



#UKICDigital Adoption Event

26th February 2020

BT Tower, London





Foreword:

Councillor Alan Lion

Digital is driving the fourth industrial revolution; its impact is already being seen and felt in every area of society.

Since this event at BT Tower we've entered the worldwide economic meltdown and social uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The change, in a relatively short time to mass homeworking and accelerated adoption of digital technologies demonstrates the significant importance for both business and leisure, and the impact on society. So, when we come through this, it's highly likely that the world will have changed significantly. As a result, it will be even more important to ensure the infrastructure is in place, that growing demand for capacity can be met and that people can develop the appropriate skills both soft and technical - to meet the changing requirements that will be coming.

This conference was all about how we can ensure 'our place, the LSCC Innovation Corridor' continues to be at the forefront of this process. We brought together a wide range of leaders from across the Innovation Corridor and other speakers who had some very important things to say about this journey and how we collectively and individually achieve this.

Speakers from DCMS set out the government's agenda, partners from business highlighted the investment and potential of the infrastructure across the area. Leaders from the Essex & Hertfordshire Digital Innovation Zone set out how they were bringing their stakeholders together to coordinate, champion and lead a coherent response. The whole event was ably led and managed by our partners from Cambridge Wireless.

Perhaps the most important contributions came from the audience, drawn from across the Innovation Corridor including businesses of all sizes, universities, further education and government. Together in the workshops they tackled some of the burning issues, challenges and opportunities that come along with real digital delivery.

This report highlights the contributions by the delegates and helps define what digital success can look like for a place like ours. Colleagues from the Digital Innovation Zone, North London Chamber of Commerce and LSCC will now be focusing on how we expand the communications and networks built at the event. We will also be working to build on the learning that was generated and the enthusiasm of delegates for more collaborative working. This will help us to sustain our economy and services through this difficult period and ensure that we come out of the current difficulties stronger and more resilient.

Cllr Alan Lion

Chairman of the DIZ

Cabinet Member Strategic Projects & External Liaison, Epping Forest District Council

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Welcome to the BT Tower



Philip Baulch, BT

Welcome and Introduction

Philip Baulch, Director of Technology & Innovation at BT, provided a fascinating opening to the event by taking delegates on a whirlwind tour of the history of the BT Tower. Although the Tower was opened in 1965 by Harold Wilson, it remained an official secret until 1993 before being given national monument status in 2001. Built from 13,000t of steel and containing 50,000sq ft of glass, the tower reaches 189m high and has a revolving 34th floor at 158 m.

Carrying 95% of all UK TV content, the BT Tower remains an important technology hub and was therefore a fitting venue for a discussion about driving digital adoption in the UK's Innovation Corridor. Philip emphasised how important technology is for future prosperity, sustainability and inclusion, as well as the fibre optic and mobile services that thread different technologies together. He also spelled out the importance of focusing efforts at regional levels, particularly where power has been devolved, and how data analytics will help to resolve regional-specific issues.

A common infrastructure platform now exists, but how can digital change be brought about and new services rolled out? The Digital Innovation Zone was set up to allow the platform to be shared across county boundaries.

Phil then handed over to the chair of the event, Simon Mead from Cambridge Wireless. Discussion began with a reminder of the importance of technology by Simon. He articulated his vision that everyone should benefit from world class digital connectivity and stressed that new technologies will affect the way we do business. He also reminded us that jobs in the digital technology sector are rising five times faster than the rest of the economy and that the sector is currently worth £184bn to the UK economy.

Bradley explained how the North London Chamber of Commerce wanted to build a 21st century chamber fit for 21st century business. By providing a conduit between players in the market, through the organisation of workshops, seminars, networking events, and round tables, the North London Chamber of Commerce will help organisations grow and generate new business opportunities for their customers. The customer base is broad, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to large corporate organisations, and from retail businesses to digital innovators in the AI and Insurtech spheres. Digital adoption can help businesses to grow, but because this includes a wide array of technologies, the North London Chamber of Commerce can act as a facilitator to bring relevant parties together and maximise impact.

The need to focus on rural economies was conveyed by Councillor Alan Lion, from Epping Forest District Council, Chairman of the Essex + Herts Digital Innovation Zone and Deputy Chair of the LSCC. Connectivity is essential in rural areas but it requires infrastructure investment.

Simon Mead, Cambridge Wireless



Cllr Alan Lion, Epping Forest DC and Bradley Rood, North London Chamber of Commerce



Address from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) - Gila Sacks

Gila’s address concerned the timely topic of how government can build upon existing infrastructure to drive digital adoption, grow businesses, and therefore grow the economy. She outlined the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport’s vision of a thriving economy driven by technology and underpinned by five key principles.

- an unashamedly pro-technology government
- that the benefit of technology should be spread more fairly and widely
- to drive growth through pro-innovation regulation
- safety and security online
- a drive to keep the internet free and open.

Technology can help deliver prosperity, sustainability and inclusion – things which the Innovation Corridor aims to achieve. Everyone should benefit from world class digital connectivity while new technologies improve the way we do business - digital adoption can help all businesses grow, and all people have more rewarding lives.

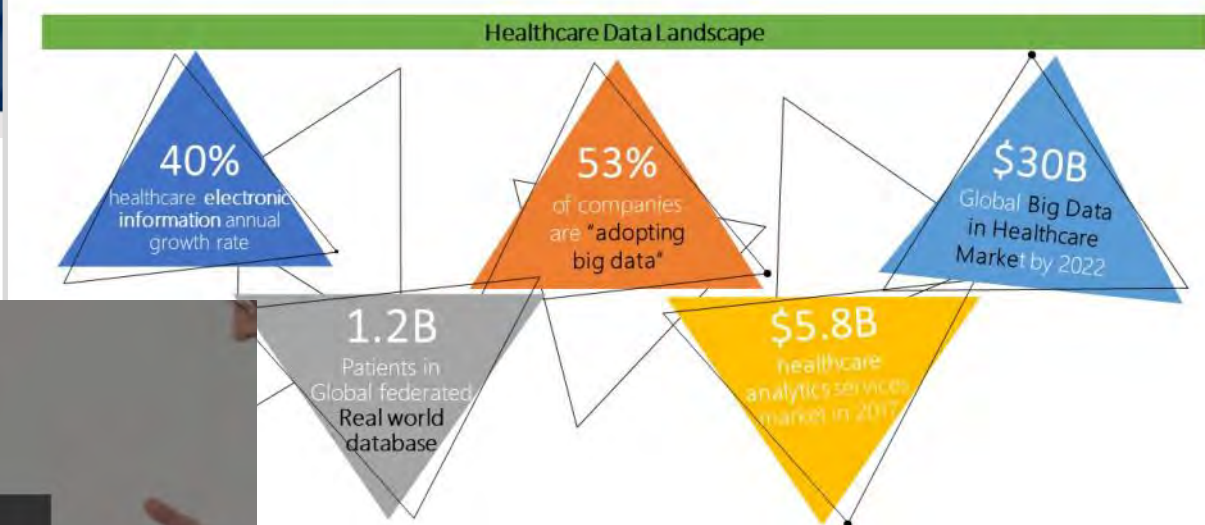
All areas need high quality digital connection – urban and rural. There are cost implications here, so we need to focus on how digital change can be brought about and new services rolled out.



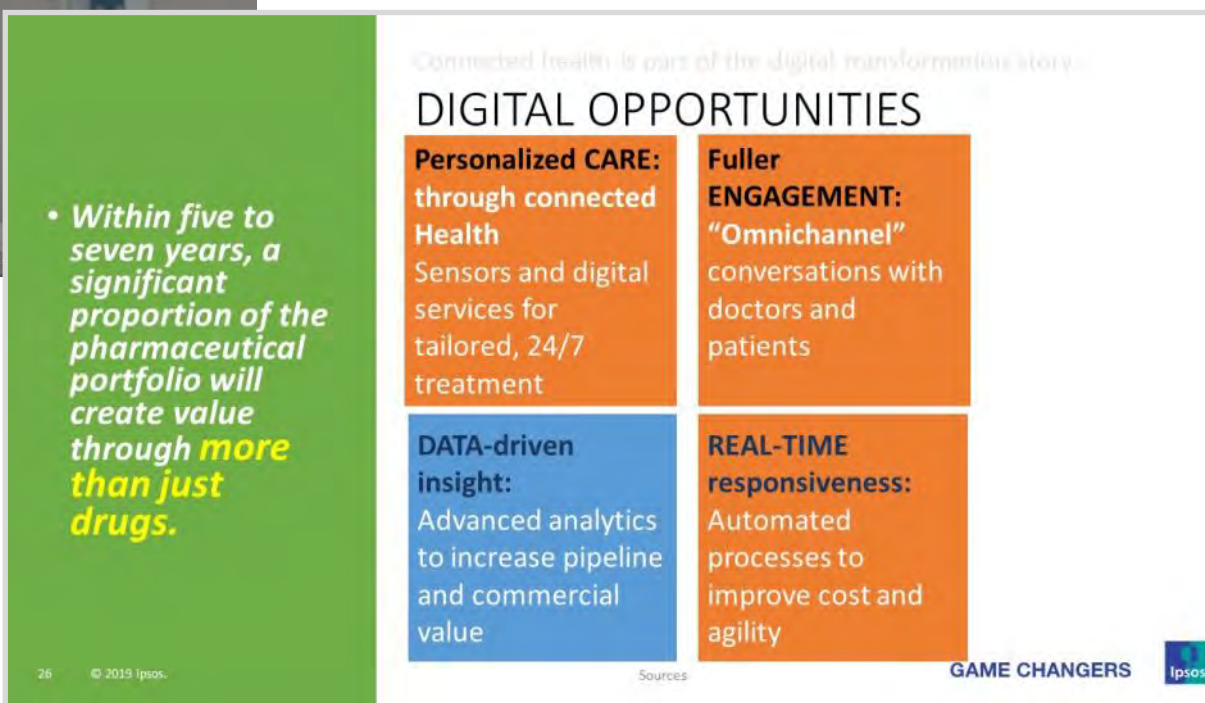
Gila Sacks, DCMS



SOMETHING IS HAPPENING: INFORMATION, DATA, BIG DATA...



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The UK's Innovation Corridor Digital Showcase Health Sector and Digital - Simon Atkinson, Ipsos Mori

Recent market research conducted by IpsosMori into public thinking about healthcare in Britain showed that the most important issue facing Britain today is healthcare and a concern that the NHS will deteriorate further. A trend that emerged was an interest in connected health, including better relationships between doctors and patients, personalised medicine, and, in particular, personalised care. Interestingly, only 11% of Britons have experienced a health device such as a Fitbit, but more are likely to use one if recommended by a doctor or nurse. There are concerns about data being shared, but trust that the healthcare system would take better care of personal data than other organisations. There is real potential to improve public health through digital adoption.

Simon Atkinson, Ipsos MORI



Ipsos MORI

Deployment Best Practice - Noelle Godfrey, Cambridgeshire County Council

Insight into the deployment of technology to connect Cambridgeshire was provided by Noelle Godfrey.

She explained that a fundamental driver of adoption is good digital infrastructure, plus ambition, collaboration, and creativity. The council's goal is to achieve superfast broadband for everyone by the end of 2020 and 30% full fibre coverage by 2022. There are also ambitions to improve 2G-5G mobile connectivity and provide free Wi-Fi in public areas. Noelle articulated the need to look for creative solutions when conventional solutions fail, for example, by ensuring that ducts for fibre networks are installed during highway work. We were reminded about the importance of building good infrastructure, including digital, to protect businesses.



Noelle Godfrey, Cambridgeshire CC



Large Corporate Execution - Stephen Pattison, Arm

In a brief interlude of light entertainment, delegates were told a story of the three little pigs and reminded about the importance of building good infrastructure including digital strategies, to protect businesses. A good digital strategy is important to deliver change and improvement as well as the needs of a business. Digital technology has the capability to make business more efficient. One example is the use of cloud technology for data storage and computing, thus transferring risk onto businesses that are experts in these areas. Technology is changing the way we do things, including in East Anglia, which is on the cusp of an agricultural revolution. This resulted last summer in an abundant supply of very tasty home-grown cherries.

Stephen Pattison, Arm



SME Digital Skills Challenge - Shereen Daniels, HR Rewired

People are often the missing factor from technology conversations. Investment in technology provides opportunities to explore new markets and be competitive, but a barrier to implementing new technology is people's skill levels. Soft skills are needed to adopt and adapt to technology: cognitive flexibility; emotional intelligence; ability to build relationships; creativity; critical thinking and so on. However, organisations don't have people with these skills because they look for specific experience rather than the ability to learn new skills. In order to compete, SMEs need the right kind of people as well as processes, data, and devices. Technology can only be an enabler if there are people that can identify the problem that needs solving and communicate this within the business.

Shereen Daniels, HR Rewired



The Investment Opportunity - Paul Finch, KAO Data

Kao Data is the UK's largest data centre and a key enabler for technology companies and organisations that generate or use large data sets. Data – the platinum of the fourth industrial revolution – is changing the world. 90% of today's data has been created since 2016, in large part due to the Internet of Things. Google's self-driving car, for example, generates 1 GB of data every second.

The decision to build the new Kao data centre was taken when the UK's demand for data storage approached 75 MW per annum and existing data centres in Docklands and Slough were becoming saturated. Backed by 100% sustainable energy sources, this new data centre can deliver high levels of availability, scalability, reliability, and energy efficiency with less complexity. The location in Harlow, within the UK's Innovation Corridor, provides a huge opportunity to attract new customers. Indeed, the European Bioinformatics Institute committed over 270 PB to Kao last year. Funding for the site was originally provided by Homes England, who saw the value of a data centre to the local economy. Subsequent funding from the Goldacre Noé Group was followed by an investment from Legal & General Capital in 2019, once the first building had been completed.



Paul Finch, KAO Data



#UKICDigital – 2020 Digital Event

Tuesday 25th February 2020 - BT Tower



Workshops

Consumer Impact

What needs to be done to encourage end user adoption? How will customers benefit from this adoption?

Customer insight is paramount for understanding consumers' needs in order to ensure that new technologies will add value to their lives. Security and confidence around individuals' data, is important, particularly when the customer journey involves multiple organisations. Silo working is ineffective in these circumstances, but GDPR rules are a challenge for sharing consumer data between organisations. In some areas, such as social media, it is important to clearly communicate the social benefits of digital solutions so that consumers are given the information they need to make a choice about engaging with the digital future.

Tech Infrastructure

Is the existing technology infrastructure fit for purpose? What can businesses do to accelerate adoption?

The government has pledged to provide gigabit broadband to every home. The infrastructure for this pledge will require ducts for fibre networks to be laid under roads, so it will be important to coordinate this effort with water, gas and electricity works to minimise disruption and cost. Government intervention may be needed to ensure that new highway developments include provision for fibre optic ducts. Demand for superfast broadband would likely come from high-growth businesses, therefore inspiring these businesses to exploit opportunities to improve broadband infrastructure could be a way forward.

The High Street – Re-thinking Consumer Behaviours

Can technology save the High Street?

The high street of the future needs to be a place to meet and connect with people, not just a place to shop. It should offer services that can't be provided online, for example colour consultations and make up advice, and products like carpets that people need to physically touch. The group discussed how the real-world shop could be better integrated with an online presence, which might involve offering greater discounts in store than online or providing samples of unusual items in store.

But how can these and other organisations be persuaded to adopt technology to survive the modern world? The benefits of change need to be communicated and disseminated throughout entire organisations because digital adoption is as much about people as it is about processes. Early adopters should be consulted, encouraged to spread the word, and lessons learned from their mistakes.





Skills

New jobs require new skills, but people skills still matter.

What capabilities are required to exploit digital opportunities? Many jobs didn't exist five years ago, so businesses need to invest in people who can re-learn. There are currently four generations in the workplace today (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Y), all of whom have different needs and expectations, but all of which need to be engaged in digital adoption, because diversity and inclusion matters. It is important for businesses to recognise new talent and bring it in at the appropriate moment.

Inward Investment - Creating the Right Environment

The UK's Innovation Corridor's digital story can attract further inward investment.

Using Kao Data as a case study, people, location and infrastructure could all be used to attract investment, but the best story is the sum of these various parts.

A barrier to investment in the corridor is the number of potentially discordant voices. Having a more joined-up approach and communicating a set of shared reasons to invest in the region could help to attract investment, as has been the case in Singapore.





Keynote: Making Digital Innovation Work - Rosalind Singleton

The UK5G Innovation Network was set up by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to help businesses deploy 5G, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas. It is a form of localised innovation that involves new tools and systems, and which has the potential to change how businesses interact with customers and the services they offer.

For successful deployment, organisations need to consider where they want to be in ten years time. Ten years ago Kindles were new and 4G networks were still in the planning. These advances ended up revolutionising the publishing and information industry, in a way which was not necessarily foreseen, illustrating just how hard it is to predict what the landscape will be like in 2030.

There are five “digital forces of transformative technologies”:

- mobility (freeing people from desks)
- big data (the Internet of Things)
- social media (including the reviewing industry)
- cloud computing (reducing the need to spend money)
- AI and robotics (reducing the need for humans and processes)

Other issues will influence technological adoption: the need to look after the environment, caring for an ageing population, training people in the right skills, and increasing connectivity whilst ensuring security and identity.

For adoption to be successful, businesses need individuals with a digital mindset, including the following capabilities: agility and resilience (the ability to anticipate and accept change); comfort with ambiguity (as the line between work and personal life blurs); curiosity coupled with an abundance mindset (fearless to experiment); collaborative (so information and data are shared); and embracing of diversity and disagreement (to create safe spaces for people to challenge each other).

Organisations also need to bear in mind that adults find it harder to adopt new technology than teenagers, and that people have a limited attention budget for change due to amount of training that needs to be done. Creating a habit of change – little and often – is the best strategy to adopt.

Digital: The 5 Digital Forces



Wrap up and next steps

Simon Mead began to close proceedings by applauding delegates for their opinions, explaining how important it was to get feedback from the real world.

Councillor Alan Lion thanked BT for hosting the event and Lysandra Halmshaw from Epping Forest District Council for organising such an interesting afternoon. He articulated his take home message from the event, which was that technology must make things better for people rather than people having to learn to live with technology. He cited the high street as a striking example – in five years' time it must provide things that people can engage with: beauty salons, coffee shops, restaurants and gyms etc.

The day's events were concluded with a drinks reception on the revolving 34th floor, with breath-taking views over London.



Notes

LSCC THE UK's INNOVATION CORRIDOR

BE PART OF THE
NEXT
GENERATION OF
DIGITAL
ADOPTION

#UKICDigital



Working together towards digital adoption

For more information please go to:

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