The Socitm magazine for members

InOurView

Issue 11 | Spring 2017

Small steps, big changes

Nudging goes local

Nudging with impact: Spring Conference

PLUS: GDS's local plans | Ed Garcez moves triborough | Digi-dogs and supporting start-ups in Tel Aviv

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A PLACE TO WORK TOGETHER

The purpose and focus of local authorities is evolving from being direct deliverers of services to enablers of outcomes in a place.

As individuals, many of us are investing in our own technology to help us live healthier lifestyles, whether it is wearables like Fitbits and smart-watches or devices like Echo from Amazon. These technologies can be built upon to achieve those social outcomes, such as helping older people continue to live independently in their own homes for longer.

I was involved many years ago in a 'whole system demonstrator' project, looking at assistive technology to help people live independently in their own homes. The biggest challenge in those days was the lack of interoperability and commoditisation of those products. Devices like the Echo have been designed to be cheap, easy to use and interface with. Increasingly, there will be an ecosystem of connected products and services around the home.

Such technologies are designed to allow you to buy things more easily, to access music and video content, but why shouldn't they be used to help isolated, vulnerable adults to be in contact with family, friends, community groups and to help people live an unsupported lifestyle at home into their later years? Essex CC is one council pioneering this approach to creating a marketplace for alternative adult social care solutions and also using associated 'nudge' techniques, both of which you can read about in this publication (page 11).

Public health is another area where I have seen nudge techniques used effectively. This includes looking at local health outcomes and associated costs, then using data to target marketing and communications resources to initiate behaviour change. In Norfolk CC we have access to two billion accident and emergency records, allowing us to analyse nationally who is like us, who is being more or less effective at reducing A&E admissions and seeing what we can learn from them.

For example, I recently came across a county council (responsible for social care budgets), which understanding that housing and health are closely connected, funded a district council housing officer to attend NHS A&E and help ensure relevant patients got released earlier and were less likely to return by quickly carrying out any necessary housing adaptations. It is very expensive to keep someone in hospital and getting out a day or two early can make a big difference. It's about joining up local authorities' actions and expenditure with local NHS providers.

Where we do need to continue to provide direct services, such as transportation for children with special education needs, then better use of data, GIS and other visualisation tools provide a great way to help improve services and reduce costs. To achieve smarter transport in Norfolk, we've been mapping all children's travel routes in order to optimise travel time and costs.

When you display information graphically, where children start from and where they go to for services, it allows you to make better decisions. Why not just move the service to where the children are rather than moving lots of children to the service location every day? That mashing-up of emerging technologies, business intelligence and better use of data is a real focus for us. If you can use the data to more effectively target your scarce resources towards early intervention and smarter activities, it's got to make sense.* Read on to find out about smart transport developments in Tel Aviv on page 20.

Having recently attended the Socitm Local CIO Council, I saw presentations from the Government Digital Service (see news p6) and NHS Digital, and was struck by the really positive position they and also the new National Cyber Security Centre are taking to be more inclusive and work in collaboration with local government. We need to try and ensure the things that they do nationally are informed by local needs and able to be reused locally.

I'm enthusiastic and positive about how Socitm on behalf of its members can engage with central government agencies to help us do things once, do it well and then to share it. We are all funded through taxation, so it's about the whole of government, local and central, working together.

**Norfolk's work improving school transport through mapping: bit.ly/2oewFFm*

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GDS EXTENDS LOCAL WORK AND ENGAGEMENT

The Government Digital Service (GDS) is extending its local work by running pilots with local services using GOV.UK Verify as well as running research focused on how to better support local service delivery, the Local Public Service CIO Council (LCIOC) heard at its 16 March meeting in London.

GDS has been working with Warwickshire County Council since 2013 in alpha trials and is now moving Verify into private beta for Blue Badge renewals through a three-month trial with around 750 existing holders. Those participating will be asked to prove their identity using Verify, and will then be asked for permission for Warwickshire to check their eligibility with Department for Work and Pensions data. They will be told within moments if they still qualify for the badge.

GDS is also running two other pilots on concessionary travel passes and residential parking permits with local authorities, to understand how Verify can be used across local government.

Use of Verify is currently free for local authorities and citizens, and it has plans to increase the number of verified users. When questioned by LCIOC attendees on how charging would work when introduced, a GDS representative said the department was still working on this but was liaising with stakeholders to make it as fair as possible.

GDS has also been carrying out research with more than 50 public-sector IT professionals at 17 organisations in Yorkshire and north-east England. After many interviews and nearly 400 pages of comments it found that many workers would like clearer and more consistent methods of communication to help with their digital transformations.

Those interviewed generally understood and supported the work of GDS, but many wanted it to be more accessible. The research also found that while GDS engaged well with those delivering digital services, better support could be provided for public sector senior managers and directors.

Getting out of London: GDS wants to be more accessible to those outside the capital

LCIOC heard that GDS is working on how to improve its communications, and is considering the importance of location when supporting those designing and delivering public services as an option for making positive changes. It hopes to play a greater role in discussing digital plans as a 'critical friend' and in match-making between different parts of the public sector that are working on similar things.

As well as Verify, GDS is working on other shared platforms including GOV.UK Pay for accepting payments and GOV.UK Notify for text messages and emails, both of which recently went live. It is also looking at ways to help public sector professionals work together across organisations, such as through making staff wi-fi networks interoperable or through online collaboration systems like Slack.

It is seeking input from local government to its development plans, contained within the Government Transformation Strategy published in February.

Warwickshire Blue Badge and GOV.UK Verify: bit.ly/2nQPj2x

New pilots: http://bit.ly/2pbH17q

Government Transformation Strategy: bit.ly/2ntQyJP

Longer version of this report for Socitm members (Socitm.net login required): bit.ly/2oOSHjD

ONLINE LIBRARY AND WASTE SERVICES NEED WORK, FINDS BETTER CONNECTED

Just 45 per cent of English library services do a good or very good job in helping users access digital material, according to a recently-published report within Socitm's Better Connected research.

Despite library services being responsible for eight per cent of website visits, researchers found that many councils do not provide clear explanations of how to join the library or access online resources. This contrasts with a relatively good performance on renewing library books online, where 74 per cent of county councils did a good or very good job in Better Connected's 2015-16 survey.

Warwickshire County Council, one of the minority rated good or very good in the new research, says that many of its online services are provided by third parties.

"What it's really important for us to do is make it really clear on our web pages about how to access those seamlessly," says Ayub Khan, Warwickshire's face to face services manager, pictured below. "Each e-book provider has a different navigation and way to download those e-books. It can be a little bit confusing for the customer."

Ayub Khan,
Warwickshire County Council

To help with this, Warwickshire has put detailed information online in accessible language covering how to use each service, Khan adds: "It's about following it through from a customer's perspective, rather than from a provider's perspective."

Some of the online services such as reference works including the Oxford English Dictionary and newspaper archives are bought through a deal established by the Society of Chief Librarians and Jisc, a not-for-profit organisation that runs digital services for UK higher and further education.

"We have a framework agreement that every local authority can use," says Khan, who leads for the Society of Chief Librarians on what it calls the Universal Digital Offer. "You know that standards have been met and prices have been negotiated effectively." The Society estimates the deal saves councils £1.5m. Warwickshire adds to the nationally-available services by purchasing family research services Ancestry.com and Find My Past.

Outsourcing is causing problems for other online services, according to another Better Connected survey on bulky waste. This found that only 40 per cent of councils across the UK running waste services provide a good or very good service for ordering the collection of bulky waste and that only 38 per cent allowed online booking.

Many have outsourced the collection of bulky items such as beds and sofas to recycling charities or businesses. The research found that some of these third parties do a poor job of providing information online, with even fewer providing online booking.

"Some of the outsourced services are seriously lacking when in comes to providing information about the service online, let alone online booking and fulfilment," says Vicky Sargent, Better Connected programme director. She added that managers might take the view that outsourcing a service means the level of online service is no longer their responsibility: "But it seems unlikely that they would take the same view of the quality of the physical as opposed to the virtual service being offered."

Better Connected found other problems with bulky waste collections including online services that did not work adequately when accessed from mobile devices, unclear or incomplete lists of what could be collected and not mentioning how many items were covered by a payment or how far in advance a booking had to be made.

Some councils also require people to open an online customer account to order a collection. All of these are likely to result in users giving up on the online process and phoning, usually at a higher transaction cost to the councils.

Better Connected: betterconnected.socitm.net

Better Connected Live will take place on 28 and 29 June in Birmingham, including workshops and masterclasses reflecting learning from the research activity. There will also be the Better Connected Awards and party. Find out more at connectedlocalgovernment.co.uk

Part of this article has previously been published on TheInformationDaily.com

DIRECTORIES AND PORTALS TO JOIN UP SOCIAL CARE

Lancashire County Council and Sedgemoor District Council are working with the Local Government Association on a common data standard for local services, to enable directories for use by health and social care providers.

"We have a wellbeing service directory which we spent a lot of money collecting over a year ago, and haven't touched it since, as it's far too expensive to maintain," said Marcus Devaney, Lancashire's virtual services development officer for wellbeing, prevention and early help service. Talking at the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (Adass) Care Apps conference, held in Birmingham on 7 March, he added: "It's just not being used." The county has another service directory which is regularly maintained, but has data on fewer services, and the two are not linked.

"Can we see service directories as not belonging to a local authority, but belonging to a place?" Devaney asked. At present, users have to know which organisation to approach, whether a council, fire service, NHS body or community organisation. There are at least ten different service directories in Lancashire: "We're trying to flip that on its head and ask is there a new and better way of approaching this, to try to build services completely around the person?"

Devaney said that Lancashire is working on the infrastructure of a directory of service directories covering both public and voluntary sector organisations in the Chorley area, and hopes to make it available across Lancashire by September. He added that they are looking at letting community pharmacies use the directory so they could "socially prescribe" a service from the public or voluntary sectors, including activities run by local community groups.

Paul Davidson, chief information officer of Sedgemoor District Council, told the event that they are working with iStand UK and the Local Government Association to establish a common data standard for such services.

"What we're also doing is helping the LGA to come up with the algorithm that can take how somebody may present their needs and circumstances and use that to discover services in the local area that might be relevant to that," he said.

"What we're looking to do in the public sector is organise our data better and make it more available as open data using common languages, common vocabularies, consistent data quality," Davidson added, allowing companies and other organisations to make use of it.

The event heard from other councils and suppliers focused on improving processes for social care. These included Manchester City Council, which last year introduced an online portal for its social care policies. Although the system, supplied by Policy Partners Project, is aimed at social care staff – who see a link from their corporate login screen – it is available to anyone.

"Our policies were all over the place," Kathy Weaver, Manchester's head of service for adult social care, told the event. "They were in different formats in different places." The online portal saves money by replacing bulky paper documents with a single electronic version and ends problems with version control. "It's very easily revised – it's not a problem to change on a day-to-day basis," she said.

Removing the paper versions is particularly useful for managers who had to maintain them, Weaver added: "It relieves the pressure on frontline managers, those constant questions," she said. "It fits our agenda of a different way of working, that single point of contact, tools and resources."

In a survey completed by 19 members of staff, 12 said the portal was very useful and seven found it useful, describing it as comprehensive, easy to use and putting everything in one place. "Nobody had a negative thing to say," said Weaver.

> **"Can we see service directories as not belonging to a local authority, but belonging to a place?"**
>
> *Marcus Devaney, Lancashire County Council*

The portal is also helping the city council work with other providers across Greater Manchester, which now report to the city region's combined authority as it has oversight of health and social care.

"We see this portal as one of the ways we're going to be able to work much more effectively with our health colleagues as they come on board and start to share procedures and policies across the health and social care economy," Weaver said.

Directory data standards (LGA): bit.ly/2nu5o39

Manchester adult social care policies: manchesterappp.co.uk

A version of this article has previously been published on TheInformationDaily.com

TRIBOROUGH TECH HEAD PUTS ICT FIRST IN NEW ROLE

ICT is a good place to start joint working between councils as information and technology are "the enabling fabric of any kind of working together," according to Ed Garcez, the chief digital and information officer for the London boroughs of Camden, Haringey and Islington.

Garcez took up the newly-created £120,000-a-year role in November last year after a recruitment process involving nearly 100 applicants. He previously ran IT for the London 'triborough' comprising Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council.

While the roles appear similar, Garcez says there are significant differences. The triborough councils had already merged services including adult social care before turning to IT and were aiming for deep levels of integration. "You might have had a Hammersmith-employed social worker working from a Kensington building on a Westminster case," he says. "Our challenge in IT was to provide stuff that enabled them to work in that way. We were catching up." The councils had established the triborough project, focused on sharing people in the main, and later needed to work out the processes and policies needed for IT, such as how to buy products with licences and how to use them across three councils.

By contrast, Camden, Haringey and Islington are making IT the starting point for their joint working. Garcez, pictured right, says the aims are to create a shared service with "a high-trust model that reduces bureaucracy," increases innovation and performance and cuts operational IT spending by 15 per cent.

"We want to understand the transition from analogue to digital," he adds. "The perception was as single authorities we didn't have the economy of scale to do that. By working together we effectively buy the luxury of more resource to engage in more strategic activity."

The IT teams at Camden, Haringey and Islington had been preparing common approaches to Microsoft Office 365, datacentres and cloud computing, contracts, enterprise architecture and building shared services. Garcez has started by bringing together the three IT management teams and is recruiting a single, more senior team with a wider scope. "I would hope that we'd see a number of folks from the existing leadership teams apply for and succeed in securing some of those senior roles," he says.

Garcez says that shared IT services are not suitable for all councils and there is no magic formula for establishing them. "It's a bit like a marriage," he says. "The most important thing is to make sure we have a shared understanding of what good looks like, where we're trying to go and that we then assess things that we do to the extent to which they contribute towards that outcome."

This means that councils will have to share goals but also be flexible in how and when they are achieved. "The other thing that's implicit in marriage is compromise – you don't always get what you want," Garcez says. "Many relationships successfully navigate that. If however it's your belief as an organisation that you always need to fight for what it is that you want, then you are probably not suited for a marriage."

Ed Garcez,
Camden, Haringey, Islington London boroughs

It makes sense to discuss required compromises at the start of the collaboration, Garcez advises: "If you can have that transparency and honesty early doors, you're much more likely to make it work. If you short-cut that, you are more likely to encounter problems."

"We are spending a lot of time working together at all levels across the three councils," he adds. "Taking small steps we're progressing well."

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NUDGING GOES LOCAL

Councils including Tunbridge Wells and Essex are using behavioural change techniques pioneered in Whitehall

When West Germany introduced fines for motorcyclists not wearing helmets in 1980, it hoped to reduce head injuries resulting from crashes. But unexpectedly, it also reduced motorcycle theft by 60 per cent, as thieves either had to bring their own helmets or risk being stopped by police.

Criminologists have found similar, if less dramatic, reductions in stolen bikes in Texas, the UK and the Netherlands. In his 2015 book Inside the Nudge Unit, David Halpern presents it as a prime example of how to nudge people into changing their minds. Halpern is chief executive of the Behavioural Insights Team, better known as the Nudge Unit when part of the Cabinet Office and now a social purpose company partly owned by the government.

The team was set up by the coalition government in 2010 to seek ways of pushing people into doing different things: sometimes better for them, sometimes better for the public sector and ideally both. Wherever possible it uses randomised controlled trials, a technique from scientific practice designed to test if something is making a difference – and if so, in the right direction.

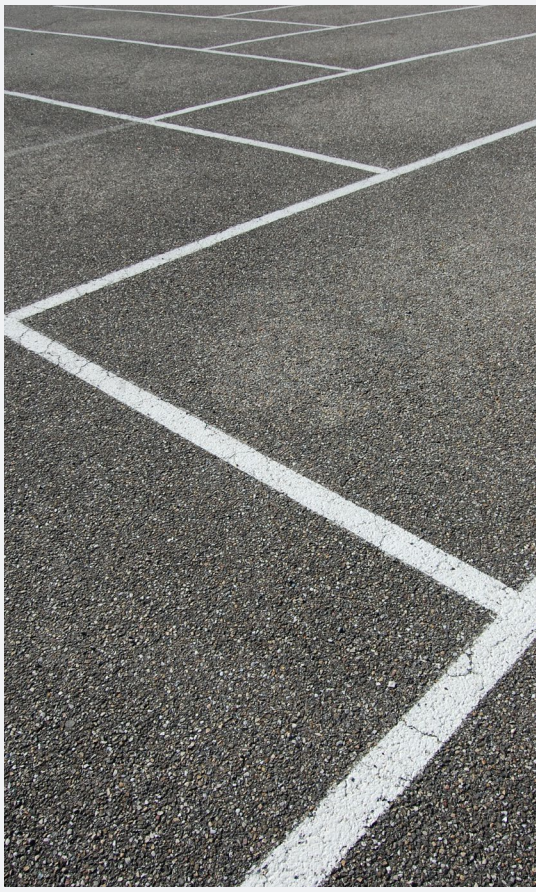
Such trials are relatively easy to run when organisations are sending out thousands of messages. Halpern writes that response rates to standard letters have been improved by techniques as simple as stamping 'pay now' in red at the top or adding a Post-It note. The unit managed to raise the response rate to one HMRC letter from 21.8 per cent to 26 per cent by changing the colour from brown to white and getting someone to write the person's first name on the envelope followed by "you really need to open this". HMRC reckoned the return on investment of this was more than 200 to one.

Persuaded of Tunbridge Wells

Some local authorities are enthusiastically applying nudge techniques to their own processes.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has moved 26 per cent of its taxpayers to electronic billing since its introduction in 2014, saving 39p a bill and £5,200 a year. It was also able to run a consultation on changes to council tax exclusively online by using its email list of more than 13,300 taxpayers, saving a further £5,000 and achieving a higher level of engagement than for previous ones. The council's chief executive William Benson says the authority uses campaigns and social media to promote e-billing – but goes further.

If someone visits the council office to pay a parking ticket, staff ask them to use a computer. "We used to have a booth with a person in, now it's just got a PC," he says, although human assistance is available if needed. "In the same way that if you go into a bank they encourage you to take up their insurance, we use the staff to encourage people to register for e-billing," he says.



"In the same way that if you go into a bank they encourage you to take up their insurance, we use the staff to encourage people to register for e-billing."

William Benson,
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Inspired by the Behavioural Insights Team, Tunbridge Wells has carried out its own experiments. "Council tax bills were written in gobbledegook," Benson says; rewriting reminder letters to make them shorter and clearer cut the proportion of people subsequently contacting the council from 45 per cent to 17 per cent. Following HMRC's experiment, the council added a Post-It note saying 'please do this today' to some reminder letters, which generated response rates of 48 per cent compared with 32 per cent for those without. By conducting a randomised controlled trial – where some letters had the Post-It and some, the control group, did not – the council was able to test the difference it made.

Tunbridge Wells has also worked with social enterprise MySociety on its website design, tracking people searching for their bin collection day. By redesigning this process through user testing, the proportion succeeding rose from 60 per cent to 89 per cent. More controversially, the council nudges people in the most obvious way – financially – to stop using cash to pay for parking. Many car-park operators charge extra to pay digitally or by phone, to cover their charges: "That's crazy," says Benson. "If people are paying by cash we've got to have machines, they've got to be insured, the cash has got to be collected from them, that's got to be reconciled."

Tunbridge Wells instead offers a discount for non-cash payments. (This resulted in a complaint to an ombudsman, but the draft decision rejects the complaint as the system includes options including ones accessible to those with impaired hearing.) Offering a discount has boosted the shift to cashless parking: it was introduced in February 2010 and took four years to reach 10 per cent of parking revenue, but since differential charging was introduced in April 2014 it has increased to 34 per cent by December 2016.

Benson says boosting efficiency is essential for the council, which has gone from receiving a £5m grant in a £13m budget a decade ago to no grant at all in 2017-18. It aims to move half of its business to digital channels as part of this process.

He agrees that letters are a good place to start nudging, since they are produced in large volumes, produce quick responses and are easy to change and experiment with. Tunbridge Wells is one of the Kent councils that has set up Smarter Digital Services, which can advise other organisations on such work.

The council has also appointed 'digital angels' from among its staff to support colleagues, set every member of staff a digital objective in its 2014 appraisal process and pays staff partly on competency, including an expectation for managers and supervisors that they use digital ideas. "Having a combination of a curious mind and data gives you real opportunities to look at how you're doing things," Benson says.

Better blue badging

David Wilde, Essex County Council's director for digital, says that reactions from the public should trigger changes. Essex's digital channels team talks to customer services staff and residents, which helped in redesigning its blue badge application process.

"We absolutely went down the user-centric design route, rather than process design," he says. "That helped us to think about some of the obvious stuff that we could take out of the process. There's nothing quite like a recent service recipient asking a stupid question that makes you realise it's a stupid process." As a result, self-service applications for blue badges have increased from 15 per cent to 75 per cent over 18 months, partly as applicants no longer have to provide paper evidence of entitlement – they can now scan and email documents.

Essex plans to go further. It already has a data-sharing agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), allowing it to check children's eligibility for free school meals. It is currently working on extending its use of the DWP data so it can also check eligibility for blue badges, meaning residents would no longer have to provide evidence.

"The thing I like about blue badge is it's so obvious," Wilde says. "It does beg the question, to what extent do we inflict process on residents when if we look across our agencies we can take a lot of that complexity out, rather than putting it back on residents?" Using the DWP checker is not particularly innovative, he says: "It gets to the heart of the extent to which we in public service need to think a lot harder about how lazy we are sometimes – rather than work with another agency, I'll just ask the resident to provide the evidence. Well, I don't think that's acceptable anymore."

Essex is carrying out a bigger experiment with rural transport provision. In some areas it has set up Demand Responsive Transport services instead of subsidising lightly-used bus services. Users book journeys in advance and have to be flexible on timing so that they can be grouped together, but it costs them less than a taxi and concessionary bus passes can be used. The service is managed by a local taxi company, which uses either minibuses or taxis for the journeys.

Trips can be booked by phone and through an app, which Essex has adapted from one developed for Suffolk County Council.

Wilde says the development process for the app made the screen less cluttered: "You made sure there were as few clicks as possible through to doing the journey," he says.

Essex is also trying to nudge residents away from using cash to pay for parking, in its case at seven of its country parks. It offers an annual £65 season ticket covering all the parks, compared with £4 to £6 for three hours or more on a single day.

Small steps, big changes: Essex CC is nudging residents away from using cash to pay for parking, in its case at seven of its country parks, by offering an annual £65 season ticket.

"There's nothing quite like a recent service recipient asking a stupid question that makes you realise it's a stupid process."

David Wilde,
Essex County Council

Wilde says the council might take less money overall, but the cost of selling season tickets is very low compared with cash tickets and people are being nudged to use the parks more. Wilde says the next step is monthly direct debits: "You get stickability – people don't tend to cancel direct debits – and as a result you get default loyalty. At the same time people are encouraged, 'I'm paying for this, I'll go and use the service'."

He believes that nudging is underrated. "The difficulty for the public sector is we've got to accept that we need to incentivise to encourage that behaviour, rather than penalise," he says. It can be difficult under austerity if it involves giving things away, but if it saves money overall it deserves to be considered: "Rather than saying 'use this channel or we're going to make it difficult', which is what Ryanair and Easyjet do, in public service we may have to do more around encouraging."

Behavioural Insights Team: behaviouralinsights.co.uk

Kent's Smarter Digital Services: smarterdigital.info

William Benson and David Wilde are speaking at Socitm's Spring Conference at 11.40am on 27 April. Details: www.socitmspringconference.com

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CYBER SECURITY AND THE COLLABORATION CHALLENGE - THE ANSWER LIES WITHIN?

by Gordon Morrison - Director Government Relations, UK, McAfee

The word 'challenging' is perhaps somewhat overused nowadays but it certainly is 'challenging' to be a security manager in a Local Authority. To illustrate this we took a recent survey of 565 security decision makers[i] across multiple industries and found that it takes an average of eight working days, or 64 hours, for a security incident, from detection to return to health. And, on average, security decision makers use four tools to get the job done, with many using more than a dozen.

Unprecedented era of change

To compound this, we are all working and living in an unprecedented era of change and opportunity. Soon there will be literally billions of connected devices in the world[ii], we will be dealing with unprecedented amounts of data[iii], cloud services will be default by 2020[iv] and the cyber threat to Public Services will continue to grow. Underlying this is the increasingly difficult skills shortage in the cybersecurity industry[v] and the increasing demand on the public sector for better service provision with, of course, budget efficiencies.

Working together

No magic bullet, talisman or miracle cure exists and perhaps surprisingly as a security vendor we do not believe we can solve this all on our own. We simply must work better together as the answer to today's security skill shortage and advanced threats may actually lie within your organisation already, through your current people, processes, and technologies. But, to do this we all need to collaborate better and work as one to improve preparedness and overcome the cybersecurity skills shortage. In our survey[i], organisations (across industry) believed they could become 38% to 100% more effective if their security personnel could collaborate better. So how to achieve this? Amongst other things the answer lies in open ecosystems, automation and human beings.

In most organisations, people have multiple roles that share varying levels of responsibility looking after security. Often there is quite a bit of overlap, and roles are not always clear-cut. Regardless of title, most people contribute in many different ways when an incident escalates and with the best intentions, these actions are not always coordinated, effort is wasted and are sometimes not as efficient as we hope.

Increasing collaboration

Collaboration is difficult. The main issues are to do with how well people share information and their overall level of trust across teams. Sharing means communicating clearly and accurately. Currently, manual methods, where data is retyped and reprocessed multiple times, increase the probability of introducing errors. However, automated and collaborative technology solutions that are available now can help ensure that the shared data is accurate and reliable. Trust arises from good communication, transparency, and accountability, all of which engender confidence in the outcome.

Teamwork will help resolve security issues more quickly, and there will be less chance of the problem getting worse due to a lack of coordination. Automated rapid response will also reduce the chance of new problems arising and perhaps reduce the skills overhead.

So, a cultural change and perhaps a focus on automation could help us with our challenges. But how to do you start? Quoting one of our execs recently – "Organisations should start with the most mundane: the routine tasks that operators normally spend an enormous amount of time on. The key to successfully implementing automation is creating a process and a workflow and then trusting what you have created."

Reducing multiple security tools

But like other organisations, in Local Authorities there are multiple security tools from different vendors usually in 'defence in depth' silos. Our survey[i] told us, organisations on average, use four different products to investigate and fix. As data is often transferred manually between tools, this increase the chances of error or misinterpretation, reduces our ability to coordinate and perhaps leads to overlaps in effort and increases response times.

Local Authorities have a lot of priorities not all of them security related. However, these investments don't have to be in conflict. An open ecosystem should facilitate the use of the right tools while improving collaboration between multiple vendors. Collaboration could include process or workflow improvements. It could also involve sharing of local threat intelligence across the entire security infrastructure or other Authorities, police forces and heath care trusts.

Improvement

But, as we have seen in our research, collaboration is vital to improving security operations. We can predict a significant improvement in efficiency with more collaboration and automation among security technologies and the people who operate them. This offers a hidden upside opportunity, in that collaboration among tools fosters collaboration among people. By better collaborating there's less organisational cost which is critical for Local Authorities. Collaboration is not just an abstract concept, it's available now and you already have some of the ingredients! See this link for more detail on this *https://www.mcafee.com/uk/solutions/lp/security-operations-center-efficient.aspx*

[i] Intel Security - How Collaboration Can Optimize Security Operations The new secret weapon against advanced threats - https://www.mcafee.com/us/resources/reports/rp-soc-collaboration-advanced-threats.pdf

[ii] McAfee - New Security Reality for Internet of Things - https://securingtomorrow.mcafee.com/mcafee-labs/new-security-reality-for-internet-of-things/

[iii] IDC: the digital universe will grow up to 44 Zettabytes of data. http://neosit.com/idc-digital-universe-grows-on-44-zettabytes/

[iv] Gartner Says By 2020, a Corporate "No-Cloud" Policy Will Be as Rare as a "No-Internet" Policy Is Today. http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/3354117

[v] McAfee - Hacking the Skills shortage. https://www.mcafee.com/fr/resources/reports/rp-hacking-skills-shortage.pdf

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How to 'insure' good process design: involve users

Nudging customers and experiments are used by many companies to test new processes. But Michael Cross, who makes extensive use of such techniques at US vehicle insurer CSAA, says it makes sense to involve users from the start.

Cross is vice-president of digital services for CSAA Insurance Group, which insures vehicles for American Automobile Association clubs in 23 states. CSAA, a well-known brand over many decades in the US, was spun out of AAA in 2011. Cross joined soon afterwards with the job of establishing a new team to implement a digital transformation programme. Through this, the company has set up new systems for producing quotations, handling member queries and providing online access to data.

"I think what we've proven here at CSAA is a solid methodology to test the best methods for customers, whether it be making a payment, utilising a mobile web experience, processing or checking the status of a claim," he says. CSAA is looking at whether it could use voice-driven services such as Amazon's Alexa to offer more convenient options in future.

Some organisations look at problems they are trying to solve and money they can save, Cross says, but CSAA prefers something more general: "What we're looking for is customer friction. It's not a straightforward ROI [return on investment] model. We'll bring users in and discuss some of the things that they're trying to solve."

When it started work on a new quotation system a year ago, the company involved users in sessions where it asked them what they would expect from such a system, Cross says: "They want it to be easy, they want it to be fast. Do they want to interact with an agent, or don't they? Would they be bothered by a chat window popping up?" It also researched what other organisations do, both in insurance and other industries. "Those are the upfront activities that get us to a starting definition of an MVP, a minimum viable product, and that's what we start building towards."

Users are great at saying what they find annoying: "We've solving friction, we're taking noise out of the process," Cross says. Regardless of the company's recent problems, Uber is good at doing this, removing worries about tipping, having the right change or making a card transaction from using a taxi.

"We believe when customers are more engaged and more willing to do business with you because of its easiness, then that makes us more attractive."

This can mean considering whether a digital option is needed: "We're always challenging ourselves as to do we need a digital capability for this particular problem we're solving, or is there more of a low-fidelity human interaction that's necessary?"

Public sector organisations generally do not have to compete for work, but Cross says the same ideas can make any service easier to use, both for external users or for staff. So how would he approach redesigning a typical local government service, applying for a bus pass?

"I would get a group of 65-plus consumers along with a few people who deal with the processing, and put them all in a room together," Cross says, for a discovery and framing session. "You would talk about the pain points and what are the things you're trying to solve." Idea-generating activities, such as participants writing how they would improve the process on sticky notes, are useful.

"Are you looking for some incremental changes, or are you looking to really turn this process on its head?"

Michael Cross, CSAA Insurance Group

"Then start driving assumptions out of the room. Some of the people doing the processing might think that it's a technology-solve," Cross says. "What they might find from the consumers is – no it's not." It makes sense to encourage technology-driven processes as they are cheaper, but it is vital to ask potential users first. Cross adds that his previous experience working for US healthcare provider Kaiser Permanente showed him that older users are often enthusiastic about using technology, but it depends on the process.

Overall, you need to know what you are shooting for, Cross says. "Are you looking for some incremental changes, or are you looking to really turn this process on its head, with the goal of driving cost savings or customer satisfaction?" It is often possible to do both, he adds: "This focus on customer experience I think has unintended consequences that ultimately can help drive efficiencies."

California's Highway One

APPLES: HOW TO MAKE YOUR NUDGE PLANS BEAR FRUIT

Advice from David Halpern, founder of the UK government's Nudge Unit, on setting up such a team in a new organisation.

We are often asked by other governments and organisations, many of whom we now advise, what the key ingredients are for setting up an impactful Nudge Unit or similar. We've summarised them in a mnemonic – '**APPLES**':

A

Administrative support
Ensure you have senior level buy-in 'inside the system'. For us, it was key that we had the support of the Cabinet Secretary, the UK's most senior civil servant, and that he personally agreed to chair the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) steering board. This was a very powerful signal to the rest of government, and gave us key leverage when we needed it.

P

Political support
Governments are also political projects. The take-off of BIT was greatly facilitated in 2010 by the interest and support of the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, and their close aides. At the very least, you need to think about how the approach fits with the political narrative and instincts of the government – and public.

P

People
Getting the right mix of skills and expertise is critical. You need subject expertise – see below – but at least as important is having people with battle-hardened experience of government and large organisations, and personal relationships with those who you will need as allies.

L

Location
So much of government, as of life, is about being in the right place at the right time. Don't rely on luck. There are certain places where people regularly bump into each other and much impromptu business is done. In the UK this includes the lobby of No 10, Parliament and on the streets around Whitehall. Choose a close location over a fancy office 20 minutes away.

E

Experimentation
Embrace empirical methods. You'll need to demonstrate to sceptics that your new approach works, and to quantify the impact. But, more fundamentally, you should follow a logic of test, learn, adapt – behavioural science is well suited to experimental approaches, and human responses are complicated and hard to perfectly predict.

S

Scholarship
Know the behavioural literature and details of the challenges you are engaging with. Everyone has some knowledge of psychology. You need a team who really know what they are talking about, and are plugged into the latest thinking and results. Identify your local and relevant academic experts, and form an expert advisory group.

Extracted with permission from Inside the Nudge Unit by David Halpern (WH Allen, £9.99). Available on Amazon: amzn.to/1UaU40p

Personal view

STICKING WITH IT

After leading IT at Southampton and Hampshire, Jos Creese reckons CIOs can benefit from staying in jobs for longer

Q. How did you get into council IT?

By chance! I had not intended a career in IT, but in the 1980s it was becoming apparent that technology was going to be a game-changer and I wanted to be part of it. After graduating with a degree in Maths I joined the Department of Health as a statistician and quickly got involved in what we might call today 'big data analytics', supporting the British Medical Association, British Dental Association and government ministers setting up an NHS central information centre.

I decided to move out of London and a role in Hampshire as an IT manager appealed. I knew nothing much about local government but was very impressed with Hampshire County Council; even then it was so much faster, more innovative and entrepreneurial than anything I'd seen in the civil service. It was exciting to build solutions that truly touched people's lives in schools, social care, parks, open spaces, transport, commercial services, libraries and much more.

Ironically, things were also much more joined-up and devolved to local government than they are today. We had an integrated network for public services, long-since broken up and now potentially coming back together, including police, fire, schools, probation, job centres, districts and the county council. Local government reorganisation, privatisation, PFI and a range of Whitehall-driven nationalisation wrested power from councils, which we are now gradually gluing back together. That new integration lies at the heart of the work I am doing with Socitm on Smart Places.

I saw through the last major reorganisation in the late 1990s. I joined Southampton City Council as head of IT and leading on the 'IT-integration-unpicking' programme, moving IT activity and associated services from the county to the new unitary council. This was my first head role and a baptism of fire, turning around a failed IT department to becoming an internationally recognised award-winning service.

We worked with councils across the UK and undertook international IT programmes in areas such as smart housing for assisted living and smart cards. This was despite the politics at the time, with some dyed-in-the-wool senior officers not taking kindly to change from young upstarts. It was a valuable experience in leading and learning to deal with politics of the most challenging sort – useful for all IT leaders in my view.

You spent much of your career at Hampshire County Council. What are the pros and cons of staying with one organisation for a long period?

I settled for more than 13 years with Hampshire County Council as chief information officer and latterly chief digital officer, following the retirement of my illustrious and talented predecessor Mike Winchester. It was a real privilege, but he was not an easy act to follow. It can be better to fix a problem service than take over a successful service and make it even better!

It is my view that CIOs do not need to change jobs as frequently as some believe necessary to get on. In central government, it is a known issue that the tenure of a CIO was typically only two or three years, which is neither long enough to see through change programmes nor to truly learn how to manoeuvre through the system.

I see too many CIOs coming into post and, like a new hairdresser, shaking their heads and asking "who left it in this mess?" They proceed to change everything and start lots of new exciting programmes which become the mess for the next incumbent to fix. A lack of continuity is the bane of many of the more complex and risky projects.

But if you do stay put, then you must remain fresh. I did a fair bit of work pro bono, including the Socitm presidency, setting up and leading the Local CIO Council and joining the National CIO Council with Ian Watmore. I was never given (or asked for) any time off from Hampshire County Council. This, coupled with volunteering for advisory and non-executive director positions, gave me a great deal of experience I believe benefitted the day job.

Finally, I decided it was time for a move. I had enjoyed doing consultancy, felt it was time to get paid for it and also wanted some of my life back – 60-70 hours a week was not sustainable.

As an independent advisor, what kind of work do you do with councils?

My consultancy work is very varied which I enjoy, although the housekeeping and administration is a trial and I miss my PA support! As a consultant, I avoid long assignments and loathe consultancy firms that feed off the public sector, so always aim to add big value in a short time for a fixed cost.

Most of my work is troubleshooting: helping with projects, contracts, team restructuring, digital strategies, shared services, IT business plans and more. Where there are difficulties, some independent experience can be helpful. I also do a bit of mentoring and run workshops, events and roundtables, where I try to share best practice, ideas and reassure those at the sharp end that they are not alone – everyone is facing similar challenges.

I enjoy the research part of my role. It is slow, hard graft, but provides a chance to speak openly and challengingly about the issues and opportunities from digital. That is where working with Socitm has always been rewarding, as it is outward-looking and prepared to challenge the status quo. It also looks out for hard-pressed IT leaders, chief executives and other professionals increasingly involved in and affected by technology.

As an analyst, I also help charities and work with all manner of businesses engaging with local public services. This is much more than responding to tenders and more about marketing, awareness and facilitating meaningful debate and dialogue which helps mutual understanding. In my view the relationship between public and private sectors is often too narrowly defined by the tendering and procurement processes, which often results in poor value and slow delivery. There are better ways of collaborating.

As British Computer Society president in 2015-16, how do you think local authority IT compares to other parts of the public sector and the private sector?

Local government leads the public sector in my experience and some councils are ahead of the private sector in IT deployment, business practice and innovation. The trouble is that it is also very varied. If I had one wish, it was that the sector got more recognition for some of the amazing digital practice which I and others in Socitm are trying to showcase. Of course there are problems and the challenges have never been greater. But we need to learn from the best and the sector has no shortage of examples. Press, politicians and Whitehall especially need to look outwards more and support local government as the fulcrum of local public services.

My chosen presidential theme of IT apprenticeship was central to what I believe matters for the future. We have too few women and younger people joining the profession and have made too little headway in fixing this. It is due to a mistaken view of IT as a place for geeks, the wrong parental and educational encouragement and too few opportunities for career returnees. I am delighted to see closer bonds now between BCS and Socitm, especially in areas of mutual interest such as cyber security, privacy, women in IT, education and healthcare. We can be powerful allies.

What conclusions have you drawn from your recent work for Socitm on Smart Places?

'Smart Cities' is a great concept, but some argue that it is too narrow and the natural wealth and capacity of many cities makes innovative adoption of technology inevitable. We need to generalise the concept to the rest of the UK as many of the opportunities will only be enhanced by a smarter hinterland. I was delighted to be involved in the Socitm Smart Place programme. This is a bit of departure for Socitm, looking at the broader implications of technology on regions in the future, anticipating how technology is changing the role of the public sector and the importance of local services. I'd like this work to set the basis for our future priorities.

What do you enjoy doing outside work?

Running, cycling, some tennis and a lot of walking keeps me pretty fit. Now I work for myself, time is more flexible to get on the bike when the weather turns bright. Flexibility also helps with my music – I'm a keen violinist, playing in a number of groups like the City of Southampton Symphony Orchestra. Apart from that, you'll probably find me in the kitchen.

Jos, centre, is the author of Socitm's innovative series of guides on Smart Places. Find out more: socitm.net/smart-places

TEL AVIV:
ISRAEL'S SMART CITY

Israel's second-largest city has enthusiastically adopted digital techniques for people and even dogs, writes Glyn Evans

In a remarkably short period, the city of Tel Aviv-Yafo (Tel Aviv from hereon) has gained an impressive reputation as a digital city, winning the World Smart Cities Award in 2014 at the Smart City Expo and World Congress in Barcelona.

To examine in detail the factors underpinning the success story, I was one of 15 people on a study tour organised last November by Major Cities of Europe IT Users Group (MCE). MCE members drawn from across Europe participated in the visit and this article is based on the insights gleaned and the subsequent reflections of the tour group.

MCE is a membership organisation comprising cities either already recognised as being highly innovative in their adoption and application of technology, or those wishing to become so. Its mission is to maximise the value realised from the use of information and communication technologies in the administration of local authorities within Europe and the European sphere of influence.

Tel Aviv, an MCE member, has a population of approximately 420,000 and is a very young city – 30 per cent of residents are aged less than 30. It is Israel's business and scientific hub with a strong IT emphasis. Its Mediterranean beaches and vibrant nightlife made me feel that it is one of the 'buzziest' cities I've visited. I'm certainly not alone in that view: The Economist has described it as a "miniature Los Angeles".

The first observation is that the digital technologies deployed are not in themselves hugely innovative. That is not to say that there are not some good projects. Quite the reverse – there are many excellent projects – but there are few if any which could not be found in other large cities.

However, what is striking about Tel Aviv is that digital developments are fully integrated into the vision that the city has of itself; a city that is dynamic, open, tolerant, progressive and technologically oriented. Everyone in the city from the mayor downwards consistently gives this same underpinning message, which is readily gleaned from the home page of the city website. Compare that to those of cities of a similar size in the UK such as Manchester, Edinburgh or Bristol; this is not to criticise those cities' websites, but the difference is striking.

In Tel Aviv, the impression is that digital is the city and the city is digital. As an aside, it would be interesting to see how Tel Aviv's website would score in the Better Connected survey.

Flowing from the city's vision is an associated strong branding. From the top level strapline of "Tel Aviv Nonstop City" down to individual project logos, there is consistency and reinforcement of the city's core message. But sitting behind the message are some real achievements.

The first of these is the Digitel City Card. This fulfils several functions: it enables personalised communication with residents through different channels (email, text messages and a personal resident account); customised digital services enabling transactions to be carried out with the city council; and it provides holders with special deals at cultural venues, sports arenas and other places. What is most striking about Digitel, comparing it with many UK and European approaches, is that it comes across primarily as a citizen engagement initiative, not a service access initiative, though it is also that.

That is perhaps a major reason why 60 per cent of eligible Tel Aviv residents, anyone older than 13, have registered on the system to date.

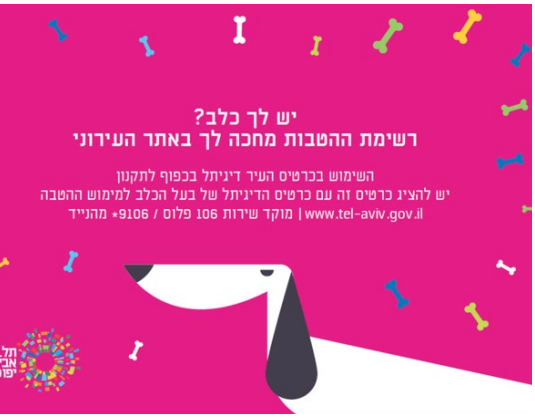
Every dog has his digital tools

While people are at the heart of Tel Aviv's digital ambitions, it caters for other Tel Aviv residents too. The city has just launched 'Digi-Dog' which it claims is the "first of its kind initiative to equip dogs and their owners with the digital tools they need to thrive in a Smart City". It will provide dog owners with access to information such as reminders about vaccinations, discounts at local businesses and directions to the nearest dog park.

Complementing the Digitel City Card is the Digitel App. Whilst this does allow residents to contact city council departments to, for example, report hazards and send a photograph if desired, it also has functions which are more focused on the more day-to-day needs of a resident. You can locate and navigate to cultural and sports events, find out where the nearest bike rental point is and whether any bikes are available and locate the nearest car park and check whether it is full.

This public engagement focus is also clear in Tel Aviv's approach to social media. The city is active on Facebook with 120 pages, as well as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Snapchat. Social media channels are used holistically, to pass information to residents, to provide services and to receive information from residents.The level of engagement is impressive, with the city's main Facebook page having 130,000 followers.

Photo of Tel Aviv's waterfront by xiquinhosilva via Flickr, used under a Creative Commons licence



Digi-Dog provides Tel Aviv dog-owners with information including directions to the nearest park

The use of social media is not seen as a panacea – for example, the generally shallow level of engagement of people on Facebook is fully recognised – but their use has enabled, for example, neighbourhood determination of which local improvements should be funded from the available council budget. And thousands of people took part in the municipal gay pride Instagram contest. This resulted in the printing of the largest gay flag in the Middle East, bearing the pictures taken by the city's residents.

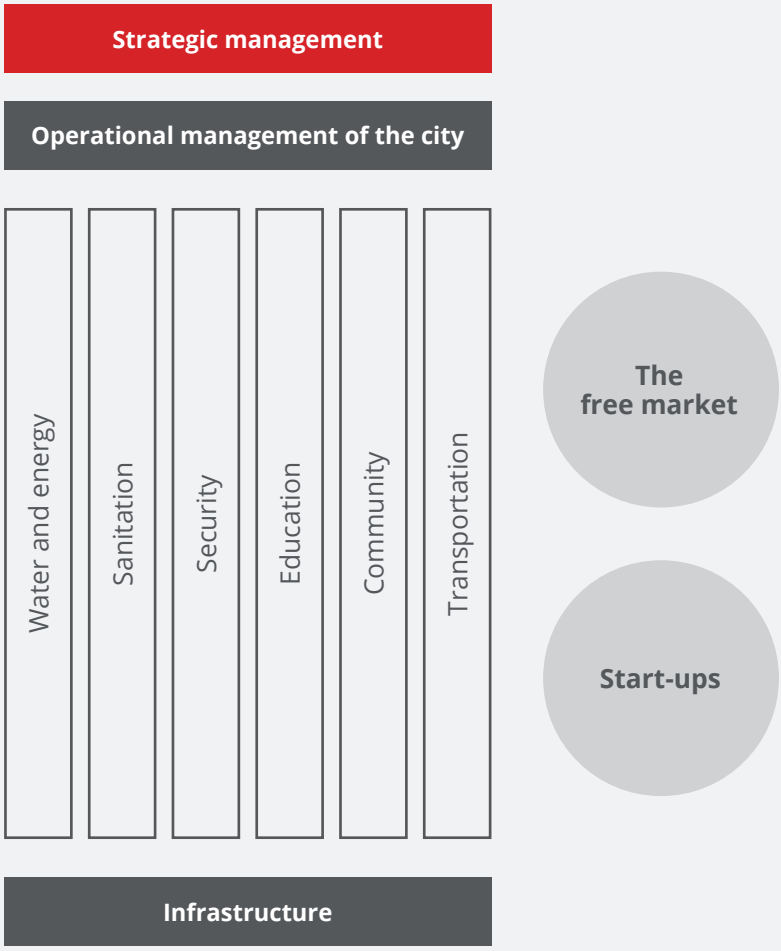
The smart city vision for Tel Aviv is not solely focused on matters that affect residents, with another core aspect being the encouragement of the city's proliferation of digital start-ups. The outcomes sought are: directly boosting the economy of the city; providing innovative approaches to the delivery of city services – the city is committed to open data; and promoting the city's credentials as a smart city.

The city's support for start-ups is comprehensive but also relatively light touch, with the cost not very significant. Four workspaces are provided around the city which start-ups can occupy for up to six months and the city offers itself as a beta testing site for products in development together with an opportunity to "meet an expert" from the city council. The council also arranges at least two hackathons a year, each arranged around a specific topic. As an indication of the level of interest, 400 people registered for the transportation hackathon in 2016 and 40 groups competed.

Practical and replicable

Tel Aviv believes that it has established a practical – and replicable – model for establishing a smart city, illustrated in the diagram. It comprises:

- Developing a smart city plan for each pillar, led by the responsible municipal manager;
- Managing and presenting an integrated operational picture;
- Supporting the strategic management of the city through the setting of appropriate targets and indicators in the strategic plan which are then subject to continuous measurement;
- Developing and supporting the infrastructure, including initiatives such as Digitel and enabling telecommunications development, with Tel Aviv having 80 free-to-access wi-fi zones; and
- Using the capabilities of the private sector – both established players and start-ups – to provide solutions.



As a former CIO myself, one noteworthy aspect of Tel Aviv's success is the role of the IT function. Whereas in many UK and European cities the CIO's role in smart city initiatives is marginal at best, Tel Aviv's CIO Liora Shechter is central to the delivery of Tel Aviv's smart city aspirations.

"This is a very exciting period for us – the ability to innovate, to think different every day and to explore the possibilities technology can offer us brings passion to our work," says Ms Shechter. "We strongly believe in involving the resident in everything that's happening in the city, from small things like reporting a hazard, to making them a partner in decision making. We also are obligated to create new and innovative services for our residents, according to the spirit of this nonstop city."

Tel Aviv is an inspirational city to visit. There is enthusiasm, commitment and real delivery. That is not looking through rose-tinted glasses – of course projects go awry, there are organisational tensions and politics plays it part. Nor can it yet be said that the benefits claimed by smart city advocates have been realised. But the city has achieved more in a shorter timescale than any European city I know.

Glyn Evans, a former President of Socitm, spent his whole career in English local government, retiring from Birmingham City Council, where he was Corporate Director of Business Change, in 2012. He is vice president of MCE ***– see*** *www.majorcities.eu*

Tel Aviv wins World Smart City award 2014: http://bit.ly/2oSKLNP

Tel Aviv Nonstop City homepage: http://bit.ly/2nunIt3

Digi-Dog scheme: bit.ly/2msOu2L

Transport hackathon: bit.ly/2of5x9q

A PLACE TO CALL YOUR OWN: SOCITM INSIGHT

Place. It's a small word, but for everybody, it has a big meaning. The place we call home, the place we work, and the places where we do everything in between. These are the places that matter to us most, and that is why they matter in public services.

It is also why 'place' is at the heart a major new Socitm venture from our Insight research programme. Called Smart Places, the project comprises a series of guides researched and written by Jos Creese – see page XX – that look beyond the concept of smart cities.

Visit socitm.net/smart-places now to discover:

- Why people must precede technology, to move away from producer-led mentality
- How technology can connect infrastructure, business, communities, public service and individual citizens in ways that were previously impossible
- Why adopting Smart Places practices can improve economic and social wellbeing, transforming public services
- How Smart Places approaches can help positively transform communities – from economy to education, employment to environment.

At the online Smart Places hub, you'll find a free introductory Smart Places guide, conveying the overarching principles and themes. The remaining six guides are available to Socitm Insight research users as restricted content accessible through a Socitm website account. If you would like to join the Insight programme or check if you are a programme user, call the Socitm team on 01604 709456 or email *hello@socitm.net*.

Place, or geography, is also a key theme to another new Socitm Insight research project. Comprising a series of five videos and supporting guides, Location Intelligence explores the ways in which many public bodies are using location information and data sources to transform public services.

Location intelligence is not GIS. Instead, it is an increasingly-popular term for geographically-referenced data that adds a new dimension to predictive analysis. Our videos explain in more detail, supported by case studies of location intelligence in action.

For example, we look at the Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) programme that uses a unique geographical reference to share data between public bodies. In doing so, it has reduced incident call time – one estimate is a reduction from more than four minutes to 16 seconds, saving some 18,000 hours a year spent on the phone requesting attendance from other agencies. This in turn has been translated to a per-agency annual saving of £37,000, not to mention many improvements to citizen outcomes.

Like Smart Places, the first video in Location Intelligence series is free and available to everyone. The remaining four videos are available to Socitm Insight research users who can watch the videos using their Socitm website account. If you would like to join the Insight programme or check if you have access to it, call the Socitm team on 01604 709456 or email *hello@socitm.net*.

Free video, available to everyone: watch our introductory guide to discover why location intelligence is mapping out a new future for GIS – visit socitm.net/location-intelligence

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION *means* MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A back-to-school experience was a lesson in the true value of digital transformation, writes Nicola Graham, Socitm vice president and Head of ICT at Aberdeenshire Council

Making a difference: Nicola Graham, pictured separately, right, believes digital transformation means treating technology as a tool for achieving something far bigger and greater than technology alone. One such example is how technology can help youngsters embrace learning more readily, helping them in their studies.

It was perhaps when my teenage son returned home and could not stop talking about how the new technology at his school was going to make doing his schoolwork 'amazing', that I realised what making a difference really means.

Being a lively and curious 14 year old, he is arguably a natural with tech, and more scrutinising of it as a result – certainly more so than is typical of my generation. And in his excitement, I couldn't help but smile. Not only at his enthusiasm, but at the irony of how his mum, in the job he describes as 'boring', helped bring about that new school technology.

Of course, I can't and won't take full credit for this story: I work with a fantastic ICT team who have transformed this school's technology. And no, we don't save lives – I'm not a brain surgeon, and I'm not a miracle worker. But every day, I strive to make a difference to public life through my role at Aberdeenshire Council, as Head of ICT.

"Through Socitm and its members I've seen an inspiring ethos where technology is just one part of the change."

It is this opportunity to make a difference that drives so many people who work in the public sector, whether in social care, planning or, like me, ICT. And it is why I left the private sector some years back: the choice between making a difference to communities – or making money for companies – was a no-brainer.

So what does making a difference mean in local government ICT? For me, the technology is the easy part. It's mindset, culture and leadership that are the real hurdles.

Powering through those hurdles requires clear focus, grit and resilience. And it calls for new thinking. I'm a strong believer in ICT being a means to an end, rather than a solution on its own. After all, in my son's case, the technology is intended to better help him with his schoolwork. But it's not going to do the work for him.

Treating technology as a tool for achieving something far bigger and greater is a common theme outside of my day job. It is inherent to my role as Vice President of Socitm – a professional association for people who work in public sector ICT and digital roles.

Through Socitm and its members, I've seen an inspiring ethos where technology is just one part of the change. Some might say it is a radical stance, and it certainly transcends the ICT function of the past, but it's not without solid foundation. Followers of Tech 100 will have no doubt met the concept of digital transformation, so I'm not going to expand further, other than urge you to read Socitm's refreshing take on digital transformation.

"Leaders... are the visionaries who dare to be different in order to do better."

A big part of digital transformation is leadership. Distinct from management's role of making things happen, leadership sees the things that need to happen. They are the visionaries who dare to be different in order to do better. And when we look to develop new strategies for the public from the ground up, leaders are the people to steer the way from the top down.

Along with Socitm, I am far from alone in spearheading the digital transformation and leadership agenda. In Scotland, last autumn saw the launch of the local government digital office, which unites 27 of our local authorities under one digital transformation umbrella. I've already heard how it's bringing councils together to share the fantastic innovations they've achieved individually, and how it's working to simplify so many processes – and most of all how it's fostering a new kind of camaraderie. These things are not only vital, they're the ray of light through the grey climate of austerity we know so well.

It's still early in 2017, but there's so much to get stuck into in the coming months. And at the risk of realising I'm no longer a size eight, 21-year-old go-getter, when I look back to 1998 and the start of my public sector career, I see a few constants.

One of those constants is challenge, but another is the immense reward of making a difference. I consider it not only an opportunity, but a duty. And a duty that today means one thing: digital transformation.

This article originally appeared in Holyrood magazine's Tech 100 section. Read it there along with other insights from technology leaders from Scotland's local government and public sector: bit.ly/2nuCuQc

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"I found the two days with the consultant to be excellent, particularly as I was relatively new to Swindon Council. The content of the system was well worked and easy to understand. Being able to go diligently through the policy system and make small changes, tailored to our requirements, was important."

Glyn Peach
Chief Information Officer
Swindon Borough Council

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