



Digital Strategy - Creating Our Digital Future

The Digital Strategy is New Zealand's plan to create a digital future for all New Zealanders by maximising the opportunities that Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) provide. New Zealand will be a world leader in using information and technology to realise its economic, social, environmental, and cultural goals, to the benefit of its people.

The Digital Strategy is made up of three key enablers:

Content - Information made available through digital networks. "Information" encompasses heritage collections, Māori language resources, research databases, and traditional and contemporary cultural products.

Confidence - Developing the necessary skills at all ages, in all parts of society, to use and participate in ICT effectively. Confidence encompasses addressing the challenges that may slow ICT uptake such as spam and electronic crime.

Connection - Affordable access to viable ICT infrastructure such as telecommunications networks, computers, mobile phones and other devices. Utilising ICT to create virtual environments in which communities can connect, especially communities faced with geographic challenges.

Content provides the reason, **confidence** provides the skills and trust, and being **connected** provides the means.

Community Partnership Fund - Unlocking the Potential of Communities

ICT can be used to bring communities closer together, to build the capacity of individuals and groups, extend existing services to isolated communities, or to those excluded from participating fully, and increase participation in the democratic process.

Through the Community Partnership Fund, the government has provided \$17.4 million seed funding to partly fund 119 community driven initiatives that will improve people's capability and skills to use ICT, develop digital content and connect communities.

Partnerships between community, local government, businesses, and government have brought further contributions of over \$30 million to complete the projects.

The Community Partnership Fund supports projects that focus on:

- building ICT skills and capability in regions and communities;
- mapping communities' ICT assets and identifying priority gaps;
- strengthening community projects through the use of ICT;
- connecting communities of interest online;
- addressing issues of confidence, such as safety and security, in using ICT; and
- smart ways to digitise and link content and use technology applications in our communities around New Zealand.

Horizons Regional Council – The Green RIG

Environmental Learning Hits The Road

Horizons Regional Council (HRC) has created an exciting, new resource that will help to educate rural landowners and youth on agricultural matters, The Green RIG.



Charged with the task of managing the natural and physical resources of the Manawatu-Wanganui region, Horizons has made raising community awareness of the region's critical environmental issues and improving the use of sustainable agricultural practices a high priority.

To help meet these goals, HRC created a series of strong partnerships with Inspired Networking Ltd/Inspired Web Solutions Ltd, the Department of Conservation and the Wanganui School of Design, to create a free, mobile learning device called the Green RIG.

The Green RIG is a state-of-the-art truck, packed with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools that provide access to Internet-based data about agricultural education and resources.

"All of our visitors are blown away by the ICT variety and the instant accessibility it gives to relevant information" said Helen Brown, an environmental educator with the Green RIG.

Many of the residents of the Manawatu-Wanganui region face significant barriers to accessing high-quality, reliable ICT, such as cost, lack of exposure to ICT, insufficient broadband coverage, and the perception that ICT has little to offer to rural audiences. The Green RIG can help to overcome many of these issues. The self-contained, mobile nature of the Green RIG means that it can take relevant, up-to-date content straight to people at rural field days, workshops, festivals, schools, and townships.

Access to timely and accurate agricultural information, for example satellite imagery of global air quality, will change the way rural communities function and will help to connect remote communities to the bigger regional, national and global picture.

"The use of ICT has been a great learning opportunity for the Green RIG team. We have grown in our understanding of ICT, as well as in our ability to support and adapt our systems to work in with other information providers," said Helen.

"For example we have certain ICT systems that we use, but those systems have to be able to adjust and work with other types of technology, such as satellite imagery, land mapping, and all sorts of exciting geographic information systems (GIS). Our ability to adapt helps us deliver a better product and we can offer a wider variety of learning opportunities and services onboard the truck."

The Horizons 'travelling toolbox' embraces a 'learning through doing' approach. The truck features a walkthrough design and many hands-on exhibits and resources. Information is presented through colourful graphics and animated content. Some of the topics of focus include bio-diversity, water (quality and quantity) and sustainable land use.

The aim of the educational experience is to create an inter-generational appeal that communicates and facilitates connectivity in relation to the environment. The goal is that visitors leave the Green RIG with a greater understanding of the links between their actions and their environment and have gained a better picture of the connections between economic needs, community aspirations, and the environment.

Over the past two years, the Green RIG has been visiting rural communities throughout the Manawatu-Wanganui region. The goal is to educate 20,000 people each year through the Green RIG. Visitor satisfaction and experience evaluations are conducted on a regular basis to ensure successful connection with targeted communities. The project has been so successful that the council has committed to continuing its support for at least the next ten years.

