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Speaking Notes for The Foundation for Science and Technology Debate on Digital Scotland – can Scotland grasp the opportunities created by the digital revolution?
Held on 28th October, 2010 at The Royal Society of Edinburgh

Key points

Firstly, the Digital Scotland team should be congratulated on an excellent, through and comprehensive view of the communication challenge in Scotland

Let us reflect on how information technology has evolved from the first transistor in 1947 to where we have 1bn transistors to every human alive!

I am reminded of the George Bernard Shaw quote - "Lack of money is the root of all evil" - we are in a time of change and need to consider the report in this context.

Services Industries will commoditise - we just do not know when.

We need to identify what will Scotland will export & learn from the transformation of the manufacturing industries..

We need to think how to get ahead of the pack

Elements of the services industries will most likely move to software in the future - If so, what is the opportunity for jobs going forward?

Software creation

Provide/maintain the infrastructure for these new software based services - commonly called Software as a Service or Clouds.

Which industries will be impacted?
　　　Creative industries is obvious..
　　　However, traditional businesses will also..
　　　So will local authorities - creating shared services as a result of the CSR?

Need to think more innovative about infrastructure
　　　ICT has 5 main aspects - need to provide a balanced service infrastructure:
　　　Communications, Processing, Data, Software, & Mobile Access
　　　All of these can be a bottleneck - Communications happens to be the one at the moment.

How can the infrastructure create a fertile ground for innovation and Small businesses? and how can we build on the real leadership in Scotland?
　　　Aberdeen - renewable energy
　　　Dundee - medical research & gaming
　　　Glasgow - sustainable city

IBM's global experiences suggests that creating change requires 3 I's to be present:
　　　Issues - that are relevant and important to all the citizens - have we really done enough here?
　　　Investment - unless seed money (£100m has been suggested in the paper) is made available nothing changes
　　　Inspirational leadership - we need a clear leader that will take this paper and implement this.

So will this be just another excellent paper that sits on the shelf collecting dust, or can Scotland implement this platform to attract the talent it needs to lead the world in the digital economy?