Delivery Innovation Team

City of London

solutions4inclusion
Tools-and-Toolkits
Community-Maps
eCredit-Union Scale-Partners MegaNexus
Inclusive-Channels
Community-Insight
Shared-Fronline-Services
Dissemination-and-Reuse
Shared-Frontline-Processes
Inclusion Efficiency Customer-Insight
Local-Service-Provider
Enhance-Frontline-Services
Virtual-home-for-ex-Offenders Business-Case
eclinics Lives-and-Life-Chances Local-Government
Protect-Vulnerable Local-Service-Transformation
Change-Management-Skills ICT-as-an-Enabler
Innovation-Process
Digital-Switchover
Next-Generation-Access Network-of-Service-Providers
esd-Toolkit Community-ICT-Champion
Cost-Avoidance Social-Impact
Benefits-Realisation Social-Landlords Sustainability Civil-Society Deprivation
Mobile-Phone-ESOL eMentoring Capacity-to-Deliver
Social-Return-on-Investment Slivers-of-Time
Most-Disadvantaged
80-20-Focus
Robust-Alternatives
Inclusive-eGovernment
eTimebanking Evaluation

Programme Observations and Recommendations

May 2006 – March 2011

About This Document

This pulls together in one document the *Programme Observations and Recommendations* within the full *Final Report* on the work of the Delivery Innovation Team (DIT), which was set up in 2006 and ran a programme for five years to investigate how information and communications technologies (ICT) could be used to improve the lives and life chances of disadvantaged groups of people and the places in which they live. The Team changed its name from its original label "Digital Inclusion Team" to avoid confusion with initiatives focussed on getting people online. The team was hosted by the City of London.

The Team

DIT was Louise Bazalgette, Johanna Davies, Ewen McKinnon, Caroline Pyke, Jane Robbins, Beatrice Rogers, and Paul Waller (Director).

Acknowledgements

For Further Information

This document is designed to be self-contained, but the full *Programme Summary and Final Report* sets out the detail of all the work of the Delivery Innovation Team. The report can be found at www.diteam.org.uk and the contents are as follows.

Programme Overview

Delivering Cutting Edge Research

Enabling Sustainable Local Service Innovation

Developing Local Tools, Toolkits and Datasets

Communicating and Capacity Building

Driving and Supporting National Policy

Local, Inclusive eGovernment Across Europe

Annex A – Programme Plan (Final 2 Years)

Annex B – Summary of Local Projects

Annex C – List of Assets Produced

Annex D – Partners and Suppliers

There is also a further document that is just the *Programme Overview*, or summary, section of the full *Final Report*. This is available from the web site as above.

All of the team's assets, produced during the programme, are available online at: www.esd.org.uk/overview. For specific enquiries on these assets or suppliers experienced in using them, please email esd-toolkit@local.gov.uk.

Programme Observations and Recommendations

Overview: Key learning points

The programme showed that there is a quite widespread appetite for innovation in front-line services, and given the opportunity, commitment to identify and implement innovative change. However, there are high barriers to this happening frequently in the form of lack of time and space (organisational and managerial capacity) to do innovation processes and manage change in often hard-pressed operational teams. There is also a widespread lack of knowledge and skills in delivering change projects in local public services. Without the active and persistent intervention of the DIT team to remove these barriers in its partner organisations, few of the projects it initiated would have made much progress. The role of external facilitators acting as innovation catalysts, who do not have a local stake in services, and can therefore independently help local teams to effect and manage change, is often a key ingredient to success.

The initiation and delivery of such projects is further hindered by an environment that largely lacks organisational-level management systems for investment appraisal, capital allocation and portfolio management. Within this context, there is little knowledge and capability regarding the value, purpose, structure, development and use of a public sector investment business case, such as that recommended by HM Treasury to support public expenditure decisions. This absence is a particular barrier to articulating and realising the value of a change to front-line services where many stakeholders share costs and benefits — for example, the distinction between the *economic case* (overall public value) and the *financial case* (affordability) is rarely understood. In parallel with the lack of project management capability mentioned above, programme management capability is also low.

The services created by the DIT work were nearly all delivered by a network of organisations from different sectors, underpinned by a viable financial model. These evolved naturally from the nature of the DIT innovation process that deliberately brings together a diverse range of participants. Many public bodies do however find the concept of creating and managing such cross-

sector network services challenging, even though research[1] shows that they are a naturally occurring and common form for sustainable services to challenging groups.

The initial presumption from *Inclusion through Innovation* was that there was little awareness in front-line public services of the potential of ICT to help their service users, and little awareness in the ICT community of the real operational and social needs that ICT might support. This proved true. The DIT innovation process explicitly fused these two worlds, often resulting in an explosion of creativity. But at present, it does require an external catalytic intervention to bring this about. In only a few cases of DIT's innovation programme were the internal IT organisations in the partner public bodies an active participant in the work (more typically, their scope does not extend to front-line service applications).

The engagement of people in front-line delivery was achieved through their desire to find new and better ways of addressing operational problems and service users' problems, rather than an interest in ICT directly. Great pains were taken to avoid service innovation being about IT solutions in search of applications, or being "IT projects". The IT component in the final projects was seldom complex: the main challenges were about embedding new operational service processes. They succeeded because the benefit was seen and owned by the operational teams, not technologists. Those conditions take time to create; the imposition, cold, of the latest technology fad on such organisations will not be successful.

In the light if its experience, the DIT concludes that policies and initiatives to stimulate innovation and change in front-line public services need to address the motivation and capacity for creativity, and skills and capability to implement change. In contrast, many seem to devote resources to promulgating ideas about what could be done ("knowledge sharing") that in essence constitutes broadcasting to an audience potentially frustrated by its inability to actually do anything (unless there is already a recognised problem

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[1] June 2009, MC-eGov Study on Multi-channel Delivery Strategies and Sustainable Business Models for Public Services addressing Socially Disadvantaged Groups, Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd

and commitment and resources to solve it). There is thus a question about the effectiveness of traditional approaches to dissemination, diffusion, replication and the sharing of services. While case studies, best practice briefings, conferences, events and reports can raise some interest it is debatable whether these really lead to change. However, a service innovation process, supported by an external change agent, can create the time and space among key local stakeholders to effectively consider alternative approaches. This can, as a consequence, build a local groundswell of support for the development of a new process, or the adoption of an alternative one that has been tried and tested elsewhere.

Future Areas of Research

There is always more research that could be done. But as we end the DIT programme, areas of research that we conclude could prove fruitful around delivery innovation are:

- Research on additional vulnerable and 'high cost' groups and segments that are target audiences for public and charitable services. DIT investigated six segments and found this insight critical to stimulating and driving change. Profiling, ethnographic research and customer journey mapping of other groups should support more innovation and transformation around services delivered to these groups.

- Additional geographic research particularly around some of our coastal towns, which were highlighted in number of studies to be particularly disadvantaged.

- There is a lot of useful modelled data at a local level on technology use. However, the granularity of actual data obtained through surveys on internet use is such that regional level estimates are only really possible, and even these have high error margins. There is real demand and appetite for data at a much lower level, and there is a need to explore non-survey based approaches to getting more accurate local data, to supplement, and potentially also improve the

modelled data. Such data would be a driver for improved and more inclusive channel strategies at a local level.

- Despite a number of useful studies on the national business case for digital inclusion, that have moved thinking forward, the clear national level economic case remains elusive. While benefits can, and have, been identified to individuals, and to government, a coherent case which expresses the net-gain to the economy across all economic actors for a clearly defined set of interventions designed to get the whole nation online, has not been expressed. Studies which focus on one economic actor have often neglected to consider the impact in other areas of the economy, or detail the exact nature and cost of the intervention to deliver the benefits. This is not to say that there is no national economic case, but to highlight it has been tried numerous times and is very difficult. It is also not clear that it is necessary when most organisations can grasp the social justice, equality and fairness arguments for intervention. What is more important for each organisation is what is in it for them to invest time and resources to tackle the issue. In our experience the local business case for action, particularly around public service delivery, is much more important to stimulating change.

- Innovation in public service delivery, particularly local government, has not been well researched. Clearly some excellent project and schemes emerge, but these are often not sustained or diffused to other areas. Over the course of its programme, DIT built up a knowledge base and toolkit around innovation as a structured business process. However, more research is recommended on:

  o How innovation currently happens, particularly in councils and front-line services providers

  o The key barriers and enablers to innovation

  o How public service organisations generate and process new ideas

  o How they can organise themselves to support innovation

o Effective approaches to diffusion, sharing and scaling of innovative approaches to public services and processes.

Conclusions from Local Projects

DIT had the pleasure to work with some excellent, motivated and innovative partners across public, private, community and academic sectors on its local innovation workstream. The team initially set out to establish projects against each one of the national social exclusion priorities. We covered all of these apart from Adults with Learning Disabilities (ALD). However, we added more themes and groups than we originally intended such as BME communities, and worklessness, and ultimately, despite discussions, did not have the time, resource, and partner local authority to take an ALD process forward.

Our experience in establishing these innovation process and local projects leads us to conclude:

- Some local authorities with which we investigated innovation processes simply could not get past the issue of having no additional money to put into solutions. 'There's no point in doing this process because we won't have any extra funding to implement what comes out it' was an insurmountable barrier for some. There was often a complete unwillingness to think that what comes out of the process could end up being a better way of spending existing resources and that the decision to proceed with a new idea could be coupled with the decision to stop doing something else. All those organisations we did work with were very creative in getting projects that emerged from their innovation process off the ground.

- Structured innovation processes can work very well. 100% of the processes we ran resulted in new services or processes being implemented.

- A structured innovation process can be a very positive experience for staff and partners who take part. The feedback across all the innovation events DIT ran was overwhelmingly positive. There are

clearly developmental and cross-sector networking benefits for participants on top of the core objectives of problem solving.

- There needs to be a senior stakeholder that 'owns' the process, agrees the priority issue or need and then makes a clear decision on the outcomes of the process. This gives the process legitimacy, helps to free up time for people to attend the innovation event, and ensures that all the outputs of the process have an end destination for consideration and potential action. The senior stakeholder could be a service director or senior service manager for example.

- DIT commissioned innovation experts to help to deliver the processes. However, this was in part to help to develop and refine the process itself. The innovation process can be run in-house as well, in a more light touch way. To facilitate this, DIT and its partners have developed an innovation toolkit (see Tools section).

- While processes can clearly be light touch and don't require major external consultancy contracts, there are clear advantages of bringing in an external person to help to facilitate the innovation event. Having an external 'innovation broker', an independent person with facilitation skills who doesn't have a stake in the problem or the potential solution, can clearly help to stimulate change.

Further lessons we therefore learned from a local authority and public service delivery perspective were:

- Change management is a difficult but a crucial area for capacity and capability building in local government. Robust processes to handle new ideas effectively, and to consider alternatives ways of doing things in budget and planning cycles are rare.

- People need the time and space to try new ways of working. More often than not though, trying new approaches has to 'fit in' around existing workloads. This drastically reduces the chance of success.

- Change must be managed like a project. It is essential to free up some effective project management support, to help to structure, plan and drive through the testing of new approaches.

Tools Lessons Learned

In developing a significant number of tools and products to build capacity and capability in local service delivery organisations around the innovation and the use of technology, we have learned some key lessons, and make some recommendations:

- There is a real appetite for some tools among local organisations, particularly maps (e.g. community maps achieved 15-20,000 map requests per month in Autumn 2009) and example projects (average of 13,000 visits per month to solutions4inclusion). Some of these resources took off with little marketing and promotion.

- We consistently found duplication and parochialism among organisations wishing to develop their own similar tools and approaches with their own brands on them. Our learning from this experience encouraged us to adopt the following approaches:

    o Share web platforms and channels where possible: we worked with the existing esd-toolkit and CLG GIS platforms. This reduced development and hosting costs, and allowed the tools to be quickly exposed to existing audiences alongside complementary tools and content

    o Adopt a white label approach and brand neutrality to applications, to extend the reach to other audiences through mature channels and allow multiple instances of the same tool. We never once used a "Delivery Innovation Team" logo on external-facing products

    o Make use of linked data approaches to maximise redistribution and sharing of data, projects and case studies

- Develop appropriately modified Creative Commons forms of licences, which maximise reuse and support future development and upgrade of the tools by others.

- Ultimately it is critical to consider who the end audience for the toolkit really is; DIT found that no matter how user friendly the tools and services are, if the subject matter is complex they will not get used by those who can benefit from the results. For more complex tools DIT found it best to:
  - Promote and support use by intermediaries such as local government consultants, experts in regional bodies etc. who can use the tools on behalf of those in local organisations
  - Maximise usability, so that interested end users can also use the tools if relevant.

- There can be a significant gap between marketing, promotion, and training and actual adoption of more complex tools. In our experience some tools can take-off with little marketing, but for the more complex tools and projects:
  - Marketing, promotion and training far from guarantees actual use of tools, or adoption of replicable projects. When people get back to their place of work, they can struggle to put the tools to practical use
  - An alternative approach is knowledge transfer, in-situ. In other words, a consultant or intermediary uses the tool for a small, but real assignment in the local organisation, and at the same time transfers the knowledge and experience in using the tool. This approach can also be used to help to set up shared services or replicate projects in other areas
  - The Local Improvement Advisor (LIA) model is an example of how to deliver this, and DIT helped to establish and support a small network of Digital Inclusion Advisors (DIAs) who used DIT's tools on behalf of local authorities (see later)

- o Our recommendation is that the way in which knowledge and experience is disseminated among local authorities is rethought — to reduce the focus on conferences and promotion of good practice, and increase effort on providing initial support to the sector to adopt replicable projects, and use tools in-situ.

- Overall DIT understood it was critical to get the IPR ownership and licensing of tools clear and unambiguous. This is critical for future maintenance, development and use of the tools.

- It is DIT's view that esd-toolkit incorporates many of the best practice principles of delivering tools to local authorities and promoting knowledge transfer through regional user forums and its supplier community. It is a solid foundation in the Local Government Improvement and Development Group for the local government sector to support itself.

Communications Lessons Learned

In the team's work on communicating with local service providers and local government, we highlight the following key learning points and conclusions.

- The team's key communication requirement was to share good practice, tools and research. Our programme therefore back-loaded communications until we had some products of substance to share. However, there were points when there was significant pressure to step up communications early on in the programme, but on the whole the team felt it was right to deliver first and communicate second.

- We avoided creating a new brand, which would have meant competing for share of voice and share of mind with other organisations rather than adding to and complementing the existing landscape of organisations. DIT therefore adopted a strategic approach of white labelling all work, while crediting the City of London and Communities and Local Government, and using existing channels and logos for distribution which best suited the audience we were trying to reach.

- We found that many events we attended attracted 'digital inclusion' professionals. These were great for networking, but not so great for communicating to the key audiences we wanted to reach such as chief executives, service directors, councillors, and front-line professionals. For these we felt that 'going to them', attending their annual events, rather than creating a regular digital inclusion event for local authorities was the best strategy. We therefore aligned communications activities with major events, e.g. annual SOLACE and LGA conferences. We utilised the Beacon Local Authorities explicitly because they had strong representation across all the key audiences we wanted to reach, and therefore could lead peer-peer communication activities.

- DIT found 'Market Place' type events were very effective in knowledge transfer and dissemination across local government.

- The small, focussed, thematic workshops, attended by cross-sector participants, worked particularly well in producing actions and material with which to engage others (e.g. through ADI workshops).

- Short and sharp, café conversation style, table sessions (as used by the team in esd-toolkit road shows) are very effective approaches to dissemination and communication with local authority officers.

- We found project case study videos were a particularly effective communications mechanism, and a worthwhile investment to share good practice.

- Overall, we found that the DIA scheme that got a consultant to use tools and toolkits 'in situ' in a local authority, on a real assignment, was a very effective approach to knowledge transfer and training in tool use.

Policy Lessons Learned

Throughout the programme, the team were aware that at its heart there were two discrete policy areas: the first to get people online (traditional digital inclusion), and the second to use technology to tackle social exclusion

particularly through improved public services (delivery innovation). DIT was aware that the two areas were often unhelpfully muddled and conflated.

- The benefits of traditional digital inclusion initiatives to get people online were frequently 'extended' to public services and taken for granted: "If you help people online they will use online services and save your organisation money". In fact there is seldom any evidence of cause and effect linkage to indicate that these benefits will actually arise, particularly to the public service organisation instituting the action. DIT's experience is that these benefits cannot be taken for granted and there has to be clear explicit action in the digital inclusion initiative to successfully realise the public service benefits.

- The case for action by public service providers often gets muddled:

  o The general case for digital inclusion for public service bodies is often cited in economic terms, but robust figures are elusive, and the logic vague. The stronger and clearer case for digital inclusion appears to be political, and around fairness, social inclusion, equality and social justice.

  o Most public service bodies, particularly local authorities, have absolutely no statutory duty to help people to get online — those that do get involved in large scale initiatives tend to be a small minority with enthusiastic local champions. So there is a real need, particularly in a tough fiscal climate, to articulate a clear case, political or economic, for intervention.

  o The case for delivery innovation is more clear cut for public bodies. It is about using technology (including the internet) to improve services, focusing on the most costly service users where the greatest opportunity for cost savings lie, through community involvement, creative commissioning with civil society, partnership working, shared services and shared processes. This is core performance improvement activity for public service providers. Traditional digital inclusion aims and

objectives can often be realised as a by-product of delivery innovation.

- There are also times when the two policy areas can be divergent and incoherent. One specific example is public service channel closure to force service provision, and hence users, to go online when the service users are vulnerable and excluded, with the likely outcome of imposing a further burden on them. The delivery innovation approach does not prescribe "online" but seeks to explore all digitally-enabled changes to find the most effective and efficient mix.

- There is significant work on delivery innovation and service transformation on major centrally delivered services. There is much less on service transformation at a local level. Arguably the greatest opportunity for impact however is around local services.

- Overall the two areas of policy are not mutually exclusive, and can be reinforcing. Getting people online can help them, but doesn't guarantee that they will use new services enabled by technology. Conversely, using technology innovatively in front-line services can break down fear of technology and offer the potential for progression to learn more about technology.

In the first couple of years of our programme the team worked across both areas of policy, but in the last two years our primary focus was delivery innovation. However our work has led us to draw some conclusions in both areas:

- At its core, digital inclusion (in terms of getting people online) is actually relevant to many policy areas across central and local government. In particular:

  o There are policies which have the potential to improve the take-up of the internet as an additional positive intended consequence

  o There are policies which stand to be more effectively or efficiently implemented with the use of technology

- o There are policies which might widen digital exclusion if that risk is not identified and not addressed.

- So the ideal digital inclusion policy approach is to ensure departments and public service bodies actively consider these opportunities and risks as a matter of course when developing new policies and interventions. There have been various approaches to governing the digital inclusion agenda, but the real test is in how well it can embed this active consideration of digital inclusion in the policy process leading to real change. This is not easy, and from DIT's experience joining-up policies can often be viewed by policy leads with suspicion, and too easily dismissed as too difficult, 'scope creep', adding complexity or increasing risk. There is little incentive to treat it as an opportunity rather than a threat.

DIT found it much more difficult to engage in the public service innovation policy area and find any traction around local government innovation policy in which to embed our delivery innovation tools and experience. It is the team's view that:

- There needs to be a fundamental study of how innovation and change currently happens in local public services. This study needs to determine:

  - o How the most innovative local authorities create a conducive climate and culture around the generation and implementation of new ideas, and effective management of change

  - o How the sector needs to support itself to build capacity and capability around innovation and change management

  - o How product and service diffusion happens most effectively in the public sector to promote replication, sharing and collaboration

- If transparency, localism and revitalised local democracy are catalysts for change around local public services, it is the effective management

of innovation and change that will provide the engine for local service transformation, and generate new delivery models

- Building the capacity and capability in local government around managing innovation and change, including managing projects that deliver these, would appear a significant priority in times of budget cuts and pressures.