



## **Lab 5: Strengthening municipal responsiveness through the use of digital listening tools, platform governance and online reputation management.**

**26 February 2026**

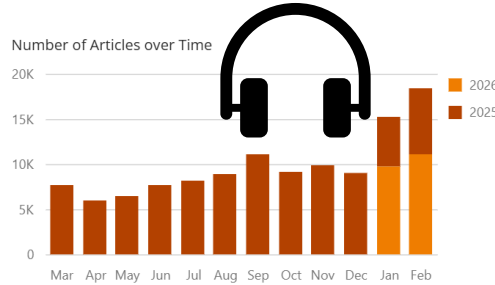
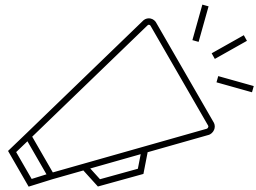


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## Evolution timeline



Conversations happen with or without you



- Publish
- Announce
- React
- Statements

- Monitor
- Engage
- Anticipate
- Conversations

- When last did an online issue escalate in your municipalities before you became aware internally?
- In many instances, by the time you get an alert, narratives are already formed.
- The conversation is about moving from reacting to being proactive.

## Where are we listening?

- Which platforms matter most in your respective municipality? Facebook, Local WhatsApp groups, X, or community radio pages? etc.
- Who monitors? Is it structured or ad hoc/informal? Whoever sees it first.
- What happens after you have monitored?



- How quickly would you know if something was being planned online?
- Digital listening is more than scrolling on social media. It requires systems and defined keyword tracking.
- Escalation protocol? From Monitoring to Responding. Who approves messaging?
- Responsiveness depends on 3 things:
  - Early detection
  - Clear internal reporting lines
  - Defined response timeframes

Mention detected

Keyword alert triggered

Internal verification

Risk Assessment

Low risk: monitor

Medium risk: dev holding position

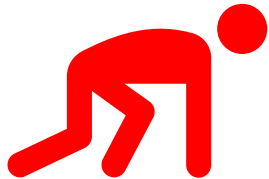
High risk: esc immediately & communicated

spreads faster than official information



## Reputational Risk Factors

- Fake notices
- Allegations
- False billing claims – medium impact



Engage or ignore?

What types of misinformation have you encountered in your municipality?



**Some issues to respond to which carry reputational risk - particularly when they involve:**

- Service delivery failures
- Influential community figures
- Political timing
- Rapid sharing across platforms
- Communication environment

Municipalities should have:

- A rapid internal verification system
- Pre-approved holding statements
- Clear decision-making authority during high-risk situations
- Clarity on who speaks on the issue at hand



## With governance

Digital platforms are not just communication channels but governance spaces

- Is there a social media policy?
- Comment moderation guidelines?
- Is posting authority clearly defined?
- What is your digital media strategy?

**NB** Governance ensures consistency and strengthens credibility

## Without governance

- Without governance frameworks:
- Responses become inconsistent
- Political neutrality becomes blurred
- Records are not properly kept
- Risk increases
- Reputation is impacted



## Recurring online issues should inform:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Proactive explainer content
- Campaign messaging
- Executive briefings

## Practical exercise

- Identify one recurring online issue.
- Propose:
  - Listening approach
  - Proactive content strategy
  - Governance considerations
  - Escalation protocol



- What is one practical change you can implement within the next 30 days to strengthen digital listening or platform governance in your municipality?

Perhaps it is:

- Establishing keyword monitoring
- Drafting moderation guidelines
- Identifying tool or system you can use to monitor
- Creating a weekly sentiment report
- Defining escalation thresholds - stop observing and start acting. Who must be informed? Monitoring without defined escalation thresholds is just watching problems grow.



# The end.



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