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## Abstract

This report describes the operational CitizenScape System as a follow on from the deliverable 1.2.1 (Technical Specification) describing the prototype site that was developed. The report explains the system that has been developed and the theory behind it.

## Document History

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## Executive Summary

CitizenScape is a 2 year eParticipation Programme Trial Project that is integrating and testing state-of-the-art Web 2.0 social networking ICT-based tools and solutions in a socially purposeful way in concrete legislative and decision-making processes - specifically looking at engaging Citizens to debate and engage with the implementation of EU environmental legislation at a local level. The project is developing a repeatable methodology for engaging with and mentoring Citizen's through different stages of engagement with the aim to ensure that participants have, as a result of the project activities, taken part in some kind of formal decision making process.

The prototype described in D1.2.1 is complete and being tested and validated. The next phase of the process involves the User Partners working with their stakeholders to agree on the descriptions of how the sites will be implemented. This phase of making the system operational is not just about the technology and the applications that will be used, but about winning the hearts and minds of those involved.

One of the central tenants of the CitizenScape project is the use of existing Web 2.0 content where possible in order to emphasise the idea that the CitizenScape sites are co-created with Stakeholders.

Before the actual sites are completed, the stakeholders (alongside the User Partners) must decide on the specific content that will be pulled in from other sources, putting the Web 2.0 element of the sites at the fore.

This report explains the basic system that sits behind the regional user sites.

# 1. Introduction

The CitizenScape technical approach has been defined in line with the initial Description of Work created for the project which was then developed in the project requirements document; Deliverable D1.1.1<sup>1</sup>. In developing the technical approach it was clear that the 'social' concept of co-creation and the need to build on existing Web 2.0 activity rather than try to create Web 2.0 activity from nothing was a key idea within the project and informed its highly modular development approach.

The intention of the CitizenScape project is to produce a repeatable approach and architecture that can be used by future CitizenScape implementations.

At this stage we are not planning for individual users to be able to customise the CitizenScape space though this should be possible in the future.

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<sup>1</sup>"CitizenScape User & Technical Requirements", deliverable D1.1.1, June 2008

## 2. CitizenScape Container

As has been said before the CitizenScape infrastructure is web 2.0 native. What this means is that it takes full advantage of text mark-up and flexibility of display and location. Where possible content will be drawn from source rather than recreated and the whole approach is one which runs with the minimum overhead possible.

As far as the user is concerned the container is the means by which they can see a cross section of all kinds of content and sites in once place – which has been created for a specific and defined purpose. By this means ready populated sites can be set up extremely quickly populated not only with content but with people as well as social networking applications can be drawn in as well.

This container is therefore the keystone application and the one which has taken up the majority of the development time. The CitizenScape container holds a number of key attributes:

- **Meta tags** which define the parameters of the external and internal content: ie you can set the tags at a container level and this then permeates down to individual widgets housed within the container to select content from RSS feeds etc
- **Design:** All CSS and design elements are held at the container level and made available to widgets
- **User management and moderation** is a property of the container
- **Meta data** about the overall CitizenScape timeline and ‘state’
- **Language:** All information about the language of the site is owned by the container
- **List of widgets:** The container is aware of the list of widgets that are available to it for use

Once the container is set-up then the widgets can be displayed within it quickly and easily.

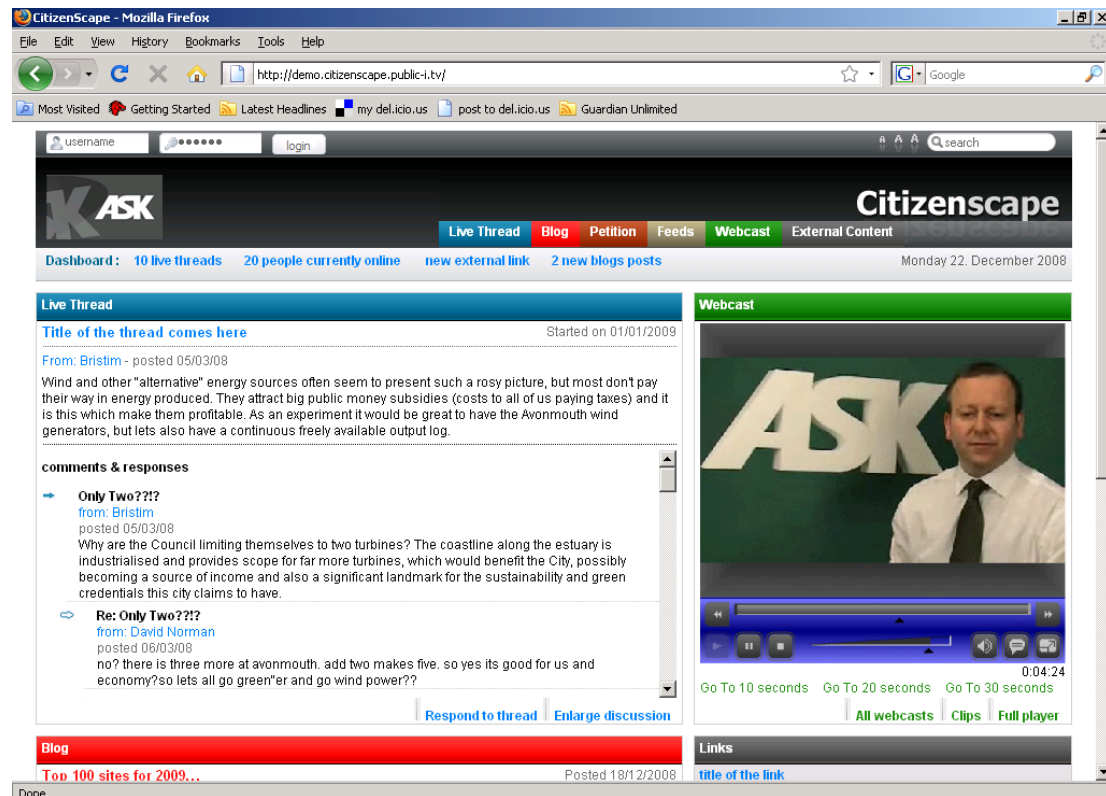
It is our intention to open the container out so that anyone can create widgets for use within it however this is not ready at this phase of development.

### 3. Overview of First CitizenScope Prototype

The CitizenScope “Container”, will include:

- a banner and some basic branding, and
- a pre-defined set of ‘widgets’ which will display within the container.

The first CitizenScope prototype, which is at <http://demo.CitizenScope.public-i.tv/> (with a screen-grab below) shows a mix of widgets from different sources:



The Container is built using a LAMP (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP)<sup>2</sup> framework and builds on the existing Public-i webcasting and Viewfinder developments<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LAMP\\_\(software\\_bundle\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LAMP_(software_bundle))

<sup>3</sup> See [www.public-i.info](http://www.public-i.info)

## 4. CitizenScape Native Elements

CitizenScape native elements consist of any application which has been created and hosted by Public-i. The CitizenScape elements will consist of the single smallest logical part of that application represented in widget format. Examples include:

- Single sign-on and registration
- A single discussion thread
- A single petition
- Webcasts:
  - Individual webcasts
  - Short clip
  - Full player
  - A feed of webcasts matching particular tags (future, live and archive)
- Map widget
- Common moderation interface
- Common / shared taxonomy / folksonomy system

There is an assumption that anyone using these tools in CitizenScape will already have them in place for other purposes. In the future however it should be possible to license individual elements such as a discussion thread so that the approach can be used to also support events, where the client will not want to set-up an entire Viewfinder installation. This could be readily achieved if Public-i set-up instances of Viewfinder and ePetitions with the client as the community moderators (see below).

There are a few additional elements that do not already exist that will be required:

- Project diary / blog
- Events calendar (beyond those which are webcast)
- Participant biographies for people who have registered
- Email newsletter option
- Single RSS feed

These could be provided by external tools.

The intention is that these widgets will work not only within CitizenScape sites but will also work on external websites; for example the webcast widget could be used to drop webcast content onto other sites. This is specified in more detail below.

## 5. Widget descriptions

<u>Widget</u>	<u>Description</u>
Single sign-on and registration	This is to support all of the CitizenScape native tools so that the site host will need to come up with a single set of registration questions. This feature will not handle sign-on to external tools such as blogs. The sign-on will support a standard such as Open ID
A single discussion thread	As per the current Viewfinder threads this widget will display the initial post (not just the title – the video / text as well) as well as the latest comment and stats on numbers of posts and date/time of last post. There will then be an option to expand to see the full thread with all comments shown in full.
A single petition	This widget will display for live petitions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The petition text</li><li>2. Number of signatures.</li><li>3. Closing date</li><li>4. For petitions waiting for consideration</li><li>5. The petition text</li><li>6. Number of signatures.</li><li>7. Date of meeting to be discussed</li><li>8. For closed petitions</li><li>9. The petition text</li><li>10. Number of signatures.</li><li>11. Feedback on the petition</li></ol> 'Click here to sign' will send the user to the full petition site as will 'Find out more'
Individual webcasts	Individual webcasts need to be accessible to the CitizenScape site as there is an assumption that anyone using CitizenScape will already be webcasting. It will be possible to embed multiple webcasts on a page.
Short clip	This widget will show a short embedded clip with no index points – it will however have right-hand explanatory text.
Full player	Any clip which requires index points will use a widget with the look and feel of the current Public-i player once expanded. The widget will show a still image and intro text with the option to 'click here to watch the video'
A feed of webcasts matching particular tags (future, live & archive)	A dynamic listings box (as per <a href="http://www.public-i.info">www.public-i.info</a> ) specific to the CitizenScape tags. This Widget should display a fixed number of listings with the option to expand to view more.
Map widget!	See separate section below.

Project diary / blog	Simple blog – which could be created from an external tool. This would have all standard blog features but comments would be written using Viewfinder and not the Blog tool.
Events calendar (beyond those which are webcast)	A listings calendar that will capture data / location / description of events plus links to the webcast if applicable.
Participant biographies for people who have registered	A short directory of participants which displays their public biography.
Email newsletter option	There is a requirement to support emailing of targeted groups who have signed up to the CitizenScape site.
Single RSS feed	There is a need for a combined RSS feed covering all CitizenScape content.

Where expanding on a widget takes the user back to the source site it will be evident in CitizenScape where a link takes the viewer off-site and advises them to 'open in a new window' in order to save their place in CitizenScape .

Each widget falls under one or both of two types of participation: Formal / Informal; and from either external (read only), external feeds from other site managed by User, or Public-i hosted and managed.

These are displayed in the table below:

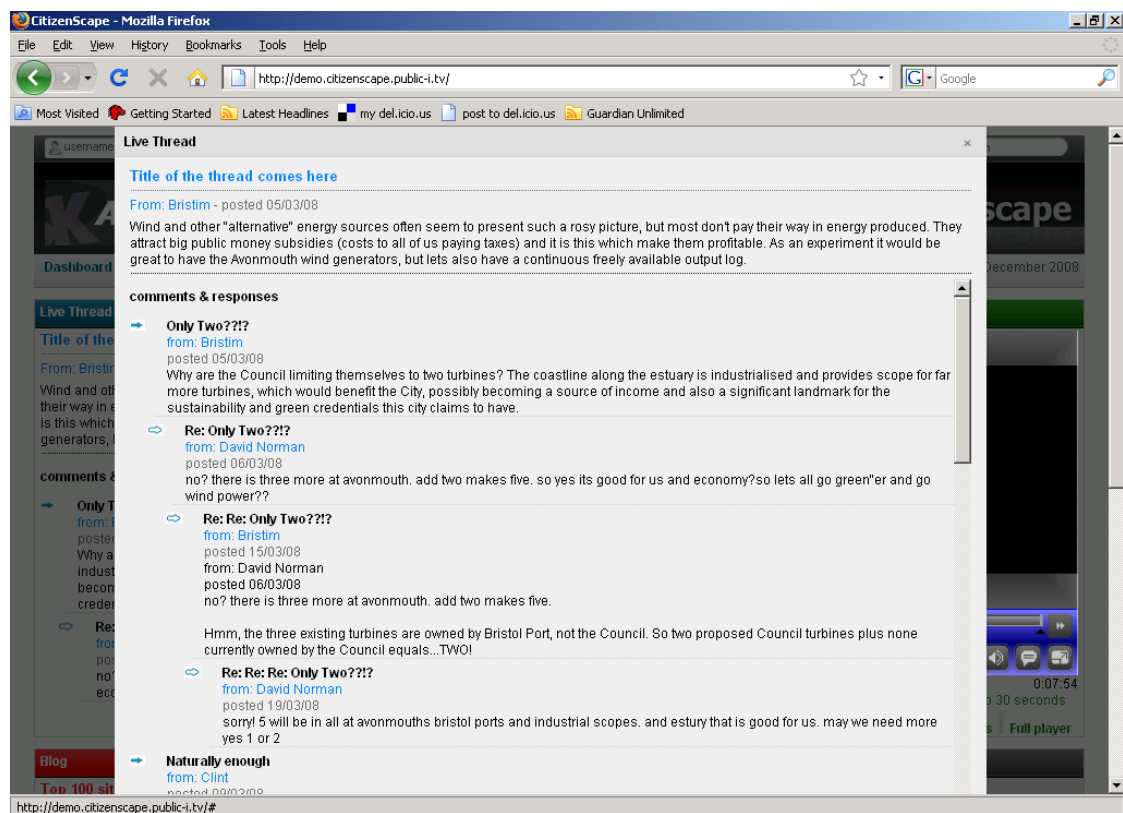
### 5.1 CitizenScape widget map:

Widget Type	Informal Participation	Formal Participation
Hosted and managed by Public-i <b>(Internal)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewfinder threads</li> <li>• Webcast listings</li> <li>• Short clip widget (used for Voxpops)</li> <li>• Webcast listings</li> <li>• Wiki</li> <li>• Event calendar</li> <li>• Static text HTML</li> <li>• Feed layered map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Webcasts of formal meetings</li> <li>• Webcast listings</li> <li>• Epetitions</li> <li>• Widget linking a discussion to a specific set of webcasts</li> </ul>
External feeds from other sites that we have no input to <b>(External read only)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blogs or Project diaries</li> <li>• Discussion boards</li> <li>• Map tools</li> <li>• News feeds</li> <li>• YouTube Channel</li> <li>• PledgeBank</li> </ul>	
External feeds with interactivity from sites which we have a relationship with (ie who we can expect to make changes to their sites to work with us)(This will include content hosted by project partners) <b>(External interactive)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion boards</li> <li>• Map tools</li> <li>• Bristol streets map product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Consultation systems</li> </ul>

## 6. Viewfinder

The current Viewfinder functionality will be reproduced in CitizenScope with the following amendments / extensions:

1. The new version will make it possible to view a thread in its entirety – i.e. all contributions all full text.
2. It will be possible for users to rate comments on a 5 point scale. They will need to be registered and logged in to achieve this
3. It will be possible for sites to just run a single discussion thread from Viewfinder rather than a whole board.



## 7. Moderation / Administration interface

Each CitizenScape site will need a single administration interface which will enable site hosts to:

- Moderate discussion threads as per current ViewFinder Moderation
- Moderate petitions as per current ePetitioner interfaces
- Add new tags to the CitizenScape site so that additional content will be displayed
- Manage user accounts including participant accounts/biographies
- Manage content on the event diary
- Manage content on the project blog
- Access the email functionality
- Access Statistics

Because an essential part of the project is the creation of Community Moderators, the CitizenScape service will need to include a moderation interface which is a subset of administration and will enable community moderators to:

1. Moderate discussion threads as per current ViewFinder Moderation
2. Moderate comments on petitions as per current ePetitions interfaces
3. Add new tags to the CitizenScape site so that additional content will be displayed
4. Add content on the event diary
5. Add content on the project blog

## 8. CitizenScape external elements

In order to make the CitizenScape approach as inclusive as possible, and to avoid trying to recreate activity such as blogging when it already exists elsewhere, the CitizenScape sites will be able to display content from external sources such as blogs, newsfeeds and perhaps external discussion boards. It is anticipated that these will be added to the CitizenScape portfolio on a case by case basis once the requirements for integration have been defined.

Where external content is being displayed it will be essential that this is correctly labelled as such and any disclaimers from the CitizenScape host are clearly displayed.

Initial external sources to be considered are:

1. Wordpress
2. Blogger
3. RSS News feeds

## 9. Map Widget

The map widget is essentially a display tool that enables the display of data on a map interface. Data is displayed in a layered way and the user has control over which of the layers that are displayed.

Users will be able to select which areas to display and to select sections of the map to display them within. For example you could choose to display all petitions and discussion threads within a specific area.

Data will fall into two types:

1. Data which of necessity has a single geospatial tag (for instance planning applications or community meetings)
2. Data which can be associated with a geospatial area (Local strategic planning consultations or petitions)

For display purposes these types of data will be shown differently. For each instance of the widget the area to be centred on will need to be defined along with the initial resolution. Once this is confirmed then the layers of data will need to be defined.

Initial layers may include:

- Webcasts
- Petitions
- Viewfinder discussion threads
- Events (as per event widget)
- Documents / consultations (TBC how these would be stored or where they would be sourced from)
- Contact data for departments / community moderators / participants in CitizenScape

## **10. Conclusions and Recommendations**

The system that has been developed and the Container is a suitable approach by which all User Partners can tailor, manage and maintain their own content.

For the individual user site, there is a requirement to map the content and design. This needs to take place in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that the content that is proposed is going to have the desired effect. The content should be selected by each user partner from a the CitizenScape Widget Map. This lists existing Public-i hosted multimedia solutions (e.g. Viewfinder); any external websites (read only) that can offer the functionality for the output to be turned into a widget; or any external websites that are already in use by the user partner or stakeholder.