Civil Servant 2.0

New ideas and practical tips for working in government 2.0

Civil Servant 2.0 *beta*

Action steps towards government 2.0

www.ambtenaar20.nl

Davied van Berlo

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Civil Servant 2.0 (Ambtenaar 2.0) is a Dutch network of people, both civil servants and citizens, who wish to study and raise awareness of the consequences of web 2.0 for government. They discuss the issues involved, exchange ideas, knowledge and practical experiences and contribute to training, support and practical tips for working as a civil servant 2.0.

Civil Servant 2.0   http://www.ambtenaar20.nl

Civil Servant 2.0 network   http://netwerk.ambtenaar20.nl

Civil Servant 2.0 book   http://boek.ambtenaar20.nl

Foreword

Dear colleague,

Governments throughout the world are facing significant changes. New concepts about the structure and role of government are emerging in many different countries: 'open government' in the US, 'the big society' in the UK and 'government 2.0' in Australia. The government of the Netherlands is also undergoing major changes.

The 'Compact Civil Service Implementation Programme' aims to transform the Dutch Government into an organisation that accommodates social dynamics and requires less public funding and fewer staff.

An intrinsic part of the Government's new way of working is based on a combination of proposals for cutting costs, including in housing and ICT, and for providing professionals in government with sufficient space to operate through management based on results and trust. In addition to the basic skills of the civil servant 1.0 (preparing reports, managing decision-making processes, dealing with politically sensitive issues), the civil servant 2.0 is proficient in the use of social media and interactive policy making and can offer solutions to society, involve members of the public in policy and apply new forms of online cooperation. The concepts presented in this book respond seamlessly to these developments.

Davied van Berlo is the epitome of the civil servant 2.0, and in this book he provides insights on developments within and outside government and on the status of government 2.0 in the Netherlands. This book is therefore essential reading in the era of 'The New World of Work'.

I hope the ideas and examples described in this book will provide inspiration for civil servants both in the Netherlands and abroad. Now more than ever, governments are in need of innovative staff who can come up with smart solutions to improve how government works. This book is a valuable resource for the civil servant 2.0.

Jaap Uijlenbroek

Director General
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

Contents

Civil Servant 2.0

New ideas and practical tips for working in government 2.0

December 4th, 2008

Contents

Box texts

Full contents

You must be the change you want to see in the world.
Mahatma Ghandi

Chapter 1. Introduction

Let me take you on an adventure - my adventure as an independent government policy consultant. My journey through the urban jungle of central government, and my quest for Civil Servant 2.0.

This adventure will lead you along the yawning gap between citizen and government, and show you how much easier it has become to bridge this gap. We will steer through the pillars of horizontal government organisation and discover new forms of collaboration. And you will learn how to cut a path through the growing mountain of information and how you can arrange your environment to suit your way of working.

This is a book for you, as a civil servant. As civil servants we have a public task to perform, and we want to do that as well as we can. Our working environment is constantly changing, and increasingly more is possible. As a civil servant, you have to be open to these developments and curious about how you can perform your work at an even higher standard. If this is something you recognise, then this book is for you.

What is web 2.0?

Also known as the 'social web'. Web 2.0 is a collective name for various websites that emphasise interaction between users and for the culture that this engenders. This is in contrast to websites that only transmit messages or offer services.

In the last chapter I will explain who I am and why I have written this book. After all, this is the personal account of a civil servant. In this book I put forward what I know about internet developments and the concepts behind web 2.0. I also describe my own outlook on work and the function of government functions, and hope to unearth some provocative ideas and pressing questions in the process.

However, let's begin with the first chapter, in which we will discover which new worlds have been created and try to understand the fundamental changes in the world that we know. We will find out what web 2.0 is, how the developments on the internet have affected society and what the consequences and possibilities are for government. Armed with this background knowledge we can embark on our journey.

We will then apply this knowledge to the government. I will share my ideas on how we as government can perform our work with more public interaction, what possibilities there are for more integrated work within and between governments, and how civil servants can fulfil a more central role in this respect. I will present several examples, but the main focus is on presenting practical tips and advice.

I believe the result is a book that provides an insight into what web 2.0 is, but primarily offers ideas about different ways of looking at our work and our organisations. The aim is to stimulate debate and provoke thought, and to experiment After all, this is all about new developments, which means there are no ready-made answers. The only way we are going to find any answers is through discussion and experimentation.

Davied van Berlo

Background

Civil Servant 2.0 is a government-wide open initiative launched by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture. The aim is to assess, on the basis of discussion and experimentation, what the consequences of web 2.0 are for our work and for the government's way of working. Discussions are published on the site www.ambtenaar20.nl and interested parties can join the network on netwerk.ambtenaar20.nl.

netwerk.ambtenaar20.nl

Besides the central theme outlined above, throughout the book's margins are practical tips and information about web 2.0, functionalities and handy internet sites, as well as other sources and further reading. This book is therefore also a reference guide.

www.ambtenaar20.nl

Furthermore, various texts also appear on www.ambtenaar20.nl These include contributions from Anja Feijen, Gerbrand Haverkamp, Paul Lanse, Ramon de Louw, Rob Oele, Arnout Ponsioen and Jeroen Vis, to whom I am very grateful. I would also like to thank all the other contributors who have provided me with inspiration and ideas.

boek.ambtenaar20.nl

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Internet and web 2.0, a different perspective

Over the last ten years the world and our lives have undergone fundamental changes. New computer and internet technology has made things possible that until recently were unimaginable. And all these new possibilities are within everyone's reach. Although the reason for this are technological developments, the consequences are much more fundamental: for society, for culture, for the economy and also for government. To make use of this, we as civil servants must attempt to understand what these fundamental changes involve. This chapter will address that issue.

A world without space or time

In our lives we are limited by natural laws. The world is very large and these days we can quickly travel to any part of it. However, our ideas travel further and go much faster than we can. We can put these ideas in writing so that they can travel to places where we ourselves cannot. Since the invention of the printing press they can be copied many times over and reach different places at the same time. And thanks to the telephone they can be spread much further than we could bring them in person. Although we cannot escape the laws of nature we are able to step outside the boundaries of time and space.

In the material world everything occupies a space and bringing people or objects together or moving them takes time. Now we can bridge these distances. But our dreams are not affected by these restrictions. Let's start imagining then. Let's imagine that these restrictions in space and time no longer exist, that everything is close at hand and always available. The whole world within reach at all times of the day. All information, all discussions, all people. Just imagine!

Overwhelmed by everything on offer

When you try to picture such a world, without space and time and where all information is accessible, I imagine you would run into a few problems. First you would simply be overwhelmed by everything on offer. You would be unable to see the woods for the trees. It would be impossible to oversee or comprehend. Unworkable. So to be able to handle that enormous quantity of information you have to make the right choices. And then what do you need? How will you arrange your environment? What people do you want to have at your table? What information do you want on your desk? What instruments do you want at hand? What will you choose?

When you've thought about what you need, the second problem is how to actually find it. You have brought everyone together and you can hear everything they say and read everything they have written. But it is of course impossible to actually follow everything. That has to be made easier. How do you bring together your own personal mix of people, information and objects that you need for the job? Or rather, how do you find it?

And say that in the end you have managed to bring your own personal combination together. You are in contact with the people you have chosen, gathered the information you were searching for and you have

World Wide Web or internet?
The term 'web' is often used as a synonym for the internet. The internet is literally the network through which all types of services can be offered.
The first and best known service is email, sending a message over that network.
Another service is the World Wide Web (www). This was introduced to allow information to be viewed on another computer. The web was conceived and developed in 1990 by Tim Berners-Lee of CERN and was made freely available to the general public in 1993.

everything you need to get started. How do you know that you are talking to the right people? Isn't there any further information you didn't know about? Are there better ways of going about things you didn't yet learn? How can you proceed with greater certainty?

Dilemmas of a new reality
Although the above is just an outline of a general, hypothetical situation, the existence of the internet confronts us with the same questions:

1. If everything is available, how do you know what to choose? For example, now that I can connect with all the people involved with the same subject as me through the internet, which people are of most use to me? And who do I therefore want to contact? What can this Australian internet advisor contribute?

2. When you can see everything, how do you find what you're looking for? For example: someone, somewhere in the world must have practical experience with the same activities I am concerned with. But how do I get hold of these insights, and what form are they available in? As a report? As a blog? As a video? Does someone in the world actually already have experience in setting up a digital network for government employees that is similar to Civil Servant 2.0?

3. And when you've gathered everything you want, how can you really be sure you have everything you need? For example: I've just had a brainstorming session with my department that generated many good ideas. But would I be able to get even better results with other people who I don't happen to know? How can I get other people to share their thoughts with me about the issues I face?

The world is emerging from a time when possibilities were limited, in which a group of professionals were put together in a building because there was no other way of cooperating and dealing with a problem. Then, the only information available was the resources in the building because it just wasn't possible to obtain any other sort. Then, parties representing interests were invited to solve problems because it was impossible to get all parties involved to share their thoughts. Much of what was not possible back then, is possible now. The following three dilemmas illustrate this point.

1. Personalise your world

In our attempt to gain a deeper understanding of these new concepts we can turn to a number of interesting books. The Long Tail by Chris Anderson offers an insight into the problems caused by the abundance of choice. The book focuses primarily on economic aspects, but it does put forward an important principle. This principle has not so much arisen because of the internet, but due to the internet's capacity to remove the barriers of time and space.

The Long Tail

So what's this book about? The long tail refers to the economic principle that an abundance of supply does not only lead to a small amount of big sellers, or 'hits' to generate cash (high sales or few products), but that the sale of an enormous number of niche products can also generate a healthy profit (low sales of many products). The chart below illustrates why this concept is called the 'long tail'.
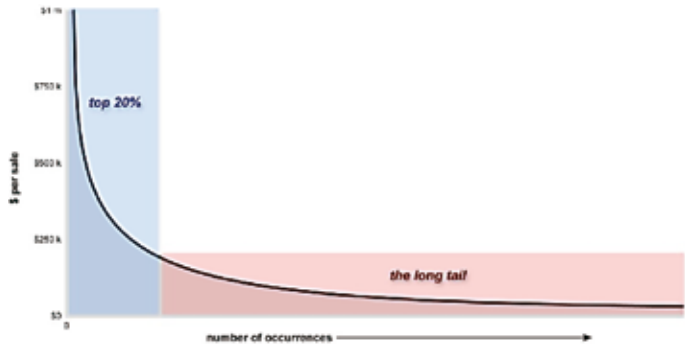
A condition for this long tail is of course that the offer of products must be very large to enable sufficient profit to be generated. The internet has provided a breakthrough in this respect because the stock held by internet stores is virtually limitless and is not restricted by shelf space, as is the case with the shop on the corner. As a result the online store does not have to concentrate on a couple of hits, but can offer all the items it wants. It is the emancipation of the niche market.

Everyone is a niche

The fact that companies can generate money through niche products is not the only revolutionary concept put forward. It does not mean just emancipation of the niche, but also of the individual. Ultimately, every individual is a niche market. The sum total of everyone's tastes, interests and circumstances is unique. Faced with a limitless offer of products, people choose what is best for them. The common denominator is no longer the only guideline. In addition to mass production, there is now mass customisation.

This phenomenon first manifested itself in the market for cultural products. This market in particular has an enormous variety in products and tastes, and covers various items including books, films, clothes, etc. Book and music stores were only able to offer a fraction of what was on offer and therefore only stocked the best-selling hits. Online stores such as www.amazon.com offer a much wider assortment of products and have therefore taken such a large share of the market. The long tail also manifests itself in other markets. Google has successfully applied this principle to the online advertising market by also giving small sites the opportunity to place advertisements, and there is certainly no shortage of small websites!

But let's return to the original question: If everything is available, how do you know what choices to make? Of course, people have to make these choices for themselves. People decide their own niche. But the

www.amazon.com is the largest online store. It started as an internet book store, but the range of product on offer was continually expanded: first second hand books, then other product groups, and even supermarket products.
Nowadays, Amazon lets you to hire a complete internet store space of your own, or just space on the server to start your own internet business.

webmessenger.msn.com is the online version of MSN Messenger. In the Netherlands, MSN is the most popular instant messaging software. If you are unable to install the MSN software on your computer, you use web messenger to still make contact with your network anyway.

www.twitter.com is a microblogging site: provide regular updates of no more than 140 characters about what you are doing and follow other users to read about what they are up to. More information is available elsewhere in this book.

www.hyves.nl is, with ten million users, the largest online social network in the Netherlands. Hyves offers many functionalities, but is aimed more towards personal use than for work. Hyves makes the Netherlands an exception in the world of social networks as people in most other countries make use of international sites such as www.myspace.com and www.facebook.com

www.delicious.com allows you to bookmark your favourite websites so you can access them from any computer.

www.last.fm is an online social network for music and bands. Apart from the opportunity to contact others and state your own musical preferences, the site offers you the chance to listen to your own 'radio station' that broadcasts music based on your tastes, or which sound similar to your favourite band.

Long Tail makes it clear that we no longer have to restrict to the hits. And that we should not expect members of the public to do so either..

2. Finding and being found
I mentioned above that internet stores offered added value because they stock a wider range of products than a high street store. But if that was their only advantage then they wouldn't have come as far as they have. Because if the offer of products is so wide, how can you find what you're looking for? Isn't it then a case of not being able to see the woods for the trees? An enormous range of products only offers added value if you can bring the right product to the right customer. In other words, now everything is available and within reach on the internet, how can you single out what you need? What type of filter do you need? There are three main types of filter.

a. Human filter
The human filter is traditionally the most well known: the expert who knows what is good, e.g. the film critic, the music magazine, the purchaser for a big wine merchant, the editor of a newspaper, etc. These professionals are under pressure and there are many discussions about what internet and web 2.0 means for them. Such 'connoisseurs' will retain their function in the internet era, but they have lost some of their authority, partly because we are no longer dependant on them to find something.

b. Social filter
The social filter has also been around for some time: friends, whose tastes you know recommend films or good clothing stores for instance. The intensity of contacts with friends increases through, for example, MSN, Twitter or Hyves (see section on 'My Brands'), and therefore the importance of the social filter also increases. The term 'friend' also has an increasingly looser definition. Rather than believing an expert, consumers are more likely to put more trust in a person like me (the marketing term), e.g. sites with reviews and evaluations of various products and services, such as www.iens.nl for restaurants and www.vergelijk.nl for retail products. You can also receive tips and information via personal networks: messages in forum groups which you belong to, or a link from someone in your network at www.delicious.com.

c. The algorithmic filter
The algorithmic filter has become possible because search engines and other sites can process many terabytes of user statistics to identify the behavioural patterns of users. The internet has made this algorithmic filter possible, but has also enormously expanded the reach of the social filter, and it is therefore what gives internet companies and search engines added value: not only in offering a massive variety of choice, but assisting users in the choices they make. Amazon.com (and Bol.com) let users know that customers who bought "The Long Tail" for example, also bought "The Wisdom of the Crowds". Google shows advertisements that relate to your search query, on the pages you have visited, or the gmail you read. The music site www.last.fm registers the music you listen to and comes up with suggestions. This allows you to further refine your search results according to your own tastes and interests,
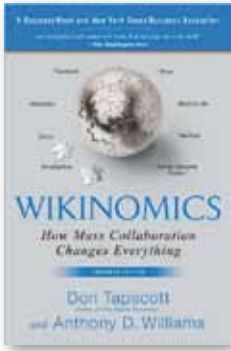
and allows you to go deeper into the long tail. The conclusion is that the professional groups who have always functioned as 'human filters' now have a weaker position in society. They are working hard to reconsider what their added value (their niche) is in this new world (for example, journalists on **www.denieuwereporter.nl**) as their work is increasingly being done by other internet users (such as bloggers). A similar situation could arise for civil servants. This subject is dealt with in greater depth in Chapter 5. As civil servants, we must realise that members of the public no longer automatically look to government for solutions, but will look around for other options. And we should also assess how we ourselves can make use of the social networks and the possibilities the internet offers us to do our work better, just like the businesses I referred to do.

Don Tapscott, *Anthony D. Williams -Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything (2006).*

3. Mass collaboration

It is a well known fact, but one that perhaps needs to be repeated. As a government, we know a great deal. We have some of the best professionals and experts, which means we have a lot of in-house knowledge. But we don't know everything, which is why we involve other people in our work: we hire the services of companies, commission research and invite interest groups and other such bodies to share their thoughts with us. This costs a lot of money, and we hope it will fill the holes in our knowledge: the things we know that we don't know. But even this leaves another category of knowledge: those things we don't know we don't know. How do we find out what they are?

You can probably use the same graph as for the long tail: the small group of experts who can contribute the largest amount of knowledge and ideas, while the long tail comprises the invisible knowledge and ideas of an enormous group of people you don't know about. It is important not to focus on the whole tail, but on being able to pick out that one idea we need, or finding the right person who makes the right contribution to a text or project.

Dictionary: **Crowdsourcing,** 'outsourcing to the crowd'. This is when organisations assign tasks to consumers and the public.

The government is working towards becoming smaller, better and more flexible. One of the ways it can achieve this is through outsourcing to the crowd, or crowdsourcing. I will return to this term in the next section, but one book which deals in greater depth with this concept is "Wikinomics. How mass collaboration changes everything", by Don Tapscott en Anthony D. Williams. How can we as the government make use of mass collaboration?

Wikinomics

The book actually has two important messages. The first is that to get on in the world and stay on top as an organisation, you cannot just rely on your own organisation and employees; you have to know how to implement knowledge and ideas from outside the organisation. The second message is that this is not easy to achieve. It requires a mental shift of the boundaries, and learning how to take a new approach. But the most successful companies have been the ones who have implemented the most radical changes.

Wikinomics describes seven models of mass collaboration. They cannot all be used by government, but I will try to mention some examples that can:

- *Peer pioneers* are large networks of volunteers who work together quickly and efficiently to come up with a product. Examples are of course open-source software and Wikipedia, but also the initiative in California to record all official schoolbooks in a wiki. One condition is that the work relates to digital tasks (much of the government's work is digital), that can be divided into sub-tasks and then easily joined back together to produce one final result;

- *Ideagoras,* or open innovation is a marketplace for ideas and innovation. There are two kinds: one where problems are posted (such as **www. innocentive.com**) and one for solutions (e.g. **www.yet2.com**). These problems could of course also be issues affecting society;

- *Prosumers* are consumers or customers who further develop and innovate existing products. One example is Lego, which allows its customers put together their own kits and brings out the most popular as a product. Second Life, where almost everything is built by users, is another example, or **www.wuz.nl**, the news platform of de Telegraaf newspaper. What government information could you use as a basis for a useful internet site? For further information, see chapter 6, which deals with open government.

- *New Alexandrians,* companies and scientists who work together and exchange knowledge to tackle large or complex challenges. I can imagine that in government, it would be extremely beneficial for efficiency to have online access to an updated overview of all the studies and results thereof published by all the ministries;

- *Platforms for participation* offer an open platform which users can contribute to. Google Maps is of course a well-known example, and **www.flickr.com** and **www.youtube.com** could also be termed in this way. But also Amazon, where everyone can start their own store, using all the functionalities that Amazon itself has. The BBC has launched an initiative called BBC Backstage (**backstage.bbc.co.uk**), which allows users to create their own programmes. The best programmes are then selected by the BBC;

- *Global Plant Floor:* in The World is Flat, US journalist Thomas Friedman describes how businesses are increasingly expanding their activities throughout the globe on the basis of costs, knowledge and other requirements. Tapscott and Williams take this concept further, to include the involvement of consumers in the design process (as BMW does) and the allocating of tasks between suppliers such as Boeing in aircraft construction. They refer to an ecosystem of businesses and organisations that harmonise their activities and production lines. Government organisations also operate such 'ecosystems'. Would it also be possible to develop a policy plan or a piece of legislation, by allocating tasks to the organisations around us?
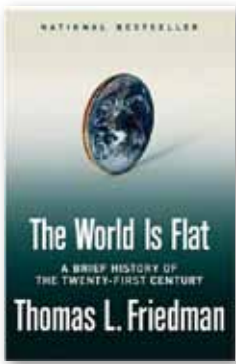
Thomas L. Friedman - *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century (2005).*
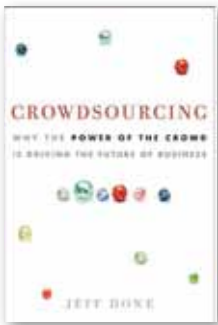
Jeff Howe - Crowdsourcing. *Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business (2008).*

Read more about John Harrison on Wikipedia: **http://twurl.nl/ljhpmw**

Brainstorming and gathering ideas
If you want to brainstorm online or to collect ideas from your network or the public, try visiting **www.uservoice. com** or **www.crowdsound.com.** If you register with the site you can create a page with an introduction or question. Everyone you invite can then launch an idea. Others can respond and rate ideas. As the ideas grow. the most popular ones will slowly emerge.

• *Wiki workplace,* about the advantages of mass collaboration for the internal organisation: the horizontal collaboration and co-creation between staff over organisational boundaries, internal communication via blogs and discussion forums, drawing on ideas from lower levels of the organisation (for example, Google employees are allowed to devote 20% of their time to their own plans and projects) and the use of prediction markets to support decision making, etc. The authors are actually bringing other models such as peer production and ideagoras to the work floor. They also describe the consequences for hierarchy and decision-making, the advantages of openness and self-organisation and the need to seek a new balance between hierarchy and self-organisation. There is further information about this subject in Chapter 7.

Crowdsourcing

Another term often used in this context is crowdsourcing. This is a term (and also the title of a book) conceived by Jeff Howe. As he explains it himself, it is about: outsourcing to the crowd. He suggests that most knowledge and ideas are not found within your own organisation, regardless of how big your R&D department may be. You can always get more from the public domain, so how can you find the right people to help you? The answer is open innovation, and below are a few examples from the book.

Crowdsourcing is not a new phenomenon. The solution for the eighteenth century problem of determining longitude is perhaps the first successful example of crowdsourcing. At the time, seafaring nations had poor navigational skills in the open seas. As soon as the coast was out of sight there was no way to accurately measure longitude, and boats could veer far off course. To solve this very costly problem the British government put up a prize of 10,000 pounds for a suitable solution. And a solution was found, not by a civil servant or a scientist, but by a clock and furniture maker named John Harrison.

In terms of open innovation the internet has also made it possible to work on a much larger scale, and to therefore really use crowdsourcing as a tool for organisation strategy. One example of this is Innocentive.com, where businesses put complex problems online, with a prize for the solution. This encourages people from a wide variety of disciplines to get involved, and makes it possible, at a relatively low cost, to source the right solution from countless individuals and ideas. According to Tapscott en Williams, pharmaceutical giant Procter & Gamble is convinced that in 2010 open innovation will account for 50% of innovation. This is a considerable statement by a company that itself employs 9,000 staff in R&D.

What is striking about Jeff Howe's account is the emphasis he places on diversity and uniqueness. It is therefore not about the average contribution of the masses. Crowdsourcing should not be understood as a mechanism that allows 'the masses to collaborate on the development of a product (although this may be the case sometimes). No, the fact the whole world is connected by the internet is exactly what makes it possible to connect to people with unique and specialised knowledge and characteristics with problems or innovations that seem impossible

to solve or achieve. And one general principle applies: the less you are involved, the greater the chance of an original solution.

Summary

Internet is a relatively new phenomenon, also for government. It brings with it new questions and concepts. It asks us to look at the world in a different way, to think differently. The reasons for this development are technical, but the consequences are social. This results in new questions and dilemmas, but also new opportunities. In this chapter I have sketched several new ways of looking at the world of the internet, and therefore our own world. I have also outlined a few of the consequences, and the potential that can be unlocked. Now that we are stepping over to web 2.0, this potential is becoming clearer, and the way it can be applied to the work of the government is becoming more tangible. Before we go any further we first have to know what the term 'web 2.0' really stands for. In the next chapter we will take a more in-depth look at the elements that characterise web 2.0.

What is Twitter?

How often do you think to yourself: "Pity I didn't hear about that earlier, then we could have …"

It is crucial for everyone to know what their colleagues are doing (in your department, in your organisation, in government, or outside, in short everyone you work with. That way you can prevent the same work being done twice. It also enables you to respond quickly to other people's activities and build on them, reaching across boundaries and through compartments. To do this, you can use blogging, or microblogging in the form of Twitter.

On Twitter you can let people know what you are up to using no more than 140 characters. Your message, which is called a tweet, offers a snapshot of your activities. Register on www.twitter.com and choose other users to follow. They in turn can follow you. Visit www.twitter.com/davied and you might see someone you know in my list of followers. If there's anything you want to share with me, that you're reading this book for instance, add @davied to your message.

A couple of tips

To get into the swing of writing, just think every hour, "What am I doing now?" Also report things you are proud of or anything unusual you notice.

- Do not hesitate to follow many people. You can always "unfollow" them if there are too many to keep track of;
- Make sure you find people around you who also twitter to get you started;
- Also follow a few famous twitterers to get ideas on how to make the most of Twitter;
- Make sure you are notified via search.twitter.com or www.twittermail.com of any messages that are sent to you (@davied), so you don't miss them;
  Integrate Twitter into your working environment through a platform like Netvibes or iGoogle (with an rss feed or widget), so you do not keep having to go to Twitter.com;
- You can also use Twitter to search globally through search.twitter.com. You can use mail and RSS to notify you when someone uses a term in which you are interested;
- It is very useful to have a mobile internet device (e.g. your phone) so you don't have to rely on being at your desk to access Twitter;
- Everyone in the world can access Twitter, but you can also protect your tweets so only your friends can see them. This is recommended if you're dealing with sensitive issues

Other handy features of Twitter

- For the latest updates, you can also subscribe to newsletters and messages from organisations. For example, if you want to read the latest blog about civil servant 2.0, subscribe to @ambtenaar20.
- Increasing numbers of politicians use Twitter. There are US politicians who send tweets live from the floor of Congress. Maxime Verhagen, Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, also uses Twitter;
- During conferences or other meetings there are often several people who use Twitter to send comments and insights about speakers . Read these tweets to learn more;
- Organisers often request twitterers to use codes in their tweets, e.g. #db. All tweets tagged with this code will be displayed on a screen, enhancing the interactivity of such meetings;
- You can also search tweets through search.twitter.com. Type in the subject (e.g. countryside) to find out who's discussing it.

Characteristics of web 2.0

What is web 2.0? The answer seems simple - the second version of the *world wide web,* but that's not really accurate. There are two reasons why: it is the generic name for a variety of developments and it is originally a technical innovation that nonetheless has consequences for society. It Therefore it is difficult to clarify what web 2.0 actually means. The term web 2.0 was first used by Tim O'Reilly, publisher of ICT books and internet visionary. He cites its two most important features:

1. *The network is the platform: online is where it happens and that brings with it a different way of thinking;*
2. *Users add value: the more people use a site or online facility, the better it gets (user generated content).*

I would also like to add a couple of other terms:

3. *Everyone's connected: this means that everyone has the potential to be reached;*
4. *From read only to read-write: or going from one medium for broadcasting information to an interactive platform.*

In the last section we saw a few examples of the consequences and possibilities offered by the internet and web 2.0. But what is the definition of this term? When is it web 2.0 and when is it not? Wikipedia, itself a product of web 2.0, uses the following definition:

"web 2.0 is a term describing changing trends in the use of World Wide Web technology and web design that aim to enhance creativity, information sharing, and collaboration among users." (Wikipedia, August 2008)

This definition firmly places the emphasis on the technological background of web 2.0 and what these technologies have made possible. It is a bit more difficult to define the mentality and culture associated with web 2.0. Some of these aspects will be described in the next section.

Definitions

Valerie Frissen holds an extraordinary professorship in ICT and Social Change at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and is a researcher at the TNO research institute. In the spring of 2008 she was commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior to study the consequences of web 2.0 for government (also see Chapter 6).

In her report, 'Naar een user generated state' (Towards a user generated state) Frissen defines a number of concepts. She refers to the 'social web', based on networks, an open environment where there is room for user generated content. According to Frissen, web 2.0 can be defined as the emergence of platforms on the internet where users can organise themselves, cooperate, maintain friendships, share, exchange, trade or create. These platforms are: 1) accessible to all and decentrally organised 2) allow users to actively contribute 3) make maximum use of all results.

Dictionary: User generated content, Information that is added to a site by users rather than administrators.

The report 'Naar een user generated state' (Towards a user generated state) can be found on the website of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations: **http://twurl.nl/hjz4k4**. The report is only available in Dutch.

Frissen believes web 2.0 offers the public the opportunity to decentrally organise themselves, work together on the co-creation of products, collect and remix user-generated content, and build on existing services.

The three key characteristics of web 2.0, as indicated by this and other definitions and descriptions, are as follows:

1. open: accessible and transparent;
2. social: based on people and contacts between them;
3. user-oriented: offer users the opportunity to do 'their own thing'.

It is vital to remember these three factors. Let's examine them in more depth.

1. Open

'Open' is a word you often encounter on the internet: open source is the most well-known. Open standards is another common term,, as is open data. Open API, (Open Application Programming Interface) allows computers to automatically exchange open data, while OpenID allows you to log-in to all these sites through just one password. 'Open innovation' is another term that appears in this book. Chapter 6 deals with Open Government.

In short, being open is a key characteristic of the internet and particularly of web 2.0. The network was originally intended for military purposes, and was anything but open when it was developed. Thanks to various parties, particularly Senator Al Gore, the network was allowed to be used for non-military aims, principally for education and research. Since then, there have been regular discussions about the degree of openness on the internet and the extent of government influence. People and computers are subject to statutory regulation, but the internet continues to be of an open nature, and operates on a supranational level.

This culture of openness has been the basis for many innovations on the internet. Openness makes it possible to find, distribute and add to innovations. Organisations with a closed and internally minded internet presence receive a great deal of criticism. They are put under considerable pressure to operate more openly. This calls for greater openness and also raises new problems (and new solutions), in areas such as confidentiality, copyright and privacy, but the basic principle of the internet is openness, any limitations to openness. Working on this basis, any limitations to this openness are then looked at.

Being transparent

The first aspect of openness relates to your own work method, as an individual or organisation. Gaining trust means transparency in your dealings, activities and results. To develop collaborations, participate in a community or generate involvement in your activities you have to be open. If you are open, you are genuine. It means you don't have a dual agenda, but an open mind and nothing to hide.

As well as being transparent, you also have to be findable and accessible. As we already established for 'the long tail', each project is a niche, and there are always people who want to contribute to your project, but how do you find them? That will largely depend on your image: the social filter only gives you the information that is considered to be good (network effect, word of mouth). A characteristic of web 2.0 sites is that they are often highly user-friendly. You can quickly see what you can do and you can get started straight away. That, too, is a form of openness.

For that matter, openness does not mean that all the doors have to be flung wide open. There are plenty of reasons why certain information should not be disclosed, and no one will raise an eyelid. Nevertheless, decisions to keep information internal must be well-considered. Nor does openness have to mean the whole world has to know, it could also relate to openness within a group, organisation network or other collaborative relationship. The intention is to collaborate and exchange knowledge and ideas within that relationship and within the group (and that may even include the whole world).

Being open to other ideas
Working together with other people means being open. Although that sounds obvious, it is not. Being open calls for action. Generating involvement in your site or project is very hard to achieve. For instance, people must understand that there is scope for openness, Create scope by making it easy to become a member of your site, give insight into what you do and provide plenty of opportunities for people to make a contribution. After all, everyone's contribution is valuable as it strengthens the community and the dynamic.

Not every contribution will lead to the solution you seek, but the solution may well arise from this dynamic. For example, someone who you had not considered may put forward the idea you are looking for, or someone could use your activities as a platform to build on, or perhaps someone else may make the right connection on the basis of the discussion or other ideas. But this type of 'cross-fertilisation' can only occur in an open environment where those involved can exchange insights about your problem. And that is one idea to which you must be open.

2. Social
I mentioned above that openness is crucial in involving people in an issue, product or problem. And that's the second aspect of web 2.0: the social. Web 2.0 is also often referred to as the social network, as it is more about the internet being a collection of people, rather than a collection of documents and other sources.
And because almost everyone is connected to the internet, you can easily gather together the people you need to tackle a project or a problem. This social aspect manifests itself in various ways in web 2.0.

An internet made up of people
You cannot overemphasize how fundamental people are to web 2.0. I don't want to make a website, I want to communicate my message to other people. I don't want to organise meetings, I want people to come

www.linkedin.com is a social network site dedicated to professionals and businesses. The site is very popular in the Netherlands and it has recently expanded the functionalitieson offer. The site also has a Civil Servant 2.0. group

www.scribd.com offers the possibility of publishing documents in for example Word, Powerpoint or PDF on the internet and then embedding them in your blog or site. But you can also search Scribd to see if you can reuse someone else's document or presentation.

www.pbworks.com is a site that allows you to open a wiki, invite participants and follow discussions on what you are developing together. It is an easy and interactive way of building a site.

together and enter into discussion. Communities and organisations are made up of people, so that's where it has to happen. As a civil servant, everything you wish to do or achieve by yourself will never progress further unless other people get involved, by passing on the message, building on your efforts, etc.

Almost all the websites and instruments of web 2.0 have network functionality. The most popular are of course network sites such as Hyves and **www.linkedin.com**, but there are increasing numbers of other sites that have networks around them. YouTube used to be solely for uploading video clips, but now you can also make profiles, connections with other people, subscribe to their work, forward interesting videos, find out what videos a person likes, etc. That is also true for music on last.fm, for photos on Flickr.com, for documents on **www.scribd.com** and for wikis on **www.pbworks.com**.

The reason so many sites (including **netwerk.ambtenaar20.nl**) allow profile and network possibilities is because it expands and deepens the functionality of the sites. When someone adds text to a wiki, you want to know who that person is and what kind of background they have. Then you can evaluate a comment. It's the same with a forum discussion or if you read a blog. It strengthens collaboration if you know who you're working with. The emergence of these profiles and network possibilities offered by sites is recognition that it is about people and their opinions, and not just about something they have written (or a video, photos, etc.).

Horizontal networking

It therefore doesn't matter which product or subjects form the basis for groups. New networks and groups develop all the time, and vary in intensity, duration and seriousness. Everyone, even in terms of IRL (the internet term for in real life, which is therefore outside the internet) is organised in several groups, networks and collaborative relationships. They may be friends, or colleagues, and the groups may be organised according to interests and be hierarchical or egalitarian. This was always the case, but on the internet these connections are much clearer, for example, the sites which you are a member of, the subgroups within and the connections ('friends') you have.

What is striking about these networks and groups, is that there is hardly any in-built hierarchy. There is of course a site manager and sometimes moderators to keep an eye on things, but in general everyone involved in a discussion or network site has their own page and the same rights. So whether you are a newspaper delivery boy or the president, you have the same profile space and the same contribution rights. You join the discussion on even terms. Your position in the social network is largely based on your contributions to the community, your ideas and your input, not on your position, education or age.

The egalitarian nature of such groups strengthens involvement and creates new forms of contact, collaboration and ways of exchanging knowledge. It is easier to allow bottom up initiatives to appear and develop and to find support for them. Networks that go beyond the boundaries of organisations can make cooperation quicker and more
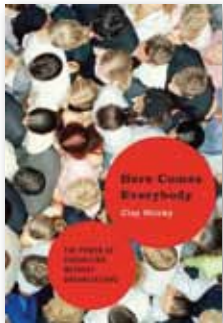
Clay Shirky - Here Comes Everybody:
*The Power of Organizing Without
Organizations (2008).*

efficient. Your networks may also produce new ideas (in the same
way that crowdsourcing does). If it's useful then it's good. One recent
example from the UK is how a minister and a civil servant from a
different ministry were able to come into contact through Twitter to
make progress on the issue they were working on.

Self-organisation
The disappearance of hierarchical structures does not means that
everything is plunged into chaos. Open-source-projects also need to
be administered, and even the editors of Wikipedia have a hierarchical
structure. However, this structure is based on the quality and quantity
of the work contributed. The organisation is therefore formed on the
basis of everyone's contribution in the group. This same process can
often be seen in online communities: in horizontal networks the most
active contributors prevail and there is always someone who keeps the
online environment in order. Because everyone has the same resources
at their disposal, changes can always be reversed if necessary. So if a
particular format or structure is retained, then it has the support of
the participants.

Of course, this kind of self-organisation calls for group involvement,
and naturally, this doesn't apply to so-called trolls who browse a dozen
sites in an evening to air their opinion. But if someone is involved with
a community or a network, then they feel responsible for what happens
on the site. They may take someone to task about a contribution (e.g.
in a discussion) or they may repair any damage caused (e.g. in a wiki).
Many sites offer a button or a functionality for this, such as the 'This
is not OK' option on Hyves. It is a way of using the involvement people
feel with a site or a subject to make a contribution to the community.

Clay Shirky, author of the book "Here comes everybody: The power
of organising without organizations" goes as far as to suggest that
self-organised mass collaboration is the most important organisational
form for the twenty-first century. In the twentieth century, centrally-
controlled, hierarchical organisations, were the most powerful
organisations. In the twenty-first century the most powerful organisations
are decentralised, horizontal networks. Not because companies will no
longer exist, but because a variety of social initiatives and networks
will emerge through social software on the internet that can be
quickly formed and organised. In the coming years we will therefore
see an unprecedented increase in the number of social activities. The
challenge for government will be to identify the right waves to ride.

3.User centrality
The user is central
In Chapter 2 I presented the digital world as a world full of niches. Everyone
has their own niche because everyone has a collection of interests,
activities and contacts that are unique to them. Because everything on
the internet is fluid, everyone can put their own environment together.
You can shape your own environment exactly as you wish: what you need
for your work, what your interests are, what you get from your network,
etc. There is so much information and so much to do that you must make
choices, as everything that's unnecessary just costs time.

Wat is lifehacking?

Lifehacking is a movement of people looking for handy tips and tricks (including for computer use) to manage their lives more efficiently. According to pionier Martijn Aslander it is a mix of time management, knowledge management and personal development, with a dash of web 2.0. To subscribe to new tricks and learn more visit: **www.lifehacking.nl.**

www.netvibes.com and **www.igoogle. com** are free to use and allow you to create your own home page or dashboard. Both sites allow you to fill small windows with information or applications.

Dictionary: **Rss,** the standard through which a site can display unedited elements of an article (such as title and summary), easily allowing other sites to incorporate the text.

Dictionary: **Widget,** a building block with information or a software programme that can be embedded in another site.

Create your personal dashboard

In short, you want to organise your life and therefore your environment as efficiently as possible so that you have time left for other activities and you don't drown in a flood of information. That is why lifehacking is currently so popular: lifehackers are people who want to organise their lives as efficiently as possible and exchange tips about which tricks and tools can be used to achieve this. web 2.0 makes this much easier: there are various handy sites that you can use and because there are so many standards on the internet, the instruments can easily be connected with each other.

As an internet user you can personalise your computer. Sites like **www.netvibes.com** or **www.igoogle.com** allow you to bring together the sources of information (thanks to rss) and applications (in widgets) that you need. You take what you need from the internet and piece together your own personal dashboard. This allows you to turn your computer to your own personal window on the world. And not only your computer at work, also your computer at home, your mobile telephone, your laptop on the train, etc. If you're online, you can access your dashboard. Any time, any place, any device.

User generated content

Internet users therefore expect to be able to create their own environment, and adapt the internet to their own requirements. The requirements and expectations do not of course end with your own dashboard, and the same degree of flexibility is also expected from other sites. If the web is flexible, remixable and personalisable, why would anyone visit the website of an organisation which has been conceived by someone else, and which is the same for every user? If I choose to grace an internet site with my presence, I want to do what I came there to do as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This is something major web 2.0 sites like YouTube and Hyves understand only too well. When you register you are given your own page. You can often choose your own colour and design to give you the feeling that it's your own site. This stimulates a greater feeling of involvement with the site and puts you at greater ease. That's important because these sites want your contribution. You show something of yourself, whether its photos or videos, your friends or contacts or your opinion or idea. To encourage this user generated content, users have to feel that they have the space to express themselves and have control over what they put there. So even if they want to remove all the content they have contributed, the option should be there.

That feeling of controlling the environment in which you are active is even reflected in the way the sites themselves are constructed. You may often see the word beta, next to a site logo, such as **www.gmail. com** or in a site like **www.lifestrea.ms**. In the world of software this means a product that has not yet been finished, is still being tested and therefore hasn't been officially released. On the internet these versions work well. By referring to them as perpetual beta, the impression is created that the functionality is constantly being tuned to the wishes of users. The button you can use to send ideas or reactions is usually in

a prominent place. In this way, the users help to determine how the site looks, and there is still room for the website to evolve.

Giving users space

The difference between web 1.0 (although this is of course not how it was referred to when it first came out) and web 2.0 is mainly interpreted as the shift of initiatives away from organisations (businesses, governments, etc.) to individuals (consumers, citizens, etc.). Computers have become cheaper, software is often freely available (see **www.download.com**) and broadband internet is available virtually everywhere. Handy web 2.0 sites (which often began as a one-person business or a start-up) offer functionalities through which you can easily publish content online and meet others. Users often have more resources at their disposal (empowerment), while organisations with their large systems and rigid structures lag behind. If I really need to do something then I work from home.

The user / consumer / citizen therefore has all the resources at their disposal and can develop their interests and step onto the worldwide platform. They may be able to make music and publish it on **www. myspace.com**. Via Hyves or **www.schoolbank.nl** they can trace old classmates and organise a reunion. But they can also put issues on the agenda, (such as **www.vroegopstap.nl)** or create a site for their neighbourhood. If we as the government want to harness this energy (e.g. for internet consultations or crowdsourcing) then we do have to consider how we create an environment (or find an existing environment) they wish to participate in. These users are members of the communities we want to work with. As the government, how do we give room to that involvement and that potential?

Summary

'Open, social and based on the needs of the user'. These three terms underlie the changes that can be seen on the internet. We refer to these changes as web 2.0 or the social network. These three terms describe the culture that has emerged on the internet, and which is also largely possible thanks to internet en web 2.0. But the internet is also connected to the rest of society. Internet and web 2.0 culture has an increasing influence on how we regard areas of the world, and the government. Web 2.0 therefore has a growing influence on society, and this will be examined in the next chapter.

RSS makes it easy to gather information

Information overload is becoming an increasing problem: you browse magazines, email newsletters arrive in your inbox and you have to visit all kinds of sites. And even then you can't be certain if you're up-to-date with your specific area of expertise. Information overload mainly comes from the failure to make the right choices. How many articles in that magazine are actually relevant? And do you really have to sign up to both the mailing list that is specific to your area of interest as well as the general mailing list?

But you can also deal with information overload by organizing your information supply more efficiently, and that's where RSS comes in. With an RSS feed, you no longer have to visit the site for information, but you can ensure that the information on the site comes to you. Not in an email, but in an easily manageable list in which the most recent information is clearly marked. You can bring all these feeds together on one page (such as Netvibes or iGoogle) which allows you to view all the latest relevant information at a glance.

You can begin by registering with **www.netvibes.com** or **www.igoogle.com**. You then get your own page, or 'dashboard' with a number of empty fields that you can fill with information through RSS feeds. Visit your favourite sites and see if there are RSS feeds available, recognizable by the orange logo. If you click on this logo you can see the unedited text. You can add the link from the website to your dashboard on Netvibes or iGoogle to keep track of all the latest information, as and when it becomes available.

This logo lets you know if an RSS feed is available on a website

Hoofdstuk 4.

Web 2.0 and the impact on society

Some of the changes and innovations I have discussed so far will be entirely new concepts to you, while others will be familiar. I want to show you the world from a different perspective. To encourage you to think about a world that is completely connected and to give you an impression of what that means for internet culture. The border between the internet and 'the real world' is blurring. Web 2.0 brings about changes in society. In its Topic Overview report, Forrester Research formulates this as follows:

"Most of the technologies comprising web 2.0 are evolutionary, but the convergence of these technologies is resulting in revolutionary changes in consumer behaviour, business efficiency, and the technology sector."

MIt is ultimately not about the term 'web 2.0', which is partly the product of hype (although it is easy to be able to refer to all these developments with one word). It is also not specifically about sites (Hyves, YouTube or eBay), as there are new and better sites appearing all the time. The key aspect is that web 2.0 has brought about fundamental changes. What is the impact of these changes on society?

What has been changed by the internet and web 2.0?

As I mentioned, the internet began life as military communications network, and was then developed into a computer network for scientists, a realm for ICT nerds and ultimately into a digital copy of reality. The internet has become an integral part of our lives and our society, and at the same time it has enriched our lives providing us with new concepts that make new things possible.

These new developments mean the government has to stop and look around. Not only because we have other things to do, but because we have to do things differently. As society changes, our relationship with society changes. What developments have occurred that make organisations think fundamentally about how they use the internet? Below I outline three of the main changes.

1. Digital integration

As I mentioned in the introduction, the internet underwent a phase in which it was considered to be a digital copy of reality: We continued to do the same things, but digitally. Concepts on paper transferred to the web. Companies and institutes would place their brochures on a website so people around the world could view the information at any time. The internet was not confined to time or space and that offered advantages. But this approach did not generate any new concepts. The internet remained a separate world, and the computer was yet to enter people's living rooms.

That was just a few short years ago. These days the computer is a laptop that you can use relaxing on the sofa, always within reach. You can even access the internet through the phone in your pocket. This is not only because the number of functionalities and possibilities has grown enormously. Indeed, most Dutch people do their banking on the internet, **www.marktplaats.nl** has replaced its paper counterpart and

www.marktplaats.nl is a useful site for selling any old belongings, but it's also great for finding special collectors' items. The site now also offers services in direct competition with Yellow Pages. Marktplaats.nl has been one of the three most popular sites in the Netherlands for some time.

www.nu.nl Has quickly become one of the largest news sites in the Netherlands, and now offers images, videos, business news and regional news. An interesting spin-off is **www.nujij**.nl, where users place their own news stories and rate those of others.

for the latest news you go to **www.nu.nl.** The reason we always want to be online via ADSL, wifi and umts is because the internet has become part of our lives. And more. New concepts have been developed that make smarter use of the digital possibilities. We can do things we never could before: and that is true added value.

The arrival of the internet meant that email replaced letters to maintain social contact. Contacts remained one-on-one. But now, social networking sites such as Hyves are emerging, and this is where new groups are formed and new contacts are made. Now you can do your shopping from home or start a business without having to invest in accommodation. Products and services can be marketed through Google Adware, avoiding exposure to people who are not interested in them. New concepts, new possibilities, a changing world.

The integration of the internet in our lives will only grow in the coming years. A couple of years ago most people still used a pseudonym online. Now, millions of people lay their lives bare on social networking sites. As all this information becomes interconnected, our digital shadow begins to look more like who we really are. Mobile technology in combination with GPS not only pinpoints where we are in Google Maps, but can also provide up-to-date information about the actual location. It is an extension to your environment that is known as *augmented reality*. We will therefore not only be more visible on the internet, internet information will also become more visible in our environment, and this is a very exciting development.

2. Democratising the debate

One of the key areas of society where these changes are most prominent is in the media, which now gives people the power to express their own opinions to the outside world. Before the arrival of the internet, this possibility was primarily reserved for organisations. The opportunities for individuals to express themselves were limited to opinion pieces in newspapers, or they could release their own publications, which had a very limited reach due to costs and logistics.

Internet gives each user a platform to express their views, and this possibility is fully exploited. From profound thoughts and elaborate plans to knee-jerk reactions and verbal abuse on internet forums (or trolling as it is known). One person may contribute to a national political discussion, someone else may relate what they have done during the day, while another may pursue hobbies or interests with like-minded people. Everyone has the means to join in.

Now that there is the possibility for everyone's voice to be heard, the need to be heard has also increased. To participate in the debate and in setting the agenda (horizontalisation). For the government, which is so used to working with intermediaries (interest groups, press, etc), this presents new challenges and questions. How does it deal with all these individuals and opinions? But it also offers opportunities, namely the ability to tap into knowledge from across the whole society. Prior to the internet, this knowledge was unattainable.

3. Social potential

To be clear, this is not about referendums or direct democracy. Each and every reaction or contribution does not have to be recorded and used. Still, all organisations require knowledge and ideas to be able to do their work. To this end, employees, networks of individuals and organisations are brought in or are assigned to these tasks. Useful knowledge and ideas are sifted out and put into practice. There may have been relevant experience or solutions that were present externally, but they stayed invisible. Through the internet this knowledge can be made accessible. As the 'sieve' becomes wider, so does the possibility of obtaining new knowledge and ideas.

One example of this is the mining company Goldcorp, which put its geological data online and invited amateur geologists to help locate seams of gold, offering a reward for the participants with the best methods. www.waarneming.nl is another example. It is a collection of sightings of flora and fauna posted by nature lovers from all over the Netherlands. Increasingly, spatial planning projects attempt to involve the public through simulations and computer games in order to tap into local knowledge and experience. With these resources available, every organisation must see for itself how it can perform its tasks better.

If the appropriate government agencies do not make use of that social potential it is equally possible the initiative will come from somewhere else. Waarneming.nl originated separately from the nature associations connected with the Ministry of Agriculture. In England www.mysociety.org (an independent organisation) enables the public to report loose paving stones and litter. In the Netherlands actions to challenge required school hours and other initiatives, such as Stop Fout Vlees which encouraged people to re-examine their attitudes towards meat consumption, showed how easily and quickly a movement can organise itself.

Questions for government

In his book, *The world is flat,* Thomas Friedman describes how the process of globalisation has been reinforced and accelerated by the development of computers and computer networks, particularly the internet. This process of globalisation was already underway, but powerful computers, the growing ease with which users can interact with them, and in particular the fact that all these people are interconnected through a global network offers new opportunities and has thus sped up this process.

The same acceleration is also occurring in the government's sphere of work. The three developments I have outlined are the consequence of the challenges we came up against in Chapter 2:

1. Increasing numbers of people and increasing numbers of activities are online because the internet has become a part of our way of life, but who are we going to collaborate with and what are we going to share?

2. The process of horizontalisation and the changing role of the government in society is strengthened and accelerated through the ease with which the public can participate in the social debate via internet (through forums, blogs and polls), but how do we find what is most relevant to us?

www.waarneming.nl is the initiative of three nature lovers who were convinced that the habitats of animals could be more efficiently mapped out, so they built a site where everyone could report sightings of animals.

www.mysociety.com has resulted in several sites that strengthen the relationship between citizens and government and politics, e.g. www.fxmystreet.org and www.theyworkforyou.com

3. There are new instruments available to organise collaboration and to contribute to developing policy or plans (mass collaboration). These confront organisations, and particularly the government, with an increasing number of high expectations and initiatives from society. More than ever, the government is expected to take up its role in the horizontal society.

Where to begin?

All the resources I have discussed are therefore at our disposal if we want to make use of the long tail of knowledge, ideas and efforts from people outside our organisation. It offers the government a major opportunity to work more efficiently, effectively and interactively while offering so many new opportunities that it is difficult to keep them all in focus.

Time and place has no bearing on the internet as all the information is always available and can be accessed in milliseconds. Almost all Dutch citizens and the entire professional world are online and connected to each other. You can invite whoever you want to help you come up with new ideas and seek new knowledge, as long as you go about it the right way. And you can fit all the blocks together until you've found the mix that's right for you. This approach is no longer yesterday's dream; it's today's reality.

As I said, in just a few years we have gone from a scarcity to an abundance of ideas, knowledge and contacts. However, this change is so great and has happened so quickly that we can barely begin to understand the implications,, and cling on to the way we were used to working. We still sit from nine to five in a building, we go to meetings and we try to solve problems in small groups, while ignoring all the other options we have dealt with so far.

Why do we approach our work in this way? As a civil servant you want to do your work as well as you can. It is vital to have the right information, involve the right sort of people and select the most appropriate instruments. The most significant obstacle is that we just don't have any idea about the potential of all these new possibilities. What is possible? And how do you make it possible? What are the risks? Who can help me? These are the questions we have to attempt to answer together.

The reality and realisation that place and time have become irrelevant, the understanding that every citizen of the world can be in the same room as you which means you don't have to go it alone, and the insight you can gain from being able to put together your ideal work environment are concepts that are very remote from our current approach to work, which is based on spatial constraints and scarcity of information. There is a dizzying amount of concepts to get your head around. But these are the principles for working on the web, and working in the 21st century. This is something we must understand if we are to make progress.

eParticipation on the map

The government wants to improve how it tailors its services to public requirements. One basic principle is that improving public services, public administration and the mechanisms of democracy is only possible if you involve citizens. Smart use of ICT is one way to achieve this, and eParticipation projects are the result. These projects are a widespread phenomenon and receive a tremendous amount of enthusiastic support. However, as can be seen from Burgerlink,(which translates as Citizen Link) a government initiative to help tune policy to public requirements, these projects often do not follow a structured approach. There seems to be a major requirement to get an overview of various examples, to draw inspiration and to exchange knowledge. Burgerlink addresses this need through the eParticipation map.

In the period May-June 2009 Burgerlink commissioned sCompany, a consultancy from the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, to perform a study to obtain a clear overview of the status of eParticipation in Dutch municipalities. Which municipalities involved citizens in developing policy through digital means? Who uses the internet to get the public to contribute to improving the neighbourhood? Also, what do municipalities think about the uses of eParticipation – and do they put these thoughts into practice? With a response rate of almost 70%, the outcome is representative for the whole of the Netherlands.

Based on the outcome of the research, two recommendations were prepared for small and large municipalities. These can be downloaded from the Burgerlink website (only available in Dutch) www.burgerlink.nl. Perhaps even more importantly, the study provides a thorough overview. Many initiatives are worth finding out about. Burgerlink offers a GoogleMaps application on its website, which literally and figuratively puts eParticipation in the Netherlands on the map.

The overview can be found on www.burgerlink.nl/landkaart/eparticipatie.html.

What does web 2.0 mean for the government?

A while ago someone asked me if I thought attempting to use web 2.0 to increase interactivity and public engagement in the government's approach to work was a hopeless task. He suggested that the strong hierarchical structure, political sensitivities and the large number of older workers meant government was not an ideal place to introduce the web 2.0 approach.

We could of course have a lengthy discussion on this topic, but this is ultimately a moot point. Change comes from the outside. As society increasingly embraces the principles of web 2.0, the government will be expected to do the same in its approach. In short, it is not a question of making a choice, it will happen with or without you.

Search for your added value

This made me think about the music industry and the press. Ultimately, web 2.0 will have consequences for everybody, and for every sector. Look at the examples in mining (Goldcorp), footwear (Nike), development (1% club) or toys (LEGO). But some organisations have to cope with these changes earlier than others. The music industry and the press were the first that had to change their methods as a result of the internet. The choice was taken out of their hands because their customers no longer went to them to get their music or news – they used the internet.

It is only logical that these sectors were the first to suffer the consequences. Their products can be digitalised and therefore easily distributed over the internet. There was still a need for these products, but there was no more use for the middleman. Before the internet the music industry decided what music could be sold and the press decided what news to publish. They have since lost these positions as the internet allows everyone to publish or download the music and news they want.

Time Warner and papers such as The Guardian were among the first to respond to these developments. They had to come up with new concepts and business models to strengthen their position in the sector. Where are the actual benefits for the organisation, and how can they be exploited? The Guardian, for example, has become more multimedia-oriented, involving people with the site in an effort to create a broad platform for debate. The music industry is also looking hard for new concepts to preserve its position.

Government is quick to realise the consequences

Government is of course very different from the companies referred to above. The government is not selling a product, and does not have to deal with legal issues surrounding copyright. But there are also similarities:

• the government's 'product' is largely digitisable: it is engaged in seeking and gathering knowledge and information, writing texts and documents, reports, collaboration, harmonisation and networking, which are all things that can be done digitally.

www.1procentclub.nl allows people to make small contributions to support initiatives in developing countries.

The Dutch site www.petities.nl is an initiative of Burgerlink, which makes it easy for anyone to start or sign a petition. It is also possible for the petition recipients to receive and respond to petitions on their website. The right to petition is one of the oldest rights in the Dutch Constitution. A petition is a request to the government to take action, and provides the public with the opportunity to criticise policy. Petitions are a key instrument for raising awareness and they also have symbolic value.

• The government has a very valuable 'product', namely, how the Netherlands is run. Many people are engaged with the areas we deal with, and have ideas about how to approach them. Our activities are also in the media spotlight and new developments can spread quickly and easily;

• The 'customers' can also perform activities themselves: various activities performed by civil servants can also be performed by others, and if these activities are digitisable, they can also be done online.

Of course there are some functions that are inalienable to a government. That is not the issue. But there are also examples of government tasks that are already being dealt with online by the public. One example is the UK site **www.fixmystreet.com** where you can report cases such as litter or broken street lights. This site, which was set up independently, then passes these reports on to the local council. The Netherlands has sites such as **www.ikregeer.nl**, which posts parliamentary questions. Or have a look at the wiki for a Wind Energy Act. This may just start as one person's idea, but the potential is much greater. When will the first wiki laws be enacted by parliament?

There are also parts of government that will have to face the consequences of web 2.0 before others. For example, take the ministries and departments that deal with public participation and communication. They will be among the first to be confronted with the implications of web 2.0 for their work. Yet ultimately, everyone should ask themselves the question, just as the music industry and newspaper publishers. What does web 2.0 mean for my work, my role and my added value? This is a hot issue for government, and one which I think can be resolved through active use of web 2.0.

What areas of our work are affected by web 2.0?

The internet has become an integral part of Dutch society: nearly the whole population can go online, and it has become a platform for services, social contacts and collaboration. The advent of web 2.0 significantly increased the number of possibilities for using this platform to communicate and exchange knowledge. Also for government, the possibilities for working in a more flexible, interactive and more transparent way have grown, both within the organisation and with the outside. There are opportunities for a smarter approach, to do more with less people. How can the government interpret this new task over the coming years?

The influence of internet on how government works is now beginning to take shape in various policy areas. It has not only created new forms of interaction amongst citizens, but also between citizens and the government, and internally among civil servants. These new developments offer new opportunities to work in a different, more efficient and altogether better way within government and outside it, but they also present new threats and uncertainties. Furthermore, all these developments place new demands on the role of government and civil servants.

www.fixmystreet.com has in eighteen months received over 20,000 reports of litter in the street, broken traffic lights and vandalism in public places, which have been passed on to the local council.

www.ikregeer.nl provides an overview of parliamentary bills, questions and their responses, and offers various subscription possibilities. The site is an initiative of two employees of the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Web 2.0 not only has consequences outside the government

The consequences of web 2.0 for the government can be seen in the three following interrelated areas:
1. The relationship between the citizen and the government (government 2.0);
2. The government's internal organisation (organisation 2.0);
3. The civil servant's approach to work (employee 2.0).
The Civil Servant 2.0 project addresses all three areas.

www.geenstijl.nl is a biting blog with a right-wing, populist tone. Thanks to its confrontational approach it has become one of the biggest weblogs in the Netherlands and has come to occupy a powerful position in the media landscape.

Dictionary: **Social networking,**
Websites that allow users to become members, make contacts and join groups.

This of course raises many questions. Is government prepared for the new situations these developments will produce? What are the opportunities and risks? And how can government exploit the opportunities offered by web 2.0 to increase awareness of their environment and to work in a more efficient and more interactive manner? What does this mean for the internal organisations of government and for the position of the civil servant? The consequences of web 2.0 can be seen in the following interrelated areas:

1. The relationship between citizen and government;

2. The government's internal organisation;

3. The civil servant's approach to work.

I have outlined these three areas below, and will use the next chapter to explore them in greater depth.

1. The relationship between citizen and government

Dutch people are used to doing their administration (such as taxes and banking) digitally and via the internet. The government has made considerable efforts to increase the level of digitalisation of administrative contacts. In addition to these administrative contacts, it is increasingly normal to exchange opinions, knowledge and information over the internet, or to cooperate online in personal (such as eBay) or social (such as community work) activities. Businesses, governments and other organisations are identifying an increasing number of opportunities to get customers, citizens and other stakeholders involved in their activities. For the government, these changes occur in four main areas:

The social debate
All users of the internet can express their views through various online channels and media. This offers opportunities to pick up on signals from society, but how can the valuable contributions be filtered from all those terabytes of information that are put online each day? Furthermore, new media sites such as www.geenstijl.nl and YouTube are becoming more prominent, and the social debate is becoming more dynamic, and its focus is switching more quickly. The government should consider how it should deal with all these views and this mediacracy.

Communities based around themes
Web 2.0 bolsters the flattening of society (horizontalization) and therefore offers opportunities for strengthening civil society. It is also possible that citizens or cooperative partnerships assume government tasks. I already mentioned Fixmystreet.com and Waarneming.nl in Britain and the Netherlands. The government should also consider how social networks can be used in a smart way to enrich policy and provide information to the public.

Mass collaboration
Involving citizens in the tasks and processes of government offers many perspectives, in areas such as policy making, supervision of laws and enforcement, but also harvesting ideas from society by making use of

www.politieonderzoeken.nl is similar to the UK TV show Crimewatch. It uses public knowledge to get leads on crimes and missing persons. The police force has a highly active presence on web 2.0 and makes use of various sites and resources to do its job more efficiently and effectively.

open innovation for instance. Web 2.0 allows organisations to be more interactive and to increase awareness of their environment. Examples are the use of wikis for developing plans for a residential area in the Dutch municipality of Smallingerland and **www.politieonderzoeken.nl**, which invites the public to assist police with their investigations. How can we as government 2.0 take advantage of sharing responsibilities or even outsourcing tasks?

Open Government
In order to give citizens the opportunity to participate or cooperate in government tasks it is necessary to provide an insight into government processes. Knowledge and information must be supplied. Disclosing more information (documents, databases, etc.) to the public produces new initiatives in society, many of which are outlined in this book. Making processes transparent gives citizens the opportunity to join in at the right stage. This applies to an even greater extent to transparency within the organisation. However, information is sometimes difficult to protect and guaranteeing safety, confidentiality and privacy is therefore a prerequisite when taking this approach.

2. The government's internal organisation
In order for the government to capitalise on all these developments, respond to them and offer the possibility to perform your work better, internal organisation also has to change. Not only to maintain a connection with society, but also because it will be expected by new, young government employees. They are used to a different way of working, collaborating and communicating. What kind of settings and attitude do managers and staff need for what is referred to as The New Way of Working? What kind of conditions have to be developed to accommodate these developments?

Space for staff
Hierarchies and work methods in the civil service tend to mimic business procedures, with defined roles and managers who visibly want to demonstrate their control. With knowledge workers, it isn't always obvious if, where and how they are working. They require space and confidence to perform. The current civil servant approach tends to be 'one size fits all'. Civil servants should be offered a wider range of choices so they can put together their own more personal, user-friendly working environment. Civil servants become entrepreneurs, and their managers become the facilitators who provide the framework and establish the results they expect.

Working in networks
While civil servants belong to specific departments and sections, they often have closer relationships with people in their network that work in the same areas as them. These may be colleagues from other departments or other ministries, but they can also be representatives of public organisations, or active or involved citizens. Working through networks is about penetrating the boundaries of departments, and therefore requires different competencies and a different approach to management.

Management
Hierarchy clearly demarcates responsibilities within an organisation, but is also perceived as being too rigid and obstructive. Working in networks

is about working across boundaries of organisations. What are then the consequences for management? If employees can be physically anywhere and potentially working on any number of things, how do you as a manager get an overview of the areas of work you are responsible for? And how do you run your department in a way that ensures that all assignments are carried out by the end of the year? New resources such as blogs can help you monitor what employees are doing. Additional knowledge both inside and outside the organisation can be brought in through open innovation and crowdsourcing. But this does require a different approach to management.

A transparent organisation

Enterprising civil servants require knowledge and information to be able to perform their roles. The new generation of civil servants regards knowledge and information as public goods, rather than private goods that should be withheld from other parties. This knowledge and information should be available as and when required, in other words, not on inaccessible private networks. If it isn't clear what civil servants are working on some work may be duplicated. And if it isn't clear what managers are doing, it will be impossible for employees to represent their organisation to the outside world. Transparency is a prerequisite for employees to perform their work well and on an independent basis.

3. The civil servant's work method

Earlier I referred to the 'open, social and user-centric' features of a web 2.0 based approach to work. This also applies within the organisation: there are increasingly greater opportunities for employees to determine the shape of their work, but this brings with it more responsibilities.

Availability of resources and tools

Web 2.0 has made various sites and functionalities available where people can find each other quickly, can form groups and networks and work together online. These tools are available not only to the public but also offer new opportunities to civil servants. Anyone with an internet connection at home and at work can make use of a host of potential new resources and tools to organise their work more efficiently, operate on a broader and more effective basis and collaborate more effectively and more interactively with citizens. That has a lot of implications for the way we work.

Developing skills

It is primarily up to the employees themselves to give shape to this new way of working. However, to do this they must be properly equipped. This involves not only providing the right tools, but also developing knowledge, competencies and e-skills, primarily through following courses. These courses may also deal with subjects such as the consequences of web 2.0, the use of web 2.0 in work, risks and pitfalls, as well as the protection of information, archiving, tools, attitudes, etc. Employees must be able to get the very best from themselves and from their environments to perform their duties and achieve their goals.

Web 2.0 course

Civil Servant 2.0 is about a way of working, and about the associated new instruments. The web 2.0 course provides an explanation of what web 2.0 is and what the consequences are for the government. It also helps identify the right sites that can support you in your work through:

• Maintaining contacts with your network, with the people you work with in your remit or team, in and outside the government;
• Acquiring knowledge and keeping abreast of developments in your policy field;
• Keeping up-to-date with your work environment (colleagues, management, contacts, network);
• collaborating to prepare texts (policy documents or reports) or to achieve other results.

If you want to register for this course visit **cursus.ambtenaar20.nl** (in Dutch)

Position of the civil servant

The government is a political organisation and the role and actions of the civil servant in the outside world is subject to rules. In an organisation that increasingly works online and networks and interacts with the public, these rules are being stretched ever further. Having an active presence on the internet and fulfilling your role there places a great deal of responsibility on employees: after all, when you are officially representing the view of the minister it is not always possible to express the opposite view. The organisation should clarify the professional remit for civil servants to work freely, experimentally and interactively in a publicly engaged manner.

The work/leisure balance

Do you have to remain a civil servant in all aspects of your digital life? Do civil servants always have to be acutely aware of their actions on the internet, and constantly remind themselves not to express themselves too personally over matters of policy in which they are involved? And if civil servants are always accessible and can work in any environment, how will they be able to feel as though they are exerting control over how they structure their own time, without slipping into a situation where they are 'on call' 24/7? The government should express its opinion on these matters.

Summary

The developments that have been set in motion by the internet and web 2.0 can be felt in all three of the abovementioned areas: the balance with society is shifting, the complexity of organisations is increasing and the potential of the civil servant is expanding. As affirmed by the independent innovation organisation, TNO, these are disruptive developments, and they will continue to evolve for some time in fits and starts. But it is a path government has to follow if it wants to maintain a connection with society, attract new, young talent and strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of its staff.

The aim of this book is not to answer these questions but to raise awareness of the challenges we face and to give some examples along the way. In the next chapters I will describe the insights into government 2.0, organisation 2.0 and employee 2.0 which will address some of these matters described above.

BDplaza, the social network of the Dutch Tax Authority

Many employees of the Belastingdienst, the Dutch Tax Authority, were active on the Dutch social networking site Hyves and had formed groups. They used the site to discuss all sorts of things, but work was of course one of the topics they dealt with. However, Hyves is an environment where other people can follow your discussions. So the Tax exmployees set up their own social network.

What is BDplaza?

BDplaza is a social networking environment, just like the civil servant 2.0 networking site. The difference is that BDplaza is a closed environment that can only be accessed by employees of the Dutch Tax Authority using a password and a username.

These employees may exchange information with colleagues (in the form of blogs, photos, videos or other documents) and can create private or public theme groups and use these as work platforms. There are no other rules in place, although if there are transgressions the managers of the site can contact the poster of the offending content. That has to date only occurred once, and the content was voluntarily deleted by the poster.

The site has been a success. Many employees have joined, simply through word of mouth. BDplaza now has 15,000 members and many groups, both within departments and between different departments and across various locations.

Unorthodox approach

BDplaza came into being in an unorthodox way. The initiators did not take the time to develop a master plan or risk analysis, they started work on the site straight away and management approved of their methods, so brought in external expertise to assist them. The first version was ready in two weeks, but more time was required afterwards to finetune the result. The site has a modular structure, so can be expanded with new functionalities as and when needed.

BDplaza provides a platform for staff to collaborate and exchange knowledge, and is an environment in which you can work together and exchange knowledge. Last but not least, its a place to do fun things. Compare it to workplace conversations around the water cooler, where people just have a quick chat in between meetings. The management fully supports this approach based on trust. So far they have not been disappointed with the results.

Government 2.0: the relationship between citizen and government

One of the characteristics of web 2.0 is that it allows internet users to add their own content to sites. This content may take the shape of photos, video clips, links, comments, evaluations, tags, but also articles. The collective name for all these details is *user-generated content*.

TNO research on "User generated State"

In the spring of 2008, Valerie Frissen from the TNO research institute published a report on the consequences of web 2.0 for government (see also Chapter 3). The title of that report is: "Towards a user-generated state". She presents a number of examples occurring across various fields of government activity:

- Democracy 2.0, through improving the exchange of information, forming of opinions and mobilisation of citizens;
- Public services 2.0, by which citizens participate to improve public services;
- Enforcement 2.0, where citizens make an active contribution to detection and enforcement;
- Supervision 2.0, whereby citizens play an inspection role and demand government transparency. This marks a shift, with citizens occupying the role intermediary organisations once had.

Recommendations

Although there are still many questions to be answered, Frisson believes government cannot afford to ignore them, and states that "The greatest challenge is for the government and public administration to be prepared." Social developments follow their own course and the government must stay in touch with them. She makes the following recommendations:

1. Set civil servants 1.0 to work: experiment more!
2. Value the web 2.0 competencies of the network generation;
3. Make more use of knowledge, information and creativity of citizens;
4. Provide a sharper focus on experiences, preferences and problems of citizens;
5. Invest in solutions for pressing problems;
6. Start experimenting with other forms of self-regulation;
7. Explore the practical consequences of web 2.0 for the civil servant 2.0;
8. Identify social risks of web 2.0.

www.watstemtmijnraad.nl shows how municipal councils have voted. The aim is to increase the transparency and accessibility of municipal councils. Not only can you see what issues were voted on, you can also see how members of the council voted. You can search according to political party, subject, council member, name of proposal, date of the meeting or key word (tag). Watstemtmijnraad.nl is inspired by www. politix.nl, a site that provides details of votes in parliament.

Questions and risks

In addition to the opportunities web 2.0 offers, it also presents us with a number of questions. What, for example, do these changes mean for: Legitimacy, with the public taking over the tasks of the government; The ideal of peering, when all services are becoming more personalised;

- privacy, as increasing amounts of information about citizens becomes available;
- cultural fragmentation, if everyone creates their own personal offer of media content;

- the gap in knowledge between citizens who are familiar with this technology and those who are not;
- the accuracy and the quality of information, as manipulation becomes easier and sources become less clear;
- illegal content, copyright and reuse of information;
- the effects of intensive internet use.

The Ministry of the Interior has issued a response to parliament about the Frissen report, which can be found on http://twurl.nl/yju63x (only available in Dutch). This response is primarily about the consequences of web 2.0 for the relationship between citizen and government. The implications for government organisations and employees are not dealt with, which is a shortcoming, seeing as these areas belong to the Ministry's policy remit.

I assume these studies will lead to developments. However, what's more important is that we as civil servants start to work according to these new methods. These recommendations and questions relate to our work, so it's therefore up to us to do something with them. Several examples and different ways of interaction have already been discussed In the previous chapters. They will be dealt with in further detail in the coming chapters and I will attempt to set out some rules.

1. Mass collaboration: based on the rules set out by Tapscott and Williams;
2. Communities: what are the advantages and the points for attention for working with communities?
3. Open Government: government information as a means of attracting public creativity to improve public services;

1. Working with mass collaboration

Chapter 2 dealt extensively with mass collaboration and the various forms it can take. The internet has made a great deal possible in this area and the government offers opportunities for us to perform our tasks with the public in a more interactive and efficient manner. But this requires a substantial change of approach for civil servants and citizens. It has to be just right in terms of topics, attitude, and expectations for instance. If we do intend to use it, we must think carefully about how.

In their book Wikinomics. How mass collaboration changes everything Tapscott and Williams interviewed many employees who have experience with web 2.0. When addressing these examples, they explain how these companies changed their culture. On this basis, they arrive at a number of conditions and recommendations for mass collaboration, which are summarised below:

Being open
- Making more sources of information accessible to the public and offering an open standard allows other people to add and develop their own ideas;
- This requires an open mentality, being open to ideas from outside and not restricting yourself to the information available within your own organisation;
- Transparency also encourages trust, which is important if want other people to help you think and invest time in your problems.

Peering
- Peering is a voluntary interconnection of administratively separate networks, and if you want to encourage public participation, it is important to follow this principle, rather than working on a hierarchical basis. Of course, your own participation is also required;

- Each process requires a form of organisation, but not through a top-down approach. The norm is self-organisation, and taking a supporting role can be effective;
- The most important advantage of this approach is that you do not have to look for support for the end result, as it is already there.

Sharing
- Sharing knowledge leads to a win-win situation as you work collectively towards one goal;
- Access to interim results and new insights allows other participants to build on what has been achieved.
- This also leads to a more effective use of resources as participants will not duplicate work.

Acting globally
- Allocate responsibility to those areas where the knowledge is and do not allow yourself to be restricted by the boundaries of your department or organisation;
- The possibilities for this are widely available: wherever you are, you can contact and collaborate with whomever you want, however you want.
- This also increases the need for standardised tools and support. The structure only needs to be set up once and then it can be used anywhere. After all, all boundaries are artificial.

Have you been keeping score? How do we rate as a government? How about your own organisation? Every organisation and project calls for an inquiry into which of the above points apply, and the extent to which they apply. This is yet another area in which we need more experience. The following case study is a good example of how this experience can be gained.

Wiki neighbourhood in Drachten

A neighbourhood with tomorrow's possibilities. This is what Drachten envisions for its new residential area. What makes this new residential area so special is not the technology behind it or even the spatial planning. It is the way in which it will be built. Welcome to the very first wiki neighbourhood!

The idea behind it is that everyone in the world can assist in designing the new residential area. This will ultimately generate a myriad of ideas, the best of which can be selected. To unlock these ideas the municipal council has commissioned social media organisation The Crowds to put together a community.

Involving as many people as possible
The new housing project is planned on the south edge of the village of Opeinde, a few miles northwest of Drachten. Normally, the municipality determines in advance how many and what category of homes have to be built. On this basis, they develop an urban plan that is then discussed. However, in the case of Opeinde the municipality does not have anything at all on paper, apart from the area that will be occupied by the new housing development. The only definitive boundaries are the area (which is roughly 17 hectares) and the requirement that the neighbourhood must be future-oriented. In other words, the municipality does not want a standard plan, but an approach that will produce revolutionary or visionary results in as many areas as possible.

The project aims to involve as many people as possible in the process of developing innovative ideas. These may relate to traffic, architectural style, technology, sustainability, harmonisation with surroundings and supplying utilities, but also financing, management of public space, social cohesion, etc. This process is supported by the website www.wijbouweneenwijk.nl.

2. Communities

Government policy deals with all areas of society. The division into ministries and portfolios is basically there to ensure that all the issues or topics are covered. When a new issue emerges, the government should immediately determine who is involved, to isolate and deal with the issue. This is the function of government: keeping track of these issues so that citizens do not need to involve themselves in every issue.

As a citizen you do of course tend to limit your focus to the issues that affect you, your work or your surroundings. I'm interested in fields that are relevant for my work as a civil servant, but developments in areas such as SMEs mean less to me. I want to be involved in what's happening in my neighbourhood, but a similar issue in a different city affects me less. I want to engage in areas relating to my interests and hobbies, but I do not invest time in other activities going on in the world. In short, I choose a limited number of subjects I want to put my energy into.

And there are many others who want to invest their knowledge, ideas and energy into the issues that interest me. It gives us something in common. If those people can be brought together into one online community that combines their vast potential, the benefits could be enormous. Before the internet, a great deal of money (cost of advertising, administration, stamps, etc.) and time was required to bring together people with the same interests or concerns in a group, club or association. With the internet, this has now become virtually effortless.

www.ning.com is an online platform that enables everyone to create their own community with a couple of mouse clicks. 500,000 communities have since been set up in this way. The site is also very popular in the Netherlands. The Civil Servant 2.0 network is also built with Ning.

www.meetup.com offers the opportunity to create a network around an event, meeting or activity. Unfortunately the site is not free, but it is upcoming. yahoo.com offers the same service

As a result every subject and every interest group is now represented on the web. From local to international, from small to large, from the 11,000 members of the Global Classroom 2.0 Network on **www.ning. com** to seventeen Chihuahua lovers in Spokane, Washington, USA on **www.meetup.com.** It's about people and people are the ones who run it: they are volunteers who donate their time and energy to the subjects they feel passionate about. As the government, we can make use of what these communities have to offer. We can use the energy, knowledge and ideas to make progress in an area. But why exactly should we do that?

Why work via communities?

As the government, we represent the interests of all citizens, but not all citizens have interests in the same areas. However, for every subject or issue there is a group of people in society who are more actively involved and more interested. As a civil servant you are therefore always faced with groups in society that address your area of activity. These groups can of course organise themselves and create their own platform, but the government can also play a more active role here, for the following reasons:

• To use external knowledge or ideas from the community: knowledge provided by specialists (not all knowledge is available within your organisation), local knowledge provded by residents or knowledge of recent developments occurring elsewhere in the world;

• To make connections and contacts with your users (citizens, customers, etc.): partly to gather support and keep lines of communication open, but also because they might otherwise approach another person or organisation to meet their needs;

• To work more efficiently: achieve more with fewer people as tasks are partly handed over to the community;

• To facilitate smoother cooperation between various parties, as you are all sitting around a virtual table. And that includes you as a civil servant!

The most important aspect is that you don't do your work alone. You are always working for people and with people, which is why it is better to involve people and keep them involved.

Using communities rather than internet consultations

This new approach presents a completely different perspective to the current internet consultations performed by the government. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture are very active in this area, and the Ministry of Justice is even preparing legislation here. Internet consultations involve asking the public for their opinion about matters such as policy or new legislation. For a period of one or two months a discussion forum is opened where the public can air their opinions and respond to each other. The forums are then closed and opinions given are taken into account during the next step of the process.

My main objection from the perspective of web 2.0 is that internet consultations are chiefly about the policy process, a website, and the entries made there. But what it should be about is people and their contribution. Participants in discussions are just passing by – they give their opinions and then move on. Yet here we have citizens that are deeply interested in the issue. And we let them get away. Each time we build a community only to allow it to disappear.

So start with communities of people who are involved in the same issue. Find them or get them together. Internet consultations have helped us to involve many people in these issues and identify networks, and this is something we should continue to do, as a community and as a platform. These are the places where the public debate is conducted, where you as a citizen or interested party can contribute, keep up-to-date and where you can be involved in the government activities in that area. With platforms such as these the government can support the public debate and thus meet its role as facilitator.

Platforms such as these should of course meet the three conditions of being 'open, social and user-centric' (see Chapter 3).
As a participant you must be able to make a profile, see who knows who

The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment has for some time involved citizens in shaping ideas and policy, such as in discussions about Randstad 2040 structural vision: **www.randstad2040.nl**

The Ministry of Agriculture has so far held two internet consultations, about common agricultural policy and landscape.

('friends') and invite others to join the discussion and the network, and your responses and those of others should also be accessible. You can keep up-to-date with the issue through RSS feeds to external sources such as articles, blogs, relevant sites and discussions elsewhere, etc. You can also follow developments in parliament and the EU through integration with Parlando or Ikregeer.nl. This creates a platform to which you can address your questions.

Question to ask yourself before you begin

Web 2.0 and the possibilities it offers for working in a more efficient and interactive way are all new tools that we as civil servants have very little experience with. There are still very few examples that can be followed and there are no manuals available for how you approach something like this. It is a new way of working. That's why when you're setting up a platform you have to get it just right. Although this book does provide some tips, everyone ultimately has to make their own choices about how they want to work.

To be able to make the right choices you have to ask yourselves the right questions. Mark van Twist is professor of public administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam and dean and member of the board of the Netherlands School of Public Administration. He addressed some of these issues at a meeting about e-participation. He presented several guidelines for those thinking of starting up a community or other form of mass collaboration:

1. participant identification: are contributors required to identify themselves? Is an email address enough? And to what sort of areas does this apply?
2. representative: are you looking for representative ideas, or are you just looking for good ideas, more knowledge, etc.?
3. dominant positions: what do you do if your community is hijacked by a dominant party or interest?
4. motives of participants: what will people's interest be? Will they participate through commitment or through pleasure, to make friends or contacts, to be valued and build a reputation or to use their creativity in a new environment. What can you offer in that respect?
5. transparency: working via a community requires a fully transparent process. Is that what you want and is that possible?
6. managing: working with a community means that you as the government must take the lead in certain issues, and must also step back at times. But how do you know when to do this, and what elements need to be managed?
7. aim: what do you want for yourself from the community? How are you going to use contributions to assist you in your work?
8. defining structure: do you communicate in advance about the limitations (in terms of subject, budget, rules, etc.) or do you let people think about these issues and discuss them freely before narrowing things down?
9. decision-making: how is harmonisation with the political processes and hierarchy? How can the community gain a position in the process?
10. subject: which subjects are suitable? Is size relevant? What are the limits?

If you want to work with communities, try to bear these points in mind.
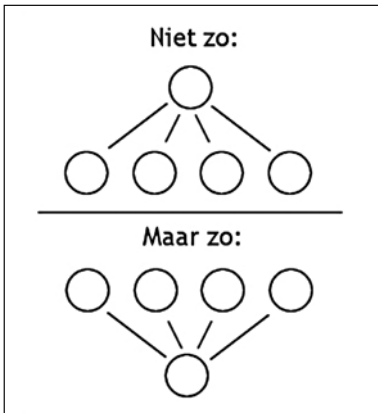
Arranging a meeting with Upcoming
You are organising a conference or a meeting and want to invite people. People register, and then nothing else happens until the event itself. And that's a pity. **upcoming.yahoo.com** gives you a new handle. Create a site for your meeting and use it to issue invitations. When people reply to the invitation. they automatically create a profile. Not only does this generate a list of who's coming and what they will contribute, it also enables discussions to start before the event itself. After the meeting the site can be used to continue discussions and publish photos for instance. It's an instant internet site for your meeting.

What do you have to be aware of?
If you, as a member of a government organisation, wish to make use of communities, then you should bear in mind the following rules:

• You ask citizens and stakeholders to invest time and effort in the community and into what you as a civil servant wish to achieve via the platform. That means that you have to give participants the space to do something (e.g. to develop something, provide an opinion, etc.). And that means that you have to be able to relinquish control;

• In addition, participants must be given the means to be able to do something. This may mean providing the right facilities on a site, but also the right background information, such as research data. With insufficient input, the output will also be insufficient;

• Do it yourself: if mass collaboration is part of your working process, you have to participate in the community on an equal footing. Ross Mayfeld, of the company Socialtext, calls this operating in the flow, as opposed to just floating above the flow. You yourself are part of the community and perform a facilitating role from that position;

• This facilitating role also means you are responsible for keeping the site ticking over. In principle, everyone is welcome to join in, but things do not just happen by themselves. Someone is needed to welcome new members, start discussions, launch initiatives, find ambassadors, keep an eye on the balance in discussions, provide motivation and stimulate;

• But it is ultimately not about you and the individual contacts you have, it is about setting the community in motion and allowing members to interact. You must make sure that there are opportunities for this, that everyone can make contributions and that participants can also evaluate each other's contributions (peer review);

• But not anything goes. Long-term planning is needed to focus people and activities, rules for cooperation and agreements are required to organise the community, and it must be possible to intervene if these rules are broken;

• Setting up a community takes more than sending a press release to the paper. It has to grow over a long period of time as you want to gather people together from various groups. It is important to be pro-active, invite people, leave posts about the community on other blogs, provide access to a widget that other people can put on their site, try to set a network effect in motion (such as through viral means that directs interested parties to the community from their network), use RSS feeds, etc.

• But the most important thing to remember is to be yourself. If you want people's trust you have to be honest, open and authentic.

Make use of the possibilities

From my own experience I know that we civil servants are often heavily focused on text and discussion. Perhaps the reason for this is that we often choose internet forums as a means of online interaction, although this can be quite uninspiring, not in terms of content, but as regards the dynamics, possibilities for interaction, multimedia, etc. This approach means the focus is primarily on sharing pieces of text in chronological order. Hardly any use is made of video (by ourselves or through the option to upload videos) or embedded maps (e.g. a map of where the responses come from), and there is no option to upload photos (for discussions on spatial planning or landscapes) and so on.

If you do in any case decide to work with the text, there are several ways to visualise opinions and discussion. This is possible through presenting the discussion in more visual environments, such as a 3D environment or a 'serious game'. But you can also present debates in ways other than just showing a list of entries. You can organise responses according to timeline, by filtering words, etc. For a good example, visit the BBC's White Spectrum site or **www.wefeelfine.org**, a site which tracks how the internet community feels by searching for the word feel. I for one am very curious about what new forms of expression and exchanges will appear in the future.

Guus.net: working via a community

Networking is not new to the countryside. Throughout the decades there have been many changes in the social and knowledge systems, from annual markets to communities of practice. Exchanging knowledge through these networks helps preserve the vitality of the countryside, and they have therefore always been supported by the Ministry of Agriculture through agencies such as the University of Wageningen. But the advent of internet and web 2.0 calls for a new approach. So how can the Ministry stimulate the exchange of knowledge these days?

Strengthening the multifaceted rural network

Knowledge about the countryside and rural development is being developed and exchanged in many places Practice shows that different approaches and methods emerge to meet needs: workshops, knowledge offices, regional innovation centres, countryside exchanges and even village greens are some examples. There are already a great deal of activities in this respect, but the transmitting knowledge and experiences to residents and users of the countryside is still not easy. Is an online community the best platform to achieve this?

An initial survey shows that such a knowledge network for a vital countryside must:
• be based on regional agendas and practical initiatives;
• reflect the specific questions in the area;
• disclose any knowledge, exchanges and development;
• provide an overview and where necessary coordinate;
• not be an organisation but rather a community or communities;
• not only consist of virtual networks but also include actual meetings.

A new knowledge centre is therefore not a new, and certainly not a static institute. Nor is it something you can physically visit. Rather, it is an orientation, and should primarily be part of a vital network. The Ministry of Agriculture supports such an approach and has therefore made funding available for www.guus.net. However, the Ministry does not pull the levers as rather than actually making decisions, it is a member of the community. This is a new and stimulating support role for the Ministry.

3. Open Government

Since 2006 citizens have been able to visit the site **www.politix.nl** to see which bills have been brought before parliament, and how parties have voted on them. If you want to keep abreast of parliamentary issues you can visit **www.ikregeer.nl** and subscribe through RSS, email and Twitter. Both sites make use of government information, but neither is a government site. They are initiatives of concerned citizens that contribute to strengthening democracy. More sites like these would certainly be welcome.

Example: the inaccessibility of parliamentary information

The sources of information used and referred to by these sites is Parlando, an online collection of all the official documents of the Dutch Government. However, visitors to the site cannot reuse the information they find there, and it is not even possible to create a link to a parliamentary report. The explanation given by Politix.nl is as follows:

"All the information comes from Parlando, which contains all parliamentary documents since 1995. You can find the original text by entering the dossier number and number of the bill. We would of course have preferred to directly link this information, but that's too modern and too open for Parlando."

The popular online magazine **www.sargasso.nl**, that addresses scientific, political and cultural issues, complains about the closed nature of Parlando:

"For some days I have been writing about the 'parliamentary bill of the day' in an attempt to make politics more accessible and increase public involvement, but when I do try to follow it, I immediately feel as if I am being blocked by Parlando, parliament's own information system"

This problem is partly solved by the site **www.geencommentaar.nl,** which has built a site directly before Parlando. Not only does this site provide the necessary parliamentary documents, it also provides a link to the document so you can keep using it. A very convenient solution, and I know that many civil servants make use of it. The question is: why is it necessary? Why are there hurdles for citizens to use an information resource provided by the government?

The site Ikregeer.nl had to overcome an even bigger hurdle before it could launch its services. Not only does this site direct visitors to parliamentary bills, but to be able to offer more functionality, all the documents on Parlando have been transferred to Ikregeer.nl., The site now offers visitors a whole a range of possibilities for subscribing, responding, making statements, etc. This is a valuable asset to any interested citizen or civil servant. Indeed, the Ministry of Housing even used the site in one of its annual reports. But this was only possible after the development of a different way to access these documents.

www.politix.nl gives details of all parliamentary bills since January 2003. You can see how the parties voted and whether the bill was accepted or rejected. Users can also discuss proposals or vote on them.

parlando.sdu.nl is an overview of all the parliamentary documents and is a publication of the company SDU. The government sites **www.overheid.nl** and **www.tweedekamer.nl** refer to this site.

www.sargasso.nl is one of the better blogs from the Netherlands, and became known for the in-depth information it provided about the EU constitution. The issue of privacy receives a great deal of attention on this site.

www.geencommentaar.nl is a left-leaning blog about various political themes. It focuses on various political themes and aims to make an active contribution to the social debate.

Meanwhile, the government is working hard to develop a parliamentary information system (Parlis) to organise internal information flows. However, both **www.overheid.nl** and **www.tweedekamer.nl** still refer to Parlando for documents. It would seem that it is difficult to build a site where citizens can easily access these documents. However, this is not what Sargasso, Politix.nl and Ikregeer.nl are asking for. They don't want a site, they want the documents. If they are able to access these sources of information more easily they would be able to build the site and develop all the useful functionalities themselves. That should be possible, shouldn't it?

What is Open Government?

Open Government is an initiative to increase the amount of online government information in an open format like XML or RSS, or via an API. Of course the government must also take care of user-friendly websites where visitors can access government information, but we do not have to come up with everything ourselves. Because the information is publicly available, others can build on it and innovative applications can emerge such as Ikregeer.nl. Open government information can therefore support democracy and strengthen innovation.

The Government Information Act gives Dutch citizens the right to request access to government documents. However, the evaluations performed by the Wallage and Wolffensperger commissions have called for the government to disclose more information. ICTU, a Dutch institution that helps public authorities improve their ICT performance, has subsequently begun to disclose information through the internet, focusing on regulations, permits and reports. This information can now be seen online in various municipalities, but again, the information cannot be reused (for example, linking this information to a property website so you can see what has happened or what is going to happen in the vicinity of a house you are considering buying).

ICTU has also begun to disclose the content of databases that is deemed by the Government Information Act to be of a public nature and which is useful for citizens and businesses. This content could be quantifiable results, statistical data, addresses of institutions (e.g. schools, municipalities), maps, etc. However, this initiative has yielded few results, and the few results that have been generated unfortunately do not lend themselves well to reuse. For example, the Dutch Food and Consumer product Safety Authority has put some reports online, but these are only available through the site's own search engine.

The potential

The conclusion is that we are working on several fronts to make information available online, but that information is only accessible through specific government sites, and then only if you perform a specific search for it. As a citizen, I don't want to have to go to the municipal council's website to find out if there are any problems with for example, a permit in my neighbourhood. I want to be able to access all information from all sources in the environment of my choosing. Via mail, via RSS or on a site that has developed a convenient functionality for this purpose.

Dictionary: **XML,** eXtensible Markup Language, a standard for structuring data and distinguishing text from graphics.

Dictionary: **API,** application programming interface, a set of agreements through which sites and computers can work together to exchange information.

The website of the Ministry of General Affairs provides more information about the Wallage commission at **http:// twurl. nl/585n3i,** and about the Wolffensperger commission on **http://twurl.nl/ ssghpj**

ICTU is the government's ICT administration organisation and its purpose is to support the government in developing, introducing and implementing innovative ICT applications. See **www.ictu.nl**

This is not something that has to be developed by the government. There are enough businesses and initiatives that will rush in to fill this need. Take www.buurtlink.nl, a site that provides visitors with all sorts of information and facilities based on their postcode. As the government, it is up to us to make all the information we have available so it can be used by creative outlets such as Buurtlink. Then we can give the creativity of citizens and the innovation of businesses the space they need to flourish. I'm very curious what kind of interesting sites and mash-ups this will result in!

There are already some wonderful examples that can often provide valuable, but also simply enjoyable information. A well-known mash-up is www.everyblock.com, where the residents of several American cities can obtain information about crimes committed in their postcode area, but can also find out about the results of hotel and restaurant inspection sites, building permits and the like. In the Netherlands there are similar sites including www.misdaadkaart.nl or www.alarmeringen.nl. You can obtain this information via RSS. For example, in Netvibes I receive all police and fire service alerts that occur near my house.

Many mash-ups use maps (such as Google Maps) to present information through a map. Google started to make this information available in mid-2005, and in many ways this can be seen as a new era. Google information is also available through an API, which can be quickly and easily integrated with other data. The result of this is an interactive map which can then be included on a page through embedding or with a widget. For more information about Dutch mash-ups with maps, visit www.nederkaart.nl.

I think mash-ups mark the beginning of larger developments. Mash-ups are all about collecting, integrating and presenting information. With all the information that is available on the internet, the possibilities are limitless. It seems to be a question of time before smart interfaces (incorporating geographical information) are used to meet our information requirements better and more quickly. A question like "which bicycle paths in my neighbourhood are safe" can then be answered through a map that displays information about alerts, crime, repairs, etc over a certain timeframe.

Principles of Open Government

Efforts are also underway in the United States to disclose government information, and this was one of Barack Obama's presidential campaigns: "Obama plans to make government data available online in universally accessible formats to allow citizens to make use of that data to comment, derive value, and take action in their own communities." If we wish to implement open government in the Netherlands then it is of course important that we think about the way we are going to do this. Obviously, when providing this information issues such as privacy should be taken into account, but there are also other constraints.

In the United States an Open Government Working Group has been set up to publish government information (see www.opengovdata.org). This working group has established a number of principles that must be

met by open government information. This checklist could also be used for a similar undertaking in the Netherlands:

"Government data shall be considered open if they are made public in a way that complies with the principles below:

1. Complete : All public data are made available. Public data are data that are not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations.

2. Primary: Data are collected at the source, with the finest possible level of granularity, not in aggregate or modified forms.

3. Timely: Data are made available as quickly as necessary to preserve the value of the data.

4. Accessible: Data are available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes.

5. Machine processable: Data are reasonably structured to allow auto-mated processing.

6. Non-discriminatory: Data are available to anyone, with no requirement of registration.

7. Non-proprietary: Data are available in a format over which no entity has exclusive control.

8. License-free: Data are not subject to any copyright, patent, trade-mark or trade secret regulation. Reasonable privacy, security and privilege restrictions may be allowed.

Compliance must be reviewable, which means:

- A contact person must be designated to respond to people trying to use the data;
- A contact person must be designated to respond to complaints about violations of the principles;
- An administrative or judicial court must have the jurisdiction to review whether the agency has applied these principles appropriately.

Summary

At the beginning of this book, I attempt to describe in depth the impact of the absence of place and time on the internet. Nevertheless, we still spend most of our time in the physical world, where these dimensions still determine how we organise our world. It is therefore unsurprising that copies of the physical world are often copied online. This can clearly be seen in the design of government websites. They are virtual concepts with an entrance, organisational structure and a place for everything, and they are organised according to very strict rules.

Yet this is an increasingly inaccurate reflection of how society works. Every citizen with some ICT knowledge can create a similar building, or a better functioning version, or a useful part of it. Again, we should

Dictionary: **Mash-up,** a remix of tools and data from various internet sources such as a combination of statistical details with Google Maps.

look at what we as government have to do ourselves and in what areas we should encourage initiatives from society. The wealth of information the government holds is a catalyst for such public initiatives and may even lead to the creation of new enterprises. We as a government should therefore place more emphasis on making information available in an open format. This should be the basis of Open Government.

The British do it better

Several years ago the Belgians do it better was the motto used by the Dutch government to encourage a more effective approach to electronic services. But when it comes to government 2.0 the motto should be: the British do it better. Of course, it helps that there was a minister (Tom Watson) who actively pursued policy in this field, but otherwise it's just a case of them making good use of the instruments found on the internet. Here are some examples:

British 2.0 initiatives

This is not of course an exhaustive list, but some ideas are presented below that can easily be used in the Netherlands:

- A *Civil Service Code* has been prepared to provide civil servants with guidelines on how to conduct themselves in online discussions and similar situations. See also Chapter 8;
- The Power of Information Taskforce (powerofinformation.wordpress.com) also has its own blog. As with the first version of Civil Servant 2.0, it can be freely accessed online with WordPress.
- The Taskforce has launched a competition called *Show us a better way* (www.showusabetterway.com) which challenges people to respond to the question "What online tool would you like to build with public information?". This is a prime example of crowdsourcing, and generates many ideas which can be followed on Twitter and which you can respond to. It's a shame you can't vote for ideas as that would make the judging the ideas much easier;
- In order to know what public information is available for you to build on, a list of information sources has been prepared, and the Taskforce is working hard to make more public information available online. Furthermore, a *Public Sector Information Unlocking Service* (www.opsi.gov.uk/unlocking service) has been launched which allows citizens to report what information they would like to see released online. Although this is unfortunately only available on a standard non-interactive website, you can vote to support a proposal.
- Finally, the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (www.dius.gov.uk) is engaged in an internet consultation through a forum and online survey. This isn't very different from the approach taken by some of the ministries in the Netherlands

When it comes to web 2.0, the British approach is much better. But we can certainly catch up – after all, we have more than enough ideas. So now it's time for some Dutch experiments!

Organisation 2.0: the government's internal work methods

In Chapter 6 I explored the potential of web 2.0 in the relationship between citizen and government. But we're the ones who represent the government so it's up to us as civil servants to take up such initiatives (more about this in Chapter 8). However, to do this we need to have space within our organisation. Working interactively with elements outside the organisation also requires a different approach to work within the organisation. This Chapter also deals with the consequences for hierarchy, management and the organisation's culture.

Who should work with organisation 2.0?

I have been involved in several projects that have made use of the possibilities I've described, and my contribution to the process has been attempting to explain the rules around these new resources. However, I do stress that responsibility always lies with the policy officer involved (or staff member or contractor, etc.). They are the ones who know the subject, know the audience, and know what they want to achieve. I only offer my experience with web 2.0 to address any gaps in knowledge they may have, but they're the ones who have to get it done!

I work on the assumption that this knowledge gap is a temporary situation, that the proper use of web 2.0 resources will become a standard instrument of civil servants. This is currently not the case: we're in a period of searching and experimentation. Some organisations and departments embrace this new way of working and others are less enthusiastic. Broadly speaking, there are three ways in which organisations can approach web 2.0:

1. As an observer by for example ensuring your organisation is constantly kept informed of online discussions and networks in your own policy field. There are many activities in this area. Communications staff and information specialists gather information for analysis and also use it to put together internal newsletters. This is a function that is often centralised within an organisation. However, this does not always allow policy officers to keep up-to-date with the very latest developments in their field. From all the information, discussions and events you can access on the web, you only want to pinpoint what's happening in your niche. A collection of press clippings or a newsletter is therefore not specific enough, and it is too indirect to provide a response to.

2. As a user, by for example involving external specialist knowledge relating to specific projects and thereby elaborating and implementing a web 2.0 approach. Although there is increasing emphasis on how departments themselves organise communications around a project, a communications specialist or agency is still usually involved in running a campaign or other activity. This means there is no room for interaction with the target group, as the agency will convey messages on behalf of your organisation, but it is not actually in a position to engage in discussion. The only one who can do that is you. In the interactive world of web 2.0, this approach is therefore inadequate.

3. As a participant, when the organisation has created its own web 2.0 presence, staff have gained an insight into the methods and possibilities, and it has become an integral part of the organisation's way of working. Only then can you properly apply the web 2.0 approach and the web 2.0 resources to generate added value in your work. This makes it possible to interact with your environment and society so you can perform your public functions. It is still possible to outsource tasks to specialists, but as a civil servant you are the one responsible for how you interpret your role and for developing the discussion. This is something that cannot be outsourced.

For the purposes of clarification, I have put the above three approaches into a table:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Society =	web 2.0 ↓	web 2.0 ↑	web 2.0 ↕
Organisation =	web 1.0	web 1.0	web 2.0

Through this table, I would like to demonstrate how this changing relationship between government and citizen is essentially a changing relationship between civil servant and citizen. If we as a government wish to participate in the public debate, if we want to engage with online discussions, if we wish to make use of knowledge, ideas and efforts from society, then it is something we have to initiate in our own working environment. It's up to you to start up your own activities and monitor the interactions that take place.

This kind of interaction therefore occurs increasingly outside the traditional hierarchical lines and structures. Civil servants who work and participate in online networks across organisational boundaries need the room and the freedom to manage their own activities, which therefore requires a different approach to management. This means that the position of the communications department will change, with the focus shifting away from providing external information and towards internal support and training. In other words, how can the organisation help employees to maximise the room they operate in and get the most out of their knowledge, network and efforts?

In Chapter 6 I described the core features of web 2.0: openness, networking, and based on the individual user. These are the foundations for the success of many of the major web 2.0 sites and are the conditions for successful communities and mass collaboration initiatives. Government can apply this approach in its relationship with society if the necessary conditions are in place within the organisation and these work methods are based on these key characteristics. This

presents quite a challenge for most government organisations. Here are those three features at a glance:

1. Openness, the organisation's transparency;
2. Networking, horizontal networking vs. vertical hierarchies;
3. Employee-central, instead of based on job descriptions.

In the next three sections I will examine how the government operates in each of these areas and how its approach can be brought more into line with the culture of web 2.0.

1. Openness
Collaboration requires a transparent organisation
During my career at the Ministry of Agriculture I've worked in many departments. Because I was mainly involved in short-term projects, effective transfer of documents and other information to colleagues was important so they could consult them afterwards. That's why I chose never to save my files on my own network, but on the drive of the department I was working for. But there was also a disadvantage: I couldn't exchange documents with other sections of the ministry, as the departmental hard drives were independent of each other with no shared access. And an even more troublesome obstacle was not being able to re-access the files I had created on the previous project.

Not only is this terribly inefficient, it also hampers collaboration across organisational boundaries. Openness, insight in activities, and access to information is a prerequisite to being able to collaborate. After all, what does collaboration consist of apart from connecting your activities to the activities of others? But to do this you have to know what the other person is doing, and on what basis they are carrying out their activities, and what is already in place. I am certain that more openness and transparency within organisations would drastically reduce the amount of tasks that are duplicated, and would also mean that activities could be much more closely aligned.

A closed work approach does not lead to added value
In addition to your network hard drive, the most common instrument used for collaborating within and outside of organisations is undoubtedly email. It is accessible and suitable for one-on-one communication where no direct contact (telephone, instant messaging, and chat) is required. But it cannot offer more added value than that as it is a closed medium.

Of course, sometimes email is the right choice. If you want to communicate something directly or confidentially, then you don't want other people to read it. However, that of course does not apply to most messages. Documents are often circulated by email, while a better option would be to display them somewhere where everyone can find them. It's the same when you ask for people to comment on a piece; it remains one-on-one contact, because people can't see how others have responded and a dialogue cannot therefore be developed. Or you send an interesting link to someone, but you might have other colleagues who would also find it interesting or useful, but who will never know about it. Choosing this closed approach does not generate any added value.

Exchanging documents
Have you given a presentation, written a good article or report, or have you come across an interesting document you want to share with others? You could do that through email, but it's even more convenient if people can download it themselves. But how do you put a document on the internet? There are various sites you could use:

- **www.skydrive.live.com** Windows Live SkyDrive offers 25GB of free online storage. You can use SkyDrive storage to back up your files online for free, or to share large files with others. You can assign permissions and set folders to public or private, to help you share individual files with only people that you select;
- **www.scribd.com** is a sort of YouTube for documents: you can upload and share you own documents, but you can also find all sorts of useful documents from other people and embed them in your site;
- **www.yousendit.com** can be used to send very large files that do not fit on email. You upload your file and the recipient receives a link to it.

Make sure you never share confidential material in this way and you don't accidently disclose information to more people than you mean to!

You›ll never get more than what you're expecting, which is the reaction of the person you have sent the email to. You won't receive any new, unexpected insights. By working openly and sharing knowledge you can configure your environment so ideas are generated, activities are aligned, and other people can build on what you are doing. Openness is key to innovation.

Taking responsibility begins with having enough information
A hierarchical organisation is a "need-to-know-organisation '. Given that each employee plays a specific role in the process (a cog in the system), they no longer have to think for themselves about why they need to carry out that task. Information is given to them by their manager. If the approach to work is strictly hierarchical, employees do not need any more information horizontally (at earlier or later stages in the process, or from other departments) or vertically (through management).

The approach will not normally be as strict as this, but it is the basis on which most government organisations work. Even from within your own organisation, it's often difficult to tell what another organisational unit is doing, and how management interprets the challenges facing the organisation. These unknown factors make it very difficult for employees to assess how they should act and to know what areas they can take responsibility in. Internally, but certainly also externally.

If the government wishes to place more emphasis on operating more interactively with the public and working across organisational boundaries, it must invest in staff with sufficient administrative and political sensitivity. Such competencies are talents which can be fed by knowledge and understanding of what the organisation is doing and where management wants to lead it. This gives employees space and allows them to take responsibility for initiatives. Again, transparency is a prerequisite here.

2. Networks
Complexity calls for flexibility
Openness and transparency are essential for cooperation, especially when this cooperation extends beyond the boundaries of your own department. And when exactly is that not the case? After all, each dossier and subject you deal with has several dimensions, and people who represent these dimensions: You work together with colleagues who are active in related areas, with people from other organisations who are busy with the same subject, with citizens or groups that are dealing with the same topic, with managers who can contribute. In every task or area you have a network of people around you who you have to work with.

As the challenges faced by the government become more complex, so too does its network. And the changing balance between citizens and government means there are an increasing number of groups, citizens and other parties in society belonging to that network (horizontalisation). To be able to perform your task, you have to collaborate with fellow civil servants, the public sector and citizens, and take steps with them together. In fact, these are the members of your team. Naturally, each

www.google.com/sites provides access to Google Sites which bundles functions such as Gmail, Google Docs and Google Calendar in one environment. Google wants to offer an online 'intranet' to compete with products such as Microsoft Office.

Saving your favourite sites
Most people store their favourites or bookmarks in their browser, e.g. Internet Explorer or Firefox. But you don't have access to these when you're not at your own computer. You can also use the site **www.delicious.com**. Then you can save your favourites on the internet and access them from anywhere. An additional advantage is that you can easily share your links with others.

team member has his or her own interests, but you all need each other to make progress.

Working in different network teams

Depending on their aims, network teams may be operational for longer or shorter periods of time, and may be assembled to a greater or lesser extent on an ad-hoc basis, comprise people who are local or far away, gathered together on your initiative, or from other organisations or perhaps even from society. The point is, you have to use any network and anyone you need to perform your tasks. In Chapter 2 I outlined a world in which time and place are absent and information and people materialise as and when you need them. Similarly, you gather a network around you when you embark on a project.

Many web 2.0 tools were released in the last few years precisely to address this way of working. Via networking sites like LinkedIn you can find people who are active in your field, by reading blogs you can gain an impression of the contribution they may be able to make to your project, and then there are online workspaces, such as Ning.com or Google Sites where you can collaborate on a document in a wiki, have contact by email, instant messaging (MSN), Skype (telephone) and discussion forums, keep each other informed through Twitter and YouTube and share information via Scribd and Delicious. This allows you to put your team together and create a work environment.

What you don't know you have to learn through others

As I mentioned, you can put together a team like this yourself, but sometimes you can also connect with existing online communities or groups that can help you. But people who you haven't considered could also assist your project and contribute added value. They can suggest overlaps you hadn't seen yourself and provide insights you were unaware of, provide you with knowledge and ideas from a different perspective and bring new networks and communities into view.

The added value of working in networks is not only the ability to involve people from various organisations and situations and put together the best team possible. The added value also lies in being able to see beyond your own environment. This increases the potential of the people, knowledge and ideas you can choose from. Your network allows you to reach the networks that lie beyond it, or allows these networks to reach you of course, and this is certainly the case if you work on an open basis.

Organisation structure and flexibility

This Chapter addresses the challenges faced by government organisations to incorporate web 2.0 in their internal processes. The hierarchical structure of most organisations can be compared to an archive structure. Just as a document can be placed in a folder, a subject can be placed in just one organisational unit, and as an employee you can only belong to one department, whereas the reality is of course much more complex. That calls for a specific combination of people and resources to solve a specific problem. And of course, that specific combination can never be reflected in an inflexible organisational structure that has been set up on a long-term basis.

Online discussions and harmonisation
In many organisations non-standard software is installed that allows employees to chat, e.g. MSN Messenger or Google Talk. If you want to discuss something online with a group you can try Campfire (**www. campfirenow.com**). The site allows you to talk in private, exchange files and display images, invite others to a discussion, etc. It is just as if you are working in one room, but then digitally. You can do this for free with up to four people.

Two examples of mash-ups with Google Maps are **www.fickervision.com** which displays on a map of the world photos published on **Flickr.com**, and **www. twittervision.com** which does the same with tweets

The current working methods of government organisations are also poorly set up for an organisation 2.0 approach. To cope with the growing complexity of society and our activities, we have to make maximum use of the potential within our organisations. If we want to get to grips with the working methods of the new generation of employees there is still much progress to be made, and employees and the tasks they perform are the foundation for this progress.

3. The employee is central

In a hierarchical organisation, everyone has their own place as indicated in their job description, and this provides the minimum requirements you need to be able to perform your duties. I am intrigued by the word 'minimum' in this sense. What else can people do that we as an organisation can make use of? What knowledge do they possess, what kind of networks do they belong to? What are their ideas, interests and energy? Organisations are often unaware of these factors. Shouldn't we do something about this for the mutual benefit of the employee and the organisation?

Using your employees' potential

Earlier in this book I cited the example of Google, who allow their staff to spend 20% of their time on their own projects. If they have an idea they think can help the company, they are granted the room to develop it during working hours and really go for it. That of course generates many fresh and ripe ideas, but it has also yielded some fantastic innovations, such as Orkut, Gmail and Google Maps. It is also a fantastic way to motivate staff. How often have you had a great idea, but didn't have the time to execute it, or it was outside your field of activities, or didn't meet with your boss' approval?

The government does not make enough use of the potential of smart, involved and energetic staff. It must address this situation. In Chapter 6 I discussed mass collaboration and crowdsourcing in society, but these resources can also be used just as effectively in government, to give employees the opportunity to do more than what falls within their job description. A number of government organisations recently opened the website **www.ideeencentrale.nl** to gather ideas from civil servants. Why can't this be a government-wide initiative?

Give employees the facilities they need

When you look at sites like Flickr.com and YouTube, it is impossible to ignore one crucial aspect: these sites could not exist without user generated content which takes the form of photos and video clips uploaded by users. The sites themselves are an empty shell, which is filled by the users. These businesses realise only too well how important users are and how important it is to provide them with everything they need. That is why web 2.0 sites concentrate fully on users so they are able to provide commentaries and contribute improvements. These sites remain as beta versions so they can be continually modified to meet users' needs.

The challenge that lies ahead for government organisations will be to consider how they can assist and support their employees in their work

www.ideeencentrale.nl is an initiative within and between government organisations to collect ideas (open innovation). The site currently has a limited number of participating organisations, but that will hopefully change.

Working from different locations
People are increasingly working from different locations. Not only 'at work' or at home, but also on the go and in other places, such as libraries or cafés. Here are a couple of handy sites for 'work nomads':
• **www.free-hotspot.com** provides a list of places with free internet (wifi), mostly at restaurants and cafés;
• **www.coworker.nl** is a map with an overview of (mostly free) places to work: sometimes it's just an internet connection, sometimes you can join other co-workers;
• **werk-gelegenheid.nl** also has a summary of useful places, but it is a little shorter.

and their methods. After all, government organisations depend on the contribution of their employees and their productivity. And they are rapidly confronted with a generation of new employees who are used to having much greater opportunities and flexibility in terms of resources and space, and partly as a result of this they are therefore able to easily switch to another employer. How can organisations assist enterprising civil servants and help them to develop?

In recent years the government has placed a strong emphasis on standardisation. In the nineties, the costs of ICT and other facilities, and their management rose sharply, and the solution was to provide everyone with the same facilities. We all work from a flexible office space, using the same computer and the same software. Special arrangements can sometimes be made, but these arrangements then have to be applied to the rest of the department. For example, our department was provided with the same telephone, which offered me an insufficient number of functions while offering my colleagues too many. This is what happens when everyone is made to act as a cog in the machine.

Personalise your way of working
And that's the way it was until web 2.0 came along. Through the standard browser (Internet Explorer 6) we could suddenly access information and collaborative environments that we could configure ourselves and choose our favourite approach. The light of personalisation and choice could finally break through the pervasive darkness of standardisation. Online software that supports me in my way of working, which is easy to use and rich in functionalities. That's the way I want to work. Why can't I exchange my phone for a netbook? Why can't I log into the network via wifi? Why can't I install the software I need on my work station?

But this personalisation and individual choice is not of course only about technology. It is also about the space my manager gives me and the trust he has in what I do, where I do it and when. They arrange for special areas where you can sit the whole day if you need to concentrate on writing a report, but you can't do it in the peace of your own home. Are you perhaps a night owl who comes up with their best ideas when it's dark? That's a pity, because you need to be in at half past nine and have to wait till four at least to leave. There were once good reasons for these rules, and they will continue to apply for certain functions, but now they are by no means applicable to everyone. Now we are not constricted by locations and can work from home, where we may even have better facilities than in the office.

Summary
Rules and regulations are always based in the past and they must therefore be regularly updated to grow with the possibilities available and the available culture. The culture of web 2.0 and that of the new (but also the current) generation of employees calls for some of these rules to be reviewed. In the first part of this Chapter I held current rules and agreements up to the light on the basis of three fundamental characteristics of web 2.0 and the changes they represent. These changes actually mean that the rules should really be reviewed. Under what conditions were they developed and do these conditions still

apply? The rules also address such issues as protecting information, contacts with politicians, self-publishing, the Freedom of Information Act, collaborating on online documents, and contacts outside your organisation. It's time to reopen discussions about these rules.

In the second part of this Chapter about organisation 2.0 I'll give you some pointers on how you and your organisation can take a 2.0 approach to work.

Flexible working environment at Microsoft Netherlands

This new way of working is omnipresent at Microsoft's offices in Schipol. Introduced in May 2008, the ground floor has a variety of open and closed seating and table arrangements, and there are sofas, a courtyard and auditoriums. There is something for everyone. The upper floors (which are closed to visitors) provide employees with fully flexible working environments. However, Microsoft doesn't expect its employees to work at the office. You get your work done on location (or en route to a location), or else at home. The building is intended for contacts, not for employees.
This approach means Microsoft needs considerably less space at its headquarters, which saves a great deal on costs. All in all, it does represent a drastic change in how people work. Microsoft does admit that the organisation has been turned upside down, but that they also have an aim in mind, one that would have to bear resutls. Here are the three main reasons for such a radical change:

- Firstly, the expectations are that this will lead to greater productivity because there are many more internal and flexible links. Society is becoming increasingly complex and this complexity is poorly reflected in organisational structures;

- The second aim is to maximise openness and transparency. This is vital for a company like Microsoft because of its inward-looking and closed culture;

- Finally, and this is probably the most important reason, they wish to appeal to the latest generation of employees.

www.andrewmcafee.org/blog is the weblog of Andrew McAfee from the Harvard Business School. McAfee's area of expertise is the influence of information technology on companies and management.

How do you set up an organisation 2.0?
Andrew McAfee is a professor at Harvard Business School and originator of the term Enterprise 2.0. He visited the Netherlands for the Enterprise 2.0 conference in Zeist, where he gave a comprehensive overview of the potential of social software for organisations and provided some practical examples. He also mentioned a number of areas that will be transformed by social software

- *Innovation:* how new products and services are developed or new ideas emerge;
- Collaboration: collaboration between employees, but also between departments and with clients or partners;
- *Knowledge sharing:* transparent sharing of knowledge between staff about new ideas, contacts and activities;
- *Collective intelligence:* development of knowledge and ideas, e.g. through discussions and adding to existing knowledge;

- *Search and discovery*: searching and finding information, to keep track of what different departments within the organisation are doing.

These are areas that are crucial for an organisation's success: how do you generate new insights and innovation? But they are also areas with a strong influence on how people work – how you collaborate, what information you share with each other, etc. But behind the advantages cited by McAfee there is a different story, involving people and culture. So let's leave the grand perspective about the organisation to the side and start with employees, colleagues, and their perspective.

Find colleagues who are open to this experiment

Members of organisations who wish to take a web 2.0 approach should first find colleagues who are open to such an experiment. We have to start with people who have welcomed innovations and who realise that there is room for improvement in the organisation's working methods. A basic positive attitude is necessary because we do have some obstacles to overcome. As I said earlier, it's a process of searching and experimentation, and it can only work if everyone joins in. It requires an investment in time (to learn new things) and attitude (to learn to approach work differently). Only then can added value and results be achieved.

Clearly, this involvement should come from both staff and management. By using web 2.0 work methods and tools we can boost efficiency by for example cutting meeting times and using other tools to reach consensus. But if you're going to do both, then you of course duplicate the workload. If everyone says what they're doing on their blog, but are still expected to attend meetings and listen to rounds of monologues, then it costs more time than it's worth. Choosing the right group of employees to start with is vital.

Investing in knowledge and solid agreements

This group then takes a common approach and agrees on the basis for their cooperation. If the decision is made not to send documents by mail, but to place them in an accessible location, everyone must of course be made aware of this. With these possibilities in mind, you can make agreements on how to structure cooperation and knowledge sharing. This will be different for each group After all, you start with the functionalities that harmonise well with work and the working method of the group, and where there is most room for improvement.

In addition, you must invest in gaining knowledge about the possibilities available: how can wikis, social networking sites, RSS feeds, blogs and all the other features be used in the organisation? What works best for keeping each other up-to-date? This requires more than following a course on how to push buttons. If your organisation wants to make the very most of all the new opportunities, they have to be jointly explored and analysed. Questions should be asked such as: "Is this something we can do more efficiently or with greater public interaction? If so, how are we going to apply this?"

If you then have a clear picture of which resources are best for the job, and what you wish to achieve with them, it's time to get started. If

What's an unconference?

An unconference is an open meeting where interested parties from various backgrounds come together around a theme. The participants are asked what they can contribute to the meeting and the programme is put together using a wiki in which each participant describes their input, as opposed to the conferences where the organiser arranges speakers and determines the programme.

you've decided to keep each other informed about interesting web sites via Delicious, then we should all register with the site, create a profile, install the right buttons on Internet Explorer and make agreements on which tags we're going to use and learn how we can easily send each other tips. If we're all going to describe what we're doing on a blog, then we're also going to arrange RSS feeds so everyone can easily follow the most interesting blogs. In short, we also have to arrange basic facilities together so we can get to work.

Conceiving a strategy for your environment

But those are the easy things; those are the things you can agree on with each other and which can be organised and controlled within the group. But our work involves connecting with elements outside the organisation. It's not about just the colleagues you share your room with being able to read your blog, it's about being able to involve others operating in your field. It is not just about receiving interesting links from your colleagues; it's all about getting a picture of the knowledge and information from the rest of your world. Now we've agreed on how we can work together as an organisation, we must consider how we are going to arrange cooperation within the network. This is a personal path that each employee has to take. How do you work? How will you achieve your goals with your network? What works best for your environment?

This largely depends on your area of work and your network: are the various parties involved close together or not? Are there any communities and possibilities for collaboration, or do you have to set them up yourself? What degree of openness and collectivity works best? What tasks can you outsource and what do you have to take care of yourself? What's your core business value and where's the added value? Do we also have to organise courses for the people in your network or are they already familiar with the resources and working methods offered by web 2.0? This requires a plan of action in terms of policy or field of activity. When your department or organisation addresses this area it's good to have a brainstorming session about what works best for everyone.

Your work is also personal

Except for your closest colleagues and the members of your network, this approach also has to work for you of course. This is partly in the facilities: choose the functionalities that best fit you and the way you work. Do you need a laptop or phone? Do you have to work a lot from home or while travelling? The best set-up is different for each individual. What do you need to get the most out of your time and your environment? For example, my phone's internet connection allows me to follow developments on email and Twitter between meetings, so I don't have to sit behind my computer at the end of the day and be confronted with a flood of messages.

What's even more important than considering what facilities you need is how you can link them to what drives your passions. If you're interested in videos, how can you use this to increase interactivity with your network? If you know all about it, blog about it and get involved in discussions. As long as you are clear about your role and function it adds

How do I start a blog?

What's blogging? Blogging is writing a short text about what you're doing and making it available online so other people can read it and respond to it. A blog is therefore a personal account and may be two lines or two pages long. It's up to you. Blogging allows you to tell your story, keep other people up-to-date with what you're doing, and allow them to respond with tips, ideas or approval. Blogs therefore often call for responses to gain the perspectives of others.

Where can you blog? There are currently many possibilities. For example, you can start a blog on your own page on the Civil Servant 2.0 networking site. But there are also a number of specialised blogging sites that are free, such as **www.blogger.com** and **www.wordpress.com**. All you have to do is register, choose a user name, layout, and then get typing. You can set your own blog up in a minute.

How do you start? The next challenge is to start typing. There's actually never an ideal time to start blogging, you just have to do it. If necessary, start by composing an email. That's the style you should be aiming for. Pretend you're writing someone an email about what you've achieved that day, or the challenges you have encountered, and then just paste the text into your blog. In short, don't make things too difficult for yourself.

Plain English

Although much is still possible with sound and video on the internet, most communication still consists of text. It is vital to express yourself clearly. The Taalridders (language knights) are a group from the Ministry of Agriculture who specialise in this area, and here are a few of their tips:

When you're writing something …

1. Before you begin, think about what you want to say. What's the message of my text?

2. Put yourself in the reader's place. What do they want to know? How long do they have to read the text?

3. First tell a colleague what you want to say, and then try to write down what you said. This works better than formal style of writing.

4. Don't beat around the bush. For example, start with: "I have decided to amend the Dangerous Dogs Act because it no longer meets current requirements. In this letter I will explain why I have made this decision".

5. Use short sentences. I tend to use to no more than fifteen words per sentence.

6. Try to avoid the passive voice. Rather than saying 'the mouse was eaten by the cat', say 'the cat ate the mouse'. This keeps readers alert.

7. Avoid the use of difficult words. A clever text is simple enough for everyone to understand.

8. Try to avoid using bureaucratic jargon and outdated turns of phrase, such as 'in this respect'. For example, use 'if' rather than 'in the event that'.

9. Edit your text mercilessly: I keep it short and if necessary use appendices.

10. Structure your text in paragraphs and chapters. A good text has an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

value to your work as a civil servant and reinforces the authenticity and value of your message. By being open in your approach and in the motives behind your activities you can also create understanding and give yourself room to engage in discussions. And last but by no means least, through connecting your passions you can make your work more fun. Your work is also personal, and there's no harm in showing that. If you want to set up a 2.0 organisation, this is something you should also bring to the table.

Manager 2.0

Managers have a crucial role to play in putting their colleagues on the right track. In this respect, the role isn't strictly as a manager, but more as a facilitator. What does each employee need to take full advantage of his or her knowledge, network and efforts? What features and functionalities can be used to achieve this? How much space and how much control is required? How can you keep up-to-date with what your employees are doing and how can you stimulate them? How can you set up your department or organisation in such a way that the employees are able to organise themselves? These are interesting questions to address in the management process. Here are some tips to kick off the discussion (see box).

The manager also has certain responsibilities, and this is partly due to hierarchy: there are political expectations and it's the manager's role to ensure these are fulfilled by the organisation. But the manager also has to check that the shared objectives of the department are met. If it was agreed that there would be greater interaction with the public, has this been applied in all areas of activity? If there are agreements about how knowledge is shared, do these agreements work and how can they be improved? In short, the manager has to have a comprehensive overview. Being a manager 2.0 is a very interesting job indeed!

Summary

I've explained my approach for setting up a 2.0 organisation, and have provided tips for a manager 2.0. These ideas are based on my own experiences, and they can only be improved if they are put into practice and discussed further. I hope you'll participate in this discussion, as that is after all the purpose of Civil Servant 2.0.

Getting started as manager 2.0

Working in a different way requires action, so if you want to take this approach in your department here are a few helpful hints:

- Make information such as reports, figures, etc. available in your department so employees themselves can look things up and asses situations;
- Limit the number of departmental meetings, but keep a blog to discus dilemmas and progress;
- Provide opportunities for discussion on the dilemmas and decisions you've taken;
- Encourage your employees to keep blogs so their colleagues can keep track of what they're doing;
- Comment on blogs and participate in the discussion so you can exert your influence to help meet the required targets
- Encourage communities that are based around particular themes and which go across organisational boundaries. Such communities are more effective and better able to generate their own more solutions;
- Count on employees to participate in communities and networks, share knowledge and make use of knowledge from outside, via RSS feeds for instance;
- Ensure staff are properly trained to work with social software;
- Use open innovation, crowdsourcing and other methods to uncover new knowledge;
- Consider which tools are best for which job, such as a wiki to bring knowledge together in one document;
- Don't worry if you make mistakes, as that's part of experimentation. As long as you take an open approach everyone will know where they stand.

Employee 2.0: the civil servant's way of working

In a society that's becoming more complex and flatter, it is increasingly difficult for a rigidly-organised government to take a comprehensive approach to tackling issues in society. These issues are increasingly beyond the boundaries of any one division, department, ministry or government. This means that the civil servant who deals with the issue also has to work across boundaries both inside and outside government. A civil servant's 'safe place' within the hierarchy is becoming increasingly less assured, while knowing how to find your way as a civil servant and what your position entails, is becoming more and more important.

That is a very demanding task for civil servants. It means they not only have to be involved with public issues within government, they also have to approach the role from an outwards perspective, to be able to work in horizontal networks within and outside government and know the right tools to use. And in the meantime they also need to know when to involve the manager if an issue is beyond their responsibility. That's quite a tall order. What do civil servants have to learn so they can meet this challenge?

In Chapter 7 I already made the case for tailoring facilities to the needs of employees. If an organisation wants to get the most out of its employees' potential then it has to provide technical support. And this technical support is therefore different for each employee. But empowering employees like this means more than just having the right computer or software. On the internet there are literally thousands of useful applications that can help you in your work. Which of them can be used for what? How do they work? What are the opportunities and what are the risks? These are things that we must learn. What can we do and what are we allowed to do?

I'll also use this chapter to discuss the characteristics of a civil servant 2.0. Young people entering the job market have a different view of work and a different way of working. In an increasingly tighter labour market, the government must therefore also be prepared to keep attracting the talent of the future, and I also have some tips in this regard.

Empowerment: knowing what you can

Firstly, what can we do with 2.0 resources? What opportunities and useful websites are there? The answer is there are a countless number! Any entrepreneur can now easily start their own internet business: they don't have to purchase any stock or production capacity, because everything is digital. Even a physical store or office premises is no longer necessary because now you can just start it up at home. All you need is a computer and a good idea – and there are plenty. A new interactive site is launched every day in the hope that it will be the next Google or YouTube. Web 2.0 is partly a result of the huge range of useful functionalities for collaborating and sharing knowledge in any form.

And that's convenient for us. We used to be dependent on the software our organisation just happened to have installed on our computers,

Is the internet address too long?

I regularly come across internet addresses that are anything up to three lines long, e.g. a link to a location on Google Maps. Luckily there is a solution to make these links shorter, namely with the sites **www.tinyurl. com** and the Dutch site **www.tweetburner. com**. All you have to do is enter the long address and then the site will convert in to a shorter one, e.g. **http://tinyurl. com/6y6esu.** Tweetburner does the same thing, but also keeps track of how many people click on your links, as well as providing statistics.

Keeping lists

We all keep lists, and then cross off the things we've done. This is possible in Outlook, but you can also do it on the internet. Visit **www.tadalist.com**, a simple and accessible site that also allows you to share lists with others. Or use **www. rememberthemilk.com.** This offers many more possibilities for extensive task management.

whereas now there are a whole range of possibilities where you can choose exactly what is suitable for you and the task you have to perform. Here's what Douglas Merrill from Google has to say about this:

"Fifteen years ago, enterprise technology was higher-quality than consumer technology. That's not true anymore. It used to be that you used enterprise technology because you wanted uptime, security and speed. None of those things are as good in enterprise software anymore (as they are in some consumer software)."

In other words, if you want usable and reliable software you shouldn't approach your own organisation, but go to the web.

Instruments must support existing activities

Seeing as Google is a provider of software, the above statement is certainly in the interests of Google, but the fact remains that there is enormous potential in the instruments available to civil servants. Some are well known, others less so or some not at all. What matters is that you're looking for the right tool for the task you want to perform better or more efficiently. Here are some examples:

• Maintain contact with your network, with the people you work with in your policy area (within your department or ministry, from other ministries or governments or with citizens or civil society organisations). For example, you can use LinkedIn to gain an overview of a network and expand it, you can use Twitter to keep you up-to-date with the activities of your colleagues, and can contact them through MSN, Google Talk, or Skype.

• Gain knowledge and stay on top of developments in your policy field: use RSS feeds so you can easily stay up-to-date with a large number of news sources, create links on Delicious to important sites, articles and reports so you can always stay connected to areas and share your knowledge with others;

• Stay informed about your environment (colleagues, management, contacts, network): you can do this through writing a short blog about the latest developments and insights (such as in **www.wordpress. com**) and clearly indicating your activities and responsibilities on your site or employee profile. You can of course also provide images through sites such as Flickr or YouTube;

• Collaborate on texts or to achieve other results. For example, Dutch civil servants can use the Rijksweb application to take advantage of collaborative websites and wikis, but that can also be achieved through Ning and PBworks, and these sites offer much more extensive possibilities. Online collaboration on a project can also be facilitated through **www. zoho.com**, or you can build your own work environment in Google Sites, including, of course, Google Docs, Google Spreadsheets, etc.

• To organise input and get ideas from your environment (crowdsourcing, wisdom of the crowds, use of mash-ups, etc.) you can make use of User Voice (to gather ideas), **www.intrade.com** (to start a prediction market) or Google Maps (to indicate locations).

www.wordpress.com is just like **www. blogger.com** in that it offers facilities to easily start a blog, free of charge. The site also allows the software to download and install your own provider. There are many free plug-ins (additional features) available to the site which provide even more opportunities.

www.zoho.com offers a long list of programmes and software for your own use or to collaborate with. For example, General Electric, the largest company in the world, uses Zoho as an intranet and working environment.

Wisdom of the crowd: the idea that the aggregate opinion of a large group of people is closest to the best solution.

Civil servants require training to get an insight into all these possibilities. For example, a Civil Servant 2.0. foundation course should in the first instance give participants a feel for the possibilities available and should be specifically focussed on their activities. You can talk at length about the potential of web 2.0 for government and the work of civil servants, but you have to learn how to deal with web 2.0. That's also why there are various practical tips and tricks in the margins of this book.

A web 2.0 course can help to point out the right way, give people more confidence with the internet and web 2.0, and also to provide practical tips. But I do think the practical advice provided in such a course should be supplemented with additional information:

explain the culture of web 2.0, e.g. the characteristics, terms such as long tail, crowdsourcing and mass collaboration, etc.;
• guidance on how to write on the web;
• awareness of some of the risks and concerns, e.g. regarding privacy, security, archiving and your position as a civil servant. I will deal with this in greater depth in the next section.

Where can I learn this?
To put civil servants in a position where they can responsibly use web 2.0 resources, their organisation should offer them the opportunity to learn this, preferably in different ways so everyone can choose what's best for them. The following Civil Servant 2.0 learning resources are under development:

• Web 2.0: The course provides instruction about useful internet sites, but also about the impact on the relationship between government and society. The information centre at the Ministry of Agriculture has organised several courses and the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs also wants to offer employees this course. The Government Information Service (Rijksvoorlichtingsdienst) also offers its own course for communications professionals;
• An online course can reach more people: Possibilities are being studied for developing an online course on web 2.0 for library staff (**www.23dingen.nl**) and a course in a 3D environment or a serious game;
• Tips and tricks: The network site of Civil Servant 2.0 also offers a section on 'tips and tricks'. The idea behind this is to offer practical advice on how web 2.0 resources can be used to lessen stress and improve cooperation. You can also visit the site **www.lifehacking.nl** for further information.
• Examples: Lead by example. A collection of best practices has been put together so others can learn from them or draw inspiration from them.

If you're interested in following a web 2.0 course click on **cursus. ambtenaar20.nl** for the latest news.

How to handle information

The advent of the computer meant big changes for many organisations. In the beginning this was particularly true for typists, but ultimately every civil servant was given their own personal computer and was responsible for typing their own texts. A much bigger change occurred when computers were connected across a network. Email and network drives allowed documents and messages to be exchanged and cooperation and exchanging information within the organisation became a lot easier. And with the arrival of the internet it also became possible to do this with the rest of the world.

Email became very popular. So popular in fact, that now it's seen as a threat to the productivity and mental health of employees. There are courses on how to handle email, and several companies have introduced email-free Fridays. This is the first sign of a fundamental change. We have in fact gone from a situation where we had so little information that it was a struggle to get work done to a situation where we have an abundance of information. Now the world has become a lot more transparent as a result of the internet and the exchange of information has become a great deal easier, the amount of information has become overwhelming – *information overload*.

This situation has arisen because the mentality has not developed alongside the growth of information access and interactive possibilities. We still think that we have to read everything. In other words, we aren't selective. A monthly trade magazine with ten items may contain one or two articles that are actually relevant, but because the magazine only appears once a month anyway, the fact it isn't so specific isn't very important. But if you have ten email newsletters, twenty websites and thirty blogs to follow that all relate to your field of activity then it can all get a bit too much. So what's the solution? Well there are actually two: be more selective and make better use of tools such as RSS feeds, Netvibes, etc.

I often speak to people who can't keep up with all the flows of information. They know of the existence of websites, blogs, discussion forums, etc. in their field of activity, but they don't have the time to read everything, in addition to all the trade magazines and news clippings. They also make selections, but they select what they are familiar with, and choose to leave to one side the new ways of exchanging information and public discussion, saying that they don't have the time. I think this is regrettable, firstly because I think it's every civil servant's responsibility to be aware of what's happening. But also because we as government are always struggling to keep up with what's going on in society. But mainly, because there is a smarter way of doing things.

Empowerment: knowing what you should and shouldn't do

Much of what I have written about the opportunities offered by web 2.0 to facilitate dialogue between government and society call for civil servants to take a different approach to work. To prevent online dialogue slipping into overly informal, one-dimensional chit-chat we need pro-active civil servants who are willing to engage with the public and who have a visible presence. This calls for civil servants who can ask the right questions, generate enthusiasm, listen, and confront the issues so they can stake a clear role in the dialogue.

For example, to actively participate in online networks and discussions as a civil servant you have to assess what you cannot and what you can and should say. After all, you are operating in an external position and cannot therefore subject any of your responses to internal approval. That will for example have consequences for hierarchical alignment, management and for civil servants themselves. This can result in many dilemmas.

Source: Civil Service Code – Guidance for online participation: **www.civilservice.gov. uk/iam/codes/social_media/participation. asp**

For more infromation about the Netherlands Government Information Service (RVD), visit **http://twurl.nl/76vegr**

Civil service code

So what are the desirable characteristics for civil servants operating online? In Britain, they have already thought about this and the UK government has prepared a document entitled Guidance for online participation, as part of the wider Civil Service Code. The main points are as follows:

1. Be credible: be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent;

2. Be consistent: encourage constructive criticism and deliberation.

3. Be cordial, honest and professional at all times;

4. Be integrated: wherever possible, align online participation with other offline communications;

5. Be a civil servant: remember that you are an ambassador for your organisation. Wherever possible, disclose your position as a representative of your department or agency.

One notable aspect of this guidance is that it primarily focuses on general principles and leaves plenty of scope for civil servants to participate in the substantive debate. It even allows room to provide online assurances if they fall within your remit. The fact that this guidance fits on one page is also striking!

I think we could apply most of these guidelines to the Netherlands. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Government Information service are looking into this. There are a few extra areas I would like to see dealt with in a code like this:

1. Civil servant values: these are well represented in the guidance: "Remember you are also a civil servant when you're online and that means the following";

2. The culture of web 2.0: there are also references to this in the guidance, such as transparency, sharing knowledge (unless only intended for internal use), etc. However, the difference with other forms of public contact could be better described;

3. Pitfalls, these are also included on the UK site and include realising that you are identified by your IP address, that you should consult your manager when in doubt, keeping personal information anonymous, copyright, making commitments, etc. However, there should also be references to recording and storage of blogs and reactions.

4. Dilemmas: the guidance does not make any mention of dilemmas. This code is for civil servants in their strict role as civil servants. However, the separation between work and home is becoming increasingly blurred:
   a. To what extent can you express a different opinion when you are online 'at home' rather than at work?
   b. Can you also present yourself as a civil servant from your IP address at home?

There are many useful sites on the internet, but some require passwords to enter them. You can often use the same password for sites that come under Yahoo or Google, but this still sometimes inhibits your online activities. However, this situation is gradually being addressed on the internet. With OpenID, you can use the password for your favourite site elsewhere. It works a bit like the online banking payment system IDEAL. In the meantime, it's not necessary to come up with a whole list of passwords, because you don't always use a different password for each site. I personally have the same password, but vary it according to the level of security. So for most sites I use more or less the same password, but I'll use a different password for my email for example, and another one for very sensitive matters like my online bank account. But one thing is clear: never use your organisation's internal password online!

c. Online contact can happen 24 hours a day. You must also be mindful that you aren't guided too much by that agenda. For example, make good agreements with colleagues about shifts.

There are still many questions and discussion points to be addressed regarding this code for civil servants, or this manifesto for Civil Servant 2.0. This discussion will also be taken up by the Civil Servant of the Future Project, which is part of the project for the renewal of the Dutch government, so we will certainly be addressing these points again!

Some years ago the Ministry of Agriculture put together a booklet on web behaviour, which contained the useful rule: "In case of doubt, always ask yourself if you would tell a colleague or roommate." This is a useful rule to keep in mind."

Protection and storage of information

Working in government also means dealing with sensitive information. This may be classified information, such as that held by the Ministry of Defence, but it can often be private information such as data held by human resources, or knowledge that is politically sensitive, (e.g. when preparing a collective labour agreement). If you do have such information, you should always be aware of this sensitivity. Not all information needs to be available to everyone and it is often unwise to use applications on the internet for security reasons. Deliberate and reasonable decisions should be made that are based on sufficient level of knowledge.

The safest approach when working within a government organisation is to use your own network or intranet. But that's not always possible: if you want to collaborate and share knowledge over the boundaries of your organisation, you're still dependent on the internet as a platform. And the supply of online tools and functionalities is so large and diverse that if it allows you to work more efficiently then it's almost irresponsible not to make use of this added value. It's ultimately about making well-considered decisions, and keeping in mind the above advice.

The same consideration should also be given to storage and archiving of data. As a government we are required by law to keep a record of our activities, such as the steps taken in preparing a law. The more this occurs via online contact and collaboration, the more important it becomes to find solutions to archiving these steps. We should therefore be able to access wikis and Google Docs (this is often already possible). And responses to blogs and discussions should be stored automatically (such as through **www.backtype.com**). How can we organise this?

Who is employee 2.0?

Much has been written about the digital skills of the next generation of employees. Are they better equipped to work with the internet? What's clear is that they will work differently and have different values and needs. How do we stimulate young people to come and work for government? This goes much further than posting vacancies on networks like Hyves or LinkedIn (recruitment 2.0), it is something that relates to work culture. See also Chapter 7.

What do employees 2.0 expect from their employer? Do they still expect good possibilities for self-development, a permanent contract and secondary benefits? These elements will certainly retain their value, but the new generation demands more. The above questions have still not been answered, but the discussion is in full swing and the following themes have emerged:

Employees 2.0 seek meaning in their work
The new generation of employees aren't looking for a job for life, but a job they can feel connected to, where they for example have the opportunity to address social issues. For them, it is about a quest for values and having a collective ambition within the organisation. Such a culture and attitude is a good reason to belong to a certain club and put all your effort into it.

Internal enterprise
Being involved in an area of activity also makes it less likely that employees will feel like a part of the assembly line of the process. They need the room to pursue enterprising activities within the organisation, and this means they will invest maximum level of knowledge, network and technological capabilities. They expect to be judged on results and largely decide themselves how they will achieve them.

Personal branding and personal development
The employee is therefore central in the eyes of the new generation. They present themselves according to the issues they are involved in and the results they have achieved. Compensation requirements are also different for each person: some want more leave while others may wish to follow courses or seminars, or even do an MBA. Training is a part of your job, and the emphasis is on self-development. As long as the organisation knows how to stimulate your interests and is able to contribute to growth, the employee will stay with the organisation, but job hopping is an increasingly common phenomenon.

Hierarchy is a relic from the past
Hierarchies only inhibit the progress that can be made in an area by individual enterprise, and the enthusiasm that comes with it. Hierarchy is not interesting and not impressive, except when based on expertise and contribution. Employees 2.0 are focused on their subject, and hierarchical structures, bureaucracy and internal political games only obstruct this.

Sharing knowledge means multiplying knowledge
A similar barrier can also be presented by colleagues who refuse to share knowledge. These days it is always possible to obtain the same (or perhaps better knowledge) through a different route. But this requires additional effort, and it means the colleague in question will not be approached again anytime soon. It is important to be open, as an employee's strength lies in sharing knowledge rather than keeping it.

Summary

In the coming years a new generation of employees, with a different culture and a different way of working will come to prevail in government. These employees approach their tasks in a different way, but also expect other things from the organisation, their manager and their colleagues. This requires new forms of organisation and management and it is the process that should be initiated now before we are faced with a generation gap. These employees can make a vital contribution by helping government to adapt to the changes occurring in society.

The end is the beginning

I hope that the end of this book will mark the beginning of a discussion. The journey I referred to at the beginning of this book marks the first step in a greater journey that we as a government and civil servants have to make if we are to translate developments around web 2.0 into practice. This is a largely theoretical journey, and it is up to each of us to discover for ourselves how we can effectively improve our work and contribute to a better government.

Using my experience with web 2.0 I have tried to provide you with some useful equipment for this journey. And I have tried to adapt this knowledge to government: to the relationship between government and society, the internal organisation of government and in the approach taken by civil servants to their work. I hope this 2.0 window on our work and how we do it has also encouraged you to think about and discuss these ideas. The discussion can be conducted on www.ambtenaar20.nl and the issues in this book can also be addressed on boek.ambtenaar20.nl, but this is a dialogue that should preferably be conducted in the workplace.

Because that's the main purpose of this book: to initiate discussions among civil servants about the significance of web 2.0 for government and for their work. This book provides background information and various opinions on what this significance might be, but the answers must be found in the workplace, through experimentation and engaging in discussions. That's the challenge faced by the next generation of civil servants.

I believe the lines along which this discussion should take place are 'open', 'social' and 'user-based', and each chapter of this book addresses these three factors in one way or another. At the heart of web 2.0 lies the need to create a flat surface, where people can connect with others and therefore accomplish more. This applies both within organisations and in working with the public: how can we empower people so they can contribute more?

Economic advantages

Just as the rationalisation of production in factories has greatly increased the productivity of factory workers, new concepts in digital collaboration will also raise the level of productivity of knowledge workers both within and outside the organisation. In a time of ageing populations and emerging countries, this could offer valuable solutions for the coming time. Our economies will have to be in innovation, and that means our people.

This is not only about streamlining a government by working on a more efficient and interactive basis. Of course, there are opportunities for doing the same amount of work with fewer people through greater cooperation and the smarter use of tools. There are also advantages in transferring more tasks to the public (crowdsourcing, co-creation, open innovation), but what's more important is that government looks at and understands how the opportunities of web 2.0 in society can create added value.

One example of this is the open government initiative to make government information available in an open format so it can be used and further developed by others. Sources of government information can be used as a foundation on which to build and market new applications and websites. This means start-ups or existing businesses can release new products and business model based on the government information (and of course the conditions set by government). Open government provides a stimulus to this sector of industry, while at the same time improving the services offered by the government.

A changing society

The term 'web 2.0' was conceived by Dale Dougherty, an internet pioneer and manager of the company O'Reilly Media: http://twurl.nl/kahqcf.

One thing this book attempts to make clear is that society is changing at a rapid pace, and one of these changes concerns digitalisation, the internet and web 2.0. The change is perceptible in all areas, from the entertainment industry to the automotive industry, from health care to politics, to the children sitting in the classroom, to Minister Maxime Verhagen sending tweets from the UN building in New York. The web is sixteen years old, the term web 2.0 is four years old, and Twitter is two years old.

What is web 3.0?
Sometimes also called the 'semantic web' Web 3.0 is a vision of the future where information is connected to concepts or people to give as broad an understanding as possible. This is in contrast to the current fragmented nature of information spread across various sites.

Technological developments, but also the concepts that accompany them are accelerating faster by the day. There is already talk of web 3.0, which will allow us to create an even more complete picture of our online identity. But our existence is also becoming increasingly integrated with the internet through mobile technology and GPS. The opportunities for gathering knowledge and working together independently of time or place are only becoming greater, which means new concepts will be developed every year, resulting in new worlds to discover.

Government organisations often tend to develop in fits and starts, e.g. through major reorganisations. Revolutions such as these are usually decided at the time the evolution of society reaches a certain point. However, changes in society occur in such rapid succession that this raises the issue of whether the current methods of government can keep pace with society. Shouldn't a constantly changing society require a government that is also constantly changing?

The main challenge in the coming years will be to keep up with changes in society and meet the expectations of citizens. They are the ones who can see what the possibilities are, and how the business community can use these opportunities to involve customers more closely in their activities.

They will also come to expect this from government. The public's wishes evolve with the possibilities available, not only in terms of government services, but also in terms of how they can influence the activities government performs for them.

Platform Civil Servant 2.0

There is still so much to discover, but fortunately we don't have to do this alone. After all, as civil servants we have a lot of people we can work with. Anyone with a good idea can inspire others, so all the methods involving web 2.0 that you can think of to improve how the

government works can also be useful for your colleagues. Whatever level of government you work in, and whatever your department, we all face the question of how we as civil servants should respond to this development.

The only thing we should not do is keep these ideas to ourselves. Ask questions, so people can contribute. Describe your idea so others can develop it further. By sharing our experience from projects and experiments, we can learn from each other. We can also use the resources and principles of web 2.0 to respond the questions web 2.0 raises for the government. Then we can capitalise on the opportunities available to us.

As mentioned, the exchange of ideas and experiences can take place anywhere, but it will in will in any case continue to take place on **www.ambtenaar20.nl**. Civil Servant 2.0 is the platform for discussing the consequences of web 2.0 for the government, for asking questions and setting the right examples, to focus on future developments and to launch initiatives and experiments. And this can be happen online, through meetings, or even through a book.

Chapter 10.

Why me?

Other chapters have dealt extensively with what web 2.0 means, what you can do with it and why it's had such a major impact on the government's work. This story is not just about Civil Servant 2.0; it's also about me. In a way I am my own research, and I put the results directly into practice - it's a case of practicing what I preach, but also preaching what I practice. So why am I working on this?

1. Forming part of society

After I graduated in 1996 I took a work placement at the strategic department of a business, and it was our job to think about the consequences of the internet for publishing. I therefore became involved with the internet when it was still in its infancy. At the same time I also became socially active. I joined a political party and became a board member of the Leiden Heritage Foundation, and for many years I was able to help set up wonderful events for the public. I found this voluntary work highly rewarding. It gave me a sense of social satisfaction that I was unable to achieve through normal work, and I found it difficult to separate the two worlds.

I came to the conclusion that the world of business could not give me sufficient motivation. I needed more, I wanted a job that would also let me contribute to society, and that's why I wanted to work for the government. This contribution to society ultimately proved to be a relatively indirect one, but my motivation stayed the same: improve the way the government works to also improve how society works. Government is part of that society, and plays an important role in it. It is therefore the government's duty to occupy a central role and actively participate in society. If an opportunity arises to work on a more efficient and interactive basis, then we must seize it. That is every civil servant's responsibility.

A more efficient and interactive government

And that's also what motivated me to start the Civil Servant 2.0 project. There is now a great deal of political attention focussed on civil servants and how they work. Society demands that civil servants perform their duties using all the resources they can to work more efficiently, effectively and on a more integrated basis. Giant strides have been taken in this direction thanks to all the resources available to us today.

But more important than the resources the government uses, is the approach we take to our work. Partly as a result of the internet, society and the role of government is changing rapidly. The balance is shifting. And when society changes, the government should also change with it. We have only just embarked on this journey of discovery, but there are still many opportunities to perform our tasks in a more open and interactive way.

It's a journey that I'm glad to be a part of. With the arrival of the internet, a whole range of new opportunities have become available to the government that can help it work more efficiently and more closely aligned to the requirements of society. A better government for a better society, that's something worth working hard for.

2. My network is my organisation

My primary motivation is my enthusiasm for the field I work in. I can therefore feel more closely connected to the area I'm responsible for, and I can use all the resources I have at my disposal and seek out other likeminded individuals from my networks who might wish to contribute. And if you too can make a valuable contribution please let me know!

I don't limit myself to the confines of my department or ministry. Valuable contributions can also be found outside these boundaries. I try to keep in touch with the knowledge, ideas and networks of people inside and outside the organisation who have the same aims. This is the group I work with. Of course, everyone has their own separate tasks and responsibilities, but it is possible to work together in the pursuit of a common social goal.

Sharing knowledge

My loyalties do not lie in any one particular department or directorate, but with the entire organisation and the people I work with. Further still, they lie with a government that performs its role in society as effectively as possible. This way of working across organisational boundaries can of course only succeed if everyone is open about what they are doing. Information should be freely available.

I used to spend a lot of my time putting together and distributing copies of interesting articles, but now I can do that much more efficiently by email, or a whole host of even more convenient ways. After all, gathering the right information is crucial for our work as civil servants. I also started a blog to keep colleagues and associates informed about my progress. This makes it possible for others to collaborate at the appropriate stage. In short, I can work and communicate more horizontally (in networks) than vertically (hierarchical lines).

Personal branding

From the start I have tried to work to my own strengths and competences in an attempt to generate added value. Together with the knowledge I have built up and the networks I belong to, I have tried to create my own niche, my own brand.

But it's taken a long time to actually develop this 'brand'. What does it stand for? What services can you expect? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Over the last few years it wasn't always clear how my capabilities and knowledge could be linked to this, but my idea of what this brand is is now a lot clearer, and in my role as head of the Civil Servant 2.0 project, I'm much closer to occupying the niche that suits me.

In Chapter 8 I already addressed what organisation 2.0 involves and how an employee 2.0 can operate in this environment. It's a way of working that is closely related to my personal work methods and motivation, and that's also the potential I want to unlock to make Civil Servant 2.0 a success.

3. The world at your fingertips

This way of working has rewarded me with a very broad and diverse network. One that I have been able to make excellent use of, even if does require a lot of time and effort to maintain it. Unfortunately, I never felt that all the relevant people were in the picture. Much seemed to be pieced together due to coincidence, the people I came across and the subjects we'd discuss, and whether it was possible to do something together in the short term before we lost sight of each other again.

Social networking sites have completely turned this way of working upside down. If you add someone as a contact, you always have their email address and you can always reach them. You can see what someone is doing and seek to cooperate with them. You can get an insight in experience and interests that extend beyond the reason for originally getting into contact with them. And because you can look beyond your own network, you also get a better understanding of who else is in your field. This has greatly increased my professional strength.

Personal dashboard

I've always disliked the need to travel. The views can be beautiful and travel offers the opportunity to sit quietly and read a book, but ultimately I do not want travel; I want to be somewhere. The internet is free from the constraints of time and space, everything is connected to everything else at all times. I have discussed the fundamental implications of this at length, but it does mean I can access any information I want when I need it, and make contact with people in a way that I find useful.

In short, it gives me the opportunity to arrange my life, my work and my environment in a way that suits me. When I was young I would bury myself in encyclopaedias, atlases and dictionaries (and I still collect them), now all these works of reference are one click away. I've always been curious about everything that happens in my environment and in the areas that interest me. And now I can organise my personal dashboard so I can keep up with this information in the most efficient way possible. And I can do all of this online.

I can do it all by myself

And the great thing is that I can do this all by myself. I used to envy people who could program computers. If they had a good idea, they could develop and realise it themselves. I enjoy discussing and developing ideas, but I'm also pragmatic and want to make things happen. The online tools that have become available in recent years have given me the opportunity to do this quickly. Now, everyone has resources at their disposal that were once the sole preserve of big businesses. Imagine the potential!

When I started this project, I made sure I used all of these resources. Setting up a blog on WordPress took just a few minutes. It gave me a platform to publish my ideas, and the number of subscribers quickly shot up past the one hundred mark. I also started a community for people who want to talk about web 2.0 and the government, and there

are now thousands of members. All of these sites and tools can help you get started, which is why they are referred to in the margins of this book.

I don't know if I qualify as a good example of a 'Civil Servant 2.0', but that's not the point. What I do want to stress is that this world is good for me. That's the motivation behind this project, and that's why I wrote this book. At the same time I also make use of all these new tools to carry out this project as best as I can. That's the responsibility of every civil servant: to consider how these innovations will affect your work and to make use of these resources so you can work more effectively and efficiently. This book can provide you with guidance, but ultimately, it's up to you.

Be the change you want to see in the world — Mahatma Gandhi

Civil Servant 2.0 *beta*

Action steps towards government 2.0

December 4th, 2008

Contents Civil Servants 2.0 beta

Text Box

Full contents

"Our commitment to openness means more than simply informing the American people about how decisions are made. It means recognizing that government does not have all the answers, and that public officials need to draw on what citizens know."
Barack Obama

Introduction

How do we create a government 2.0?

This is our challenge. In this book I present the tools civil servants and administrators need to meet this challenge.

Civil Servant 2.0 discussed what web 2.0 means for government. Since its publication, society has changed. Our government now faces new changes. And it must be prepared.

We are seeing debates, on Civil Servant 2.0 for instance, pilots, and the involvement of parliament. Merely developing bottom-up and ad-hoc activities is not enough. Instead, government organisations need to develop specific 2.0 strategies.

I start this book with a brief review of my first publication, followed by a discussion of the key trends and developments relating to government 2.0. I then provide a number of action points. These action points form the building blocks for a government 2.0 that participates in society, which incorporates work 2.0 in the organisation and is transparent in how it performs its tasks.

But a strategy alone is not enough. In the end, this is about civil servants changing their approach to work. A top-down strategy can work only if it is met by a bottom-up movement. By civil servants who take the initiative. The book ends with a number of practical recommendations: the working principles for the civil Servant 2.0.

Together we can take the next step towards improving government. You too have the opportunities and means to play a role in this. Talk to others. Take the initiative. Use the building blocks in this book. And do it with other civil servants 2.0.

After all, as one of my colleagues replied when asked by his son what 2.0 stood for, "Together on the internet, that's 2.0."

Davied van Berlo, November 2009

If you would like to join the debate on web 2.0 and the government, visit **forum.ambtenaar20.nl**

Burgerlink maps out e-participation efforts in the Netherlands. Go to **http://twurl.nl/gqk7v0**

For the report on web 2.0 submitted by the Ministry of the Interior to the House of Representatives, go to **http://twurl.nl/quvmrm**

To contact other civil servants 2.0, or to submit questions to the network, join the network site.
See **netwerk.ambtenaar20.nl**

Summary

Following a review of the first Civil Servant 2.0 book, this publication comprises three sections:

Section I. Trends for government 2.0: developments since the publication of the first book have led to new insights about government 2.0, set out here.

Section II. Building the organisation 2.0: the first book was a great inspiration for many to work towards a government 2.0. This section presents the building blocks to get you started.

Section III. Working as a Civil Servant 2.0: the Civil Servant 2.0 network is growing fast. But how to put the new approach into practice? Here are some ideas.

Throughout the body text there are references to relevant internet sites, explanations of terms used or extra information.

The book ends with a number of appendices, including a dictionary.

A quick review

Civil Servant 2.0 beta continues where Civil Servant 2.0 left off. If you haven't yet read the first book, I recommend you do so before you continue. Civil Servant 2.0 introduces web 2.0 and explains what it means for government. It offers useful tips on how to get started, explains key terms and identifies opportunities.

What was in the first book?

This chapter is a quick reminder of the key concepts I presented in the first book. The summary is also available on over.ambtenaar20.nl.

What is web 2.0?

Society is changing, and fundamentally so. It is changing in how people find each other, how they exchange knowledge and ideas and how they work together. Driven by technological developments (the internet, web 2.0), these changes affect society as a whole. Hence they affect people and the government: the relationship between citizen and government, the government's internal organisation and how civil servants work.

A general introduction to Civil Servant 2.0 is available on **over.ambtenaar20.nl**

Three characteristics of web 2.0 play a crucial role in these changes:
1. **Open:** transparent, accessible, exchange;
2. **Social:** networking, collaboration, connecting;
3. **User central:** empowering, customised, responsibility.

Web 2.0 and the government

The government must act and respond to these changes. However, there are no instant solutions. It is our responsibility as civil servants to define how these changes will affect how we work, our policies, implementation and control, and how we can work more efficiently and interactively by using web 2.0 and the internet. And this starts with debates, studies and experiments.

Government 2.0

The power of networking was never clearer than during the rallies against the introduction of minimum required school hours by the Dutch Ministry of Education. Despite talks with interest groups, there were massive student protests following an on-line call to action by a 17-year-old. The protests were organised on the internet, leaving the Ministry and other stakeholders standing by the sidelines. Public initiatives are put on the agenda faster, both within and outside government. So how can we address this new situation? And can we use these opportunities in what we do? And how should we go about it?

The Erasmus University Rotterdam studied the protests against the introduction of required school hours. Victor Bekkers et al De virtuele lont in the kruitvat. Welke rol spelen de oude en nieuwe media in de micromobilisatie van burgers en hun strijd om politieke aandacht? (the virtual fuse in the powder keg. What is the role of old and new media in the micromobilisation of citizens and their struggle to be heard by government?) (2009)

Organisation 2.0

Obviously, there are opportunities for government organisations too. Working across organisational barriers was never easier. By collecting the knowledge and input you need, work can be done faster and better. Knowledge is used more efficiently, and it will bolster support for the outcome. A broad, flexible and open attitude to work changes organisations and management.

Employee 2.0

The developments I have set out above have changed the way civil servants work. A responsive government needs civil servants who make active use of the internet. But how? As a civil servant, how far can you go on the internet? This is something we will need to learn. Web 2.0 also offers civil servants an opportunity to work more efficiently and effectively. "Government entrepreneurs" can achieve more if they use the right tools and combine expertise.

My first book introduced web 2.0 and presented lots of illustrations and ideas. This book is your manual for creating your own government organisation 2.0. Time to take the plunge.

Section I.   Trends for government 2.0

Developments on the internet

Web 2.0 is about online social interaction. How I behave on the internet is how I would behave in the real world. Let me give you some examples.

I compare Twitter to how I tell an anecdote at a party. At a party, I want to entertain others with my story. Not every story is as amusing or dramatic. And of course, if I were to talk about nothing but myself, the other partygoers would soon stop listening.

The same goes for blogs: a blog is about starting a dialogue with your target group with whom you share a specific interest. You don't just take an article, column or lecture and cut and paste it in a blog. This would be like inviting others to join a debate, but never allowing them to speak.

Or take a Hyves group of local teenagers. How could you participate as a civil servant? Discussions in a group are often visible, and you might be tempted to simply join in when your area of policy comes up for debate. But that would be like barging in on a youth club and demanding to be heard. Better to introduce yourself first: "I am Y from the local council. I see you're talking about Z. Mind if I join in?"

Not responding to emails or other messages addressed to you is essentially the same as ignoring someone talking to you. Can you imagine doing that at a reception? In other words: social interaction is the same online and offline, so mind your manners!

I am not saying that it is always easy to know exactly how to act online as you would offline. The world is fundamentally changing and with these changes come new questions and circumstances. This chapter discusses these changes based on books by Clay Shirky and Jeff Jarvis and ends with six trends we must keep in mind when we start working with government 2.0.

Getting together was never easier

Clay Shirky's 'Here comes everybody' has become classic web 2.0 literature. According to Shirky the internet has made it ridiculously easy to bring people together. This has consequences for how things are being organised. And that is exactly what civil servants do: "organise things".

The term Shirky uses is: "*ridiculously easy group forming*". Cyberspace is no longer a separate place. The internet connects people, and this becomes easier all the time. "Group action gives human society its character and anything that changes the way groups get things done will affect society as a whole." Shirky is interested in the social implications of the internet and asks himself: "What is likely to happen to society with the spread of ridiculously easy group forming?"

How organisations operate

In his book, Shirky studies the bureaucratic organisation model presented by Ronald Coase in his essay '*The nature of the firm*' published in 1937.

Dictionary: **Twittering** or microblogging is posting text messages of up to 140 characters to keep your network informed of what you are doing.

Dictionary: A **blog** or web log is a report or description of something you are doing that you want to share with others and invite reaction to.

Clay Shirky - Here comes everybody. The Power of Organizing Without Organizations (2008)

More about Ronald Coase in Wikipedia: **http://twurl.nl/kr4csl**

Shirky talks about organisational structures, hierarchic relationships, closed groups of specialists, and position-based information barriers. All of these are part of the system.

But Shirky also looks at the reasons why organisations exist. His principle is: Organisations exist if organising yields more than it costs to organise. Working as a group can help to generate growth, combine strengths, or divide tasks, provided people's activities are harmonised. It is the meetings, circulating decisions for approval, paperwork, etc, that costs money.

The mass organisations of the twentieth century have embedded this system in our way of thinking: in how tasks are divided (who is responsible?), in power relationships (the director is bound to know) and in professional groups (my specialty). But these "truths" are shifting.

New forms of collaboration

In the twentieth century organising meant working from an organisation, be it a business, an association, or a government agency. This would have positions, administrations and meetings. Problems would be tackled by people with functional responsibility in project groups that would meet at pre-arranged times.

In a world where distance was an obstacle for collaboration and where people relied on tight planning to work together and share knowledge, this approach made sense. But many of these barriers have come down. With the internet offering plenty of opportunities for people working together and sharing knowledge, new forms of collaboration have become possible:

Dictionary: A **wiki** is online software that enables users to write documents together. Every amendment is logged.

- **not dictated by time or place:** internet forums, web meetings and wikis have made remote collaboration much easier. No longer bound by time, people can now continue debates or write documents outside of meetings;

- **projects involve more people:** since travelling distance and agendas no longer dictate where and when people can work together, more people can be involved in solving a problem;

- **people contribute less:** both travelling and meeting take up a lot of time, and this eats into the time reserved for a project. Any time saved can be spent on the actual topic. And if people contribute less, but more people contribute, the end result is the same. This makes every contribution to a project, no matter how small, a useful contribution;

- **participation in more than one group:** travelling and meeting times used to make it impossible for one person to take part in two or more project groups. But following online discussions in your area of expertise is easy. Focus on the expertise and knowledge you can contribute.

The success of open-source projects comes from the benefits of internet collaboration: a big, distributed group of people contributes a little or a lot to a single project (here a software program). Obviously,

this will work only if a few people invest time in monitoring the process (see *Wikinomics*). In public office these are the case officers and project leaders. The internet has opened up a whole range of collaboration opportunities.

Removing collaboration obstacles

People are social creatures. It is in our nature to get together, to exchange information, to form groups and to work together. And the fewer obstacles there are to doing so, the easier it is for groups to form and grow. Shirky: "Social tools don't create collective action – they merely remove the obstacles to it." In civil society, too, we must be aware of these developments.

Obstacles for cooperation are coming down, offering opportunities for government as an organisation and for other groups in society. These groups can be any number of people who share an interest. Shirky discusses two forms:

- **Collective action:** people with a common interest or purpose find each other to create something, from people who speak Russian in The Hague to people who want to ban fireworks or share information on Chihuahuas. People who share a common interest or purpose, and who can now find each other and organise themselves more easily. Shirky: "It's easier to like people who are odd the same way you are odd, but it's harder to find them."

- **Collaborative production:** once groups have found each other on a particular purpose or interest, they may create something new. This can be software, an encyclopaedia, or even a national innovation plan, like the wiki for *Beleid 2.0 (policy 2.0)*. The reason why Wikipedia is unaffected by vandals or criticism is that those who turn to Wikipedia for information far outnumber those that aim to ruin it.

How do networks work?

These developments require us to adopt a different approach. For instance, how does a group like this progress? How can people who collaborate online take decisions? And what about people's roles? Someone who visits just once to add a specific bit of information or to correct a typo has an entirely different role from someone who visits regularly and who knows how the network is developing. The rapid information exchange through collaboration tools on the internet enables groups to organise themselves in new ways ("*group coordination*").

This collaboration is driven by "*social capital*". As people in an online group start to get to know each other, their trust in each other grows.

This applies to everyday life and to online groups equally. People, their actions and their authenticity are key. Connections are created between people. And with people knowing other people, connections between networks emerge. As Shirky puts it:
- *bonding social capital*: within networks
- *bridging social capital*: between networks

Don Tapscott, Anthony D. Williams - Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything (2006)

On 1 January 2009 Arno Bonte and David Rietveld started a petition to ban consumer fireworks. On the same date, digital signatures were given legal force. In a matter of weeks, the fireworks petition was signed by more than 40,000 people and submitted to the chairman of the House of Representatives.
Visit **vuurwerk.petities.nl**

Beleid 2.0 is an innovation programme which a group of people wrote as a wiki in 2008. A few hundred people participated. For more information go to **www.beleid20.n**l

Dictionary: A **troll** is someone who responds to blogs or forum discussions in a consistently negative and non-constructive manner, thereby disrupting the interaction.

Dictionary: In a **community** participants can exchange knowledge, debate or collaborate on a particular subject.

Meetup.com is a platform for people who want to form theme groups and organise actual meetings. The site was frequently used during the US presidential elections to bring people together for political meetings and public addresses.
See www.meetup.com

Dictionary: A **tag** is a word or a term added to a text, photo, video clip or person to provide a better description and so make it easier to find.

From a technical point of view, it's easy to start a group on the internet. To make it work is much harder. Of the many networks that are started, such as Meetup.com, only a few are picked up. All the successful groups seem to meet a need and are properly managed. Shirky distinguishes three conditions which online groups must meet in order to be successful:

• **Promise**: the message must be convincing. By addressing people through their common interest they become involved;
• **Tool**: select the right tool to support your group. This can be a mailing list, a discussion forum, a wiki or even a tag, as long as it suits the group and what you aim to achieve;
• **Bargain**: how will people benefit from taking part? What is the added value for them, which implicit arrangement do you make with your community? Keep this in mind in what you do.

It is not about technology

Clay Shirky stresses that the changes he describes are not primarily technological. "Revolution doesn't happen when society adopts new technologies – it happens when society adopts new behaviors." The internet has made contacts between people easier. While technology is the precondition, the fundamental change lies in our behaviour.

He also explains that there is little point in discussing whether you should be in favour or against these changes. "When society is changing, we want to know whether the change is good or bad, but that kind of judgment becomes meaningless with transformations this large." What matters is that you try to understand what this transformation means for you and your work and that you adjust your behaviour accordingly.

In other words, it was never easier to get together and to work together. So how does this change your work?

Twitter is often used to inform large numbers of people about lectures and other meetings.
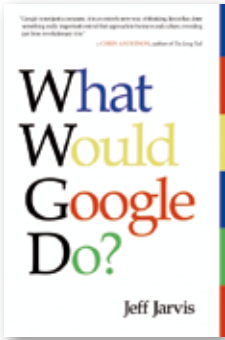
Jeff Jarvis - What Would Google Do? (2009)

Jeff Jarvis shares his views on marketing and the internet on his Buzzmachine blog.
See **www.buzzmachine.com**

Facebook is a social networking site, where you can create your own personal profile and stay in touch with other users. It doubles as a platform for working with others, sharing expertise or playing games. It is the equivalent of the Dutch Hyves networking site and has more than 300 million users.
See **www.facebook.com**

Identify relationships and support them with *elegant organization.*
(Photo: Jaap Stiemer, Hoorn)

What would Google do?

The internet holds no secrets for Google. This has made it one of the most successful and fastest growing companies ever. And it wasn't monopolistic behaviour that made it so big, but its sound understanding of how the internet works and what its users need. The name Google stands for success, and for ease of use, speed and innovative solutions. It is an icon. So if you are faced with a challenge on the internet, you can ask yourself: "How would Google do it?" This is exactly what Jeff Jarvis, author of 'What would Google do?' did.

Work according to Google's rules

Jeff Jarvis advises media agencies, has founded businesses, is an active blogger on his Buzzmachine.com site and teaches at the University of New York. But he is best known as a customer of the Dell computer company. A disgruntled customer, that is. His blog about his experiences spread like wildfire and even caused a slump in Dell sales. In the end, Dell decided to change its approach and to take its customers' complaints more seriously. Since then, Dell has invested heavily in finding new ways of using the internet and to improve its contacts with its customers. It became "Googly".

Jarvis's book is not just about Google. Besides Dell, businesses like Amazon, Facebook and Craigslist have also come to realise how to use this new medium and how it impacts on society and the economy. Jarvis sets out a number of rules these companies have learned, and refers to Google's own set of rules.

Google's rules according to Jarvis

Google is not a site or a portal. It is a network and a platform. A platform that enables things to happen, that helps others to create value. If they are successful, the success is shared by the owner of the platform. It is about the people and about creating new relations between people. It is not about organisational or hierarchic structures, but about networks and environments. Jarvis calls on organisations to map out their relationships and to invest in expanding and deepening them. That is where an organisation's value lies.

Basically, sites like Hyves, Facebook and Craigslist do the same. Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook, put it as follows: "Communities already exist, let's support them with elegant organization." This creates a win-win-situation. The next step according to Craig Newmark, founder of Craigslist, is to "Get out of the way." In short, don't interfere, but see what happens so that you can give even more support.

But letting go isn't easy – you need to be able to rely on your target group. David Weinberger, author of 'The Cluetrain Manifesto' and 'Everything is miscellaneous', says: "There's an inverse relationship between control and trust." The more you aim to control, the less trust you will receive. And vice versa. The time of control is gone. New media are open to all, and groups can get together everywhere. Jarvis has even created a law: "Jarvis' First Law: Give the people control of media, they will use it." Hence to gain trust, you must lose control: "Once you hand over control, you start winning."

Craigslist is an online marketplace where users post products and services and where supply and demand meet. The site has claimed a sizeable chunk of newspaper sales and the personal ads market in the US.
See **www.craigslist.org**
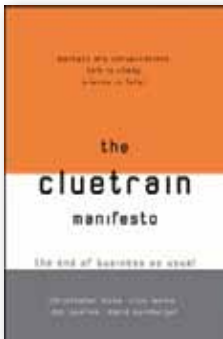
Rick Levine, Christopher Locke, Doc Searls, David Weinberger - The Cluetrain Manifesto (2009)
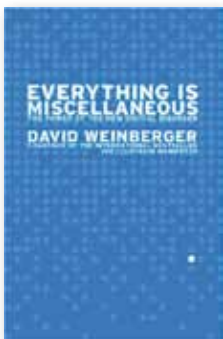
David Weinberger - Everything is Miscellaneous: The Power of the New Digital Disorder (2007)

Jarvis refers to Google's own rules, but also presents his own list of rules:

• Customers are now in charge. Everyone in your target group can now be heard around the globe and have an instant impact on huge institutions in an instant;
• People can find each other anywhere via the internet and coalesce around your work. This can help or hinder you in what you do;
• The mass market is dead, replaced by a mass of niches;
• The key skill in any organisation today is no longer marketing but conversing. Organisations and their employees must learn to converse;
• We have shifted from an economy based on scarcity to one based on abundance. The control of products or distribution will no longer guarantee a premium and a profit;
• Enabling your target group to think with you, to spread your story, to support you, is what creates a premium today;
• The most successful enterprises today are networks and the platforms on which those networks are built;
• Owning pipelines, people, products, or even intellectual property is no longer the key to success. Openness is.

Projected on other organisations, the rules Jarvis discusses in his book boil down to three terms: *openness, connectedness and decentralisation*. Now I am sure you will agree with me that these terms are very similar to the terms "open", "social" and "user-centric" which I presented in my first book.

The Google rules, by Google
So what are Google's rules? Google understands exactly how the internet works and how to use it. This understanding forms the basis for its corporate philosophy. Google uses ten working principles, the *Ten things Google has found to be true*:

• Focus on the consumer and everything else will follow;
• Its best to do one thing really, really well;
• Fast is better than slow;
• Democracy on the web works;
• You dont need to be at your desk to need an answer;
• You can make money without doing evil;
• Theres always more information out there;
• The need for information crosses all borders;
• You can be serious without a suit;
• Great just isnt good enough.

Visit the Google site to learn more about these key principles. So if these principles helped Google become successful, how can you use them in your own organisation? How would you do your work differently?

Google's internal rules
Google also has a set of internal principles that are rolled out wherever possible, says Eric Schmidt, Google's CEO:

• Hire by committee. Everyone's opinion counts, from manager to co-worker;

- Cater to the employees every need. Employees want to concentrate on their job, so strip everything that gets in their way;
- Pack them in. No separate offices, but areas where employees sit together and they can learn from each other;
- Make coordination easy. Let others know what you are doing. Employees keep their co-workers informed about what they do so work can be aligned;
- Eat your own dog food. Everyone at Google uses Google software (for instance Gmail), which enables them to test it constantly;
- Encourage creativity . Employees get to devote 20% of their office time to developing their own ideas and publishing these on an internal site for others to assess;
- Strive to reach consensus. As Schmidt puts it: "The role of the manager is that of an aggregator of viewpoints, not the dictator of decisions."
- Don't be evil. Google's well-known motto. Make money, based on respect and tolerance;
- Data drive decisions. Another well-known motto. Calculate and measure use and study data, and you can work out the way forward;
- Communicate effectively. Information, even strategic information, is shared throughout the organisation, but is seldom leaked. Give trust, receive trust.

Of course, not all of the above rules will apply to government. But they do say a lot about society's changing rules and they will go a long way in your own work situation. This is where we can learn from Google and other enterprises who keep their finger on the pulse.

Or maybe we, civil servants, should ask ourselves an entirely different question: "What would Obama do?" More about this in Chapter 4. First I will distil a number of 2.0 trends from the above developments and describe why these are relevant for government.

Christian van 't Hof, Jos the Haan – De digitale generatie (2006) (The digital generation)

Dictionary: **MSN Messenger** is a popular instant messaging program. Most MSN chats are between two individuals.

Dictionary: **Mash-up,** a remix of tools and data from various internet sources such as a combination of statistical data with Google Maps.

Dictionary: **Niches** - the fragmentation of society into personal niches based on each individual's unique combination of preferences and interests.

Dictionary: **The Long tail** is the economic principle that an endlessly large group of poorly selling products generates just as much income as a small number of great-selling products.
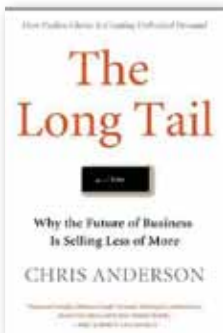
Chris Anderson - *The Long Tail:* Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More (2006)

Six trends for government 2.0

One of the things that inspired me to write Civil Servant 2.0 was '*De digitale generatie*' (digital generation) by Chris van 't Hof (Rathenau Instituut). The report describes the use of applications like MSN Messenger by youngsters and what it means for their friendships, how they form opinions and how they learn. Technological innovations are changing the lives of young people, and this must be reflected in education.

These changes extend beyond youngsters and education. With the entire population on the internet, these changes are sweeping civil society. Citizens and businesses are exploring the interactive and public web and are experimenting with new applications. With it come new concepts, visions and working methods that can also be used by government. Expectations are high.

To address these developments we must understand what characterises them, and what characterises web 2.0. After all, many of these changes are rooted in online developments. By looking at how the internet works and develops we will get an insight into changes in society. We can then incorporate this knowledge in our decision making. Trends on the internet will eventually become trends in society. The government must anticipate these trends.

Trend 1: Borders are fading

Geographic, cultural or organisational barriers tend to create new borders. The internet has helped cross these barriers, narrowing distances, distributing information wider and faster and promoting new forms of collaboration and organisation. The single point of contact of the future promises to be a mash up of many different sources.

To some extent, borders between people, groups or organisations are redefined by the internet. Borders between the inside and the outside, who is part of a group, and who isn't, what is the office and what is home, what is public and what is private. Many of these borders have been institutionalised, in organisations, buildings and regulations for instance. How can we address these shifts? Which new borders will emerge, and where?

Trend 2: Society in niches

Borders between groups are becoming more diffuse. People still look for social relationships, but now aim to fit them in with their personal interests. There are significant variations in participation duration and intensity. Finding or forming online groups has become so simple that there is always a group of like-minded people for any interest or goal you may have (The Long Tail). Based on individual choices, we can now all put together our own personal social world.

Individuals and small groups make up a new fragmented society. They use technology to overcome barriers to get together. They expect to be informed and addressed on an individual basis with information that applies to them. A government site is but one amidst billions of other sites. To reach these many niches, organisations must scatter themselves throughout these networks. Again and again, in tiny bits. Think distributed!

Google Latitude is an application for Google Maps on mobile telephones. The telephone tracks the location by GPS or GSM receivers and pinpoints the location on the map. The position is then forwarded to all authorised people in your contact list.
See http://latitude.google.com

Google Streetview is an application for Google Maps. After pinpointing a location on the map, the user can switch to street level, and see the surrounding area in images.
See **www.google.com/streetview**

The government as a platform is a concept actively promoted by Tim O'Reilly.
See **http://twurl.nl/hephzj**

Trend 3: Here and now

People are online, they talk, and they work together. The internet is not about information, it is about life and work. Life is live. The internet is not constrained by time and place, it never stops, it is real time. Like life itself. Take Wikipedia, you could change it now. Go to Twitter and see what others are thinking, doing and talking about right now. Being an active part of networks means dispensing with the nine-to-five mentality and being constantly active.

The expansion of mobile internet has provided an extra stimulus. Photos and videos of news events travel the world in no time, with exact positioning made possible by GPS receivers. Google Latitude lets your friends know exactly where you are, and services like Google Streetview tell you which tram to take or where the nearest pizzeria is. So where do government services fit in?

Trend 4: The government as a platform

The internet is a platform: it is open, it grows with input from others and it is an enabler for new initiatives and innovations. The government has a role to play in a wide variety of fields. Give people the tools to organise themselves and give them room to grow. Apart from a few basic rules to ensure smooth interaction, don't interfere. Only then can new relationships between people and groups develop.

But first we must understand our own position and the role of government. Who or what is your platform's target group for instance? And will society grant you this role? The government can act as a platform that brings together the public and their interests and that lets them take decisions that stimulates innovation and growth, and that leads to the best solution. The government will supply what is needed: a platform, a location, funding, expertise and data (Open Government), contacts, etc.

Trend 5: Openness as the norm

Openness is the norm on the internet. Openness lets you find what you are looking for, maintain relationships, and collaborate. Inside and outside the organisation. It is a prerequisite for co-creation and crowdsourcing. Make government information available and enable others to take part in processes or debates. Or use it for new services. This would make the most of the wealth of knowledge and information available to all, perhaps in ways you never thought possible.

This also raises the question how far openness should go. Are there borders to openness? Where? What should be discussed and what should be worked out privately? What are the arguments in favour of these new restrictions (privacy, high-risk professions, and negotiation strategies)? With openness the standard, what should remain private?

Trend 6: Everything beta

As a government we are used to doing our work well, to publish only after we have found the answers to all our questions, and to study every detail. Obviously, this takes time. Time to look at the various options, time to involve all actors. A long and complicated process. Too long sometimes in a society that is increasingly complex and evolving fast.

Dictionary: **Co-creation** is working towards a joint product, not by means of a sequential process but by contributing simultaneously.

Dictionary: **Crowdsourcing** is 'outsourcing to the crowd', in other words outsourcing tasks to people outside the organisation with the right expertise or solution.

Dictionary: A **beta version** is a draft version of new software that is operational, but that is perfected as it is being used.

Software beta versions are software versions which are operational, but need fine-tuning. By placing these versions on the internet, users can help adapt and improve them. Wiki documents are documents on the internet that invite input from users to keep them updated. It is an open approach that enables fast and flexible improvements and adaptations.

Summary

This chapter discussed new insights on the internet and web 2.0 based on the books by Shirky and Jarvis. As such, it followed on from the introductory chapters of my first book. I also discussed how our insight in web 2.0 and its importance for organisations is growing. Paths are emerging that may take us to the future.

I have condensed these paths into six trends as they would apply to government. These changes in society will affect us sooner or later. As a government organisation 2.0 we must be prepared.
Chapter 4 will look at government 2.0 and present new ideas and concepts.

What does web 2.0 mean for communication departments?

'The Long Tail' by Chris Anderson was extensively discussed in Civil Servant 2.0. With the internet offering access to endless information and products, room has been created for niche products and messages away from popular and mass products and services. The development affects many areas, including the newspaper and music industries.

It is also affecting government. So what are the most popular services, the 'hit makers' , in government communication? And what channels are being used to reach the audience? Before the internet, these were of course newspapers and television. And because room in these channels was limited (the number of pages in a newspaper, thirty minutes for television news) only the biggest stories made it to the front page or television screen.

By definition, only the biggest government news reaches citizens by newspaper or television. Think of major policy changes, public appearances by Ministers, and of course controversy, leaks and other information which channels expect will appeal to a large target group. The ever-present "hit tyranny" rules government communication too. Everything revolves around the bigger stories. Minor successes receive little attention, if any.

Leafleting can also be used for targeted messaging. This selective distribution gives communication professional control of the channels but while it may be more effective than newspapers or television, it is still just a single message being broadcast.

Two paradigm shifts
The internet has turned this world upside down. Some big blogs can still be classed as new hit makers, but generally speaking communication professionals now need to choose from an infinite number of channels.

So is it possible to tune in to so many channels? There is fragmentation in how citizens are informed. And this is not just because of the internet. Citizens' interests also seem to be "fragmented". Where citizens would read their papers and watch television and only see the big stories, the 'hits', that reached them through the media, they can now choose from an endless number of channels.

News consumers can now put together their own personal news based on their own interests. They all have their own little niche. They choose topics that interest them, and that affect them in their lives. These are not always the big ministerial stories. In fact, it's usually the smaller messages that reach them.

The internet has changed the work of communication professionals. Now they must choose both the channels and the tools to reach their target group, and the type of message and how to customise it. Two paradigm shifts in one. The "long tail" whips two ways.

The citizen as a broadcasting station
Clearly, communication departments cannot maintain so many contacts. It is "fragmentation times fragmentation". They cannot go it alone. They need help. But hiring a communication agency won't do them any good. What's caused by the long tail, must be solved by the long tail.

Web 2.0 has given us all our own channel. We can all blog, twitter or keep our Hyves profile updated to let others know about our likes and dislikes. We can now reach all of our friends, colleagues, or the members in our club, or even people interested in knowing what others think about a particular subject. No matter how big or how small, we all have our own channel.

There are countless such channels. They distribute the message. From blog to blog, from network to network and finally, from government to citizen. How can we set this chain in motion?

How can we make our citizens the transmitter and the network the station? How can we enter the long tail? Here are some tips:

- keep it small: prepare small, bite-size messages that are easy to forward. It is better to prepare a wide range of messages on a specific subject, than combine all information into one big story;
- Make it personal: not just by engaging someone's interest, but also by selecting the right tone: by using unambiguous, rather informal language, without jargon. Bloggers must want to blog about it, and must want to adopt it as "their own";
- Make it easy: by being concrete and using the right language, but also by providing technical functions, for instance by offering widgets that can be easily inserted into the blogger's own page. And by using internet standards.

Prosumers

To encourage internet users to pass on a story, it must be more than just factual, more than just a topic that interests them, more than just easy to pass on. It must also be something they want to use and respond to. For instance by giving their opinion in a blog, by placing it in a particular context (a widget in a Hyves group for instance) or even by adapting it. This group of internet users is also called prosumers: content is used again and again.

This is the idea behind the Open Government initiative: put government information on the internet and use an open format based on open standards to enable others (prosumers, sites or businesses) to build on it. This gives internet users the tools to share and distribute the information. Niches are provided with information and the government moves down "the tail".

From sending to talking

Communication professionals can capitalise on these fragmented channels and target groups by making the long tail work for them. They must encourage others to disseminate their information. For this they must overhaul their current approach and attitude. They will even have to redefine their roles.

Minister Verhagen using Twitter is a great example of the new interactive approach. He follows people who follow him, he responds to questions and he initiates dialogues (or sometimes even a discussion) with others. Twitter is a two-way channel. You can't use it just to send – others will respond.

The next challenge for communication employees is to release control: prosumers will take your story and use it and there is absolutely nothing you can do about it. And while this was of course also true for newspapers and television broadcasters, the scale is now much bigger. Not only because there are more prosumers than news products, but also because this movement extends beyond just a change of channels: creativity and opinions attract more internet users than news ethics.
HAll you can do is follow how your message is being reused, and act on it, for instance by responding to blogs (this is referred to as webcare, also see action item 7 on page 75).

Training employees

Finally, the communication department is given a new role within the organisation. Employees no longer need a communication department to contact their target groups, they can now do it themselves via the internet. Policy officials can use the internet to keep their network abreast of their activities via Twitter, social network sites or wikis. They can also respond to debates in their policy fields. Again, the communication department has two roles to play.

First, it has a role in training employees who now have the means to take part in internet discussions. This offers opportunities, but this greater visibility for the ambassadors of an organisation means greater scrutiny. Training employees in how to participate online is essential, and the communication department has a very important role to play here.

Secondly, it is possible to actively support employees in their activities on the internet, for instance by alerting them to relevant discussions and identifying key players in these discussions. A project like this is already up and running at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

In collaboration with Carl Rohde and a group of interdepartmental communication professionals headed by Martijn de Moor, the Netherlands Government Information Service has published a book on the significance of web 2.0 for communication departments, titled "Ondertussen … online" (Meanwhile….online). It can be downloaded from http://twurl.nl/x08adh.

Citizen Participation Network is used to exchange information about web 2.0 and government communication. See www.netwerkburgerparticipatie.nl

Joost Reus is policy officer at the Ministry Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. His blog was picked up and became the subject of a debate on Foodlog, a widely-read blog about food. On Twitter and Civil Servant 2.0 Joost asked how he should respond. He also contacted the Ministry's Communication Department.

What is government 2.0?

In September 2009 I attended the Gov 2.0 Expo and Gov 2.0 Summit in Washington where hundreds of people had gathered to share experiences and listen to speakers including Clay Shirky and members of president Obama's staff. For three days, all we talked about was government 2.0, open data, participation and the government as a platform. The congress had been organised by O'Reilly, the company said to be the first to have coined the term web 2.0. Its founder Tim O'Reilly lectures and writes regularly about government 2.0, hence this congress.

Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams, authors of *Wikinomics,* have also joined the ranks of avid government 2.0 advocates. They believe the world of government has great potential. They have set up an international research programme about government 2.0. And they are not alone, as the list of studies in this chapter clearly shows.

Of course, 2.0 is not an end in itself. As Beth Noveck, deputy chief technology officer for open government of the White House, puts it: this is about national challenges that demand collaboration and the use of the potential of government and society as a whole. 2.0 can help solve problems. This is the object of White House policy. This chapter will give a brief outline of the situation in the US, and will put forward ideas on and developments in government 2.0 in Australia and Great Britain.

Six study reports

It is possible to predict with some degree of accuracy if a particular trend will become an accepted development. One sign is the emergence of a countermovement. Take Twitter for instance, which is regularly criticised. And you just know that a development has become mainstream when it becomes the subject of research. I have listed a number of reports that offer some very interesting insights.

Gartner

The Business Impact of Social Computing on Government

Gartner expects web 2.0 to change the role and tasks of governments fundamentally: "The future of government is a very different government and, in some cases, no government at all." The current economic crisis has accelerated this development, as new solutions are being found and social network solutions are relatively cheap. But it also presents huge challenges for governments as they will need to change their attitude and approach.

Governments put great emphasis on control, security and the division of tasks. At the same time, boundaries between organisations are becoming blurred: "Boundaries in government are blurring at every level." One such example is cloud computing in IT. Financial and business operation systems are also increasingly crossing organisational boundaries with tasks being outsourced or shifted.

Web 2.0 illustrates the increasingly diffuse boundaries between organisations. Skipping across these boundaries are the social networks that offer so many opportunities for governments. Unfortunately,

For the full report, go to
www.ambtenaar20.nl/?p=3729

Beth Noveck - Wiki Government: How Technology Can Make Government Better, Democracy Stronger, and Citizens More Powerful (2009)

For a summary of the report, visit
http://twurl.nl/ll2esq

Dictionary: the term **cloud computing** refers to the use of IT services on the internet rather than software on one's own computer or network.

governments rarely initiate them. With government initiatives placing far too much emphasis on control, networks lose their appeal. Governments should focus on tying in with existing networks. "Gartner recommends that governments engage selected employees in finding external social networks relevant to the agency and its domain of government."

Government organisations have increasingly little control over processes. The role of civil servant, case officer or executive will increasingly shift to a facilitating one, overseeing if service demands and public and political expectations are met. If not, they must engage the right people to address the situation.

Accenture

Leadership in Customer Service Report: Creating Shared Responsibility for Better Outcomes

Accenture found that governments fail to deliver when it comes to service. Service is more than just a transaction. Governments must focus on maintaining strong relationships with citizens, based on collaboration and shared responsibility. "Clearly, these are complex aspirations that will take time for governments to put into practice. However, we know that not achieving these goals will lead to eroding public confidence with government and to poor public services."

To achieve this strong relationship, Accenture expects governments to do the following:

• gain better insight into what people need, so whoever needs support receives it quickly, and whoever wants to take action is given the space and opportunities;
• initiate contacts with citizens: an interactive government can start building a relationship of trust needed to work together on public facilities and value;
• use available tools and relationships, involve internet groups, business, pressure groups and citizen initiatives to make complementary connections;
• be open in what they do and respond to how society reacts. It is a precondition to building the trust governments need to work together towards achieving public values.

Cisco

Realizing the Potential of the Connected Republic

For Cisco government 2.0 is about three things:

• **collaboration**: creating platforms to bring people together from inside and outside the government and to exchange expertise on social issues;
• **openness**: by being open and transparent, commitment is enhanced. Restrictions and thresholds become visible and can be dealt with;
• **empowerment**: placing tasks with (groups of) citizens. For instance, let citizens distribute district budgets and help people help themselves.

This brings me back to the three characteristics of web 2.0 I discussed in my first book, with the first two characteristics underpinning the third: "Empowerment means citizens do more for themselves, and a move away from a dependency culture can help tackle the problem of never-ending demand for certain public services." Again we see a shift of tasks from government to citizens.

Ogilvy

Can brands have a social life? How brands in Asia can benefit from interacting with customers through social media

What does web 2.0 (social media) mean for brands? Research company Ogilvy studied this for the Asian market. Craig Thomler, the Australian blogger on government and web 2.0, highlights a few issues. After all – politicians, managers, the tax authorities and the government are all becoming more and more of a brand. As are civil servants!

Dictionary: A node is a place in a network where several connections come together, both in computer networks and between people.

- what consumers and users think and feel increasingly decides the success of your product or service;
- social media reflect what people do on the internet;
- the generation of screenagers is alive online, so if you don't contact them there, someone else will;
- the internet is all about influencers", the nodes between the networks: talk to them so they can spread your message;
- lose control over your brand. It is essential that management recognises this and is prepared to take this risk and make the investment;
- honesty and trust are crucial in establishing the authenticity and values of a brand. Sales talks dont work;
- don't be afraid of receiving contrasting views and differences of opinion, questions or negative feedback. It will help you being accepted;
- as a brand or organisation, you should contribute to online platforms, even if you do not expect to get a response.

Dictionary: **LinkedIn** is a social networking site for professional contacts that enables online contacts, maps out networks and helps form discussion groups.

Ogilvy also expects search engine marketing to become more important, online social networks to expand and go mobile, blog views to increasingly become a key factor in purchase decisions and the crisis to boost vacancy sites and professional networks like LinkedIn. Nothing too drastic, but areas nonetheless in which government doesn't have a leading role.

ERP stands for enterprise resource planning, CRM for customer relationship management and SCM for supply chain management.

McKinsey

McKinsey Quarterly: Six ways to make Web 2.0 work

In its report, McKinsey explores 2.0 and how organisations must change how they work. In the twentieth century, organisations introduced a range of productivity-boosting technologies like ERP, CRM and SCM. Web 2.0 presents a new challenge, yet is fundamentally different. Its added value is not achieved through the introduction of complex and expensive technology, but through adopting a different approach to work. McKinsey has six tips to ensure a smooth process:

- the transformation to a bottom-up culture needs input from the top. Management must lead by example and give others room;
- the best uses come from users, but they need help to scale up. The use of 2.0 tools cannot be imposed, but you can make them available and see how they are applied;
- what's in the workflow is what gets used. If its nothing more than a gimmick, its novelty will soon wear off. It will only get used if it effectively helps employees in what they do;
- appeal to the participants egos and needs   not just their wallets. This requires new stimulation and management tools, such as complimenting employees;
- the right solution comes from the right participants. Involve employees who are already showing the behaviour you are looking for: the networkers, the visionaries, etc. Select target groups in the organisation;
- balance the top-down and self-management of risk. Too many rules can stifle ideas and initiatives. But too much freedom can lead to chaos. Find a balance.

Incidentally, I believe these tips also apply to external interaction, with people outside the organisation. Again, it is essential to involve the right people, to make connections, to create room and to find a balance between freedom on the one hand and control on the other.

Deloitte

Change your world or the world will change you

I would also like to include a Deloitte report here, even though it was published a while ago. It's a fun read and offers valid points about government 2.0.

Conclusion: web 2.0 is a transformation for governments

All studies agree that web 2.0 means a fundamental change to the role of government, caused by the blurring of boundaries between organisations and shifting tasks across these boundaries. As tasks are being reassigned, more responsibilities are placed outside the government, in society.

New forms of organisation emerge that are neither government nor business but that do take on functions and roles that were once considered public. This raises many questions. At the same time, web 2.0 offers major opportunities for governments, for bridging the gap between citizen and government and for enabling citizens to tackle social problems themselves.

This requires a new government approach. We must assume new roles to guide the process, to involve people, to offer a platform and to make available resources and information. It sounds easy enough, but working with web 2.0 demands an approach that is new to government and its employees. They are asked to relinquish control, to tighten relationships with citizens and groups, to invest in trust and to become more responsive. This demands new characteristics and approaches, in the relationship between citizen and government, but also between management and employees.

The main conclusion is that this change is more than just fundamental. It is unavoidable. And with a new generation of citizens and employees calling upon the government, this movement will gain strength. Web 2.0 offers governments an opportunity to narrow the gap with its citizens. Remaining idle will widen the gap. We must act, and we must act now.

The American government publishes data sets on the internet which businesses and private persons can use to build services and internet sites.
See **www.data.gov**

The American budget is freely accessible via the internet, and contains detailed information about its biggest recipients.
See **www.usaspending.gov** or **www.transparency.gov**

All funds made available by the American government to combat the effects of the credit crunch are published on the internet, see **www.recovery.gov**

Dictionary: **API** stands for application programming interface, a set of agreements through which sites and computers can work together to exchange information.

The United States: from campaign 2.0 to government 2.0

The United States is ready to seize the opportunity and bridge the gap with society. Barack Obama's election campaign has become a classic example of how to use web 2.0 to involve people. But a campaign 2.0 is no government 2.0. And when Obama wanted to develop this campaign, he ran into a number of practical problems.

From the start, Obama was clear on how he planned to put together his government 2.0. His very first memorandum was on "*transparency and open government*" in which he set out his vision:

• Government should be transparent;
• Government should be participatory;
• Government should be collaborative.

His ideas have been put into action by sites including Data.gov (which makes government information available for re-use) and USAspending. gov (also known as Transparency.gov), "where Americans can see where their money goes". The information and data on government expenditure can be reused by means of an application programming interface, or API. Support is provided by Recovery.gov, a site with information on the objectives of the economic recovery process and action taken.

The challenges of Whitehouse.gov

The Center for American Progress, an American think-tank, described the obstacles which Obama must overcome for his government 2.0. For one, Obama will no longer have 170 campaign workers specialised in social media. At the White House he will have to make do with just ten experts. And that's not his only problem. Campaign 2.0 and government 2.0 also differ in:

• **scale**: Obama has fewer resources to reach a larger target group, which is now the entire American population;
• **attuning**: where an error by a campaign official can be awkward, a mistake by government can have far-reaching consequences;
• **responsibility**: canvassing by campaign volunteers is acceptable, but this is not an option for a government.

Also, the government is expected to meet certain standards and regulations. Easy to comply with on its own site, but harder away from its site, where the target group is. How can a government organisation use the software that is freely available on the internet, such as YouTube, Twitter or Facebook? This is the subject of one of the reports.

The White House faces the challenge of applying the standards agreed for government in the world of 2.0:

• **privacy**: the government has specific rules for dealing with personal details. Would these also apply to a government YouTube site?
• **web guidelines**: when it comes to membership and user friendliness, not all 2.0 services are as accessible. How can we guarantee access for all?

- **advertising**: there is no advertising on government sites; reference to any particular site by government should not be interpreted as a seal of approval;
- **conditions**: are the user conditions of the 2.0 site in accordance with the government's aims and standards?
- **Public Records Act**: how do we ensure that what the government does and all relevant publications are recorded and filed (accountability)?
- **security**: are the sites sufficiently protected against interference?

Civil servants' access to 2.0 sites is also discussed, as many organisations still prohibit access to these sites.

What has been done so far?

The think-tank refers to web 2.0's vast opportunities for openness and participation. Opportunities governments must use within their operational frameworks. But how? The report ends by calling on all actors to keep an open mind and to continue to find practical uses for these new resources as part of sound government and good governance.

One of the resources frequently used by the White House is video (on more than one platform, usually). The advantage of video is that it is easily accessible (accessibility), has little interaction (scalable), and yet can connect on a personal level. There is a link on the official White House to the President's weekly video address on YouTube.

Obama also used interactive tools. Interactive discussion sites ('Open for Questions') were used to collect questions and wishes from the public. The result: "92,937 people have submitted 103,978 questions and cast 1,782,650 votes." Obviously, an impossible amount for the White House to answer. The public was therefore invited to rate what they thought were the best questions and these were put before the President.

Obama is said to have been handed ten questions each night to keep in touch with developments in society. The questions that were rated the highest were answered by civil servants.

Conclusion: the White House is building a government 2.0

When Obama became president, expectations were high. How would he define a government 2.0? The US is forging ahead, and they are making more progress than we are. It is inspiring to see what Obama has already achieved: Open for Questions, Transparancy.gov, Data.gov, the use of 2.0 sites and the video messages.

Equally inspiring is a look at the underlying discussion. After all, civil servants in the States face the same questions we will when we start government 2.0. How do they deal with these changes in culture, for instance? We can learn from their experiments and from the resulting reports. And when we are ready for the next step, we can build on their expertise.

Example: Vergunningenkaart.nl, open government in practice

Governments issue all sorts of permits, for all sorts of activities, including construction. The impact of construction on the local area must be monitored. By civil servants and by local residents. If my neighbour across the road builds an extension, I want to be kept informed, preferably by email or RSS. Unfortunately, we haven't come that far yet. But it has become easier to keep track of permits issued in your local area, thanks to www.vergunningenkaart.nl. Not a government site, but a fine example of Open Government nevertheless.

Publish permit announcements on the internet
Permits and announcements by local councils are a great example of government information that can benefit residents directly. Take for instance building permits, tree removal permits or amendments to local designation orders. Some local councils publish these on Overheid.nl. Type in your postcode, and you may get a list of all the permits issued in your local council.

But more can be done. Besides Overheid.nl, which is continuously improving its services, there are many businesses with excellent ideas and the skill to build handy sites using government information. Vergunningenkaart.nl, for instance, publishes a map based on permits issued. In the interview below, the people behind Vergunningenkaart.nl discuss some of the problems they encountered building their site.

How does Vergunningenkaart work?
"We use the 'Bekendmakingen' search engine on Overheid.nl. This allows you to fill in a form to search for information, and there is an email service too. There is no web service or API to easily access the information and use it for other applications. Which is surprising, because councils do supply all their announcements in XML format.

We use a script for the search engine to search every council, translate results with many regular expressions into XML and then enter the geo-coded locations in our own database."

So some tricks and tweaks gets you the information you need. And you can just use it?
"Another strange thing: despite the fairly tight XML structure, which is used for storing data and supplying the announcements, there are substantial differences in how councils supply their information. Many councils cluster different announcements in a single record and this makes it impossible for us to trace announcements to individual addresses. And of course, an XML definition doesn't really work if we all use it differently."

You are now experienced users of government information. Do you have any tips?
"To make this project a success, we believe we need two things. First, we need a web service/API, and secondly we need more consistency in how councils publish their announcements in XML. We hope that Vergunningenkaart.nl helps to encourage the further publication of government information."

For more information about Open Government, go to openoverheid. ambtenaar20.nl. For an explanation about the terms, go to the dictionary at the back.

Australia: the taskforce is ready to take action

In Great Britain the 'Power of Information review' report led to the *Power of Information Taskforce* (see the first book). In Australia the 'VenturousAustralia – Building strength in innovation' report inspired the *Government 2.0 Taskforce*. What does this taskforce do and what else is going on in Australia in the field of government 2.0?

Politics to focus on openness and interaction

Kevin Rudd, Australia's prime minister, is on Twitter (although I don't believe he actually does the twittering) and he keeps a blog. You can talk to him about the environment and health care. There is also a photo gallery and videos of the prime minister talking to Al Gore and interviewing the chairman of a healthcare research committee. The Australian government is clearly looking for ways to bridge the gap between politics and citizens. The *Community Cabinet* frequently travels through Australia.

Senator Kate Lundy also contributes to government 2.0 by organising meetings about the internet and innovation: PublicSphere. She has contacted Pia Waugh, an activist in the field of open government and open source who has a clear vision on how to deal with government 2.0. There is also a detailed wiki that gathers input to present to the Government 2.0 Taskforce.

The taskforce was set up following a study by the Australian Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. Earlier this year the Ministry published a detailed report on its innovation policy for the period until 2020. Some recommendations also related to government 2.0. and included giving government information a creative commons licence and setting up a taskforce: "An advisory committee of web 2.0 practitioners should be established to propose and help steer governments as they experiment with web 2.0 technologies and ideas."

Taskforce puts government 2.0 on the agenda

The taskforce's site and blog went online in June 2009 and aim to give recommendations and support initiatives that are best practices of government 2.0. An issues paper was published in July, initially a beta version that invited comments online and offline. It was followed by the definitive version. Sebastian Chan, one of the taskforce members says: "We need to make sure that Government 2.0 isn't creating another niche lobby group".

The taskforce posed 35 questions related to the OECD principles for the release of public sector information: openness, access and transparent conditions for reuse, asset lists, quality, integrity, new technologies and long-term preservation, copyright, pricing, competition, redress mechanisms, public private partnerships, international access and use and best practices. Some of the key issues the taskforce will address are:

• How can we build a culture within government which favours the disclosure of public sector information and innovation?
• What are the legal and privacy obstacles and how can they be adjusted?
• What government information should be more freely available and what might be made of it?

Pia Waugh blogs about government 2.0 and open government. See **www.pipka.org**

- What are the major obstacles to fostering a culture of online engagement within government and how can they be tackled?
- How can government capture the imagination of citizens?

The outcome will be encompassing, valuable and instructive.

Conclusion: Australia is carefully considering possible applications

I believe that politics and government in Australia are making a deliberate effort to be open and interactive in what they do. The city of Melbourne for in instance, involves its residents in its development via FutureMelbourne. Australia is making progress, although plenty of obstacles remain. What might make them succeed though, is the fact that public servants in Australia have access to a government-wide collaboration platform with forums, wikis, etc.

The site of the Australian city of Melbourne is set up as a wiki.
See **www.futuremelbourne.com.au**

There is a lot we can learn from developments in Australia. Apart from the results generated by the taskforce, I am sure we can also benefit from studying the open and interactive approach by the taskforce. Isn't it time we set up a similar taskforce in the Netherlands?

Example: PIANOo desk, online network for procurement officials

By Kees Tazelaar

PIANOo desk was founded in 2002 as a virtual community for procurement officials and contractors. PIANOo is a Public Procurement Expertise Centre, part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It was founded in the wake of the building fraud which exposed the Dutch government's failure to meet European compliance regulations.

Initially accessible to government officials only, PIANOo-desk soon welcomed other public officials operating in this field. From the initial 1700 members in 2005, there are now nearly 2800 active members.

A platform for sharing expertise and information
Active members are members who have logged in at least once in the past four months. Quick browsing sessions are also classed as an activity - after all, the visitor might have learnt something. At the centre of the site lies its debate section. This is used a lot. The main section publishes some thirty new questions or discussions and some 120 answers each month.

The site is also used to post a wide variety of documents. The address book with profiles and photos is also extensively used. PIANOo-desk has some fifty subgroups, arranged by organisation (central government, local council, province, police), interest (electronic auctions, legal, IT) and regional collaboration for instance. These more or less active groups can make use of the diary function. Functionalities like chat, enquiry, poll or blog are not used.

Over the past few years PIANOo desk has become the contracting platform. It has helped civil servants throughout the Netherlands to liaise and exchange expertise, wherever and whenever. This expertise is essential in ensuring billions of taxpayers' money is spent wisely.

Great Britain: the priority top 5

Tom Steinberg is founder of mySociety, a British group of volunteers which has organised various online initiatives in Great Britain to make government service more accessible (e.g. Fixmystreet.com) and democratic processes more transparent (e.g. Theyworkforyou.co.uk). Steinberg also advises the British government on the use of social media and the internet. Some time ago he wrote a blog about the five priorities for government 2.0. As they also apply to the Dutch situation, I have listed them below.

The priorities are not in any order and do not lack ambition:

Invest in civil servants 2.0

The internet is changing at a lightening pace and what citizens expect from their government is changing just as fast. Without knowledgeable civil servants with a thorough understanding of what the internet is about, change will pass government by, and the gap between citizen and government will grow. Invest in civil servants 2.0, by training them, and by hiring a whole new generation of civil servants 2.0 before this gap becomes too great.

Make your information visible

Free your data and information on the internet using open standards (save for privacy sensitive information), especially maps and other geographic information, plus non-personal from public services and implementation bodies. Introduce a presumption of innovation: if someone has asked for something costly to free up, it's probable that they have an innovative concept in mind.

In early 2009 the Dutch Ministry of the Interior launched its first study into opportunities of, and obstacles to Open Government and open data. The study is carried out by Ton Zijlstra and James Burke.
See **www.vrijedata.nl**

Make internal systems accessible

Give external parties the right to interface electronically with internal systems, such as health records (with the patient's consent of course), council fault reporting services, progress systems for citizen requests and subsidy requires, or service user data, unless it can be shown to create substantial, irrevocable harm. It will help identify problem areas in government organisations and ensure they are tackled fast. Punish unjustified refusals with fines.

Build a national deliberation platform

Involve citizens in policy development by holding national sessions on policy areas that have yet to be decided on. This requires the creation of online deliberation platforms where citizens can contribute and which will keep them informed on how their responses have contributed to the eventual policy. Once it has been made to work well, this form of participation can be legislated into the fabric of democracy, like elections and referenduma.

Create a digital services waiting room

For all online services and forms, include a function where citizens can talk to others who are going through the same process. Enable them to help each other by exchanging tips, providing comments or suggesting improvements. Users will get a faster response without having to use the regular service. And if government organisations stay tuned into

the debate, they can even see where and how their services can be improved.

Conclusion: Great Britain inspires new examples and ideas

If I look at what we're doing in the Netherlands, I see great activity, albeit in its early stages, on the second and fourth recommendation. The Ministry of the Interior and Civil Servant 2.0 are pushing for greater availability of information on the internet and the Ministry of Justice is keen to start internet consultations.

I believe the third recommendation is the most ambitious and will require the most efforts to introduce. The digital waiting room, however, is something we can set up now. The points for action are listed in Chapter 8.

Having said all that – the first recommendation is the basis for all future development. These developments are carried by civil servants, so it is vital that the focus of investment should be on civil servants 2.0!

Internetconsultatie.nl is an initiative by the Ministry of Justice to submit new legislation to the public before sending it to the Dutch House of Representatives.
See www.internetconsultatie.nl

Monique Roosen (province of Noord-Brabant) refers her followers to an interesting column (see link) by Matt Poelmans, director of Burgerlink.

Best practice: Verbeterdebuurt.nl, debate platform for public space

Verbeterdebuurt.nl helps local residents improve their neighbourhood. The site offers residents a platform where they can address their councils about issues in public areas and to present ideas. Verbeterdebuurt is the Dutch version of the British Fixmystreet.org: crowdsourcing in the public area.

Verbeterdebuurt.nl uses Google Maps. Residents can enter a postcode to find their neighbourhood and post an idea or a problem on the map. This is communicated to the council, which may then take action.

Report problems and develop new ideas

The internet site was launched to bring residents and councils closer. It enables residents to report problems regarding public areas and to contribute ideas. All problems are forwarded to the council. Ideas, however, are forwarded only if they have sufficient support. Compare it to a petition - residents are invited to rate problems or ideas. This encourages a debate on public areas.

Verbeterdebuurt.nl cannot guarantee that all Dutch councils will act upon the reports they receive. What it can guarantee is that all reports reach the council. And it is then up to the council to decide if it wishes to act upon the information.

In short - a great initiative. Just try for yourself. If you see any litter, or if you know of any loose tiles, report it. Verbeterdebuurt.nl offers citizens and civil servants the opportunity to manage and develop public space together.

The United States: advice for the Department of Defense

Mark Drapeau is an Associate Research Fellow at the National Defense University. He is a prolific blogger on web 2.0 and the government. With colleague Linton Wells II he wrote the 'Social Software and National Security: An Initial Net Assessment' report. This report discusses the theory and practical implementation of, and obstacles for web 2.0 in government organisations. It discusses government 2.0 best practices, and the use of social media in conflict areas (including Georgia, Mumbai, Moldavia). The report concludes with ten recommendations and six conditions.

The '**Social Software and National Security:** An Initial Net Assessment' report is available at **http://twurl.nl/g873y**d

Obstacles for government organisations

Drapeau starts by sketching a model of interaction and exchange within and between government organisations: *inward*, *outward*, *inbound and outbound sharing*. More about this in Chapter 5. He also sketches the obstacles for these forms of government collaboration and expertise sharing. He lists seven:

- Interagency interaction is difficult; employees have an internal focus;
- Classic bureaucracy   regulations on access to the internet and specific sites vary per organisation or even per department;
- Information (mission) assurance. Apart from opportunities, web 2.0 also brings new risks. Care must be taken that security does not lead to passivity;
- Infrastructure. Outdated technology infrastructure at various government organisations (or parts thereof), in hardware, software and in networks;
- Employee demographics: many older staff, little flexibility and virtually no digital natives;
- Administration and political changes affect stability and support for creative processes;
- Budget and resource restrictions and the annual planning cycle affect stability and creative processes and thwarts long-term planning.

Dictionary: **Digital natives** are people born after 1985. This generation grew up with computers and the internet and takes the digital world for granted.

These obstructions hinder organisations in how they respond. They may put them at a crucial disadvantage, and even stop them from reaching their organisation goals.

Recommendations for the use of 2.0 opportunities

The report ends by calling on the DoD to recognise the importance of web 2.0 and to develop a strategy: which conditions must be met and how can the ministry benefit from the broader interaction opportunities and faster developments? To help draft a strategy, Drapeau presents a number of concrete recommendations:

- Lead by strongly supporting social software. Change must happen across agencies;
- Analyse the balance between security and organisational sharing cooperation;
- Create a culture of social software experimentation. This will show what works and who can relate to it;
- Network government with the new digerati liaise with the creative

sector, internet firms and innovative freelancers to keep abreast of developments;
- Be prepared to discard some legacy systems and processes to get something new off the ground;
- Empower some individuals to be authentic in their use of 2.0 tools. The organisation will benefit;
- Unlock the governments cognitive surplus and use the expertise, ideas and commitment of the entire organisation and its ecosystem;
- Envision citizens as communities of conversations and use the information and opinions shared;
- Create return on engagement through sharing information and liaising online. Make it transparent;
- Develop modern "brands" and market these employees, products or organisation departments as recognisable and interactive brands on the internet.

The above recommendations should help the Department of Defense change the way it works. There are some preconditions:

- New policies must be agreed on how the ministry can deal with web 2.0 (inward, outward, inbound and outbound sharing);
- Invest in training and provide the right incentives to stimulate employees to use 2.0 tools and methods;
- Determine which resources suit which processes and how their effect can be enhanced;
- Draw up a vision on the integration of 2.0 tools in processes;
- Security policy must comprise several security levels to identify risks for users;
- Develop a new strategy for the role of participation and engage citizens in what the department does.

Conclusion: government organisations all face the same challenges

So far the results from Mark Drapeau's study. A long list of valuable information and insights. I have condensed and adapted the information to the Dutch situation and other government organisations. For detailed information on the American Department of Defense, please read the report. While the DoD will differ from other government organisations in some areas, the overlaps are considerable. And don't forget - this is the organisation where the internet was invented!

Summary

With Web 2.0 a firmly established term, government 2.0 now receives the attention it deserves. It is the subject of studies, conferences are being organised, and initiatives are being set up. The United States in particular is an inspiring example. An open government that participates appeals to many and inspires innovative ideas and activities across the world. Over the next few years it will be interesting to see how these innovations develop and how they will change the way governments work and collaborate.

We find many examples in the Netherlands too, from organisations with progressive plans and activities (see elsewhere in this book) to public officers who develop new initiatives and use new tools to do their work differently. These civil servants 2.0 are the subject of Section III, but first we'll look at how government organisations can work on their strategy 2.0.

@cheeky_geeky is Mark Drapeau's Twitter name.

What does web 2.0 mean for accommodation?

Government buildings can be formidable and intimidating structures. Many are built like fortresses, there's nothing appealing about them. This is in stark contrast with the concept of work 2.0, which promotes openness, working in networks and putting employees central. So how would this translate to where we work? Let's explore this a little further.

The workplace is changing

Organisations tend to guard their computer networks like fortresses. They are secure on the inside, and contacts with the outside are seen as risky. In other words, "Jericho styled security". We see similar walls of Jericho around our government buildings where a myriad security rules get in the way when we want to welcome visitors or colleagues from other government agencies.

This situation is at odds with social trends. The internet and web 2.0 are blurring the barriers within and between organisations. Governments are taking a more open approach to society and more and more employees are working away from the office. Governments increasingly manifest themselves as facilitators of social processes and as supporters of initiatives emerging in society. So what accommodation and working environment would fit these developments? And which support and facilities would these civil servants need?

Working from home has been an option for years, but is rarely stimulated. Most civil servants (save for inspectors for instance) are at the office from nine to five, sharing a corridor with colleagues working in the same department, and an office with the same colleague for months or years. It's what they are used to. Aside from habit, there are also structural reasons why civil servants are stuck in one location:

- Efficient collaboration: being in the same place with one or two others is an efficient form of collaboration for most jobs. The disadvantages (dependency on time and place, hence excluding or restricting people) are usually outweighed by the advantages. But we are seeing a shift. Increasing numbers of tasks can be made more efficient without actually meeting: collaborating on a document in a wiki, keeping in touch with a distributed network via Twitter, keeping a broad group abreast and gauging their responses via blog, et cetera. Why spend all of your time at the office, if it is not the most efficient approach in all cases? Especially if you are considering transforming to an interactive and transparent work approach;

- Being visibly active: what is also important is that it is clear for all to see that you are working, that your colleagues can see you are working hard, but most of all, that your boss can see that you are putting in the hours. It works both ways – both the boss and the employee value this. Of course, being seen to be staring at a computer screen is no guarantee that you are actually working (let alone that you are working well). For a manager 2.0 results are all that matter. And there are ways to meet this need for being visibly active at work. Not via webcams, but by using Twitter for instance (for regular updates on what you are doing), or MSN Messenger (to let others know when you are available), a short blog (to report on the steps you have taken), or even your contributions to a wiki. Open work also meets managers' needs to know what their employees are up to;

- The social aspect and groups: we should not underestimate the need to actually see and speak to each other, however. And what better way than having a drink out in the sunshine, or a chat over a coffee. Civil Servant 2.0 organises coffee mornings, and our Drinks 2.0. Of course - online contacts can also be fun: you get to talk to people like you who share the same sense of humour. But this is not the same as actually meeting. No matter how well you get on with someone on the internet and how well you work together, you must always have what is known as 'face time'. Just for fun, or to talk about issues that are just a bit more complex and personal, or to form groups. And quite often you'll find that the people in this group are not the people down your corridor.

Your place of work is mobile

You can ask yourself if it is absolutely necessary for you to be in the same building 40 hours a week. There are plenty of alternatives away from this one location for some of the time. This allows you to organise your work differently. You may work more quietly from home for instance, or find it easier to balance your professional and private life. If you are an evening person, you could put in some hours in the evening, and take it easy in the morning. Or you could do your shopping during the week rather than on Saturday morning. But you can also work elsewhere. Your place of work is mobile. So where do you choose to work?

A laptop and a mobile internet connection are all you need to go wherever you want and still keep in touch with your network and colleagues. We have found that you are free to choose where you work for most of your time. So how can you use this freedom to do your work better and more efficiently? Some locations:

- **On the road:** on a train, at a station, in a motorway café, or wherever you are on your way to the office or an appointment;
- **With other colleagues:** why not join your colleagues in a different department down your corridor, or go to another municipality, province or ministry if you have a meeting there anyway. You will hear new things and meet new people;
- **Close to home:** if you need certain facilities, but your regular office is a long way from home, why not go to a government service that is nearer: a municipality or a local office;
- **Central location**: if you are meeting people from all over the country, meet them somewhere central and make it your workplace for the day. Arrange the meeting in another government building, or book a co-work place like Seats2Meet in Utrecht;
- **Fun:** find yourself a nice comfortable place to work. Look for somewhere in café with wifi, or even on a terrace outdoors somewhere. It's a much nicer place to meet people, and you don't have to report to security.

Mobile working allows you to meet new people, plan your time more efficiently and generally have more fun in what you are doing. In principle, you can start now. But you will find that things are even easier if you make sure you have arranged the following:

- **Customised:** this is about the technical facilities you need. Employees should be given a budget and choose what they need to do their work the best they can. Do they want to invest in a laptop, a mobile phone, or a better workstation at home?
- **Mobile workstation:** if you want to work mobile, you need a fast laptop that is light and always connected;
- **Online facilities:** the internet offers plenty of opportunities for contacts and collaboration, and employers and governments must provide reliable and user-friendly facilities: access to network and email, to MSN Messenger and video facilities, as well as to the employee's own social network sites and wikis;
- **GPS technology (+ augmented reality):** where are your colleagues, where do you need to be, which facilities are near?
- **Health and safety:** workstations at home or in government buildings must have adjustable chairs and desks, plus wireless keyboards, mice and high-resolution screens for easy connection to a laptop;
- **Travel costs:** these include tickets for public transport as well as refreshments or office supplies like photocopies. Contracts with conference facility chains like LaPlace or Regardz could be an option. How much would a day's work at La Place cost compared with maintaining workstations and buildings?

Obviously, much remains to be arranged. But this does not mean that we can't yet start adopting this approach. For now, I use my own laptop (a netbook), occasionally arrange to meet people in a café and pay for my own coffee. These are all things that would have to be arranged by a 2.0 organisation. It would be an investment in an open, flexible, interactive organisation that would save on accommodation costs.

A minister tower, civil servants clubs, agora buildings and a satellite network

I have explained how we can all work as Civil Servants 2.0, not tied down to a single building, and free to choose where we work, provided this is facilitated.

A vision on accommodation is based not only on how civil servants work, but also on the role of government in society. This role determines how we present ourselves as an organisation:

- an open government, which is transparent and accessible, also in its buildings;
- an interactive and responsive government, which is part of society;
- the government as a platform, a supporter and facilitator of social processes.

Based on these principles, I would like to put forward some inspiring new concepts:

Satellite network: Scattered all over the Netherlands are government buildings for local councils, provincial authorities, implementation bodies and official inspectorates. They all have workstations, meeting rooms and office facilities. But not for me. I believe we can use this vast potential more efficiently. With a tight network of accessible buildings throughout the Netherlands I could work wherever I am, arrange to meet people wherever it is most convenient, and organise meetings such as informal coffee mornings wherever there are the most people. All I need is a workstation for me and my laptop, an opportunity for a quick meeting, and meeting rooms with all the facilities I require to bring together groups of people. Big or small. The costs could be settled amongst the organisations;

- **Agora buildings:** This approach to work requires buildings that are partly public. Not buildings with "a wall of Jericho" and security gates at the entrance, but semi-open buildings with secure areas. The public area should be like a marketplace, with a host of facilities to work or meet with other civil servants or with citizens. The private areas would be secured. The public areas and facilities could also be made available to local clubs or organisations. Or consider working with companies like the Coffee Company to increase the appeal of government buildings. We see a similar development at the country's larger stations which now also offer shops and catering facilities;

- **Civil servant clubs:** If you want to work quietly, you can work from home, and if you want to meet people, you can choose a convenient location. But sometimes it's just nice to bump into someone you know, have a chat and talk about what's been happening in your group or elsewhere. These 'clubs' should of course not be secluded areas for the happy few, but workplace locations where civil servants can interact at a social level. The office function should shift from workstation to meeting location. Apart from workstations and meeting rooms (some of which will be located in the "agora" areas) there must be areas for casual interaction. A coffee machine alone is no longer enough. An area with a billiards or a table tennis table, pleasant views or exhibition areas could also be the perfect setting;

- **Minister tower:** By rearranging workstations and hours, we won't need as many workstations in the future, particularly at the ministries. In fact, would accommodation by ministry be at all necessary? As it is, buildings are being merged, as are facilities and business operation functions (local councils).

With a local network of government buildings, with civil servants who choose where they work based on what they need to do that day, and with buildings that also have a public and social function, ministries will need fewer large buildings. Their Ministers can work as a team, accommodated in the same building where they keep in touch with their staff through a range of multimedia facilities.

Building on today's developments, this is how I imagine the future of accommodation and work environment of civil servants 2.0 will be. And we can start right now. The Civil Servant for the Future project is busy mapping out all (central) government buildings in the Netherlands, creating "hubs" where people can collaborate on social themes. As a civil servant yourself, you can also contribute to this process. After all, we have the tools and the facilities. All we need to do now is adopt the right frame of mind.

Section II.   Building an organisation 2.0

The three worlds of government 2.0

Conversations. Between people. Online

In 1999 David Weinberger, author of 'Everything is miscellaneous' contributed to 'Cluetrain Manifesto'. The authors listed 95 statements on the internet's impact on the economy (society) and on organisations. Their first statement read: "Markets are conversations." Conversations, interactions, debates, that's what it is all about.

In his book 'Here comes everybody' (see Chapter 3) Clay Shirky underwrites this principle. People are social creatures and communication is an important aspect of how we interpret this social interaction. Conversations inspire an exchange of knowledge, ideas and collaboration to achieve something together. And since the internet, conversations were never easier.

The internet is a platform for conversations

The internet is like a giant collection of conversations. From an abstract point of view, virtually every link on an internet page is an interaction with another internet page. Google keeps track of these connections to improve its search results. After all, every link was made by someone and says something about the related page. But the internet is also a platform for conversations, literally. Email conversations are of course an obvious example, as are discussions on forums, blogs (and their responses), Twitter, all conversations and connections on networking sites like Hyves and LinkedIn, video clips on YouTube, wikis, etc. The internet is one giant conversation.

There are conversations about whatever interests people. And while not every conversation might seem relevant to you, the reality is that others must have thought so at the time. These conversations are a fact – it is up to you to decide if you want to take part in them.

Conversations form the basis for knowledge exchange, collaboration and processes

Conversations on the internet can take any shape or form. They could be like chats when you go for a coffee, or talks during a meeting. Conversations to organise a joint event are called collaboration. If collaboration has a clear focus, it is called a process. Groups of people (like organisations) attune their work through conversations. There are three forms in which they can do so:

The ten BurgerServiceCode items
1. Choice of contact channel
2. Findability of government products
3. Understandability of facilities
4. Personal Information service
5. Convenient services
6. Transparent working methods
7. Reliable digital infrastructure
8. Receptive Management
9. Responsible system management
10. Active involvement
For more information, go to www.burgerlink.nl

- **knowledge exchange:** even informal chats are a form of knowledge exchange. Every interaction contains information and knowledge. Not just the content of the conversation, but also the time and place, the form, the partners in the conversation, etc. Conversations will tell you something about opinions, about circumstances, about stakeholders and about networks. Everything starts with conversation;
- **collaboration:** if it appears from conversations and the exchange of knowledge and ideas that there is reason to organise a joint event, activities are attuned for collaboration. To achieve a goal, the right persons are involved and arrangements are made about the division of tasks;
- **processes:** to some extent, collaboration is laid down in processes, specifying the steps to be taken, how these are taken and with

whom. These processes are focused on specific end goals or concrete products. This form of collaboration also exists of interactions, transactions and conversations, partly agreed in advance.

Conversations, between people, that is what society and organisations are built on.

So why my interest in them? A purely semantic discussion, you could argue. But we have to go back to basics, back to the origins of human interaction for a clear understanding of the social and organisational changes brought about by the internet. The internet is radically changing the nature of conversations. If we plan to take this onboard as a government, we will need to start at the beginning.

The relationship between government and society on the internet

A better and more efficient government should focus on improving conversations and on making collaboration more efficient by finding the right people and the right tools. The internet will be used more and more, for online conversations, online collaboration and online processes, across organisational borders.

It is difficult to define the increasingly transparent borders on the internet. Discussions help to occasionally make clear distinctions between government and society. John Geraci, working for American publishers O'Reilly, lists four areas where interaction takes place. In his words:

- *Government to Citizen* (G2C): making government information accessible to society;
- *Citizen to Government* (C2G): offering citizens the opportunity to "talk back";
- *Citizen to Citizen* (C2C): platforms for citizens to exchange information and to collaborate;
- *Government to Government* (G2G): exchanging data and information between government organisations.

While a very clear classification, it is too restricted for our government to focus its approach on these new circumstances. Mark Drapeau, researcher at the American Defense University, describes a model and makes a distinction between the direction of interaction from within and inside government (also refer to Chapter 4):

- *Inward sharing*: sharing information within the ministry, both operational expertise and information and operation and collaboration;
- *Outward sharing*: sharing information with other organisations and persons (the organisation's ecosystem), such as other government bodies and layers, police, involved businesses and public organisations or influential persons;
- *Inbound sharing*: garner input from citizens, for instance to gauge their opinion on topics, to rate an issue or for crowdsourcing (using citizens' expertise or ideas);
- *Outbound sharing*: communicating with and informing citizens, for instance by using multimedia to share expertise and information or to put data online to help others.

While Drapeau's views are inspired by a government organisation, more so than Geraci's, again I find his classification incomplete. Government organisations are often structured like fortresses. They may even seem impregnable to citizens. Where this may be expected for a Ministry of Defence, it does not make sense for local councils, provinces, water boards and most other ministries. These organisations could be much more open.

Contrast between government and society?

Society often regards government as a single institute. In reality, government is made up of various layers of organisations. And more importantly: these organisations are made up of people. If you deal with "the government", you deal with one or more civil servants. Ordinary people with whom you can have a conversation.

Geraci and Drapeau present two institutes, "government" and "society", and connect them by arrows to denote the flows of information. But why this constant emphasis on separation? There are natural reasons for this. The hierarchic and internal culture and the focus of government organisations on their political officeholders is partly to blame. Equally important is that our buildings and ICT hinder collaboration outside the organisation. Civil servants are, in a way, 'locked up'. But you can leave these buildings, mingle with society and arrange to meet people. Or you can invite people to visit you in your government building. This requires action on your part, but it is possible. An organisation's ICT environment is not usually that flexible, or never used to be until now. Thanks to digital advances, the internet offers people an opportunity to talk to others outside their organisation. A new playing field has opened up.

Three online worlds for conversations and collaboration

There have always been contacts between society and government, between citizens and civil servants. There is nothing unusual about that. Citizens and civil servants talk, mostly offline, all day: local public servants talk to local residents, policy officials talk to representatives for organisations and businesses, people at desks answer questions, and so on and so forth. There are offices and post boxes, there are participation processes (involvement) and collaborations, drinks and parties, and much, much more.
Geraci and Drapeau describe the playing field as flows of information between government and society, within government and in society (on the internet). Basically, they emphasise the contrasts between citizens and civil servants. Unnecessary, I feel - objectionable even.

I believe that we need to look at where conversations are held and support them.

Viewed from government these conversations take place in three online worlds, three collections of platforms:

- **In society**: The internet is the participation platform for conversations between citizens. People talk to each other, work together online and use processes and transactions on the internet. From discussion

Slechte Dekking is an initiative by Jaap Stronks. It uses Google Maps to map out mobile network coverage black spots with input from users. The maps are published on the site.
See **www.slechtedekking.nl**

forums about traffic jams and people mapping out mobile network coverage blackspots to bank transactions for instance;
- **For the government**: Performing government tasks involves many conversations: knowledge exchange, collaboration and processes within governments, between governments and with external parties and individuals. All of these parties play a role in enabling a government to function;
- **In participation**: The internet has made it easier to address government tasks in collaboration with citizens and public organisations. Putting issues on the agenda, exchanging ideas and involving expertise from society enables governments to work better and more efficiently.

This is not about underlining the differences between government and society. The challenge lies in supporting interaction. Civil servants and government organisations have a role to play in each of the three online worlds. By listening, taking part in conversations, collaborating in creative processes or offering a platform supporting these conversations and collaborations.

What do these three worlds look like?

In the coming period government organisations will need to flesh out this participating role and take action. But before I discuss the government's new role in the three online worlds, I will describe the worlds as we know them now. Which platforms bring people together and enable conversations? In society, within government and for participation?

A platform is everything that supports and stimulates conversations between people within these three online worlds. It is a level playing field with minimum obstructions for interaction and maximum scope for generating new relations. Provided a platform meets this condition, it can take on all sorts of shapes and forms.

Wherever conversations take place, there is a platform to support them.

Dictionary: RSS is the standard used by sites to make information (such as title and summary) available to others as plain text.

Dictionary: **Embedding:** integrating information or an application (widget) from one site to another site, such as a YouTube video clip in a blog.

Dictionary: A **widget** is a building block with information or a software programme that can be embedded in another site.

Dictionary: Vir**tual teams** are project groups with people from different organisations or departments who work together on a task in an online work environment..

1. the online world of citizens: the internet

The internet is *the* platform for conversations and collaboration between citizens. It is freely accessible, its potential for conversations is huge and it is open to all, social and user-centric. With so many sites, businesses and institutions that make the internet possible, we are spoilt for choice.

What makes the internet so powerful are its connections between the different sites and platforms. These can be simple links (hypertext), as well as open standards (like RSS), mash-ups (such as embedding Google Maps), widgets and other modules (see how Netvibes and iGoogle work), joint logins (such as OpenID and Facebook Connect) and so on and so forth. Together these connections strengthen the platform function and facilitate exchange.

Internet users may not always be aware of these developments, but what they do know is that it's becoming increasingly easy to get together and start a conversation, whether by starting a blog on a platform like

Hyves, or by using a separate site like WordPress. Both offer RSS, the option of embedding YouTube video clips and space for reactions. Your story on the internet in just a few clicks. The barriers to conversing online are coming down.

• For more about the internet principles see Chapter 6.

2. The online world for government is mostly unexplored

There are plenty of sites and platforms on the internet to get started, but for the internal world of government it's not easy to make contact online and make full use of the opportunities for collaboration. While intranets are commonly used by organisations, these do not enable people to get together, to converse or to create something.

The central government has *Rijksweb* (due to be shortly replaced by the Digital Workstation Rijk), and enables civil servants to invite people from outside the government. But there are some major obstacles. Some workgroups even charge for external access. The site focuses on sharing documents, rather than conversations or co-creation.

There is no platform for conversations and collaboration within government and with partners (virtual teams). There are very few facilities. *Ideeëncentrale* is a platform that facilitates the exchange of ideas between local councils and the Ministry of the Interior. It has no external access. Neemtinitiatief.nl does have a platform function and brings together initiators from across the government to exchange ideas.

• For more about the organisation principles, see Chapter 7.

3. Building an online world for participation

The number of platforms for conversations and collaboration has grown tremendously. Yet the government has failed to make the most of the opportunities to create an efficient and effective organisation. It is virtually impossible to set up online groups in government and start conversations or collaboration with colleagues or partners. A chat over a virtual coffee or in an online meeting room is still a long way away.

The government is also lagging behind in using society's potential through the internet. How can a civil servant start an online community on a particular policy theme? Is there a platform where a policy process is visualised to involve people? How can you invite people to contribute ideas and crowdsource solutions for social issues? Where can you make documents or data available to society?

There have been a few tentative initiatives. Legal opportunities for internet consultations are limited, but we are seeing some developments. The Ministry of the Interior has set up Government 2.0, a site for civil servants to form groups. And there are some private initiatives, such as Governmentswidgets.nl, Verbeterdebuurt.nl and *Jij en de overhead (*you and your government). These are all platforms that facilitate contact between society and government and between citizens and civil servants. But we still have a long way to go.

• For more about the participation principles, see Chapter 8.

Summary

The internet presents government with vast opportunities to work more interactively and efficiently: by taking part in developments in society, internal collaboration and involving citizens in government tasks. So far, little progress has been made in these three areas. But the government of the 21st century should make it work. After all, government 2.0 *is* the future.

Before I continue, here a brief summary of what has been discussed so far:

- Human interaction is shaped by conversations. The internet has changed interaction fundamentally;
- Knowledge exchange, collaboration or targeted processes are all conversations;
- Wherever there are conversations there is a platform that supports them.
- For the government, there are three online worlds where conversations take place and where government plays a role;
- The internet is the platform for conversations in public society in which the government participates;
- Lack of solid platforms hampers efficient collaboration within government and with partners;
- Participation: opportunities for participation by citizens and using their potential;
- The government needs a strategy to work as government 2.0 in these three areas.

What does web 2.0 mean for inspectorates?

Albert Meijer of the University of Utrecht and Vincent Homburg of the Erasmus University Rotterdam wrote 'Op weg naar Toezicht 2.0' (towards Inspection 2.0) (2007). Based on Dutch and international cases they mapped out the effects of increased transparency during inspections. What have been the effects of publishing audit data in the Netherlands, Denmark and Great Britain? The study looked at:

- The Dutch Health and Safety Inspectorate which publishes business assessment reports online;
- The Danish food inspectorate which publishes study data online and uses smileys to make the information transparent. These smileys are also used on restaurant menus and in shops;
- The Limburg environmental inspectorate which compiles a Complaints Top Ten with an Environment Map pinpointing locations where problems are reported. Citizens can consult the map and search by postcode;
- The British Environmental Agency which publishes reports and rates businesses on environmental and pollution aspects.

Meijer and Homburg conclude that the above organisations have made good progress by publishing their inspection data online and adjusting their organisations to offer high-quality and up-to-date information. But, they say, this is still inspection 1.0. Because, despite publication of the information online, these organisations still fail to use what 2.0 has to offer. Distribution of data is difficult and there is no interaction.

The researchers therefore decided to include in their report recommendations for inspectorates. One is to assume a wider role for citizens:
- Use citizens to signal faults (restaurant visitors for instance);
- Stimulate citizens to inform businesses or organisations who do not score well;
- Act as information broker, for instance by delivering information in an open format (such as local information to Funda.nl or catering data to Iens.nl);
- Enable citizens to respond to inspectors work.

Other recommendations included:
- Recognise the diversity in citizens: adopt a strategy to reach different target groups online and through other channels;
- See transparency as one in a mix of control tools: publishing data can help you reach your goal;
- Make procedures public: show exactly which methods, terms and assessments inspectors use;
- Distinguish layers of transparency. Take the Danish easy-to-use smileys for instance. Click on them for more information.

Since citizens and inspectorates have a joint interest in securing adequate and safe products and services, they could really work together. So far, inspectorates have failed to recognise this. The report's ideal picture of achieving better inspection with fewer inspectors is still very much something for the future. Nevertheless, its recommendations form a great basis for inspectorates' inspection 2.0 strategies. After all, there is so much to be gained here.

In the next three chapters I present thirty action points for creating a government organisation 2.0. You will find plenty of ideas to get you started, but more ideas are always welcome. So if there is anything you would like to add to the list, please go to actiepunten.ambtenaar20.nl

The government participates on the internet

To operate as government 2.0 in these three online worlds, the government needs a strategy. This will be discussed in the next three chapters. I then present three lists with action items for the government to take an active part in online society, to operate as government 2.0 and to involve people in what government does.

Taking part in conversations in society

People talk and work together. This is what makes society tick, this is what makes it dynamic, socially, economically and politically. The government has a role to play. Stimulating, restrictive, observing or even facilitating. To fulfil this role, authorities rely on a range of tools such as subsidies and legislation, expertise, action plans, coaching, and decision processes.

Their role is the same in online society. This society too is governed by Dutch legislation (take stalking or privacy laws). Digital detectives roam the internet looking for offenders. Regulations and enforcement are made to reflect web developments. The police use social network sites to involve citizens in investigations (YouTube) and they search the internet for leads and evidence (on Hyves for instance).

Progress is being made on police 2.0, and on enforcement of privacy laws and copyrights on the internet. But government agencies have yet to step into their role as stimulator and facilitator. And despite subsidies for inspiring ideas such as Digital Pioneers, campaigns for digital skills (by ECP-EPN) and a media expertise policy route initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, not many government organisations are active in online society.

To listen, take part and enable

Conversations on the internet never stop and communities are active all the time. Government agencies can use the information and options shared online. People find each other on the internet and get together in your area of expertise. This can help or hinder you in what you do. How can you use people's involvement to your advantage, and how can you prevent it from turning against you? Where to invest, and where to start?

From the 2.0 perspective, the government has three roles in social discussions:

- **to listen**: what do people talk about, and what can we learn from this? Tune into specific conversations or amass and filter information from conversations throughout society. It is not just the content of the conversations that is important, but also where they take place and who the key speakers on any particular topic are (bloggers for instance);
- **to take part**: sometimes it's useful to actively take part in conversations, for instance if you are addressed or if the discussion is relevant. Civil servants must be given support and space. It gives the government an opportunity to visibly fulfil its role in (the online) society;

Digital Pioneers is an incentive scheme by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to support innovative social internet initiatives.
See **www.digitalepioniers.nl**

Digivaardig & Digibewust is an initiative by the government, industry and other organisations to encourage more people to safely use digital facilities.
See **www.digivaardigdigibewust.nl**

Guus.net was created by the Ministry of Agriculture as a platform for knowledge exchange in rural areas. For more information about Guus.net, see the first Civil Servant 2.0 book.
See **www.guus.net**

"It's not information overload, but filter failure"
Clay Shirky puts the problem of information overload in perspective: "If you have the same problem for a long time, maybe it's not a problem. Maybe it's a fact. That's information overload. Talking about it and especially talking about it as if it explains or excuses anything is actually a distraction. We've had information overload in some form or other since the 15 hundreds, what changes now is that the filters we've used for most of those 500 years are breaking."
Also see **http://twurl.nl/wodhx2**

• **to facilitate**: government organisations can also facilitate online conversations, discussions and collaboration. It can do so by enabling platforms (**Guus.net** for instance), by supporting existing platforms (with input and involvement or by contributing knowledge and information) or even by taking the initiative to start a discussion.

To adopt these roles in conversations, collaboration and processes on the internet, government organisations can start by applying the following action points:

The ten internet principles for government 2.0

1. Map out where the conversations are
2. Go where the action is
3. Trust your employees
4. Assist employees online
5. Provide the right facilities
6. Invest in online platforms
7. Identify problem areas
8. Ask questions and initiate conversations
9. Be human
10. Analyse online data

These items are worked out in detail below.

1. Map out where the conversations are
People all over the internet come together to talk about topics that also interest the government. If you would like to listen to or take part in conversations or work with others, you must first know where to find them. Where is it happening? What are relevant developments? Who is active? The landscape keeps changing and demands our constant attention.

• Have information specialists list the discussions, groups, forums, etc. on the internet that are relevant for your government organisation and put the list online for everyone to use;
• Create search profiles to map out conversations and groups on the various platforms. Stay informed to be able to respond promptly;
• Map out who is actively involved in a topic and who draws attention. They are the hubs in the online networks and the people you could work with.

2. Go where the action is
Civil servants should not just stand by the sidelines. They must be visible and approachable by the public. The type of online group and the discussions they choose to join may boost a government's accessibility. Join specific online groups, or offer a desk function on a site, arranged in consultation with the site manager.

• Enable employees to join relevant communities and groups. Be present and available for questions or comments;
• Consult with the communication department to assess the nature of forums and groups and the type of presence this calls for;
• Consult with the communication department and contact the

managers of the site or community to arrange your presence. Not as a banner, but as a point of contact.

3. Trust your employees

Employees are an organisation's ambassadors, whether on a working visit or on the internet. They are professionals with an important task. As a manager, you should be able to trust they will act responsibly and professionally on the internet. However, we are only human, and we all make mistakes, so invest in training and supervision. It will pay off. After all, it is the employees who make an organisation, online too.

- Support employees if ever a situation grows awkward. Civil servants aim to serve society as best they can, but things do go wrong sometimes. Stand by your employees and solve any problems together. Make it a learning experience;
- Discussions and interaction on the internet are fast, frequent and 24/7. Give employees the information and scope they need to take part without having to ask permission; as a manager be available for advice (online);
- Ensure employees have the information they need. If information is withheld internally, it is impossible for them to take the right decisions and represent their organisation;
- Make mistakes and learn from them. Of course things can go wrong sometimes. Make sure that experiences (successes as well as failures) are shared and discussed so others can learn from them. Use the Practical Pointers discussion forum for instance.

4. Assist employees online

Civil servants will change how they do their work and they can use all the help they can get. They can start with training and instructions on where to start. But they can also turn to a network of colleagues available for questions, or local experts who can help them with specific problems or questions. The Communication Department can play an important role in this.

- Organise training for employees to learn more about what you can do with web 2.0 and the nature of online conversations and collaboration;
- Make sure that the list of discussions and groups in their field are available and up-to-date to enable employees to respond adequately and promptly;
- Set up an internal network that can answer questions. Besides employees who participate on the internet, the network must have 2.0 experts who can assist in difficult situations. An online platform must support the network;
- Who excels? Identify all employees with great online networking skills. Arrange with the communication department that they act like spokespersons. They can also help their colleagues;
- The Civil Servant 2.0 Practical Pointers help define how civil servants should behave on the internet. Use the instructions and discuss them internally. New insights can be added to the Practical Pointers.

The Practical Pointers You will find a discussion forum on Civil Servant 2.0 (go to handreiking.ambtenaar20.nl) if you have a question or would like to share experiences.
See **http://twurl.nl/evrzww**

5. Provide the right facilities

If you go exploring, you need the right tools. As do civil servants who explore online. Computers and accessories like webcams should work properly, run up-to-date software and allow plug-ins. But civil servants who actively represent the organisation on the internet must also be made aware of security, storage and efficiency issues.

- Civil servants must feel secure. The risk of account hacking with civil servants being impersonated on the web must be minimised. Apart from detailed information on security and passwords, the ICT department can assist with smart programs (passwords for instance). Create a hotline for this topic;
- Online conversations take place on other peoples sites. The government has no control over these sites. To keep track of who said what and where, and to promote consistency in your response, and to prevent your words being used out of context, content must be stored (for instance using BackType) or be easy to download and stored in an internal management system (for wikis);
- There are countless ways to improve efficiency on the web and to keep track of developments, for instance through RSS and the right software and set-ups. Internet dynamics is comprised of lots of tiny interactions, and finding, tracing and participating in these interactions should therefore take little time. Speed is of the essence and is a critical factor for actions undertaken by ICT departments!

BackType searches responses and discussions online. Log in to find an overview of responses you have contributed to internet sites. The site can also be used to look for listings of topics or names.
See **www.backtype.com**

6. Invest in online platforms

If a topic appeals to people, they will want to discuss it. Online and offline. To do so, they need a solid platform. It's like an online pub or digital community centre. There are many such platforms already. The government can stimulate public discussion by supporting or creating platforms.

- Based on policy priorities, list all platforms where topic conversations are taking place. Then decide on the platforms where you want to invest to stimulate contacts, discussion or collaboration;
- Identify how a platform can be supported. By funding it, or, preferably, by offering expertise (as information or by providing experts who take part in such platforms) or data (Open Government), by giving it a wider reach, or by providing contacts or networks for instance;
- Government has vast pools of expertise. People are increasingly turning to the web for information. By putting the expertise of civil servants online (on Wikipedia or Scribd.com for instance) they add to society. Enable knowledge departments to share and record their expertise online;
- There is a strong preference for existing platforms, but if necessary, a theme-based platform can be created by the government (like Guus.net) to initiate conversation or collaboration or to inspire new relations between all those involved. Let's not build a community centre when you don't have to! And if you do need to, take a step back and let the community manage itself.

Scribd is a global library with a search facility for digital documents for reuse. The site offers a whole range of opportunities to read documents, and to distribute and embed them.
See **www.scribd.com**

7. Identify problem areas

Solving problems is what civil servants are all about. But before you can start on problems, you need to identify them (don't go rooting about

Stefanie talks to people who complain about Dell products on Twitter and asks them if she can be of assistance.
See www.twitter.com/StefanieAtDell

In 2008 the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) called up all 12-year old girls for a cervical cancer jab. Opponents started an online counter campaign, and they dominated the discussion in online networks and schoolyards. As a result, not the anticipated 70%, but only 49% of all girls got the jab.
See **http://twurl.nl/fbhjii**

Google Trends publishes social developments based on search engine behaviour and news.
See **www.google.nl/trends**

for them, or create them even!). Remember that not all problems are reported. But because the internet is so transparent, even implicit problems are easily recognised, like people complaining on Twitter that they have trouble doing their taxes. This proactive approach to solving problems is also referred to as webcare, and a popular example in the Netherlands is UPC, and Dell worldwide (take @StefanieAtDell on Twitter).

• Have search machines look for references to your organisation, products or people (ministers, directors, key employees, etc.). After all, if someone talks to you, you tend to listen;
• Arrange for the communication department or service desk to make sure that all questions, reports and contributions are delivered and addressed by someone;
• Respond. Show that you are listening and show your responses to comments or information;
• Publish the outcome of your webcare activities. Not only will this help people, it also makes for excellent PR;
• Gather comments, questions, contributions and complaints and use them as input for processes, products and communication and how they can be improved.

8. Ask questions and initiate conversations

The government has a story to tell. Not by leaving messages on the internet or by spamming discussions, but by joining conversation about topical and relevant themes. A local councillor on a local site, a policy officer in a relevant discussion, or an implementation officer on a customer forum, they can all introduce topics and ask questions that feature high on the agenda. If you don't participate, discussions on the web can even influence national health campaigns. Take for instance the failed cervical cancer jab campaign organised by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment. It met with fierce resistance which was played out online.
•Determine how to contribute new topics to a community without disrupting its character. What works and what doesn't? The government communication departments should know this;
• Employees must understand the organisation's priorities to use these in conversations on the web;
• Start and encourage debates and conversations on platforms in order to support ongoing campaigns. Use this approach sparingly however. The type of target group is a decisive factor;
• Ask the communication or policy departments to provide low-barrier material, like a short explanation on YouTube, a widget or links, which civil servants can use for online references and further redistribution.

9. Be human

The internet is a flat world. Online conversations and collaboration take place between people. A blog or a message on Twitter is not an anonymous press release, but a personal contribution to a discussion. The internet is personal and to succeed you must take a personal approach. Be authentic and approachable, also as an organisation (also see: Can organisations twitter?).
• Respond like a normal human being, and use normal language. Most

At the end of the year it looks back at developments and data. These data are analysed and interpreted and combined to form the Year-End Zeitgeist.
See **http://twurl.nl/7t5w7c**
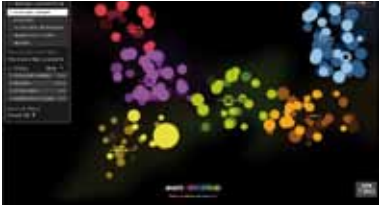
BBC White Spectrum shows the result of an integration study in the United Kingdom. Consensus on opinion is colour clustered. If you click a particle, a quote appears or invites the reader to respond.
See **www.bbc.co.uk/white/spectrum.shtml**

Debategraph is a project that visualises the many sides to social discussions on the internet.
See **www.debategraph.org**

Brandwatch is a company that follows and visualises online brand discussions and developments.
See **www.brandwatch.net**

organisations will need to put the use of simple language on the agenda, and provide information and training. With the arrival of web 2.0, the subject of "language" has never been more topical;

- Use your own name. Make it clear that you speak on behalf of your organisation, but take a personal approach, like @StefanieAtDell. You can also use a profile page (also refer to the Practical Pointers in Chapter 10). Even if you communicate on behalf of your organisation, your name must be traceable;

- Help people by referring them. If you are part of a conversation and you receive a question your organisation cannot answer, "connect" them to someone who can.

10. Analyse online data

Comments and texts are not the only thing that say something about a country, a province or a municipality. Online behaviour and relationships can yield useful data. Google's 'Trends' and 'Zeitgeist' reflect the spirit of the times. It can predict the spread of flu on the basis of search behaviour for instance. Twitter has what are known as trending topics, and Delicious has fresh bookmarks. Analysed data can be used to gauge society.

- Develop ways to make social discussions transparent (for instance BBC White spectrum or Debategraph) or to gauge market awareness (like the Brandwatch company);
- In consultation with information specialists, have the possibilities of Google Trends studied for your organisation's policy priorities;
- Aggregate information about your target group on the internet is strategic information. Put it on the agenda and share any lessons learnt with the organisation.

Summary

Clearly, if we want to move towards government 2.0 we have our work cut out for us. But it will be worth it. Web 2.0 offers great opportunities for government to become more approachable and closer. The action items I have listed above will help government organisations on their way.

Example: helping a minister on Twitter

In Luxemburg, meeting with Belgian and
Luxemburg counterparts to prepare for
the 10 o'clock EU meeting of Ministers of
Foreign Affairs.

Remember to congratulate the Luxembourg
officials on Andy Schleck's Liege win
yesterday. That's bound to create goodwill ;).

You were right – my Luxembourg colleague
is beaming -).

A platform for internal collaboration

The last chapter listed the action items for government to define its role online, in the public arena. This chapter deals with changes in the internal world of government organisations. Again I list ten action items which organisations can use to become an organisation 2.0.

Over the past few decades organisations have introduced a range of innovations based on IT developments: from digital services and internet desks to CRM (customer relationship management), DMS (document management systems) and HRM (human resource management) programs, like P-direct for the central government. While major changes, they were always inspired by a single discipline or department.

Although support departments have a role in establishing an organisation 2.0, this transition should not be the sole responsibility of a single department and must be rolled out across the organisation. After all, this is about adopting an entirely new way of working for all, particularly in the organisations' core processes. Of course, the support departments are involved, but in the end this is about a new organisation strategy and approach to work.

A change of organisational culture

Dictionary: **the New Way of Working** is a movement whereby organisations are arranged more flexibly and man-oriented in order to boost the productivity of knowledge workers.

Organisation 2.0, Work 2.0, and the New Way of Working are all terms used to denote the next step in a process of organisational change that started some time ago. Both cultural and technological innovations leading up to this process have helped knowledge workers and others to perform better and to break down hierarchy structures. Take email, for instance. This has radically changed how organisations work and relate. What started as "electronic mail", soon became an entirely different approach to work, both internally and externally.

Web 2.0 is the next phase in how organisations operate. Again it is not so much about the introduction of new technology, but about the relevance for how we work together and how organisations achieve their goals. Like email, web 2.0 opens up the door to new forms of collaboration, with a whole new culture. Of course there are differences between the introduction of email and web 2.0:

A paradigm shift in organisations:
- from organisation structures to platforms for collaboration;
- from documents to getting together and conversations;
- from working as an civil servant to working as an individual.

- web 2.0 is not a single functionality, but offers a whole range of new opportunities, from chat, blogs and Twitter to social networks and wikis. This makes it harder to learn;
- web 2.0 is spreading much more rapidly than email which makes it harder for employees to keep track of changes or to keep connected;
- aside from an organisational change, 2.0 is a societal change, which requires an entirely new approach and which raises expectations in society.

Web 2.0 has accelerated and boosted organisational changes in recent years. It has created challenges for government organisations both internally, and externally in the performance of their public tasks, as addressed in the ten action items of the last chapter.
The ten action items below regard government organisations and their internal work processes.

The ten organisation principles for government organisation 2.0

11. Information is open; activities are visible to everyone;
12. Facilitate online conversations and enable employees to join groups;
13. Invest in civil servants 2.0;
14. Support employees in how they work;
15. Make employees entrepreneurs in their field;
16. Use your employees' potential;
17. Flexibility becomes the organisational structure;
18. Make space for innovation;
19. Leadership 2.0 is a condition;
20. Make it fun.

These items are worked out in detail below

11. Information is open; work is visible to everyone

A government organisation 2.0 is a transparent organisation, clear on who is doing what and which information is where. To work with the right people, you must be able to find them. To promote what the organisation stands for, information must be available and easily accessible to the entire organisation. A transparent organisation forms the basis for people working together, sharing expertise and making sure no work is duplicated. It also shows faith in employees and is an investment in commitment.

Dictionary: An **RSS feed** is the stream of information users can integrate in their page (e.g. Netvibes) to keep up-to-date with the news.

Dictionary: **Status updates** are short communications posted on social network sites like Twitter or Yammer, or WieWatWaar on Hyves.

Yammer is similar to Twitter: it enables status updates to be shared with others who subscribe to your content. Yammer can be used in an organisation where people share the same email address.
See **www.yammer.com**

- Make sure that all information (documents, network drives, records, databanks, etc.) are accessible and open to all in the organisation (with the exception of privacy-sensitive data like personnel systems). Working in an open manner should not make more work for employees;
- Create a hot-topics page with information on what the organisation is doing and what it has decided, for instance by gathering reports, documents, discussions, blogs and other relevant news, through RSS feeds for instance;
- Provide a system for status updates, like Twitter or Yammer, where employees can share what they are doing or any questions they have, where others can find them and respond. This initiative has already been picked up by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs;
- Invest in better search engine technology to inventory relevant information inside and outside the organisation and ensure low-barrier availability in feeds, email notifications, etc..

12. Facilitate online conversations and encourage employees to join groups

People find each other to talk business and to work together. They should be able to do this online too. They should be able to get together on different subjects and converse. From online meeting rooms to digital coffee corners or workplaces. Virtual teams must be given a range of digital tools to collaborate (wikis, discussion forums, mindmaps, chatrooms, Skype, etc.). This will help create new teams across organisation borders, with people from outside their own organisation.

Online collaboration requires the following basic conditions:
1. an easily accessible platform to drive interaction;
2. people that inspire conversations and create connections (community managers).

- Make the intranet a platform for connections, a social network site that centres not on information but on conversations between people. The information supports the online groups and collaboration;
- Stimulate people to get together and converse online, by setting an example, by stripping away obstacles, or by creating a good atmosphere for instance. Remember, conversations don't always have to be about work!
- Involve online theme discussion groups, for instance by giving them a task and support. Build on the roles participants have in groups. Organise processes around people and energy, not the other way around;
- Consider making information and platforms accessible to people outside the organisation involved in virtual teams (by introducing system access layers);
- Study the consequences of these operational methods (network organisation) for management, steering and decision processes.

13. Invest in civil servants 2.0

It is the employees that have to do it. Remember that Work 2.0 cannot be outsourced to an external or support organisation. An organisation 2.0 is made up of, and inspired by, its employees 2.0. They *are* the organisation. They know how to work together and they have ideas. They represent their organisation. Empower employees by giving them the knowledge and skills they need to work as Civil Servants 2.0. This transition will be easier for some than for others. It requires commitment and investment, in the form of training for instance.

- Have the HR department develop a strategy to bolster the organisation's 2.0 capabilities by providing training, new employees and overhauling the culture and organisation;
- Train employees in the use of 2.0 tools and methods, and provide specialist courses for employees or divisions;
- Embed 2.0 training in the organisation's training policy and integrate the 2.0 ideas in courses already given: there are many courses that can implement the new opportunities and work method;
- Assess new employees for their 2.0 skills and make these skills a precondition when inviting job applications;
- Identify active users of social media and use their skills in visible projects. Make these users examples or buddies;
- Find out which competencies, capacities and characteristics best suit your organisation 2.0.

14. Support employees in how they work

Most organisations offer their employees tools based on general standards or positions, like mobile phones for managers. But to optimise performance in employees, they need tools tailored to their needs. To be able to work anytime and anywhere, people have different needs as regards IT, management and work environment. Empowering employees to make the most of themselves benefits both the organisation and the employee.

- Assign employees a personal budget to pay for the IT support they need. This budget will allow them to choose from a range of resources via the internet;
- Offer facilities to work anytime and anywhere, including access to the organisations work environment, mobile internet connections or generic applications;
- Allow employees personal use of 2.0 resources so they get a feel for them;
- Instruct the ICT division to develop a strategy for the introduction of individual employee budgets.

15. Make employees entrepreneurs in their own field of work

Dictionary: Government entrepreneurs are civil servants who, like freelancers, take initiatives to bring together resources and people from inside and outside of government.

Civil servants who take initiatives independently do their work based on their expertise, skills and networks. Civil servants are professional employees who are able to find solutions to the tasks they face. Have confidence in your employees and give them the resources and space to let them find the approach that works for them. If employees work on topics they can relate to, they will have more fun in what they do and this will boost results for the organisation.

- Create an online marketplace with projects and activities and have employees sign up and argue why they are the most suitable person;
- Appoint one person with responsibility for a task, case file or topic and ask him who on his virtual team will join him in achieving it;
- Result is key. Where necessary facilitate employees in finding the approach that works for them;
- The government wants civil servants committed to improving society. Use their level of commitment when allocating tasks.

16. Use your employees' potential

Government organisations tend to be large organisations with many employees and huge potential. But this potential is fragmented through internal directorates, departments or clusters. mGovernment organisations frequently hire external expertise, ideas, skills and manpower. But isn't this available elsewhere in government? Employees can do so much more than specified in their job descriptions or defined by their department's remit. And if we also include the "ecosystem" of businesses and civil society organisations of which government forms part, this pool of expertise becomes even greater. There is tremendous potential we have yet to tap into. So what should we do?

- Stimulate the use of online platforms like Neemtinitiatief.nl and Ideeëncentrale.nl to bring together supply and demand for jobs and

What do you need for an online cooperation platform?

The internet has become a platform where people can meet, converse and perhaps work together as a group. As in a real building where people chat over a coffee for instance, the internet must offer room where you can talk or meet in a facility-enabled area, as you would in a meeting room. Looking at the options available on the internet, what would you expect from an online platform for internal collaboration?

- Profiling options where you can present yourself with your position, activities, expertise and experience;
- Status updates and a blog function to keep others informed and to stay in touch;
- Joining groups to create a virtual team;
- A discussion forum, to exchange ideas and present joint views or decisions;
- A wiki for people writing documents together.

You could also include a (video)chat function and options to show photos and video, to add files or to create your own dashboard (like Netvibes or iGoogle). And what else would you expect to see in an online meeting room?

Dictionary: **Delicious** is an internet service where users can store, share and consult their favourite websites from any computer.

ideas across organisation boundaries (internal crowdsourcing). This can also be used to put together virtual teams;

- Map out your colleagues networks, for instance LinkedIn, and use them. After all, to put together a task or project group, its best to work with people your colleagues already know;
- Keep in touch with employees who move to jobs elsewhere, inside or outside of government and build up an active network (like alumni networks);
- Study how so-called prediction markets (online markets on specific subjects issues, like Intrade.com) can be used within the organisation, for instance to monitor project development or prepare for a decision-taking process;
- By working online and open in virtual teams, more people can contribute to a project. Be it an idea, a piece of information, or even just correcting a typo   every little bit helps. There must be a function to enable this contribution;
- Place manuals, handbooks, scenarios, etc. on the intranet as wikis where those in the know can keep them updated. This changes the manager's role from author to supervisor;
- Lots of employees collect expertise, reports or best practices on the internet and store them as favourites or bookmarks. Store these links centrally on Delicious to create a huge and instant topical and valuable knowledge database.

17. Flexibility as organisation structure

Society is increasingly chaotic and fragmented. Changes are happening at lightning speed. Organisation structures are becoming harder to align with how society is structured. To address new developments government organisations must be able to adjust promptly, for instance by finding and using novel expertise flexibly and by getting together the right people (see item 16) and supporting them (see item 12). Virtual teams can be brought together quickly and given the right tools to get started. Government organisations must organise around problems rather than organisation structures.

- Arrange for technology and online facilities to be built up in modules. Developments can be addressed quickly and new options added. Always use open standards;
- Most employees and FTEs are allocated to specific departments or divisions. This hampers their mobility and deployability. Wouldn't it be better if they were centrally employed by government so they could be assigned to tasks and work as and where needed?;
- Facilities like accommodation, meeting rooms, catering, computers, etc. are reserved for the organisations own employees. Civil servants who work across boundaries do not have access to these facilities. What can be done to remedy this situation?
- Map out the expertise and support available outside the organisation (for instance businesses, freelancers, or co-creation with citizens). Projects and virtual teams should be able to draw upon these support troops promptly.

Open Koffie is a meeting which Civil Servant 2.0 organises every two weeks in The Hague for people to meet and talk. There's coffee and usually a guest speaker for a brief presentation.
See **openkoffie.ambtenaar20.nl**

Dictionary: **Guerrilla marketing** uses short, striking and fun actions to get the target group interested in a new product or idea.

The Tigers are a group of employees who use creative techniques in workshops to inspire innovative and provocative solutions. The Tigers are facilitators and call themselves "Ambassadors for creativity".

Rotterdam Idee is a project initiated by the Municipality of Rotterdam that supports initiatives by local residents for a vital and living city. Residents and businesses can provide input to or sponsor ideas posted on the site.
See **www.rotterdamidee.nl**

18. Make room for innovation

Aside from a flexible attitude to adapt to changes in civil society, organisations must have innovative skills: creativity and new ideas to address changes and present new solutions and methods. Government organisations have always focused on risk minimisation and cost control. They have become command and control organisations. But it is times like these that government needs innovation and entrepreneurship to properly perform its public role. This is not a temporary change project: innovation skills must be embedded in the organisation. How do organisations continue to evolve?

- Ideas and innovations spring from employees who know their profession and the environment they work in. Give them room to work out ideas, for instance by enabling them to devote time to their own projects or to make improvements (like Google);
- Stimulate connections and the exchange of ideas, for instance by organising open inspiration sessions (like Open Koffie), by inviting guest speakers, by connecting employees through what interests them, etc. Have someone arrange and supervise these activities.
- Highlight new, funny, fresh or stimulating ideas (use the staff magazine, the internet or guerrilla marketing for instance) to ensure they are picked up on and can land elsewhere in the organisation;
- Identify creative professionals in the organisation, put them together and give them the facilities to distribute their ideas and approach in the organisation (like the "Tigers" at the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs);
- Clear an innovation budget for experiments (like Rotterdam Idee). Use an online platform to gather ideas. Have employees rate and discuss these ideas, and invite their input;
- Make innovation and the use of new resources part of job appraisal processes and make sure to include them when assessing bonus schemes.

19. Leadership 2.0 is conditional

An organisation is made up of employees and management. And in order to become an organisation 2.0, both must evolve (the sandwich method). The role of manager changes and this requires investment. Managers must create room for employees to manoeuvre and be open to new initiatives, and at the same time continue to perform as usual. How can they make the most of their employees' skills and at the same time guarantee good results? Managers will need to get involved in 2.0 to empower themselves and their team. It is a new approach made possible thanks to new resources.

- Focus on what you want to achieve. Define the broad lines and make sure that your employees can follow them. Propagate the lines and discuss them to keep them top-of-mind in the organisation;
- Take action, don't just talk. Lead by example – it is crucial to involve others and bring across your message. Don't be too theoretical – put it in practice so others can use it;
- Make choices. Know what the added value of your organisation is and make sure that what you do you do well. Work with others to be able to offer a full range of services. In Jeff Jarvis's words: "Do what you do best and link to the rest!";

- Train managers to become facilitators for employees and teams. They must enable employees to perform to the best of their abilities and create consensus about decisions. According to Google's internal rules: "The role of the manager is that of an aggregator of viewpoints, not the dictator of decisions."
- Have managers adopt a 2.0 approach to work, not just to lead by example, but to become empowered through networks and efficient instruments. Create managers 2.0.

20. Make it fun

Make it simple and make it fun to work with others and share expertise. Employees should not be forced, but rather tempted to connect and share. If the goal is fun, it will be easy to achieve it. People who come together to talk about or work on a project need the right ambiance, online too. This will be the biggest challenge for organisations, to recreate such an environment on the intranet. Work does not need to be done in a sterile environment. Pleasant surroundings will make work more fun and ultimately better.

- Make resources and sites where people work together and share knowledge simply (every objection is one objection too many) and fun (such as the joking monkey in Mailchimp). Create an inviting and dynamic online setting, like a corporate canteen or city centre;
- Continue to adapt and improve facilities. By continuously monitoring the use (and abuse) of facilities and involving users in the further development, they can be adjusted all the time. This must be embedded in facility management.
- Provide the right incentives to encourage employees to use 2.0 resources and methods, like attention and compliments, entertainment, ratings (by awarding stars), status or an award (for the best idea);
- The right people will provide the right approach. Involve employees who already have the right behaviour: the networkers, the initiators and such. Employees who like it now, will continue to like it and inspire others.

Mailchimp is an online service for drafting newsletters, offering user data and the possibility to automatise subscription applications. A monkey assists users and gives information and encouragement. See **www.mailchimp.com**

Hi, Davied. I can haz banana?
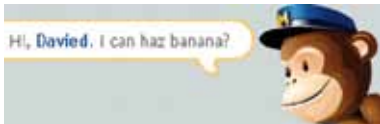
Summary

These were the action steps towards organisation 2.0. Addressed individually or as a group, they are mutually reinforcing. A civil servant, for instance, will find it easier to work as a "freelancer" (item 15) if it is clear to others what he is doing, and how he is getting on (item 11). To work towards organisation 2.0, organisations must address all action items. How, is up to the organisations themselves. The strategy and route they decide on must fit the organisation and employees. This requires vision and an implementation strategy.

There are many more creative ideas to drive these action items further: practical ideas to make the organisation more flexible and versatile or to create room for innovation. Use what potential is in the organisation to come up with even more ideas, have employees decide which they find the most important ones and find people willing to get stuck in. For an organisation to evolve, its employees must be involved. Inspire through leadership 2.0!

"Leadership 2.0: will be top of the agenda in boardrooms across the world within a few years. Social media will really break through as companies start adopting them."

twitter   Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

= Leiderschap 2.0. Staat binnen enkele jaren in elke bestuurskamer op de agenda. Na adoptie van bedrijven breekt social media pas echt door

mlanting
Menno Lanting

Example: Work 2.0 at the Ministry of Agriculture is a learning curve

By Marie Louise Borsje

The Ministry of Agriculture is experimenting with web 2.0 instruments and principles. What does web 2.0 mean for its administration tasks? How should the organisation change to become 2.0? How should you change if you want to work according to the 2.0 principles? And the biggest question of all, where do you start if you want to use 2.0 in policy work? So far, the first attempts have given us some interesting insights.

Experiments with online collaboration platforms

The Ministry of Agriculture is in the middle of a major change process. It is changing its organisation structure, and looking for new ways of working. To put words into actions, some departments set up collaboration platforms. Two departments used Ning to put the debate on reorganisation online.

The differences between these two Ning sites are considerable. One is very lively with the management initiating discussions, writing blogs and responding. There is lots of input from employees. Emails draw attention to the site and it works on an interactive basis with the regular soapbox meetings. What makes it even more fun is that employees of other departments are also invited to join the discussion.

The other department's Ning site is quieter. Management contributes less, there are fewer members, less action. Why? Well, if you want a community site to work, you must dedicate as much energy to it as you would in setting up a 1.0 group. This site did not have a community manager to set things in motion. The motto for change projects still is: management must lead by example.

Continuous online work meetings

Another department was keen to work together on documents, discussions, blogs and document sharing. They didn't yet have an internal platform to support this, but they did want a secure environment. So it opted for SocialText, a wiki platform with a range of 2.0 functionalities. All of the department's employees are expected to take part in the platform and they have all been on an introductory course.

The result: documents are shared and there is blogging. Now blogging can be a very handy tool. For instance, you can read where your colleagues go and what they do. That saves time during work meetings - no need to start with an update on who's done what, you can get to the heart of the matter straight away. And then there are the shared documents. How frightening – others can change your work. But now there is some experience with people writing documents together. Discussions via the internet still have to take off. The group is very easily defined with employees working near each other. A chat over coffee is still more efficient.

At the same time, this group has seen what other functionalities the platform has to offer and has gotten a taste of its vast potential. After getting by on a scooter for years, they are now ready to roll on their bike. And while they might at first ride their new bikes like a scooter, there comes a point when they wonder what the other parts are for. That time is now.

Nine findings

It is not easy to make work 2.0 work. It requires commitment and energy, learning a different approach as an employee and as a manager, understanding where the organisation' boundaries are (organisation sensitivity), and above all tons of imagination and creativity. Now which combinations are there to provide added value?

The Ministry of Agriculture has ten departments and projects working with 2.0 instruments such as Ning, wikis, SocialText and Twitter. They are mostly used to form groups, to blog and to have discussions via the internet. The first question most users asked was which instrument they could use. An understanding of the principles of web 2.0 is more important, however. Start by learning some basic tools, see what suits you best and then stick with it. It will make the tools more than just functional - they will come alive. The course 'Werken met web 2.0' (working with web 2.0) gives you better insight into the many possibilities (see cursus.ambtenaar20.nl).

The initial conclusion from the pilot projects are:

• employees are very keen to explore 2.0 instruments,
• the instruments are used to share expertise,
• the social media are used mostly for internal processes,
• there is support from management to explore 2.0,
• 2.0 tools are not really used to create virtual workstations,
• support departments are not yet equipped to support other departments,
• the Ministry of Agriculture is perceived to be leading other ministries in the use of social media,
• Civil Servant 2.0 is not exclusively young and dynamic, and
• there is no focus for working with 2.0.

This only goes to show – we are never done learning.

A participation platform to take on tasks together

In Chapter 5 I explained that government 2.0 has a role in three areas: on the internet (that is, in society, see Chapter 6), in internal collaboration (also with people from outside the organisation, see Chapter 7) and in collaboration with society (through online participation platforms).

You will find all sorts of information on government internet sites, such as press releases and communications, as well as specific services like the digital permit application desk. But government sites do not offer any room for citizens and civil servants to work together on issues that take a prominent place in society. Instead of platforms for collaboration, internet sites are like walls erected between government and society, with a desk here and there.

Ideally, government organisations should have three sites:

- an internet site that explains what the organisation does for society;
- an access point that explains what the organisation does for individual citizens;
- a participation platform that sets out the tasks that need to be addressed together.

What is a participation platform?

Web 2.0 has made it much easier to get together wherever, whenever. Civil servants can participate in the social discussion and it has become easier to involve people from outside the organisation in virtual teams. But we can also use the internet to bring together and tap into the vast potential of expertise, ideas and energy of society to do our work and face our challenges together.

What we need is a participation platform. But not a giant site created for the whole of government. So what should it be?

- a network of internet sites, functionalities and connections that combine to form a platform for collaboration between government organisations, citizens and businesses involved;
- a network where the facilities and sites are connected and integrated via the internet, for instance through links, widgets, APIs and feeds. All sites and its components should be modular and standardised;
- services and facilities built both by government organisations and by private parties (businesses or citizens). Verbeterdebuurt.nl for instance, is developing into a platform where people can report instances of waste and vandalism in public areas and where they receive feedback;
- based on modules and internal and external content, all government organisations can put together their own participation platforms with topics for collaboration.

A participation platform for every government organisation

In short, these building blocks can be created by one organisation and used by another. Take the local map on Verbeterdebuurt.nl for instance

21 ways to write a blogpost your readers will want to read

1. Write something that is useful;
2. Write something that is unique;
3. Write something that is newsworthy;
4. Write something that no one has written about before;
5. Write something that makes the reader smarter;
6. Write something that is controversial;
7. Write something that is insightful;
8. Write something that addresses a fear people have;
9. Write something that helps people achieve something;
10. Write something that evokes a response;
11. Write something that makes readers feel that they belong;
12. Write something that is passionate;
13. Write something that interprets or translates news for people;
14. Write something that inspires;
15. Write something that tells a story;
16. Write something that solves a problem;
17. Write something funny;
18. Write something that saves people time or money;
19. Write something only you could write;
20. Write something that can be used as a source of information;
21. Write something about something 'cool'.

See Alex Vermeule, Auteursrichtlijnen Het Nieuwe Werken Blog, http://twurl.nl/nz0etz

Verbeterdebuurt.nl

Dictionary: **Ning** is an internet service that enables you to start your own social networking site. Others can join this site and use it for debates, blogging, etc.

– it can also be used on the site of the local council's environment and management department. Or an application built by a Municipality which might be very useful to other organisations too. Government organisations then create a single page listing the various ways in which people can work with them. This creates a local participation platform.

The participation platform is like a hub, a combination of facilities and ways in which citizens can contribute to social issues, to society. But it also helps governments profile themselves as organisations that aim to tackle problems together, and that value solutions put forward by citizens. There are a range of functionalities:

- **invite others to use government information to build on**: on the participation platform publish data sources in a format that can be reused by businesses or other initiators to encourage the development of new services and facilities;
- **bring stakeholders together on particular topics**: the platform should enable the formation of communities on a partial (policy) theme (and offer Ning-like functionalities), provided of course these are not already on the internet!
- **perform policy routes in an open and interactive manner**: a facility for policy officials to make a policy route and its various steps transparent, to give updates, to act on expertise and ideas contributed by society and to provide feedback;
- **make more use of crowdsourcing in implementation and control**: citizens are a natural partner in implementation and control. They are everywhere and often share a common interest. Standard facilities to gather expertise or ideas for instance would be welcome;
- **offer a summary of activities on the internet**: are there any relevant discussions taking place in which civil servants are active? Where are they? Which other facilities does the organisation contribute to? The participation platform must give an exhaustive list of participation opportunities.

An interactive toolbox for civil servants
A flexible and modular system enables civil servants to easily involve citizens and businesses in their work. They can build a toolbox with instruments taken from their own and other organisations. These can be used by civil servants or departments to put together the environment that is needed for a particular task. Communication departments can assist in this.

All government organisations can set up their own site with participation functionalities, developing additional modules and functions. There are plenty of online facilities and services they can use for this purpose. Every contribution forms part of the jigsaw that will eventually build into a participation platform for all of government. A platform that shows exactly how government and citizens work together on improving society.

Ten action items for participation
In this chapter I will discuss ten action points for government organisations 2.0 keen to perform certain tasks and processes in collaboration with society: from policy to implementation and from

Jeff Howe - Crowdsourcing. Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business (2008)

communities to crowdsourcing. I will also present a number of practical recommendations.

The ten participation principles for government organisations 2.0

21. Give the organisation a participation platform;
22. Make government information available online;
23. Have citizens contribute to policy processes;
24. Involve citizens in implementing government tasks;
25. Create digital waiting rooms for online services;
26. Facilitate communities for your organisation's disciplines;
27. Remove obstacles for participation;
28. Ensure everything can be shared and distributed online;
29. Organise dynamics;
30. Make full use of input and provide feedback on the result.

These items are worked out in detail below.

Wat stemt mijn raad (how does my council vote) shows how municipal councils vote. The website was initiated by the Ministry of the Interior in collaboration with the Municipalities of Almere, Groningen, Enschede and Woerden. Municipalities who would like to join the initiative can contact: **aanmelden@watstemtmijnraad.nl.** See **www.watstemtmijnraad.nl**

21. Give the organisation a participation platform
You cannot build without foundation. So start by setting up a participation platform alongside an existing internet site to build on. This would also mark a new start, where tasks and challenges are tackled together. Besides an introduction, the site can list information sources, communities in which civil servants take part and online facilities in which the organisation participates, such as Verbeterdebuurt.nl or Watstemtmijnraad.nl

- Dont wait too long to present an approach or strategy about the setup of a participation platform and involving citizens in activities and responsibilities;
- Lay down the foundations for a participation platform, which will also help to whet people's appetites;
- Make a list of the facilities, agreements and modules available online and at other organisations and use them (organisations like Association of Netherlands Municipalities or Burgerlink can act as mediators);
- Develop modules and facilities for interaction and collaboration (for communities, crowdsourcing or online policy routes for instance) and make them reusable for other government organisations;
- Make user arrangements with facility suppliers to meet government standards in terms of privacy, stability, accessibility and storage (also for Google, Ning and Hyves);
- Measure the use and develop and adapt the platform and facilities accordingly.

Burgerlink, a programme by the ICTU foundation, aims to be 'the link between citizen and government'. The programme presents the eParticipation Award each year in recognition of commitment shown by citizens and governments in the field of digital involvement. Burgerlink also develops four e-participation instruments, including Petities.nl and Watstemtmijnraad.nl. The instruments are freely available for citizens, municipalities and government organisations. See **www.burgerlink.nl**

22. Make government information available online
Be open and transparent in what you do as an organisation. A condition for being able to involve committed citizens in processes and tasks is providing accurate and updated information. Citizens and civil society organisations need the same information to be able to make a valuable contribution. An open government makes public information accessible to and reusable for society (through open standards) and gives

The Dutch Government Information Act provides for government documentation access and publication. Every citizen has the right to request access.

Dictionary: **Rating** allows people to rate a topic to identify its most popular or appreciated part.

continuous progress reports. Apart from transparency, this also allows for external input to add to or amend government data, as is the case for the Dutch National Archive for instance.

- Ask the information or communication department to draw up a vision and strategy for Open Government where the organisation makes information sources and databanks available online, using an open format (XML, APIs) that others can reuse;
- Ensure that your information is in order and that it is easy to manage and make available;
- Publish a list of available data sources;
- Map out which information sources are needed in society, for instance by gauging this need in organisations and citizens (like the British Unlocking Service);
- Start simple, and use sources that are easy to make available online. This quickly creates valuable volume people can use;
- Invest the time and energy that is now spent on answering individual requests for information on making the entire information source publicly available online;
- Use the Open Data Principles as a guideline wherever possible to make information available and to promote its reuse.

23. Have citizens contribute to policy processes

Over the past few decades we have learnt a lot about active participation and interactive policy forming. Web 2.0 offers the possibility to go one step further and take down some of the barriers in place. By being transparent about the topic, the expertise available, and the phases of the route from the start of a process, be it policy or otherwise, citizens can be involved throughout. Each project phase may draw upon different ideas, expertise or commitment and use various incentives to attract people. The responsible civil servant or department acts as a process manager, approaching people, pushing for progress and providing feedback.

- There is more knowledge outside an organisation than inside it. Invest in expertise about crowdsourcing and online processes and their use in government organisations. This could be a task for the Communication or Knowledge departments;
- Use the internet to present the projects and activities the organisation is working on and enable readers to respond, by rating developments for instance. This will clearly show where priority is given and which topics would be best to get started with;
- Start by providing an insight into the phases of some policy processes, the information that is available, the parties that are involved and the decisions taken. Start with an easily accesible topic;
- Set up an internal training route for policy employees to monitor online policy projects. Employees who have been trained can form an online knowledge network to exchange experiences;
- Choose a suitable route (based on content, target group and employees) and start. Be open as an organisation and ask for feedback about the approach and shape of the route;
- Create room on the participation platform (Twitter for instance) where civil servants can give easily accessible status updates on ongoing projects. These can then be forwarded to sites run by involved communities or neighbourhood sites, for instance.

Iens is an online restaurant guide where visitors can rate and comment on restaurants they have visited.
See **www.iens.nl**

Battle of Concepts is a crowdsourcing platform where businesses and organisations invite answers to problems and put up a sum of money for the best solution. It is already used by government organisations.
See **www.battleofconcepts.nl**

Getsatisfaction offers a platform for an online customer service. Questions asked here may be supported, added to or answered by other users. Employees and their answers are identifiable.
See **www.getsatisfaction.com**

24. Involve citizens in implementing government tasks

Citizens' expertise, ideas and energy can be used not just in policy formation, but also in policy implementation and control. Citizens are everywhere and see a great deal. So how could this be used in business operations? I have already mentioned Verbeterdebuurt.nl as a platform where citizens can report instances of waste, vandalism or other damage in public areas. Iens.nl is used to comment on catering facilities, but the comments are not yet picked up by the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority. By offering low-barrier facilities for citizens to share their experience and observations, lots of expertise can be collected and processed.

- List the facilities available on the internet, for instance private initiatives or initiatives by other government organisations. Many of these can be instantly applied to one's own organisation;
- Collaborate with sites where you will find some of your target groups (for instance restaurant-goers on Iens.nl) and integrate room for responses and/or data sources in those facilities;
- Start a public online brainstorm session (for instance via the 'Battle of Concepts' site) to collate ideas on how crowd sourcing can be used and citizens involved in certain tasks (also see Ideastorm.com by Dell or MyStarbucksIdea.com by Starbucks);
- Select a number of ideas to make a quick start, to gain experience and to create dynamics;
- Invest in expertise on crowdsourcing and its use in implementation and supervision. Implementation and supervisory bodies should set up a separate expertise centre to develop concepts and coach departments;
- Offer people a platform where they can easily report their observations (for instance via a tag on Twitter or an email address to send photos to).

25. Create digital waiting rooms for online services

Government organisation desks deal with all questions individually. But not every question is unique. Some people may have the same question. Others may have found the answer already and no longer need the government's services. By creating a digital waiting room citizens can contact each other about a government service, help each other and share tips and ideas. Civil servants can participate in these conversations. A site like Getsatisfaction.com is a well-known platform for "people powered customer service". It eases the pressure on the helpdesk and automatically creates user communities.

- Create digital waiting rooms for the online services your organisation provides. Create room for people to form groups, ask questions, report complaints and respond;
- Enable employees to take part in these conversations (as regards support and coaching, as well as training) and make sure they are easily recognisable as spokesperson for the organisation;
- Draw conclusions from the conversations in the digital waiting rooms, and use these as input for the development of new services or adaptation of existing services.

26. Facilitate communities for your organisation's disciplines

There are many reasons why people want to form groups. To offer a service, for instance. Whatever your organisation is doing, there will always be people who want to be kept informed, who have a story to tell, or who have ideas or relevant expertise. There may well be suitable internet communities already (see Chapter 6). By offering people a platform for their interests, it is possible to collate this expertise, ideas and commitment, as Obama did when he introduced his healthcare plans. Offer people a platform where they can talk, facilitate communities, listen and learn.

- Offer a platform where people can gather around topics on politics, or policies drawn up for a particular area, neighbourhood or some other project. It doesn't matter whether the platform is initiated by a civil servant or a citizen, all that matters is that it is easily accessible;
- Support and facilitate online communities by offering them functionalities and a platform, as well as information, attention, points for discussion and coaching. Consider how a specific community is best served;
- The role of civil servant is increasingly that of community manager, facilitating online communities and discussions and using them in what the organisation does. This requires specific capacities and therefore specific training;
- The further development of the community is public too: be open about steps to be taken, involve members in developing the platform, etc. Make sure that conversations about the community actually take place on the platform and with members of the community;
- Stress that the discussions do not represent the organisation's views, but that the organisation wishes to stimulate social debates by offering a platform. Provide clear rules (like the ones used for Innovatie 2.0 at the Ministry of Economic Affairs);
- Draw conclusions from the discussions, participants backgrounds and user data and disseminate this expertise throughout the organisation. This provides valuable information for strategic and tactical decisions.

27. Remove obstacles for participation

The more people participate, the more information and data you will have and the more conclusions you can draw. People must be enticed to participate. Accessibility of information and sites is partly about technology, design and language (see the 'Web guidelines'), but also about atmosphere and incentives to take part and respond. There should be few obstacles to participation and it should be fun and familiar. This requires a new arrangement and flexible set-up that is able to expand as demands and insights grow (perpetual beta).

- Make the platform as accessible and easy as possible. Keep it simple (like Google). Not just the layout and text, but give clear tools to take part too ("Respond");
- Appeal to people, ask them questions, involve them in the discussion. In short, be a discussion leader and tempt people to take part;
- Usually, internet sites are laid out for the sole purpose of presenting

Dictionary: **community managers** are the facilitators and hosts of online communities that stimulate interactively, gauge the atmosphere and put developments on the agenda.

Webrichtlijnen.nl is a Dutch government site that lists 125 quality standards for accessibility which apply to all government websites.
See **www.webrichtlijnen.nl**

Dictionary: A **perpetual beta** because an internet site or service is never fully developed and because it can always be modified, there is never a definitive version (it remains as a beta version).

information. To enable an environment that stimulates conversation and collaboration, design a style that promotes participation;

- Also use other forms to involve people, like serious gaming. Be creative and find a form that best suits the topic and target group;
- Make sure that the most important sites and pages can be reached through simple and logical links (like cursus.ambtenaar20.nl or www. volkskrant.nl/binnenland) which people will find easy to refer to.

28. Ensure everything can be shared and distributed online

The amount of information and internet sites is growing, as is the number of channels with all parties vying for attention. Now everybody can publish. A free blog on WordPress is as accessible as a site that cost lots of time, effort and funds to build. In order to connect with people and involve them, use the fact that we can now all publish. A message that is distributed through a network has far more impact because the recipient has faith in the sender (someone you know). To achieve this effect, all obstacles to distributing links, texts or functionalities should be removed where possible. This enables you to connect to your product, services or brand and connects the participation platform to the public discussion online.

- Make everything on the site "*widgetable*" to allow others to distribute content online (like embedding YouTube video clips or buttons to add to Delicious, iGoogle or someone's blog);
- Use modular constructions based on standards;
- Make sections suitable for internal distribution, via the intranet, internal blogs and platforms;
- Actively transfer information and parts of the participation platform to people and groups, both online and offline. This requires a communication plan 2.0 designed in collaboration with the communication department;
- Study the "re-usability" of internet sites and platforms: how can reuse be stimulated on the site? Which components are shared the most and why? Which design, words and functions work best?
- Present employees, products or divisions as an recognisable, interactive brand on the internet;
- Work through networks: keep in touch with the nodes in the networks (key figures, moodmakers, etc.) to broaden the impact and reach more people.

29. Organise dynamics

An empty bar is no fun. The same goes for a participation platform. It needs liveliness, a dynamic atmosphere. To draw attention, keep communities active and create interaction. There must be a buzz, movement. This requires investments from a community manager, for instance by inviting people to contribute or organise something. Creating the right ambiance also helps, for instance by offering opportunities for personalisation and subscriptions (through mail or RSS). Both explicit and implicit (aggregated) information can be used (for instance best visited pages, "kijk ook eens op" (*also see*, etc.). The dynamics can also be used outside the organisation.

- Keep your platform alive and dynamic with regular updates and news. Keep it interesting and give people plenty of reason to come back again and again;
- Draw up a schedule for the site or group to present news on a regular basis and to keep the flow going;
- Involve members or people on site by assigning them a role. This stimulates people to come back and contribute;
- Organise events that require people to contribute, for instance a poll, a competition (for a good cause or to build or write something) or responses to topical issues;
- Make sure that civil servants active on the internet (or on other channels) are aware of what is being organised and what is available on the participation platform so they can incorporate links.

30. Use the input and provide feedback on the outcome

Many citizens are keen to think and talk about issues that interest or affect them, some of which come under our areas of activity. People devote time and money to contribute. And they like to see something in return. I don't mean that ideas should be instantly acted upon, but there should at least be some confirmation that they were heard. People can only work together if they trust and respect each other. Civil servants must be clear and authentic (also see the work principles in Chapter 10). Decide in advance your expectation strategy and afterwards provide feedback on was done with the contributions and why.

- Every contribution is valuable and must be visible and included (save of course foul language and irrelevant or even insulting language). Be very careful when removing or barring contributions. It is better to respond on the basis of arguments;
- Honesty and trust are crucial to establish the authenticity and values of an organisation or brand and to involve people and keep them involved. Develop a strategy to broaden the image and a plan to implement it;
- Make all contributions visible and don't hide anything;
- Think in advance about expectations management and indicate the position and phase of collaboration or discussion based on the positions of government and politics on this theme;
- Provide feedback. An online route runs from the very beginning to the very last step. Keep interested parties informed throughout the process, and tell them about decisions taken and progress made, and show them how input has been used.

Summary

A place where government and society, civil servants and citizens can work together to create solutions is a brand-new concept. Organisations need adapting, buildings are ill-fitted, and there are no online facilities. It is up to us to create them. We need platforms to locate what web 2.0 has to offer for co-creation and crowdsourcing. Civil servants and citizens must be given the instruments to get started and find new solutions and working methods. This is how we can bridge the gap with society.

This does require a different approach to work, both internally and externally. Support departments can provide support, but in the end, community management should be placed with the responsible department. It is up to government organisations to think about this carefully and develop a strategy. In short, there are four steps:

- Make information available online and provide access to what you do;
- Offer a platform for people to get together and contribute;
- Create dynamics to make the platform and information come alive and promote its distribution;
- Ensure that all input is processed and provide feedback on the result.

This is a new world for government and society, crucial if we want to develop into a government 2.0 and society 2.0. The question is not if we will tackle tasks together, but how and when. Professor Valerie Frissen recently talked about a new gap: between a society 2.0 that is already up and running and a government 2.0 that is just finding its feet. But it's not too late – these thirty action items will help government organisations catch up.

Someone at the Innovation Lecture 2008 (#IL08) proposed to crowdsource the innovation policy of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The Minister was very keen indeed. And of course – the news did the rounds instantly. More about this at http://twurl.nl/g0xuyg.

Example: Innovatie 2.0, an online community for policy processes

By Linda van Duivenbode

When the Ministry of Economic Affairs organised the 'Innovation Lecture' in 2008 we had no idea it would lead to "Innovatie 2.0". Our guest speaker Charles Leadbeater gave his view on the importance of using expertise inside and outside the organisation. He also indicated that there were plenty of communities on the internet applying these new forms of collaboration. It became an interesting discussing and soon the question was raised if the Ministry itself should also collaborate to establish its innovation policy. An excellent question!

Back at the office, we decided to explore the question with input from the Civil Servant 2.0 network. Using an approved plan of approach we launched the 'Innovatie 2.0' pilot. Without exploration, feasibility study, agenda or budget.

What did we want innovatie 2.0 to achieve?
We aimed to gather input for the policy development and along the way learn how web 2.0 tools (social network sites, forums, wikis) can be used for policy development. The aim was to:
- develop (building blocks for) innovation and policies to stimulate business in co-creation with participants;
- enhance familiarity with and support for innovation and business policy amongst the target group, as the policy would be developed in collaboration with the target group;
- provide the Ministry with a better insight into platforms and information communities on the internet, where individual policies are developed through co-creation;
- teach policy officials to use web 2.0 tools for policy development, so that online co-creation forms standard part of engaging stakeholders in policy development and it is embedded in the Policy Communication Guidelines (*Wegwijzer Beleidscommunicatie)*.

There is so much more to learn, but for now it is clear that web 2.0 has an important role to play in policy communication and formation, and knowledge management. The next step is ensuring 2.0 is rooted in the primary process.

What have we achieved?
A lot, looking back at the past year:
- We set up an '174Innovatie 2.0 – Community of Talents' group on LinkedIn as communication channel and discussion group. To be honest, we didn't expect it to be this successful. The group has nearly 3,000 members and organises its own meetings;
- At the meetings we asked for input for two policy issues. For one issue we received fifty very serious and detailed answers, and for the other a hundred over six week period;
- The sector is busy creating the *Creatieve Industrie* innovation programme. This is a long-term and more complex route that combines meetings and online dialogues;
- We used the Battle of Concepts network to complete a crowdsourcing concept route amongst students and young professionals (aged up to 30) about services innovation.

Some learning points
We now know that policy input can be obtained quickly and relatively easily. Web 2.0 is the perfect way to draw on external expertise. Input quality and quantity is highly dependent on the accurate definition of the issue and the ability to reach the target group. Enthusiasm is great, as is people's appreciation of a platform that enables a dialogue with government. For civil servants it is an opportunity to expand their network and share experiences. It enhances visibility and hopefully public understanding of the role of civil servants.

For the 2.0 approach to work, the organisation must be open to and able to deal with opinions that may be at odds with those of the establishment. In addition to input to specific policy issues, the discussion will also yield insight into how innovation is experienced by those actively involved. So how do we approach it (do we actually want to pick up on these signals?) and deal with it (the LinkedIn group has more than 100 discussions, some of which have dozens of responses)? Another point for attention is the choice of platform and instrument: policy employees should be enabled to use these new opportunities.

Rules set by the Ministry of Economic Affairs for Innovation 2.0

- The Ministry of Economic Affairs invites you to provide input to develop policies in these three subjects. The aim is to find novel solutions to concrete policy issues and to develop a more effective innovation and enterprise policy;
- Ministry employees are preparing a position for the Minister and are gathering information and opinions. Not every contribution by participants will be adopted. The position will eventually be decided by the Minister and feedback given to participants;
- We ask participants to provide an insight into who they are and what expertise they have. This also applies to civil servants who participate for the Ministry of Economic Affairs;
- Every participant in the discussion is responsible for what he or she posts. Participants cannot start discussions themselves. Participating civil servants will not join the discussion unless asked a question directly. In their answer they must give public and factual information only, not their personal opinion;
- The Ministry will not remove any posts, unless they are spam, i.e. everything that can be interpreted as recruiting, promoting and/or advertising for your business, product, service or meeting. If repeated, the participant who posted the spam will be excluded from the discussion.

See http://twurl.nl/7bzj1n

A strategy for government 2.0

Internet makes conversations possible, regardless of time and place. Conversations lead to collaboration, across borders. Collaboration can help us achieve our goals, with input from all over. Conversations, collaboration and processes may take place in society where we, as civil servants, can contribute. Conversations can touch upon internal issues, or bind people from across the organisation. Or they can be about challenges that are best tackled together, or provide a participation platform.

Every government organisation chooses its own strategy

These opportunities make for a fundamental change in how government and civil servants work. Civil Servant 2.0 discussed these changes and their consequences for government in detail. This book builds on this. It presents practical action items for government organisations to get started, to take part in public discussions on the internet, to enable internal online collaboration and to use the vast potential of citizens. The recommendations to the action items provide handles to implement government 2.0. However, this book is not a plan of approach.

Despite the correlation between the action items and underlying concepts, it is up to the organisations to put together a suitable strategy. This must take account of the organisation's tasks and principles, as well as its management, employees and culture.

The next step is defining a strategy to step up 2.0 efforts. Which route suits your organisation best? What would be your first action items? Which role do support departments, policy departments and implementation agencies play? Should you start with your own organisation, or outside your organisation? Which information sources can be put online? Whatever your strategy, clearly a government 2.0 should never be the sole responsibility of a Communications or ICT department. Work 2.0 demands organisational changes, cultural changes, and they will affect all those involved. So give careful thought to how work 2.0 can be incorporated in your day-to-day work, in existing processes. If it is presented as yet another gimmick, it has no chance of becoming engrained. Work 2.0 will only be used if it helps employees to operate efficiently and its added value is understood by the organisation.

It is also important to realise that a work 2.0 strategy should not focus on just one of the three worlds I discussed. After all, it's the correlation that gives the process its strength: civil servants who are active on the internet are also part of internal virtual teams. Widgets can be used to embed modules for online policy routes in communities to draw on the right expertise. These modules can also be used internally. A strategy requires a broad vision and approach to get government 2.0 off the ground (both online and offline). This book calls on all government organisations, administrators and civil servants to define a work 2.0 strategy.

And what can be done at the national level?

Each government organisation will have to devise its own government 2.0 strategy, tailored to the organisation. And what should be done to create a government 2.0 at the national level? National support could be given to the following two facilities:

- **platforms and modules**: everything on the internet can be shared and reused. Work methods and experiences can be shared, for instance via Civil Servant 2.0, and modules can be reused. Government organisations can share their modules, which can also be developed and prepared centrally;
- **advice teams**: sharing experiences and documents or asking questions on Civil Servant 2.0 can be very instructive, but it would be even greater if someone could come round to address the organisation and actually explain the concept. Compare these 2.0 teams to the EGEM iteams. Also, we can learn from developments abroad, like the US initiatives by president Obama and the first steps taken by Australia;
- **a Government 2.0 commission**: while it may not sound like the height of innovation, a commission is a good way of bringing together a broad group of people to prepare a national recommendation and put the topic on the agenda. Compare it to the Australian Gov 2.0 Taskforce. And of course this taskforce will work according to organisation 2.0 principles!

A fine call to action to conclude this section.

Internet Explorer 6 (IE6) is still the government organisation's standard internet browser. Not all sites are compatible with Internet Explorer 6, however. Outdated software prevents civil servants from working efficiently. Will you join me on my campaign to ban Internet Explorer 6?

Can organisations twitter?

I know there are stacks of manuals on how to use Twitter. But now there is a manual especially for civil servants. Or rather, for government organisations and their communication departments.
What do you think about twittering government organisations?

Of course, there are plenty of ministries and municipalities that twitter. But hang on – is it actually the organisations that twitter? No it isn't, it's people. Who is an active twitterer in an organisation? Well, it could be anybody. From ministers, mayors, town clerks and aldermen to every single civil servant, like you and me. Sometimes on private matters, sometimes on business, sometimes on a bit of both. Twitter is a personal medium you can use to communicate and converse. So how would this fit a government organisation?

Neil Williams, head of digital channels at the British Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, wrote a twenty-page manual: the 'Template Twitter strategy for Departments' http://twurl.nl/2bo4zv.

Key points

The document is based on the communication principles an organisation aims to achieve, namely:
- extend reach of corporate messages;
- provide an informal, 178human' voice of the organisation;
- provide thought leadership and credibility;
- exemplary use in social media;
- provide low-barrier interaction methods;
- provide ways for audiences to subscribe to updates;
- monitor mentions of the organisation and engage with critics and key influencers;
- provide live coverage of events or meetings.

It also presents a range of methods to gather evaluation data and looks at the risks, such as abuse (for instance hacking) or problems or changes in Twitter itself. These risks can impact negatively on the organisation and simply destroy whatever credit it built up. The tone of voice must be right. Williams lists a number of conditions for tweet content:

- varied: the channel will cover a broad base of content types and sources to retain interest levels;
- human: informal spoken language, no automated feeds;
- frequent: not too much or too little;
- retweetable: make it easy for others to retweet;
- timely: in keeping with the 'zeitgeist' feel of Twitter, tweets must be about issues of relevance today;
- credible: while tweets may occasionally be fun, they should have a relation back to the objectives;
- inclusive: signpost relevant content elsewhere and retweet messages from others;
- focused: make your subject the primary focus.

What else does the document describe?
- tips about the sort of information traffic on Twitter;
- illustrations of internet sites that compress web addresses;
- explanations for dm, retweet and hash tag;
- how to devote Twitter channels to campaigns for instance;
- importance of Twitter and number of users;
- Twitter addresses for government organisations, politics, media, etc. (in Great Britain);
- time devoted by other government organisations on Twitter;
- illustration of Twitter corporate policy.

The twenty-page article was written for communication departments all over. If your organisation wants to start using Twitter, this document will get you off to a good start!

Three items I missed

In the title I asked: 'Can organisations twitter?' Twitter means to chatter. In his manual Williams presents a range of methods to give organisations a human face, for instance by using informal language, answering questions or steering clear of automatically forwarding questions. Yet Williams chooses to remain an organisation rather than a human being (or group of people). This organisation is open nine to five, follows automatically and is anonymous. In short, this Twitter strategy for organisations skirts around a number of issues, including the following three:

- Publish who has access to the organisations Twitter account. We all know it's run by people, so show us who they are;
- Automated responses suggest the presence of a computer rather than a human being. Some people are relevant for an organisation to follow, and you can show this;
- It is not in the spirit of Twitter to leave queries, complaints or reports unanswered for hours or even days. The team could agree to monitor replies on a regular basis.

And what about the other employees?

Twitter has truly taken off, and most government organisation will have twittering employees. Of course, a corporate Twitter channel would be great, but remember that every employee on the internet is an ambassador for your organisation. They all have the same means at their disposal and probably use them all day. You must consider this when designing your own Twitter strategy.

Adding a new channel to the organisation's communication mix isn't difficult to do. But this is not what web 2.0 is about. The playing field is changing: government organisations are expected to take part in online conversations. The communication department is no longer the only one to represent the organisation. This has become something all employees do together. This is your new communication strategy.

For the British Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Twitter strategy, go to http://twurl.nl/x6js5t

Section III. Getting started as a Civil Servant 2.0

Handles for Civil Servants 2.0

The world is changing fast. This change might be more fundamental for civil servants than it is for other professions. Government organisations must invest in the 2.0 skills of civil servants. They cannot achieve this change overnight. Civil Servant 2.0 offers a range of methods to gradually introduce civil servants to the world of 2.0. I will discuss this in the first paragraph.

Since the publication of my first book, many have asked me how to start working as a Civil Servant 2.0 in their own organisation. What does it mean, being a Civil Servant 2.0? How is it different? To help, I have put together the civil servant 2.0 work principles. These are not behavioural guidelines, but a modern approach to get the most out of your work.

Many civil servants also want to know the dos and don'ts on the internet. Aside from the working principles, I have drawn up a number of practical pointers for Civil servant 2.0. As a civil servant you must observe a certain code of conduct. In the physical world, and on the internet. But online society also demands interaction by government. How do you deal with this? The Practical Pointers help.

The working principles and practical pointers mostly address the attitude and working method for Civil Servant 2.0. However, they say very little about the tools and online instruments that can support this way of working. In my first book, I listed a number of resources, and have included them in the last paragraph of this chapter as well.

Learning about Civil Servant 2.0

Lifehacking is a movement that encourages people to find practical mentors and tricks (online) to live life more efficiently. Pioneer Martijn Aslander calls it a mix between time management, knowledge management and personal development, with a dash of web 2.0.
See **www.lifehacking.nl**

A lot is being written about Civil Servant 2.0 and much more about web 2.0 in general. Some of it comes from the Civil Servant 2.0 members themselves. Drawing attention to how web 2.0 will affect government and civil servants is the first step. The next is actually working with it. This can be quite a step if you are new to the overwhelming options available. Civil Servant 2.0 offers a whole range of tools to learn more about 2.0 and how to use it, in your own work situation, or with your colleagues.

1. Read the book

The first Civil Servant 2.0 book is of course a very good start. It describes what web 2.0 is and what its implications are for government and for us as civil servants. It also presents a selection of cases and practical tips and sites. The book is available online, or can be ordered free of charge.

boek.ambtenaar20.nl

For more information, go to **boek.ambtenaar20.nl.**

2. Invite a speaker

To really get your message across, invite someone to explain it. If you are interested in web 2.0 and you wonder what the implications and opportunities are for you or your organisation, why not invite a speaker to discuss it in greater detail. This is where the Civil Servant 2.0 speaker network comes in. Complete the form, tell us what you are looking for and we will find you the right speaker. Go to **sprekers.ambtenaar20.nl** for more information.

sprekers.ambtenaar20.nl

3. Visit an informal coffee morning

An issue only comes alive if you can talk about it. With colleagues within your organisation, or elsewhere in government. Of course, you can use the Civil Servant 2.0 network site, but you can also visit one of the 2.0 events, like the informal coffee morning held in The Hague every other Monday, or the monthly 2.0 get-togethers or any of the other meetings throughout the country. Visit an event to meet others and discuss your ideas. For more information, go to **openkoffie.ambtenaar20.nl**.

4. Complete the course

If you would like to learn more about working with web 2.0, its culture, instruments and rules, the 'Work with web 2.0' course might be for you. It looks at the tasks and responsibilities of civil servants and gives examples in government. It is a practical course with plenty of room for discussion. For more information, go to **cursus.ambtenaar20.nl**.

5. Learn tips and tricks

The course will introduce you to a range of instruments you can use. But practice is always best. By collecting and sharing handy tips you can develop as Civil Servant 2.0. Lifehacking and work hacking for civil servants. For more information go to **tips.ambtenaar20.nl**.

6. Ask questions on the forum

If you have any questions about the use of the handy sites and instruments or about how you can use 2.0 for your project or organisation, post your question on the forum. The more than 2500 members of Civil Servant 2.0 are a huge resource of expertise, ideas and expertise about government 2.0, so you are bound to find someone who is able to help you. For more information, go to **forum.ambtenaar20.nl**.

7. Involve your colleagues

You can't start these new ways of working together on your own. You need others if you want to promote Civil Servant 2.0 in your own organisation:

- Contact us to exchange ideas: contact.ambtenaar20.nl;
- Publish an article on Civil Servant 2.0, your staff magazine or on the intranet: teksten.ambtenaar20.nl;
- Create a group for your organisation and invite your colleagues: groepen.ambtenaar20.nl;
- Organise a meeting with one of our speakers: sprekers.ambtenaar20.nl;
- Use material available to print and distribute: materialen. ambtenaar20.nl.

For more ideas and information, go to **organisatie.ambtenaar20.nl**.

For the Civil Servant 2.0 meetings go to the agenda: agenda.ambtenaar20.nl

openkoffie.ambtenaar20.nl

cursus.ambtenaar20.nl

tips.ambtenaar20.nl

forum.ambtenaar20.nl

organisatie.ambtenaar20.nl

Twitter is developing its own jargon to enable posts of up to 140 characters. Here Erik Jonker (RT) agrees with Niels Leerentveld that the tip by Evernote (@MyEn) on how to couple their program to Twitter, with a link to more information, was spot on. Erik retweets it to his Twitter network, and to his colleagues at the Ministry of the Interior on Yammer (#yam), which is like Twitter for internal use.

Working principles for civil servants 2.0

Colleagues at ministries, councils, provinces and water boards often tell me that they have read the book, but don't really know where to start. "I would quite like to, but those around me aren't into 2.0 yet." Things are a lot easier if your colleagues are already working as civil servants 2.0. But don't let it stop you if they aren't. Someone has to be the first, and it might as well be you. To help you along, I've drawn up ten "working principles for Civil Servant 2.0". In other words: how does a Civil Servant 2.0 work? In compiling the list I have tried to follow these working principles. It contains ideas generated by my network. Dozens of people have contributed through a range of instruments. Now it is about using these working principles in what the government does on a daily basis, by you as a civil servant. Make them work for you!

The working principles

1. Be open and be visible
2. Define your borders
3. Enable participation by others
4. The process is your product
5. Keep it clear and keep it simple
6. The whole picture is a sum of little parts
7. Life is live
8. Take the initiative
9. Go for solutions and results
10. Work is personal

But what do these principles mean?

1. Be open and be visible

If you want others to contribute, you must be open in what you do. Show what you are doing – be visible. After all, you never know what people may contribute, or where. Be open in your work and you will inspire trust and commitment. This will connect and involve people in your process, so they can join the process. It also makes you easy to find on the internet, and this will bolster your impact. It all starts with openness.

2. Define your borders

Borders don't exists, you choose them. Don't base your work on organisations, cases or job descriptions, but on people, themes and

The Noord-Brabant provincial authority has the working principles pinned to a wall where everybody can see them.
See **http://twurl.nl/m8jg27.**

networks. Focus on the subject and choose the right people. Ignore structures and use what you need to achieve your goal. But remember to define your own borders: your role, task and aim. Be realistic. Focus on your added value and strength and let others make up the rest.

3. Enable participation by others

Don't do anything alone, and enable others to contribute. Your network comprises people with expertise, ideas and energy. Use it. Whatever the contribution, whatever shape, whatever size. A small contribution by one person may prove vital to somebody else. And don't just be open to this, but support it. What platform or tools should you offer for others to contribute? You are the process facilitator.

4. The process is your product

Nothing is ever ready - it all starts the moment you do. And this is when your work starts: make it visible and involve others. Even the very first idea can prove the start of a much bigger process. Then let it grow and expand on it until the product has taken hold. You can always go one step further. So make sure that you continue to adjust and improve whatever you do. After all, the world around you never stops.

5. Keep it clear and keep it simple, whatever you do

Make sure your work is accessible. Keep barriers low so others can use your work and take part. Take them by the hand and show them around step-by-step. The fewer barriers, the more people you can involve. See the world from the perspective of your target group and make things as easy as they can possibly be. And don't forget – being clear saves time: continue to ask questions, make it transparent, communicate accurately and relevantly and define opportunities and expectations..

6. Little parts make up a whole

Think big, but work small. Little steps help you get a long way. *Frapper toujours!* A step-by-step approach promotes flexibility, enabling you to adapt your course to new developments. By visualising smaller parts they are picked up more easily. Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Every little bit counts.

7. Life is live

Time or space do not exist on the internet. Virtually, you could be anywhere, anytime. Make sure you're there where it happens, where other people are. Take a step back to view society online and see how it works. Look beyond the chaos and find the patterns. Patterns that will allow you to follow the developments that are accelerating all the time. If you want to play a role in this, you will have to keep up. Time to speed things up!

8. Take the initiative

If you have an idea, take action. Don't wait for others, but don't exclude them either. By taking the initiative, you define the playing field. Others can join you there, sooner or later. Use your creativity, experiment and learn. You can only learn through practical experience. This requires entrepreneurship: the will to achieve something, to improve government little by little. And it starts with you.

9. Go for solutions and results

Be positive, see opportunities. There are more opportunities than you may expect, but you must organise them. Keep your eyes peeled for risks and hurdles, and work towards solutions. In the end it is not about your work, but about the impact you have, concrete and practical. Make progress and achieve goals. This means you can achieve practical results with your work that are of use to others.

10. Work is personal

The government is about people. Don't be afraid of showing the person behind your position. Respond if you are addressed and be open, honest and you. Social interaction conventions apply to your position and the internet too. Bring your personality to work, because that is what makes you strong. Use your capacities, your commitment, your input and your network and be unique. Apply your personal motivation, but remember to take a step back to look at the bigger picture every now and again!

Floor Drees prepares for an interview and uses crowdsourcing to collect questions.

The dos and don'ts of civil servants on the internet

By Pierre Deen

After learning about web 2.0 and its discussions, your challenge is of course to put this new expertise into practice. Not just working with other civil servants, but elsewhere too, on the internet. Society increasingly relies on a responsive and interactive government. What is the role we must play as civil servant? What can we do and say online? What should we address? This is where the Civil Servant 2.0 Practical Pointers come in.

The Practical Pointers section comprises three parts:
• The frameworks: codes of conduct for civil servants and where to find them;
• The Practical Pointers: five guidelines to help you operate as a civil servant online;
• Frequently asked questions: questions and answers that may help you.

The frameworks and Practical Pointers are set out below. The frequently asked questions are available online. There is also a discussion forum for any other questions you may have. Go to **handreiking.ambtenaar20.nl.**

"Freedom of speech applies to all. Civil servants can use Twitter, as long as their comments do not conflict with their responsibilities."

Minister Maxime Verhagen responds to a question asking whether civil servants are permitted to use twitter.

Frameworks: the code of conduct for civil servants

Like other employees, civil servants must observe certain rules and regulations. These provide the frameworks within which civil servants operate. They also apply to the use of social media like blogs and discussion forums. Below are rules and frameworks we as civil servants must observe.

The Dutch Central and Local Government Personnel Act, Section 125a

The Dutch Central and Local Government Personnel Act sets out the rights and obligations of civil servants. Section 125a focuses on public servants expressing their opinions in the public domain:

1. "The civil servant shall refrain from making public any ideas or emotions or exercising the right to unite, to meet and to demonstrate, if due to such exercising of rights the adequate performance of his position or the proper functioning of the public service, where related to his position, cannot reasonably be assured.
2. As regards the right of union, the first paragraph shall not apply to membership of: a. a political grouping whose appellation is registered in accordance with the Elections Act, or b. a union.
3. The civil servant shall be obliged to keep confidential all that comes to his attention in his professional capacity, where the obligation of confidentiality arises from the nature of the case."

Instructions for civil servants and external contacts

A dispute between the Minister of Justice and the Public Prosecutor's office in 1988 was extensively communicated through the media, and ultimately led to the 'instructions for civil servants and external contacts'.

These were informally known as the *Ukase Kok*, which would suggest

civil servants and their room to manoeuvre were placed under tight control. In practice, it wasn't. Rather, it is a modern interpretation of Section125a of the Dutch Central and Local Government Personnel Act applied: "First and foremost, the instructions aim to create more clarity on how civil servants and third parties are expected to act in functional contacts. Also, the new instructions aim to create more clarity about the validity of the basic right of free speech when civil servants act as private persons or otherwise. By providing more clarity the new instructions aim to promote free speech by civil servants. In a democratic constitutional state it is important that civil servants feel no undue reservation when presenting their views on subjects affected by government policy. In practice most issues arise in contacts between (members of) the States General and civil servants, which is why the updated instructions focus on these contacts."

General Public Service Regulations (ARAR)

The ARAR follows from the Dutch Central and Local Government Personnel Act and stipulates the material rights and obligations of civil servants working for government. The Regulations do not comprise any stipulations on comments made in the public space or how to deal with external parties.

Practical Pointers for civil servants online

The **British 'Principles** for participation online' are available at **http://twurl.nl/rukuyq**

All of these rules also apply to the internet where civil servants must behave as such. I don't think I need to elaborate on this. But a new environment sets new standards with new expectations and circumstances. The Practical Pointers for Civil Servant 2.0 aim to address these issues and give some guidelines. They are partly based on the British 'Principles for Participation Online'.

Be credible

As a civil servant you are accurate, fair, thorough and transparent in one-on-one contacts and during open discussions with several participants. Whatever comments you make, you make them on behalf of the organisation.

Be consistent and constructive

Your behaviour and attitude towards others must be consistent. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation.

Be open and responsive

Share your expertise and be specific about which information or anything else you need from others. Where possible refer to others. Show you are listening. Make it clear that you act on behalf of your organisation.

Be integrated

Wherever possible, align online participation with other offline communications (*multi-channel*). Align your participation on the internet with your regular (offline) activities. Document your contributions. Make time for online participation – it takes time.

Be a civil servant

Remember that you are an ambassador for your organisation. Wherever possible, behave as a good civil servant and be careful, honest and reliable.

And remember:

- The Practical Pointers Civil Servant 2.0 are about your online participation as a civil servant. Act as you would when dealing with other media or public appearances, for instance when speaking at a congress;
- Disclose your role as a representative of your department or agency unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a potential threat to personal security. Never give out personal details like home address and phone numbers;
- Participation online results in your comments, personal too, being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply;
- This means that you should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of your organisation unless you are authorised to do so;
- Also be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, So proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or in a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice from your colleagues, line manager or the Communications department;
- Many organisations have an internet code. Find it and stick to it. For more information, go to the Frequently Asked Questions, the Practical Pointers section.

Or post your questions on the associated forum, which you will find at handreiking.ambtenaar20.nl.

"I would love to comment on the declining number of hospital orders imposed, but alas, I'm a civil servant on this subject ..."

Example: identifying a complaint via Twitter

Gemeente Den Haag. De ambtenaar die me hielp, kende het woord 'mevrouw' kennelijk niet en sprak me voortdurend aan met 'schoonheid'.

HannyKraa
Hanny Kraa

"The Hague Council. It seemed that the civil servant serving me didn't know the word for "miss" as he kept referring to me as "gorgeous"."

You can use the internet to keep track of what people are saying about your organisation.

@andremiddendorp Is dit een klacht? http://twurl.nl/3p43bw

davied
Davied

"Is this a complaint?"

I read the tweet and pointed it out to some fellow civil servants at the Municipality of The Hague.

Wil ik zelf zo geholpen worden? Nee! Dus behandelen als een klacht... @davied: @andremiddendorp Is dit een klacht? http://twurl.nl/3p43bw

gwm
Gert-Willem v Mourik

"Do I want to be served like this? No! So treat as complaint."

Someone then reported the incident to the department head.

What 2.0 instruments do I use?

Web 2.0 (or "social media") is the name for a new generation of sites on the internet that enable people to collect or share information online, converse with others, and collaborate. For instance, check out go2web20.net where you will find a staggering amount of web 2.0 tools and applications. If you know where to find the ones you need, you can really increase your elbow room. It's what I did.

Go2web20 publishes a comprehensive list of existing and new 2.0 sites. Go to **www.go2web20.net**

By using a range of 2.0 sites and instruments, I became both more efficient and more interactive in my work. I can now process more information and find the information I need faster. I also share more and

www.gmail.com is Google's online email program. It does not offer a facility to place information in folders, but it uses labels (tags), stars (favourites) and a fast search engine to put information in order. Messages are grouped by conversation and handy functionalities can be added via plug-ins.

www.ning.com is an internet service that enables users to start their own social network site. Others can join this site, or use it for discussions, blogging, etc.

Dictionary: **RSS feed**, the stream of information users can integrate in their page (e.g. Netvibes) to keep up-to-date with the news.

www.frankwatching.com is an influential blog aimed at marketing, the New Way of Working and web 2.0.

www.thenextweb.com is blog with an international focus about developments on the internet and in web 2.0.

Dictionary: A **retweet** is forwarding another person's message (tweet) to one's own followers.

www.google.com/alerts offers a personalised search engine based on selected words (your name for instance). When the search engine finds a page that contains this specific word, you receive an alert by email or RSS.

search.twitter.com is the Twitter search engine. The search engine will also find recent messages, which allows you to follow live discussions on a subject or tag (e.g. the De verslaglegging (the report) during Open Koffie events on **http://search.twitter.com/ search?q=openkoffie**). The results page is also available as an RSS feed.

www.delicious.com is an internet service where users can store and share their favourite internet sites and consult them from any computer.

collaborate more. Both have helped me achieve more. Of course, I haven't changed, but I have been able to get more out of the qualities I already had. What makes 2.0 instruments work for me is that they help me to:

- collate and record information,
- share expertise and distribute ideas,
- make contact and communicate
- collaborate and organise.

Based on these categories, I will present my story.

Screenshot Gmail

Collating and recording information

I use two dashboards, Gmail and Netvibes. I use Gmail for my emails as well as reports on, for instance, new followers on Twitter or responses to discussions I participate in (on Ning or LinkedIn). I use a filter to assign the information to groups so it doesn't clog up any one inbox. A Gmail plug-in then publishes these messages in separate windows next to the inbox, where I can see them from the corner of my eye, and decide whether I want to read them later.

But my real dashboard is Netvibes.com. This is where I collect a number of RSS feeds. A slow feed with a number of blogs of people I find interesting and a fast feed with online magazines that publish regularly. But I rarely look at these, for two reasons: I now follow relevant sites like Frankwatching and TheNextWeb through their messages on Twitter. And more importantly: I rely on my "social filter". If someone from my network retweets an article on Twitter or blogs about it, chances are it is relevant for me too!
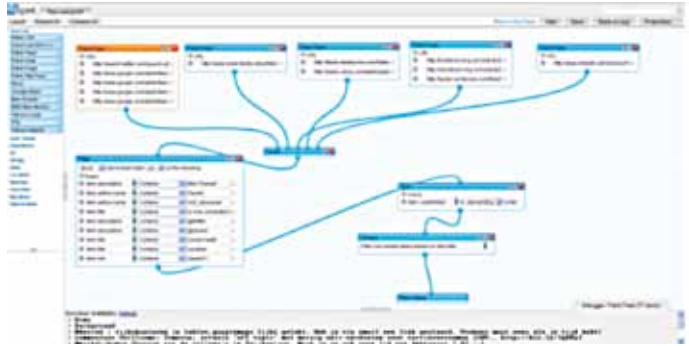
I also search information on the basis of search words or key words. Google Alerts sends me a report whenever my name pops up somewhere on the internet. Twitter Search does the same for my name, my employer's name and Civil Servant 2.0. Delicious is used by hundreds of thousands of people to store their favourite links.
Anyone who uses the tag "government2.0" or similar is likely to be of interest to me. You can mark feeds for all of these sources and search results and display them in Netvibes or Google Reader. But even a dashboard can get swamped in RSS feeds. You can easily bundle one steam with other streams to make a wide river of information. Use

www.google.com/reader is Google's RSS reader. It allows you to keep track of, and bundle various RSS feeds to keep track of developments in dozens or more internet sites.

pipes.yahoo.com is a platform for building applications online in a simple and transparent manner. The result can be embedded in other sites.

Yahoo Pipes for instance. This is where I combine the streams or pipes of information, remove duplications, filter for words (if the author is me, I don't have to see what I wrote) and put everything into one, encompassing RSS feed. I probably use just 1% of everything a site like Pipes offers, but at least it saves me lots of time.

Screenshot Yahoo Pipes

Share knowledge and distribute ideas

Civil Servant 2.0 started with a blog I wrote to test my ideas on web 2.0 for government and to receive feedback. I chose to use WordPress, a free blog programme without advertising. There are two options. Either you can place your blog with your own provider (download the software yourself and re-install it) or you can have your blog stored at WordPress. All you need to do is find a name and you are set to go. All it means is that you have fewer opportunities to add functionalities.

www.feedburner.com enables you to send newsletters automatically as soon as a new message appears on the site. Feedburner offers many formatting options, planning facilities and subscriber management options. People may take out or cancel their subscriptions when required.

Of course, you can subscribe to new blogs and the responses via RSS. But there is so much more. Feedburner allows you to generate an automatic mailing list and keep score of how many people subscribe. Twitterfeed can help to place your every blog on Twitter via RSS feed. Or you can make your own mailing list via MailChimp. You can take out a subscription to boek. ambtenaar20.nl on my mailing list if you want to be updated of how Civil Servant 2.0, the book, is coming along.

www.twitterfeed.com enables users to send information from an RSS feed to Twitter. New blogs, for instance, can be twittered automatically. A new twitter news service can be set up for any subject by combining various feeds from sites and distributing them via dedicated twitter channels.

Twitter is as multifunctional as a white sheet of paper. To me, Twitter is just all around. I also use it to share and distribute expertise. And I retweet interesting twitter messages, just like blogs and sites which have caught my eye. If you want to know what happens in the area of government and web 2.0, all you need to do is follow me on Twitter (which is automatically linked to Facebook and Hyves). I use Twitter to let you know what I am doing and the things I find important. I put other relevant sites on Delicious, which can now also forward links to Twitter.

www.flickr.com and **www.picasa.com** are internet sites where users can place and share photos. Many of the photos are publicly accessible, and sometimes even reusable (under a Creative Commons licence). Flickr is part of Yahoo, Picasa of Google.

But there is more than text alone. I have also posted photos on Flickr and Picasa, video clips on YouTube and *Vimeo*. If I find something worth taking a photo or video of along the way somewhere, I will immediately forward it to the Civil Servant 2.0 email using the pda (the photo gallery on Ning) or to MobyPicture, which forwards the photo to Twitter and Hyves. Presentations are published on Slideshare, but usually on Scribd, where I also publish lots of documents as well as usable materials for whoever

wishes to promote Civil Servant 2.0. And all of these photos, videos and documents can then be embedded in other sites, for instance my blog.

Making contact and communicating

I am very active on the internet and therefore easy to find. Look for my first name, and you will see you can contact me in many ways: via Twitter, LinkedIn, Civil Servant 2.0, etc Being easy to find is important. It generates new contacts and expertise. I also have my own site, www.davied.nl. Not much is happening there, just some links to other sites where I can be found and a little information about me. The site makes it easier to find me, but to make contact and communicate I prefer to go to wherever there are people. I am also on Hyves and Facebook because this is where I find many of my friends and acquaintances and because there are a lot of interesting things going on. For my work contacts and my curriculum vitae you need to go to LinkedIn. It is important to keep my CV updated here so others can see how I can be of help. I do not approve every request to link, only those sent by people I know, or who I work with in some way or other. I have also joined a number of groups, although I am not very active there.

The LinkedIn groups are a success. While Civil Servant 2.0 aims to be present on all sorts of platforms, the LinkedIn group is a hub of activity. I meet many people on the Civil Servant 2.0 network site. The site is built using Ning. You can use Ning to simply build your own network site around a specific theme and you will end up with a group where everyone shares the same interest. The Civil Servant 2.0 group has some 2500 members, but there are networks that are much larger. Most members also present a profile, so you know instantly who you are dealing with. A Twitter counter is also handy: if you add this to your site, you can see exactly which twitterers (*tweeps*) are reading your site.

Dictionary: A **dm** is a message in Twitter that is not visible to all, but is sent from one person to another. Dm is short for direct message.

Dictionary: **Instant messaging,** or chat, is having a conversation by sending short text messages between people who are online at the same time.

If I want to contact people directly, I still use email a lot, although not as much as I used to. Sending messages via LinkedIn, Ning, Hyves or Twitter (through a dm) is just as easy. I don't really restrict myself to any one particular resource anymore. During the day I mostly communicate via Twitter. It don't really chat (instant messaging) via MSN Messenger and I use Skype only when my parents are abroad. I find the programs take up too many resources to install and start. Google Talk is easier, and simply works through your browser and in Gmail. For video calling I could perhaps use Tokbox more, which is now also available online.

Screenshot LinkedIn

addons.mozilla.org is the site where add-ons or plug-ins can be added to the Firefox browser. There are more than 5000 additions to adapt Firefox to what you are working on.

Dictionary: A **wiki** is online software that allows individuals to work on one document and where every amendment is logged.

www.pbworks.com is a free online wiki. It is easy to use and has no advertising (unlike **www.wetpaint.com**).

groups.google.com is a platform to start your own mailing list. An e-mail sent to the mailing list is distributed to all members on the list. A record of all messages is stored online.

www.friendfeed.com is a versatile internet site to subscribe to messages posted by others, to set up groups and to have discussions.

docs.google.com is an online word processing program, where documents can be written and shared with others. Other versions of the program enable people to collaborate on spreadsheets, presentations, forms, etc.

www.mindmeister.com is an online program for drawing up mindmaps. The mindmaps can be shared with others or be published, enabling others to contribute to the brainstorm.

www.surveymonkey.com offers lots of opportunities to place surveys online and manage, interpret or distribute the outcome.

www.wufoo.com is a site to build and manage multifaceted forms for a variety of purposes

Collaborating and organising

As my network is located all over the Netherlands, I have no choice but to work online. And unless someone is directly opposite me in the same room, it is always easier to contact somebody online than actually getting up and walking over.

The browser I use, even at work, is Firefox. Two plug-ins make Twitter even easier than it already is. Twitterbar allows me to post communications via the address bar in my browser. Echofon (used to be Twitterfox) shows messages at the bottom right of your monitor, where you can just see it. I feel as if I'm always working with dozens of people. Collaboration is not always possible in short messages. Sometimes you need to work together on a joint text or plan. Wikis are ideal for this. I write most of my texts in wikis, so that others can make amendments and provide input while I am writing. For those who are actively involved in Civil Servant 2.0 there is a so-called "workplace". It stores and updates background texts and it is used to work out ideas and projects. People also use it to write texts (like the weekly mailing). For the work place we use Wetpaint, but Pbworks also works very well as a wiki.

Civil Servant 2.0 also has a group of volunteers who do maintenance jobs. This group stays in touch through a send list in Google Groups. A mail addressed here is automatically sent to all board members, and records are kept. FriendFeed is used for engineering functions. It is like an online discussion flow that can be followed via mail or RSS for instance. Besides the workplace wiki, Google Docs is also sometimes used to collaborate on texts. But usually group members simply join the discussions or the responses on Ning.

The Mindmeister mindmaps have been a firm favourite of mine for some time. I use them to structure ideas, but also to gather contributions from others. After preparing a layout in Mindmeister, I open the mindmap and invite people on Twitter to add ideas or comments. I then work out the ideas in a wiki (open again), and write a blog. But there are other ways in which you can gather expertise and contributions from others too. For instance, open a survey on Surveymonkey or create a form in Wufoo. All answers are stored in a dedicated database.

Screenshot Mindmeister

Go with the resources that help you along

These are all the sites and programs I use on a regular basis. A long list. The list is so long you might not see the wood for the trees. It's important you are selective in what you use. You will learn something new every time, something you can add to you toolbox. Everything I have listed is free (sometimes with advertising) and you can use it without having to be too much of a techie. A little common sense, an undaunted approach and a bit of a feel for computer programs will get you a long way. And if you don't succeed, there are plenty of online forums where you can post your question, like tips.ambtenaar20.nl.

More important than knowledge of all of these tools are social skills. Because while they may be different online than they are in the physical world, basically, you are still dealing with people. Behind every Twitter account, behind every response, behind every blog and behind every site there is someone like you and me. Someone you can reach through these social media, but to really get in touch and collaborate, you will have to make an effort.

If you are a civil servant and if you would like to learn more about working with web 2.0, go to cursus.ambtenaar20.nl.

Screenshot Netvibes

What does web 2.0 mean for ICT departments?

Organisations are increasingly active on the internet and this presents new challenges, for bandwidth for instance. But web 2.0 and the many applications available on the internet (cloud computing) also present strategic questions for ICT departments.

Any sizeable organisation, public or private, may be dealing with anything up to hundreds of applications and software programs. Not just Windows and Word, but all sorts of large and small business systems, server software and databanks. The licences, maintenance and installation of updates all cost a lot of money. Moreover, knowledge must be logged and programs must be compatible.

Over the past few years, ICT departments have aimed to limit the number of applications. Whenever they received a request for a new application, they always looked to see if existing applications could be used. It seems logical that the random downloading of freeware or shareware is not stimulated. After all, it can pose security, liability and management risks.

Why use online software?
New applications are assessed for their functionality. To access internet sites, you have a browser. Most ministries use Internet Explorer 6. To write documents, you have a word processing programme, usually Microsoft Word. Until recently, you had to make do with what they gave you. You had no choice. But with web 2.0 has come access to online word processing programs, software as a service, like Zoho Writer and Google Docs. The choice is yours!

Of course, there are benefits to using standardised products: all of your colleagues use them and you can call your ICT department for support. So why use an online Word? Well, you might find it handier as it allows you to work more efficiently, or because it offers more options. For instance, Google Docs allows you to collaborate with others on documents, even outside your own organisation. This is a functionality your standard work station doesn't offer.

Circle or Ning?
Of course, you could argue: why would an ICT department worry about these sites that are all outside the organisation? But it's not that simple. There are security issues, as well as archiving, training, support and exchange issues. The use of software on the internet is the user's own responsibility to a large degree: that your passwords are secure, that you record and file developments and decisions in policy development for instance, etc. if you use your own software, this cannot be arranged for you.

So what do you do? Wait until the ICT department offers the functionality? Rijksweb, the government's intranet, offers a wiki functionality, but is not very user friendly. A lot of time and effort has also been put into "Circles", used for online discussions and collaboration (like Ning). Apart from the fact that you cannot use it to collaborate outside the central government, these functionalities will never be able to keep up with developments on the internet. That is where it's all happening.

Action items for the ICT department
In short, I believe that the use of online software and 2.0 sites by civil servants will continue to grow for now: because it offers functionalities internal software cannot provide, because people like to choose for themselves how and what they can use to perform the best they can and because it is virtually impossible to keep up with developments on the internet. ICT departments will have to consider how to handle this. What will be their strategy?

It is difficult to mention every singly aspect, but I would like to mention two possible approaches. First, there are a number of major resources many civil servants already use, like Google Docs and Ning.

It makes sense to look at the security of these providers and grant approval or points for attention (like the Ministry of Agriculture does for SocialText, which is used for the work 2.0 pilots). In studying such sites attention must be paid to:

- **connection security:** is it possible to establish safer https connections to prevent interception of information between your computer and the site?
- **service security:** how is information stored by a service provider, how are back-ups made, who has access to which information?
- **information management in Europe:** the American government has access to databanks in US territory, including internet sites. Is it possible to use a databank in Europe?
- **is the provider future-proof:** of course, any provider could fold, but start-ups might be slightly more prone.

I believe these are issues ICT departments can address now. But they will also need to focus on the new situation for the long term, for instance by:

- signing contracts with providers, for instance about additional security measures, about the use of a specific part of the site or about hosting the service internally on the organisation's own network;
- giving new training sessions and information to users, for instance about security, archiving and of course the use of the service itself;
- organising management and support and training the helpdesk in supporting key online services;
- integrating online facilities in the organisation's own environment, for instance periodic back-ups, the use of handy plug-ins and add-ons.

Support for civil servants online?

So far I have mostly discussed the use of online software: sites that offer handy functionalities to collaborate. But civil servants are also active on other sites, when they respond to blogs, take part in discussion forums or make changes to Wikipedia. These responses are scattered all over the internet, they're not confined to a single site. Again this raises certain issues. How can you as a civil servant keep track of your responses? What if these responses are amended by the site manager?

Again the ICT department can help, for instance through software that collects and stores online responses and posts. Not so that the boss can check them, but so you have an insight in what you've written and can manage your activities online.

One such site is BackType. Very handy, but it can be used on the internet only. But is BackType secure? Is the company future-proof? There's busy times ahead for the ICT department!

Chido seems to have lost some text he had just typed online (a response to a blog) as the service went down just as he sent it. Ingmar refers to a tip in Civil Servant 2.0 book on how to prevent this from happening again.

What will come after Civil Servant 2.0?

Lots of people ask me this. What will come after Civil Servant 2.0? Some call it Civil Servant 3.0. After all, there is a web 3.0, isn't there? Some even jokingly say that this is the year for version 2.009. An initiative has been launched to start government 1.7, as 2.0 is aiming too high. Whatever the case may be: if this is Civil Servant 2.0, surely there's something that will follow it?

What is web 3.0?

Web 1.0 was the internet of information, of digital brochures and forms. The name came later, as the term web 2.0 was first introduced. The term was launched to indicate that things were changing on the internet. That was an internet of people, a social web, where every internet user could be heard, could discuss with others, make contributions to online encyclopaedias, etc.

Once the term web 2.0 was established, there had to be a web 3.0 of course. A number of developments on the internet are referred to as web 3.0: three-dimensional environments like Second Life, mobile and geographic services (GPS), networks in-house and in your direct environment *(*ambient intelligence*)* and computer generated input in a real-live environment *(*augmented reality*)*. In short, it affects all developments before us. But usually web 3.0 refers to the semantic web.

Web 3.0 in the sense of a semantic web is an image of the internet where information on concepts or individuals is combined to provide a comprehensive image. This is in contrast to information online now which is scattered across many different sites. Just think where information about you can be found.

Will there be a Civil Servant 3.0?

Developments on the internet, and therefore in society, affect how government works. For every technical development, we must consider how it would impact on how government works. Web 3.0 *is* a technical development. One that may raise questions about privacy and security, but one also that is not expected to have a huge social impact.

This is where the difference with web 2.0 and social media lies. These technological innovations are interesting and useful, and their social implications far-reaching. Internet users can express and organise themselves through a whole range of facilities. The balance between businesses and consumers, but also between government and citizen has changed fundamentally. This requires new concepts, new methods and a new approach by civil servants.

So will there be a Civil Servant 3.0? No. First let's understand what 2.0 means for government. This presents a big enough challenge for us now. Let's start with Civil Servant 2.0 beta.

The Government 1.7 initiative was launched at the Government 2.0 congress of 4 December 2008 .
See **www.government17.nl**

Dictionary: **Second Life** is a 3D environment where users can create characters, arrange landscapes and buildings and interact with each other.

Dictionary: **Ambient intelligence**, also known as the internet of things, is an electronic environment where devices work in concert through wireless networks to support people in carrying out their every-day activities.

Dictionary: **Augmented reality** is the addition of computer generated input (like internet images) in a real-live environment (visible via webcam for instance).

Appendices

About Pleio (Government Square)

If we want to build a government 2.0 we require a government-wide platform for cooperation, a place where you can easily book an online meeting room for the people you work with which transcends organisational boundaries. That's why Civil Servant 2.0 started Pleio, or Government Square. And at the same time we're cutting costs!

Offering a platform

This book describes various ideas for government initiatives to put 2.0 initiatives into practice. However, often there is no platform available to support these initiatives, either within or outside the organisation. Pleio meets this need. It is a platform for Dutch civil servants to meet each other, have discussions and work together with people from their own organisation or across organisational boundaries. But it is also a place to deal with issues together with members of the public.

Working in networks

What does this mean in practice? Civil servants work together in various teams, groups and networks. On Pleio they can bring the right people together to collaborate on a project or problem, from inside government or outside. Both civil servants and members of the public can create an account and make use of the facilities. One can, however, make a distinction in accessibility: for colleagues within an organization, for all civil servants or for everyone.

Collaborative approach

Pleio is freely available for all civil servants and all government organizations. A number of organizations have built an internal subsite to use as an intranet 2.0, others are using Pleio to involve citizens. Pleio has been built using open source software so all additions built by agencies are added to the "app store" and can be used by other agencies as well. By using a central platform and reusable applications the Dutch government wants to bring down software expenditure.

For more information visit www.pleio.nl.

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*To read more about web 2.0, go to the Civil Servant 2.0 database at
kennisbank.ambtenaar20.nl.*

Overview of shortened internet addresses

The Civil Servant 2.0 books contain various internet addresses that have been shortened for the purposes of presentation and ease of reading. This page contains an overview of all the shortened links in Civil Servant 2.0 and Civil Servant 2.0 beta. The full internet address is listed beneath each shortened link. This overview is also available on the site boek. ambtenaar20.nl.

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http://twurl.nl/wodhx2
http://ambtenaar20.ning.com/video/clay-shirky-its-not

Page 150, Discussiegroep Handreiking Ambtenaar 2.0
http://twurl.nl/evrzww
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Page 152, RIVM, Dossier HPV Vaccinatie
http://twurl.nl/fbhjii
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Page 153, Year-End Zeitgeist
http://twurl.nl/7t5w7c
http://www.google.com/intl/en/press/zeitgeist/yearend.html

Page 168, Flickr.com, Nationaal Archief
http://twurl.nl/1feid5
http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationaalarchief/
sets/72157622500820677

Page 168, Public Sector Information Unlocking Service (beta)
http://twurl.nl/ozvhpr
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Page 168, Open Government Data Principles
http://twurl.nl/zo87m2
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Page 173, Balletjes kunnen snel rollen
http://twurl.nl/g0xuyg
http://ambtenaar20.ning.com/profiles/blogs/balletjes-kunnen-
snel-rollen

Page 179, Twitter policy
http://twurl.nl/x6js5t
http://www.bis.gov.uk/twitter-policy

Page 184, De 10 werkprincipes van Ambtenaar 2.0
http://twurl.nl/m8jg27
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Ambtenaar-20

Page 187, Ambtenarenwet
http://twurl.nl/m4j83b
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Page 187, Aanwijzingen inzake externe contacten van rijksambtenaren
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contacten-van-rijksambtenaren.html

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Dictionary

All terms new to the text are explained in the margin and listed in this dictionary.

Ambient intelligence — also known as the internet of things, is an electronic environment where devices work in concert through wireless networks to support people in carrying out their every-day activities;

API — application programming interface, a set of agreements through which sites and computers can work together to exchange information;

Augmented reality — is the addition of computer-generated input (like internet images) in a real-live environment (visible via webcam for instance);

Beta version — is a draft version of new software that is operational, but that is perfected as it is being used;

Blog or web log — is a report or description of something you are doing that you want to share with others and invite reaction to;

Co-creation — is working towards a joint product, not by means of a sequential process but by contributing simultaneously;

Cloud computing — refers to the use of IT services on the internet rather than software on one's own computer or network;

Community — online community where participants exchange knowledge, debate or collaborate on a particular subject;

Community managers — are the facilitators and hosts of online communities that stimulate interactively, gauge the atmosphere and put developments on the agenda;

Crowdsourcing — "outsourcing to the crowd", in other words outsourcing tasks to people outside the organisation who have the right expertise or solution;

Digital natives — are people born after 1985. This generation grew up with computers and the internet and regards the digital world as a given;

Dm — Direct Messages that can be sent to individual users. These are private and can only be seen by the sender and recipient;

Embedding — integrating information or an application (*widget*) from one site to another site, such as a YouTube video clip in a blog;

Geocoding — adding positioning details such as coordinates or postcodes, to put an object or event on the map;

Guerrilla marketing — uses short, inspiring and fun actions to get the target group interested in a new product or idea;

Hash tag another word for tag, mostly used on Twitter to associate updates with a particular event;

The New Way of Working is a movement whereby organisations are arranged more flexibly and person-oriented in order to boost the productivity of knowledge workers;

Instant messaging or chat, is having a conversation by sending short text messages between people who are online at the same time;

LinkedIn is a social networking site for professional contacts that enables online contacts, maps out networks and helps form discussion groups;

Long tail the is the economic principle that an endlessly large group of poorly selling products generates just as much income as a small number of great-selling products;

Mash-up a remix of tools and data from various internet sources such as a combination of statistical data with Google Maps;

Microblogging writing brief updates on what you are doing, which can be read by your network;

MSN Messenger is a popular instant messaging program. Most MSN chats are between two individuals;

Ning is an internet service that enables you to start your own social networking site. Others can join this site and use it for debates, blogging, etc.;

Node is a place in a network where several connections come together, both in computer networks and between people;

Open innovation involving citizens/consumers in product development in order to mobilise expertise or ideas from outside the organisation;

Perpetual beta because an internet site or service is never fully developed and because it can always be modified, there is never a definitive version (it remains as a beta version);

Prosumers People who produce a new creative statement on the basis of creative products they use as consumers;

Rating allows people to rate a topic to identify its most popular or appreciated part;

Troll is someone who responds to blogs or forum discussions in a consistently negative and non-constructive manner, thereby disrupting the interaction;

Retweet is forwarding another person's message (tweet) to one's own followers;

Re-usability is arranging internet pages such that particular sections are easily forwarded or reused (compare usability);

RSS is the standard used by sites to make text (such as title and summary) available to others as plain text;

RSS feed, the stream of information users can integrate in their page (e.g. Netvibes) to keep up-to-date with the news;

Second Life is a 3D environment where users can create characters, arrange landscapes and buildings and interact with each other;

Serious game is an online computer game for the purpose of communicating a message or raising awareness;

Social bookmarking internet sites where users can share and record their favourite internet sites, such as Delicious;

Social networking Websites that allow users to become members, make contacts, and join groups;

Status updates are short communications posted on social network sites like Twitter or Yammer, or *WieWatWaar* on Hyves;

Tag a word or a term added to a text, photo, video clip or person to provide a better description and so make it easier to find;

Twitter is posting text messages (tweets) of up to 140 characters to keep your network informed of what you are doing;

User generated content information added to a site by users, not administrators;

Niches fragmentation of society in personal niches on the basis of everyone's unique combination of preferences and interests;

Virtual teams are project groups with people from different organisations or departments who work together on a task in an online work environment.

Webcare is a proactive online customer service that assists people who blog or tweet about a product or a service they don't like;

Widget is a building block with information or a software programme that can be embedded in another site;

Wiki is online software that enables users to write documents together. Every amendment is logged;

Wisdom of the crowd the idea that the aggregate opinion of a large group is closest to the right solution (do not confuse with crowdsourcing);

XML eXtensible Markup Language, a standard for structuring data and distinguishing text from graphics;

Government entrepreneur a civil servant who, like a freelancer, takes initiatives to bring together resources and people from inside and outside of government.

Freelancer a self-employed person without staff. Many freelancers boost their strength through 2.0 resources

The following terms have been created for this publication: re-usability, niche fragmentation and government entrepreneur.

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In this book Dutch civil servant Davied van Berlo explains the significance of web 2.0 for government in terms of its internal organisation, its relationship with the public, and the working methods of the civil servant. The second part, Civil Servant 2.0 beta, provides a practical interpretation of the concepts expressed in the first part, and contains action points and ideas for government organisations to develop their own strategies for government 2.0.

Over 25,000 copies of these two books have been distributed to civil servants in the Netherlands and Belgium. They have now been translated and combined in one volume that offers an overarching vision of the future role of government 2.0 and the civil servant, and which contains a large number of useful examples and handy tips. Van Berlo offers inspirational new ideas and practical pointers for interpreting these ideas.

The Dutch Civil Servant 2.0 network currently has about 7000 members. It is a platform for forward-thinking civil servants who wish to innovate government. The Civil Servant 2.0 books have been an excellent resource for getting Dutch civil servants started. With this translation these experiences can be shared with civil servants worldwide.

Davied van Berlo is a civil servant and founder of the Civil Servant 2.0 network.