
Community Research
Oct – Nov 2017
Amsterdam Smart City

Luc Baardman
Communications Intern



Abstract

This document presents the results from the community survey held by intern Luc Baardman from Amsterdam Smart City. Held in October and December 2017, the goal of the study was to find out how Amsterdam Smart City can better serve its community members. This survey therefore asked members to express their experiences with, interests in and wishes for the community website www.amsterdamsmartcity.com.

Results have shown a general satisfaction with the website in terms of usability and quality of content. More so, most respondents found the website relevant to their interests.

Those who gave a more critical response also helped us a lot. Main critiques in this were found in some minor e-mail processes (people complained about the many e-mails they get), and the missing functionality of personal messaging on the website.

We do value all opinions gathered through this study and hope to follow up on these in 2018. Already, the Amsterdam Smart City team is working to make the platform more user-friendly, and to stimulate more activity on the platform. This way, networking will be made easier.

A more elaborate write-up of all the responses can be found on the next pages.

Luc Baardman

December 2017



Timeline

January 2017: presentation of results first community survey, showing general facts and desires of our community (then <2000 members)

--

October 2017: inventorying new questions, what do we want to know at this point (community 3600 members).

November 2017: Send questionnaires to community-members, collect data

December 2017: in-depth interviewing (3), analysis of results, presenting results to Amsterdam Smart City team

January 2018: Publish results to wider community, publish on website.

September 2018: repeat (altered) study; study adjusted desires of community?



Why this study?

In this study, we wanted to gather information about four key topics, characteristics of our community. First, we want to know how the community uses the website. This is important because we need the community website to run smoothly so that connections can be made. We also want a user-friendly website to support the opinion of all, not just tech-savvy people. By asking the opinion of all our members, we give a way for them to express concerns. These concerns can then be taken up and if necessary, we can adjust the website to their favour. After all, it is the people that count in this Smart city, not just technology.

A second topic regarded the interests of the community. Are we still relevant to them? Do we publish the right articles, with the right length and right depth?

Third, we tried to study the satisfaction of our community members. Though interlinked with the previous two, this is an important theme since if members are not satisfied, we would like to know how we can adjust the website to be more meaningful to them.

Last, we focused in this study on the preferences, desires and wishes of the community members. By having an open question about their wishes, a lot of new perspectives were collected that we can consider when adding new features to the website.

In short, we asked the opinions of members on four themes:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Usability | 3. Satisfaction |
| 2. Interests | 4. Desires |



Respondents

This study collected the opinions of 94 respondents, who were approached through the following methods:

1. A dedicated e-mail stating the action to fill in the survey! This e-mail was sent to all our community members.
2. An update on our website
3. A box on the homepage of our website, asking people to 'help us improve'.
4. Through social media
5. Through a pop-up on the website in the chat-box, asking logged-in members to fill in the survey.

The number of respondents, 94, was notably less than the number of respondents last year (over 300). We are not sure why this number is remarkably higher than this year, perhaps the attention spent on marketing this survey was not great enough.



Usability

When it comes to the usability, we collected the following answers.

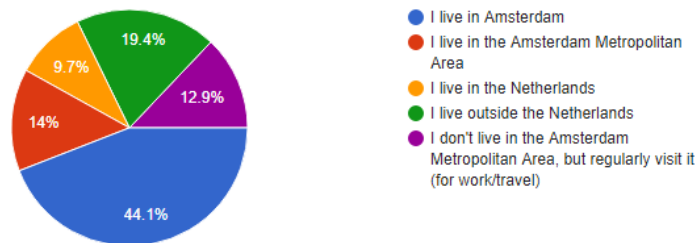
We see that most respondents live in the greater Amsterdam Metropolitan region. We also see a big part of our community that lives outside the Netherlands (19,4% of the respondents). However, do note that not everyone in our community responded and that generalising is not possible due to the low number of respondents.

We see that most of the respondents visit the website weekly or monthly. This is found to be a good level of engagement of our community.

When asked in which sections of the website our community is most interested, most members selected the update, project and event page. Less visited were the request, visits and products page. This is also seen in the analytics of the website use.

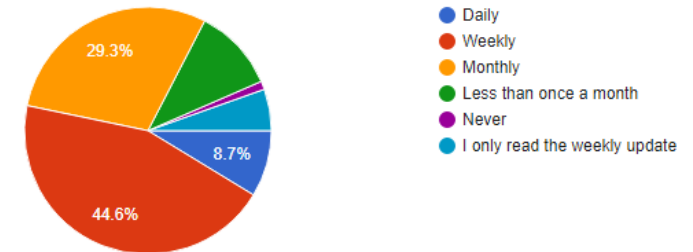
Let's start with an easy one: what's your relation to Amsterdam?

93 responses



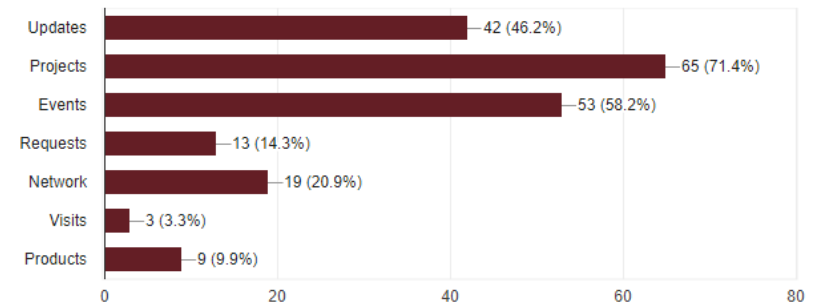
How often do you visit our online platform Amsterdam Smart City?

92 responses

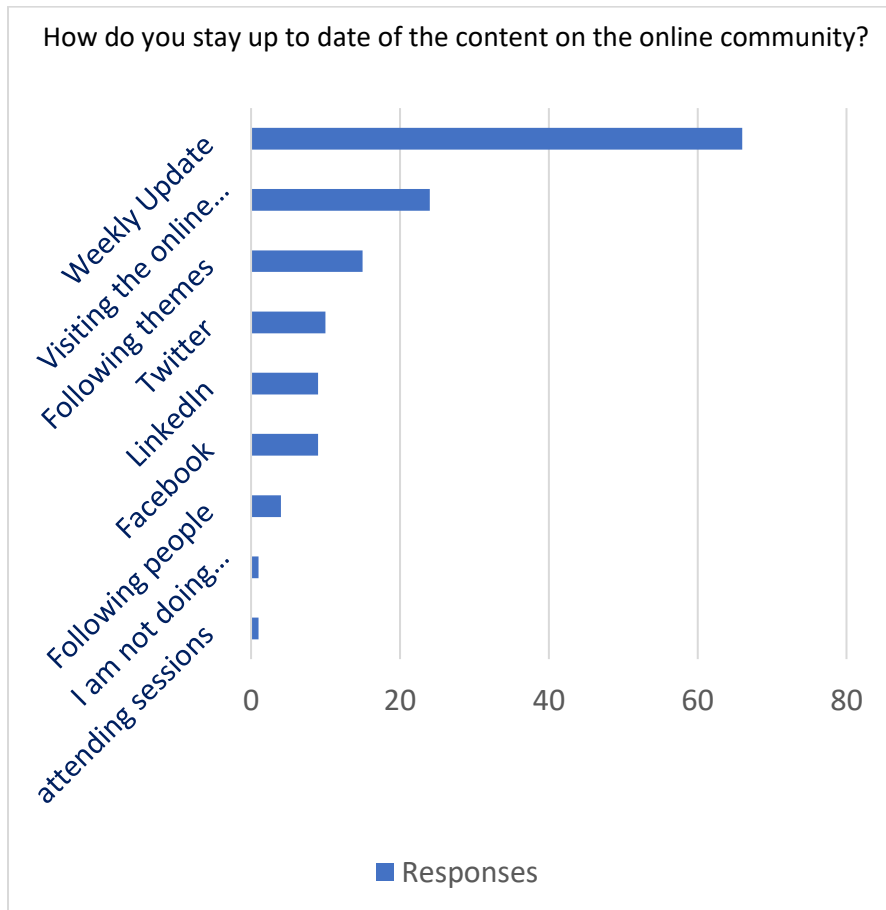


Which parts of the website do you visit mostly? If you do not visit the online community regularly, which subpages would you be interested in visiting?

91 responses



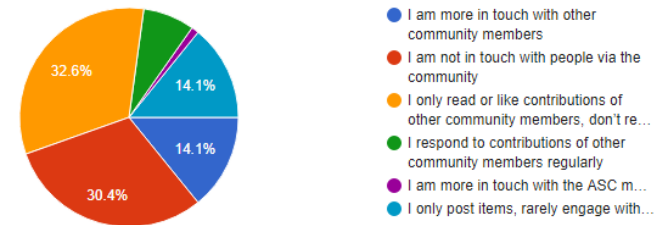
Most respondents stated to be held up to date of the content through our weekly update. Next to the reminder that the weekly update resembles, about a quarter of the respondents stated to visit the website regularly.



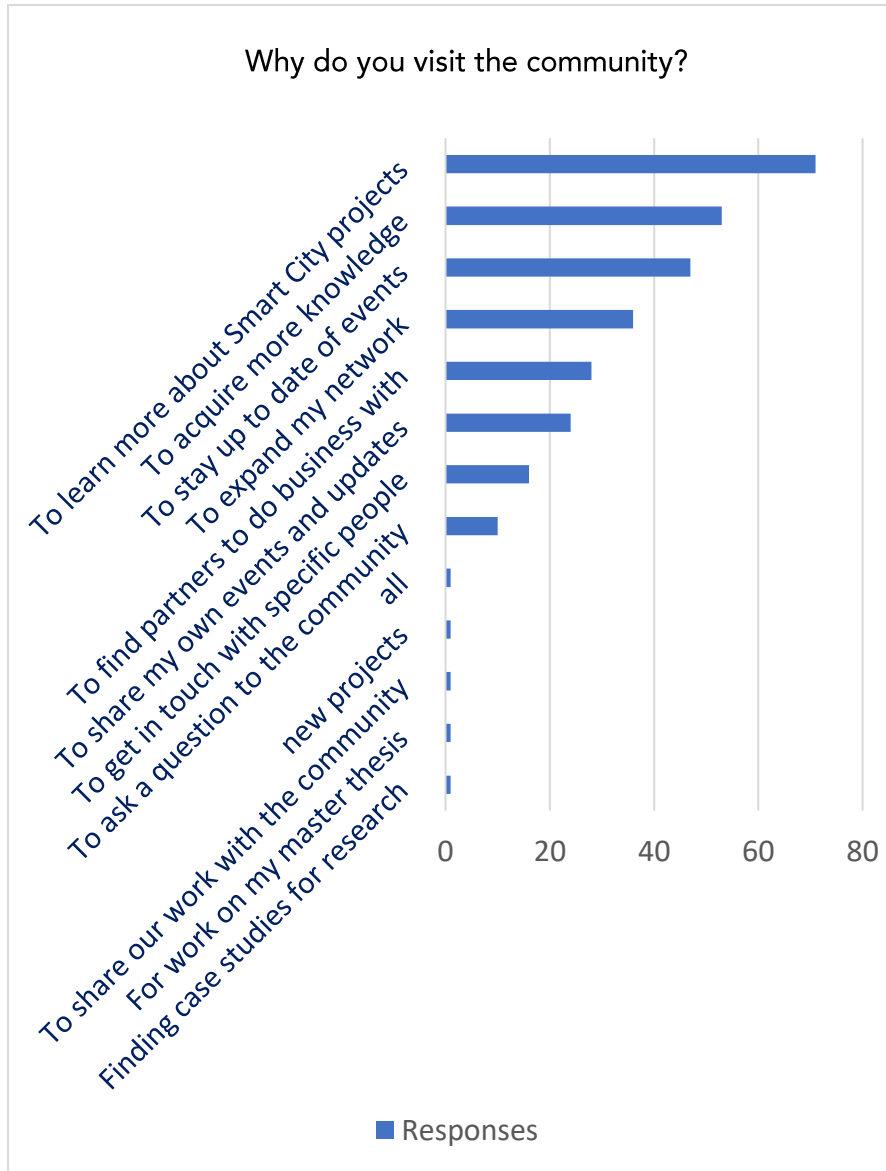
Last, people described their activity in an almost dichotomous manner. By far the biggest group only extracts information from the website and not contributes. A smaller group only posts but rarely engages and a small group also engages with other community members through the website.

How would you describe your activity on Amsterdam Smart City?

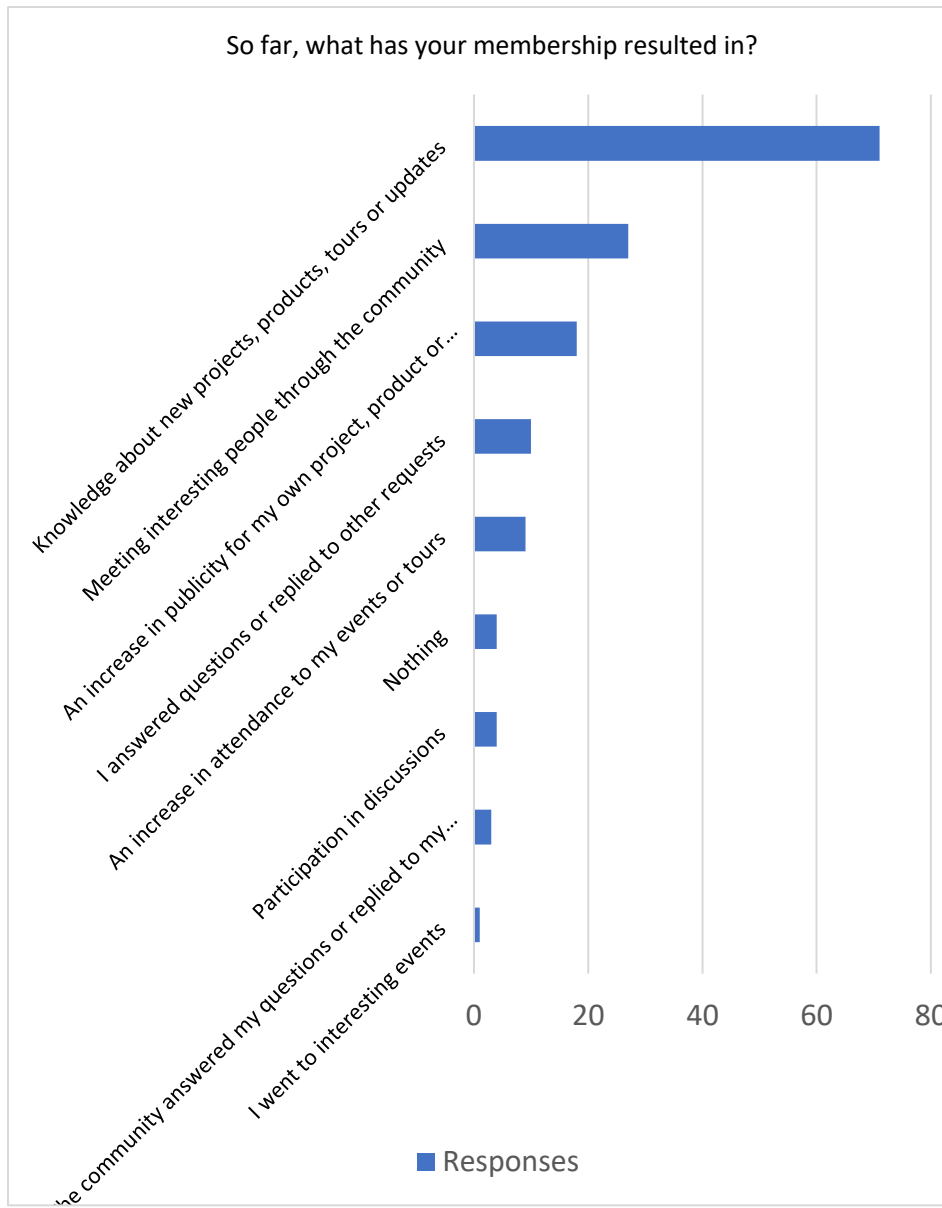
92 responses



This has motivated us to improve on this. We believe that a community website should be interactive and engagement should be high. Members should add information as well as respond to other people's contributions. This strengthens the function of being a network-organisation.



We asked why people were eager to visit our website. Most respondents stated the obvious 'to learn more about smart city projects' and 'acquire more knowledge'. A smaller group was interested in the events listed on our website. The fourth biggest group wanted to expand their network, and a fifth hoped to find partners to do business with.



Most people stated that their membership resulted in an increase in knowledge. More interestingly, people also stated to have met interesting people through our community. This signals that the network functions.

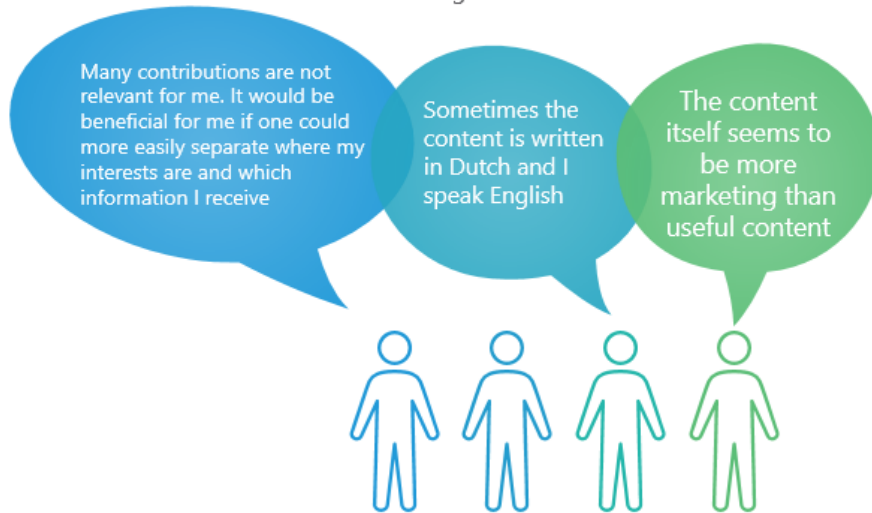
A third group stated that the membership resulted in an increase in publicity for their own project, product or organisation. This is sometimes seen as predominantly commercial content; advertising once own content.

This is also seen in the answers to open questions, where one respondent said that the content is sometimes more marketing than 'useful'.

Although general satisfaction, people can be confused about the mixed use of Dutch and English. We are working on stricter guidelines that better define this. We are also working on personalising the content that is being shown.

Satisfaction

With regard to relevance



What do you think of the items added to the community?

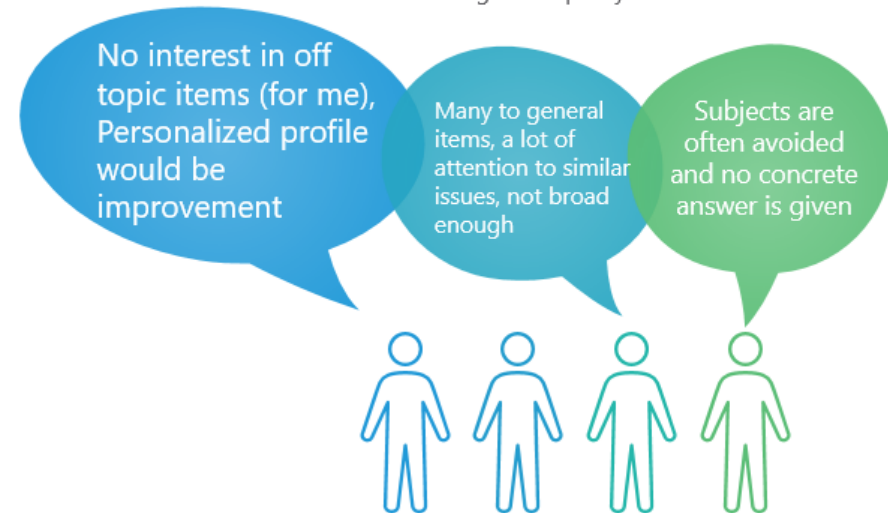


In general, most people were satisfied with the general quality of content. Only when they answered 'mostly good' or 'mostly not so good', they were asked to elaborate on this. This revealed some interesting insights.

Slightly less well-scoring is relevance. How we can improve on this is through personalised profiling. The broad nature of our website also knows advantages and disadvantages. We need to be cautious that we do not avoid certain sensitive subjects or avoid giving concrete answers.

Satisfaction

With regard to quality



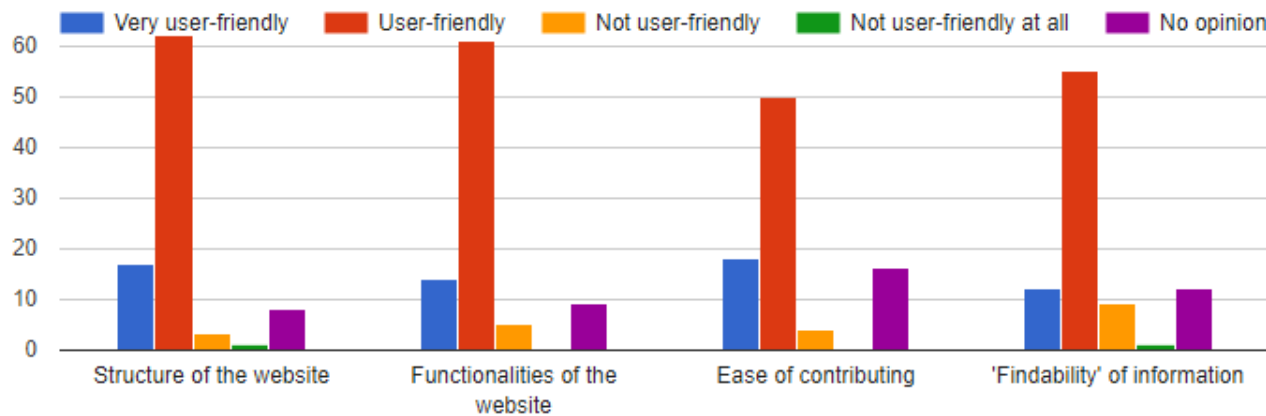
Most people found the user-friendliness of the website to be good.

Most un-user-friendly was the findability of information, in which people stated that 'older information is hard to find' or 'a good search engine could be useful to reveal more information'.

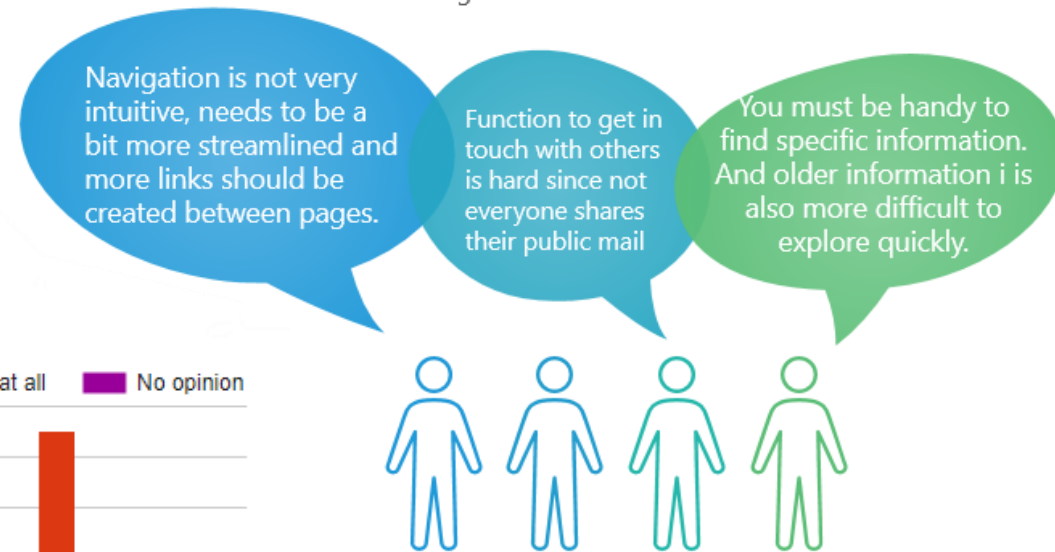
Others wanted an app of the website through which they could find information and respond to other contributions.

messaging. We also intend to ease the way information can be found by improving the search function and selection of items displayed. Currently, you can find the most popular projects or new projects very easily, in the future there probably will be added a function to show projects in a 'random order'.

What is your opinion about the user-friendliness of the online community?



Satisfaction With regard to user-friendliness



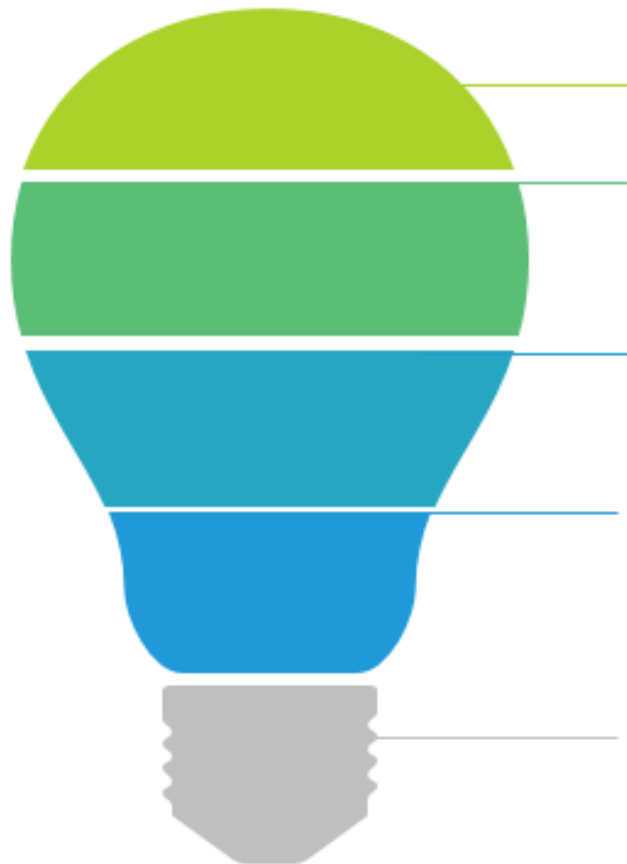
Desires and tips

Lastly, the following tips were collected through an open question at the end of the survey. Highlighted are these five top-tips that we aim to follow up on in 2018. These adjustments should make Amsterdam Smart City relevant to more people, and we hope to achieve this with your help!

These adjustments should make Amsterdam Smart City more relevant to more people, and we hope to achieve this with your help. We always our community members and invite you to take part in this development. Do you want to help implement these tips? Let us know via a comment on the website or by sending an e-mail to info@amsterdamsmartcity.com

Desires

& tips from community members



Get more active people on it

Would not mind an App!

More interaction with own content and non-professionals

Organise events where all members can provide nano-pitches on what they do and what they seek

Interviews which show the community what we have achieved and where the possibilities are for future partnerships.

Acknowledgements

To all the survey respondents, thank you for making yourselves heard! Through your opinions, we can work on a better Amsterdam Smart City.

I also want to give credits to the Amsterdam Smart City team for their assistance during the study. They helped me formulate the questions and gave tips on the gathered insights.



Disclaimer

This communication contains non-generalisable information only, and none of Amsterdam Smart City, its program partners, or their related entities (collectively, the "Amsterdam Smart City Network") is, by means of this publication, rendering professional advice or services.

Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your finances or your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser. No entity in the Amsterdam Smart City Network shall be responsible for any loss whatsoever sustained by any person who relies on this communication.

© 2017 Amsterdam Smart City. All rights reserved.

Designed and produced Luc Baardman

(for further questions, contact: info@amsterdamsmartcity.com)