

Omnichannel assistance to citizens in the electronic relationship

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1. Introduction

In 2016, Mataró Council implemented a **Transformation Plan to adapt to the change and innovation context** in which public administrations must respond to new regulations, new ways to interact with the citizens and new ways of working to offer a better public service. A necessary transformation to overcome the challenges that arise in a changing society, digital by default, but which involves a cultural, ethical and values transformation of public organizations.

To achieve this transformation, the council identified four key challenges where the organization had to focus its efforts:

- Objective #0 papers, which focuses on "how" we produce
- The Council's role with citizens, focused on "for whom" we work
- Collaborative and networking work, focused on "how" we work
- Culture and values of the organization

The challenge of what should be the role that the council should play with the citizens is where we place Mataró Connecta Space, which was set up as a strategic project in 2019. It is a project whose mission is build a new relationship model with citizens based on two fundamental dimensions:

A new relationship model with citizens

1. Guarantee citizens' access to public services and products under equal conditions, regardless of technological capabilities.
2. Create and develop spaces for interaction and collaboration, co-construction, co-creation and cooperation, between citizens and the Council to generate public value.



Thus, the Mataró Space service, specifically created to develop this project, has the competences of Attention and general assistance to citizens in their administrative relationship and Promotion of citizens collaboration and participation in the design and development of policies and public products.

2. Mataró Connecta Space

The flagship on which Mataró Space Project materializes is the new facility located in the city centre opened last May 2nd, 2022. Mataró Connecta Space in plaça de la Muralla contains the main Office of attention and assistance to citizens and different spaces intended for participation and innovation, always with and for citizenship.

The opening of the new facilities means a reorganization of public attention, evolving towards an omnichannel system. This is why important changes are executed to all channels (telephone, telematic and on-site).

Thus, on the telephone channel, which is free, service hours are extended from Monday to Thursday from 8.30 a.m. to 6 p.m., uninterrupted, and on Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The service is reorganized to focus on assistance and municipal information,



automating switchboard services and appointment services, which will now be available 24 hours a day. Likewise, it is guaranteed that citizens can be attended by staff instead of automated services if they wish so, during regular service hours.

On the telematic channel, service hours are extended via e-mail and a virtual assistant is opened (chatbot) specific of the Electronic Headquarters.

Half of the on-site attentions are made without prior appointment thanks to the Quick Service Points (Point0) and Self-Service points (cashier)

On-site service hours are extended from Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., uninterrupted, and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The so-called Points 0 of speedy processing are launched, without prior appointment, for procedures identified with an average up to 5 minutes of attention (certificates issuance, municipal cards acquisition (Bus, Punt Net and Pets), duplicate payment receipts acquisition, etc.). Systems to speed up the acquisition of prior appointment for complex procedures are established and procedures of up to 15 minutes of attention are attended without prior appointment depending on the daily operation. The presentation of documents to the General Registry is guaranteed within the administrative deadlines in each case.



A special operation has been established to provide on-site attention and assistance to citizens of initially vulnerable groups in ICT technologies for specific campaigns in municipal equipment such as Centre for old people or in private facilities such as Special Employment Centres. This proactive service contacts by SMS or phone the people potentially interested in the service (those who in previous years had already requested this campaign) and the attention is given in facilities close to their place of residence or their workplace.

“Pop-up” service: we appear where necessary, with special attention to vulnerable groups in ICT

3. Changes in the human team. Objective: Omnichannel System

To guarantee the same quality level in attention and assistance to citizens in the different channels in which the service is structured and to be able to adapt human resources to the needs produced by the demand flows in each channel, a new type of job was defined in 2021 in the corresponding Workplaces List. Thus, the position of Citizen Assistance Manager was created. It provides service to any of the channels that Mataró Space can open and in any channel in any “position” or office, from the so-called Point0 of quick service to the phone or video conference assistance.

This new system allows to balance at any moment the human resources available on demand in each channel nimbly. On the other hand, it allows to standardize responses to citizens, which are equally “good” or “bad” in all channels.

The human team also carries out Backoffice tasks to structure the content of the answers to be provided to citizens in each procedure, demand, etc. The service has specific attention and assistance procedures that describe how each delegated operation should be carried out. There are currently 266 stable procedures available and around thirty additional procedures of citizen campaigns are usually published on the content management platform.

4. An assistance model based on permanent adaptation to citizen needs with the help of technology

The omnichannel system of assistance to the citizens establishes as a priority in all scope of action to ensure that, regardless of technological capabilities, everyone can access to public services and products under equal conditions. No one can be left behind. But at the same time, the system ensures that those who wish to interact electronically with the municipal administration can do so even if they do not have the devices or the knowledge to do so.

To make these objectives come true, levels series and technological equipment of all kinds have been established for attention and assistance, which are adapted to the different needs expressed by the citizens, depending on the starting point and the procedure to which they want or must access.

No one can be left behind, but we do not force any natural person to the electronic relationship



Regarding the physical space and technological equipment, in the on-site channel, attention and assistance options have been established in Self-Service Point (cashier), Point 0 (at counter), classic Table, informal Table (low round table and tall round table) and adding as technological equipment Tablets, Laptops and the technology itself contributed by the citizens (mobile phone, tablet, laptop...). Here are some examples:

On-site

Demand identified type	Answer
I am a natural person, I have no idea about technology, or I know what this is all about, but I do not want to deal with the administration electronically.	No problem. We issue the procedure for you at the Self-Service Point (cashier), at Point 0 (quick processing point) or at table (classic attention) depending on the type of request. If what you want is information, maybe we will sit at a round table and we explain you what you need.
I am a natural person; I have no idea about technology, but I need to issue a procedure and I am interested in understanding what the electronic administration is about.	At the Self-Service Point (cashier) we show you how to issue procedures with the administration. We help you to fill out forms, download notifications, get information in electronic format or print it on paper. We also will show you with your mobile device. Do we sit at a high table with stools and with a tablet I help you to get a digital identification? Can I explain you how to have your Waste or Pet Card on your mobile phone? Do you dare it?
I am a natural person; I buy online and I organize my holidays online. I have a laptop, but I do not know if I correctly understand this you name Electronic Headquarters. Basically, I do not know if I will do it correctly.	If you have a laptop, you can bring it. I help you to install a digital certificate that we can issue instantly. With your laptop we explain you how to use the Headquarters, tips for digitize documents, the user requirements we have...
I already know how this work and I tried to issue a procedure online, but there is no way. This does not work.	Let's see what has happened. We verify if you have attempted the procedure and in which situation you have been left. Our Backoffice team with specialized technical support will serve you, if necessary, with our laptop to verify the possible error and we give you the answer in situ. If it is a technological incidence of our own, the maximum period of resolution is 24 hours.

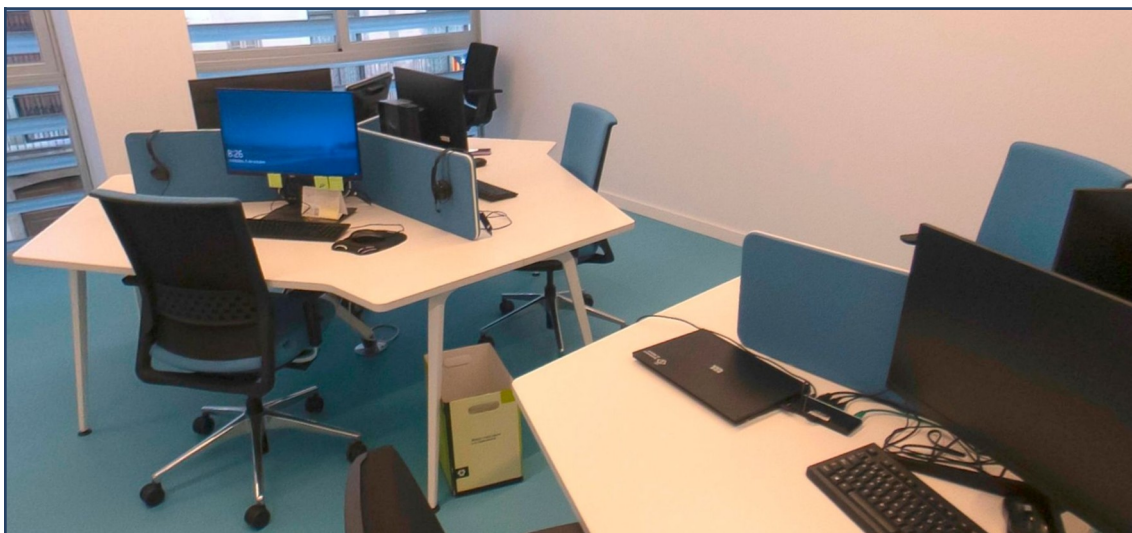


On the telephone channel (010, free)

Demand identified type	Answer
I want to issue a procedure that it is available by phone.	I offer you the possibility to issue the procedure by internet. If you have an email, I send you the link to the procedure and the help manual, if it exists. You can call again if you have any doubt and we help you to complete the form, etc. Also, I will confirm that everything is ok once submitted.
I want to issue a procedure online, but I do not understand anything. I do not even know where to start.	But if you do not like technology there is no problem. We issue the procedure by phone... Let's start. Tell me your email and I will send you the help manual, if we do have it. If not, let's start... Go in seu.mataro.cat
I have an incidence with a procedure	Tell me your personal data and we check what has happened. If I detect that, especially for data protection issues, I cannot help you properly, I will ask you to use our Citizen Box or that you send an email to



seu@ajmataro.cat with a screenshot and the appropriate information. Within 6 working hours you will have the answer.



On the telematic channel

Demand identified type

Answer

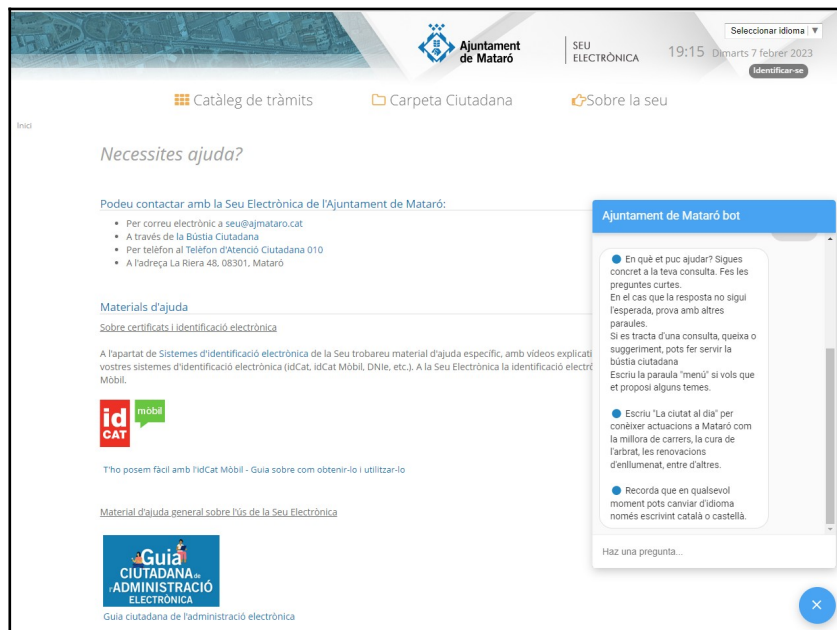
Level 1 assistance need (where I find the procedure and the information on how to do it)

We have at your disposal a specific help section in the Electronic Headquarters. You can also ask our chatbot. We will also answer you by email within 6 working hours if you have chosen to contact us by email (seu@ajmataro.cat) or through our Inquiries Box.

Level 2 assistance need (I have an incidence to process at the Electronic Headquarters).

We will contact you initially by email. If necessary, we will call you to verify data or let you know how to solve the incidence if we think that is attributable to the use of the equipment you are using.





5. The self-service Points, a before and an after in on-site assistance

Since 2014, Mataró Council has maintained some computers to carry out certain procedures at different municipal equipment with content presentation through specific software that allows the management of users' sessions (to guarantee data privacy) and offers specific menus to lead the citizens towards certain more common procedures. In January 2022, 4 computers of this type were available for the citizens.

In 2021, the council defined the bases of a new concept of technological material available for the citizens and drew up procurement documents for the supply of Self-Service Points, in "automatic cashier" format. It was considered that this team format, which many users already know from banking relationship, favoured the approach to citizens, instead of classic IT equipment. In the definition of this sub-project, the Self-Service Points were considered as the priority system of citizens assistance in the telematic relationship from the on-site channel.

The use of this Self-Service Points is not mandatory for citizens. From May 2022 onwards, through the staff assistance, it will be set up as equipment that speed up certain simplified procedures, but at the same time it represents an introduction for citizens to use the corporate applications (Electronic Headquarters, Citizen Folder, etc.) Those citizens who have basic technological and administrative knowledge can use the equipment completely autonomously or with the on-site assistance they need at any time.

The Council provides the technological and personal equipment to teach and help you, but its use is not mandatory

5.1. Geographic distribution

In the first phase of implementation, the new Self-Service points have been geographically distributed throughout the city, prioritizing facilities where there are already attention and assistance Offices for the citizens. These are civic centres with extended opening hours (from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Monday to Friday) and the new Mataró Connecta Space equipment.

In total, 8 units have been installed in the first phase of implementation, all in compliance with Order TMA/851/2021, of July 23rd, for which the technical document of basic accessibility conditions and of non-discrimination for access and use of urbanized public spaces is developed. Three units have been installed in the central office of Mataró Connecta Space in plaça de la Muralla and one unit has been installed in the other facilities.



5.2. Implementation and commissioning

The new Self-Service points have been launched within 2nd May 2022, when the new equipment Mataró Connecta Space was opened, and 12th May 2022, when the last cashier is activated. From these dates onwards, a team of support staff is made available for citizens.



The main technical characteristics are:

- 21" touchscreen
- Keyboard
- Identity card scanner
- USB input
- Webcam, speaker and microphone (to implement in the next phase remote assistance)
- Code reader (bar codes and QR codes, to facilitate the reading of payment receipt codes)



- Printer
- NFC reader (to implement in next phases possible identifications through this kind of devices).

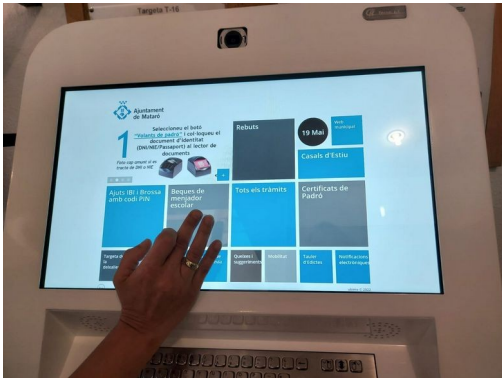
5.3. Use cases. But wasn't this a cashier?

No. Self-Service Points are not an automatic cashier, in the sense that they do not have specific processing applications or forms, as in the case of bank cashiers. When you interact with these devices, you are accessing to the screens of the council administrative processing applications, so, these same screens are the ones that citizens could view from their own electronic device, if they had one (laptop, tablet, mobile phone...).

Citizens get used to these displays and, therefore, take advantage of the acquired knowledge to, in the future, "dare" to use them more and more autonomously, either at Self-Service points or on their own devices.

Citizens decide whether they want to use the Self-Service Point autonomously or with the staff assistance

Is the citizenship who decide whether they want to use the Self-Service Point autonomously or with the staff assistance. If, for some reason, staff assistance cannot be provided, the interested person will have at their disposal the possibility of issuing the procedure at the ordinary service of the Citizens Service of the office.



Through the Self-Service Points you can issue any municipal procedure that does not require to attach documents, but the assistance staff advises those who need it and advise on how to do any municipal procedure through the Electronic Headquarters. Regardless on the advice about the use of the Electronic Headquarters and its associated services, the Self-Service Points have as main products:

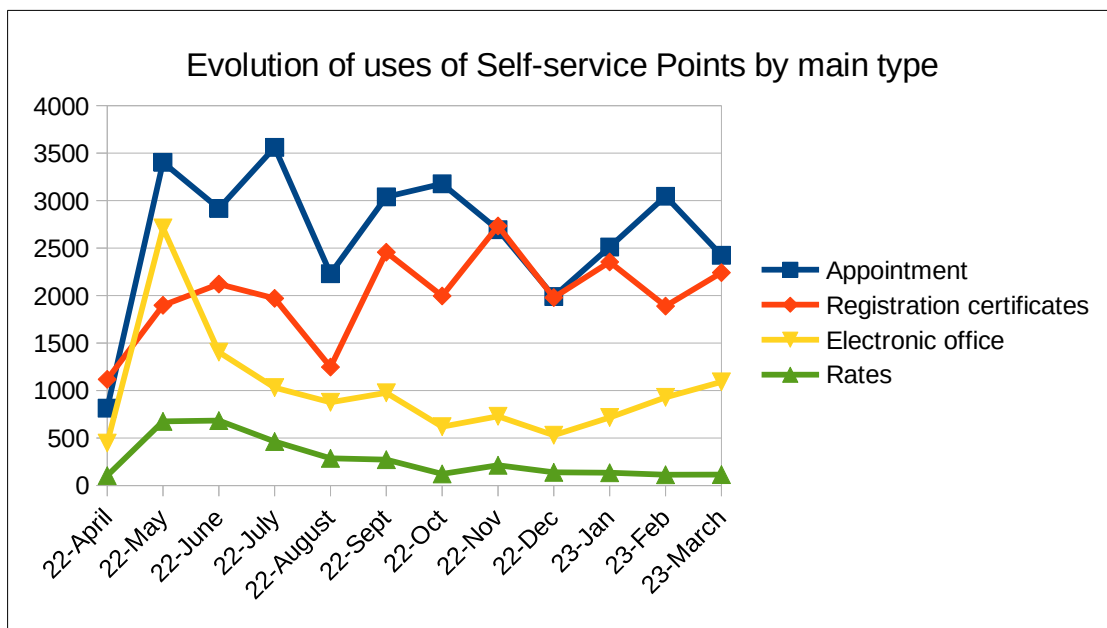
- Census certificates obtention and electronic Notifications
- Arranging prior appointment with municipal services
- Duplicate payment certificates obtention, payment letters and pay
- Courses and activities registration
- Application for permits to use the public road
- Submit claims and suggestions
- Obtain the "Deixalleria" card
- Obtain the Pets card
- Obtain the idCat Mòbil electronic identification
- Download communications and notifications from the General Directorate of Cadastre

5.4. Results

The implementation of the new on-site assistance system at Self-Service Points with the incorporation of new technological equipment and own staff from May 2022 onwards has meant multiplying for 3 the use of these devices compared to the average of the first quarter of the same year.

The arrangement of prior appointment for municipal services, which until May was mainly directed to the telephone channel, has experienced the most important increase, while issuing census certificates with these devices has reduced the “classic” on-site attention, thus leaving more appointments available for complex procedures that bring more added value.

The range of services offered by the Electronic Headquarters (municipal cards obtention, courses and activities inscription, forms obtention, queries submission, complaints and suggestions, web forms assistance, simplified procedures and notifications) had a significant increase in May, multiplying by 6 the average of the first four months of the year. This is due to the new service implementation and because public aid application procedures are concentrated between April and May.



The use of Self-Service points for notification management requires a separate analysis. Citizens who go to the municipal offices requesting help regarding the reception of a notification are attended by the staff assistance without prior appointment. It is offered to the interested person assistance to download the notification on their own mobile device, but if they request the notification in “paper”, they are accompanied to the Self-Service Point to download the electronic notification. In this way, it has practically disappeared, in our council, the concept of notification from a public employee for appearance of the interested person at the citizenship attention and assistance Offices.



6. And what if we involve citizens and we learn?

Another element that defines the Mataró Connecta Space Project is the incorporation of the citizens in the definition of policies, services and public products. Through collaboration and cooperation with citizenship in the widest possible sense (natural persons, groups or collectives not formally organized, entities, companies, professional associations...) we aim to improve services and public products by adapting them to the real needs and to the specific demand that can be generated.

Is for this reason that Mataró Connecta Space has spaces intended for encourage collaboration, cocreation, cooperation and contribution of the citizenship with the public administration.

They are also configured as spaces for reflexion, debate and knowledge exchange, but with specific goals and, whenever possible, measurable and introducing innovative techniques or methodologies.





Thank you so much!

<https://youtu.be/vtkogZS4Sj4> (Spanish version)

https://youtu.be/M_tOpNk6rDg (Catalan version)

