LIBEROPINION – A Web Platform for Public Participation

Artur Afonso Sousa
Polytechnic Institute of Viseu
ajas@di.estv.ipv.pt

Steven Abrantes
Polytechnic Institute of Viseu
steven@di.estv.ipv.pt

Pedro Agante
Libertrium
pedroagante@libertrium.com

Luís Borges Gouveia
University Fernando Pessoa
lmbg@ufp.edu.pt

Outline

- Context

- Objectives

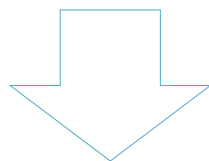- Electronic Participation

- Liberopinion Platform

- Conclusions

Context

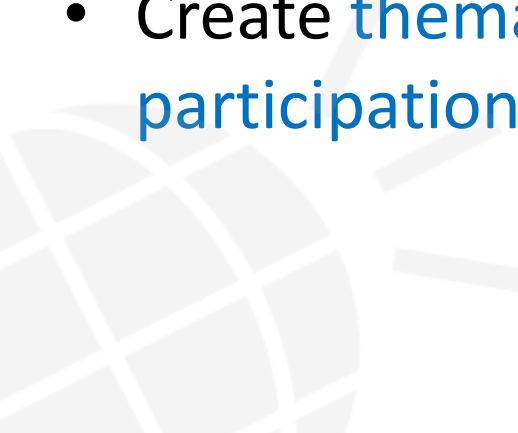The current economic, social and democratic conjuncture calls for public participation.

In recent times we have been witness to a decline of public confidence in the political class in the western hemisphere

Politicians seek to recover public confidence and foster their engagement and participation through innovative means.
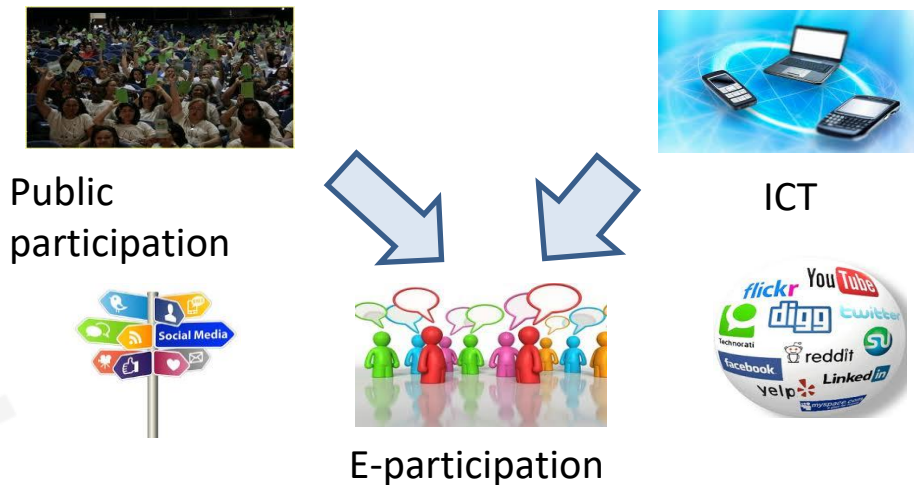
Objectives

- Promote and stimulate the exercise of citizenship.

- Bringing citizens closer to the political class.

- Enrich institutional websites with innovative multi-channel participation and with interaction, collaboration and multi-directional communication capabilities.

- Create thematic and organized communities of participation.

Electronic participation

The concept of electronic participation is intrinsically associated to the concept of public participation and to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), especially the Internet.

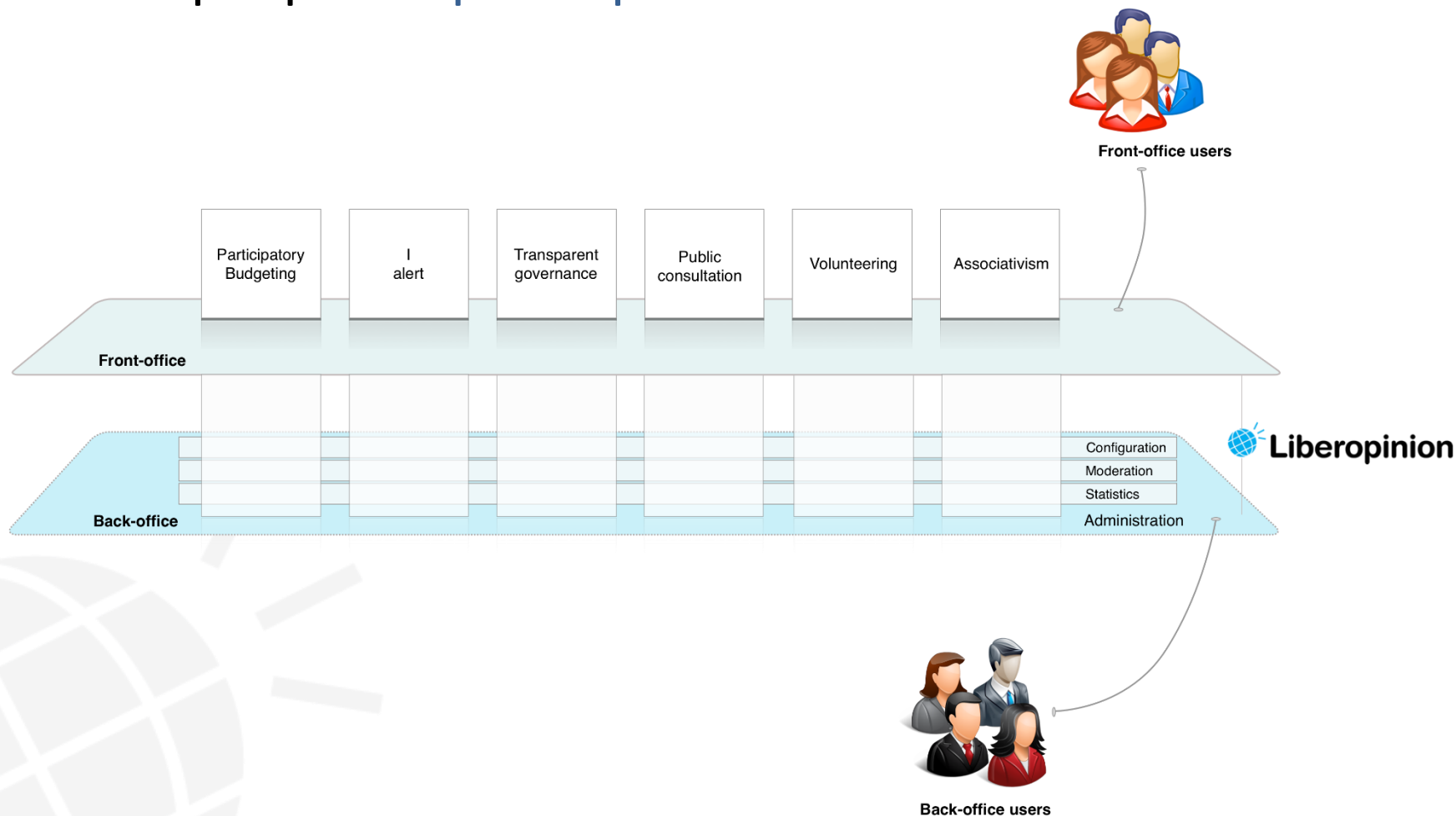Assumption that technology has the ability to change and to promote citizen engagement in participation initiatives.

Public participation

E-participation

ICT

e-participation is not an alternative to face-to-face participation, but a complement.

Liberopinion platform

Is an innovative multichannel solution, based on Social Media principles, that allows the creation and management of multiple public participation events.

Front-office users

| Participatory Budgeting | I alert | Transparent governance | Public consultation | Volunteering | Associativism |

Front-office

Liberopinion

Configuration
Moderation
Statistics

Back-office

Administration

Back-office users

Participatory Budgeting

- Covers both participation cycles, namely the budgetary definition cycle and the budget execution cycle.

- Supports a multiplicity of parameters, allowing the platform adaptation to the PB participation rules.

- Linking to Public Administration web services for user validation.

- Integration of on-line, face-to-face and SMS participation (submission of proposals and voting on projects).

Participatory Budgeting

- Integration with Social Networks and Google Analytics;

- Management of editorial content (News, FAQ, Calendar, Documents, Photo and Video Galleries, ...)

- Security mechanisms

- Monitoring the stage evolution of the winning projects

- Consultation of previous editions of participatory budgeting

- Mobile Version

Liberopinion
sharing views

Public Consultations

Allows the creation of several participation scenarios. For example, the platform can be used to create events where citizens are encouraged to present their ideas and suggestions for a given problem and elect the best proposals. In this scenario the module has a thematic scope of use.

It can also be used to get ideas in a wider scope, that is, without having defined a specific theme. For example, in a company or in a town hall such can serve as a bag of ideas.

Public Consultations – Main features

- Hear the citizens opinion through:

  - Open consultations;

  - Surveys;

  - Pools;

- Allow constrain the participation to a certain target audience, by defining profiles.

- Statistics about participation.

Liberopinion
sharing views

I alert

on the municipally context, occurrences or improvements can be related with public spaces. Examples are public lighting (streets and gardens); abandoned animals; abandoned vehicles; or recycling appliances, among others.

In other words, one can say that with this module, a city council can have a shared management with its fellow citizens, of the municipal public spaces, offering to people, both a information co-production (by submitting occurrences) and information co-monitoring (resolving the occurrences).

I alert – Main features

- Occurrence Management:

    - Reporting;

    - Resolve (monitoring the stage evolution);

    - Search through filters (e.g. stage, thematic area, …);

- Georeferencing and notification mechanisms.

- Mobile version (very convenient).

Liberopinion
sharing views

Transparent Governance

On the municipal context, the transparent implementation module allows to share with citizens the evolution of the execution of the city council projects, through the publication of situation/status points, using text, images and videos.

Whenever the chamber wishes, it can publish a project and make known to the citizens some important data, as well as the main aspects on the evolution of the execution of the project.

Transparent Governance – Main features

- Publish relevant information about projects (e.g. procurement contracts, amounts involved, source of money, …) → To increase transparency.

- Publish progress reports on the project implementation (before, during, and after).

- Following projects to receive notifications about their stage evolution.

Volunteering

Foster the proximity of the town hall or a local volunteering base, with the community, as well as to promote interaction and communication between this community and citizens who wish to carry out actions of volunteering.

The volunteer portal also creates an aggregated and structured space, designed specifically for the complete management of all volunteer actions, volunteers, promoters, training entities, trainings, etc.

Volunteering – Main features

- Portal of all volunteer entities of the municipality.

- Publish volunteer projects.

- Search for volunteer entities and projects by map (e.g. near to me) or through filters.

- Management of the process of registering citizens in voluntary projects.

- Notifications (e.g., match the project's target audience to the volunteer's area of interest).

- Useful information (e.g. legislation).

Associativism

Stimulate the proximity between the town hall and its community associations, collectivities and clubs.

Encourages citizen participation in the qualification of the cultural life of their residence areas.

Allows the disclosure of entities and their events, in a collaborative way and enables citizens easily, comprehensively and intuitively to search associations and events.

Associativism – Main features

- Portal of all associations of the municipality.

- Search for associations by map (e.g. near to me) or through filters (parish, subject area, …).

- Collaborative events calendar of all associations.

- Notifications by event type (e.g. folk music in the county, football in a certain parish, …).

- Management of support requests.

Conclusion

The Liberopinion platform is a multi-channel digital solution (participatory budgeting, public consultations, occurrences management - "I alert", transparent implementation, volunteering and associativism) that allows the creation and management of multiple public participation events.

In the political field, the Liberopinion platform promotes the modernization of government services (national and local), transparency and openness to civil society, encouraging active citizenship, and stimulating collective construction practices through co-decision and collaboration mechanisms.

Conclusion

It is important to emphasize that, despite all the advantages, technology is considered as a facilitating means, which enhances innovation, and complements the very important face-to-face participation, and not as an alternative.

That is, although the strong potential of e-participation tools to reverse citizen distancing from politics is recognized, it is nevertheless argued that the main focus should be on participation and the people and not so much on technology.

Thank you

https://liberopinion.com