Digital Scotland

Spreading the benefits

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Vice-Chair of the Inquiry

The Main Issues

- The 'digital divide' is growing
- Some of the UK's highest average speeds in Scotland's Central Belt
- Some of the UK's lowest participation rates in Scotland's Central Belt
- Some remote and rural areas (and some close to Central Belt) don't yet have reliable speeds

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Infrastructure Is Not Enough

Digital Participation also requires:

- Access to skills, equipment, and training
- Effective learning
- Motivation
- Recognition by public sector, small businesses and third sector that they have not engaged effectively

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The Committee

- **Professor Michael Fourman**, Informatics, University of Edinburgh
- **Professor Alan Alexander**, Public Sector Management, University of Strathclyde (Emeritus)
- **Professor Frank Bechhofer**, Sociology, University of Edinburgh (Emeritus)
- **Dr Janet Brown**, Chief Executive, Scottish Qualifications Authority
- **Norman MacAskill**, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- **Professor Johanna Moore**, Informatics, University of Edinburgh
- **Ms Nicola Osborne**, Social Media Officer EDINA
- **Dr Sarah Skerrat**, Land Economy and Environment Research, SRUC
- **Daryl Mead**, National Library of Scotland
- **Martyn Wade**, National Library of Scotland

The Inquiry's *Modus Operandi*

- A broadly-based committee to oversee the Inquiry
- Collection and collation of existing evidence from Scotland and elsewhere
- Wide consultation throughout Scotland
- Targeting evidence from specific sectors
  - Public Sector bodies
  - Business community
  - Third sector
  - People with disabilities
  - 'Excluded' groups
  - All age groups

The Interim Report

- Digital Scotland
- Digital Dividend
- Digital Divide
- Digital Inclusion
- Digital Society

The 'Heroic Assumption'

That targets for broadband infrastructure will be met but…

- Remote areas
- Percentage targets *('If the target is 80% we'll be in the 20; if the target is 98% we'll be in the 2')*
- Gap funding regime
- Regulatory regime
- Multiple deprivation

Non-participation: The Reasons

- Lack of access
- Lack of equipment
- Lack of skills
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of confidence
- Fear and risk

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What Needs to be Done

- Ensure access for all including the itinerant and the homeless
- Learning opportunities for individuals who need it
- Learning opportunities for businesses that need it
- Allay fear by building awareness and trust

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Demonstrating the Digital Dividend

The Martha Lane Fox report, *The Economic Case for Digital Inclusion*

- Efficiency savings, especially for the public sector
- Better education and employment outcomes
- Making available a wider range of goods at lower prices

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Our Interim Report Adds

- Reducing health care costs
- Enabling independent living
- Enabling socialisation/social inclusion for isolated minorities
- Sustaining marginal communities

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Sector Specific Dividends

- **For the Public Sector:** accessibility, transactional efficiency, consumer engagement, greater interactivity
- **For the Private Sector**: business growth, customer engagement, flexible working
- **For the Third Sector:** cost reductions, better connections with client groups, improved communication with volunteers

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SMEs: I

- Least digitally engaged part of the business community
- Low understanding of benefits of digital participation
- Inaccurate perception of the costs and risks of going online
- Lack of trusted providers
- Often vital to the economic development of remote and rural areas

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SMEs: II

What is needed:

- Get everyone to take the first step
- Awareness raising
- Tailored courses, especially 'entry level'
- Peer-to-Peer support
- Risk education

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Public Access to Public Assets?

- Library closures leading to loss of publicly provided internet access
- No education authority allows public access to school computer suites, for various reasons:
  - Contractual specification
  - Security and risk
  - Professional defensiveness
  - Absence of clear policy on access

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Emerging Conclusions & Recommendations I

Access

Varying availability and affordability of access to digital infrastructure is key barrier to participation. Internet as an essential utility.

- Scotland should aspire to **universal digital inclusion**.
- **Greater public access to public assets** (e.g. in schools).
- **Minimum broadband speeds should be 25% of median speed available in UK**.

Emerging Conclusions & Recommendations II

Motivation

People go online for social and cultural reasons; wider political and economic benefits are externalities. Bad experiences, fear and perceived risk are negative motivators.

- **Identify individual motivations** to encourage people online.
- **Public sector websites as examples of good practice** for good user experience.
- **Transparency and clarity on how data is used and stored**.
- **Tailored training for SMEs** explicitly linked to business growth.

Emerging Conclusions & Recommendations III

Skills

Scottish education system has not yet caught up with the digital revolution; lack of coordination of training initiatives.

- **Scottish education system must provide basic understanding and skills** required by digital society.
- Need for **joined up approach by training providers** and signposting and sharing of resources.
- **Facilitate peer support for SMEs** to develop and maintain online presence.
- '**Trusted Trader' model** for good quality web developers.