

European Workshop
Perspectives of Web 2.0 for Citizenship Education

7 - 9 April 2011
 Brno, Czech Republic

Project Fact Sheet

Workshop 2: “Web 2.0 as Innovative Toolbox”

	Section	Indications of content
1	Title of the project	Social networking website for Latvian parliamentary elections of 2010
2	Main topics (select 5 max.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct communication between citizens and election candidates; - Voter education; - Citizens' participation.
3	Objectives of the project (250 words)	<p>www.gudrasgalvas.lv (now available archived here: old.gudrasgalvas.lv) was launched in September 2010, one month before the general elections in Latvia. The main purpose of the project was to increase direct communication between voters and politicians. This was achieved by providing a simple on-line platform where each candidate could register his/her profile, state their motivation of becoming a member of parliament and answer questions from the public.</p> <p>This seemed particularly important in the absence of active campaign culture (elections campaigns in Latvia have traditionally been outsourced to advertising agencies allowing little or no direct contact between politicians and the public) and the fact that very few candidates had an on-line presence by way of a blog, website or a profile on a social networking site.</p> <p>Additionally, the candidates were asked to take a position on sensitive subjects of Latvian party politics such as gay rights, non-citizen status, anti-government protests and other issues.</p>
4	How would you describe the impact of your project for citizenship education and citizens' participation in politics and society	User feedback indicated that the website helped them choose which party to vote for and which candidates to endorse in particular.
5	Target groups	All Latvian citizens, especially young people
6	Social Media Formats/ Project Methods used during the project	The website was built specifically with the purpose of being very intuitive, simple, easy to navigate, youth-oriented and integrated with Twitter, Facebook and local social network draugiem.lv. The most active participants (who voted, asked and answered

		questions, etc.) were awarded Activism Diplomas, activity badges and earned a ranking published on the site. The website was promoted by using twitter account @gudrasgalvas and by users' activities in gudrasgalvas.lv being shown to their friends in social network draugiem.lv
7	Range and sustainability of the project (local, regional, national)	After the elections the website has been transformed into a communication platform between the citizens and their newly elected parliamentary representatives as well as the members of the new Cabinet of Ministers (now available here: www.gudrasgalvas.lv). New functions have been added – a voter's profile that enables users to track their own activities on the site, for example, to follow questions asked and answers received; blogging opportunities; monitoring of what the internet media is saying about each MP and minister; an opportunity for the MPs and ministers to ask questions to the voters; to ask for a visit to the Parliament; to see Parliament debates on-line.
8	Project results	During the 4 weeks on-line before the general elections the website became very popular – it was visited by almost 80,000 users, more than 4000 questions were asked of which about 3000 got answered. Of the 1234 MP candidates more than 400 registered on the website and many were available daily to answer questions. MP candidates who engaged actively with the users included the Prime Minister and members of his Cabinet.
9	Contact information (first name, surname, postal address, name of organisation, e-mail address, phone)	Iveta Kažoka Centre for Public Policy PROVIDUS Alberta St. 13 Rīga LV 1010 Latvia E-mail: iveta@providus.lv Phone: + 371 67039361