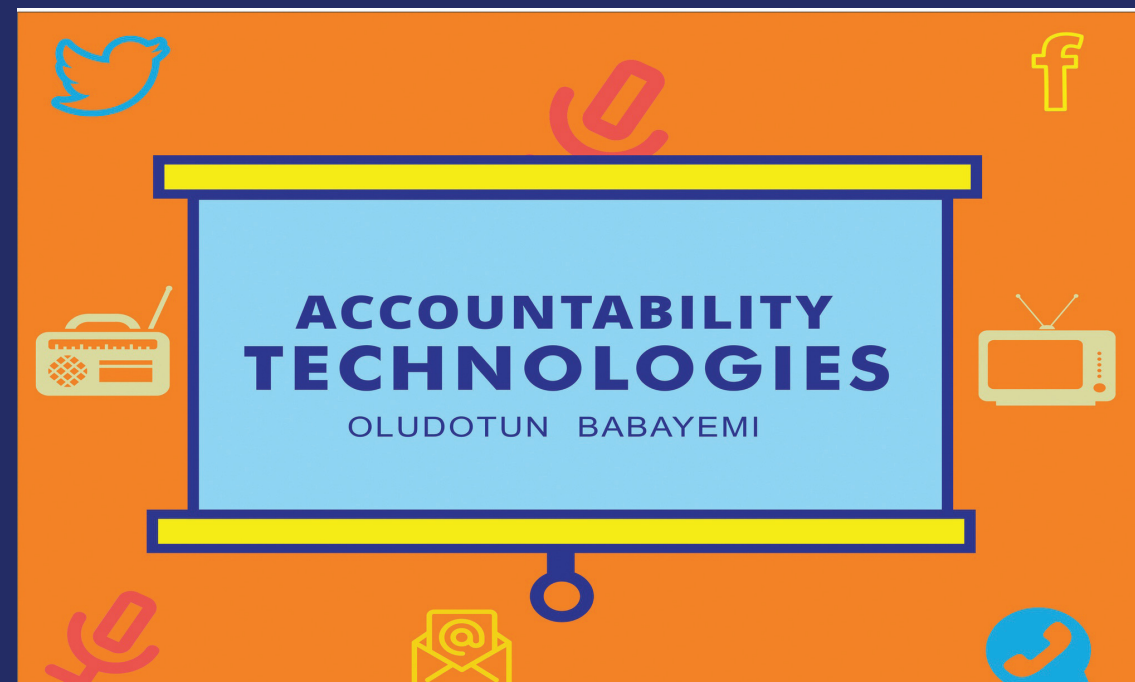This book contains desk research of best practices that can be used by organizations, or individuals working to improve transparency and accountability of government institutions in West Africa, and in Africa at large. In addition, information from this book was taken from interviews conducted with nine organizations working on transparency and accountability issues in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the Open Government Partnership Team. Information was also gathered through a survey of 23 organizations working on social accountability in West Africa.

ACCOUNTABILITY TECHNOLOGIES

OLUDOTUN BABAYEMI

Oludotun Babayemi is a monitoring and evaluation expert providing technical assistance to people and organizations on how to use technologies to improve governance and increase transparency and accountability.
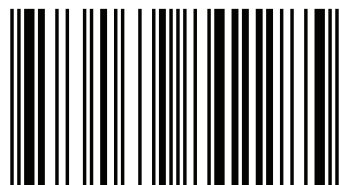
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Accountability Technologies

A Handbook on Accountability Technologies

A guide on how civil society organizations can use technologies to promote transparency and accountability - with case studies from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia

Table of Contents

Foreword

This is a timely publication given much soul searching among the civic tech, open data and transparency communities of late as to our collective impact. Accountability outcomes are hard to achieve, so it is important that guidance draw on the experiences of those groups working on the ground – in this case from the West African context. Tips for use are backed by case studies and a review of the origins and motivations for accountability technologies.

As emphasized here (and matching findings of recent studies), technologies are tools to address problems, not solutions in themselves. They can be highly effective when fit for purpose. For example, the appropriate technology to mobilize citizen awareness will not necessarily be the same as the technology to prompt a government response.

The surveyed practitioners offer a useful reminder that older technologies, such as radio, still have critical roles to play. However, given the growing uptake of online, especially social media based, approaches, the author is right to point to not just their potential but also the need for civil society and government to ensure adequate protections for users and their data. Technologies need to be used smartly in a context of growing restrictions on the ability of civil society to operate freely.

More positively, as detailed here, there is potential for civil society and government to partner on the push for greater accountability, for example on service delivery. Technology can enable collaboration, but we should be realistic in what it can achieve. Accountability technologies are important but will not magically build trust or transform governance relationships. As with the transparency that technologies facilitate, they are but one of a set of moving parts needed to change behaviors.

Michael Jarvis
Executive Director,
Transparency and Accountability Initiative
Washington D.C.
January 2018

Hear from Activists

Context matters – high-tech approaches do not work in low-tech environments. This means we have to redefine what civic technology means. These can include radio, murals, town hall meetings, etc... Ecosystems matter too - deploying technology for civil movements is not just about individual efforts but building platforms for government to better engage citizens in improving the effectiveness of government and the participation of citizens.
iCampus, Liberia

Technology can only strengthen an already sound strategy for promoting accountability. Develop a plan and then consider if digital technology would be beneficial.
The Engine Room, Sierra Leone and Nigeria

I would advise to partner tightly with media organizations (radio!) in the country to gather reports and to build campaigns about accountability issues. Also, open as many channels of reporting as possible to reach a wider audience (WhatsApp, Facebook, SMS, email). Coordinate your work with other NGOs/CSOs not to overwhelm citizens with multiple campaigns.
United Nations University Institute for Computing and Society, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria

Don't use a tech tool just because others are doing so. Understand your terrain and what works for you. Then make the best use of what works. In our work, we have found that Radio, Twitter and print media has served us well and we've leveraged these platforms to gain visibility and influence with our audiences.
Policy Alert: The Grassroots People Empowerment Foundation, Nigeria

Identify the technologies that are most used in the country. For example in Côte d'Ivoire, Facebook is a leader in mobilizing social media. Twitter comes next with regard to mobilization.
Social Justice, Cote d'Ivoire

The NGO or civic movement has to develop or use technologies that are not confusing to use. This will ensure that all layers of target groups are able to participate in the initiative or activity. It is also important to know which alternative digital technologies or methods of communication

are being developed alongside the proposed digital technologies. This is to enable those without access to the proposed technologies to also participate within the initiative and by so doing, increase the overall impact of the initiative.
Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development, Nigeria

Consider blending offline and online technologies, since technology only serves as an enabler to the social interaction. There is also need to put in a place an action plan to execute engagements rather than ad-hoc communication (information sharing and interactions)
Odekro, Ghana

NGOs/CSOs need to utilize radio more frequently in mobilizing citizens especially those in the rural areas. They should be relentless in engaging both government and citizens on various social media platforms, especially Twitter and Facebook as these tools are gaining more traction in several African countries including Nigeria. Email can also be used for targeted campaigns.
Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI), Nigeria

Civic campaigns depend on the communities you are going to be working with. Research the communities and see what works.
Organization for Women and Children, Liberia

The use of radio, especially those in local languages, are crucial to reach rural communities. This is more efficient than elitist-styled social media campaigns.
Connected Development, Nigeria

Organizations that use digital technologies for their campaigns should use social media, particularly Facebook, which is very well known by West African populations. Many young people are registered, and the platform makes it possible to reach a broader audience.
Forum de la société civile de l'Afrique de l'Ouest de Côte d'Ivoire (FOSCAO-CI), Cote d'Ivoire

Consider your audience - their literacy level and demography.
BudgIT Nigeria

Consider user needs when designing technology.
Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ), Nigeria

The solution should have an audio or video component that would help illiterate people to connect quickly. It is also important to use a combination of solutions (including the most traditional ones) and not limiting to one only. Technology adoption will be gradual.
Afrik Poll, Mali

What This Book Is

In 2016, 16 West African governments spent an average of US$4 billion (*CIA World Factbook*) on providing services and infrastructure for its citizen[1]. This fund is citizens' money, collected via tax, rates, and bills. In the next years, more will be spent. It is also the citizens who make sure this money reaches them. Citizens are to make sure their government is accountable. Civil society organizations, also, are intermediaries that mediate and empower citizens to demand their public service providers are transparent and responsible. This book highlights how civil society and individual citizens can use accountability technologies to hold their public service providers accountable.

Accountability Technologies discusses how offline and online technology tools can be used to improve the effectiveness of government and participation of citizens. The tools presented in this book include Radio, Television, WhatsApp, SMS, Mobile Apps, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Online Websites. Accountability technologies are set up to check government spending.

This book contains desk research of best practices that can be used by organizations, or individuals working to improve transparency and accountability of government institutions in West Africa, and in Africa at large. In addition, information from this book was taken from interviews conducted with nine organizations working on transparency and accountability issues in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the Open Government Partnership Team. Information was also gathered through a survey of 23 organizations working on social accountability in West Africa.

In chapter 1, we define Accountability Technologies and the role it plays in promoting democratic governance. We discuss the justification for social mobilization in tackling corruption in West Africa and examples of organizations that are using these technologies to hold their government accountable.

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[1] "The World Fact Book," *Central Intelligence Agency*, accessed January 4, 2018, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2056.html.

In chapter 2, we trace the history of accountability technologies and the organizations using them in West Africa. We also discuss the importance of the Open Government Partnership for delivering on the use of accountability technologies. We conclude with how organizations using technologies to improve government effectiveness and citizen participation get support, and who supports them.
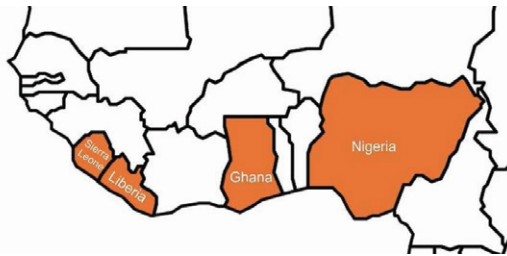
Figure 2 Map of West Africa highlighting countries focused on for case studies

Chapter 3 focuses on a quick field guide on accountability technologies and looks at policies and laws that support the use of these technologies in West Africa. While chapter 4 focuses on the tools that are used by organizations in West Africa, best practices and how you can secure yourself and your organization from being monitored by repressive regimes.

The last chapter discusses reasons why accountability technologies are essential for social mobilization, how to decide which of them to use and guidelines on how they can be effectively utilized. Highlights of interviews and lessons learnt from the nine organizations from Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone wraps up the book.

Accountability Technologies in Perspective

Each piece of technology that has emanated from human history has come with its positive and negative side. The advent of the print in the 15th century made more documents available to humans. It led to reprisal movements on the integrity of the church, which only had access to few copies of the Bible. The same doctrine leveraged on the prints to make the Bible available to many of its congregation[2]. The Radio also played a very critical role in the French and Mexican Revolutions at the end of the 19th century[3]. Radio is also used by the State in several countries to spread propaganda of how the State is creating change; even though, the situation is otherwise. The United Democratic Party before the 2016 Gambian Election used Facebook and WhatsApp. It was also used by the incumbent president Yahya Jammeh to spread information and propaganda during the campaign.[4]
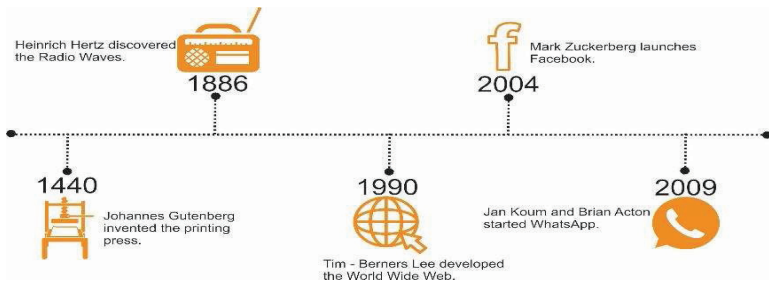
Figure 1 A timeline of some accountability technologies

If you are planning to use accountability technologies, the following assertions should be considered:

1. **Non-Technology means are still the most effective for demanding accountability from public service providers**. Organizing town hall meetings, attending quarterly parliamentary meetings, memo submission to parliamentarians, attending public hearing discussions should be considered as part of your activities. Highlights from all

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[2] Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*, (Yale University Press, 2017), 262-263.

[3] J. Justin Castro, *Radio in Revolution: Wireless Technology and State Power in Mexico, 1897–1938*. (University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 33.

[4] Sanna Camara, "Gambia: Social Media Overwhelms a 20-Year Dictator (blog)," *World Policy Blog*, last modified December 9, 2016 (10:59 a.m.), accessed January 4, 2017, http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2016/12/09/gambia-social-media-overwhelms-20-year-dictator.

nine organizations, interviewed for the handbook, ascertained that these traditional methods are at the core of their work.

2. **The combination of offline (Print, Radio, TV) and online technologies such as Facebook and Twitter are very important for organizations working around social accountability**. If social accountability is about the real citizen's voice, then your campaigns should take cognizance of communities that cannot be reached online but through offline means.

3. **Instead of building new tools, collaborate with existing organizations working on social accountability**. This may also include making your initiative work with established workers unions, community associations, and other civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the same space. Think of partnering with CSOs from neighbouring countries as well, aiding cross-border collaboration.

4. **The use of these technologies should consider how the government will be able to respond to citizens voice been amplified**. Some of the success stories were influenced by the creation of partnerships with government agencies. If possible, partner with government anti-corruption agencies in your country.

5. **Create a partnership with Independent media organizations or trusted traditional media organizations in the broadcast and print.** While there is free access to the new media, there is great need to take into consideration the followership garnered by existing broadcast and print media entities.

6. **As a civil society organization, or individual, mobilizing citizens to make sure public services providers are accountable, you must also be transparent and accountable.** The morals we hope to see exhibited by our government must also be shown by your organization or, you as an individual. This includes making your budget available online, filing tax returns when due, conducting audit reports within your organizations. The best practice is to make it available to your members, and your government.

Introduction *(Chapter 1)*

What are Accountability Technologies?

Accountability Technologies are communication technologies that citizens or non-governmental organizations can use to mobilize other citizens while making their government accountable and responsive. A responsible government is one that believes it is answerable to the people it governs and puts the people's interests above its own.[5] Among communication technologies are Print, Radio, Mobile Phones, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. These technologies help to share and interpret data, strengthen citizen voices, facilitate social cohesion and support direct citizen participation in democratic processes[6].

Why do Civil Society Organizations Need Accountability Technologies?

Democracy is in decline in many countries, and corruption is one of the primary reasons. It undermines democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the social welfare of citizens. In reducing corruption, civil society organizations are using readily available technologies to increase citizens' participation and to hold their governments accountable. Accountability technologies are becoming ubiquitous, and every citizen can now access a form of technology that allows information sharing. In Africa, radio has remained the top medium in the global era because of its ability to adapt to the rapidly changing living conditions on the continent.[7] However, one may still wonder why radio remains the primary medium for

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[5] Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: from Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 321.

[6] Talitha Dubow, Axelle Devaux, Christian Van Stolk, and Catriona Manville, "Civic engagement: How can digital technologies underpin citizen-powered democracy?," *RAND Corporation and Corsham Institute*, 2017https://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF373.html, 6.

[7] Winston Mano, "Why Radio is Africa's Medium of Choice in the Global Age," In *Radio in Africa:*

information sharing, even in the age of the internet. Some reasons mentioned by the activists interviewed were that Radio is affordable, and information exchange is often conducted in local languages.

These technologies can be used to sensitize citizens on how they can leverage the freedom of information laws in their countries to access government data. They can be used to mobilize citizens to attend district parliament meetings, where discussions on government spending can be initiated. WhatsApp and community online platforms can be used to create groups that discuss issues related to budget data, open contracting data or aid data. In places where government officials are on Twitter, citizens can send messages directly to the government officials by mentioning the name of the concerned government official or agency. In some cases, hashtags can be created to create more visibility for a campaign that may prompt government agencies to respond more rapidly. Radio and Television programs may be developed to bring government agencies to answer questions directly from citizens, particularly phone-in programs, which are designed for that citizens' immediate contribution.

As more governments are using legal means to halt activities of civil society organizations around the world, the interconnected nature of accountability technologies can allow civil society organizations to operate with minimal infrastructures. For instance, civil society organizations can create online niche networks to mobilize their members, and to organize meetings. These technologies also allow civil society organizations to leverage on cross-border collaborations without putting up physical structures that can be shut down by repressive regimes. There are 21 legal instruments on corruption, which civil society groups can leverage on to hold their government accountable[8]. These instruments include the General Assembly resolution 58/4: United Nations Convention against Corruption; African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption; and the Economic Community of West African States Protocol on the Fight against Corruption.

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publics, cultures, communities, edited by Elizabeth Gunner, Dina Ligaga and Dumisani Moyo, (James Currey, 2011), 102.

[8] "Compendium of International Legal Instruments on Corruption, 2nd ed," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, (New York: United Nations, 2005), https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/publications_compendium_e.pdf.

Why are Accountability Technologies Important?

Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew to US$ 2.2 trillion in 2015, and 25% of that amount is lost to corruption[9]. That's US$ 550 billion (198 trillion Naira)! US$550 billion is about the total GDP of Nigeria ($568 billion, 2014 World Bank figures). This US$ 550 billion (198 trillion Naira) could have provided thousands of water points in rural communities, provided more support for education and teaching, and of course, better health facilities in communities in just one year. The table below shows the Freedom House ranking of Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone with mark 0 as worst and 100 has best. The Freedom House ranking assesses the condition of political rights and civil liberties around the world. It is composed of numerical ratings and supporting descriptive texts for 195 countries and 14 territories. The Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum in the table assesses the competitiveness landscape of 137 economies, providing unique insight into the drivers of their productivity and prosperity.

Table 1: Relevant development indicators for focus countries in West Africa (2017 Freedom House Ranking [10]and 2017 World Economic Forum Ranking[11])

Indicators	Ghana	Liberia	Nigeria	Sierra Leone
Freedom House (Rank/100)	83	62	50	66
World Economic Forum Ranking				
Institutions (Rank/137)	59	92	125	112
Higher Education/Training (Rank/137)	98	133	116	132
Infrastructure(Rank/137)	103	126	132	126
Health/primary Education(Rank/137)	120	134	136	120
Macroeconomic Environment(Rank/137)	131	126	122	128

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[9] "Eliminating Corruption Is Crucial to Sustainable Development," *UNODC.org,* last modified November 1, 2015, accessed December 9, 2017, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2015/November/eliminating-corruption-is-crucial-to-sustainable-development.html.

[10] "Freedom in the World 2017 - Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy," *Freedom House,* https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017?gclid=Cj0KCQiAyNjRBRCpARIsAPDBnn0umRzsF_O9B7Pnfq7UPr96zaFLMxqDe3QXP-TyFB7-dM_GRAz-4asaAid9EALw_wcB.

[11] "The Global Competitiveness Report 2017 – 2018," *World Economic Forum*, 2018, https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2017-2018.

Technological Readiness(Rank/137)	93	133	112	128

In West Africa, 6 out of every 10 people live in rural communities. Sixty percent now have access to improved drinking water, but only 18% of this population has access to improved sanitation facilities. In Nigeria, the cost of corruption is estimated to be 37% of its Gross Domestic Product by 2030, according to a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the impact of Corruption on Nigeria's economy[12]. The president of IMANI Center for Policy and Education, Franklin Cudjoe, observed that Ghana loses over $3 billion of taxpayer's money in corrupt activities every year[13]. In a survey of 43,143 respondents across 28 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, a more significant percentage of respondents affirmed that corruption is on the rise in the continent and that their government is doing less about it. The top four countries where respondents alluded to increases in corruption were in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria[14].

Many times, citizens do not have information about funds meant to provide facilities in their communities, and even when they do, there are no platforms to engage with their governments. Accountability technologies can provide the platform for them to do so and to make governments respond. Information communication technologies (ICTs) have further enabled citizen collective action by facilitating access to information, lowering transaction costs for the creation and development of associational networks, and providing effective coordination tools for disadvantaged groups across the globe.[15] In *Civic Tech in the Global South: Assessing Technology for the Public Good*, Tiago Peixoto highlighted how accountability technologies are used to mobilize citizens and to make government accountable by twenty – three initiatives in the Global South[16].

12 "Impact of Corruption on the Nigerian Economy," *PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC),* 2016, https://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/impact-of-corruption-on-nigerias-economy.pdf, 4.
13 Godwin A. Allotey, "Ghana loses $3 billion annually in corruption – IMANI," *Citi FM Online,* last modified May 15, 2016, accessed December 26, 2017, http://citifmonline.com/2016/05/15/ghana-loses-3-billion-annually-in-corruption-imani/.
14 Coralie Pring, "People and Corruption: Africa Survey," *Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer*, 2015, http://files.transparency.org/content/download/1941/12775/file/2015_GCB_SubSaharanAfrica_EN.pdf, 2.
15 Bennett, W. Lance, and Alexandra Segerberg, "The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics, *Information, Communication and Society 15,* no. 5 (2012) 742. http://ccce.com.washington.edu/about/assets/2012iCS-LCA-Bennett&Segerberg-LogicofConnectiveAction.pdf.
16 Tiago Peixoto and Micah L. Sifry, *Civic Tech in the Global South: Assessing Technology for the*

Some Examples of Organizations using Accountability Technologies

In Ghana, Odekro uses its website to provide information about parliament proceedings to citizens. It also provides statistics on parliament member attendance and the number of times they contribute during debates in the parliament. Reports are created from their findings and made available as policy briefs, and press releases.

In Nigeria, the Public-Private Development Company, popularly known as Procurement Monitor, has developed Budeshi, an open contracting platform integrated with SMS to ensure contracting processes are made available to citizens, and citizens, in turn, can monitor and report using SMS.

In Sierra Leone, the Network Movement for Democracy and Human Right (NMDHR) is using community radio to sensitize and mobilize community members to engage government to provide more efficient health services.

In Liberia, the Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL) uses Radio and Television to mobilize citizens to monitor funds meant for rehabilitating and constructing schools in a School Grant Monitoring project, which tracks the disbursement of money to schools in rural regions of Liberia.

In Uganda, Trac FM Common Matters amplifies advocacy campaigns, monitors and evaluate government projects using polls from radio program and SMS to reach underserved populations to contribute to governance issues. TRAC FM works with NGOs, CSOs, research groups, activists and government institutions.

In Kenya, if there is a shortage of water in your community, a project called MajiVoice will allow you to report water-related issues to government agencies that are responsible. In

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Public Good, (Washington, DC: World Bank and Personal Democracy Press, 2017), *license: CC BY 3.0 IGO, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/27947.*

this case, the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) of Kenya. Citizens send reports through SMS, and an online platform.

In The Blind Alley *(Chapter 2)*

The Origin of Accountability Technologies

Print

1440 - Printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg

1663 - First Periodical, one of the earliest examples of modern magazines, Erbauliche Monaths-Unterredungen "Edifying Monthly Discussions" created by Johann Rist

1666 - First English newspaper, the London Gazette, published

Sound & Radio

1871 - Phonograph invented by Thomas Edison

1886 - Radio waves discovered by Heinrich Hertz

1894 – Long distance wireless telegraph started to be developed by Guglielmo Marconi

1933 - Frequency Modulation (FM) invented by Edwin H. Armstrong

TV & Photography

1000 - Pinhole Camera invented by Ibn Al-Haytham

1885 - Photographic paper film invented by George Eastman

1888 - Kinetograph invented by William Kennedy Laurie Dickson through Edison Labs

1895 - Cinématographe invented by Louis Lumière and Auguste Lumière

1921 - Recording sound on film, "talkies" invented by Lee de Forest

1947- Electronic television sets created by Philo Farnsworth

Internet

1969 - Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), developed the precursor to the internet

1972 - First Email Management Program written by Larry Roberts

1990- Precursor to World Wide Web developed by Tim Berners- Lee

1993 – GSM for Short Messaging Service was invented by Nokia

1998 – Google Inc. Search engines established by Larry Page and Sergey Brin

2004 – Mark Zuckerberg launches Facebook

2005 - YouTube is founded

2006 – Twitter is created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone and Evan Williams

2009 – WhatsApp was started by Jan Koum and Brian Acton

The Origin of Civil Society Organizations using Accountability Technologies

The use of Accountability Technologies by civil society organizations started at the beginning of the last decade in West Africa. Most countries in the region at this time were either transiting from a military government to a democratic government or consolidating a halted democratic era.

As the newly elected Ghanaian President John Kufuor was taking over from former leader Jerry John Rawlings in 2001, PenPlusBytes, a pan – African, non-government organization based in Accra, was founded by Kwami Ahiabenu II. The organization started by training journalists on how to use digital tools. By 2008, it focused its work on training citizens on using digital tools to hold the government accountable.

In Nigeria, the Public-Private Development Company (PPDC), was founded by Chibuzo Ekwekwu in 2001, three years after the new democratic government of President Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in. The organization started out focusing on public finance and procurement, and on social justice. By 2010, it started the Nigeria Procurement Monitor, which later transformed into the online platform named Budeshi. This platform aggregates government procurement information that enables citizens to monitor projects and report back using an SMS integration.

By the end of the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone in 2002, President Tejan Kabbah was democratically re-elected. Around the same time, the Network Movement for Democracy and Human Rights, a network of civil society organizations promoting human right and democratic values, was founded by Abdul Karim. Fourteen years after it was established, it embarked on using community radio to engage citizens on monitoring service delivery in the health sector.

The Center for Transparency and Accountability Liberia (CENTAL) was founded in 2004: two years before Ellen Sirleaf Johnson was elected as the president of Liberia leader, and while Liberia was transiting into a new democratic era. CENTAL is a non – governmental organization, affiliated to Transparency International, the global civil society organization leading the fight against anticorruption. With its school grant-monitoring project, CENTAL uses video documentary and community radio to engage citizens to hold their government accountable.

By the end of 2010, more NGOs and social enterprises specializing in transparency and accountability were founded. BudgIT in Nigeria, started in 2011; Odekro in Ghana, started in 2012, and Connected Development Follow the Money in Nigeria, began in 2012.

Some of these organizations were inspired by the work of Transparency International around the world; My Society's work in the United Kingdom; Open Knowledge International's work around the World; The Stand By Task Force; Prozorro in Ukraine. By 2011, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) was created, with technological innovation as one of its pillars. More civil society organizations became enthusiastic about the role technology would play in helping to fight corruption.

The Open Government Partnership Movement

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The OGP engages civil society and the business community in identifying effective practices and innovative approaches for leveraging new technologies to empower people and promote transparency in government. OGP's multilateral platform story began in 2010 when President Barack Obama delivered a speech at the UN calling for countries to make bold commitments to open up government, fight corruption and boost transparency. The White House reached out to the Transparency and Accountability Initiative, interested in setting up a partnership that would eventually become the OGP[17]. The Open Government Partnership now has 74 national government and 15 subnational government members, who make a commitment to become more transparent and accountable. The four countries involved in this study, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Liberia all have governments that are members of the OGP.

How are civil society groups leveraging on this platform using technology, and in turn how are governments responding to citizen demand? An example is Prozorro in Ukraine, which is an online public procurement portal created due to the partnership between government, businesses and civil society organizations through the Open Government Partnership. In 2016, journalists

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[17] Martin Tisné, "The Magic in the Room: How the Open Government Partnership can inspire and go to scale (blog), *Omidyar*, last modified September 20, 2016, https://www.omidyar.com/blog/magic-room-how-open-government-partnership-can-inspire-and-go-to-scale.

and civil society organizations in Ukraine discovered that government were to contract mops for USD100 each as seen on Prozzoro. An advocacy campaign ensued around it, and the contract was cancelled. Prozorro, in 2016, saved the Ukrainian government USD 315 million, which could have been lost to corruption[18].

Since the OGP started, there have been several CSOs involved in the use of technology for democratic governance. For example, Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA) CBM, which is a school project in collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of Education, allows 150 local trained monitors to use SMS to report the status of the implementation of projects in 150 schools in the country[19].

Another example is Check My School (CMS), a participatory monitoring initiative for the education sector in partnership with the Department of Education in the Philippines. It provides third-party monitoring of specific government programs on education, delivered directly to the schools[20]. It also collaborates with various network organizations for the mobilization, training and deployment of citizen monitors in different parts of the country.

In Italy, development project funds for the Southern portion of the country are monitored through a web platform named Open Coesione. It is an initiative on cohesion policies in Italy with the aim of promoting the effectiveness of interventions through the publication of data on funded projects and widespread civic participation.[21]

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[18] Garvin Hayman, "When governments can spend £75 on a mop, open data is vital", *TheGuardian.com*, last modified December 7, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2016/dec/07/public-contracting-open-data-fraud-waste.

[19] "CBM - Integrity Watch Project," *Integrity Watch Project (Afghanistan),* accessed October 30 2017, https://iwaweb.org/cbm-schools/.

[20] "CMS Initiative," *Check My School Project (The Philippines),* accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.checkmyschool.org.

[21] *"*Programmazione 2014-2020," *OpenCoesione (Italy),* accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.opencoesione.gov.it/.
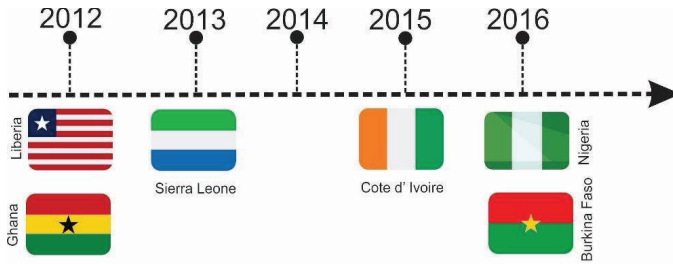
Figure 3 Timeline of West Africa Countries that have joined the OGP (Source: OGP Website)

These are just a few examples of how the OGP is ensuring democratic governance, and allowing public service providers to be responsive. It is a platform that allows citizens' voices to be heard by their governments. In most of the success stories shared by the OGP, one will notice partnership between the government and CSOs. This has yet to be the story in the West African countries that have become members of the OGP, namely Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso. However, there have been promising developments since the first countries joined in 2012.

Nigeria joined the partnership in 2016 and had 14 commitments. In a mid-term review of their commitments, all are in the process of implementation. Only three are in a substantial stage while the rest are at an early stage[22]. The most important commitment in the substantial phase of implementation is the deployment of the citizen budget portal[23], which would ensure effective citizens' participation across the entire budget cycle. The other two are the appropriate actions to coordinate anticorruption activities and improve the integrity of agents of anticorruption such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), Code of Conduct Tribunal by reviewing policies and laws guiding them, and also the adoption of common reporting standards for mobilizing local resource through tax.

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[22] "Open Government Partnership (OGP) Nigeria Self Assessment Report," *Open Government Partnership Nigeria,* Last modified September 2017, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Nigeria_Mid-Term_Self-Assessment_2016-2018.pdf.
[23] "Nigeria Budget Info," *Citizens' Budget Portal (Nigeria)*, http://budgetoffice.gov.ng/nbi/app/.

Since joining OGP in 2013, Sierra Leone has had ten commitments and has completed one, which is the provision of timely and user-friendly data on climate-related issues[24]. Other commitments are still at the substantial stage. This includes the completion of the country's open data platform[25], access to information on public procurement, access to budget, and accountability on the management of elections among others.

Ghana joined the OGP in 2012 with six commitments in its first four years. It was able to complete three commitments, which included the passage of the petroleum exploration and production act, a revised contract act and the public financial management act of 2016.[26] The other three commitments still at substantial stages of engagement include the Right to Information Bill, citizen participation mechanism with the parliament and local government structures, and the defunct Ghana open data portal. The three commitments have been added to the new national action plan with nine commitments, recently submitted by the country to the OGP secretariat[27].

Liberia also joined the OGP in 2012. Twenty commitments were outlined in its second action plan. Ten commitments were completed with results. Of the remaining ten commitments, five were substantially completed, four were limited in terms of results, and one was not started.[28] Some of the commitments achieved include the institutionalization of agents of anticorruption like the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Procurement and Concession Commission, and the Internal Audit Secretariat now Internal Audit Agency (IAA). Providing public information on land and natural resources, and the freedom of information enquiry online platform was also part of the commitments completed.

Listed above are some significant achievements in getting governments of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Liberia to become more transparent and accountable. However, there are sustainability issues that crop up that might stagnate these milestones. Some online portals are

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[24] "OGP Sierra Leone Mid Term Self-Assessment of the National Action Plan (2016 – 2018)," *Republic of Sierra Leone*, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Sierra-Leone_Mid-Term_Self-Assessment_2016-2018.pdf.
[25] "Open Data Sierra Leone," *The Open Data Registry of Sierra Leone*, http://opendatasl.gov.sl/.
[26] "OGP Ghana End of Term Self-Assessment Report National Action Plan 2016 -2017," *Public Sector Reform Secretariat (Ghana),* August 2017, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Ghana_EOT-Self-Assessment_2015-2017.pdf.
[27] "OGP National Action Plan for the Republic of Ghana 2017-2019," *Republic of Ghana,* https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/ghana-action-plan-2017-2019.
[28] "OGP Liberia End-Term Self-Assessment Report 2015-2017," *Liberian Government,* https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-end-term-self-assessment-report-2015-2017.

not being used as were intended, as seen with the newly created Nigeria's Citizen Budget portal, which would ensure openness and transparency in the budget process. According to Alexa, a subsidiary of Amazon, that provides commercial web traffic data and analytics, the portal had witnessed a reduction in site visitors from 970,811 in May 2017 when its launch was announced to 716,232 on December 24, 2017. The portal receives three daily page views per day is unpopular. The Liberian Freedom of Information portal only has 103 requests since 2016, and the concerned government agencies have not responded to most of the requests. The website enjoys four daily pageviews per day, and it is unpopular in the country. The Sierra Leone open data portal is unpopular and enjoys two daily pageviews per visitor.

Drawing from OGP commitment reviews, there is a lack of capacity within the government agencies that are responsible for meeting some of the commitments. There are also issues of funding and resources available to maintain some of these online platforms. Nevertheless, Hamzat Lawal of Connected Development in Nigeria emphasized that the OGP, if efficiently utilized, remains a platform in which organizations using accountability technologies can use to make public service providers respond to expressions of citizens' voice.

Who is Supporting the Use of Accountability Technologies in West Africa?

Civil society organizations in West Africa, who specialize in demanding transparency and accountability of their government, are supported by multilateral, bilateral, or private foundations. Hamzat Lawal of Connected Development in Nigeria said it is still tricky to access in-country support from the government because it might be difficult to investigate or gather citizens' voice against a government institution that supports you. He advised that accountability work of watchdogs becomes effective when organizations working on accountability can draw the line between its work and the work of the state.

This raises the issue of sustainability for civil society groups in West Africa. BudgIT in Nigeria started BudgIT.co in 2015, as its moneymaking enterprise[29], while Public Procurement

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[29] Odunayo Eweniyi, "BudgIT Launches Paid Model For Businesses, Budgit.co," *TechPoint.ng,* last modified July 3, 2015, https://techpoint.ng/2015/07/03/budgit-launches-paid-model-for-businesses-budgit-co/.

Development Company (PPDC) and PenPlusBytes, generate income from consulting for international NGOs. Accountability Lab in Liberia relies on corporate and individual donations to supplement its Foundation Grants.

As grants remain a substantial part of CSO income in this region, here is a list of some of the organization that supports them.

Table 2: Organizations that provide support for CSOs using technology to promote democratic governance

Name of Partner	Description	Link to Website
Africa Innovation Fund	Hopes to increase the prosperity of Africans by catalyzing the innovation spirit in Africa. The Foundation seeks to establish co-operation platforms for institutions, investors and innovators, and to promote ideas to support them.	http://www.africaninnovation.org/
Indigo Trust	Funds organizations using digital technologies to improve transparency and accountability in Sub-Saharan Africa	https://indigotrust.org.uk/
Global Giving	Largest crowdfunding community, helping nonprofits to access the tools, training, and support they need to be more effective and make our world a better place.	https://www.globalgiving.org/
Hivos	Hivos seeks new and creative solutions to persistent global problems. Solutions created by people taking their lives into their own hands.	https://www.hivos.org/
Open Society Initiative in West Africa	Its mission is to enable open societies and inclusive democratic governance that is based on transparent and accountable	http://www.osiwa.org/

	institutions and an active citizenry.	
McArthur Foundation	Supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. The Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.	https://www.macfound.org/
Omidyar Network	Omidyar Network focused on five key areas: consumer internet and mobile, education, financial inclusion, government transparency, and property rights.	http://www.omidyar.com/
National Endowment for Democracy	National Endowment for Democracy is a private, nonprofit Foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world.	https://www.ned.org/
Humanity United	Humanity United is a foundation dedicated to bringing new approaches to global problems that have long been considered intractable.	https://humanityunited.org/
Ford Foundation	Foundation's mission has been to reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement.	http://www.fordfoundation.org/
UKAid	UK Aid Direct supports civil society organisations working on	https://www.ukaiddirect.org/

	sustained poverty reduction in marginalised and vulnerable communities	
Partnership for Transparency	Mobilizes expertise and resources providing technical assistance to civil society organizations (CSOs) that engage citizens in actions to improve governance, increase transparency and reduce corruption in developing countries	https://ptfund.org/
Trust Africa	The Trust focuses on securing the conditions for democracy, fostering African enterprise and achieving broadly shared prosperity and cultivating African resources for democracy and development.	http://www.trustafrica.org/Fr/
Konrad Adeneur Stiftung	Supports civic education programs to promote freedom and liberty, peace and justice. The Foundation focuses on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.	http://www.kas.de/wf/en/
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung	The foundation is committed to equal rights for cultural and ethnic minorities and to the societal and political participation of immigrants. Finally, they promote non-violence and proactive peace policies.	https://www.boell.de/de/stiftung/stiftung

Getting the Right Accountability Technologies
(Chapter 3)

A Quick Field Guide

Technology is not a silver bullet, but an enabler of citizen engagement activities, which in turn leads to citizens requesting accountability from their governments. It is believed that when citizens make such requests, governments are able to respond. However, governments should not wait for the citizen's petition. They should be able to provide information proactively. The Public Procurement Development Company (PPDC) in Nigeria monitors government institutions that provide information by default.

To hold your government accountable, you need to find information. Your source of information could come from the government directly. Odekro, in Ghana, collects such information from parliament proceedings. BudgIT in Nigeria downloads government budget data that is made available on the government website. A team of data miners looking through several sources can also integrate information. In Nigeria, Connected Development uses data spreadsheets to collect information on government spending data from the World Bank, media sources, and tender documents. This information is obtained in a format that could be reusable by citizens and other third parties.

Your Right to Use Accountability Technologies

The right to information is inherent in the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR) and the Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The level of compliance and implementation by signatories to these laws is not convincing[30]. In response to the level of access and fluidity these tools have become, the governments of certain countries have introduced policies and regulations that prevent citizens from using them to hold them accountable.

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[30] Catherine Howell and Darren M. West, "The internet as a human right (blog), *Brookings – Tech Tank*, last modified November 7, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2016/11/07/the-internet-as-a-human-right/.

According to the International Telecommunications Union Cyberwellness Profile, Liberia does not have any officially recognized national legislation pertaining to cybercrime. However, it has transposed the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Directive on Cybercrime into local Telecommunications law, which is currently awaiting legislative approval. Sierra Leone does not have specific legislation and regulation related to cybersecurity[31]. In Ghana, there is the Regulation Interception of Communication Act (RICA), which monitors the use of some of these technologies[32]. In Nigeria, the Cyber Crime Act 2015, outlaws cyberstalking and cyberbullying on Twitter and Facebook; Cyber Squatting on the internet, and the distribution of materials that could cause ethnic and racist violence in the country.[33] Although the CSOs in these countries affirm that their governments are not comfortable with the democratization of these technologies, they are still confident of its value for promoting accountability.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Works. Use it!

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a right to information legislation that allows citizens to request information from their government. Out of 117 countries that have enacted the FOIA in the world, 21 are in Africa. The Freedom of Information (FOI) laws in West African countries are an appendage to the freedom and values that democracy entrenches in them. In countries that have enacted this legislation, information that citizens do not have access to, are now been provided. For an organization to demand accountability, it needs information from the government in cases where information is not provided by default. In the four countries studied for this handbook, only Ghana does not have a Freedom of Information Act.

[31] "Cyberwellness Profile Sierra Leone," *ITU*, accessed December 28, 2017, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Documents/Country_Profiles/Sierra_Leone.pdf.

[32] "Cyberwellness Profile Ghana," *ITU*, accessed December 28, 2017, https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Cybersecurity/Documents/Country_Profiles/Ghana.pdf.

[33] "Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act, 2015," *National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, https://lawpadi.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CyberCrime_ProhibitionPreventionetc_Act_2015.pdf.
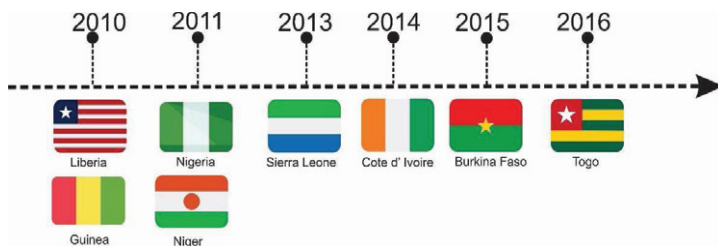
Figure 4 Timeline in years of the eight countries in West Africa that have a Right to Information Law. (Source: http://www.freedominfo.org/regions/africa/)

On July 22, 2010, Liberia signed its Freedom of Information Act into law and now allowed citizens to request information through an online information Library. Nigeria passed its Freedom of Information law in 2011. Nigeria has a Freedom of Information Portal for citizens to use in requesting information from the government[34]. Sierra Leone passed the Right to Access Information Act in 2013. This law criminalized the non-provision of information by the government. Even with the passage of the freedom of information laws, the implementation process has been unsatisfactory owing to weak government institutions and responsiveness of the government. However, PPDC, CODE, BudgIT, CENTAL, Accountability Lab, iLabLiberia rely on the law to get more information on government activities. In 2013, PPDC sought procurement information from at least 15 institutions; 67 in 2014, 116 in 2015 and 131 in 2016[35].Examples of FOIA Letters can be found at FOIVault[36].

How do you do this?

- Read the Law in your country.
- Know the concerned government agency that will provide such information

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[34] "Freedom of Information Portal," *The Bureau of Public Service Reforms -The Federal Government of Nigeria,* http://www.bpsr.gov.ng/index.php/publications/external-resources/foi-act.

[35] Seember Nyager, "The 3-year Expedition to Unlock Basic Education Data; a true short story (blog)," *Budeshi,* last modified October 19, 2016, http://www.budeshi.org/2016/10/the-3-year-expedition-to-unlock-basic-education-data-a-true-short-story/.

[36] *FOI Vault,* http://foivault.com; http://foivault.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/FOI-to-OAU.jpg.

- Write a Letter to them. In some countries, a verbal enquiry is allowed, but that might be tricky.
- Do not wait until the date stipulated for a response. Track your letter in days between. If seven days is the maximum date stated for intervention in your country, visit the concerned government agency on the 3rd and 7th day. Connected Development in Nigeria uses the 3 – 7 – 2 methodologies. The first 3 days, the 7th day, and every 2 weeks afterwards.
- Use your communication channels (Radio, Twitter, Facebook, Prints) to inform the world you have submitted an FOIA Letter to a government agency, and that you hope to receive response in the time stipulated in the Law
- If you eventually get a response, thank the government institution for responding as at when due via same communication channels.

Understanding Technology *(Chapter 4)*

Tips for Working with Accountability Technologies

Adapted from Alidade[37]
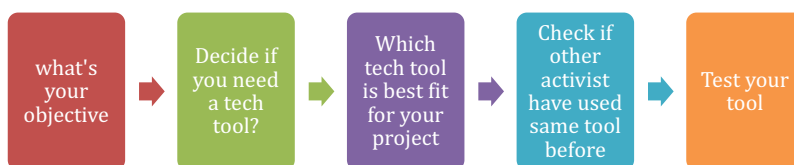
Figure 5: Steps to follow when planning to use accountability technologies

1. Think about what the objective of your project, where you want to achieve your goal, and who will benefit from your intervention.

PenPlusBytes in Ghana usually does desk research and a survey of the citizens that need to take part in their intervention.

2. Why do you need a technology tool to achieve this objective?

After outlining your objective and you have been convinced that you need a technology tool, you need to decide on which of the tools is the best fit for your project.

If your project is focused on rural populations, and places with poor access to the internet, use the print technology, radio, mobile SMS or Television. When CENTAL was implementing a citizen monitoring of schools in rural communities in Liberia, they decided to use the community radio to disseminate information and mobilize, while reports were printed as briefs to be used by communities to engage their district parliament representatives.

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[37]*Alidade Tech*, https://alidade.tech/.

If your project is focused on urban centres, where the population has reasonable access to the internet, you can decide to use Facebook, Twitter, web-based software such as websites and mobile applications, tools that use messaging apps, SMS and USSD, and hardware such as GPS devices and tablets.

To make a right decision about the technology that best fits your project and the processes you need to take to leverage on that technology, use Alidade - a tool that allows you to make a better decision on the use of technologies for social change projects.[38]

3. See if the tools that best fit your project are being used other organizations. If they are, then use theirs or collaborate with them. There is no need spending money to build your own. You can use many free open source tools for your social projects. Some of them are highlighted in the links below:

How to create SMS Platforms[39]
A Selection tool from 49 Mobile Solutions for the Collection of Data[40]
Find out tools for working with data[41]
Selecting visualization tools for Advocacy[42]

4. Look for forums, organizations and projects using technology to promote social accountability. Find them listed below

Table 3: Forums and Networks using technology to promote social accountability

Organization	Description	Link
Civil Society Open Government	A member mailing list of Civil Society Organizations used for	https://dgroups.org/hivos/ogp

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[38] Tom Walker, "Alidade: An Interactive Tool to Make You Bring Technology Strategically Into Your Project (blog)," *The Engine Room*, last modified March 7, 2017, accessed December 15, 2017, https://www.theengineroom.org/alidade-interactive-guide-for-finding-technology-tools/.
[39] Timo Lüge, "Comparison of SMS Platforms," *CartONG*, Last modified December 17, 2015, http://cartong.org/sites/cartong/files/Benchmarking%20SMS%20Tools%20V%201.3%20published.pdf.
[40] "Find the Right Mobile Solution," *Nomad Project*, accessed December 15, 2017, https://humanitarian-nomad.org/online-selection-tool.
[41] *School of Data Online Resources*, accessed December 15, 2017, https://schoolofdata.org/online-resources/.
[42] "Visualisation Tools*," Visualising Information for Advocacy*, https://visualisingadvocacy.org/resources/visualisationtools.

Partnership Group	discussing Open Government related issues	
Follow The Money Network	An open, inclusive network established to enable its members to share information about what they are doing to enable citizens to follow and shape the flow of public money, to spot gaps and opportunities, and to collaborate more effectively.	https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/ftm_network
Stanford University Liberation Tech	A mailing list that serves as an information hub for those interested in how technology can be used to promote democracy, development, freedom, and human rights around the world	https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/liberationtech
Global Partnership for Social Accountability Knowledge Platform	An online forum that serves as a knowledge repository, learning activities, networking and knowledge exchange space	http://gpsaknowledge.org/
TicTec	A group of individuals and organizations that do research and work around civic technology	https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/tictecbymysociety
Influence Mapping	A network of political scientists, technologists, journalists and designers who work to break down the complexities of lobbying, conflicts of interest, corporate structures and many related fields.	https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/influencemapping
Parliament Monitoring Organizations	An international network of civil society organizations and individuals that monitor the work of parliaments.	https://groups.google.com/forum/?utm_source=digest&utm_medium=email#!forum/pmo-network
DataKind	Brings together top data scientists with leading social change organizations to collaborate on cutting-edge analytics and advanced algorithms to maximize social impact for non-profits working with data to create social change.	http://www.datakind.org/

5. Test your tool.

You have now reached out to different forums to get insight on how using a technology tool might better help to deliver your project. What next? You will need to test it out and see what works,

what doesn't and how you can improve. This allows you to get feedback from a sample of the target audience you expect to serve with the technology you have adapted or built.

Start with People, Amplify with Technologies

Technology cannot solve every problem. Many times, programmers are excited to develop a tool or solution without thinking about the people that will use it. Where are they located? If you are developing a mobile app, do citizens in such community have access to smartphones? Can they afford to buy one? Even if they have smartphones, what will motivate them to download your application?

In using technology to promote accountability, I will infer that your users are the citizens you need to mobilize, and the governments that are meant to respond to citizens' demand. This is referred to as the mapping of stakeholders. How do you create profiles for citizens and government agencies to decide which technology will appeal to them?[43]

Demographics	Geography	Attitudes	Media Habits	Culture
•Race •Gender •Ethnicity •Age •Education •Religion	•Local •National •International •Remote •Urban •Rural	•How they percieve the issue? •How proactive they are? •What would it take to get them to act.	•What technology tools do they have access to? •Which one do they use and like?	•What is their cultural background? •What languages do they speak or read?

Figure 6: Creating profiles for users of accountability technologies

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[43] Namita Singh and A. Ravi, "Who are you talking to? Know your Audience,"Tactical Tech, https://howto.informationactivism.org/content/who-are-you-talking-know-your-audience.

Accountability Technologists Discuss Their Tools of Choice

In a survey of 23 non-government organizations working in 12 countries in West Africa - Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, Nigeria, Benin, Niger, Guinea, Mali. Twenty (86.96%) of the organizations use Facebook for promoting transparency and accountability while 16 (69.57%) use Email and Twitter. 14 (60.87%) use Radio and Web Platforms while WhatsApp and Television are used by 11 (47.83%) and 10 (43.48%) organizations respectively. Short Message Service (SMS), Mobile Applications and Instagram remain the least used tools by these civil society organizations.

Facebook – The Leading Tool for Civil Society Organizations.

Most people that use a smartphone in this region have Facebook as an application on their phone. Many people actually think Facebook is the internet. Consequently, the CSOs surveyed had it as their number one choice for promoting transparency and accountability. Many organizations already have personal accounts before using it for mobilization. For a more extensive reach, Facebook can now be found on feature phones. It can also be accessed freely through some national mobile data providers in some African countries.[44]Facebook, in Africa, is becoming the leading social media application, coupled with its attempts to connect rural communities.[45]
Olusegun Onigbinde of BudgIT in Nigeria mentioned that thousands of their followers are eager on Facebook and Twitter to make use of their budget analysis. He said that as more people are coming online, these online tools have become a productive niche to communicate and sensitize citizens on how the government budget is spent.

While this remains a prospective tool for CSOs, it is not the most efficient tool for promoting transparency and accountability in the region, as we will see in the next chapter.

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[44] Toby Shapshak, "Facebook Adds More Free Services in Africa," *Forbes.com*, last modified Nov 17, 2015, https://www.forbes.com/sites/tobyshapshak/2015/11/17/facebook-adds-more-free-services-in-africa/#279c6a031747.
[45] Loni Prinsloo, "Facebook Adds Wifi Hotspots to Sustain Africa Growth," *Bloomberg.com*, last modified April 6, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-04-05/facebook-adds-wifi-hotspots-to-sustain-africa-customer-growth.

The Importance of Offline Technologies

Only three out 10 people in West Africa are connected to the internet. As such, the media habit of target audiences is predominantly offline. Seember Nyager of PPDC in Nigeria affirmed that radio is still a powerful tool as it reaches a broader audience in the country. Jerry Sam of PenPlusBytes in Ghana reiterated that they use radio for to mobilize at the grassroots level and to sensitize people in northern Ghana in their language.

Gerald of CENTAL in Liberia said that for effective participatory monitoring of school spending in the country, they use television and radio to engage citizens.

What's the Reason for the Choice of WhatsApp over SMS?

Abdul Karim from Network Movement for Democracy and Human Right (NMDH) in Sierra Leone said many people have resorted to using WhatsApp as a messaging platform because it is cheaper than SMS, and that it allows for extended conversation via a group format. Hamzat Lawal of Connected Development in Nigeria affirmed that their community mobilization group platform was first created on a WhatsApp platform, an extension you cannot achieve with an SMS. He mentioned that it was easier to add people quickly to a WhatsApp group.

Although the use of WhatsApp is becoming ubiquitous among users in the region, it comes with its own challenges. Karim said a group created by the government to create a feedback loop between the government and citizens had to be deleted due to the proliferation of false news in the group. Lawal mentioned that at a point it became difficult to track reports from community members and that new member could not access the repository of past messages.

Securing Yourself while Using Accountability Technologies

Recently governments in West Africa have started monitoring the activities of activists using these technology tools. A way to avoid this is to partner with the government institutions, as stated by Hamzat Lawal of CODE in Nigeria. He mentioned that their members partner with security operatives before getting into target communities. Other activists have divergent views on this. Some have alluded that partnering with the government institutions might be the best option, but

they doubt the intentions of the government institutions. They feel the agencies are interested in partnering not to serve communities, but to grab the political attention of "doing good". Government institutions might also behave differently – resisting the transparency and accountability work of the CSO.

To secure yourself and community members, here are some tips:

Partner with security operatives in target communities.
It would not cause any harm.

Protect your device from malware and hackers
Always provide anti-virus for your staff and make sure it is updated all the time.

Protect your information from physical threats
Install a CCTV in your office, and make sure there is a receptionist in front of your central office. Always take note of the surroundings of your work and office area.

Create and maintain secure passwords
Always use a long and complicated password. Do not use the same password you use for your email for social networks, and desist from signing into social networks with your email.

Protect the sensitive files on your computer
Delete confidential information that you no longer need. However, if you cannot avoid keeping such information, you can encrypt your data using veracrypt.

Remain anonymous and bypass censorship on the Internet
There is software that can prevent repressive government regimes from monitoring your activities online, or that allows you to have access to online platforms that have been blocked by your government. Examples of such software include Tor and Proxify.[46] Ethan Zuckerman writes about how to blog anonymously using WordPress and Tor[47]

Protect yourself and your data when using social networking sites
Think twice before posting your location, biodata, videos and photo online. This includes your date of birth, name, contact address, family member details and past employment history. Other

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[46] "Remain Anonymous and Bypass Censorship on the Internet," *Security in a Box*: *Digital Security Tool and Tactics,* https://securityinabox.org/en/guide/anonymity-and-circumvention/.
[47] Ethan Zuckerman, "Anonymous Blogging with WordPress and Tor (blog),"
EthanZuckerman.com, last modified October 1, 2006,
http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/2006/10/01/anonymous-blogging-with-wordpress-and-tor/.

people can use this information to trail you and attack you. The world doesn't need to know your location, if it is not necessary, keep it!

Use mobile phones as securely as possible
Add password to your phones. Make sure it is kept in a safe place. If you do not want your location shared, turn off the location function on your phone.

Delivering on Accountability Technologies
(Chapter 5)

Accountability Technologies for the People, by the People (Government Response and Mobilization)

In a survey, 23 civil society organizations working in 12 countries in West Africa - Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, Nigeria, Benin, Niger, Cape Verde, and Mali, were asked to tell us the accountability technology that is most effective in mobilizing citizens and getting government response. Their responses are captured in the chart below.
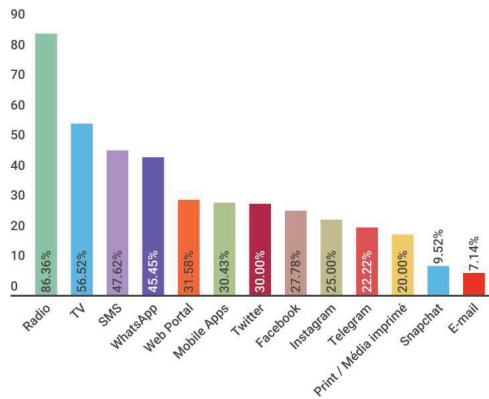
Figure 7: Response of 23 CSOs on their most efficient technology for mobilizing citizens in West Africa

86.36% responded that Radio is very useful for mobilizing citizen, followed by Facebook, Twitter and TV, Print Technology, and Mobile Apps in that other. All the nine organizations in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria that we interviewed affirmed how powerful Radio has been useful in still mobilizing citizens in their countries.

73.68% rated Radio as the most effective technology for getting a government response. This was followed by 71.43% who said Television is very useful. Following Television is SMS, WhatsApp, Web Portals, Mobile Apps, Twitter and Facebook in that order. Print, Snapchat and use of Email came up with the least efficient technology.

Still, why would government agencies have an affinity for responding to campaigns when they listen to it on Radio or see it on TV? I would argue that most of the constituencies government officials serve are those that do not have access to high technologies like Twitter or Facebook. This might mean that the campaign voices heard on Twitter, Facebook, Mobile Apps and Web platforms are mostly those of elites, or those called infomediaries as described by Vanessa Herringshaw in his blog post on Making All Voices Count.[48]

However, more government agencies are signing up to Twitter and Facebook. This means engagement can be initiated by using these technology tools. In an interview, Nehemiah Attigah of Odekro in Ghana said when their organization publishes parliamentarians' scorecards on Twitter and Facebook, many parliament members call their office to have meetings on how they can perform better. Oluseun Onigbinde of BudgIT in Nigeria mentioned that many hash-tagged campaigns on Twitter have made the government officials quickly respond because they are publically named in Tweets. Hashtags like #SaveBagega[49], #OpenNASS [50]and #ENDSARs[51] have been used to hold government agencies in Nigeria accountable.

[48] Vanessa Herringshaw, "Are you doing what's needed to get the state to respond to its citizens? Or are you part of the problem?(blog)", *Makeallvoicescount.org*, last modified October 23, 2017, http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/blog/whats-needed-get-state-respond-citizens-part-problem/.
[49] Mark Trainer, "Want to Fight Corruption? Follow The Money," *Share America*, last modified April 4, 2017, https://share.america.gov/want-fight-corruption-follow-money/.
[50] Yomi Kazeem, "A dogged transparency campaign reveals why it pays to be a lawmaker in Nigeria", *Quartz Africa*, last modified May 15, 2017,https://qz.com/983331/a-dogged-transparency-campaign-reveals-why-it-pays-to-be-a-lawmaker-in-nigeria/.
[51] Jonah Obajeun, "End SARS and the Rising Apocalypse in Nigeria," *Huffington Post,* last modified December 11, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/endsars-and-the-rising-apocalypse-in-nigeria_us_5a2eb51ce4b04cb297c2aecf.

The WhatsApp Generation

In January 2017, popular messaging application WhatsApp achieved 1 billion daily active users, and it is becoming a favourite technology tool to mobilize citizens and form groups across borders, to discuss accountability issues. All the activists interviewed in West Africa confirmed that this is becoming a great new tool to mobilize citizens. However, it can be daunting getting citizens and government on the same platform as alluded by Abdul from NMDH in Sierra Leone. On NMDH community service delivery project, they added government and CSO members to a WhatsApp group to exchange information on what concerned government officials can quickly respond to, as it regards service delivery in the health sector. After sometimes, the government officials on the platform had to leave because of false information shared. Police Monitor, an initiative of the Network on Police Reforms in Nigeria (NOPRIN) uses its WhatsApp group to mobilize journalists and activists to hold the police in Nigeria accountable for human rights abuses. The WhatsApp group also had police officials who responded to these abuses. The team has since moved to Telegram, as WhatsApp could not contain its over 250+ members.

Creating groups on WhatsApp can be frustrating for the administrators, but these simple steps could make it easy to use to meet your objectives.

1. Know the objective of setting up the groups and write down your rules of engagement on the team based on this goal. It is essential to think through what you will achieve with your group, to reduce distractions.
2. Create a Code of Conduct. This can be used as a binding agreement between intending members and your organization. CODE's Follow The Money has a Code of conduct for its 1000+ members.[52]
3. Before adding people to the WhatsApp group, inform them about your objective and that you will like to add them to your team. This will allow you to communicate your objective to them, and get feedback from people that will decline.
4. Add those that agreed to be on the platform and then post guidelines and rules of engagement.

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[52] "Connected Development [Code]'s Follow The Money Code Of Conduct For Project Assistants Working As Community Reporters Members Code of Conduct." *Connecteddevelopment.org,*https://docs.google.com/document/d/1960JRglOUumsFdShIVIM4JDB57_KVRCbo6XZemIYlzM/edit?usp=sharing.

5. As the creator of the group, you must be ready to engage members on issues related to your objective. Set the tone. Some teams fix a time in a week to discuss accountability issues, while another post can be a discussion of the critical problems related to the group objective. Some choose a day for general topics.

6. WhatsApp can be used to spread rumours and fake news swiftly, always verify images, text and videos that are posted using tools like Google Images and TinEye.

7. Introduce Perks or Badges, members of your group will be encouraged to discuss better. The Police Monitor Group in Nigeria announces Birthday Greetings for members.

8. Whenever you add new participants, send the rules and guidelines immediately.

9. Have two or three more administrators that can help in moderating discussions on the platform.

10. Democratize the process by requesting a vote for administrators in the coming year. It is a way to show leadership, and show you support participatory democratic systems.

11. Encourage members to use emojis on a post sent in by members. It will encourage members to post and facilitates more discussions.

Is Radio Still the King?

Almost every household in Africa has a radio, and it has become the most used medium to get information due to its cost-effectiveness, extensive reach, and its affinity for the culture in Africa.[53] In the most populated country in West Africa – Nigeria, radio is the dominant news platform, followed by the TV.[54] In Sierra Leone, a nationally represented survey carried out by the British Broadcasting Corporation showed that the most effective medium for communications is the radio, followed by the TV[55].In Liberia, in a survey conducted in the capital city of Monrovia in 2011 by IREX, out of 400 respondents, 86% own a radio, and 94.3% claimed they listen to the radio.[56]

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[53] Oludotun Babayemi, "This is the Most Effective Technology to Promote Accountability, and No it is Not Facebook, (blog), *Dotunbabayemi.com*, last modified December 7, 2017, http://www.dotunbabayemi.com/2017/12/07/this-is-the-most-effective-technology-to-promote-accountability-and-no-it-is-not-facebook/.
[54] "Contemporary Media Use in Nigeria," *Broadcasting Board of Governors*, https://www.bbg.gov/wp-content/media/2014/05/Nigeria-research-brief.pdf.
[55] "Sierra Leone's changing media landscape offers fresh opportunities for development Communications," *BBC.co.uk,* July 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/publications-and-resources/research/summaries/africa/sierra-leone/media-landscape.
[56] IREX, "Understanding the Media and Advertising Market in Liberia," *USAID.gov*, July 2011, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M29T.pdf, 4.
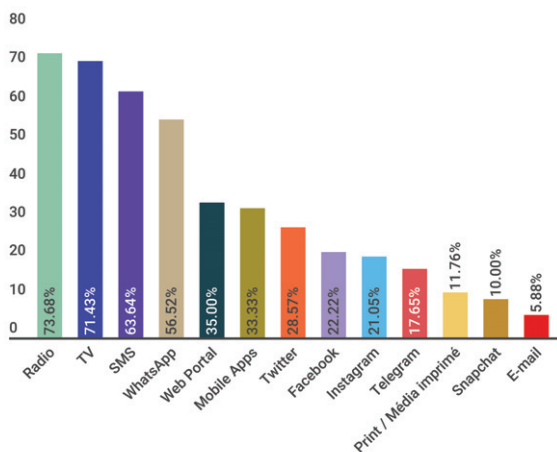
Figure 8: Response of 23 CSOs on their most efficient technology for getting government response in West Africa

All organizations that were interviewed affirmed how important radio has been as an offline technology to reach a broader population and to reach offline communities, which form a more substantial part of the people in West Africa. Emmanuel Ametepey of Youth Advocates Ghana reiterated how they relied only on the radio to promote their accountability project on health facilities. Hamzat Lawal of Connected Development in Nigeria commented that radio is the only tool they could use to engage the rural population, which their Follow The Money projects targets.

The Radio has been a tool of revolution in a positive way since the late 19th century as written by J. Justin Castro[57], but that it will be a mainstay for activists in this region in this age of social media is very uncertain. Blair Glencorse of Accountability Lab in Liberia raises the concern of the media ownership of radio stations. The radio is also entirely regulated by government institutions and can be manipulated in repressive regimes. An answer to this might lie in how TRAC FM in Uganda operates[58]. The station collaborates with CSOs and nine other radio stations to get citizen voices

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[57] Justin J. Castro, *Radio in Revolution: Wireless Technology and State Power in Mexico, 1897–1938*, 10.
[58] "How informed are you as a parent about the financial accountability at your child's USE school? (blog)," *Tracfam.org*, https://tracfm.org/s/blog/152/how-informed-are-you-as-a-parent-about-the-financial-accountability-at-your-childs-use-school/.

to change government policies and counter undemocratic narratives[59]. This is an example of how CSOs can partner with radio stations to create impactful programs.

Here are some tips on how to use the Radio to promote democratic governance

1. Have in mind what you need to achieve with your radio program. I will advise you to plan for programs in local languages. CODE in Nigeria runs its radio program in local languages.
2. Conduct regular training sessions with radio broadcast journalists, so they understand what you do, primarily with on-air personalities. (OAP)
3. Discuss your project with one or two of the OAPs, and get feedback on what you intend to do.
4. If you have the resources, invite an OAP to join your team, part-time for one month, for them to understand more of your work.
5. Check if there is a program that is similar to your intended application. This might allow you to collaborate with the existing program instead of starting a new one.
6. Some radio stations run programs within 12 weeks, so prepare a synopsis of your plan for the next twelve months.
7. Update the synopsis every week during the program.
8. There are tools like Pocket FM, which can allow you to broadcast independently in a region without internet.[60] TRAC FM also helps you to amplify your voice through Radio. It has software that will enable you to reach remote and developing areas, and its interface is built to work with low bandwidth internet[61].

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[59] "Trac FM: Increasing effectiveness and government response to CSO campaigns in Uganda," Makingallvoicescount.org, last modified November 16, 2017, http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/news/tracfm-increased-effectiveness-government-response-cso-campaigns-uganda/.
[60] *Pocket FM*, http://www.pocket-fm.com/.

[61] Rosemary McGee and Ruth Carlitz, "Learning Study on "The Users" in Technology for Transparency and Accountability Initiatives: Assumptions and Realities," *Institute of Development Studies (IDS),* October 2013, https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/ds2/stream/?#/documents/10529/page/1, 8.

Accountability Technologies goes Social (Using Facebook and Twitter Effectively)

There is no doubt that the growth of Facebook, as explained in the preceding chapter, has become unprecedented, surpassing that of its counterpart -Twitter, in the region. Three out of 10 Africans are on Facebook. Among the countries studies for this handbook, Nigeria has 4 out of 10 people on Facebook; in Ghana, the figure is about 3 out of 10; Sierra Leone has 1 out of 10 on Facebook, and Liberia has the lowest number of users at 0.8 out of 10.[62] As activists continue to rely on this technology to mobilize and get government responses as seen in the last chapter, its prospect cannot be overemphasized. More governments that are democratic will come online, as such, citizens can use this technology to mobilize themselves and exchange information quickly, even outside of formal organizations[63].

The internet has proved a powerful tool for the freedom of speech and expression but it also shows troubling trends. The same tool used by democrats is also now being used by authoritarian regimes. This is becoming a threat to democracy itself as highlighted in the print edition of the Economist on November 4, 2017[64]. So, who owns this freedom, and who has the right to suppress the other when it feels the freedom of one violates the power of the other?

The government has always managed to regulate, every bit of technology that has changed the course of history. Social media will be no different, even though private organizations own this tool. Before that occurs, here are some few tips to note, if you want to use the social media.

1. Have a Social Media Strategy.
2. Know what you want to achieve within your group, or with a page. Have a short-term and a long-term plan for your team.
3. Democratize your group by aiming to become an organization, if you are not.

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[62] "Africa Internet Usage, 2017 Population Stats and Facebook Subscribers," *Internet World Stats*, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm.
[63] Joshua A. Tucker, Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, Pablo Barbera et. al, "From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 4 (2017), https://muse.jhu.edu/, 49.
[64] "Scandal, outrage and politics - do social media threaten democracy?," *The Economist,* last modified November 4, 2017, https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21730871-facebook-google-and-twitter-were-supposed-save-politics-good-information-drove-out.

4. You can create your own social media. These are called niche networks. An example is the Mighty Networks, which CODE in Nigeria uses as its knowledge exchange platform with its group[65].

5. Create an official organization Facebook or Twitter handle.

6. Get someone into your team who can help do further research on your intended posts. Create trusted sources for traditional new media. The Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein centre published a list of tools for verifying and assessing the validity of social media and user-generated content[66]. It included factcheck.org, Checkdesk and mediabugs.

7. The niche network that you create will serve as a fact checker on the ground for information going around on the social media.

8. Verify information that is shared within your networks, as posts and as messages you want to retweet or share. There are 13 tools you can use to verify photos that are shared online. They include Tin Eye, Google Reverse Image[67].

9. Engage your followers on Facebook by asking questions on accountability issues.

10. Use less of text in your posts. Create visuals in the form of info-graphics, images, and videos. Nehemiah Attigah of Odekro mentioned that they had more engagement when they switched from text to the use of infographics.

11. Tag concerned agencies in your posts; if it is on Twitter mention them in your Tweets.

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[65] *Mighty Networks,* https://mightynetworks.com/.
[66] Josh Stearns and Leighton Walter Kille, "Tools for verifying and assessing the validity of social media and user-generated content*," Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy,* last modified April 2, 2015, https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/reporting/tools-verify-assess-validity-social-media-user-generated-content.
[67] "13 online tools that help to verify the authenticity of a photo," StopFake.ORG, last modified July 29, 2014, https://www.stopfake.org/en/13-online-tools-that-help-to-verify-the-authenticity-of-a-photo/.

Case Studies

In this section, we take a more in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at several Accountability Technologies projects — from online platforms developed in a day to nine-month investigations. We learn about how Accountability Technologies have been used to augment and improve coverage of everything from procurement to tracking government spending, corruption, tracking legislative bills, to the construction of schools, provision of health facilities. We learn from initiatives such as Budeshi, Follow The Money, Odekro, Penplus bytes, Tracka, and Accountability Lab.

Nigeria

Private Public Development Company, Budeshi

Name: Seember Nyager

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

In the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name?

The organization was started by Mr Chibuzo Ekwekwu in Aba, 2001 and called Public and Private Development Center with the hope that public-private partnership would foster transparency and accountability.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

The organization is registered as an NGO, limited by guarantee.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

It has no affiliation.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps, etc...)

The web-based platform, Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Radio, and Mobile Phones.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

Because we work in the area of strengthening procurement practices of the government while encouraging citizen engagement, we work on the web-based platform on open contracting with the state, and then provide means for citizens to access such documents for a fact-based meeting with the concerned government agency.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Radio and Prints have been great for mobilizing citizens while the Prints, in Freedom of Information, supported letters, have been useful in getting a government response.

8. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

In 2010, we developed a web platform called the Nigeria procurement monitor, which was a long online compliance checklist that citizens could use in sending feedback. Only a few citizens were able to use it because there was not enough information.

Owing to the lessons, we recently started an online platform called [Budeshi](#) which has an SMS integration which allows citizens to interact with open contracting documents and give feedback to the government, and vice versa.

9. Are there other projects that have inspired you?

[Prozorro](#) open contracting platform in Ukraine.

Connected Development in the way they organize community mobilization.

BudgIT on their use of infographics.

BudgIT, Tracka
Name: Oluseun Onigbinde

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

The organization is based in Lagos.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name?

We started in 2011 as "Budget for you". We were a product of a hackathon that was organized by the Co-Creation Hub in Lagos. Budget for You was later changed into BudgIT in 2011.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

It is a social enterprise.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

We are not affiliated with another organization.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps, etc...)

Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Mobile Application and a Website Platform.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We analyze the federal government and state government budgets. We simplify the budget lines into different media for better representation. Depending on the user identified, and their location, we select the technology that is the best fit for the geographical area of the campaign embarked on.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Twitter has been very useful in getting a response from the government while radio has been helpful in mobilizing citizens.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

In early 2014, In Iwoye - Ilogbo, in Ogun state, 429 Primary students were crammed into two classrooms and were learning under tin roofs. There was an urgent need for the government to construct new classes. The BudgIT team presented a printed budget analysis, which includes the construction of the school.The community members then wrote letters using the FOIA to concerned government agencies responsible for the building. By February 2015, the creation of new classroom was completed.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

When we started Tracka in 2014, we relied on the web platform to provide information to citizens and to get feedback from citizens. However, few people used it, so we decided to use an SMS integration to the system, which now proves working.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired you?

Open Knowledge Foundation's Open Spending and CKAN Project Co-Creation Hub.

Connected Development Follow the Money

Name: Hamzat Lawal

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

The Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria but it has chapters in The Gambia, Kenya and Malawi.

2. What year did your initiative/organization launch and how did you come about the name?

We started as a Follow The Money campaign in 2012, and at the time of legalizing the operations of the organization, the government declined to register the name as Follow The Money. As such, we had to look for another name, which means connecting all aspect of international development while looking at past activities in the development space. The name was inspired by Steve Jobs speech at Stanford University 114th commencement on June 12, 2005.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

It's a non - government organization.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

Not Affiliated.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps etc…)

Radio, Prints, Twitter, Facebook, Web-based platform and WhatsApp.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We make sure we use available technologies used by citizens in the country, and realizing the fact that our Follow The Money project tracks funds government spending meant for rural communities, we focus on offline technologies and activities, while we use new technologies like web platforms, Twitter and Facebook to connect with citizens that have access to internet.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Radio and WhatsApp have been useful in citizen mobilization, and the most effective technologies that have caused a government response is Prints, and Twitter, when you have the concerned government agency on Twitter.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

In January 2017, we were tracking how the government would spend US$55,556 for the rehabilitation of two blocks of classrooms in Tongo, North Eastern Nigeria. In a mobilization meeting with the community members, we found out that the school had not been rehabilitated after 5 months. We were able to mobilize the citizens to join in our radio program, and after 3 weeks, the contractors responsible for refurbishing the school moved to the site.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

In June 2013, we launched Follow The Money as a web platform where citizens could report, with respect to a geo-referenced data, the government planned expenses for the year 2013.

After launching the web platform, we found out that citizens would not use the platform but instead want to send us SMS, or send us an email with reports. We had to stop reference to the website and focused on ground mobilization activities in communities.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired you?

The Standby Task Force model for community building informed our community mobilization work.

Ghana

PenPlusBytes

Name: Jerry Sam

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

A Pan African Organization based in Accra, and implementing projects across 14 countries in Africa.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name?

It was founded 2001. The Pen was from our training of journalists on how to use digital tools in 2001, while Plus was derived from our realization that we also needed to start training citizens on the use of digital tools. Then Byte was derived from binary computer numbers.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

A Non-Government Organization.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

Affiliated to Ghana Journalist Association.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps etc...)

Websites, Radio, Twitter, Facebook, SMS (Short Message Service), Interactive Voice Response (IVR), Mobile Apps and WhatsApp.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We do baseline studies and do research on possible technology tools that can be used in our target area locations.

7. Which one of these technologies has more impact on the work that you do?

Radio and SMS have been useful in mobilizing citizens while Paper Reports to parliaments have fostered government response.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

In Ada, the local district assembly wanted to build a health facility. We, however, started a campaign with the citizens of Ada, which requested that they halt procurement processes for the health facility. The community argued that the immediate need was for a public toilet and a robust refuse disposal system. The community alluded that it was the lack of these essential facilities that required them to visit health centres often.

The campaign for the assembly to redirect the funds into what the communities wanted was done via engagement on the radio, and policy briefs that were developed and presented during quarterly community meetings, which bring together district parliament members and concerned beneficiaries.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

We launched a mobile app in 2014 so that people could download it, and use it to report on government activities. After 12 months, we found out that only a few people had downloaded the App, and that only 1% of those that downloaded the App actually used it for reporting.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired your work?

Una Hakika in Kenya inspired the work that we do. They fact check rumours in rural communities and verify citizen information in such cities.

SEND Ghana have village champions who generate reports from local community leaders on the implementation of government projects in communities.

Odekro

Name: Nehemiah Attigah

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?
Accra, Ghana.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name.

Odekro was a product of the citizen technology work of the Late Emmanuel Oche and Nehemiah Attigah. In 2012, we were advised by Loren Treisman of Indigo Trust to collaborate on a project since we have the same objective in the civic technology space. Odekro was derived from the name given to district chief in Ghana. He is responsible for running errands on behalf of citizens in the district.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

A Non-Government Organization.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

Media Foundation for West Africa.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps etc...)

Radio, Short Message Service, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and a Web Platform.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We deploy technologies based on available research on the geography of technology usage in Ghana. For instance, we know that digital natives in city centres are predominant users of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter while the use of Radio and SMS is more popular where internet is not available.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Facebook has been more effective in engaging citizens while for a government response, the print of scorecards and reports have been useful.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

Recently, we published a report that showed that there was a member of the parliament who had not spoken a word at the floor since he was elected 4 years ago. The parliamentarian kept calling our office saying if he had known that he was being monitored then he would have been speaking. He also lamented that they should have notified him before releasing the report.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

When we started, our Facebook and Twitter posts were text-based. We found out that our followers were not engaging with it. Then we changed to using visualization in the form of infographics, which citizens interacted with better. It made us realize that people prefer visuals to text content.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired your work?

My Society They Work for You is a website that allows UK citizens to keep track of local parliament members' activities. An instance of this was also created in Kenya as Mzalendo.

CODE for South Africa was an inspiration on how we can use traditional media to engage citizens.

Sierra Leone

Network Movement for Democracy and Human Right (NMDH)
Name: Abdul Karim Habib

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

Freetown, Sierra Leone.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about your name?

Our organization was founded in June 2002, immediately after the civil war by Abdul Karim Habib.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

It started out as a coalition of 28 NGOs, but at a point, it became tasking to raise funds for the network, so it was restructured to a national NGO.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

The organization is affiliated with the Network of National Elections, National Commission for Democracy, Campaign for Good Governance, and the Inequality Movement.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps, etc...)
Printed Materials in the form of Policy Brief, Community Radio, Mobile Communications through WhatsApp, and Email.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We have a technical team that is responsible for conducting an assessment of projects that might need the use of these technologies. They are responsible for leading a baseline assessment of our target audience. We then deploy technology tools based on the outcome of such evaluations.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Radio has become the most efficient means for us to mobilize communities, while for the government it is through email and press releases in prints.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

In 2016, the district health officers with more than 1,000 workers went on strike due to one of our reports, which highlighted the mismanagement of funds by the district health management team. We helped mobilized them on the radio to discuss their plight, and a press release was sent out through the media. Within 2 days, the government responded by providing the funds for the health workers to return to work.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

At a point, we felt WhatsApp would deliver for our activities, so we created a group that had government and citizens. After a while, because of false information that some member sent to the platform, the government officials had to exit the group.

Liberia

Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)

Name: Gerald Yeakula

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

Monrovia, Liberia.

2. What year did was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name?

CENTAL started in May 2004 after the civil war, and the focus of the organization was on human rights and humanitarian relief. In 2010, we began focusing on governance issues.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

It's a Non-Government Organization.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

[Transparency International.](#)

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps etc...)

Web platforms, YouTube, Mobile Apps, Facebook, Radio, and SoundCloud.

6. How are you using the technologies (the processes)?

We conduct baseline studies and assessment of our target population to determine the kind of technology that best fits such community.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

YouTube and Radio have been very effective for us to mobilize citizens, while prints have been the most effective in getting a response from the government.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

In our 2015 School Grant Monitoring Project in one district in Liberia, we were able to mobilize citizens from the community to request that the education sector committee provide books to a school, which was part of the education budget of the country. The paper report, which highlighted the status of implementation of the project, was used in engaging the education sector committee. After a month, the council made provision of funds for the books.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

None.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired your work?

[Transparency International](#) *work with civil society all around the world on tackling corruption.*

Accountability Lab

Name: Blair Glencorse

1. Where is your initiative/organization based?

We are based in Washington DC but locally registered in Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan and recently Nigeria.

2. What year was your initiative/organization started and how did you come about the name?

In 2012, about four of us came up with different names for the organization, and we voted for Accountability Lab.

3. What structure does your organization have (e.g. non-profit, for-profit)?

A non-profit 501(c)(3) in the USA and registered in Liberia as an NGO.

4. Are you affiliated with another organization (e.g. newspaper, media organization, NGO)?

Not affiliated.

5. What kind of digital technologies do you use? (SMS, Radio, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Project Apps etc...)

KoboToolBox, Radio, Video, social media and WhatsApp.

6. How are you using it (The processes)?

We start with what the problem is and see if technology can solve the problem. If technology is needed, we find out which technology will work, using the technology that has been working in our target audience community.

7. Which one has more impact on the work that you do?

Radio and TV have been the most effective for community mobilization. It has been difficult to measure which tools cause the government to respond to our work in Liberia.

8. Kindly tell us a story of how one of these technologies has had an impact on your work.

We've found that technology is more useful to gather data than it is to interact with citizens in Liberia. Citizen-focused apps for example- do not fare well here, given the internet penetration. However, apps that can be used systematically to gather data (such as Kobo Toolbox) can provide useful inputs for the design of offline programs.

9. Which of these technologies didn't work and what have you changed since you started?

A lot of online tools do not work in Liberia- not enough people are online or engaged enough around governance issues in that space to see the meaningful use of the tools. We start with offline approaches and if there is a more ICT based idea that is useful we look at how, when and why it might be worth adopting it.

10. Are there other projects that have inspired you?

Twaweza in Tanzania, which works to enable citizens to hold government agencies accountable.

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