State Election Commission Maharashtra (EMP)

E lection Management Project was conceptualized to conduct local body and urban local body elections most Transparent, Fare and efficient manner. A common voter is always at the focal point of this initiative. It aimed at making concise, unbiased information available to the citizens.

Local Self Government Institutions in Maharashtra

- 26 - Municipal Corporations ,
- 220 - Municipal Councils and
- 13 - Nagar Panchayats
- 33 - Zilla Parishads ,
- 351 - Panchayat Samitis and
- 27,873 – Grampanchayats

Registered Political Parties

- Recognized National Political Parties - 6
- Recognized State Level Political Parties - 2
- Recognized Political Parties - Other States - 8
- Registered with State Election Commission but not recognized Parties - 320.

Conducting Local Body elections is a continuous process. We are sharing following figures from 10 Municipal corporations elections held in February 2012 as an example. This should give an idea about vast scope of project.

- Total manpower utilized was 1,45,770 personnel.
- Total population of 10 corporations as per 2011 census is 2,55,66,505
- Number of voters – 2,02,71,928
- Total Seats - 1,244
- Total Wards - 734

- Women Seats - 624
- Electronic Voting Machine requirement - 31,450 units
- Polling stations 20,430

Challenges as a Voter

As voters we have some basic questions in our minds… who are contesting candidates in my ward, where is polling centre, how to vote using electronic voting machines,… so on.

Challenges as Election Officer and Staff

Are we upraised about latest updates and guidelines from State Election Commission, are there any malpractice happening in preparation of electoral roll, are we on schedule and within budget, do we have all tools to be able to work…

Political Parties & Candidates

Do we know exact election program, what is code of conduct, what is expense limit for campaigning, when should we submit the nomination forms and what documents should be attached,.. so on.

Challenges of State Election Commission

All above challenges pretty much become challenges of SEC. Besides, geographic spread of Maharashtra being huge SEC having local existence everywhere is practically impossible.

Proposed Solution

Creating websites which will:

- Publish authentic information
- Bring all statutory information under one umbrella
- Publish information in Marathi as well as English
- Maintains transparency by providing complete information related to elections
- Not be dependent on Software developer for updating
- Enable completion of work within stipulated timeframe
- Disseminate information to all stakeholders like Voters, Election Officers and Staff, Political Parties & Candidates

Provision for voter search engine and Computerise electoral roll generation process

Website of State Election Commission (www.mahasec.com)

MahaSEC.com is multilingual web site which publishes information about on-going election programs, important orders, various acts and rules pertaining to elections, telephone directory of election officials, newspaper cuttings, audio-visual trainings for EVM, and videos of voter awareness campaign. Application forms for amendments in voter list are made available here.

Being central component of rest of the information infrastructure it provides links to election websites of 15 Corporations, 10 Zilla Parishads, and 197Councils. It also publishes statistical analysis of elections results. In less than a year, MahaSEC visitor count is more than 600,000.

Election websites of Local Bodies and Urban Local Bodies

The election website of individual local body took the initiative even more closer to people. These website publish current affairs, local news, ward formation, reservation information. Apart from population, geographical boundaries, contesting candidates, each ward map can be found integrated with a google map. One can find the polling centers highlighted on the map and can find the directions to them from their homes with standard map functionality.

Candidate nominations forms are also published. The websites are powered with easy touse content management engine so election staff can modify content on their own.

Each web site offers safe, secure and reliable messaging mechanism for election officials and SEC. The communication can be targeted to masses as well as individuals.
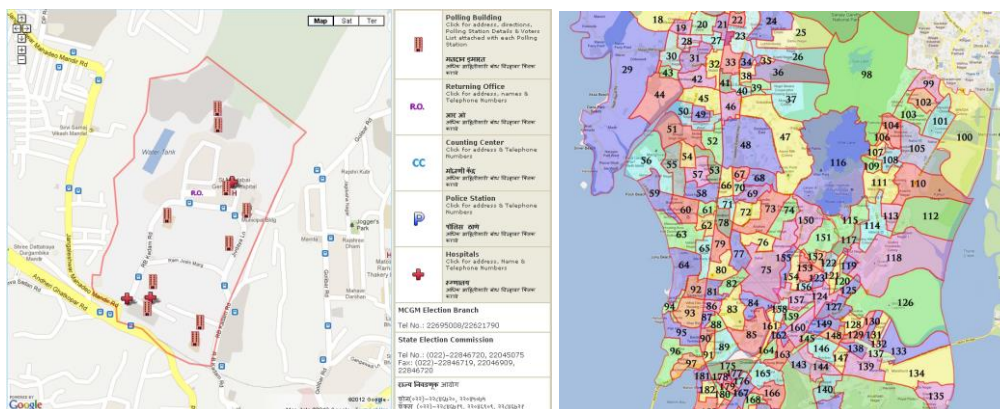
Voter Search (Web and SMS)

Voter search engine is linked to MahaSEC website since June 2011. Initially it helped voters to find their names in the voters list from about 8 cror records. This service was enabled so voters can either register or apply for change in name, address etc. As electoral roll formation process started, search results also provided information like ward name s, polling booth addresses etc. Voter Search engine was available as Web Based as well Mobile Text Message based service.

Every Corporation, Zilla Parishad or Council web site had an attached search engine. For text messaging based service 56677 short code and VOTER keyword is reserved. Voters can find their records by using Name Search, Voter ID Search or Assembly Constituency Numbers Search.

Google Maps of Each LB, Each Ward

Each ward map can be found integrated with a Google map. One can find the polling centres highlighted on the map and can find the directions to them from their home with standard map functionality.

e-यादी Centralized Electoral Roll Software

Before E-yadi service electoral roll preparation involved tremendous drudgework of manual cutting, pasting and copying. Chances of single voter getting added into multiple wards were very likely. The strict monitoring system co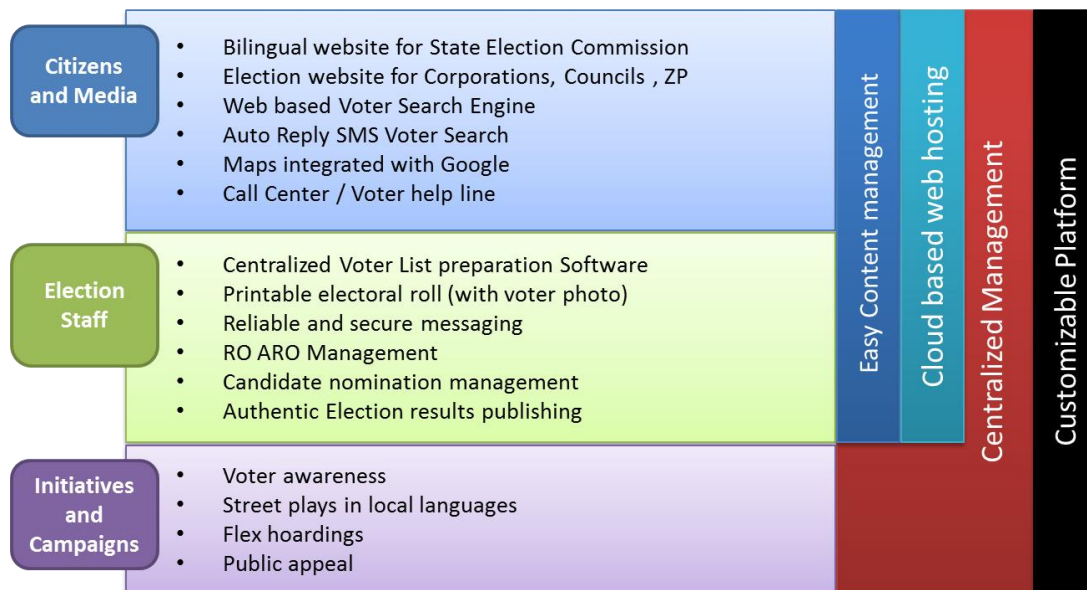uld not be established and as result of it electoral roll preparation process was full of loop holes. These loopholes were leveraged by corrupt social elements in their own favour.

Election program milestones and dates are carefully planned at least a year ahead of actual election date. The sub tasks in this plan have some serious dependency on one another. All work has to be completed dot on

time and no delays are affordable. Voter list preparation is humongous activity occupies most of the critical path of the program. E-Yadi Web became an absolutely mission critical application as a result of this.

E-Yadi introduced a zero tolerance system and which can be monitored in centralized as well as decentralized manner. However, the challenge was to bring in the change in the traditional system. Getting acceptance from most remote location was a key factor for the success of the system. We understood this situation and conducted training at multiple divisions. Total 1000+ staff was trained to handle new system within mere couple of weeks. Apart from this Ultimate's well trained location coordinators were available at staff's disposal 24x7 in every town.

SEC IT Services Platform

Citizens and Media	• Bilingual website for State Election Commission • Election website for Corporations, Councils , ZP • Web based Voter Search Engine • Auto Reply SMS Voter Search • Maps integrated with Google • Call Center / Voter help line	Easy Content management	Cloud based web hosting	Centralized Management	Customizable Platform
Election Staff	• Centralized Voter List preparation Software • Printable electoral roll (with voter photo) • Reliable and secure messaging • RO ARO Management • Candidate nomination management • Authentic Election results publishing				
Initiatives and Campaigns	• Voter awareness • Street plays in local languages • Flex hoardings • Public appeal				

Voter Helpline

To assist voters who may not have access to internet, voice voter helpline was active for 12 hours a day. Online agents helped to resolve queries pertaining to election. Queries pertaining to voter search, acts rules, contact numbers of officials were resolved on a phone line as well.

Hosting of large number of websites and web applications, generation of voter lists and their online distribution, voter search engines needed adequate infrastructure so that overall workload could be balanced.
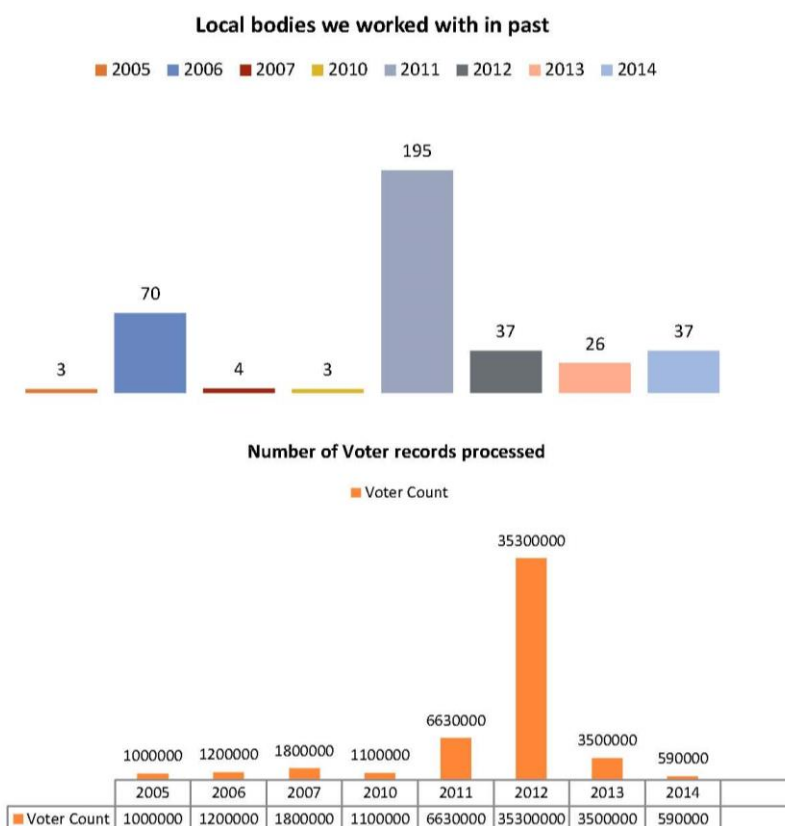
Cloud based hosting

During Municipal Corporation Election program we needed some 60+ heavy duty servers, high availability storage systems and ultrafast network to do the job. The cost for such infrastructure would run into crores of rupees. Running and maintaining such infrastructure is less likely an easy job.

In elections previous to one in 2012, we all have witnessed campaigns appealing voters to execute their fundamental right. It asked general public to come forward and form a better government. The campaigns did good job however, voters were still confused about where to register and exactly whom they should really vote. However, this time SEC wanted to take a step forward and make the right information available to people.

Our work in SEC of Maharashtra

▸ In 2010 State Election Commission of Maharashtra recognized our work. We immediately started working with them to build set of integrated products and services for managing elections. We developed systems in-house and also procured few.

▸ **Beneficiaries of a program were a big corporations like Mumbai (1 crore voters) as well as small councils like Panhala (2500 voters).**

▸ This project was one of its kind in India.

▸ Key high lights:

  ▸ MahaSEC.com website was made live on 9th August 2011

  ▸ Be A Voter Campaign

  ▸ Training to approx. 900 persons from 200 Municipal Councils at divisional headquarters

  ▸ Electoral Roll preparation for 195 councils

  ▸ Election informative websites for 195 councils - made live on same day

  ▸ Voter Search was provisioned for each Municipal Council

  ▸ In February 2012, Election Management Program covered 17 Municipal corporations along with Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Thane, and Nashik to name few.

Local bodies we worked with in past

■ 2005 ■ 2006 ■ 2007 ■ 2010 ■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013 ■ 2014

3	70	4	3	195	37	26	37

Number of Voter records processed

■ Voter Count

	2005	2006	2007	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Voter Count	1000000	1200000	1800000	1100000	6630000	35300000	3500000	590000	

Our evolution and experience

The adjacent graphs show how local bodies adapted our services and number of voter records processed.

The key challenges:

• Multiple geographical locations

• Numerous Stake Holders to handle

• Volume of voter records to process

• Up skilling the work force

Thank You !!

Ultimate Information Technology Pvt. Ltd.
www.ultimateitpl.com