



CITIBOT CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

The City of Williamsburg

Williamsburg Virginia is the uppermost point of Virginia's Historic Triangle. Home to the College of William and Mary and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation—the world's largest outdoor living history museum, the city has a population of 15,000, almost half of which are students. Williamsburg turned to Citibot to provide better customer service and more communication options for its residents and visitors to engage with the city.

CHALLENGE

While the City of Williamsburg had a multitude of ways to provide information via its website, phone, etc., it was lacking a user-friendly way for residents and visitors to quickly and easily engage with the city via mobile. City staff was also interested in scaling customer service by leveraging the emerging technology of artificial intelligence (AI).



- Wanted to complement its existing communications and reporting channels
- Needed an Artificial Intelligence platform to provide important information while reducing staff workload
- Selected Citibot to provide an integrated text-based system to discover and address issues
- Has experienced steady adoption and customer satisfaction with Citibot

“We wanted to provide more options for getting information out there,” said Mark Barham, City of Williamsburg’s director of information technology. “We took a look at Citibot and saw it as a good complementary way for people to report issues and search for information. I firmly believe in the text based aspect, but am also very excited about webchat and AI.”

SOLUTION

Williamsburg adopted Citibot in March 2018 as a way for people to search for city information, ask questions and report issues regarding common city services including trash pickup, potholes, and street light outages, among others.

“Pretty much everyone has a cell phone in their hand—giving them that option to search for information whether they are in the city or not is a valuable way to do things and a valuable way for us to communicate,” said Barham

RESULTS

Williamsburg can now provide multi-faceted customer service, record and report information and answer questions in real time without taking staff time. “If I can answer a citizen’s questions or allow them to tell me something that is going on rather than them calling and taking up an employee’s time that can be spent on other beneficial projects, that’s a win for everyone,” said Barham. “Usage of Citibot continues to climb, and it has been well received.”

Since launching, Citibot has answered 79 percent of residents’ questions instantaneously without requiring assistance from the city’s staff.

Here are some of the findings from interactions Williamsburg residents have had with Citibot over the last two years:

- 38 percent of residents who texted in were looking for city or staff information
- 24 percent of requests made were related to recycling
- 10 percent of interactions were about parking issues

Citibot also established a platform for Williamsburg to leverage AI, which is a priority of the city’s. “I’m interested in any way we can better get information to or request information from citizens, and I firmly believe that AI is going to be the answer,” said Barham. “When you ask a question and you get the correct answer, that’s the way I see all of this technology moving. And we want to be on the cutting edge.”



I would absolutely recommend Citibot. I think the platform is in place that is going to carry this type of work into the future.

MARK BARHAM,
CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG'S
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY



Barham, an innovator in the government technology field, has leveraged his 20+ years of experience as an IT director to provide input on Citibot's technology roadmap.

"I would absolutely recommend Citibot. I think the platform is in place that is going to carry this type of work into the future," he said. "The ability to have Citibot embedded in a website, working through AI/voice recognition. For me, it's a no-brainer."



ABOUT CITIBOT

Citibot is a tool for citizens and their governments to use for efficient and effective communication and civic change. Using text messaging, Citibot can help to report a problem, search the city website, send notifications and view analytics. Citibot empowers citizens to solve city problems and get questions answered immediately via text message.

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