Open Civic Library Project

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Who are we?

We are a small team of a programmer, a librarian, and a designer passionate about openness and civic data accessibility.

We believe that we can increase the amount of civic engagement in communities around the world by reducing barriers to get information.

What are we doing?

We're creating a website and tools to find and make searchable civic documents all across the United States.

We want to make it simple to get civic information presented to citizens as quickly and as painlessly as possible.

Why are you doing it?

Civic engagement is important. Decisions made by municipality, county, state, and federal leaders affect every aspect of our lives.

We believe that getting information to people quickly, concisely, and simply will make them better informed, which in turn will increase civic engagement and participation.

How does it work?

Powerful software tools find documents on municipality websites and pull them into a database where they can be searched.

Once found, they are checked for keywords or phrases that users have decided are important to them. Notifications are then sent if documents contain those phrases.

How will you do it?

Leverage the low cost of cloud-based infrastructure and use Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) to find, convert, classify, and index civic documents.

A "freemium" model will be implemented where more advanced filtering and phrase discovery will be available at a cost.

Who will use Premium?

We suspect that news outlets will immediately see the value in the service since they will be able to get notifications of phrases across massive geographical regions (such as the phrase "fracking" in all of New York State).

Additionally, we suspect that some municipalities and researchers may be interested in using the service.

Can I use it today?

Not yet.

The Open Civic Library Project is based on many of the ideas from the MonroeMinutes project started in late 2012 by Tim Duffy. We're working hard to scale the tools and website to support much more data and a lot more users!

Are you doing research?

We are!

A big part of the Open Civic Library Project is researching the best method of organizing and categorizing the massive amount of civic documents we find. All of our research will be published in the open domain!
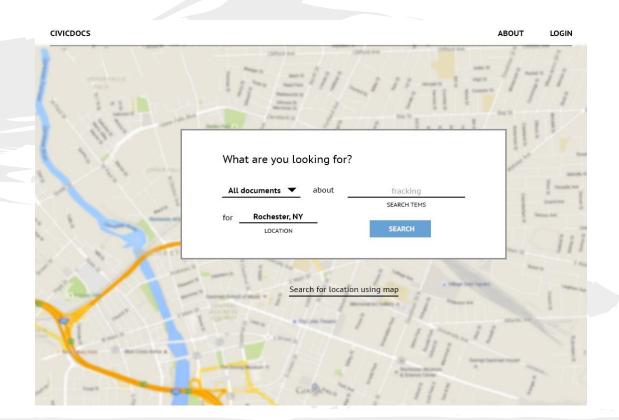
So what's next?

We continue to find new and better ways to accomplish our goals. All of our efforts up to this point have been volunteer. We're looking to ramp up our efforts to deploy our project before 2016 in a few counties in New York. We are currently looking for funding to assist in this initial deployment.

The Website: civicdocs.io

The website will live at civicdocs.io and will provide a method to search for documents, see those search results, and setup notifications for when keywords or phrases are found in new documents.
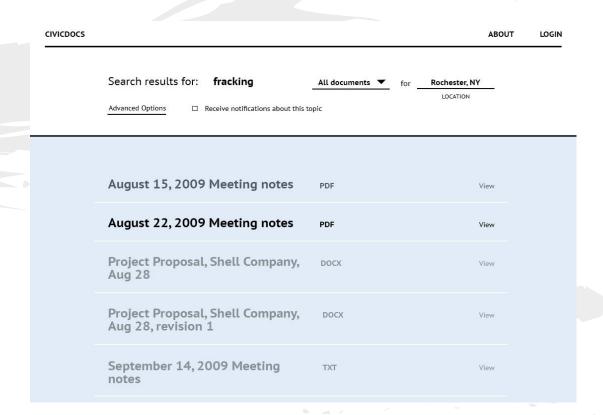
civicdocs.io - home

A mock-up of what the homepage of *civicdocs.io* will look like.

civicdocs.io - results

A mock-up of what the search results page will look like.

CIVICDOCS   ABOUT   LOGIN

Search results for: **fracking**   All documents ▼   for   Rochester, NY
                                                                      LOCATION
Advanced Options   ☐ Receive notifications about this topic

August 15, 2009 Meeting notes	PDF		View
August 22, 2009 Meeting notes	**PDF**		**View**
Project Proposal, Shell Company, Aug 28	DOCX		View
Project Proposal, Shell Company, Aug 28, revision 1	DOCX		View
September 14, 2009 Meeting notes	TXT		View

civicdocs.io - notifications

A mock-up of what the notifications page will look like.

Username   EDIT

email@email.com   EDIT

Notification frequency
☐ Daily
☐ Weekly
☐ Monthly

Saved Notifications

X	Remove	Fracking documents in Albion, NY
X	Remove	Town meeting minutes for Albion, NY
X	Remove	Meeting minutes for Rochester, NY

civicdocs.io - document

A mock-up of what the document viewing page will look like.

Comments and tags are also be supported.

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