

## Journal paper, in preparation

### Campaign groups and local authority staff: the potential for a web based tool to support engagement

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**ABSTRACT:** Applications making use of 'Web 2.0' capabilities have radically changed perceptions, and use of, the internet. Instead of seeing the internet as providing distributed users with direct and very fast access to data resources the internet is now seen as a dynamic meeting place where users can interact and exchange information with individuals around the world. The leading social media are now dominant web applications with many millions of users but much smaller groups of individuals who share a common view are also developing applications to meet their specific needs.

Campaign groups tackle many different agendas but they often have similar needs with respect to tools to support their internal communication and lobbying activities. The Cambridge Cycling Campaign developed a web portal to support its own activities and potentially those of any group with a geographically oriented focus. Its purpose was two-fold: to enable the campaign group to more effectively share and organise information and to strengthen interaction with decision makers such as cycling officers from local authorities.

This paper reports on a study which considered the potential of this web portal from the perspective of these decision makers. In particular, its 'fit' with respect to the activities and job requirements of local authority cycling officers. The outcomes discussed include: the potential benefits of such a tool, key considerations in order to avoid any mismatch with local authority processes and the perceived barriers and enablers with respect to (widening participation in) public engagement.