Published on *Digital Agenda for Europe* (http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda)

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An Open Source application developed by the project of CIP program is scaling worldwide!
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Web and mobile civic engagement apps are improving the performance and image of government by helping citizens actively participate in the improvement of their city. Such an application has been developed by URENIO Research Unit during the EU funded project PEOPLE (http://people-project.eu [2]). The “Improve My City” application enables citizens to report local problems (potholes, illegal trash dumping, faulty street lights, etc.) or suggest solutions for improving their city. The submitted issues are displayed on a city's map, whereas users may add photos votes & comments.

An Open Source Civic Engagement Application is available thanks to the Connected Smart Cities initiative - please visit http://connectedsmartcities.eu/ [3]

Using “Improve My City” Application local government agencies enable citizens and local actors to take action to improve their city. Reported cases then go directly into the city’s work order queue for resolution, and users are informed how quickly the case will be closed. When cases are resolved the date and time of the resolution is listed, providing users with the sense that the city is on the job. In this way Improve My City helps Municipalities to enlist new segments of the population—people who had not previously participated in government—and bring their concerns, insight, energy, and commitment to reinvigorate not only the city but also the government.

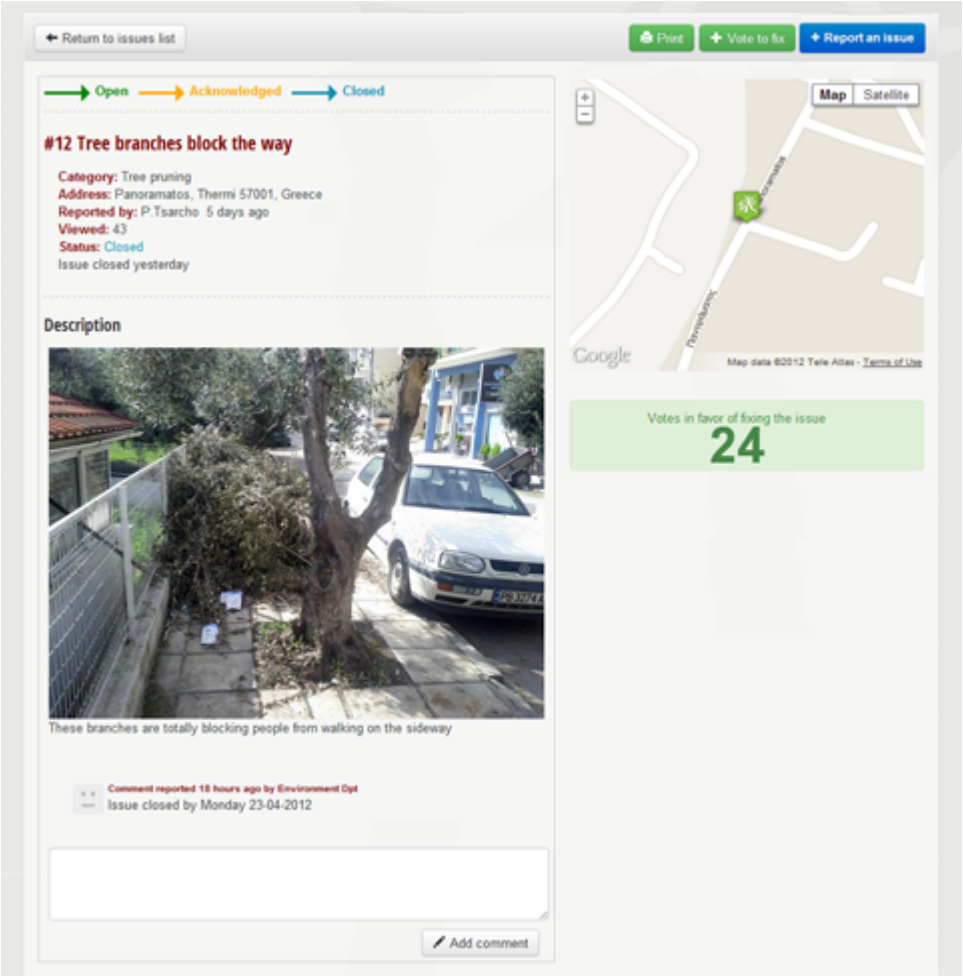
Key Features

- Users locate issues on a map: Citizens are able to determine the exact location of the problem on the city map, while they can also attach relevant photos.
- All issues are displayed on a local map: The submitted cases are displayed on the city’s map. Each category is presented with a different icon. There is also a cases list with most important info about each case.
- Users are informed about the resolution process: The citizens are informed about the status of their

requests by email. Initially the status of each case is "Open". Once the Municipality becomes aware of the case and forwarded it to the relevant department the status changed to "Acknowledged". Finally, once the case is resolved the status becomes "Closed".

- Detailed presentation of each submitted case: Each case is presented in detail, in a separate page showing all the available information. In this page users can also comment and give a positive vote.
- Filtering of submitted cases: Users can track citywide trends through issues isolation. They can view only the cases that belong to specific categories or those who have a specific status. Moreover, they can sort the cases by date of submission, number of votes and status.
- User feedback: Citizens and employees of the Municipality can make comments on existing cases. They can also provide a positive vote on issues they consider significant. Voting process helps Municipalities to better hierarch city's problems.
- An integrated management system: The submitted issues are managed through a web based environment that is based on Joomla content management system. The authorized employees manage the entries through a web form which presents all the available information.
- Distributed administration: The management of the submitted issues is distributed to the Departments of the Municipality. Different employees can be responsible for different categories. The application allows the assignment of various notification emails per category.
- Customisation: The application is fully customized in terms of user rights, comments, number of categories, notifications on new issues and comments, centre of the map, category icon, etc.
- Comprehensive Reports: The compilation of city data produces visualisations of departmental progress or conduct an in depth needs assessment. Data can also be exported and delivered to those who need it.

Open Approach



Improve My City has been developed following the open innovation methodology created in PEOPLE project (http://wikipeople.asi-soft.com/index.php/Methodology [4]), in close cooperation with the Municipality of Thermi and user groups. It is therefore a truly user-centred web application, adapted to the needs of Municipalities and local communities.

Moreover, the application is distributed for free, under AGPL v3 open source license. Anyone who wishes can download it from the GitHub website (https://github.com/icos-urenio/Improve-my-city [5]) or participate in application's improvement. It is also available in 18 languages (English, Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese (Brazil), Portuguese (Portugal), Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Romanian and Turkish).

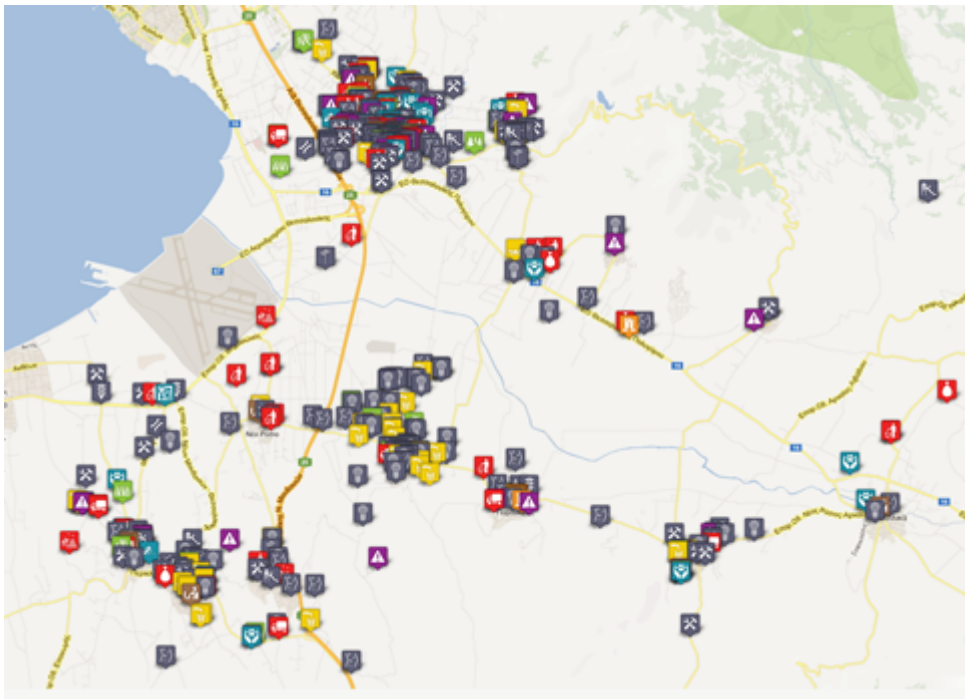
Following the latest trend of application interoperability, Improve My City introduced a complete functionality wrapping around its core features and elements in the form of RESTful services. Simple speaking, Improve-my-city has its own Application Programming Interface (API) to be used by 3rd party developers. The next version (3.0) of the application will support the Open311 standard, which provides open channels of communication for issues that concern public space and public services. Primarily, Open311 refers to a standardized protocol for location-based collaborative issue-tracking.

Mobile Application

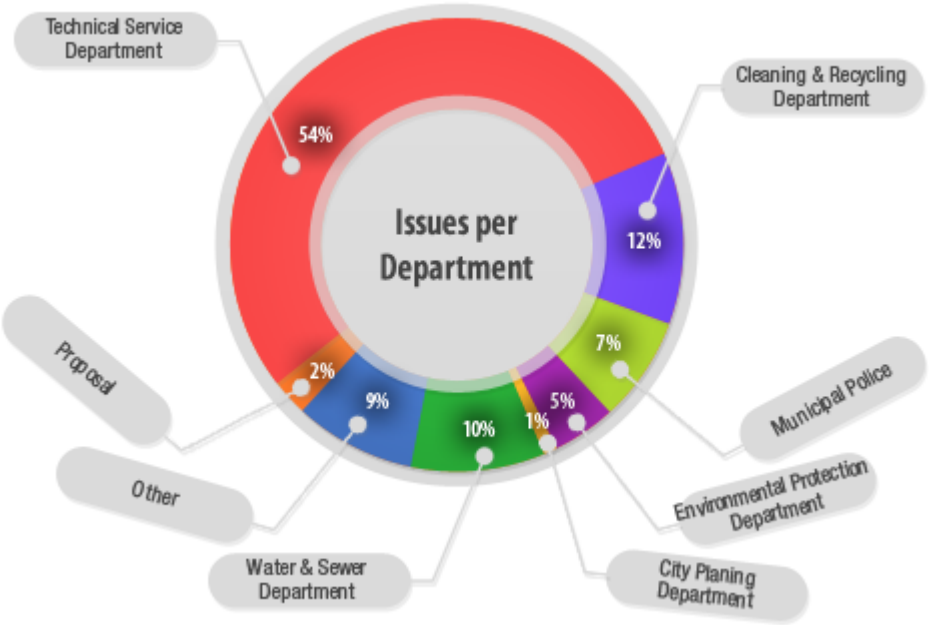
The Information Technologies Institute - Multimedia Group (Greece) has developed an Android mobile version for Improve My City web application. The mobile app makes use of modern smartphones' features enabling automatic extraction of the GPS coordinates of the reported issue and photographing the issue using the phone's camera.

Improve My City in Action

Improve My City was originally deployed in the Municipality of Thermi, Greece, in April 2012. One year later more than 500 users have been registered and submitted 585 issues and 1350 comments.



Improve My City has been spread worldwide. There are a lot of installations in Municipalities and communities' websites across the world.



Web and mobile applications for smart cities

The Improve My City application belongs to a number of web applications developed within the EU funded project “PEOPLE: Pilot smart urban Ecosystems leveraging Open innovation for promoting and enabling future e- services”, which is partly funded by the European Commission. PEOPLE aimed at speeding up the uptake of smart cities through the rapid implementation, deployment and uptake of innovative internet-based services in order to allow facing the main challenges of developed cities at present and towards their future quality of life. This was enabled by designing and implementing user-driven open innovation methodologies and processes. For these purposes, four pilot Smart Open Innovation Urban Ecosystems have been created at four different European cities: 1) Bilbao, in Spain; 2) Vitry sur Seine, in France; belonging to the Isle de France area, close to Paris; 3) Thermi, in Greece, belonging to the Thessaloniki agglomeration, and 4) Bremen, in Germany.

Useful Links:

- Smart City Applications - Improve My City (http://smartcityapps.urenio.org/improve-my-city_en.html [6])
- ImproveMyCity demo (http://smartcitydemos.urenio.org/ [7])
- Municipality of Thermi – Imrove My City (in Greek) (https://smartcity.thermi.gov.gr/improve/en/ [8])
- Improve My City - Source code in GitHub (https://github.com/icos-urenio/Improve-my-city [5])
- PEOPLE Project (http://people-project.eu [2])

- Future Internet [9]

Source URL: http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/blog/improve-my-city

Links
[1] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/users/lakavra
[2] http://people-project.eu/
[3] http://connectedsmartcities.eu/
[4] http://wikipeople.asi-soft.com/index.php/Methodology
[5] https://github.com/icos-urenio/Improve-my-city
[6] http://smartcityapps.urenio.org/improve-my-city_en.html
[7] http://smartcitydemos.urenio.org/
[8] https://smartcity.thermi.gov.gr/improve/en/
[9] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/science-and-technology/future-internet