

# CatalanNews What the world can learn from Ukraine's wartime technology

Kyiv deputy mayor explains how tech can improve cities during UserCentriCities summit in Barcelona



Kyiv Digital City presented at User Centri Cities / Maxime Van Cleven

**MAXIME VAN CLEVEN | BARCELONA**

**FIRST PUBLISHED: NOVEMBER 15, 2022 05:59 PM**

**LATEST UPDATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2022 06:05 PM**

Petro Olenych, the deputy mayor of Kyiv, came to Barcelona on Tuesday to share at the 2022 UserCentriCities Summit how the Ukrainian capital has made **immense technological progress** during the war and what the rest of the world can learn from their citizen app.

“We want to share our **digital development in times of war** so other cities are better prepared if similar situations were to happen to them,” Kyiv’s deputy mayor told Catalan News after the summit on the opening day of the Smart City Expo World Congress in the Catalan capital.

The 2022 edition of **UserCentriCities** was dedicated to the technological development that the Ukrainian city has made over the last five years including during the war, introducing their progressive digital platforms 'Kyiv Digital' and 'Diia' to a European audience.

A delegation from Kyiv explained how the ongoing war with Russia forced the country to take their technological progression and communication to the next level. In combination with the digital transformation of different sectors that Kyiv has been working on for years, the city quickly became a benchmark as a modern smart city on a European level.

### *Emergency app*

“When the war started we did not have communication channels ready to handle this kind of situation,” Olenych admitted during his presentation. “We had to **create an app** in no time that sent out bomb alerts and helped with medical aid, traffic jams, housing and public utilities,” the deputy mayor explained.

Kyiv’s Chief Information Officer Oleg Polovynko joined the conversation by giving extra details about the **urgent digital changes** when the war first started. “We contacted companies that wanted to help install **wifi in bomb shelters** in just a few days, in order to maintain communication with citizens,” he explained.

Continuing on the topic, Polovynko added that “the scenario could not be tested before, but the application worked surprisingly well.” The app notifies people when dangerous events occur, leading to a “**trustworthy connection**” with citizens in times where fake news can cause chaos.

During the interview with Catalan News, an alarm went off on Olenych’s phone, notifying him that residential buildings were being bombarded in Kyiv at that moment. The app sends out **real-time** updates and provides tips so citizens know how to act in specific scenarios.

‘Kyiv Digital’ currently has two million daily users, of which 600,000 use the health care side of the app.

### *Sharing knowledge*

One of the main reasons the delegation came to Barcelona to share their information is so other cities can prepare themselves in case similar scenarios occur in the future. “If you start this process early on, you can save more lives in the future,” Polovynko said.

Kyiv’s digital transformation plan has been in the making for over five years and the city plans to complete it by 2030. “We want to develop our app so our kids can live in the best possible way in our cities in the future,” said Olenych.

During the summit, the deputy mayor presented the different sides that the app has to offer that allow digital progression in different sectors. He started off by showing Kyiv’s LoRaWan camera network coverage which “improves the fight against crime drastically, making the city a lot safer.”

The app also supports **e-democracy** by giving a digital passport and allowing citizens to participate in online polls, votes and petitions and getting them involved in participatory budgeting projects, increasing citizen involvement in political topics.

Some of these digital transformations became less urgent in wartime, but are still very useful for other European cities. Ultimately, Ukraine did find extra ways to help their citizens through 'Kyiv Digital'.

On an educational level, the city is able to keep **schooling** going in bomb shelters to a certain extent, using the wifi network they set up when the war first began, which eliminated the need for electricity in certain situations.

The social assistance and **healthcare** sides of the app quickly grew in importance as well, offering personalised social help and assistance with medicine, food and psychology to Kyiv's inhabitants.

Olenych finished up his presentation by saying that he is "very proud to share their progression and unique experience to the world, even if the circumstances are unfortunate."

UKRAINE | SMART CITIES EXPO WORLD CONGRESS | KYIV

<https://www.catalannews.com/tech-science/item/what-the-world-can-learn-from-ukraines-wartime-technology>

---