



NYC 311

MAKING NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL OPENLY AVAILABLE TO CITIZENS.

By The City of New York

Project URL: nyc.gov/apps/311/about.htm

Project Twitter: [@nyc311](https://twitter.com/nyc311)

Organisation URL: www1.nyc.gov

Organisation Twitter: [@@nycgov](https://twitter.com/nycgov)

- Data
- Geolocation
- Mobile

A review of public services in the UK conducted by the last Labour government found that half of all phone calls made to public sector agencies were either following up a previous inquiry (about which nothing had been heard) or simply went unanswered. Many of the calls that were answered were simply the start of a merry-go-round of transfers trying to find the right person, in the right department, who knew the answer. In one extreme case a woman trying to register the death of her husband had to make calls to 11 separate agencies.

New York's 311 service was inspired as a response to nightmares such as these. 311 has set a new gold standard for how city councils can make themselves available to citizens. Someone can visit the 311 website, text 311-692, call 311 when in New York, Skype NYC311, interact with the service over Twitter or download its iPhone and Android apps. New York City services are the most

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languages and the telephone service is set up to deal with 170.

The questions that people ask are themselves revealing. One of the most popular was how to become a guard on a school crossing. The answer: go to your precinct police station and get the form. Another simply asks whether New York has any special rules governing noise. The answer: rather a lot, depending dog, provide entertainment or run a construction site.

Those calls and questions then provide the city council with a detailed, daily picture of what most concerns people. All the data from 311 is released in a monthly report to the public.

Image 'First shots with Sony A7, in Midtown Manhattan' courtesy of Dan Nguyen

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