



## Recommendation 23:

### Social Media & Social Networking

**Participate access to public sector services (political participation)**

Using 'Social Media & Social Networking' to meet the societal need 'Participate access to public sector services (political participation)'

### Actual solutions and services:

Today as many as 152 countries out of 193 (four out of five; in Europe 39 out of 43) offer social networking features, such as the "Like" button, on their national portals (i.e. there are links to, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Sina Weibo (in China), Odnoklassniki/VK in the Russian-speaking countries, etc.)

For example in the UK 100% of the local governments use twitter, 90% Facebook, 68% YouTube, 54% Flickr and 38% Instagram.

### SWOT Analysis

#### Strengths

- Improving individuals' sense of connectedness with real and/or online communities.
- Popularity, outreach.
- Ease of use.
- Immediacy.
- Integration on mobile devices.

#### Weaknesses

- Negatively impacting social skills due to the absence of face-to-face contact
- Affecting mental and physical health - links found between heavy social media use and depression, sleep deprivation, addictive behaviours, etc.
- Becoming a factor of distraction for many users.
- Enabling behaviours, like [cyberbullying](#), online [harassment](#) and "trolling".
- Scepticism around the reliability of user-generated content.
- Huge debate on the ownership of the content on social media platforms.
- Privacy concerns
- Potential of data and information collected for third party use.

#### Opportunities

- Higher participation opportunities.
- Personalised Services.
- Novel communication channels.
- Online information/data sourcing opportunities.
- Crowdsourcing enabler.

#### Threats

- Exclusion of people with no social media profiles or no access to web services or even technology illiterates.
- Citizen data being collected for law enforcement and governmental purposes.
- Privacy and Ethics concerns.

### **Participative access to public sector services (political participation):**

*Our informants mentioned establishing trust in governance, voicing their opinions, accessing timely and accurate information, unlinking public sector and politics as some of the key needs under this header.*

*One informant expressed his opinion as: "A clear point of authority to be established (often have to roam offices because it is not clear the authority for a particular task)."*

### **Social Media and social networking:**

*Social Networking refers to the act of establishing online many-to-many human connections for the purposes of sharing information with the network or subsets thereof, and is based on computer-mediated technologies that make up an online environment allowing the creation, consumption, promotion, distribution, discovery, and sharing of content (e.g. information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression) via virtual communities and networks. The common features of social networking applications or social media are that they are interactive web 2.0 internet based applications, involving the creation of service-specific user profiles and leveraging user-generated content, and facilitating the development of online social networks. Essentially, social media are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.\**

\*Gartner IT Glossary Social networking. <http://www.gartner.com/it-glossary/social-networking/>. Accessed 14 August 2017.  
Gartner IT Glossary Social Media. <http://www.gartner.com/it-glossary/social-media/>. Accessed 14 August 2017.  
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