



Submission Form

Respondent Information

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Please attach this form to your submission.

Questions:

To assist you in shaping your views, we are particularly interested in the following questions.

On 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?

On confidence

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On 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?

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?

Other comments

Do you have any further suggestions or comments?

Post to Digital Strategy 2.0 Submission
 Digital Development Group
 Ministry of Economic Development
 P O Box 1473
 Wellington

Email to submission@digitalstrategy.govt.nz

Fax to 04 499 0969

Submissions close on 12 May 2008 at 5:00pm.

Confidentiality and the Official Information Act

Respondent should note that written submissions or comments provided to the Ministry of Economic Development on the Draft Digital Strategy 2.0 will be subject to the Official Information Act (OIA) 1982. The OIA requires information to be made available unless there is good reason, pursuant to the Act, to withhold the information and that good reason outweighs the public interest in making the information available.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please clearly identify the material and explain to us why you believe the information should be withheld under the provisions of the OIA.



This is a staff submission and not a Council submission.

As the Waikato communities have evolved, increasing amounts of Council business is being conducted using information and technology. This change has enabled the Council to continually improve its level of overall service and to extend the number and types of services.

Environment Waikato is very supportive of the Digital Strategy and the vision and goals of the Strategy.

On connection

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

Agree that broadband must have widespread availability and be affordable. It must also be “open access” to the extent that every user has equal access to the service delivery layer. In analogy to our roads, everyone must have access to the road network.

The broadband service must also be reliable. Some minimum quality of service is required, and an ability to enforce this level of service.

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

There should be recognition that telecommunications ducting in urban areas is a medium to long term critical asset requiring appropriate planning, development, management and maintenance in a similar fashion to roads and electrical networks.

Duplication of inter-community fibre infrastructure, beyond that needed to ensure network robustness, should be discouraged.

Fibre to the home or premise is the ideal medium to long term goal, however communities need access now to digital networks so that they can build confidence, collaboration and content. In many cases copper based broadband or wireless networks would be acceptable if they were available. In many cases they are not available.

There is a need for public measuring, monitoring and reporting on available service and trends in service levels. It is very obvious when and where road, water or power networks aren't operating at acceptable levels. It is much less obvious when telecommunication networks or connections fail or malfunction for a community. Yet quality of connection (a malfunctioning service) is a huge disincentive to digital participation. (For example, many will be reluctant to engage with the Digital Strategy on-line because of experience in similar situations where connections have failed, documents locked, and the associated train-of-thought has been derailed. It is too expensive for many to engage in this manner if the service is unreliable.)

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

Urban fibre loops should be available in more than merely 15 cities and towns. It may be that there are only 15 urban fibre network entities, but they should be able to



operate fibre or at least ducting networks in multiple cities and towns. Our experience in Hamilton is that the creation of the urban network entity is not easy, and will likely be impossible for medium to small size communities.

It is also likely that some of these urban fibre networks are going to fail. Perhaps there needs to be some dedicated business management support from MED for these entities, rather than just an audit role.

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

Help from MED in the establishment and operation of urban fibre entities. These tend to be public private partnerships (PPP) that take skill to establish and operate. At present the skills and knowledge needed for this appear to be difficult and expensive to access. Significant funds and time goes towards negotiating, formulating and crafting PPP documents rather than procuring more network coverage.

Establishment of a publicly controlled urban fibre entity that can accept, plan, establish, maintain and promote telecommunications ducting in small to medium size communities and towns. At present property developers have little option in whom they can vest the telecommunication networks that they create. In contrast, roading, water and power networks are vested in community controlled entities.

On confidence

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

There needs to be a core of digitally capable and confident people in every community who can help people transform New Zealand. This support network should not be restricted to medium to large businesses, towns and cities.

How many New Zealanders are being considered and will be directly involved in the transformation? Hopefully, most citizens throughout New Zealand will be involved in the transformation.

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

The role of libraries as information centres should be leveraged to introduce people to a wider range of information technologies than just desk-top computers. Why not seek to have video conferencing facilities in every library rather than just computers? Libraries could also be encouraged to be wireless hot-spots. Many libraries already use identification cards for borrowing books and accessing other services. This could be extended to include access to wider information technology services, such as bulk storage of community heritage audio and video records.

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?

There appears to be a lack of support for small businesses. Perhaps MED could consider encouraging or funding a minimum level of back-office technological support for start-ups.



Perhaps the People's Network should be considering wireless networks. As the price of laptops continues to decrease and the number and functionality of wireless connection devices increases, citizens will need and seek better access to local community digital networks.

Libraries could also be used to showcase or demonstrate new information technologies. These technologies could be road-showed by NZT&E via the libraries to small businesses and households.

On content

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

Digital content should also be enjoyable and contribute to a sustainable community. The goal suggests we use digital only when we strive.

The goal could be shaped so that digital technology is accepted as a part of most, if not everything, that we do.

We could be “worldclass” yet not be digital in everyday activities. We hear that other countries have significantly improved themselves by leveraging digital technology, yet we still appear to approach digital as though it is optional or something we could do.

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

There is a need to manage and administer the many datasets that are created or compiled for the various evidence-based reports now being encouraged by government. In the past many of these digital datasets have been lost and are now not available for reference, further research or extension.

Perhaps these data need to be presented / published in an open-source format prescribed as part of the procurement process.

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

Is there the digital New Zealand equivalent of Silicon Valley? Why can't people with ideas approach Trade & Enterprise via an on-line “café” to hear, test, explore, develop and hopefully commercialise their ideas. The impression is that innovators would need to physically and formally visit, say, the Icehouse to assess and access these services. At a digital café, innovators could observe the culture and protocols, identify the strengths of various parties and gain the confidence to engage. Perhaps this is an opportunity for NZT&E to have a presence in 2nd life?

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

The concept of data supply chains and sector focused portals could be developed and implemented by central and local government. For example LINZ via Land-on-line has a relationship with lawyers during property transactions. However, councils are notified via fax or letters. A portal providing local government and central government property information that could be corrected and modified by registered



agents would greatly improve property transactions and databases. Similar a local and central government farmer focused portal has the potential to greatly improve government / farmer transactions.

Perhaps the idea of a cross government Farm-on-line portal could be a specifically targeted and funded Digital Strategy project delivered by the New Zealand Geospatial Office. This would then be a pilot for other sector targeted government portals.

On collaboration

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

New Zealand has a small population and a high level of employment. It is critical that we co-ordinate and collaborate in working to achieve our goals. New Zealand can not afford to wastefully duplicate effort.

Apart from the ones already identified, what other collaboration partners or sectors (if any) are vital to achieving our digital potential?

A missing collaboration partner or sector is a vibrant, engaged, online community. At present, organisations including central government and local government agencies rarely engage in on-line communities. Most of the successful on-line communities appear to involve or rely upon people contributing outside work hours. Most government engagement appears to occur in physical meetings and if it involves central government, then those meetings tend to be in meeting rooms in Wellington.

Perhaps the proposed “Overarching Sector Forum” will set the example of a dynamic, engaging and effectively supported online community.

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?

Maori could bring a different world view and a unique cultural dimension to the forum. They also appear to have the ability to engage across many generations, and with the natural environment.

Communities can contribute by verifying data, information and theory against the physical reality. When engaged they have a tremendous capacity to implement change and achieve goals. Communities can leverage relatively small initial investments.

Business groups have the ability to effectively and efficiently prioritise requirements and deliverables. They can also focus on profit and leverage extensive networks.

Local government contributes by providing, over the medium term, infrastructure, services, planning, operational funding, continuity and stability across multiple communities and across generations.

Online communities provide an example and opportunity for New Zealanders to live in a special location and yet work and engage wherever and whenever they want. They can verify information and theory against the virtual reality.



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

The sector forum should focus its work programme on extending New Zealand into the digital space. It should not be based in Wellington, instead it should work digitally and experience the opportunities and pain in doing this. It should prioritise the areas of pain and remove them. The forum should also participate in identifying and realising opportunities.

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)?

Environment Waikato (EW) has many projects either underway or in the planning stages that seek to use digital and information technology to improve its business processes and its contribution to achieving sustainable communities. Some of these projects are outlined below.

EW has installed video conferencing facilities at its out-offices in Whitianga and Taupo, and is using these to reduce travel costs, improve communication with staff and citizens, and to gain confidence with this form of communication.

EW is working with the other 12 Waikato Councils to leverage back-office shared services delivered where appropriate over the Web. They have created a shared service company – Local Authority Shared Services (LASS) that presently has one service (the Shared Valuation Database Service – SVDS) in operation and another in development (the Waikato Regional Transport Model – WRTM). The SVDS has significantly changed the valuation data management market significantly improving data gathering, accuracy, timeliness and availability.

EW is facilitating collaboration across a group of Regional Councils to create an integrated regional information system that will provide the applications specifically required by Councils to fulfil their statutory and community obligations. It is likely that this system will be delivered as a shared web based service, eventually available to all New Zealand Councils.

EW is also facilitating collaboration across the collective Regional Councils in the development and possible creation of an integrated land data system. This work is occurring in coordination with the New Zealand Geospatial Office and is intended to include participation and data from central government agencies.

Other comments

Do you have any further suggestions or comments?

Local government obviously has a substantial role to play in the delivery of the Digital Strategy. However, as Councils continually strive to be more efficient in how they deliver services and in the prudent expenditure of rates and other income, it is very difficult for them to find the resources, knowledge and skills needed to engage



proactively in innovative initiatives. This is especially so when these initiatives evolve quickly and involve technology, multiple parties and relatively high risk profiles.

One effective way of getting Local Government attention is to provide sufficient central government funding to pay for structural change. Otherwise, it is very difficult to access funds, through the normal annual funding process, for structural change.