mistakes happen, but working in the safe environment helps prevent mistakes from happening when the employees go live on social media.

### III.

#### Next Meeting

- January 22, 2015
- Possible agenda items:
  - New guest speakers

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