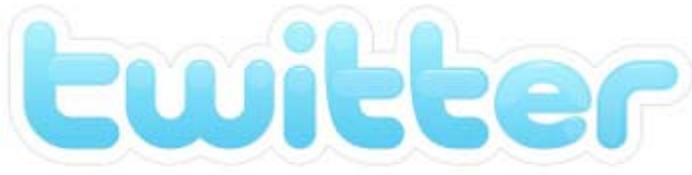


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['Boston About Results' App Puts City's Performance Review in Your Hands](#)

December 4th, 2012 by [Alex E. Weaver](#) Posted in [Boston About Results](#), [Mayor Menino](#)
[BUSINESS](#)

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In an innovative push for governmental transparency, the City of Boston is publicizing great swaths of data on a new website and app, giving the general public the opportunity to see—and hopefully influence—the city’s progress in key areas such as crime, graffiti and tax collection.

The [Boston About Results](#) program will be unveiled Tuesday evening in New York at a forum on technical innovations in city governments. The website and its accompanying iOS app, [Citizen Insight](#), together comprise the city’s much lauded Performance Management Scorecard.

The website and app, the *Globe* [reports](#), are the brainchild of a \$650,000 contract with business software giant SAP America to “improve the city’s back-end data analytics system,” an effort SAP is championing “as an example of what cities can accomplish by exposing data and innovating with technology.”

“The [Performance Management Scorecard](#) gives city officials and residents the ability to find out what city agencies are doing, how well we are doing it and where we can improve,” said a press release from the office of Mayor Menino. “Collecting and sharing this data helps city agencies understand what programs are working, make changes to those that are not, and provide a level of accountability for responsive service delivery.”

The scorecards, then, should serve as a barometer for both how the city is handling various public service issues as well as how Bostonians feel they could be handling them better. Take potholes, for example. According to the release, the Public Works Department scorecard illustrates the percentage of pothole complaints resolved in 2 days or less has jumped from 48% in early 2011 to 96% currently. “Using the BAR scorecard to relentlessly track pothole performance citywide,” it goes on, “Public Works was able to focus their workforce and deliver faster, better services to the people of Boston.”

This is a nice image: Have a pothole problem, make note of said pothole problem via your smartphone, and in two days time , no more pothole problem.

If you’re wondering about electronic downloads at local libraries, fire department response times, or how many vehicles were towed during the month of September—well, that’s all in there too.

The City of Boston rolled out the BAR scorecard internally to 45 departments in May of this year with the goal of improving city-wide data collection via an easy-to-use, flexible application. So far, the Citizen Insight software has met all the requirements.

The real test, though, will come from the city’s residents.

Is this a service you’ll take advantage of? Let me know why or why not below.

Image via iTunes