Gram Vaani Community Media
- Technologies for Community Empowerment -

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

DECEMBER 2013

VOICE OF THE VILLAGE
Engaging citizens at the BoP

Current Internet users in India ~ 150M
Projections until 2017 ~ 300M

Population still left without Internet access > 400M

- Poor literacy to use text based communication media
- Inability to afford smart phones

Even with government subsidy for Internet access and devices, there is a large user base that may not be on the Internet and able to use interactive communication technologies

Voice based media technologies on IVRS and community radio have had significant success
Design principles to keep in mind

✓ Build a sense of community and ownership
✓ Usable and appropriate technology design
✓ Being able to capture context brings relevance
✓ Know your limits to manage citizen expectations
✓ Work in partnership with other stakeholders
✓ Clarity in whether or not to design for financial sustainability and scaling
Mobile Vaani: How it works

1. Speak
   Users speak and listen to contributions over our intelligent IVR platform

2. Moderate + Share
   Content moderated locally and centrally, then published on IVR, web

3. Connect to stakeholders
   Inputs connected to government (local + other), NGO partners, social enterprise partners
Content on Mobile Vaani

- 90% community sourced content
  - Local news
  - Interviews and informational services
  - Opinion on topical issues
  - Guided discussions and campaigns
  - Grievances and feedback on government schemes
  - Cultural artifacts including folk songs and poems

- Current reach
  - 2,000+ calls per day
  - 6.5min average call duration
  - 90,000+ unique callers
  - 7 most active districts in JH
  - Expanding to Bihar
Principle 1: Build a sense of community and ownership

- Large network of 100+ volunteers
- Appreciating good contributors
- Personalized guidance calls
- Soliciting community inputs on what topics to discuss
- Building social networks
Principle 2: Design for self-learning and exploration

- Navigation begins only after 3 calls, contributions come after 6 calls
- Can solve the voice search challenge through navigation: Multiple channels and time slots
- Interactive features drive usage
  - Gurgaon Idol: Contribute songs and vote for them
  - Forward messages to friends, lucky draws
**Principle 3: Capturing context can bring instantaneous relevance**

- **Important to capture context**
  - Increases relevance
  - Localization improves understanding
  - Quicker behavior change

- **However, hard to execute**
  - Requires community ownership
  - Feedback loops to react to community demands
  - Processes to serve information and services at local levels

- **Campaign process on Mobile Vaani**
  - Engaging seed content is provided, to encourage discussion
  - Content played out to Mobile Vaani users
  - Feedback is analyzed and channeled back for community response
  - Leads to contextualization of even hard topics including gender equity and early marriage
Principle 4: Manage expectations of people from the platform

- Hard evidence gathered on public health facilities
  - 80% do not have clean drinking water
  - 40% have vacant posts for doctors
  - Deliveries happening in the bathroom

- Stories carried by several regional media publications

- Testimonials about 5 health facilities that have improved since campaigning started on Jharkhand Mobile Vaani

- Estimated 100,000 people thus indirectly impacted
Should it be an external “activist” oriented system?

Fear of escalation can make things work at the local level.

Can this be leveraged as an institutional part of decentralized/devolved governance?

People reported on a few officials who were demanding bribes for UID enrollment. The site was visited by the block development officer and the officials were fined.

A village ignored by health agencies was reported to have had 3 malaria deaths in the last one week. A mobile ambulance was immediately dispatched, with fumigation equipment and first aid.
Or, can it be made a part of the government machinery?

Adoption largely depends on conscientiousness of officer

However, inefficient in implementation since it is top-down in principle
Principle 5: Bring multiple stakeholders together

25% of new users are added via mass media

Resolve issues reported by people

Face of the platform

Improve community engagement
Design principles to keep in mind

- Build a sense of community and ownership
- Usable and appropriate technology design
- Being able to capture context brings relevance
- Know your limits to manage citizen expectations
- Work in partnership with other stakeholders
- Clarity in whether or not to design for financial sustainability and scaling
The Mobile Vaani Connect network

1. Awareness campaigns
2. Get feedback
3. Convey analytics

Stakeholders

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development
Other voice-based applications developed by Gram Vaani

- Data collection
- FAQ and helplines
- Fullcircle
- MIS extension of MNREGA
- GRINS

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development
Thanks

Gram Vaani Community Media

Website: http://www.gramvaani.org

Email: contact@gramvaani.org
Demand driven accountability needs feedback loops

Service provider → Community

MIS
- Poor tracking
- RTI, elections, media
- Systemic change or one off solution

Service provider responds to the data
- Poor accountability

Community
- Awareness
- Empowerment, inclusiveness, institutional processes
- Capacity building, TV, radio...

Community knows what’s working & what’s not
- Generates data required for action

Consultations
- Implement the fix
- Social audit
- One off cases, poor pattern detection

Grievance helplines
- PRIs, SMCs, VHSCs

Poor tracking

Empowerment, inclusiveness, institutional processes

One off cases, poor pattern detection

Systemic change or one off solution

Consultations

Implement the fix

Generate data required for action
Fullcircle: Integrate community inputs with internal tracking


2. Our server makes and receives calls/SMS from contract staff on their deliverables.

3. Community members query the status and dispute it if they want.

4. Status and disputes were made available on a web dashboard and reviewed by the MCD commissioner; City Representatives post responses on Facebook.

Self-reported status by MCD staff

Citizens can query and dispute
vHelp: Running a mobile callcentre/helpline

1. ‘The Hoot’ approached Gram Vaani to build an ‘intelligent helpline’ for journalists

2. Journalists call into a toll-free number to request for assistance/advise

3. Calls are patched to the closest first response network of volunteers and staff

4. Calls are archived if nobody answers, and can be reviewed over a web interface

Journalist Helpline Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caller</th>
<th>Handled by</th>
<th>Received at</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jul 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jul 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jul 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jun 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jun 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00911400360018</td>
<td>Recorded Call</td>
<td>Jun 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vSurvey: Collecting structured inputs from the community

1. Create a survey using our online admin interface:
   Mix of quantitative, MCQ, qualitative input questions

2. Create a contact database and survey schedule

3. Survey rolled out to community for data collection

- Surveys on IVR and SMS can be pushed out to community members
  - Mix of multiple-choice questions, numerical inputs, and audio recordings

- Used by UNDP to understand whether their SHGs wanted help with livelihoods or savings or advisories. Used by InVenture to profile the financial habits of people over time
vAct: Community-based complaint management

1. A governance focused NGO, Action India, approached Gram Vaani to build a ‘better grievance redressal system’

2. Community members call into a toll-free number to leave complaints

3. NGO listens to complaints and categories/transcribes them on the Internet

4. Youth wing of NGO files complaint officially, and sends a report to the local councilor

5. Internal pressure dynamics thus created were used to improve grievance rates on ration, pension, and sanitation. New toilets and public works were sanctioned
Understanding community awareness and perceptions

- Poor awareness about entitlements is not the reason for poor uptake of public health services
About Gram Vaani

- **Vision:** “Build citizen-driven media platforms that give communities a voice of their own”

- Pioneers in building innovative voice-based technologies that are in use with more than 60+ organizations in India, Africa, and Afghanistan

- Reach to a rural demography of more than 2M people through our network of mobile based social media services

- **Awards and recognition**
  - mBillionth award 2013
  - Rising Stars in Global Health award 2012
  - mBillionth award 2012
  - 10 most innovative companies in India (*by Fast Company*)
  - Economic Times Power of Ideas 2010
  - Manthan Award 2009
  - Knight News Challenge 2008
Our partners

- inVenture
- cedpa
- Farm Radio International
- Sesame Workshop
- SATARK Nagrik Sangathan
- Development Alternatives
- Nomad
- UNDP
- Oxfam India
- PHRN
- Action India
- KGVK
- UNHEARD
- Video Volunteers
- m a rā a
- Grand Challenges Canada
- MCD Delhi
- Knight Fndn.
- IIT Delhi

Mobile Vaani: Technology. Media. Development