



Summary of Submissions August 2008

A summary report of the 125 submissions the Ministry of Economic Development received on the *Draft Digital Strategy 2.0*.

Introduction

In April 2008, the government released a Draft Digital Strategy 2.0 (DS2.0) for public consultation. The Draft DS2.0 provides the context and direction on how we can achieve leadership in the digital world. It sought the public's views on proposed government actions and challenged New Zealanders to contribute towards achieving this vision.

Submissions on the Draft DS2.0 were invited over a six-week period, from Monday 14 April to Friday 23 May. The Draft DS2.0 invited the public to respond to a series of questions, or to submit a statement on the ideas and issues set out in the draft.

The Ministry of Economic Development (the Ministry) also consulted with a range of interested groups through face-to-face meetings and online discussions using a wiki, an online forum and discussions in Second Life.

The Ministry received a total of 125 submissions – most in writing – from the telecommunications sector, ICT industry, digital broadcasting and creative sector, business sector, local and central government, research organisations, community and non-government organisations, Māori, academia and interested members of the public. Those who completed the online questionnaire, or provided a statement of their views on the wiki and online discussion forum, were more likely to be individuals rather than representative organisations.

Comments from the telecommunications sector and ICT industry were generally focused on their respective areas of operations and expertise. There were opposing views between ICT users and ICT providers, for example, on net neutrality and access to content.

A list of all submissions and a copy of each submission can be viewed here [\[link to table\]](#).

Approach to reviewing submissions

This review of submissions is qualitative rather than quantitative due to the breadth of content in the Draft DS2.0, the broad range of responses received and the small percentage answering questions directly.

Submissions on the Draft DS2.0 were analysed using the following process:

- Submissions were divided into sector groups and analysed in terms of the four enablers discussed in the Draft DS2.0 - connection, confidence, content and collaboration - and three main outcomes - productivity, community and sustainability - [\[link to the relevant draft pages\]](#).

- Each submission was analysed and peer-reviewed. Copies of submissions relevant to ongoing and future government-funded projects were sent to the implementing agencies.
- The responses were reviewed by sector to extract high-level issues and messages, new action proposals, and commentary on the suggested outcomes for New Zealand that will be enhanced through being digital.
- The main themes identified provided the basis for this summary report.

This report does not cover every issue raised by submitters. It focuses on key areas and themes submitters considered need attention as the government moves towards finalising the DS2.0. Where appropriate, common views across sectors, and the divergence of views across or within sectors, are noted.

Main themes

The main themes emerging from the submissions across all sectors can be grouped under the following headings:

- Broadband
- Greater access vs protection of digital content
- Skills and education
- Security and safety
- Collaboration
- Sustainability.

Broadband

Broadband is widely recognised as a prerequisite for achieving productivity gains both in business and in the community. New Zealanders want broadband that is fast, affordable, universally available, symmetric, reliable, resilient, secure, and delivered through open access networks.

Universal access to broadband and other technologies is important to achieve digital inclusion. Online respondents also emphasised the need for wireless and mobile connection, particularly for remote and rural areas, and the importance of a reliable international connection.

The ICT sector emphasised the need for a technology neutral approach in deploying broadband. There is a case for multiple technology solutions for New Zealand – fibre, wireless, mobile and satellite options. New Zealand needs to ensure net neutrality and access to an open internet platform, and internet speeds must be symmetric – as the proliferation of digital content increases, upload speeds are as important as download speeds.

Business submissions and meetings with stakeholders also raised the need for exporters to have digitally enabled international linkages. Connection, both throughout New Zealand and internationally, was considered the highest priority for the government in submissions received from the business sector. There was a strong sense that good digital infrastructure is vital to enabling export-led growth from New Zealand businesses.

Fast, reliable connection is important for the tourism industry to meet customer expectations. Visitors to New Zealand must be able to communicate easily with home and have easy access to information about New Zealand.

The cost of international connection for New Zealand businesses set up in other countries and communicating with New Zealand was also raised as an issue that should be addressed.

Many organisations – such as the Telecommunications Users Association of New Zealand and Local Government New Zealand – and the creative sector, believed that the connection targets set in the Draft DS2.0 are not “aspirational” enough. They would like to see high-bandwidth connection to premises/home at faster speeds, with greater coverage in a shorter period (before 2012). Some submitters described the proposed bandwidth speed target as “not a stretch target”.

The telecommunications sector stressed the importance of the recent reforms in its sector and that it was now time for these to be embedded into the regulatory environment.

Digital broadcasting and the creative sector would like to see the connections goals broadened to include digital television and other digital applications, not just broadband. Many groups – including rural communities, local government and business – would like to see a greater emphasis on a technology neutral approach in deploying broadband, taking into account not only fibre but a mix of technologies, including wireless and satellite, particularly for remote and rural areas. However, there were concerns that the current satellite offering was expensive and unreliable, so the service needed improvement before it could meet the needs of rural users.

There was broad support across most sectors for the promotion of “broadband friendly councils”, including a consistent approach to deploying telecommunications networks across the country, and the aggregation of broadband demand, particularly in non-urban areas and the health and education sectors. Greater support for rural and remote communities was also an important issue, particularly around economies of scale, access to connectivity, provision of technical support, and development of ICT skills and knowledge in these communities.

There was also broad support for continued investment in the Aotearoa People’s Network and recognition that libraries are a good connection point for towns and communities. Libraries can become “digital hubs” with free wireless access, videoconferencing facilities, digital archives and centres for community-based training.

The research and education sectors were concerned about the sustainability of the Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network (KAREN). Submitters expressed concern about the cost of KAREN, both in terms of using the network and its upkeep.

Note: KAREN provides high-capacity, ultra high-speed connectivity between New Zealand’s tertiary institutions, research organisations, libraries, wananga, schools and museums, and the rest of the world.

The health sector stressed the importance of industry specific hardware as well as connection. The sector recognises the opportunities presented by ICT to the benefit of New Zealanders.

Greater access vs protection of digital content

There is an inherent conflict between the demand for greater access to content (by advocates for Creative Commons licences, Privacy Commons and open source software) and protection of content (by advocates for the greater protection of intellectual property and copyright). Both sides argued their view in support of innovation. There are complex issues surrounding this debate, particularly in an environment of converging technologies.

Submitters from the ICT and creative sectors highlighted that the government has an important role to play in terms of intellectual property rights, anti-piracy and copyright protection.

Note: The Digital Broadcasting Regulatory Review and implementation of the Copyright Amendment Act, which will be reflected in the final DS2.0, will provide further guidance on what the appropriate balance could look like.

The galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) sector highlighted the importance of access to public records and information and the digitisation of resources. The context and the quality of information are vital elements of the digital content area. Content that is well organised, and accessible to all, will be of value to all New Zealanders.

Digital-born and digitised content form a significant part of our cultural heritage. Shifting the emphasis from merely digitising content to storing it for future generations was important to the GLAM sector. Training, maintenance and management around the digital repositories are also important to the preservation of public resources. Some concerns were raised about the need for upskilling of volunteers who manage community resources and the need for a common approach across New Zealand for digitising important historical information.

Note: New Zealand's Digital Content Strategy released in 2007 was a key action from the 2005 Digital Strategy. The Content Strategy is about making New Zealand visible and relevant in a connected digital world, and aims to chart a course of action for a content-rich digital New Zealand. The Content Strategy looks at many of the above content issues. See www.digitalcontent.govt.nz for more information.

The research sector indicated that access to research outputs is becoming increasingly important. This requires greater access to and protection of nationally significant databases (including models, simulations, raw data, workflows and other knowledge that can be shared with others and experimented with), while recognising the inherent conflict between access and protection. Good standards for sharing research information need to be in place. There was concern from the science community about the additional expense of sharing and managing digital resources.

Submitters asked that the DS2.0 focus on developments that will result in economic and productivity gains rather than on “picking winners” or specifying solutions.

Skills and education

Capability remains the biggest issue aside from broadband. The digital skills of New Zealanders need to be improved across the board, and appropriate investment made and programmes available.

Stakeholders sought redevelopment of more appropriate digital literacy curricula for all educational levels, including adult education.

Further work is needed to encourage people into the ICT profession, so careers in ICT need to be better defined and better promoted.

Some industries are already working with government agencies and industry representatives to implement a certification programme that will provide incentives for individual ICT practitioners' professional development, to encourage continuous upskilling of those in the industry.

Several submissions highlighted the need for a more flexible immigration policy to facilitate the entry of highly skilled ICT practitioners, to help overcome New Zealand's skills shortage in this area.

There is also a need to improve the level of understanding of the value of ICT by managers and decision-makers. This is true across a range of areas from community groups to small-medium enterprises and even in large businesses. Appropriate training needs to be provided to this group in order for their organisations to realise the benefits of using digital technologies.

Many acknowledged the significant contribution of the Community Partnership Fund and the Aotearoa People's Network to the development of digital capability in communities, and proposed continued or increased funding for these initiatives to foster digital inclusion across society.

Security and safety

Submitters indicated that confidence (security) and capability (skills) should be treated as separate enablers in the DS2.0. Due to the increasing importance of trust in the functioning of digital networks, the security of our networks – and people's confidence in that security – is an important enabler for achieving our digital potential.

Many sectors considered that the security action and goal were weak and this was an area that needed more work.

Many submitters stressed that New Zealand needs to build a safe and secure online environment by placing a high priority on intellectual property and cultural rights protection, and authentication, as well as the security of the infrastructure itself.

Security and confidentiality were important to submitters in the health sector as more patient information becomes available online.

The ICT and business sectors noted that many organisations already play a significant role in building confidence and capability.

There was broad support for continued funding for the Internet Safety Group and NetSafe. New Zealanders need to build their confidence and skills in looking after their own security online. Organisations such as the Internet Safety Group are an important resource for information on cybersafety and security.

Stakeholders raised the issues of security, trust, privacy and authentication. The government can be an exemplar in ensuring these in the delivery of government services online. We need good standards in place to protect New Zealanders' privacy as we interact more online, as well as guidelines on the use of personal information.

Resilience needs to be a consideration in the choice of infrastructure solutions. The ICT sector highlighted the fact that multiple technology solutions were important not only for accessibility across all of New Zealand but also in times of crisis to ensure emergency services can get through, for example, by dedicating spectrum for emergency services.

Collaboration

There was broad support from all sectors for collaboration being explicitly discussed in the DS2.0, – particularly from the community sector, education, the research community

(e-research depends heavily on collaborative work with overseas researchers) and those supporting the promotion of Māori culture and economic development.

The DS2.0 could be strengthened by building on collaborative arrangements between organisations and sectors. Importantly, collaboration between industry, universities and research centres is essential to develop exciting and productive innovations.

The GLAM sector, and cultural and community groups, highlighted that collaboration between government, the ICT sector, business and community organisations is pivotal. The government can assist in strengthening relationships between relevant groups to achieve the goals of the DS2.0, for example, through adequate funding and resourcing.

A few, however, noted that there are costs to collaboration, and that some seemingly collaborative interactions are merely part of businesses' day-to-day activities. Some submitters queried the value for business in collaborating with community groups.

There was broad support for projects such as the Community Partnership Fund. In encouraging communities to design their own solutions for content creation, connection, security and skills, we can all be empowered and ensure digital inclusion. However, these projects must also be sustainable from a financial, maintenance and human resource perspective.

Digital divide issues were raised, with submitters noting a need to address those who are disadvantaged. Others said that communities must be empowered to find their own solutions and drive their own initiatives in using ICT.

Submitters stressed that continuing cross-sector partnerships which are locally based and run, such as the Community Partnership Fund, would strengthen community ICT initiatives.

Many also said the DS2.0 must address the importance and role of culture alongside social and economic goals. It is also important to identify and build on successful community initiatives and the unique attributes of ethnic groups including Maori.

Some submitters were concerned that the Draft DS2.0 did not adequately reflect matauranga Māori philosophies, while others felt there was insufficient consideration given to other ethnic groups, especially those whose first language is not English.

There was broad support from local government and community groups for the Digital Development Council to adopt the Digital Communities Action Plan, developed by the Economic Development Association of New Zealand and Local Government New Zealand, as the basis for part of the Council's work programme.

Note: the Digital Development Council is currently developing its work programme to feed into a funding agreement with the Ministry.

There was support for the World Internet Project (WIP) in a number of submissions, and suggestions that WIP statistics could be used in the monitoring and evaluation framework for the DS2.0.

Sustainability

Submitters generally acknowledged the significant contribution of digital technologies in enabling activities that contribute to sustainability – for example, teleworking / transport substitution and the use of smarter technologies that reduce the intensity of resource use. Submitters felt we need to examine the net impact of these activities vs the increased energy

consumption of using more powerful computers and the e-waste resulting from the disposal of digital equipment.

Local Government New Zealand, on behalf of councils around New Zealand, recommended that the DS2.0 include more environmental sustainability goals in line with the bottom-line accountability in councils' Long Term Council Community Plans *[each council in New Zealand produces a 10-year vision for their region called the LTCCP]*. Digital technologies enable us to achieve our environmental goals, but using them also requires greater use of energy, which could pose a risk to the environment. This should be accounted for in the DS2.0's vision.

Some community organisations and individuals thought that more work needs to be done in the area of sustainable ICT, such as e-waste recycling, energy saving, teleworking, thin client systems, and free wireless access in main centres.

Government agencies realised the importance for government of supporting the new digital environment in all areas – social, cultural, economic and environment. There is an ongoing challenge for government agencies to think digitally about sustainability in all areas of government.

Summary

Submissions were generally supportive of the issues and initiatives described in the Draft DS2.0. There was a keen sense of excitement about the opportunities the digital future could bring for New Zealand – how we as a nation, by being digital, can change people's perception of New Zealand as being at "the ends of the earth" to it being a digital destination of choice, with the skills and environment needed to excel in our digital future.

For more information on the Digital Strategy visit www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz