

Digital Strategy 2.0

Feedback from CORE Education Ltd

To whom it may concern

Please find below a submission from CORE Education Ltd on the draft Digital Strategy 2.0. Thank you for your consideration.

CONNECTION

What do you think of the new connection goal – is it ambitious enough?

What other key priorities in this focus area (if any) would you like to see considered?

How well do the identified challenges and actions contribute to achieving the priorities?

What other specific challenges and actions (if any) do you think should be considered?

By whom and by when?

CORE Responses:

The new goal is typically PC speak – it can read as ambitious to the optimistic, or “safe” to the conservatively minded. There’s certainly the scope in this statement to believe that it will meet our future needs, but it lacks courage as a statement to really say what it means. Speed is what will be the transformative element for NZ so connection on its own isn’t enough.

The key here is to determine that there is a vision of fast, affordable broadband across the country, and that this will be achieved through:

- (a) a national fibre backbone that connects to regional UFN and MUSH networks that are ‘open access’ to allow multiple service providers to deliver services to the home/business/school
- (b) a network that is built on an aggregation model of service delivery
- (c) has an “end-to-end” strategy that includes connections to the home at one end and includes a significantly upgraded international link at the other.
- (d) that issues of equity of access are addressed and that in public institutions such as schools, connectivity and speed are seen as essential environments for common benefit. That schools as educational and research organisations have access to a national education network through KAREN. (The education part of Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network seems to be forgotten.)

We strongly agree with the long term vision of fibre to the home, and endorse the statements at the bottom of page 17 in respect to the above. However, stronger assistance/inducements are required to create the collaboration required to develop urban fibre loops, rural broadband infrastructure etc.

We note the importance of the international link – the network will only be as good as it’s weakest link. If NZ is to be successful economically in the coming knowledge economy then we need that international link to provide as broad a pipe of connection to the rest of the world as possible. We want NZers to be able to contribute and participate in the global knowledge economy while staying in NZ, not by having to go offshore to do so.

Connections to schools MUST be paid for from the government purse, as a matter of course (as with electricity, water etc.), and we should consider broadband connectivity as the fifth utility!! This is an investment in the future of NZ, by



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technology | innovation
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providing our students with an opportunity to become familiar with working in a highly connected environment and with tools that operate over these networks. KAREN'S main role must be seen as enabling research AND EDUCATION (not just the research!!!)

What does baseline Budget mean? That there is only current funding to go into this area? Long term budgeting is required.

CONFIDENCE

What do you think of the new confidence goal – is it ambitious enough?

What other key priorities in this focus area (if any) would you like to see considered?

How well do the identified challenges and actions contribute to achieving the priorities?

What other specific challenges and actions (if any) do you think should be considered?

By whom and by when?

CORE Responses:

The new goal is gutsy – but will need considerable teasing out to be clearly understood in the wider community.

We are especially interested in the educationally focused actions listed on pages 21 and 22. To achieve this in the school sector we are going to need to maintain a significant investment in the capability building of the teaching workforce – as well as ensuring that access to the tools, resources and networks are in place and not an impediment.

Libraries and librarians across the country are another community resource for confidence building. But, just as within schools there is still large demand for connectivity and upskilling, the same is true of the country's libraries. This is another area where, with high speed connectivity, schools can serve local communities. In many communities, the school is a focal point for community activity and they have the capacity to draw the community in – building confidence but also aggregating demand for connectivity in homes.

Good luck with the “Reforming Tertiary Education” Action priority. We need a similar one for secondary schooling! The problem is that as long as everything we do in both domains is judged on the successes of short-term (ie one year) cycles we'll never really engage the key stakeholders in acknowledging the need to change. There has to be a real willingness for tertiary organisations to collaborate as the country is too small for each to define totally different expensive solutions to issues, and for success criteria to be based on longer term effects.

The digital technologies framework (DTF) is an excellent idea in principle, and should be resourced and encouraged. HOWEVER, it has fallen short in terms of establishing a unique set of unit/achievement standards and so is doomed to die in the same fashion as did the previous Technology Curriculum, which attempted to integrate existing areas of the curriculum. Priority MUST therefore be given to creating a unique set of achievement or unit (or both) standards that can be a focus of these courses.

We consider the action point on curriculum to be staggeringly narrow in its focus and in its adoption of the language of “delivery”. Surely infusing skills and capabilities with IT experiences needs to be integrated throughout early childhood and compulsory schooling curriculum, and the language around that should reflect the social constructivist nature of the new curriculum and the technologies of Web 2.0 and 3.0..

It was great to see a continued emphasis on the participation of ECE in this area. This needs to be drawn to the attention of the MoE, who seem intent on scaling the involvement of ECE down rather than beefing it up.

The peoples network is a great vision. But there must be adequate training and upskilling of librarians and library staff for it to succeed.

Greater support is needed to assist with education and the cultural shifts necessary across all sectors.

Identity Management and Authorisation issues are national (and international) issues which keep appearing in organizations. Universities and the Mush Loop initiatives are grappling with these, but we desperately need some common solutions so that progress can be made and security protected.

ON CONTENT

What do you think of the new content goal – is it ambitious enough?

What other key priorities in this focus area (if any) would you like to see considered?

How well do the identified challenges and actions contribute to achieving the priorities?

What other specific challenges and actions (if any) do you think should be considered?

By whom and by when?

CORE Responses:

The new goal is fine. It aligns well with the National Digital Content Strategy, at least in its essence.

Our experience is that many of the organisations and institutions referred to in this section still regard content in very traditional terms, and see the online environment as simply another place to 'store and distribute' it. The real power of digital technologies to benefit what we do is only now emerging – thus it is good to see reference to Right Hemisphere (and HITLab??) in here. But we need to keep pedalling harder in this area and to emphasise at all times the role of new technologies for communication, contribution and social participation – not just one way content delivery, advertising and the like..

For example, the document claims that content delivery is the major driver of the uptake of advanced networks. On the contrary, we believe that while content will always be a significant aspect of the online environment, the main thing that is driving uptake nowadays is actually collaboration through the use of social networking applications, and communication tools such as video conferencing and grid computing etc. We need to keep this in balance when considering the drivers and the things we should invest in to engage people in these networks.

Digital rights management must be emphasised here more than it is, including a concerted effort to recognise and apply the principles of creative commons licensing as a part of this.

COLLABORATION

How important do you think collaboration across sectors is to achieving our digital potential?

Apart from the ones already identified, what other collaboration partners or sectors (if any)

are vital to achieving our digital potential?

What unique contribution do you see for Māori, for communities, for business groups, for local

government, for researchers or for other contributors you identify as having a key role?

What would you like to see the overarching sector forum focus its work programme on?

CORE Responses:

The document needs to more clearly define collaboration in two different dimensions:

(a) collaboration across the sectors (the connecting of people to make the network happen), meaning business, national government, local government, education, community etc, as described in the introduction, where previously these were regarded separately. This level of collaboration is VITAL for the successful implementation of this strategy. Evidence of this can be seen in some of the regional areas where urban fibre networks are being established. A good example is CHCH with its Council-owned open access network and a range of business providers and public institutions working collaboratively to provide services across it. Another good example would be the Wellington Loop initiative with the collaboration of WCC, City Link and local secondary schools at this point in time. There needs to be greater inducements to assist such collaboration across the country.

(b) collaboration as a key driver of uptake (the actual connecting of people across the network once made). Key drivers here are the provisioning of social networking applications (and addressing the issues of access, safety and security that these raise), and the provision of services such as video conferencing and desktop conferencing. This is the 'collaboration' which will drive innovation and is critical to New Zealand's future.

ON ACHIEVING OUR DIGITAL POTENTIAL

Using digital technology, what contribution will you make to improving our productivity (achieving a creative, knowledge-based, high-income economy)?

Using digital technology, what contribution will you make to enriching and valuing New Zealand communities and cultures, and promoting our unique national identity?

Using digital technology, what contribution will you make to achieving sustainable growth as a nation?

What contribution do you think others need to make to achieve our digital potential?

CORE Responses:

CORE Education is an educational research and development organisation, specialising in the area of capability development. With this network in place we plan to provide many of our existing services across it, expanding our reach and ability to service the many schools, ECE centres and tertiary institutions we deal with. We also intend to use it to connect with the various international jurisdictions that we work in. For our company this network would help realise enormous efficiencies in the use of our scarce resource (staffing) and enable us to engage with a wider audience to help build the sorts of capabilities referred to in this document.

To do this the following MUST happen:

- the connection must include linking to every educational institution, and ultimately, every home
- it must be affordable to connect and to take part
- it must allow for open access to the network(s) as a service provider

OTHER COMMENTS

Do you have any further suggestions or comments?

CORE Responses:

It is important to realise and acknowledge that breakthroughs in research and innovation happen in many places other than just in the tertiary (University) sector. Terminology around KAREN does not currently recognise the place of Educators/Teachers/Students trainers, developers, researchers and so on, in organisations other than universities. In practice some of these boundaries are now blurred and different learning cultures are emerging. The Maori concept of AKO or reciprocal learning is one we can look to as connectivity enables things to happen despite age or stage. The Digital Strategy is a document for the whole of society, and so the language of the Strategy should acknowledge this and expand its scope to include the wider implications for, and users of, these emerging technologies in our future society.