

WhatsApp, the new tool used by councils to make them more accessible to their people

LOCATIONS: Palos de la Frontera (Huelva)/Hinojos (Huelva)

DURATION: 1'40"

SUMMARY: The mobility of smartphones and one of the most famous free apps, WhatsApp, are helping to bring local councils closer to the people. This is the case in Palos and Hinojos, two villages in Huelva which are pioneering the use of WhatsApp to enable incidence and information services in real time, with a 24 hour direct connection to the government. Whatsappalos, in Palos, was the first in August 2012, followed by the Council of Hinojos, where the mayor personally answered all of the messages with the support of two assistants. He receives 254 messages on average a day. The experience, based on both villages, has been very positive.

VTR

A burst irrigation hydrant... a mobile in hand to take a photo of the incident, and whatsapp to let the Council know immediately.

Ambience: "Plumbing team."

This is Whatsappalos, the initiative by the Council of Palos de la Frontera in Huelva to communicate this kind of incident.

FRANCISCO MACARIO
Whatsappalos Coordinator

"Wherever you are, for free, automatically, at whatever time, 24 hours a day, you can send something and the local authority will get back to you, this is what the citizens aren't used to."

Resident of Palos

"The bureaucracy of paperwork is what takes time... and with this, how long does it take? 30 seconds?"

The Council of Palos has been one of the pioneering councils in Spain to use WhatsApp to develop a more direct relationship with its citizens. They have already reported more than 1000 incidents since the service began in August 2012.

FRANCISCO MACARIO
Whatsappalos Coordinator

"It's now more of an information service than reporting incidents."

This has been the starting point for the Council of Hinojos, also in Huelva, whose Mayor is a man literally stuck to his mobile.

MIGUEL ÁNGEL CURIEL
Mayor of Hinojos

"I receive an average of 254 messages a day, received and replied."

And this is due credit. Because in a village of 4,000 inhabitants, more than 500 are registered on one of the 9 WhatsApp groups on which the mayor and two assistants manage all information of interest in the village. Because after all, a politician...

MIGUEL ÁNGEL CURIEL
Mayor of Hinojos

"...is a server to the public who has to be close to the citizens, taking advantage of technology to be able to talk to them."

RESIDENTS OF HINOJOS

"So that you feel listened to."

"The village is more united."

New technology to bring local authorities closer to their citizens, and especially to aid a much more direct participation in the construction of their environment.

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