G-Cloud 10: service definition for Citizen Space

Cloud software for consultation
Delib Ltd

Citizen Space

Delib

‘Citizen Space meets perfectly the part of our Consultation and Engagement Strategy requiring digital formal consultation. Our staff have taken to the system easily and we have had overwhelmingly positive feedback.’
Policy Manager, Birmingham CityCouncil

1.0 Overview of service

Citizen Space is an online consultation and engagement platform, originally developed as a joint initiative with the UK government. The platform helps public sector organisations to run excellent and effective digital consultations, by providing a range of functionality that supports an end-to-end process, including survey and analysis tools and feedback mechanisms.

'Citizen Space has transformed the way we are able to engage.'
Head of Consultation, Transport for London

Citizen Space helps organisations address a number of common cultural and technological problems, such as:

- Poor coordination and oversight of consultation activity
- High barriers to entry for citizen participation
- Falling behind on technical innovation
- A lack of consultation-specific training, support and advice
- Licensing restrictions that limit access to public feedback

Citizen Space remedies these issues by providing:

- A central, auditable repository of all consultation activity
- A powerful built-in survey tool designed around user convenience (including the ability to complete surveys and save responses without needing to log in)
- A continuous improvement release cycle, providing customers with free updates which take account of new developments in technology and governance
- Dedicated account management, support and a range of training options
- Unlimited use: Citizen Space is charged on a single annual subscription fee, with no restrictions on the number of users, administrators, consultations or responses

‘Citizen Space is one of the key tools which will allow us to manage change within the NHS, increase consultation...and reach more and more people’
Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator, Stockport CCG

Citizen Space is a proven platform that has been used to run over 13,700 consultations (as of May 2018) by more than 100 organisations worldwide, including:

- Ministry of Justice
- Department of Health (UK and Australia)
- Post Office
- Transport for London
- The Scottish Government
- NHS England and NHS Digital
- Birmingham City Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Sheffield City Council

Citizen Space is built for scale, designed to facilitate all levels of consultation activity, including major public consultations with high response rates. It has comfortably supported exercises which received tens of thousands of responses. Examples of large scale consultations run through Citizen Space include:

- Scottish Government, Independence Referendum Consultation - 26,000 responses
- BBC Trust, 6 Music Consultation - 70,000 responses
- Transport for London cashless payments - 37,000 responses

A full list of all Citizen Space consultations and subscribing organisations can be found at aggregator.delib.net/citizenspace

'We wanted to make the process of responding to the consultation as simple as possible – simple for users to express their views, and simple for us to redact, analyse and publish those responses...We were very happy with the outcome.'
Digital Engagement Manager, The Scottish Government

1.1 Features

Citizen Space is designed to make it as easy as possible for public bodies to run excellent, effective public consultations and for citizens to participate in those consultations. The fully-responsive platform is continually refined, in consultation with Delib's customers and drawing on feedback from frontline users and respondents, to ensure that Citizen Space's features are built around user needs.

Gather opinion
Citizen Space provides a number of survey options, including traditional linear surveys, chapter-based surveys, private surveys and routing by page ('skip logic'). Question types include all the expected formats: radio buttons, checkboxes, ranking questions, text boxes and matrix choices, alongside answer components specifically built for government, such as file upload for supporting documentation. Questions can be set to require a response before submission, to ensure you get the demographic and other pertinent information that you need.

Citizen Space's flexible range of survey options mean you can always build a survey appropriate to the particular audience or context. It's even possible to build parallel surveys within one consultation tailored for specific audiences.

Ultimately, this means organisations are able to build the consultations they need, rather than having to work around limitations imposed by their technical platform.

Gain insight from responses, quickly
A consultation or involvement exercise is only as good as the insight that can be gained from it. Without analysis tools, the responses become a burden rather than a rich source of useful data. Citizen Space includes analysis tools that allow users to theme (or 'code') text-based responses – and to filter and group these themes (sometimes known as cross-tabulation) and/or quantitative data (such as those from radio button response data). All data queries made within Citizen Space return tabular data and graphical charts, allowing you to analyse and report back on consultations without needing to outsource this work to a third party or export it to unsuitable spreadsheet software.

With such easy tools at hand, Citizen Space helps organisations to access insight comprehensively, faster and more cheaply, ultimately allowing you to make better-informed decisions.

Feed back to respondents, showing transparency
It is recognised that best practice when consulting any audience is to feed back the outcomes of the exercise and any changes made as a result of people's participation. Citizen Space is more than just a survey tool; it happily also includes numerous ways to feed back and to demonstrate transparency in the decision-making process. Tools include: 'We Asked, You Said, We Did', a succinct way to quickly and easily feed back; the ability to add more formal reporting and also the option to publish all responses where consent has been given.

Public expectations around government interaction have risen – the idea of decisions being made in the dark is unpalatable and increasingly called out as such. Failure to provide feedback diminishes trust in the decision-making progress and reduces engagement over time.

Provide the best possible user experience
Responding to a consultation can be a lengthy process, even online – sometimes requiring citizens to dedicate significant amounts of time. People will often be unable to commit to making a response in one sitting, given the competing pressures of life.

Citizen Space is designed to encourage participation in consultations by acknowledging these time pressures and making it as easy as possible for people to participate. The path through every consultation is clearly indicated; the content layout and structure encourage concise, helpful supporting information; each page of the survey allows a citizen to save their response to complete at a more convenient time and an automated email will be sent on completion, to keep a digital record of their response.

These features keep barriers to participation low and response rates to consultations accordingly higher.

Engage your audience
Citizen Space is a flexible platform that allows for the use/integration of other tools that help to create a more engaging and informative user experience. It's easy to embed rich media (such as YouTube, Google Maps, images and infographics) in introductory pages and within surveys themselves. There's also a built-in document reader, that allows for supporting documents to be embedded within pages, to provide contextual information at the point of response.

Dedicated account management
Citizen Space isn't just a technology platform: it's a managed service that helps organisations to get the best use out of the system, to run excellent digital consultations. Often, there is a shortage of digital capabilities – or even a cultural fear of online interaction – within organisations looking to transform their consultation activity.

Delib regularly runs training sessions for customers to improve their teams' skills. All Citizen Space users are also invited to regular user group meet-ups, where you can hear and learn from other clients in your sector.

'Delib really understand their stuff...especially useful in giving lots of practical tips to get new initiatives working well.'
Consultation Manager, Bristol City Council

84% of customers rated their training as '**very useful**' and **87% would definitely recommend it to others**.

A tour of Citizen Space functionality can be found on the Citizen Space website:
citizenspace.com/info/tour

For organisations undertaking early market engagement or considering procurement, Delib provides free, guided screen-share demonstrations to answer any questions, discuss adoption plans and to provide information about deployment timeframes. A demo can be booked here –
citizenspace.com/info/request_demonstration

2.0 Key facts

Pricing model
Simple annual subscription pricing with payment taken upfront. We always make clear what's included and what's an optional extra.

Accessibility
- Tested for W3C WAI WCAG 2.0 Level AA
- Tested for screen reader users and keyboard access. Compliant with colour contrast requirements.
- Accessibility page in the application provides clear accessibility statement.

Browser support
Supports all standards-compliant web browsers including Firefox, Chrome, Safari and Internet Explorer versions 11 or later. No plugins or additional software required for public or admin users.

Cookies
The application does not set any intrusive cookies. Cookies page in the application clearly explains cookie use to respondents.

Hosting
Included:

- Hosting fully managed by us, with a 99.95% uptime guarantee and 24/7/365 monitoring.
- All backups and maintenance are taken care of by us.
- Can be hosted on https://yourorganisation.citizenspace.com or on a domain you supply.
- UK hosting in secure datacentres.

Optional extras

- Enhanced hosting for situations where very high response rates are expected, for example when consulting a large population on a contentious issue.

Data and security

- You own all the response data collected through your Citizen Space. We act as the data processor, and a clear data journey is available on request.
- We have been handling sensitive data since 2004, are ISO 27001 and Cyber Essentials certified. We are also registered for Data Protection with the UK Information Commissioner's Office.
- All our staff are background checked, and we operate a robust information security policy, available on request.
- Privacy Policy page in the application enables you to clearly inform respondents how their data will be handled.
- Citizen Space tested as 'fit for purpose' by CHECK-approved third-party security vendor.
- SSL encryption as standard.

Comprehensive consultation publishing system

- Unlimited admin users, teams, consultations and responses.
- Multiple consultation types: run online surveys, share documents and information, and link to other consultation tools for maximum flexibility.
- Extensive admin dashboard: publish, clone and preview consultations; analyse results; publish responses with redaction.
- Export all response data in .xlsx format for use in external analysis software.
- Multiple admin user types with different access permissions.

Theming and branding

- Sitewide theming so that you can customise the visual design to reflect your organisation.
- Insert your organisation's logo.
- Ability to brand consultations on a per-exercise basis, to support project or partnership initiatives.

Support and account management

- A dedicated account manager will support you throughout the course of your subscription.
- Online knowledge base of product guides/articles for easy reference.
- Support email monitored by the Delib team of product developers and account managers for thorough and quick responses to questions.

Procurement

- Invoice billing.
- Range of payment methods accepted, including BACS and IBAN.

Deployment time

- The application typically takes 5-10 working days to deploy from agreement of contract.
- Deployment can be expedited – contact us if your need is urgent.