



evoice: rationale

Interest in politics in the North Sea Region has dwindled to such an extent over recent decades that the legitimacy of our elected leaders is being brought into question. Figures show that:

- fewer people are using their right to vote;
- membership of political parties has plummeted, and
- the choice of political representatives is narrowing as fewer people put themselves forward for election.

If these trends continue, the proper functioning of the democratic system could be endangered.

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for more information, visit:
www.evoice-eu.net

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eLoket: the best e-services in The Netherlands



In November 2004, the Municipality of Groningen (NL) opened the **eLoket Bouwen en Wonen**, a virtual office window for electronic services like, e.g., building permits.

Already in the spring of 2005, this experiment was enlarged to **eLoket Groningen**, now giving access to more than 200 products of the municipal departments:

- beheer en verkeer (maintenance and traffic)
- belastingen (taxes)
- burgerzaken (citizens' affairs)
- milieu (environment)
- parkeren (parking)

The **eLoket** is open 24/7; in a chat, a digital assistant directly answers the questions of the users (from 9 to 9), digital forms for permits and licenses are available and - last, but not at least - a citizen has the possibility to check the status of his or her application online.



the eLoket is an attractive alternative for a visit to the townhall

eLoket: award-winning in 2005

As a crown on the work, in June 2005, the **Municipality of Groningen** received from the **Stichting Audiovisuele Manifestaties** at Amsterdam the SAM Award 2005 in silver in the category Internet for both the **eLoket** and the **Groningen Portal**.



The Groningen Portal is a co-operation to facilitate easy access to the interconnected websites of the Municipality of Groningen, the Province of Groningen and the Tourists Board of Groningen. An aquabrowser gives direct access to the websites of the other municipalities in the Province of Groningen.



airial view of the city of Groningen

evoice: targets and aims

Despite the gloomy background described on the first page, people are interested in single-issue politics. Building on this, evoice will combine traditional communication channels such as local newspapers with high-tech, innovative approaches to show people that they are also effected by general politics, and encourage them to participate.

evoice takes into account local variations in legislation and regulations, culture, and the differences in style between administrators and politicians in different countries and regions.

evoice assumes that local and regional authorities are the appropriate organisations to work with to reach the evoice aims because of their direct links to the citizens.

evoice: the multi media dialogue approach

The evoice project believes in the potential of modern ICT instruments and tools to increase citizens' participation and to access the administrative system, but only if they are employed in a well-structured, well-considered manner and over a longer period of time.

Therefore, evoice develops, tests and advocates the multi media dialogue approach: a combination of classic media (newspaper, radio, tv, phone, etc.) and the modern ones (internet, e-mail, chatroom, forum, sms, mms, etc.) in all phases of the policy cycle.

eLoket: a second award in 2006

In April and May 2006, Ernst & Young EDP Audit performed a **benchmark research** into the digital services of all 458 Dutch municipalities, almost all of which have a digital office window.

Unfortunately, the interactivity of these digital windows is often low, and for a fast majority of the municipalities, e-services are not more than a facility to read municipal information and to download forms.



According to this benchmark, the eLoket of the Municipality of Groningen offers the best electronic services available in The Netherlands.



townhall at Groningen

eLoket: ongoing innovations

An essential part of the success of the **eLoket** of the Municipality of Groningen is the **digital personal assistant**: the human touch of the eLoket.



Citizens who are unfamiliar with electronic communication, receive direct support online via a chat connection. If possible, this digital assistant also answers more specific questions as regards content.



If one opens the **eLoket**, and clicks on one of the themes or subjects in the navigation bar at one's left hand, the assistance button will be shown. If one clicks this button, a direct chat connection opens for immediate use and also shows the name of the personal assistant. Just give it a try: if the assistant is not too busy, there may be time for a little chat.

[start a chat here](#)



STADNET: the chat network of the city of Groningen

The chat facility of the **eLoket** will be stepped up. Soon, more than fifty (private) organisations, political parties and government institutions in and outside Groningen can be contacted via a chat connection. Clients of the eLoket can then be redirected to another participant, even without interrupting the existing chat connection.

www.stadnet.nl

evoice: international European partnership

evoice is a European co-operation between:

- the Municipality of Dantumadeel (NL), lead partner;
- the Municipalities of Uddevalla, Ale and Härryda with the support of Västra Götalandregionen (S);
- Norfolk County (UK);
- Intercommunale Leiedal, district Kortrijk (B);
- the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen (FRG);
- the Municipality of Groningen (NL).



evoice in Sweden: Uddevalla



Since 1776, the Kingdom of Sweden has the principle of public access to official records. This means that all documents - except those under secrecy - going **into** or **out** of the local, regional and central governmental organisations are public. Everybody in Sweden has the right to read them and act

upon them.

There are two important reasons for this principle of freedom of information:

- to fight corruption and abuse;
- to enable citizens to participate in the democratic process at an early stage.

The **Municipality of Uddevalla** (southwest Sweden), one of the Swedish **evoice** project partners, is preparing a new **document management system** to enable its citizens to access the official records via the internet.



townhall at Uddevalla, S

The system also allows the interested citizen to track the status of documents and to react on issues under discussion. The new system is expected to be in full operation in 2007.

The **Municipality of Uddevalla** also organises an **Open Dialogue** between the citizens of Uddevalla and their politicians. Questions may be asked and answers may be given on the internet, via sms or in a live chat with a politician.



a senior politician answering questions via the internet

Open Council meetings are broadcasted via the local television station and shown on web tv. The next day an itemised and searchable version can be consulted on the internet.



council meeting at Uddevalla

evoice: contact information

If you would like more information about the **evoice** project and its activities, please contact:

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