

Key elements from speech Alderman Eric Wiebes – AMS Infoday 25 April 2013

It's great to be here. This initiative is executed by my colleague Vice Mayor Carolien Gehrels, so why am I here? Well it's very simple: I'm a great supporter of this initiative. Applied technology and metropolitan solutions, I think it's time for that. Obviously this is what is happening in cities these days, it's where the economic growth comes from. This initiative fits Amsterdam like a glove.

And why is that? Firstly the University of Amsterdam has conducted research on this and they found that in almost any area, there are great differences in productivity anywhere in any field. They typically find that the lowest 10 percent in productivity and the highest differ by a factor of four. That also happens between cities and it happens within cities in a number of areas. It means that there is a lot to find. The search of today is to find the factor four in our city. In the social area, in traffic and logistics, in transport, in waste management, raw materials, where all we have to do is to find the factor four.

A second reason is that Amsterdam likes to be the living laboratory. It is what the people in Amsterdam like, they like to be experimented on, they like open data, they like the fact that Amsterdam has now been honoured with a prize in Europe for the best open data city. What do we do with this? For example, if you walk on the street, you can now find the nearest public toilet in the city thanks to open data. You might think, how can that be a factor four in productivity? Well, there are almost 10 people every year who drown by peeing in the canal when they're drunk. They now can find the public toilet. It's easily a factor four I would say.

We are the first city in the world that has an electric car sharing program and the people in Amsterdam, they love it. You see these cars everywhere in the streets, and this goes to show: people in Amsterdam like to be experimented on. We have a very advanced waste incinerator that is also used for materials recycling and energy production. This is again something that the people in Amsterdam really, really like. You've heard about district heating, we've got district cooling in all our offices on the Zuidas.

This is what happens in our city. We like to search for the factor four and the people in Amsterdam like to do that search with us and with you. Welcome here and we hope that we can inspire you to eventually have you inspire the people of Amsterdam.