THE IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 (GOV 2.0) AND SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES ON ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Abstract

This paper aims to assess the impact of Web 2.0 (Gov 2.0) and Social Media technologies provided by Local Government on different community groups. Findings represent the first stage of a longitudinal study conducted on a Local Government in Australia, namely Randwick City Council. The study explores key drivers and inhibitors behind the adoption of Gov 2.0 and Social Media technologies and identifies three distinct groups of adopters. The majority of people, those in the 25-64 age group, were identified as being current or willing adopters of the technologies; whilst others were deemed to be in the “Hard to Reach Group” (HtRGrp), those in the 18-24 and 65+ age brackets. From a Local Government perspective, those belonging to the HtRGrp are historically deemed to be difficult to engage in local issues and to communicate with. An interesting finding was that the inhibiting factors identified across the two groups were distinctly different. This had a direct result in Randwick City Council developing strategies in the next stage of the project in order to target the use of Gov 2.0 and Social Media technologies for the HtRGrp in order to facilitate engagement and communication, with limited success.

Keywords: Gov 2.0, Social Media, Hard to Reach Community Group, Local Government