

POLLING STATION FINDER

DEMOCRACY CLUB (UNITED KINGDOM, 2016)

CONTEXT

In May 2016, one of the most varied elections in history took place in the United Kingdom: mayors, local authorities, parliamentarians from Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, and police commissioners, were elected. In this context, Democracy Club led the initiative *Towards better local elections in the UK* aimed at helping the electorate have more information to decide their votes.

OBJECTIVE OF THE TOOL

- Help citizens know where to vote.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The tool is a search engine in which the voter can introduce its postcode to know where to vote. Democracy Club (2016) highlights the main features of the finder:

- Finds the polling station assigned to a property, not the closest one.
- Doesn't require voters to know their way around local government.
- Supports postcode areas that overlap district boundaries.
- Supports last minute changes, in the case of emergencies and closed polling stations.
- Embeddable in another web site.
- Fully customisable and white-label versions on request.

Find your polling station

Enter your postcode

Find your polling station

Source: Democracy Club (2016)

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- Almost any data format supported.
- Performance and scalability ensures uptime on the busiest of elections.
- Fully featured Application programming interface (API).

HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The process followed to develop this tool is described below.

Data gathering

Data of polling stations was gathered through partnerships with local governments who provided their own data and by users who voluntarily provided data.

Search

The polling station finder was accessible by voters searching on the internet or on their local council website. They did not need to know which ward or constituency they lived in or who manages their elections. By entering their postcodes, the finder provided them the answer (address and map) they were searching for (Democracy Club, 2016).

Data quality control

Democracy Club only used data provided by users. Where Democracy Club had doubts about the data supplied, they will not use it. Instead they directed users to the phone number for the council's electoral team, supplied by a GOV.UK register.

Democracy Club would also email the users asking for updates. For last minute changes, users could email Democracy Club, and the team would make changes or remove the data on the live site.

Re usage

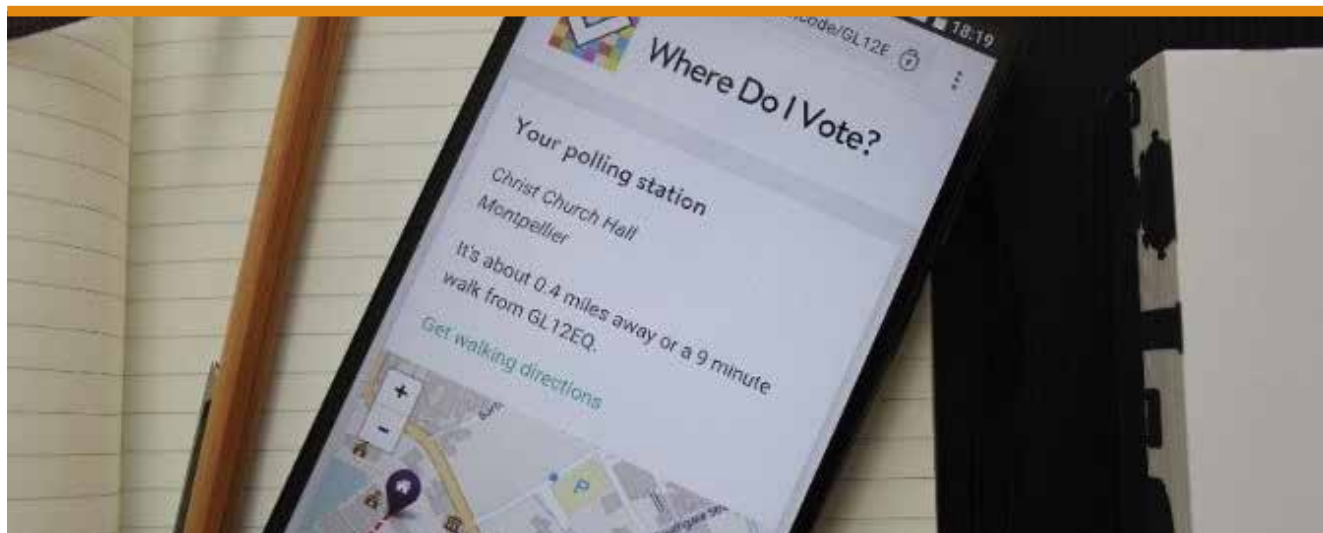
Finally, those who provided data to Democracy Club could embed the polling station finder directly on their own websites, free of charge, **by adding a bit of code**.

Moreover, the data in the finder could be updated for upcoming elections.

REFERENCES

Towards better elections. Report on Democracy Club's work on the May 2016 elections and the future of digital services for democracy. Democracy Club (May 2016). **Retrieved from:**
www.democracyclub.org.uk/report_2016/

Polling station finder. Democracy Club. **Retrieved from:**
www.democracyclub.org.uk/projects/polling-stations



Source: Democracy Club (2016)

Democracy Club – United Kingdom

Democracy Club aims to make the process of democracy better for everyone. Democracy Club's vision is of a society in which democracy thrives through knowledge, participation and openness. Democracy Club's mission is to use open data, design and technology to give every citizen the information and participation opportunities they need, in a way that suits them. Democracy Club is non-partisan and works openly.

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Electoral platforms: strengthening capacities to influence the electoral cycle

www.ilaipp.org/portfolio/plataformas-electorales

www.onthinktanks.org/eleccionesherramientas

