Online Mayoral Inauguration

LEAD-UP

The online inauguration of Seoul's mayor began with a two-page plan on Oct. 30, 2011. At first, a simple posting of an inauguration VOD on the city's website was planned, for people to watch. This expanded during an Oct. 31, 2011 meeting to plans for an Internet broadcast to form a sense of community by enabling residents to participate in the inauguration itself. It was also decided on Nov. 3, 2011 that the mayor alone would preside over the inauguration.

Towards this end, several debate-format meetings were held, some at working-level and others presided over by the mayor. After the initial format planning was completed, other details were discussed: setup of a website for the inauguration, establishment of infrastructure for a live online broadcast, broadcast filming, citizen participation through SNS, information security, live broadcast planning and scenario production, reorganization of the mayor's office, and preparation of a set for the broadcast.

※ The inauguration was broadcast live at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2011. The related website was active from Nov. 14 to Nov. 18.

"Won-soon's Seoul Story" was broadcast from the mayor's office between Nov 24 and Nov. 30 and showed the concerns and difficulties of the mayor regarding city administration. On Dec. 9, the mayor visited the Seoul Traffic Information Center, serving as a guide for the people in accordance with the aim of the broadcast: show the city's political leader listening to his constituents at different workplaces in everyday life.

INTRODUCTION

On Nov. 16, 2011, Seoul hosted its first online Seoul mayoral inauguration, allowing any citizen, whether employee, homemaker, student, small business owner or industrialist, wishing to participate in the ceremony to do so online. Indeed, being able to enjoy the inauguration together enhanced the status of the ceremony itself.

BACKGROUND & GOALS

Citizen participation is limited in public sector communications, despite widespread use of the Internet

Although communication between Internet users spreads quickly in real time through Twitter, Facebook, and other SNS services, these sites are not conducive as arenas of policy opinions, and serve instead mostly to provide simple information. Despite various efforts from the SMG to have city residents participate in the administration of "Desirable Urban Governance" in line with its ranking as the world's top in e-government, that participation remains low, which limits the policymaking process and institutional improvement to administration of the city.

Most inaugurations are large in size but enjoy the participation of only a few people, as they take place in closed areas. This type of ceremony is expensive and wasteful, and direct communication with many citizens is impossible.

Inaugurations are large events all over the world, and have been the same in Seoul. As they are held in closed spaces, where leading figures from all walks of life join a few representative citizens, most of the general population is excluded. Significant waste occurs as well, from the cost of renting the venue, printing and sending invitation cards, and bringing in people for inauguration performances.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy

The strategy of the online inauguration is simple: the mayor is a citizen. There can be no inauguration that excludes the citizens, since the mayor is also a citizen. Suitable conditions can be created to allow people who want to take part in the inauguration to do so, and for the city administration to receive directly the opinions of its people. The online inauguration was absent of any authoritative or formal events, instead focusing on being open to anyone, regardless of their actual location. The strategy was also on keeping the event

simple and consume only a small budget. Its purpose and strategy were established by the Digitalization Planning Group, in accordance with the mayor's thinking, and was implemented through consultation with the relevant departments using existing infrastructure and very little taxpayer money. Plans for the live online broadcasting of the city's administration briefing for "Won-soon's Seoul Story" was established in November 2011 towards real time communication with residents. The existing infrastructure was used and only a small team and budget during the initial stages. Through the ongoing program, Mayor Park's intention is to communicate with citizens in real time, talk about city administration, and provide an online venue for people to participate. As the host, Mayor Park answers questions on policies, relates stories, and shares a variety of news from the city. As such, he gives the broadcast a comfortable and friendly feeling instead of sounding authoritarian and formal.

Overcoming Obstacles

As many citizens watched the live online inauguration during the fixed time slot, the huge amount of online traffic revealed the limitations of using the SMG's Internet broadcasting infrastructure. However, as several private sites supported the broadcasts on their own, this helped to disperse the Internet traffic, and the public participation made for a successful online inauguration broadcast: a world first that combined Seoul's brand with unique content. In the beginning, "Won-soon's Seoul Story" used only one broadcasting medium, which was nearly overwhelmed by the number of online viewers. Fortunately, an alternate system has kept the broadcasts running. The first broadcast was suspended for about 10 minutes, due to the sound system being too high quality for the average laptop PC. The second broadcast was live-only, which increased broadcast stability. The number of viewers declined after the first broadcast, and efforts to maintain the numbers led to announcements of a broadcast schedule on a variety of topics (traffic, welfare, the environment, etc.) and diversification of the filming venues.

Resources Used

The online inauguration enjoyed voluntary participation from the private sector while making use of existing infrastructure and systems. There were no additional expenses. The inauguration site was the existing Seoul City website, which was updated and improved in preparation. The live broadcast was transmitted through Seoul City's Internet broadcasting system. The camera crew from Traffic Broadcasting was brought in to do the filming. Every aspect of the event was made possible simply by utilizing the city's existing business framework. The voluntary addition of Korea's larger portals, UCC sites, and Internet media resulted in savings of hundreds of millions of won that would have otherwise been spent creating a stable infrastructure. The fact that it was

not a public sector-only event, but enjoyed the participation of many private companies and people, gave the city a new model for communication with its residents. "Won-soon's Seoul Story" uses the SMG's existing personnel, and was broadcast as part of an existing program ("Live Seoul") on the SMG's Internet TV system. Live transmission took place through a temporary website for the mayor's office (http://mayer.seoul.go.kr), Afreeca TV (http://www.afreeca.com/ wonsoontv), and Olleh Onair (http://onair.olleh.com/wonsoontv) broadcasting channels. The opportunities for participation by the private sector have expanded through podcasts that can be replayed and the sharing of live broadcast information through Internet media and other media companies. During the live broadcasts, communication with the Mayor of Seoul is possible through a real-time chat window on Afreeca TV, the temporary mayor's office website, and Olleh Onair's social comment service.

RESULTS & EVALUATION

The online inauguration was live from 11:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. on Nov. 16, 2011. It included scenes of the mayor's office, the pledge of allegiance, an inauguration speech, and real time answering of people's questions through SNS. The number of simultaneous connectors for the Internet broadcast reached 75,000, and more than 5,000 comments were received through SNS. Online participation in the event was supplemented by 8,000 people viewing it through their mobile devices.

※ The number of cumulative video playbacks was 1,226,602 as of Dec. 9, 2011.

TRANSFERABILITY

As digital technology causes rapid changes in our society, it can promote public participation in city administration, and allow the government to shift from supply-centered to demand-centered governance. Each government agency is carrying out new government services, based on Web 2.0 technology such as sharing Seoul City policies, opening the policymaking process, and encouraging participation in that process. In this aspect, the world's first online inauguration and "Won-soon's Seoul Story" can be part of a new chapter in promoting participation of the general public in the public sector's policymaking. The significant public interest in the online inauguration has led to its benchmarking by other agencies as a true participatory event for minimal cost. And, Seoul is trying to drive this type of event in an instructional direction. The Sejong City Mayor's Inauguration Preparation Committee, which

will be launched next year, is benchmarking the Mayor of Seoul's online inauguration, and inquiries are surging from a variety of other local governments and agencies. Seoul continues to adopt live Internet broadcasting and online citizen participation for different events, as seen in "Won-soon's Seoul Story." An Open Forum of Seoul Citizens held on Dec. 13, 2011 adopted the format of the online inauguration. There are plans in place to support SNS and other media where residents can submit their comments and opinions. A variety of ways are planned to more effectively share SMG policies with the public.

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