

Burgernet, Netherlands

Burgernet gets citizens involved in police work.

SECURING THE FUTURE

Collaboration between municipalities, citizens and police supported by the right technology. This makes Burgernet or this type of citizen participation possible. In 2004, the Dutch government expressed their desire to get citizens more involved in their own safety and the security of their neighbourhood. Burgernet is just what is needed today to protect citizens.

Burgernet is a citizens' network. One of its objectives is to support police investigations aimed at catching criminals in the act. On receiving a report of a burglary or a missing child, for example, the police control room operator can start a Burgernet alert. Burgernet participants receive a voice or a text message on their (mobile) telephone giving them a clear description of a specific person or vehicle and asking them to keep a look out. If a participating citizen sees the person or vehicle concerned, they call the free Burgernet number and are automatically put through to the control room. The operator then updates the police with the information. At the end of the Burgernet incident, all those taking part receive a message informing them of the results.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2008 and 2009, nine Dutch municipalities successfully tested the pilot 'Burgernet'. Thanks to the efforts of Burgernet participants, suspects have been caught in the act by the police, missing persons traced and the police provided with useful information. In all pilot regions, an intensive form of cooperation has been established between the police, the municipality and participating citizens. Based on these positive findings, the Dutch Ministries of Home Affairs, Security and Justice have been advised to introduce Burgernet on a national scale.

The network will be expanded to all Dutch police districts, with an increasing number of municipalities introducing Burgernet. All police control rooms are now connected to the Burgernet application, resulting in a network with national coverage. This means that work on an incident does not have to stop at a regional or municipal border. A similar initiative, SMS-Alert, currently operational in twelve police districts and more than 100 municipalities, will be integrated into Burgernet during this nationwide rollout.

We developed the IT application Burgernet in 2004 and managed the application maintenance. CGI – together with the Dutch Police cooperation facility [voorziening tot samenwerking Politie Nederland (vtsPN)] – will support police districts in the nationwide rollout of Burgernet. The challenge is to achieve a smooth and efficient nationwide rollout.

CASE STUDY

GOVERNMENT

Public Safety and Justice

About Burgernet

In November 2008, nine Dutch municipalities in five police districts introduced the pilot 'Burgernet' - a new way for citizens to play an active role in the safety of their neighbourhood. And a new way for the police to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

Key benefits

- Increased citizen confidence in their safety
- More efficient suspect detection
- Missing people and vehicles found more quickly
- Compliance with national standards and laws
- People and technology delivering results together

"All expectations and projections about the rollout of Burgernet have been surpassed. Burgernet works!"

Ivo Opstelten, Minister of Security and Justice



OUR ANSWER

We have translated the concept of Burgernet into a technical working solution. In close cooperation with the police (vtsPN) and the Burgernet organisation, an integral system is realised for participating citizens, police and municipalities. The system is part of the police control room, where operations can be started and followed in an efficient manner. We developed Burgernet technology in such a way that not only the police but other emergency services can also use it.

We have ensured that the participants can be involved through various channels. Previously, communication between citizens and the control room was possible only via a fixed telephone line. Now all parties benefit from the use of multimedia. Multimedia accelerates their interaction. The system runs in all control rooms and is easy to use. By using modern development-languages and methods, Burgernet is successfully established. Working in a criminal environment requires security guarantees and Burgernet meets stringent security requirements. Ensuring the safety of the police and protecting the data of the participants.

The system is managed by us and is technically housed in the secure data centre of the Dutch Police. We proactively maintain and introduce new functionality. Besides the technical realisation and management of this system, we are closely involved in further developing citizen participation and Burgernet. We are part of the strategic steering group and work with police, municipalities and the Ministry to give direction on citizen participation. This contribution to the steering committee highlights the strong partnership between us and the Dutch Police.

WHY CGI?

Together we can create new ways to secure the future. We can achieve great things. Public challenges form the basis of our solutions. For over 35 years, leading organisations and worldwide governments have benefitted from our expertise in security, real or virtual, all over the world. Finally, security is important for all of us, now and in the future. We are proud to help organisations grow their business and operate in new ways.

We innovate to anticipate future demand. We pioneer technology across industries. We imagine everything is possible. We inspire those around us with our energy. We enable others to achieve more. We make new and unexpected connections. We bring fresh perspectives.

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A SUCCESS STORY

Of the approximately 400 monthly Burgernet actions, an average of ten percent directly leads to arrest of the accused, or to finding something lost. In addition, approximately forty percent of the Burgernet actions are indirect but a valuable contribution to the investigation process. This shows that Burgernet contributes significantly to increasing the likelihood of 'catching someone in the act'. Burgernet is a great success with more than one million people in 382 municipalities participating.

The Burgernet system is not only used for crime detection but also for informing citizens of security situations. Municipalities use Burgernet at events with the help of participants who registered especially for the event. They also use it to warn civilians of security incidents. On many fronts, Burgernet is a good example of cooperation between citizens, municipalities and police for security in the district.

A few examples of successful Burgernet actions:

- Copper thief arrested after clear description via Burgernet
- Raiders of wine shop in Delft were quickly located and arrested thanks to Burgernet participants
- A lost three year old cyclist found within five minutes via successful Burgernet action
- Advanced Burgernet implemented in Veendam due to arson

