Jorge Soto

CitiVox

“ I saw an opportunity to improve the relationship between citizens and government through technology. ”

COUNTRY	Mexico
INDUSTRY	Technology
EMPLOYEES	11
YEAR SELECTED	2011
PARTNER	Oscar Salazar
WEBSITE	http://citivox.com/

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

By harnessing technology to promote social change, Oscar and Jorge are helping citizenship find its voice in Mexico. Their company, CitiVox, uses mobile and crowd-sourcing technology to build and enhance the relationship between citizens and government – increasing civic engagement and government accountability and transparency. The growth prospects are enormous. As global internet access increases, citizens around the world are beginning to express themselves through technology and mobilizing real change, and governments are starting to listen.

Driven by the desire to prove that young people without experience and contacts can succeed as long as they think big, Citivox was born of the idea that great communication is needed for citizens to play a larger role in their own prosperity and well-being. It began when the State of Guerrero hired Oscar and Jorge to develop a mobile platform to alert citizens of incoming hurricanes, which evolved into an alert system for a range of dangers including gas leaks, sewage leaks, floods, and gunfights. Building on this one-way communication platform, they expanded it to allow for two-way communication. Enter: CitiVox.

CitiVox enables real-time information sharing via SMS, e-mail, and smartphone applications between citizens and their government as a means of rebuilding confidence, increasing public security, and improving accountability. Oscar calls it “We-Government.” The platform has four major features: 1) report: citizens say what’s really happening using mobile technology; 2) manage: governments follows-up and assigns resources; 3) measure: users generate maps, graphs, and statistics; and 4) communicate: data is made public. CitiVox creates significant value for the public sector, private sector, and civil society. Citizens are heard and involved in the decision-making process, are able to monitor results, and have a better quality of life. Public officials can make more informed policy decisions, are empowered to act on key issues in an effective and efficient manner, and can better affect public opinion.

Presently, citizens have few mechanisms to reach the government (only 50% of emergency calls in Mexico are responded to), and CitiVox is the first Citizen Relationship Management platform. CitiVox is currently halfway through being integrated into every Brazilian state and Jorge and Oscar have partnered with international organizations like the World Bank and IDB. The company is project to move into at least 15 countries by 2013, reaching 15 million citizens. In 2012 Jorge was chosen to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos as a Global Shaper.