Simple Things, Done Well

Making practical progress on digital engagement and inclusion

Sarah Fink

Policy Exchange

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About the Author

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About the Digital Government Unit

We are helping policymakers and politicians unlock the potential of technology: for an innovative digital economy, smarter public sector and stronger society. For more information on our work programme please feel free to get in touch.

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Acknowledgements

Foreword

There are a number of consistent messages emerging from research about supporting new and novice internet users: provide the opportunities but build from people's own motivations and interests; provide not just initial, but ongoing support as they build confidence and competence; find locations where they feel comfortable in trying something new. Similarly, there is a growing body of understanding about how technology can be used to support job seekers: providing responsive pathways that help establish (and extend) the job seeker's connections; supporting the development of new skills; providing access to new markets and new forms of employment, and of course searching for, and applying for jobs more easily.

This report consolidates many of these ideas and presents clear ways that policy makers can easily enhance existing work that is responding to the challenges of implementing a digital-by-default agenda. The report also sets out simple initiatives that respond to the gaps in current provision and support. As part of Nominet Trust's mission to find ways of using digital technology to readdress social challenges, I hope we can work together to respond to the recommendations and findings set out in this report.

Dan Sutch
Head of Development Research, Nominet Trust

Executive Summary

The internet provides great potential for public service delivery, including for greater personalisation, speedier service and substantial cost savings. The transformation of public services must happen because the internet has become a pervasive feature of modern society. With 76% of people online at home and 44% of people accessing the internet on their smartphones, citizen expectations are rising and they expect more innovative use of technology in public service delivery.[1]

Sometimes things move quickly, with some government departments embracing online consultations or local authorities rolling out their own 'apps'. Other changes – like the development of a single government domain or the design and deployment of the technology backbone for Universal Credit – are major programmes in their own right, taking a considerable number of years.

Leadership in the public sector rests with the Government Digital Service – an offshoot of the Cabinet Office – who are guided by the mantra of "digital-by-default". This means rebuilding each public service with digital delivery at the foundation, and an expectation that most people will interact with government via the digital channel most of the time. However, it is challenging for government to provide an excellent and accessible service to all citizens, from the nearly eight million people who have never used the internet to the 91% of 16–24 year olds who have access to the internet at home.

The government is aware of this challenge, and has a number of initiatives underway to help digital public services bed down. The GDS *Assisted Digital* initiative is designed to help people who are not able to independently access digital public services. The *Digital Engagement* initiative is about improving the quality of citizen-government interactions, to help ensure that once someone starts using the digital channel the habit sticks.

This report is about what happens around the margins. We have devoted particular attention to the challenges for policymakers in two areas:

- Responding to the 5.4 million people aged 65 and older who, for whatever reason, are offline and therefore need special consideration in the context of digital-by-default public services.[2]
- Helping unemployed young people – where internet penetration and familiarity with technology is typically high, but the digital channel is not being used to its full potential.

Key findings

The key findings from our research help build up a picture of what is happening and what some of the drivers might be. We also conducted telephone polling with 400 young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET),

in which we explored their attitudes toward the use of technology in looking for work and learning opportunities.

- Two-thirds of those aged 65 and older cite a lack of interest in or need for the internet as their main reason for being offline.[3] This makes it essential that the benefits of being online are presented in a more compelling way. For this group the convenience of digital public services may be outweighed by the need for face-to-face contact, the cost of connection or the need for training and support.
- We found that the biggest drivers to getting older people online were highly personal, such as the ability to contact dispersed family or see photos of loved ones.
- Generally, encouraging a new internet user should involve identifying their interests, exemplifying the importance of tailoring services based on an individual's needs, both when encouraging internet take-up and delivering public services through technology.
- The vast majority of people aged 16–24 are online already.
- As previously mentioned, 91% of this age group have access to the web at home in one way or another, and 71% have a smartphone.[4]
- When we talked to unemployed people in this age group there was a great deal of diversity in situations, needs and aspirations. However, a large majority reported high levels of interest in using digital methods to help them find work, training and education opportunities.
- There seems to be a strong sense that unemployed youth are not short of information, and that the government should avoid creating new content.
- This group would benefit from better signposting to high value support like coaching, mentoring and feedback. This is consistent with the wide range of organisations working in this space, often doing very innovative online work with young people but not always being sought out by the right people at the right time.
- Family and friends received the highest levels of trust from NEETs, followed by JobCentre Plus advisers, mentors and teachers, but low levels of trust for government officials.
- Only 8% of NEETs said they wouldn't use an app to help them find work.
- Of those interested in using an app, most showed interest in the potential of a JobCentre Plus app but showed low levels of interest in a government app.
- Our findings suggest NEETs view "government" differently to people on the front line in public services, revealing a channel where the government can potentially engage with NEETs.
- The government already has work underway to reform JobCentre Plus using new technologies. Given these developments and our findings, the best place for any additional effort looks to be using technology to connect young people with the place that will give them the most personal, tailored support and advice.
- For both of these groups, there is a wealth of content and support available to help them overcome the barriers to inclusion – whether it be helping them find work or learning to use the internet. However, all of these resources are missing a focal point, resulting in a fragmented approach.

● These barriers do not exist in isolation, but instead are compounded by a variety of factors, such as socioeconomic and health issues.

The government must have a sound digital inclusion strategy where the digitally excluded are able to experience the possibilities of the internet first-hand. The government should also recognise, support and strengthen the already available resources for helping vulnerable groups, and can achieve this through the use of technology.

Recommendations

We make two key recommendations for government policy:

1. Technology Advocates

A new Technology Advocate role should be piloted, backed by the training and resources required to reach out to people who are digitally excluded and mentor them as they start to access digital public services.

Integrating the most vulnerable and excluded into digital public services is crucial for a dynamic, efficient and inclusive digital-by-default government. Given the wide geographic dispersal of digitally excluded people, and the importance of helping people in their own homes and at their own pace, these roles should work on a local level. The means of delivery should be flexible, working through public sector and third sector organisations as appropriate in each instance to help identify people or groups to reach out to. On a day-to-day basis these advocates would take the internet to the digitally excluded in their homes or other convenient locations in the community, using a mobile device as the platform to help people experience being online, complete digital transactions and gain confidence using the web.

These technology advocates would deliver this service with the needs demonstrated by older people offline in mind, but could help anyone facing a barrier to getting online. The objective is to help people personally experience being online and making a digital transaction with government, and to channel shift when it is appropriate, resulting in long-term benefits for both citizen and government. We recognise and draw upon the achievements of previous volunteer-based digital inclusion programmes, including the over 12,000 hours pledged to Race Online, but recommend that funding be put in place to support a formal technology advocate role to complement existing volunteer-driven initiatives. Full-time technology advocates would be able to reach more people more quickly than could be expected by volunteers alone.

In the first instance, we recommend that a programme of this sort be piloted on a small scale to establish the principle and help inform the design of a full-scale programme. Running a pilot scheme with 100 Technology Advocates for one year might require a relatively small budget of around £2.5 million.

For a full-scale programme, we estimate that the creation of around 1,000 Technology Advocate roles working over a five-year period would have the potential to get around 500,000 to 750,000 people independently online. The cost of running the programme might be around £150 million over the five-year period, and the potential savings from cheaper government transactions worth

around £170–225 million over the same period. Our assessment, therefore, is that such a scheme has a reasonable chance of delivering a small net saving to government of perhaps around £20–75 million over five years.

If executed well, the same number of Technology Advocates might engage a significantly higher proportion of people to shift to digital channels. The net savings to government from the programme would increase correspondingly.

Even if the programme were just to break even financially, it would deliver the indirect social benefit of increased connectivity and all the other benefits of being online for a large number of people who are currently digitally excluded.

2. Connect Youth Unemployed to Personalised Support

The government should take advantage of modern, interactive web technology to connect young people struggling with unemployment to helpful, personalised content and advice.

Finding the right support shouldn't rely on being lucky when searching the web. Young people need a focal point and effective pointers toward the most relevant providers. The web makes it possible to ask people in a structured way about their circumstances, needs and ambitions, and to recommend content accordingly (in much the same way as already happens for, say, travel, shopping or movies). So rather than spending too much time generating additional content, the government would do better to capitalise on its high profile and invest in helping young people reach what is already out there. The model for this should be quick, cheap and agile – focusing on specific sub-sets of the NEET population, and using off-the-shelf tools and templates to quickly deliver and iterate a service that is "good enough". This could be done in-house or through funding from an external partner. Other organisations in this space – including charities, social enterprises and businesses – would also have a role to play in ensuring they are listed and responding to user feedback. The platform itself could, in time, be integrated into the single domain site GOV.UK.

> **❝** Finding the right support shouldn't rely on being lucky when searching the web. Young people need a focal point and effective pointers toward the most relevant providers **❞**

At present, all of the resources that do exist are often very valuable but are fragmented and lacking a focal point. Ensuring a joined-up service requires a multitude of resources working together, and technology can provide this delivery, whether a NEET is looking for part time work and child care, CV feedback and an internship, or sustained mentoring.

Personalisation is an important aspect of delivering these kinds of services, and our polling found that 83% of NEETs would find it helpful if they were able to get advice and help specific to their interests. This site could also serve as a resource for those responsible for helping NEETs and those at risk of becoming NEET, such as family, advisers, teacher and mentors. We would expect that the people trusted by NEETs, including those working on the front lines of public service, would work to direct them to this tool. Based on experience of similar projects, the cost of designing and hosting this platform might be in the region of £300,000. Savings and benefits would come from a variety of sources. The government would save money in channel shifts while creating more time for much needed face-to-face

support. NEETs would have a consolidated, personalised and joined-up resource to ensure their variety of needs are met, and those who support NEETs would also have a place to go for resources to help them further.

1
Introduction

This report considers the challenges and opportunities for a 'digital-by-default' government to transform citizens' experience of public services, with a specific focus on how to achieve the best outcomes for those at both ends of the age spectrum, ensuring a government that aims to have primarily digital interactions reaches even digitally excluded citizens. We focus in particular on two areas where there is the potential for digital developments to have powerful and important effects: the 1 million young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and the 5.4 million people aged 65 and older who have never used the internet.[5, 6]

The number of NEETs in the UK remains high despite government efforts to reduce youth unemployment. This group are generally regular users of technology and digital engagement offers potential channels to help this group into work. For older people offline, digital exclusion puts them at risk of being left behind by an increasingly connected society. The fact that over 3 million older people go over a week without seeing a friend or family member demonstrates the possible benefits of introducing technology into their lives and broadening their potential means of communication.[7]

This raises the following questions:

- What special factors set vulnerable groups apart, do they have anything in common, and what does this mean for policymakers?
- What lessons can we generalise from this about how the government can use digital channels and Information Communications Technology (ICT) to better deliver public services and engage citizens?
- What will it take for leaders in the public sector to deliver this sort of change?

This report identifies the key points for policymakers to ensure they address the needs of these groups with a core interest in the use of ICT to transform the public sector and public services. Our recommendations aim to maximise the potential of digital channels to engage disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society.

5 NEETs Statistics – Quarterly Brief, Department for Education, 2012

6 Age UK digital champions helping older people for itea & biscuits week, Go ON UK, 2011

7 Myfriends Online Week, Go ON UK, 2012

2
The Digital-by-Default Agenda

What is digital-by-default?

A digital-by-default government delivers public services online based on a "digital first" principle, meaning that accessing public services online is the primary method of contact. The government Digital Service (GDS) within the Cabinet Office has been tasked with transforming the delivery of public services in the UK, ensuring an optimised relationship between citizens and a digital-by-default government. The result of a primarily digital government can be efficiency, cost saving and personalised public services. Digital-by-default is moving closer towards reality with the approaching deployment of Universal Credit and the development of a single government domain.

Digital-by-default does not mean a digital only government where other methods of contact are abandoned. Instead, it means putting digital first, operating a digitally centric government rather than a digitally exclusive one. Citizens would be encouraged to contact the government through digital channels. In turn, the government would scale back alternative methods of contact. Minimised administration and automated services would free up time for both citizen and government, allowing for increased and targeted intervention where necessary.

Box 2.1

The GDS is split into the following workstreams:[8]

- **Assisted Digital** is responsible for ensuring support for those who are unable to access the government's digital services
- **Digital Engagement** works to improve online interactions between government and citizen
- **Directgov**, as their name suggests, is responsible for the Directgov website
- **ID Assurance** is working on approving ways third party identity assurance can facilitate transactions between people and public services
- **Innovation** works with SMEs to help users and businesses by focusing on how to maximise the benefits of technology while minimising delivery time and costs
- **Single Government Domain** continues to develop GOV.UK

8 Government Digital Service website, digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

What are the challenges to delivering 'digital-by-default'?

Figure 2.1: An overview of digital-by-default

Objectives	Challenges	Actions by government
• Government adopts a "digital first" principle • Citizen and government primarily contact each other through digital channels • Efficient, cost-saving and personalised public services through technology	• Reaching the digitally excluded • Encouraging people to shift their method of contacting the government to digital channels • Ensuring online public services are easy to use and engaging	• The Governemnt Digital Service within the Cabinet Office has the following teams working on the issues including but not limited to: • Assisted Digital focuses on reaching the digitally excluded • Digital Engagement focuses on optimising online interactions between citizen and government

Challenges in achieving a successful digital-by-default government are reaching the digitally excluded, encouraging people to shift their method of contacting the government from offline to online, and "getting it right" – by ensuring that online public services are user-friendly and engaging.

Arguably, the work of the Assisted Digital and Digital Engagement teams in GDS will play the largest role in reaching the most excluded people, including those within the scope of this report, 16–24 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and the 65 and older who are offline. This is because these teams are working to help and engage hard-to-reach groups. Assisted digital aims to help those who are offline, the majority of whom are over 65, access online public services. Digital engagement aims to deliver optimal services to those who are online, which we know includes a large proportion of NEETs.

Assisted Digital

What is 'assisted digital'?

The aim of 'assisted digital' is that no one should be left behind as a result of digital-by-default. Assisted digital is a suite of offline alternatives and concepts with an ultimate goal of moving people online. These include specialist solutions to eliminating barriers to the internet, providing internet terminals to people without an internet connection and signposting internet training. Those working on the concept and potential methods of delivery have avoided specifically nominating groups for whom assisted digital is intended, but it is useful to consider the possibilities. These groups could potentially be those who have never used the internet before or those who face barriers to getting online, such as a disability.

The GDS suggest that assisted digital could have a variety of components, such as access to non-digital channels as an exception to access public services, including internet terminals with one-on-one support, signposting internet skills training and continual monitoring of digital-by-default services. In practice, this might mean printed out forms or Post Offices serving as an intermediary

for accessing certain technology. However these strategies stop short of digital engagement, and are unlikely to encourage online take-up.

What are the challenges for 'assisted digital'?

Assisted digital complicates digital inclusion, because it is predicated on services being digital-by-default. The objective of assisted digital is to move the digitally excluded online, requiring that public service users "channel shift" their methods of contact with the government. Recognising that some people will never go online complicates this further. This is especially the case amongst those who "self exclude" themselves from the internet, meaning they choose not to go online because of a lack of interest or because of a belief that internet access is unnecessary. Government and third sector strategies have shifted between encouraging internet take-up through demonstrating the benefits and providing the necessary infrastructure, such as access to affordable computers and broadband.

Those working with the digitally excluded point out that an important aspect of giving teeth to assisted digital is ensuring that digital inclusion is still an important aspect of its delivery. Forcing people online through shutting off alternative routes of communication or charging for them does little to inspire people towards internet take-up. Assisted digital must be able to identify ways of helping people break down a range of barriers to getting online – whether it be because of a disability, confidence, knowledge or even interest.

Digital engagement

What is 'digital engagement'?

Digital engagement focuses on ensuring that, for citizens who are online, services are optimal, and as the term suggests, engaging. It also aims to attract the digitally excluded to online public services and retain users who have transitioned from assisted digital to digital inclusion. A digitally engaging government allows citizens to easily give feedback and contribute to the political process, and the government has started using a variety of platforms, such as websites, blogs, forums and social networking sites where government can engage with citizens and citizens can express their views. These have found various levels of effectiveness dependent on everything from design to authenticity.

What are the challenges for 'digital engagement'?

For a government to be digitally engaging, it must harness the success of what people find so appealing about other online services – from search engines to social networks. Internet users look for services that are personalised, fast, authentic and ready for feedback. This hasn't proved easy for government, but there are encouraging initiatives in play.

Mobile Strategy

As part of both inclusion and engagement, GDS is also working on the government's 'mobile strategy'. While 76% of adults have an online device at home, 92% have a mobile phone.[9] Directgov, for example, has been using texts to supplement the information they provide. This mainly involves auto-responses, where a user texts a word and receives a link in response.

The NHS

In May 2012, the NHS Information Service for Parents was launched. It offers parenting and pregnancy advice via texts and email when an interested person provides their due date. These free texts provide parents with NHS-approved information from the fifth week of pregnancy to four weeks after the birth.[10] The GDS is working on other ways in which texts can be used, from reminder texts for GP appointments to bulk messaging segmented groups and question-and-answer texts to location based services like the bus stop texts that provide a list of when the next buses are due to arrive in real time. Beyond texting, the GDS is working on a smartphone strategy, as the Directgov mobile site now receives over 2 million visits per month, with 9% of traffic coming from a mobile device.[11]

Search Data

Over 300,000 searches are carried out on Directgov every week, with around 4,500 of them for the search term "jobs". The GDS continues to analyse search data in order to develop search-engine optimised articles so that users find relevant results through the use of colloquialisms.[12] For example, searching 'scrappage' results in the link to the 'buying and selling a vehicle' page. This means that the government can provide relevant information across a variety of terminology, something we already expect from online searches. In addition, searches and trends can affect content. For instance, when someone searches for "bank holiday" they are more likely to want to know when their next bank holiday is, not see all of the bank holidays for the next several years. GDS is working on these changes, as shown in the difference between the current Directgov site and the GOV.UK beta test site.

Figure 2.3: Third result on Directgov for search term "bank holiday"

Figure 2.4: First result on GOV.UK Beta site for search term "bank holiday"

10 NHS Information Service for Parents

11 The Mobile Question – Responsive Design, Cabinet Office, 2012

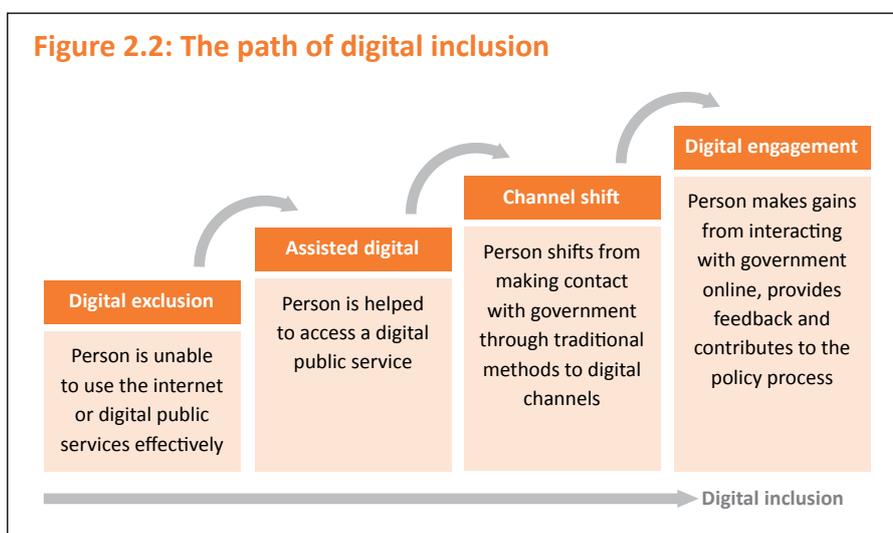12 Using Search Data to Meet Users Needs, Cabinet Office, 2012

Universal Credit

The introduction of Universal Credit in 2013 is intended to exemplify what a public service could look like when implemented through a digital-by-default strategy. In delivering Universal Credit, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will adopt the digital first principle. It will replace income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child and Working Tax Credits and Housing Benefit; and most people will be expected to apply online and manage their benefits using an online account.[13] The digital channel, being that that service will be digital-by-default, will be the primary contact route. DWP already receives claims for Jobseeker's Allowance through Directgov and expects people to increasingly use these services prior to the introduction of Universal Credit.

For people who cannot access online channels alternative access routes will be provided, predominantly by phone, and face-to-face when absolutely necessary. The aim of this digital-by-default public service is to minimise the need for recipients to contact government in person, maximise use of online channels and provide focused help for those unable to use online channels.[14] Accessibility of these services and channel shifting citizens are key to providing an effective, cost-saving digital-by-default programme. Essential, as well, is a streamlined, user-friendly, joined-up service.

Conclusion

A successful digital-by-default government does not "switch off" other methods of contact between government and citizen, but instead works with citizens to make digital the primary method of interaction, with a digital back office. Successfully delivering digital public services considers both digital inclusion and digital engagement. The next section of this report explores digital inclusion strategies for people who are aged 65 and older and do not have an online device at home. This is followed by a section on how digital engagement can help NEETs find work and training opportunities. We then offer two recommendations within the areas of digital inclusion and digital engagement with particular consideration for these two groups.

Figure 2.2: The path of digital inclusion

Digital exclusion
Person is unable to use the internet or digital public services effectively

Assisted digital
Person is helped to access a digital public service

Channel shift
Person shifts from making contact with government through traditional methods to digital channels

Digital engagement
Person makes gains from interacting with government online, provides feedback and contributes to the policy process

Digital inclusion

13 Universal Credit Welfare that Works, Department for Work and Pensions, 2010

14 Universal Credit Welfare that Works, Department for Work and Pensions, 2010

3
Digital Inclusion

Digitally excluded people are a practical issue for both government and citizen, and identifying the reasons a citizen is offline is a necessary step in developing a sound inclusion strategy.

According to the Office for National Statistics, nearly eight million adults in the UK have never accessed the internet. Of these:

- Just under half have a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act[15]
- Half of those without home internet access belong to DE socioeconomic groups[16]
- 44% do not have a formal education qualification[17]

Ensuring the accessibility of public services to these groups is crucial, especially as the government transitions to primarily digital delivery of many public services.

For the digitally excluded, a number of barriers may exist, from cost to ability to interest. Helping people take up the internet is a long and potentially expensive process, and it is especially difficult to get this same group to channel shift their contact with the government to online methods.

Table 3.1: Digital Inclusion Programmes

Who	What	Services
UK Online Centres	Programme set up by government in 1999 to provide public access to computers	• Run marketing campaigns • Offer training and project opportunities • Administer grant funding
Age UK	Charity for older people that provides advice and support, runs campaigns, and conducts research	• Digital Inclusion Network Connect with IT, a digital inclusion campaign which includes 'itea and biscuits week', 'myfriends online week' • IT Volunteering • Computer recycling • Run initiatives in care homes and sheltered housing
Go ON UK	• A partnership of Age UK, BBC, Big Lottery Fund (BIG), E.ON, Lloyds Banking Group, Post Office and TalkTalk. • The UK government is supporting Go ON UK along with Childnet, One Voice, e-Skills UK and UK online centres	• Online help for using the internet • A search tool for face-to-face training • Digital champion and Give an Hour volunteer programmes.
Digital Outreach	Social enterprise providing campaigns and consulting for digital inclusion strategy	• Get Connected, Get Online project • Bespoke digital inclusion projects for clients

15 Internet Access Quarterly, Office for National Statistics, 2012

16 This group includes the two lowest grade groups of workers and those dependent on state benefits for income

17 Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009

Technology and older people

Although 4 million of the UK's internet users are over 65, and 1.2 million of them went online for the first time in 2009, technology take-up is low among this group.[18] Seven out of ten do not have an online device at home, and 5.4 million have never used the internet.[19, 20]

Figure 3.1: Technology use by age

Source: Adults Media Use and Attitudes Report, Ofcom, 2012
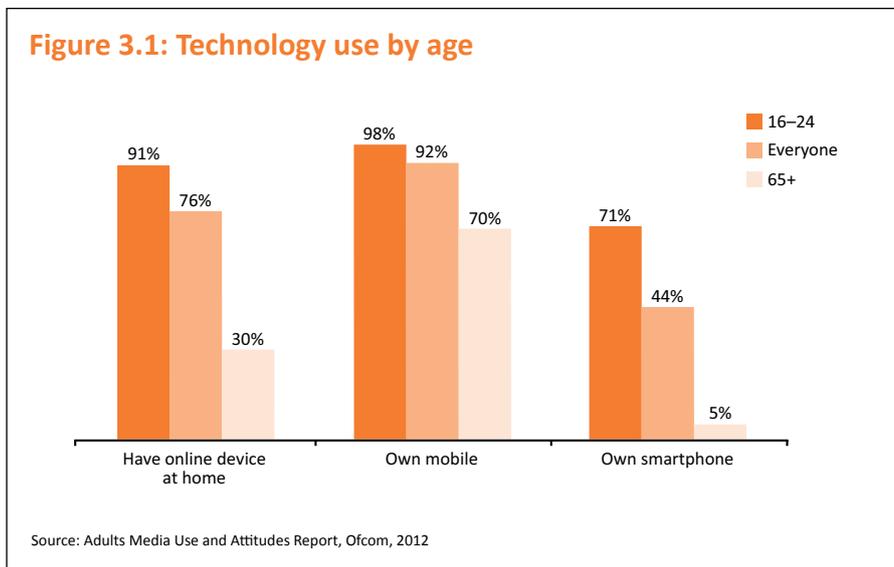
Older people are a highly diverse group with various levels of internet knowledge and access, but for those who are offline, previous research has segmented them into three main groups:[21]

Figure 3.2: Digitally excluded older people

Highly supported 22%
Traditionalists 43%
Hesitators 35%
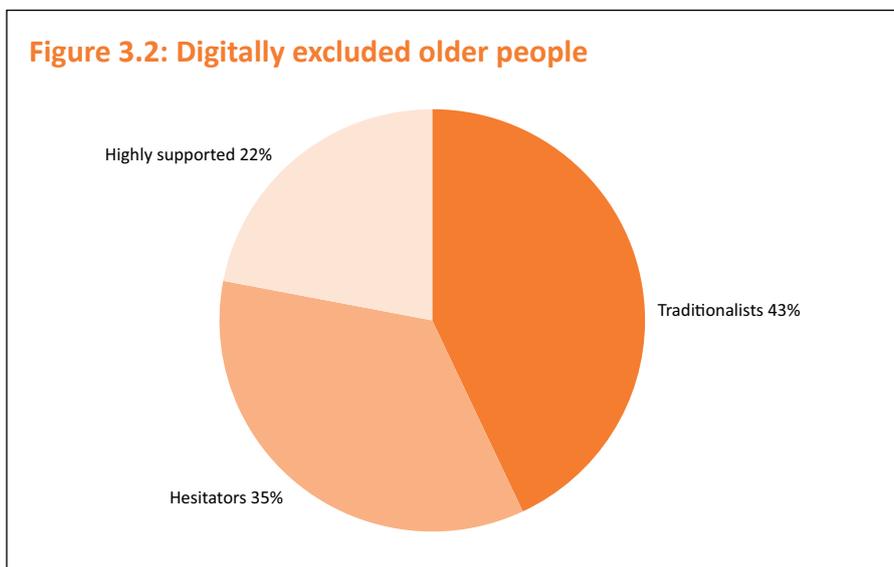
- **Traditionalists** who tend to have adequate to high incomes but a negative view of technology.
- **Hesitators** who typically have adequate to moderate incomes and a relatively positive view of technology.

18 Getting On – A Manifesto for Older People in a Networked Nation, Race Online, 2011

19 Adults Media Use and Attitudes Report, Ofcom, 2012

20 224,000 fewer adults offline in the UK, Go ON UK, 2012

21 Getting On – A Manifesto for Older People in a Networked Nation, Race Online, 2011

● **Highly supported**, typically the oldest of this group, have lower incomes and are more likely to need live-in care.

A relatively small portion of older people are financially excluded from the internet, citing that they cannot afford the hardware or connection costs of getting online. The majority of digitally excluded older people self exclude themselves from the internet, citing a lack of need or interest.[22]

However, a lack of interest or need may be compounded by additional factors. A person could have low awareness regarding the benefits of being online, or have concerns about the fragility and security of online devices, such as when making financial transactions.

Box 3.1

"I wouldn't be without my computer now. My daughter bought me a laptop in 2003, when I was 67. She and her partner showed me some basics, and assured me that I couldn't break it! Then I learned – sometimes with their help, how to use it and enjoy it."

Audrey, Hampshire

"Nearly all my funds seem to come in and out digitally now, and I keep a regular check on them by going to my bank's site, which does seem to be fairly secure, touch wood."

Ruth, Bath [23]

Some people may have physical or cognitive impairment that keeps them offline or from accessing certain types of technology. Inadequate product design and technology marketing also play a role because they are often aimed at the young, or at the other extreme, as an aid for the frail and elderly, an identity with which many older people don't identify. Furthermore, technology often has hardware that might be difficult for some older people to use, such as small buttons or screens. On the other hand, some specialist products have been criticised as looking too much like medical equipment. One such device – the "Jitterbug" mobile phone – is illustrated below. For some people the design meets their needs well, but for others the basic appearance and functionality may be offputting.

Box 3.2

"The appropriate response to this problem [is] not to create specially designed products for older people, but rather encourage more inclusive design for all. Older people don't want ugly equipment, which would not look out of place in a hospital, in their home. In common with everyone else, they want objects they are happy to live with because they are aesthetically pleasing." [24]

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22 Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009

23 We interviewed internet users aged 65 and older about their experiences getting online

24 Independent Age, Older people, technology and community, 2010

Figure 3.3: Photo of "Jitterbug" mobile phone, marketed towards older people

Figure 3.4: Older people and the internet
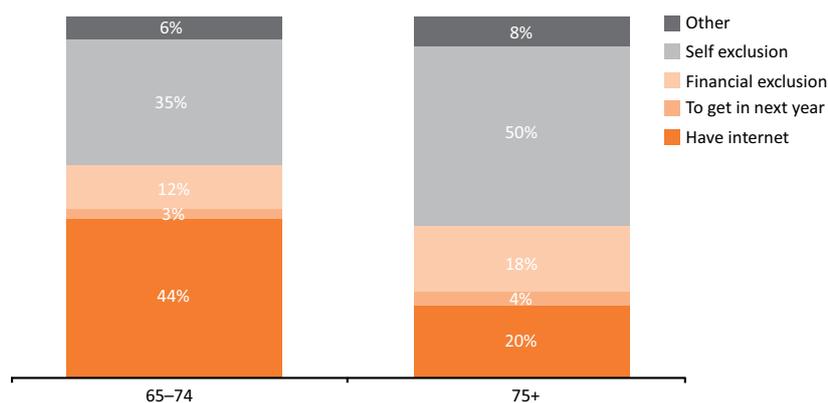
Source: Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009

To help measure these barriers, a study by Ofcom and Ipsos Mori presented people who didn't have internet access at home with ideas that could interest them otherwise.[25] Their findings demonstrate that disinterest in the internet is much more concentrated in older age groups who are offline, and cost is less of a concern compared to offline adults overall.

People who work to encourage internet take up often argue that those who say they don't want or need the internet shouldn't be taken at face value. Instead, they say that people who are hesitant about the internet need to be more aware of what the internet can offer them.

> "*Accepting self-exclusion at face value risks leaving people isolated by poor information and the misconceptions and unnecessary reservations that it seeds. Those attempting to support older people past such barriers must recognise these signs and provide a 'way out' where nobody need lose face…exposure to computers and the Internet quickly allows people to correct misconceptions, overcome fears and embed their own relevance.*"[26]

Figure 3.5: Interest in ideas to help get online

Source: Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009
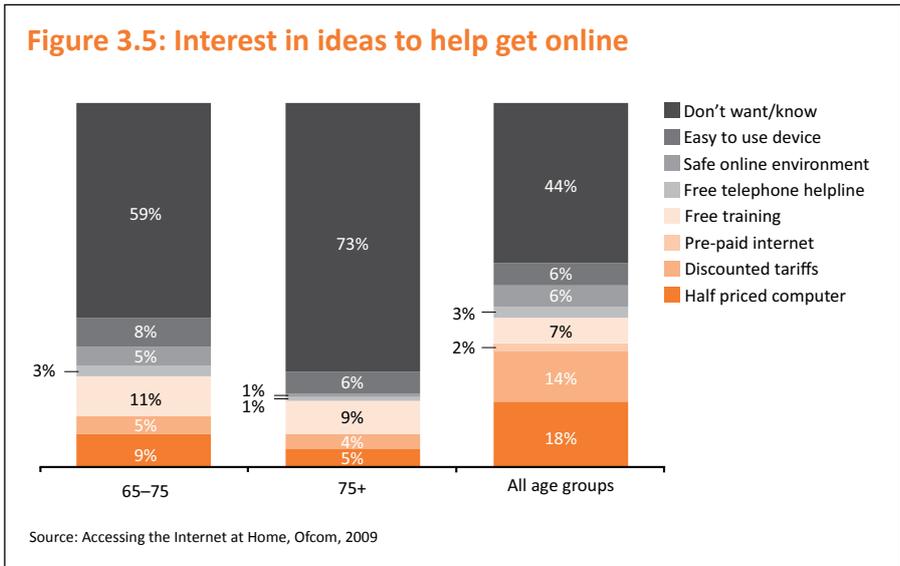
To measure this potential, the same study noted above showed people without home internet access a video of activities people could take part in online across the following areas: read the news, look up any information, book tickets, plan a journey, online shopping, social networking, compare prices, communication and watch videos.

After watching the video, most people reported no change in their interest in the internet. Although nearly 3 in 10 people offline were slightly or a lot more positive about the internet after watching the video, this study demonstrates that for most, merely seeing benefits of getting online isn't enough. Instead, these results suggest that one learns the benefits of the internet by doing.

Figure 3.6: Changes in interest in internet use after watching video

Source: Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009
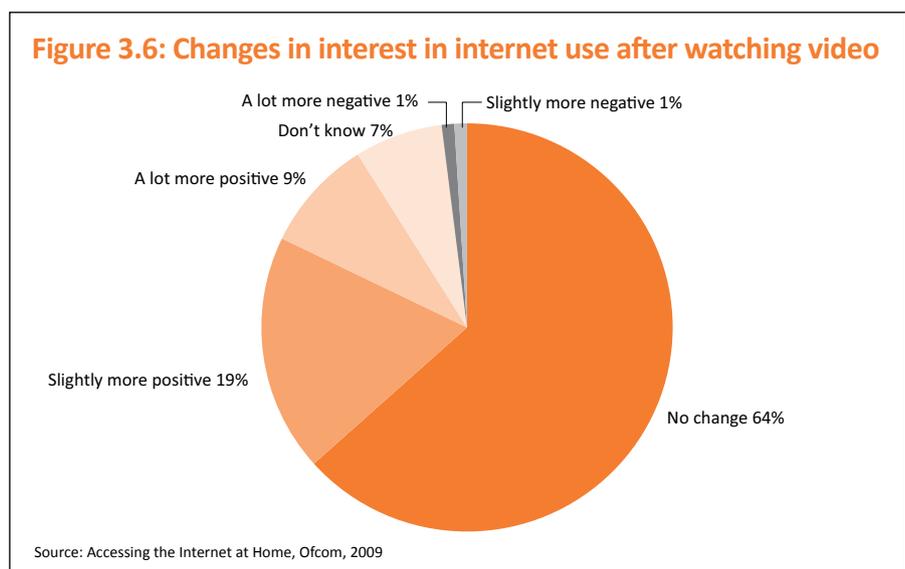
Benefits of the internet that are usually presented to the digitally excluded include the ease of online shopping and banking, cost savings, enhanced wellbeing due to increased contact with family and friends, and an increased level of independence.

Participants in the Leicestershire CareOnLine initiative and the Angus Gold project, both of which provided computer training and support to older people, reported a number of benefits from the programmes. They felt it enabled social interactions such as communication with dispersed family, making new friends, and getting back in touch with lost contacts. They also reported that it had made them feel like they had things in common with younger people and improved their confidence and the ability to access other services through the internet.[27]

However, some of these target areas for building interest may not be attractive for many older people who are offline. Although grocery shopping online might appeal to someone with mobility issues, for many time-rich or even isolated older people, getting out of the home to get groceries might be more appealing. Banking online may be of little interest for older people for the same reasons as grocery shopping, or because they still prefer or trust face-to-face banking. Those who work to increase internet take up among the older say that the biggest reason people get online is to make contact with or see pictures of their family.

Box 3.3

"My elder daughter helped me to get on to Skype. I wanted to be able to see and speak to my son and my two grandsons in South Africa."

Sheila, East Sussex

Identifying what encourages people to get online can be very personal, making a one-size-fits-all approach both impossible and undesirable. Telling people that they should go online, or that they will increasingly have to go online to access certain services doesn't tend to work, but instead can create more anxiety and scepticism around technology. Generally, encouraging a new internet user should involve identifying their interests, and showing them how going online could further develop what they already enjoy.[28] This exemplifies the importance of tailoring services based on an individual's needs, both when creating interest in technology and delivering public services through technology.

After seeing the video of internet benefits, only 16% of the offline say they would be interested in finding out information about public services online.[29] However, getting these people connected, shifted to the digital channel and used to being online could result in significant cost savings and more efficient public services. Although a digital-by-default government does not mean "switching off" other channels such as telephone or post, it is much more efficient when people contact their government through a digital channel. Therefore, encouraging citizens towards internet take-up is both a practical concern for government, a saving for the taxpayer and likely to be beneficial for the citizen.

27 Independent Age, Older people, technology and community, 2010.

28 Older people, technology and community, Independent Age, 2010

29 Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009

4
Digital Engagement

Digital engagement strategies help government effectively interact with citizens in a way that is accessible and strengthens public services, highlighting the importance of digital inclusion. Digital engagement takes a range of forms, and can include government websites and blogs, the use of social media, commenting platforms and 'apps'. These tools should allow not only the government to share content, but for citizens to express feedback, allowing them to contribute and potentially influence public policy and public service delivery. Theoretically, this can happen through a range of content including that produced from the Twitter streams of elected officials and civil servants, the feedback tools on the GOV.UK beta site, the use of e-petitions, and the release of data. The objective of digital engagement is to use technology to enhance the relationship between citizen and government – a tricky terrain and work in progress.

Figure 4.1: Digital engagement between government and public

Source: Evolving Digital Engagement, Andy Williamson, 2012
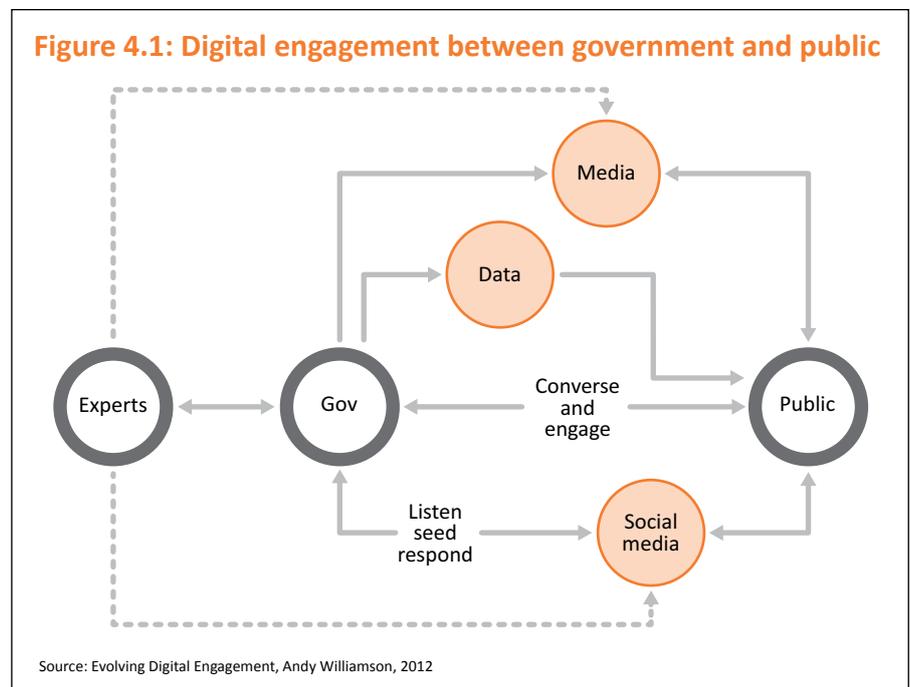
Digital engagement strategies can help NEETs find opportunities, taking advantage of their relatively high levels of digital inclusion. In addition, digital engagement can help to make channel shifts real and lasting, as it can make digital interactions with government increasingly appealing.

Box 4.1: Technology take-up of 16–24 year olds

Digital inclusion is high among this age group; generating potential methods that could help NEETs of the same age pursue education and employment opportunities:

- 98% own a mobile phone
- 91% have a device at home to go online
- 90% have set up a social networking profile
- 79% use a social networking site daily
- 71% own a smartphone

Despite these levels of technology usage, less than half of the age group understands that the accuracy of information provided in sites by search engines is variable; suggesting that finding appropriate content and advice is more difficult than often assumed.

Source: Adults Media Use and Attitudes Report, Ofcom, 2012

Youth unemployment

There are currently over one million 16–24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (commonly known as NEETs) in the United Kingdom. A ComRes survey of 754 NEETs found that seven out of ten felt their potential was "being thrown away" and 42% reported feeling like they weren't a part of society.[30] On top of this, the benefit bill in 2012 for the current levels of youth unemployment is estimated to be around £4.2 billion. The total cost of youth unemployment at its current levels in foregone taxes is likely to be around £600 million and £10.7 billion in lost economic output.[31]

Box 4.2: Segmentation of the NEETs

Those most likely to become NEET
- Have low attainment at GCSE level.
- From low socio-economic groups.
- Truant persistently in year 11.
- Teenage mothers.

Education level of NEETs
- 37% of NEETs are university graduates.
- 35% have completed college or 6th form.
- 8% left school before 16.

Groups of NEETs
- *Core NEETs* – more likely to have social and behavioural problems, and come from families with generational unemployment.
- *Floating NEETs* – tend to lack direction and motivation and move in and out of the NEET group.

30 Human Waste Survey, ComRes and FutureYou, 2011

31 Youth unemployment: a crisis we cannot afford, The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, Lindsey MacMilan, Paul Gregg & Jack Britton, 2012

Factors leading to NEET status

- *Young people-centred* – social and behavioural problems, negative experiences of school, short-term mindedness, low self-esteem and aspirations, lack of family support, lack of knowledge of their choices and lack of certainty about how to pursue a career or find advice.
- *Employer-centred factors* – could include lack of incentives to hire NEETs, an inability to offer the needed support, insufficient knowledge of vocational training and recruiting from already established networks without NEETs.
- The geography of NEETs also plays a role, and NEETs face differential access to labour markets because of where they live. This manifests itself in transport links and regions where a particular skill set might not be supported.

NEET statistics also include

- The 250,000 who are either registered disabled or have a work limiting illness or disability.
- The 350,000 with a child under 5.

Source: Human Waste Survey, ComRes and FutureYou. 2011
Policy Exchange: Need for stronger targeting in welfare state to tackle NEET problem, Matthew Oakley, 2012
Regional and sub-regional variation in NEETs–reasons, remedies and impact. LSDA 2006

Table 4.1: Help for NEETs

Who	What	Description
Department of Work and Pensions	JobCentre Plus use of technology	• Touch screen terminals allow users to search for jobs and print out details • Uses SMS to text appointment reminders and for bulk messaging
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills	National Careers Service Website	• Careers tools and advice • Contact with an adviser via phone, email, webchat and face-to-face • Discussion forums
Monster UK	Contract with DWP	• Aggregated job vacancy advertisements • Employer-employee profile matching • Automated feedback facility
YouthNet	TheSite.org, general advice site aimed at 16–25 year olds	• Moderated discussion boards • Live chat room • Advice videos and articles • Personalised support through email
FutureYou	Online peer-to-peer mentoring programme for 14–25-year-old NEETs	• Online community of support and counselling • Real-time career information, advice and guidance • One-to-one advice on areas including housing, finance, applying for jobs or a course
SPARK+METTLE	Website of charity that offers career building programme for 16–24 year olds	• Directory of resources for NEETs • Tips for creating a professional online presence • Careers advice
Plotr	In the development process, a Government funded site providing careers advice and opportunities	• Matching service to work placements, apprenticeships and further education • "How-to" videos from mentors and industry experts

Successive governments have tried to help NEETs through a variety of programmes, most recently through the £1 billion Youth Contract. This includes 410,000 new work places for 18–24 year olds, work experience for those receiving Jobseeker's Allowance, wage incentives for employers to take on young people through the Work Programme, funding for apprenticeships, and £126 million for disengaged 16–17 year old NEETs. Jobcentre Plus will offer weekly, rather than fortnightly, sign-on meetings and a National Careers Service interview. In addition to the Youth Contract, there are various resources across sectors aiming to help NEETs, many of which take advantage of the opportunities posed by technology. A sample of help available is included at Table 4.1. It is important to note that the after the increase in the compulsory education leaving age to 18 in 2015, 16 and 17 year olds out of education will be considered to be truanting.

Polling results: NEETs are interested in personalised, online support

We conducted a poll with ComRes of 400 16 to 24 year olds in the UK, not in employment, education or training to discern their attitudes towards the use of technology in searching for work and learning opportunities. The poll was conducted by telephone from 16th to 30th May 2012. The data was weighted to be demographically representative of all NEETs across the UK.

When we asked NEETs what sources they currently use to find out about work, training or education opportunities, ten% said they weren't using any sources to look for these opportunities. Of the 90% who were seeking information, 79% used online methods in some form, but were seeking out a range of resources. However, social networking sites (SNS) play a relatively small role in their search for opportunities, even though this group uses SNS in high numbers. When connecting with NEETs, we must consider not how they use technology generally, but how they use it in looking for work or training.

Figure 4.2: Sources NEETs use to find out about job opportunities

Online jobsites — 77%
JobCentre Plus — 71%
Friends, family or word of mouth — 63%
Newspapers — 54%
Specific employers — 45%
Recruitment agencies — 40%
Social networking sites — 23%
Other — 4%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012
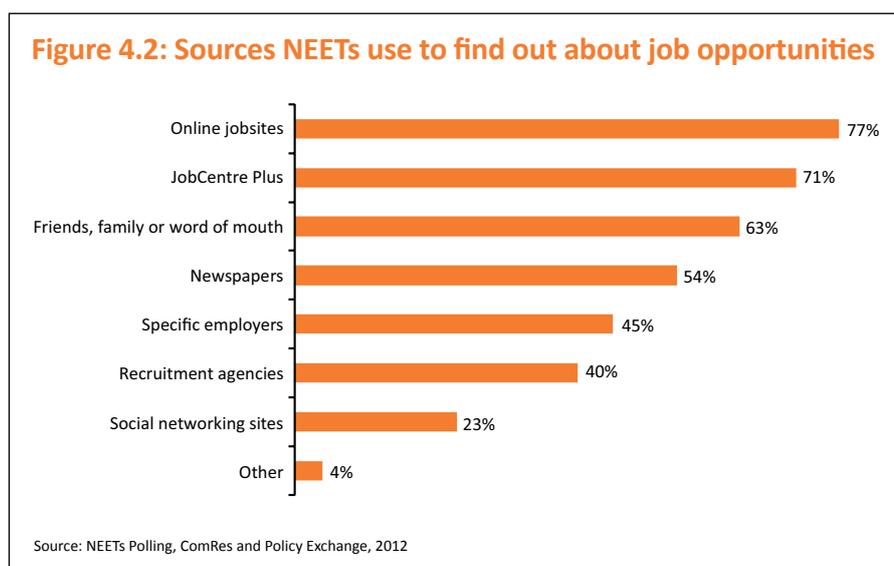
We also asked NEETs how they would like to contact employers and receive information about work opportunities. Email was the most popular choice among this group in both scenarios. NEETs also showed high levels of interest in websites, face-to-face meetings, telephone and post.

Figure 4.3: How NEETs would like to contact employers

Method	Percentage
Email	75%
Face-to-face meeting	67%
Website	65%
Telephone	57%
Post	49%
A presentation or job fair	27%
SMS/texting	27%
Social networking site	22%
An app	20%
Instant Messaging (i.e. BBM)	12%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

Figure 4.4: How NEETs would like to receive information about job opportunities

Method	Percentage
Email	78%
Post	62%
Website	57%
Face-to-face meeting	56%
Telephone	52%
SMS/texting	38%
A presentation or job fair	29%
Social networking site	23%
An app	22%
Instant Messaging (i.e. BBM)	13%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

We also asked NEETs what problems they found when looking for work. Most frequently, they reported that they did not hear back about submitted applications, suggesting the importance of feedback to this group. Issues around the availability of jobs and levels of skills and work experience were also widely reported. These results demonstrate that NEETs are facing a wide variety of barriers in finding work. Again, a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to be appropriate, and a joined-up service is especially necessary.

To help deal with the above issues, we asked NEETs what kind of support they would be interested in receiving. They reported strong interest in online sources

of support and personalised services. Contact with an adviser through phone or email also listed highly. Our polling shows that NEETs are looking for help beyond typical recruitment sites, and want advice and feedback tailored to their circumstances. Providing individualised feedback is often cited as very difficult for employers due to the scale of applications received, but an improved relationship between employer and applicant could lead to an improved perception of NEETs by potential employers.

Figure 4.5: Problems NEETs encounter looking for work

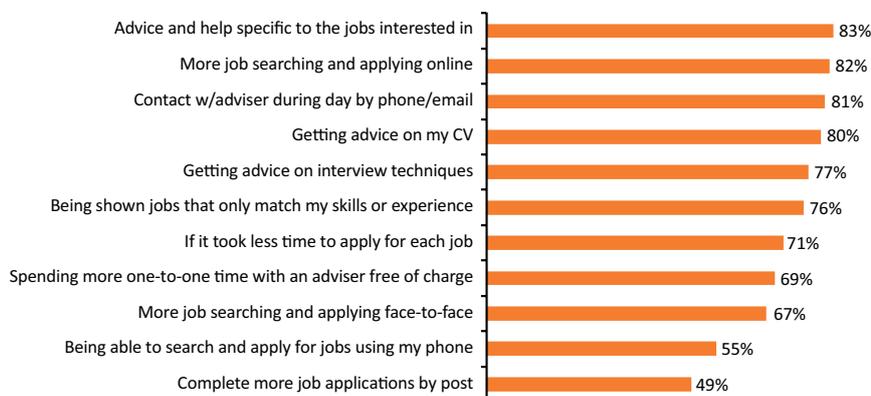| Problem	Percentage
Not hearing back about application	66%
Few jobs available	60%
Don't have the right skills/qualifications	56%
No jobs available interested in doing	50%
No work experience	47%
Not knowing if CV is good	36%
Not knowing what I want to do	31%
Unprepared for interviews	29%
Difficulty motivating self to look and apply for jobs	28%
Not knowing where to look for vacancies	22%
Too many sources to find out about jobs	15%
None of these	4%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

Figure 4.6: Help NEETs would like to receive

Help	Percentage
Advice and help specific to the jobs interested in	83%
More job searching and applying online	82%
Contact w/adviser during day by phone/email	81%
Getting advice on my CV	80%
Getting advice on interview techniques	77%
Being shown jobs that only match my skills or experience	76%
If it took less time to apply for each job	71%
Spending more one-to-one time with an adviser free of charge	69%
More job searching and applying face-to-face	67%
Being able to search and apply for jobs using my phone	55%
Complete more job applications by post	49%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

Only 8% of NEETs said they wouldn't use an app to help them find work. Of those interested in using an app, most showed interest in the potential of a JobCentre Plus app. Interestingly, NEETs showed low levels of interest in a government app, suggesting that NEETs view "government" differently to people on the front line in public services, revealing a channel where the government can potentially engage with NEETs. This suggests the opportunity for personalised

contact with NEETs to be effective, and that reaching this group means reaching the trusted people around them. However, it is important to note that a JobCentre Plus app already exists. It is free and available on Android and iPhone, although Blackberry is the most popular device among this age group.[32] The app allows the user to search for location-based vacancies. Similar to the various job searching apps available, it stops short of offering the engaging feedback and advice.

Figure 4.7: Screen Shot of JobCentre Plus App for iPhone
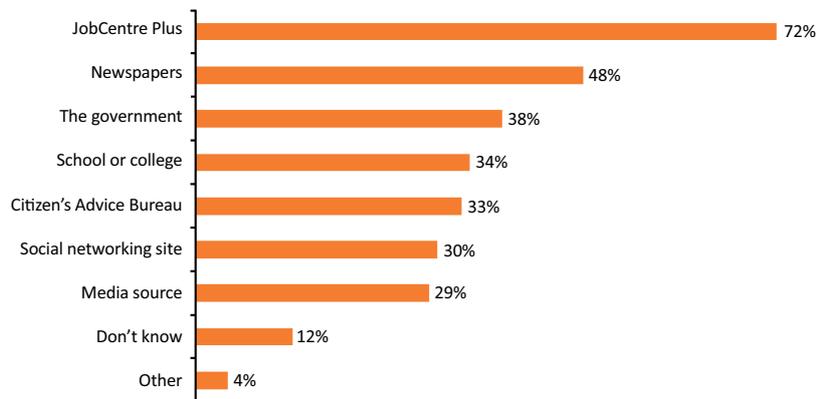

This suggests a variety of possibilities:

● NEETs may not be aware of these kinds of resources.
● They might feel these resources could be improved upon.
● They are looking for additional apps or resources from JobCentre Plus.
● They already use these resources.

In addition, we asked NEETs who they trust for advice about their future. Family and friends received the highest levels of trust, followed by JobCentre Plus advisers, mentors and teachers. Low levels of trust in the government again differentiated from public service providers, shows that government can use the people NEETs trust as a channel for reaching out to them. Therefore, digitally engaging their family, friends, advisers, mentors and former teachers could aid them in helping NEETs.

Our polling shows that digital channels are an especially strong channel for reaching NEETs, although this differs from their use of technology generally. Because they run into a wide range of issues when looking for work or training opportunities, they demonstrate a need for personalised support and feedback in addition to content. Also, technology can be used to reach out to NEETs and the people they trust for advice.
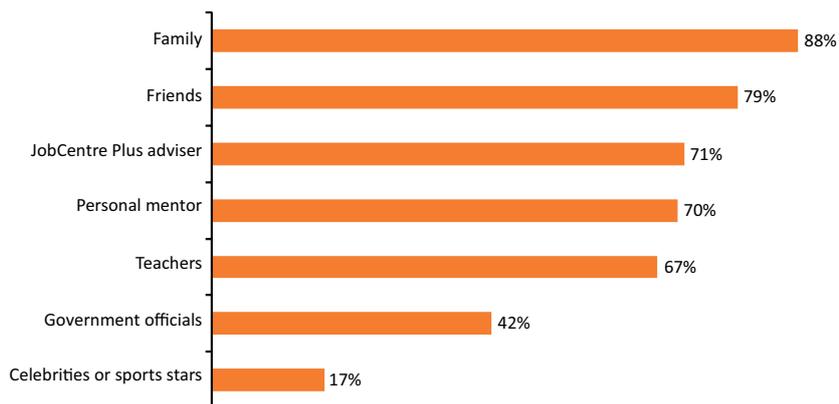
Figure 4.8: Whose app would NEETs use

Category	Percentage
JobCentre Plus	72%
Newspapers	48%
The government	38%
School or college	34%
Citizen's Advice Bureau	33%
Social networking site	30%
Media source	29%
Don't know	12%
Other	4%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

Figure 4.9: Who NEETs trust for advice about their future

Category	Percentage
Family	88%
Friends	79%
JobCentre Plus adviser	71%
Personal mentor	70%
Teachers	67%
Government officials	42%
Celebrities or sports stars	17%

Source: NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

5
Challenges for Policymakers

These findings will help us to address our original questions and aims. This helps to identify the key issues surrounding digital public service delivery to the youth unemployed and older people offline while providing a working framework for the public sector.

What special factors set vulnerable groups apart, do they have anything in common, and what does this mean for policymakers?

For both of these groups, there is a wealth of content and support available to help them overcome the barriers to inclusion – whether it be helping them find work or learning to use the internet. However, all of these resources are missing a focal point, resulting in a fragmented approach. In addition, these barriers do not exist in isolation, but instead are compounded by a variety of factors.

Older people have the lowest levels of internet-take up, and are in stark contrast to highly connected younger people, including NEETs. Where the majority of those aged 65 and older report little interest in or a lack of need to get online, NEETs show high levels of interest in using digital channels to help them find work, training or education opportunities.

Box 5.1: Attitudes and use of digital channels

Those aged 65 and older

- Among people aged 65 and over, 5.4 million people are offline.
- They make up 67% of the offline.
- Two-thirds of this age group cite a lack of interest in or need for the internet as their main reason for being offline.

NEETs

- 79% of NEETs use online methods to look for work, education and training opportunities.
- 75% would like to contact potential employers by email, their most preferred method.
- 78% would like to receive information about work, education and training opportunities by email, again their most preferred method.
- 82% would like to do more job searching and applying online.

Source: Getting On, Age UK, 2012. Adults Media Use and Attitudes Report, Ofcom, 2012. Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009 NEETs Polling, ComRes and Policy Exchange, 2012

Policymakers should identify strategies for streamlining public services and lead people to the necessary assistance, which often includes services outside of the public sector. Determining who is responsible for helping these vulnerable groups with issues, which are often compounded by other factors is difficult, but policymakers have an opportunity to ensure joined-up support through the use of technology. However, this must prioritise both digital inclusion and digital engagement.

What lessons can we generalise from this about how the government can use digital channels and ICT to better deliver public services and engage citizens?

Firstly, the government should avoid trying to make digital channels the most attractive option for people by penalising them for using traditional channels. This could be done, for example, by charging an extra fee for postal methods or charging to make contact via telephone. However, this would not be the right or practical approach for those who have never used the internet, and would punish some of the most vulnerable people in society. It is also unlikely to work. People are inspired to get online through personal experiences and interests.

Secondly, there are many organisations that provide people with the necessary help to get online or find work, but people require personalised advice and support. The government needs to find a better way to tap into these resources to help NEETs into work, training or education opportunities, without wasteful duplication of content.

Overall, different circumstances among citizens decrease the likelihood of a one-size-fits-all approach working effectively. The use of technology opens up a route to lead people in the right direction, towards identifying and using the help they need. For the offline, this means not merely showing or telling them these possibilities, but helping them experience the advantages for themselves. When making digital contact with the government is engaging, beneficial and personal, both government and citizen can benefit.

What will it take for leaders in the public sector to deliver this sort of change?

Leaders in the public sector should aspire to continue to close the digital divide. Universal internet take-up doesn't happen overnight, but investing in the digitally excluded has long-term benefits for both citizens and government. The government must have a sound digital inclusion strategy where the offline are able to experience the possibilities of the internet first-hand.

The government should also recognise, support and strengthen the already available resources for helping vulnerable groups, and can achieve this through the use of technology. This digital channel should be used not only by the public sector, but be put in the hands of citizens and their networks of support.

6
Recommendations

Based on our research and analysis we have two main recommendations for policy makers looking to make further progress on digital inclusion and digital engagement.

1. Technology Advocates
A new Technology Advocate role should be piloted, backed by the training and resources required to reach out to people who are offline and mentor them as they start to access digital public services.

Given the wide geographic dispersal of digitally excluded people, and the importance of helping people in their own homes and at their own pace, these roles should work on a local level. The means of delivery should be flexible, working through public sector and third sector organisations as appropriate in each instance to help identify people or groups to reach out to. On a day-to-day basis these advocates would take the internet to the digitally excluded in their homes or other convenient locations in the community, using a mobile device as the platform to help people experience being online, complete digital transactions and gain confidence using the web. These technology advocates would deliver this service with the needs demonstrated by older people offline in mind, but could help anyone facing a barrier to getting online. The objective is to help people personally experience being online and making a digital transaction with government, and to channel shift when it is appropriate, resulting in long-term benefits for both citizen and government.

> " The objective is to help people personally experience being online and making a digital transaction with government, and to channel shift when it is appropriate, resulting in long-term benefits for both citizen and government "

For a digital-by-default government to happen as quickly as possible, the Government must put more weight behind digital inclusion, drawing upon the experience of volunteer driven digital inclusion programmes. Creating a paid position to fill the role of a technology advocate allows the government to reach more people who are digitally excluded in a shorter period of time than could be expected by volunteers alone. Volunteers pledged over 12,000 hours to Race Online, but with an additional technology advocate role created by government, the number of hours spent helping people online would increase dramatically.[33] For

33 Race Online, 2012.

a full-scale programme, we estimate that the creation of around 1,000 Technology Advocate roles working over a five-year period would have the potential to get around 500–750 thousand people independently online. The cost of running the programme might be around £150 million over the five-year period, and the potential savings from cheaper government transactions worth around £170–225 million over the same period. Our assessment, therefore, is that such a scheme has a reasonable chance of delivering a small net saving to government of perhaps around £20–75 million over five years.[34]

If executed well, the same number of Technology Advocates might engage a significantly higher proportion of people to shift to digital channels. The net savings to government from the programme would increase correspondingly.

Even if the programme were just to break even financially, it would deliver the indirect social benefit of increased connectivity and all the other benefits of being online for a large number of people who are currently digitally excluded.

In the first instance, we recommend that a programme of this sort be piloted on a small scale to establish the principle and help inform the design of a full-scale programme. Running a pilot scheme with 100 Technology Advocates for one year might require a relatively small budget of around £2.5 million.

It is important that these technology advocates are able to understand the particular needs of someone who has not used the internet before. Those who have worked with this group point out that seeing their peers use digital channels and learning from them can be especially effective. This suggests that finding and activating technology advocates who have faced similar barriers to getting online would be ideal.

Figure 6.1: How Technology Advocates work

How it works	Short-term objectives	Long-term objectives
• Technology advocate visits offline person at home • They work together, and offline person experiences being online using a mobile device	• Offline person experiences benefits of online process such as speed and personalisation • Government benefits from digital contact with citizen	• Offline person channel shifts, making future government contact through digital channels • Government saves money and increases efficiency

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Box 6.1: Taking technology to voters

In a special primary election in five counties in 2011 in Oregon, people with disabilities marked their ballots on an iPad brought to their homes by election workers. Election workers found the iPad more convenient than the computer stations that they had previously taken to homebound voters. It is expected that a half-dozen states might use tablets for people with disabilities in the 2012 presidential election.[35]

Of the nearly 8 million people who are offline, we know that they tend to be heavier users of public services, and ensuring their accessibility to these groups is crucial, especially as the government transitions to a primarily digital delivery.

34 A more detailed breakdown of our costings is included at Annex B

35 Oregon Tests iPads as Aid to Disabled Voters, New York Times, 2011

Although other channels of contacting the government will not be switched off, we feel that integrating the most vulnerable and excluded into digital public services is crucial for a dynamic, efficient and inclusive digital government. Strategies that attempt to shift people to online contacts by charging for postal or telephone alternatives place an unnecessary burden on the vulnerable as well as complicate the administrative process on the side of the government. Engaging offline people is a practical problem for a government and encouraging people to use the internet helps progress an effective digital government.

2. Connect Youth Unemployed to Personalised Support
The government should take advantage of modern, interactive web technology to connect young people struggling with unemployment to helpful, personalised content and advice.

Finding the right support shouldn't rely on being lucky when searching the web. Young people need a focal point and effective pointers toward the most relevant providers. The web makes it possible to ask people in a structured way about their circumstances, needs and ambitions, and to recommend content accordingly (in much the same way as already happens for say travel, shopping or movies). So rather than spending too much time generating additional content, the government would do better to capitalise on its high profile and invest in helping young people reach what is already out there. The model for this should be quick, cheap and agile – focusing on specific sub-sets of the NEET population, and using off-the-shelf tools and templates to quickly deliver and iterate a service that is "good enough". This could be done in-house or through funding from an external partner. Other organisations in this space – including charities, social enterprises and businesses – would also have a role to play in ensuring they are listed and responding to user feedback. The platform itself could, in time, be integrated into the single domain site GOV.UK.

Government, charities, private sector and start-ups have all created online content and programmes offering services that range from CV builder apps to online mentors. There are countless sites advertising employment opportunities and general advice sites geared towards 16–24 year olds. However, all of these resources that do exist are often very valuable but are fragmented and lacking a focal point. Ensuring a joined-up service requires a multitude of resources working together, and technology can provide this delivery, whether a NEET is looking for part time work and child care, CV feedback and an internship, or sustained mentoring. Personalisation is an important aspect of delivering these kinds of services, and our polling found that 83% of NEETs would find it helpful if they were able to get advice and help specific to their interests. This site could also serve as a resource for those responsible for helping NEETs and those at risk of becoming NEET, such as family, advisers, teacher and mentors. We would expect that the people trusted by NEETs, including those working on the front lines of public service, would work to direct them to this tool. Based on experience of similar websites and surveys, the cost of designing and hosting this platform would likely be in the region of £300,000.[36] Savings and benefits would come from of variety of sources. The government would save money in channel shifts while creating more time for much needed face-to-face support, NEETs would have a consolidated, personalised and joined-up resource to ensure their

variety of needs are met, and those who support NEETs would also have a place to go for resources to help them further. Businesses and organisations providing support, resources or advice for NEETs would have a direct place to offer their services and receive feedback from the people they help. The scale of potential savings is hard to quantify – nevertheless the cost of this platform would be a small fraction of what youth unemployment currently costs the state.

Conclusion

These recommendations address two key facets of an effective digital-by-default government: digital inclusion and digital engagement, with particular concern for those aged 65 and older and the 16–24 year olds not in education, employment or training. The challenge for the government is to assist these groups online, engage them through digital channels and effectively deliver public services with the aid of appropriate technology. Success will be measured by the ability to reach the majority of socially, economically and digitally excluded with a government that is digital-by-default.

Annex A: Polling Data

The following tables include the full data sets, plus the variations in results dependent on age, time spent NEET and gender. In general, we found that the biggest determinates in differences among NEETs is time spent out of employment or education and gender.

Which of the following, if any, do you use to find out about work, training or education opportunities? (excluding "not applicable")

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 Months	6–12 Months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Unweighted total	*358*	*162*	*196*	*114*	*89*	*143*	*132*	*226*
Weighted total	*362*	*176*	*186*	*122*	*90*	*131*	*188*	*173*
Online Jobsites	278	126	152	106	69	97	147	131
Jobcentre Plus	258	120	138	85	75	90	134	124
Friends, family or word of mouth	228	111	117	81	65	76	118	110
Newspapers	195	93	102	60	57	72	106	89
Specific employers	161	69	92	68	45	44	93	68
Recruitment agencies	144	63	81	59	51	32	95	49
Social networking sites	83	36	47	31	18	28	39	44
Other	15	8	8	2	2	11	5	10
Don't know	16	11	5	1	1	7	10	6

Ideally, which of the following methods, if any, would you like to use to contact employers, agencies or organisations about work, training or education opportunities? (excluding "not applicable")

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Unweighted total	*383*	*173*	*196*	*118*	*91*	*162*	*131*	*252*
Weighted total	*385*	*189*	*154*	*126*	*92*	*149*	*192*	*193*
Email	289	135	154	105	71	104	136	153
Face-to-face meeting	257	121	136	92	73	86	145	112
Website	250	121	129	87	67	90	134	116
Telephone	218	107	111	88	59	68	123	95
Post	190	96	94	63	57	63	82	108
SMS/texting	105	56	49	36	24	44	55	50
A presentation or job fair	105	42	63	38	33	32	68	37
Social networking site	83	37	46	26	22	34	43	40
An app	79	43	36	29	22	23	49	30
Instant Messaging (i.e. BBM)	46	22	25	12	10	24	25	22
Don't know	23	13	10	4	2	10	10	14
Other	5	1	4	0	1	3	4	1

And again ideally, which of the following methods, if any, would you like to use to receive information about work, training or education opportunities from employers, agencies or organisations? (excluding "not applicable")

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Unweighted total	*384*	*174*	*210*	*118*	*92*	*162*	*133*	*251*
Weighted total	*387*	*190*	*196*	*126*	*93*	*150*	*194*	*193*
Email	302	143	159	108	75	104	145	157
Post	241	122	119	82	66	85	113	128
Website	221	104	117	79	59	80	117	104
Face-to-face meeting	218	106	112	83	60	72	128	90
Telephone	201	99	103	82	57	60	118	83
SMS/texting	145	72	73	51	33	57	81	64
A presentation or job fair	114	51	63	44	36	32	72	42
Social networking site	89	34	56	30	30	30	49	40
An app	86	42	44	35	22	26	53	33
Instant Messaging (i.e. BBM)	52	23	29	12	12	28	32	20
Don't know	17	5	12	1	3	12	8	9
Other	1	1	3	0	1	1	4	0

I am now going to read out a number of things that you may or may not have encountered when looking for work. Which, if any, have been problems that you have ever personally encountered when looking for work? (out of total 400)

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Not hearing back about application	265	126	138	95	75	88	133	131
Few jobs available	242	127	115	84	65	86	123	119
Don't have right skills/qualifications	223	115	108	66	63	89	104	119
No jobs available interested in doing	200	106	95	65	51	72	99	101
No work experience	190	97	93	54	56	75	90	100
Not knowing if CV is good	145	72	73	46	46	49	83	62
Not knowing what I want to do	123	56	67	30	39	48	55	67
Unprepared for interviews	117	60	57	38	32	46	62	55
Difficulty motivating self to look and apply for jobs	112	53	59	32	33	43	59	52
Not knowing where to look for vacancies	89	46	43	31	29	25	49	40
Too many sources to find out about jobs	61	30	31	27	15	17	46	15
None of these	15	8	7	3	1	11	7	8

For each of the following, please say whether you think they are, or would be, helpful or unhelpful for you when looking for jobs? (those reporting helpful, out of 400)

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Advice and help specific to the jobs interested in	333	159	175	115	79	131	162	171
More job searching and applying online	329	159	169	110	78	133	160	169
Contact w/adviser during day by phone/email	323	161	162	117	78	118	164	159

Getting advice on my CV	321	158	163	109	75	126	161	160
Getting advice on interview techniques	307	155	152	101	76	118	146	161
Being shown jobs that only match my skills or experience	304	146	159	101	69	124	145	159
If it took less time to apply for each job	285	141	144	103	65	110	137	148
Spending more one-on-one time with an adviser free of charge	278	141	137	92	76	107	142	136
More job searching and applying face-to-face	269	132	137	97	70	99	146	123
Being able to search and apply for jobs using my phone	220	118	102	72	48	90	106	114
Complete more job applications by post	196	106	91	64	48	82	94	102

If you were able to, from which, if any, of the following types of organisations would you use an app for a smartphone or website to help you find a work, training or education opportunity? (excluding "not applicable")

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Unweighted total	*362*	*166*	*196*	*114*	*86*	*152*	*130*	*232*
Weighted total	*369*	*183*	*186*	*123*	*88*	*142*	*190*	*179*
JobCentre Plus	265	128	138	97	71	92	132	133
Newspapers	178	84	4	62	56	52	103	75
The government	139	69	70	50	37	47	100	39
School or college	124	70	54	56	34	32	84	40
Citizen's Advice Bureau	123	55	68	50	32	39	80	43
Social networking site	111	51	59	44	32	32	60	50
Media source	107	53	54	40	28	37	64	42
Don't know	45	21	23	12	5	24	14	30
Other	14	6	8	3	3	6	8	6

Those reporting they wouldn't use an app (out of 400)

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 Months	6–12 Months	1 Year or more	Male	Female
Wouldn't use an app	31	14	16	7	6	16	8	23

I'm going to read out a list of people who may or may not give you advice about your future. For each one please tell me whether you would trust them a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or not at all to give you advice about your future. (Those reporting trust, out of 400)

	Total	16–21	22–24	Up to 6 months	6–12 months	1 year or more	Male	Female
Family	353	177	176	121	84	137	175	177
Friends	316	161	155	104	81	122	153	163
JobCentre Plus adviser	282	152	131	101	70	98	143	139
Personal mentor	281	138	143	99	66	110	134	147
Teachers	269	135	134	87	69	105	126	143
Government officials	0.42	0.51	0.34	0.45	0.44	0.38	0.45	0.4
Celebrities or sports stars	0.17	0.22	0.12	0.11	0.2	0.19	0.18	0.16

We found significant differences between men and women in methods for finding out about employment, education or training opportunities. Men are much more likely to use recruitment agencies and seek out specific employers or education providers. Men also show much stronger preference for contacting employers or receiving information through face-to-face meetings, telephone, at a conference or job fair or through an app. Women are more likely than men to say they wouldn't use an app to help them find work, especially if it is a government app. However those who wouldn't use an app are a small minority.

Once someone has been a NEET for a year or more (long-term NEET), their use of online, media and organisations as sources for information about work, training or education opportunities drops significantly compared to those who have been NEET for up to 6 months (short-term NEET). Overall, long-term NEETs also show less interest in the various methods for contacting employers or receiving information about work, training or education opportunities. We often found a spike in interests in help or methods of looking for work among those who have been NEET for between 6 months and 1 year. Trust among NEETs who have been so for a year or more shows lower levels of trust in everyone presented to them than short-term NEETs, except celebrities and sports stars.

Annex B: Costing our Recommendations

We estimate the costs for the Technology Advocates as follows:

We assume a fully loaded cost of around £30,000 a year per advocate (covering salary, benefits, national insurance, equipment and transport). For 1,000 Technology Advocates employed over five years, the cost would total around £150 million.

We assume that each Technology Advocate could spend time with between 15 and 20 people per working week. Working 46 weeks per year, 1,000 Technology Advocates could reach between 3.5 and 4.5 million people over a 5 period. Previous studies have shown that 16% of individuals are expected to shift to the digital channel after seeing the benefits of accessing public services online. So over a five-year period, around 500–750 thousand people might be engaged and given the confidence to go online independently.[37]

Figure Annex 1: People accessing public services
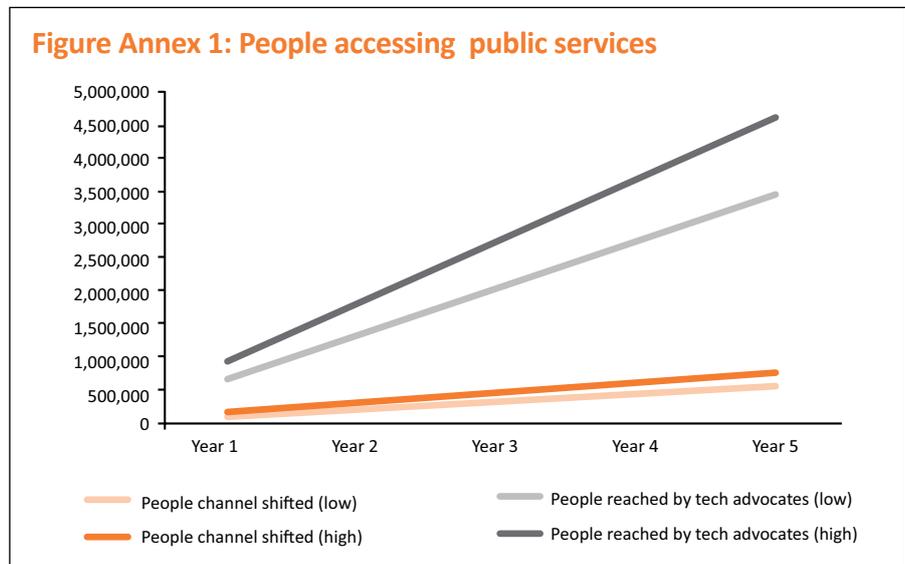
Previous studies have shown that each government transaction successfully shifted to the digital channel saves an average of £8.60, and the average user has occasion to make around one transaction a month. Based on the profile of channel shifting described above, gross cumulative savings for government would be between £170 and £225 million.[38]

After taking into account the cost of running the Technology Advocates programme, the net cumulative savings would be between £20 and £75 million.

This estimate is necessarily uncertain. Nevertheless we are confident that a programme of this sort stands a good chance of breaking even financially – and

37 Accessing the Internet at Home, Ofcom, 2009. 16% are expected to channel shift after seeing the benefits of accessing public services themselves. However, using our recommendation to allow people to experience the digital channel has the potential to increase this number significantly.

38 Champion for Digital Inclusion, Race Online, 2009.

even if no net savings were delivered, it would still deliver the indirect and social benefits of a more connected population. Moreover, we believe that if executed well, significantly more than 16% of individuals might be encouraged to channel shift. If this were the case then the potential savings would be correspondingly higher.

Digital channels have the potential to transform interactions between people and government, presenting both challenges and opportunities for helping some of the most vulnerable and excluded groups in society.

This report is about how government can use technology to improve the delivery of public services to citizens across the age spectrum, with specific focus on the youth unemployed and people aging offline.

Our recommendations show how a digital-by-default government can reach the digitally excluded and provide support for young people looking for work and education opportunities.