ThoughtWorks®

D-Cent Helsinki

INCREASING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT WITH MUNICIPAL DECISIONS IN HELSINKI

Outputs from the workshop and collaboration 3 - 5 June 2015

INTRODUCTION

Helsinki city council already publishes an API detailing the municipal decisions made by the city council.

As part of the DCENT project ThoughtWorks, OKFI and Forum Virium conducted a three day workshop to investigate using social technology for democracy
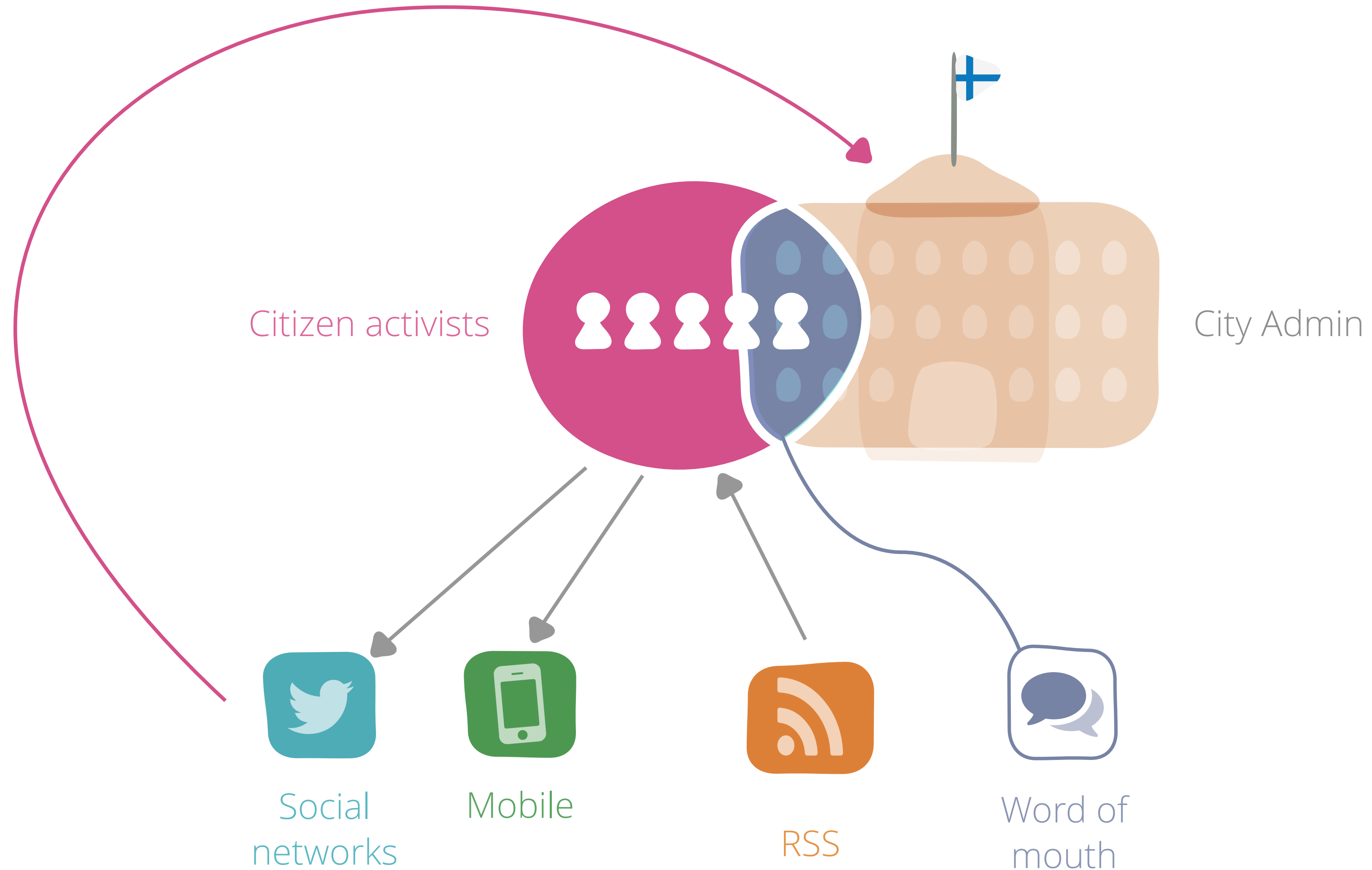
ThoughtWorks®

HOW WE WORKED

UNDERSTAND OPPORTUNITIES

- How we worked

- The work they have done

- Talk to users to understand the picture of how engagement currently works

EXISTING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Citizen activists

City Admin

Social networks

Mobile

RSS

Word of mouth

RAPID IDEATION

- Branding

- Maps

- Search

- Streets

- Topics users care about
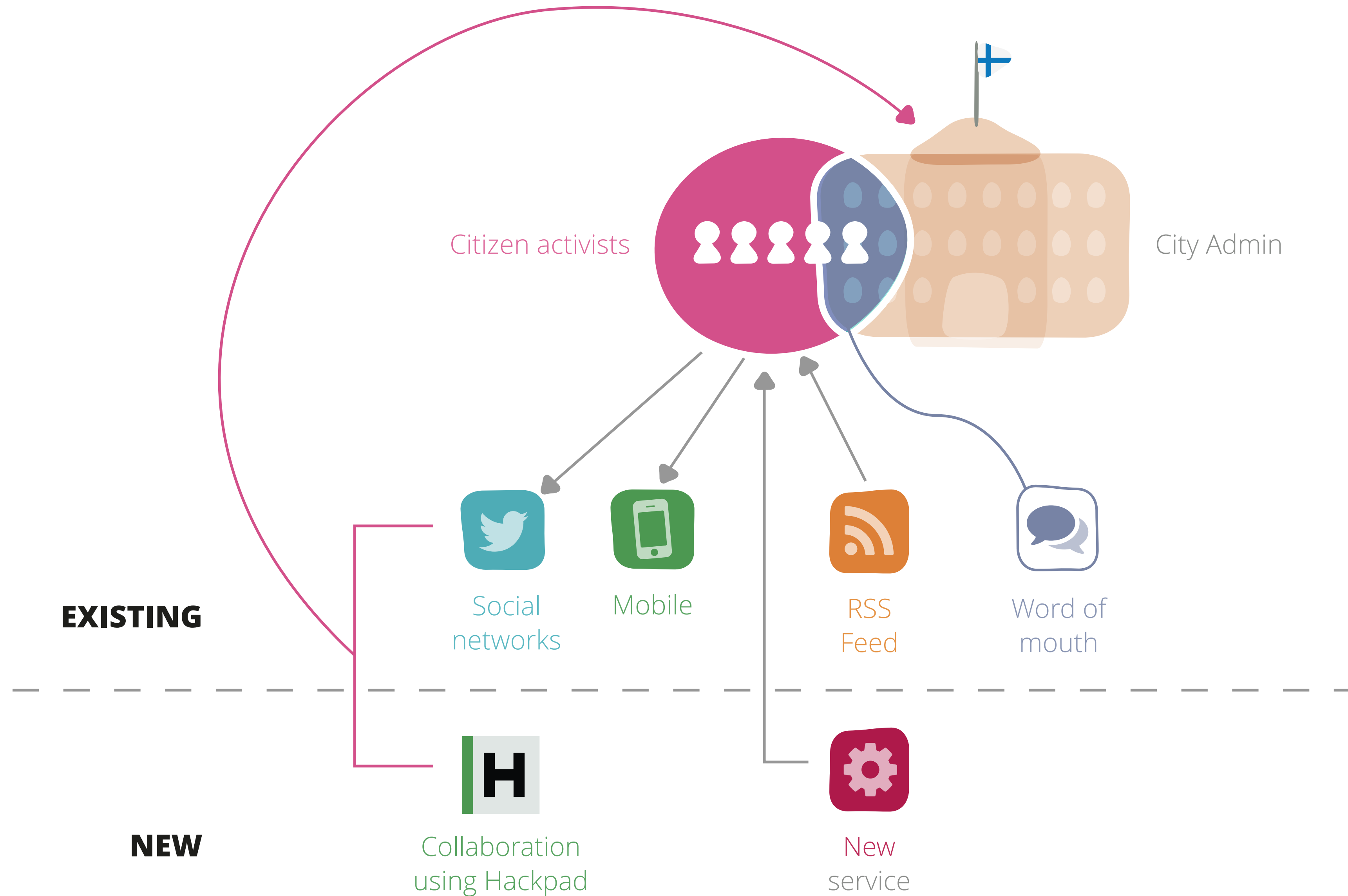
- Don't rely on twitter

IDENTIFIED KEY FEATURES

- Simple search

- Results based on search term

- Results are ordered by relevancy to search term most recently published

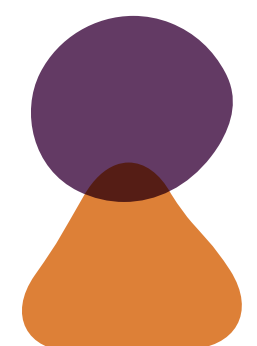- Subscription to a term

- Email updates

A 'PULL BASED' SYSTEM WHERE CITIZENS CAN SUBSCRIBE TO DECISIONS THEY CARE ABOUT WILL CREATE MORE ONLINE AND OFFLINE POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

Citizen activists

City Admin

EXISTING

Social networks

Mobile

RSS Feed

Word of mouth

NEW

Collaboration using Hackpad

New service

USER JOURNEY WIREFRAME

Subscribe to bikes near soho

Email address

Password

Daily | Weekly

SUBSCRIBE

SUBSCRIBE ✉

Decisions for bikes near soho

...
MORE

...
MORE

Details

White mazagran, mocha body aroma frappuccino steamed cinnamon rich. A to go and est caffeine qui galão.

HACKPAD

#HASHTAG

I am interested in _____ near _____

SEARCH

ThoughtWorks®

DELIVERY APPROACH

DELIVERY APPROACH

- During the three days we met with citizen activists to understand their needs

- We built on top of the research which had already been done by OKFI and Forum Virium

- We gained an understanding of the problem space and the existing processes citizen activists use to influence change and perform social action

- For the first day we built a basic prototype as working software

- During the second and third days we evolved the software using feedback and ideas from citizens

- Building the software and meeting citizens in parallel allowed us to rapidly meet their requirements
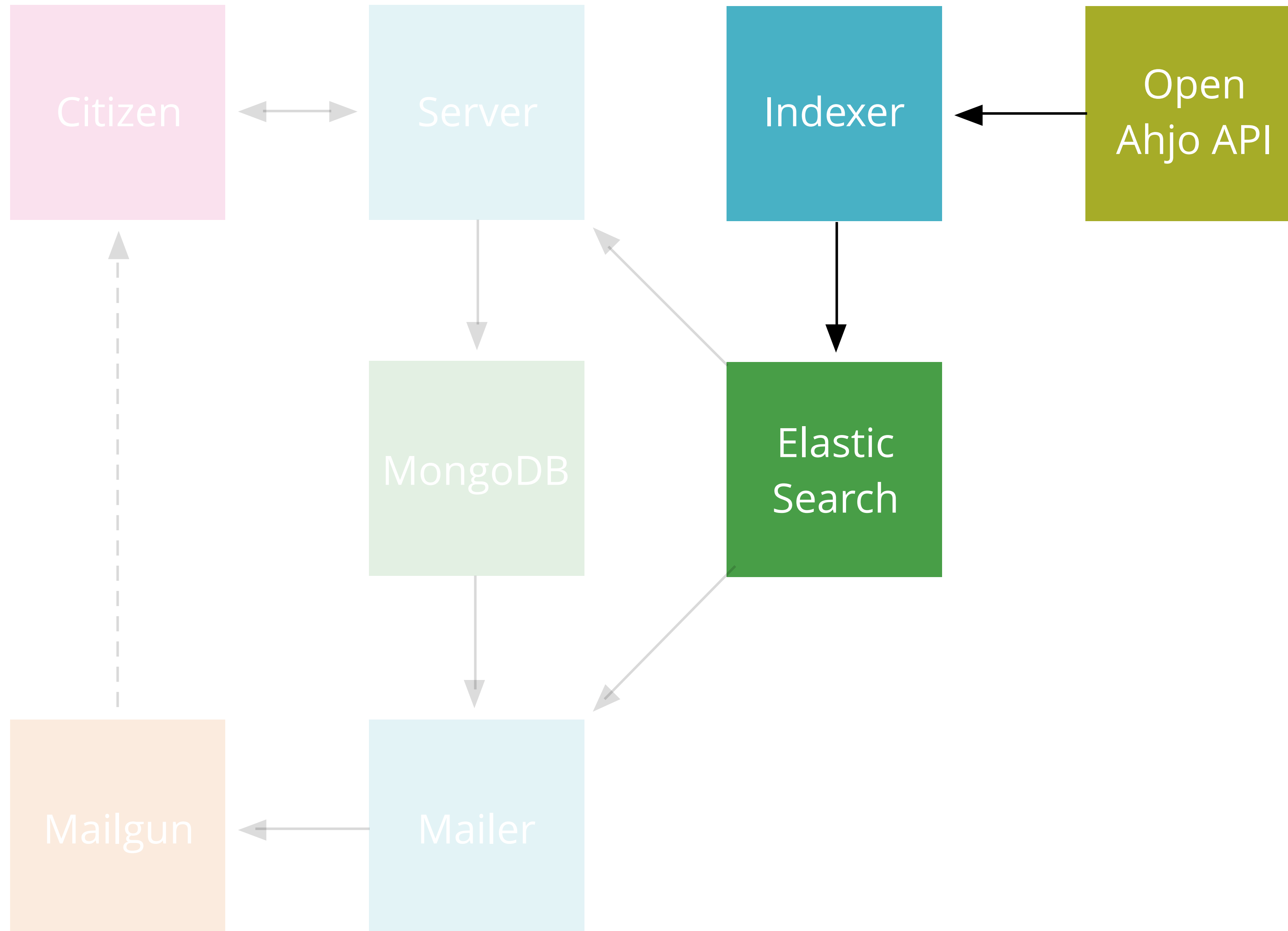
ThoughtWorks®

ARCHITECTURE

*Understanding the API service*
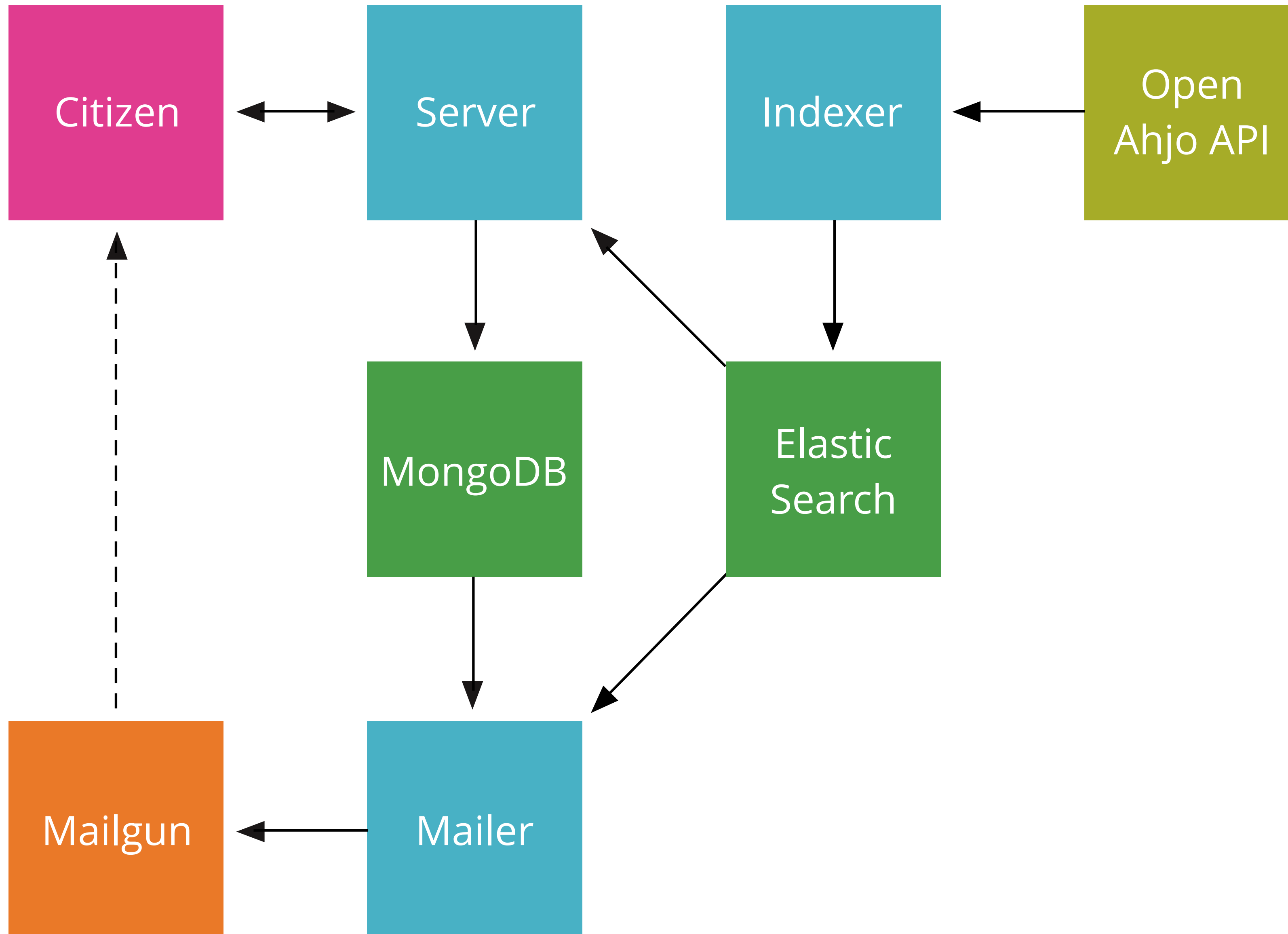
WHAT WE BUILT

Most of the pieces of the solution were already available so we focused our time on integrating already available tools and technologies in order to rapidly prototype a solution for increasing citizen engagement with municipal decisions.

GETTING THE DATA

A python script pulls data from the Open Ahjo api and indexes it in the Elastic Search search engine.

Indexing the data in Elastic Search provides capability to analyse and filter the API content to better meet users interests.
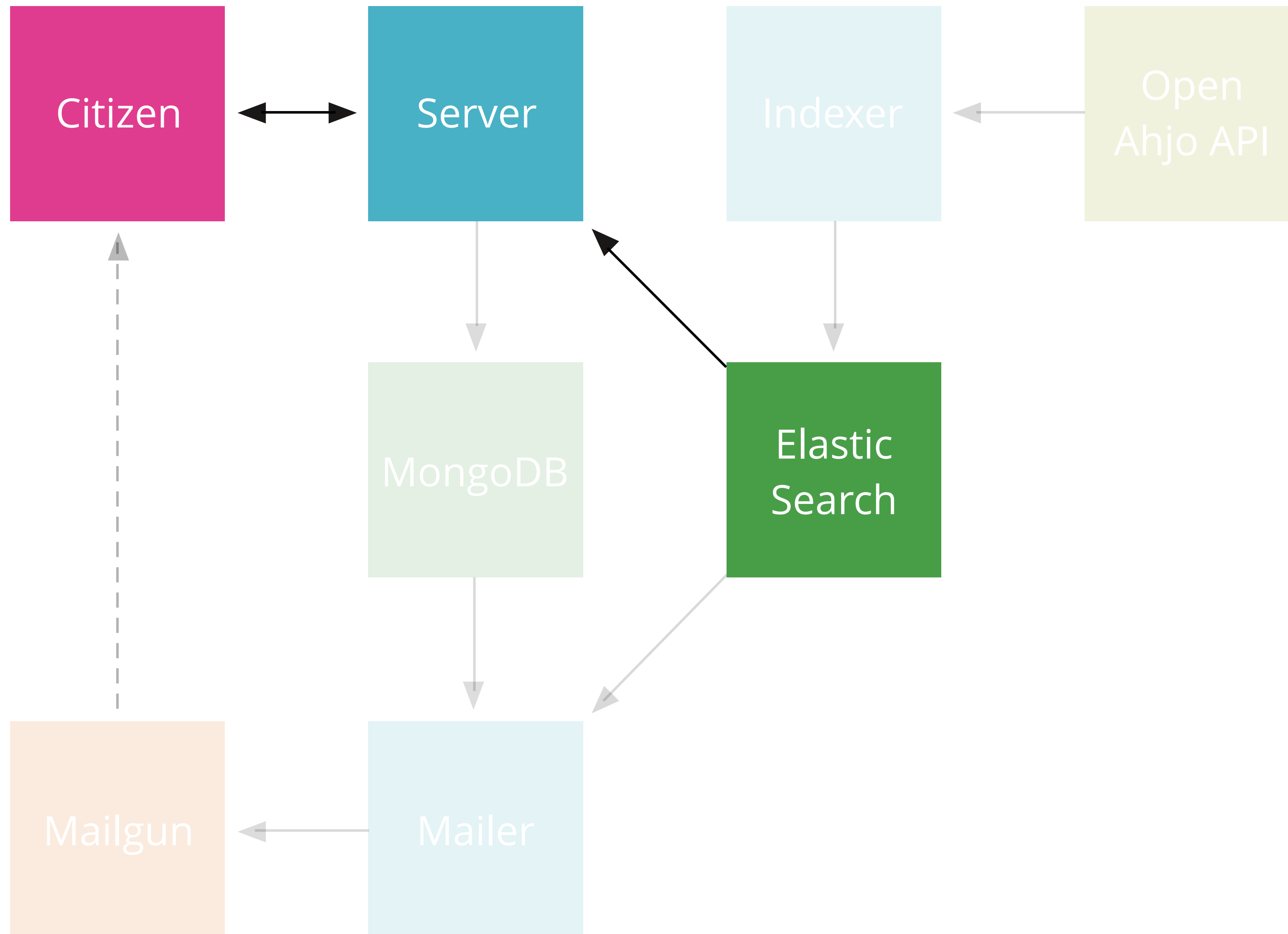
PROVIDING CITIZENS WITH A SERVICE

Citizens use a web site, written in python, to search for municipal decisions which match their interests.
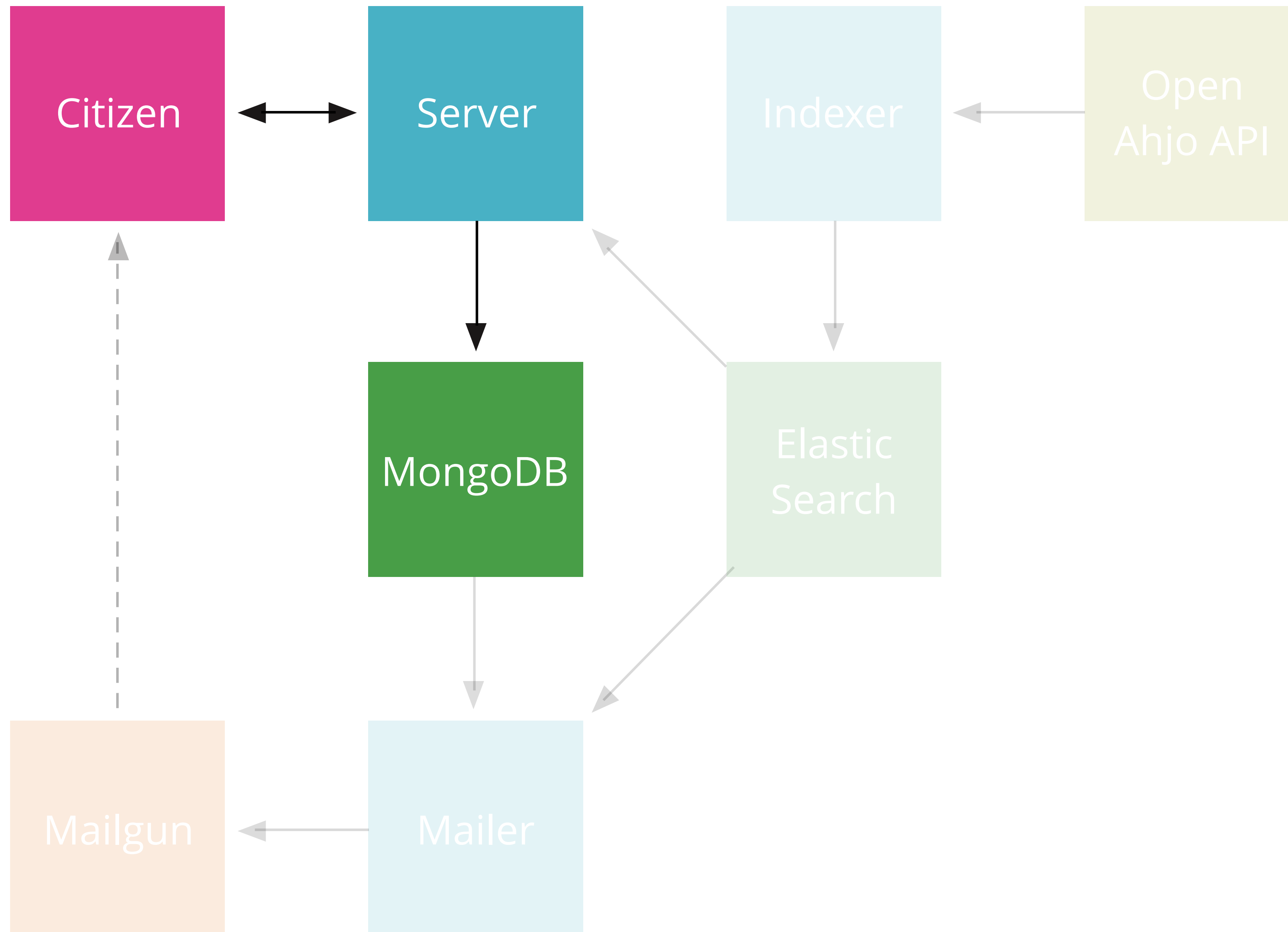
ENABLING NOTIFICATIONS

Once a citizen has performed a search they are given the option of subscribing to future municipal decisions which match their search criteria.

When a citizen subscribes their email address and search criteria are stored in a MongoDB database.
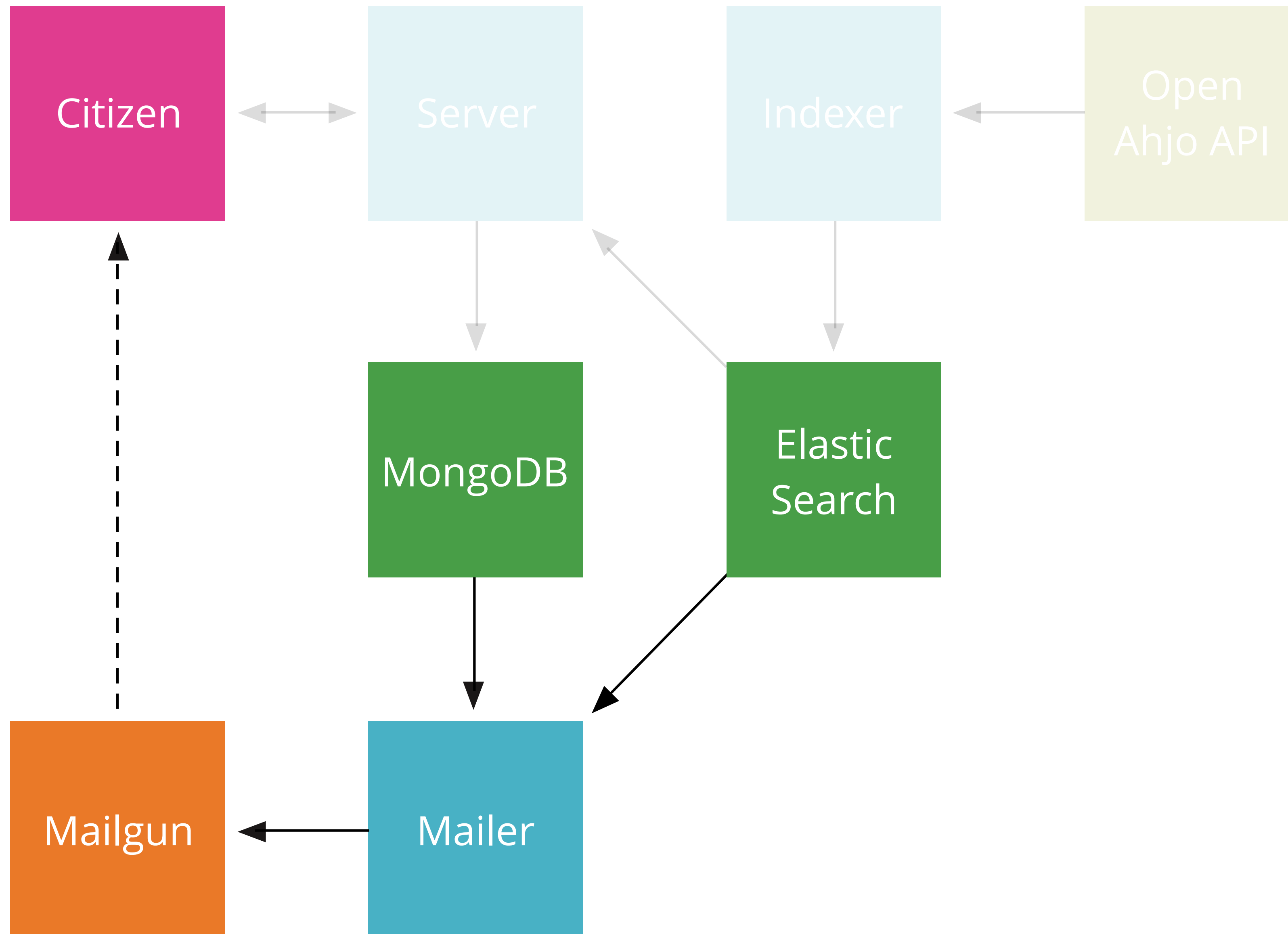
DELIVERING NOTIFICATIONS

For every subscription in the database emails containing municipal decisions are generated and sent.

Mailgun is a transactional email service which can be triggered to send an email based on an API call from the python code.

Python

Server

Mailer

Indexer

Tools

MongoDB

Elastic Search

Services

Mailgun

Integration

Open Ahjo API

User

Citizen

TECH STACK

Python was chosen due to existing capability in the Helsinki open source community.

MongoDB and Elastic Search were chosen as they can be set up and configured quickly.

Mailgun is one of many transactional email services which could be used in this context.

ThoughtWorks®

USER TESTING & PROTOTYPING

From sketch to code

I'm interested in
Bike lanes

Decisions related to Bike lanes

YESTERDAY

New lanes in Soho

Post office closure

TUESDAY

New lanes in Soho
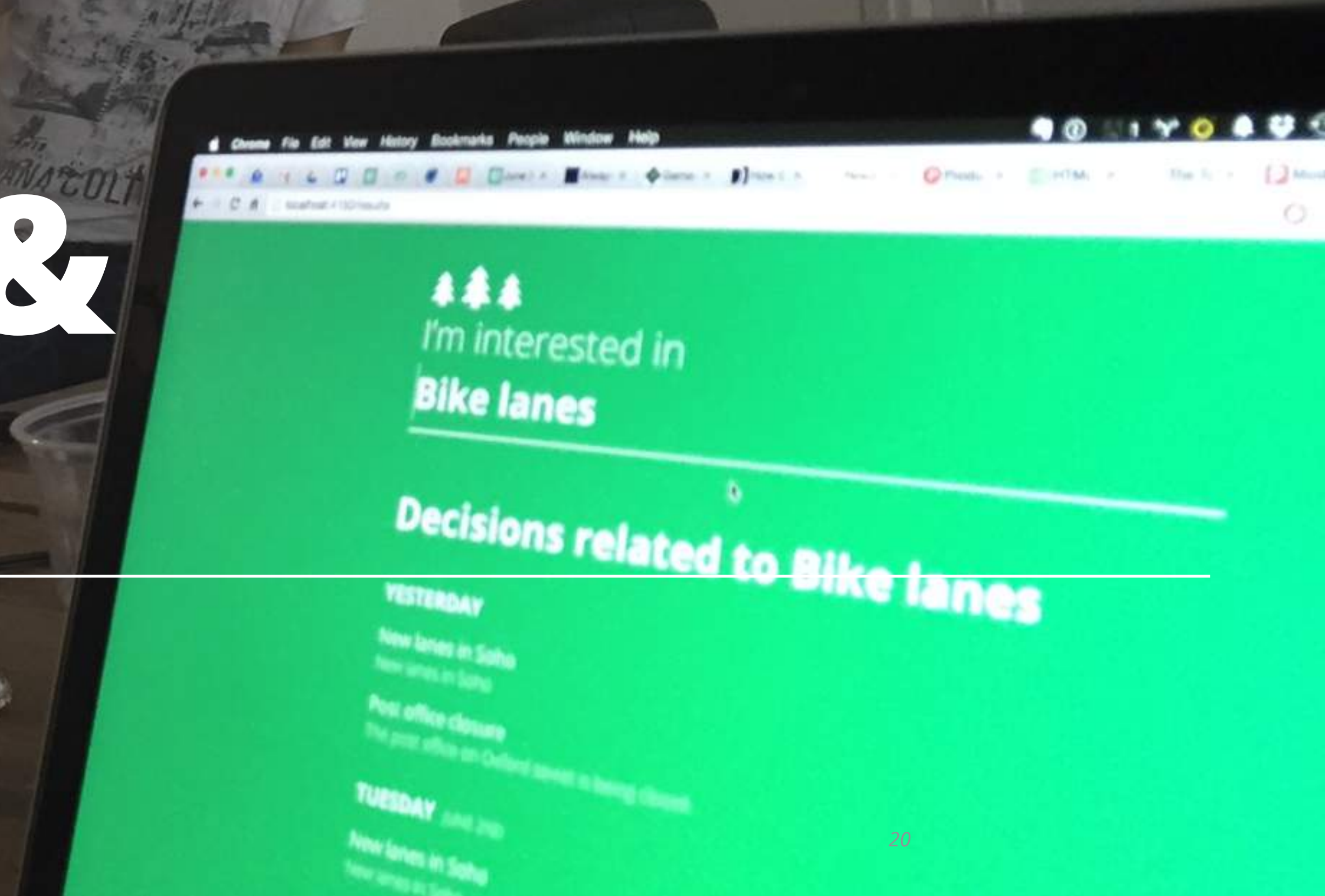
USER TESTING & PROTOYPING

- (awaiting list of users we tested with)

ThoughtWorks®

PREVIEW

Search municipal decisions for the city of Helsinki

I'm interested in

Search municipal decisions for the city of Helsinki

I'm interested in **Helsinki**

I'm interested in **Helsinki**

Would you like to receive updates on Helsinki?

[✉] [   ]   **Subscribe**

Toimitilatontin varauksen jatkaminen Art Hotel Helsinki Oy:lle (Länsisatama, Jätkäsaari, tontti 20816/2)

2015-06-10T11:05:57.814847

Tontin varaaminen Art Hotel Helsinki Oy:lle hotellin suunnittelua varten (Länsisatama, Jätkäsaari, tontti 20816/2)

Päiväkodin Plommonet toiminnan aloittaminen, Madetojankuja 5

2015-06-10T11:06:13.216389

Päiväkodin Plommonet toiminnan aloittaminen, Madetojankuja 5

Pelastuslautakunnan lausunto Vartiosaaren osayleiskaavasta

2015-06-10T11:06:01.542241

Vartiosaaren osayleiskaavan suunnitteluperiaatteet

Finnish Metal Events Oy:n erityisen häiritsevää melua koskevat ulkoilmakonsertit, Parrukatu 2 - 4

2015-06-10T11:06:12.322453

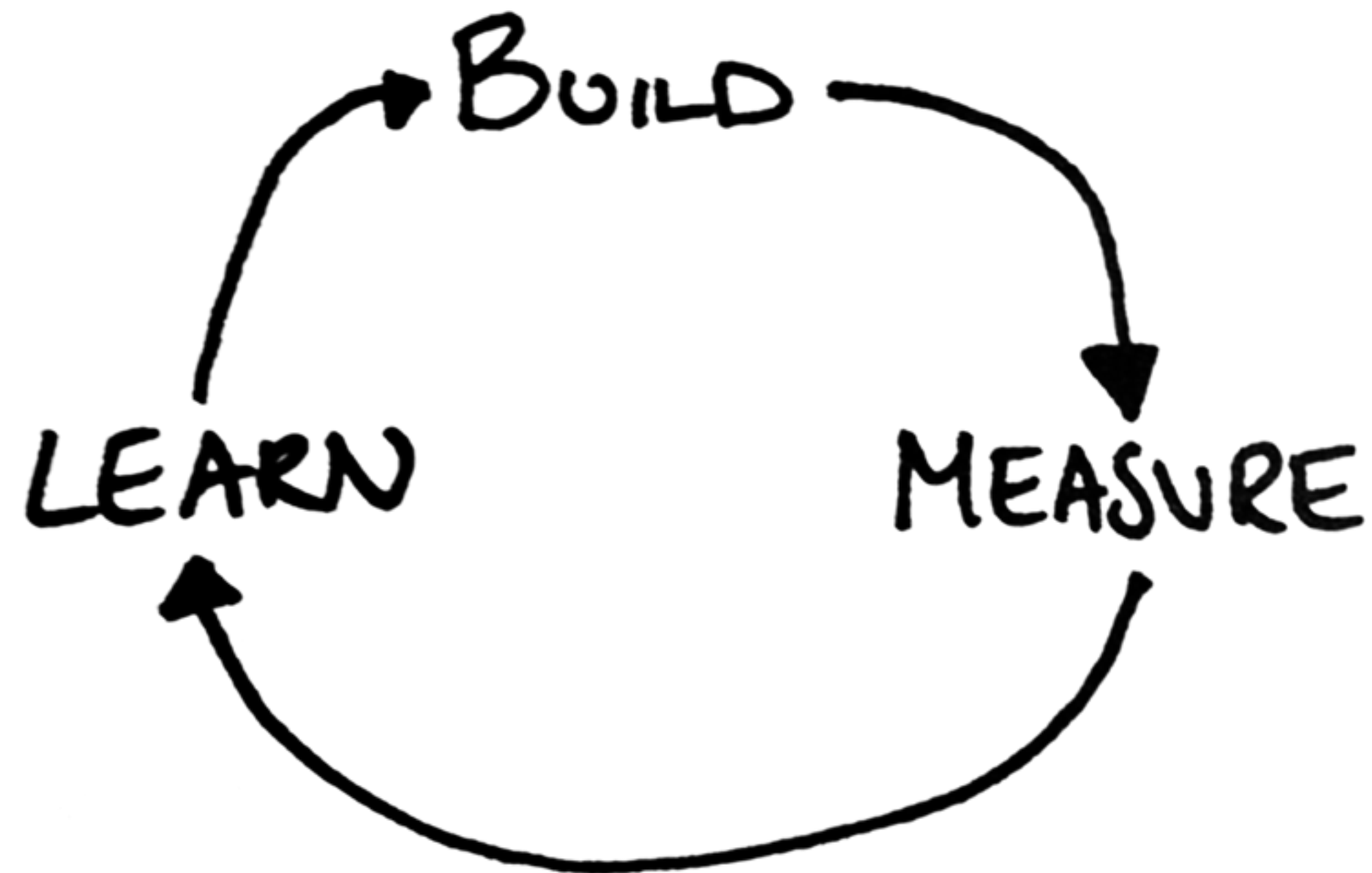Finnish Metal Events Oy:n erityisen häiritsevää melua koskevat ulkoilmakonsertit, Parrukatu 2 - 4

Lemminkäinen Infra Oy:n erityisen häiritsevää melua aiheuttava purkutyö, Teollisuuskatu

2015-06-10T11:06:12.243600

ThoughtWorks®

NEXT STEPS

AREAS FOR FUTURE WORK

- These are suggestions for the next steps for the Helsinki pilot

- They should be validated with ongoing user testing and feedback

- Piloting should begin with the citizens interviewed ASAP

NEXT STEPS: MORE TARGETED SEARCH RESULTS

- Provide a wider range of more relevant results

- Add full support for the Finnish language to Elastic Search

- Work with citizens to identify meaningful data which should be used when conducting searching

- Add support for geolocation so citizens can search based on locations e.g. home, work, school

- Identify the ideal date range of results to return

NEXT STEPS: SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT

- Allow citizens to update their criteria for relevant municipal decisions

- Allow citizens to unsubscribe from the notifications

- Identify frequencies at which notifications should be sent e.g. daily, weekly, monthly

- Allow citizens to control the frequency at which they receive notifications

- Provide account features for managing subscriptions

NEXT STEPS: EVOLVE SEARCH RESULTS

- Identify the data which is most useful to display to citizens

- Activity Streams format for using municipal decisions as social objects

- Provide an easily shareable URL for each decision to encourage social sharing

- Allow citizens to attach hashtags and other social context to municipal decisions for other citizens to use

NEXT STEPS: HACK PAD INTEGRATION

- Allow citizens to start social actions and collaborations by creating Hackpads from search results

- Investigate integration with other online democracy tools e.g. Objective8

THANK YOU

ThoughtWorks®