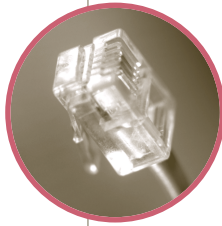
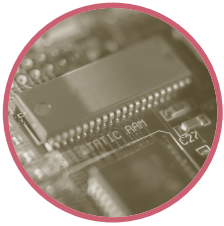


# ICT Foresight

How ICT is shaping the future design  
and delivery of public services



# **ICT** foresight



**how ICT is shaping  
the future design  
and delivery of  
public services**

**NCVO Third Sector Foresight**

Megan Griffith

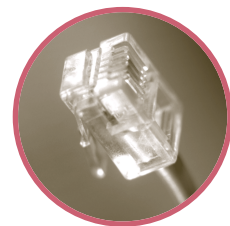
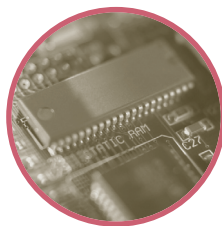
Karl Wilding



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## ● FOREWORD

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**Technology is advancing** at such a rate that organisations are coming under pressure to adapt their traditional ways of delivering services to meet the needs and expectations of their users. With terminology such as widgets, Facebook, wikis, blogs, RSS feeds and podcasts being part of everyday parlance in the media for accessing and sharing information; there is now a move towards integrating interactive forms of new media to enhance the delivery of public services.

How much of this is relevant to your organisation demands an understanding of the potential benefits of new technology – including not only the internet and computers but also music players, cameras, telephony, mobile phones and digital television. Embracing technology will bring benefits to your organisation; for example in terms of personalising services to individual users' needs; allowing users to access services and interact with staff remotely; enabling users to support one another through online networks etc. With a robust ICT strategy in place, new technology can be integrated in service delivery to ensure that your organisation is reaching its potential to offer a greater range and quality of services to a wider community whilst reducing the costs associated with travel, telephony and postage.

The ICT Hub is pleased to have funded this fourth ICT Foresight report. Drawing on case-studies from high profile organisations and current thinking and debate from ICT experts; the report looks at emerging trends in the ways organisations are run and public services delivered through the innovative use of new technology. It includes the role of digital TV and video to provide remote support; open exchange for partners and stakeholders to collaborate effectively online; greater accessibility to information and the use of call centres and online self-help tools.

The ICT Hub is working to address the issue of support by providing a range of free and low-cost resources, including events, website and publications to help voluntary and community organisations use ICT more effectively and efficiently. For more information about the ICT Hub, please visit the website [www.ict hub.org.uk](http://www.ict hub.org.uk)



**Nicola Thompson**  
Head of the ICT Hub



## ● ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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NCVO Third Sector Foresight helps voluntary and community organisations to create effective plans with strategic insight and planning tools.

[www.3s4.org.uk](http://www.3s4.org.uk)

**NCVO** is the umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector in England. NCVO works to support the voluntary and community sector and to create an environment in which voluntary and community organisations can flourish.

[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)

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## ● INTRODUCTION

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This is the fourth in a series of NCVO Third Sector Foresight reports on the changing relationship between voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) and information and communication technology (ICT). ICT has been with us for some time – though evidence suggests that VCOs have not readily taken advantage of it – but the pace, breadth and disruptive nature of its increasingly widespread introduction and use, make this a good point at which to review progress and look at future opportunities. This report, which is based on desk research and conversations with experts from within and outside of the voluntary sector, maps out emerging trends in the interaction between ICT and the design and delivery of services.

ICT is changing many of the public services that we use. Some of this is obvious (eg new web services) and some is hidden (new processes in the background). There are several characteristics of ICT which are driving these transformations. In addition a strong government agenda ('e-government') and concerns over issues of access to online services (the 'digital divide') are shaping how services are delivered.

A focus on channels of delivery and a current interest in new and innovative uses of 'web2.0' tools (such as blogs, videos or forums) can mask more important shifts in how services are designed and delivered, which are being shaped by the use of ICT by the public and by organisations. Questions about how data is stored, shared and used have only recently risen up the public consciousness. Moreover, the open and collaborative cultures that ICT can encourage and facilitate are just beginning to result in powerful examples of co-production and knowledge management between organisations, and between organisations and users.

This report is written for strategic planners – for CEOs, trustees and senior managers – to help you to understand and think through the strategic implications of ICT for your organisation. The report begins by considering some of the characteristics of ICT which lie behind its potential to shape the future of how services are designed and delivered before highlighting some of the ways in which ICT has changed the kinds of services that are available. A series of case studies highlight some of the innovative practice in this area from both the voluntary and public sectors. Throughout, the report teases out some of the strategic opportunities and challenges for VCOs delivering services.

This is the final report in the current series. The first three reports on campaigning and consultation, online communities and social networking, and giving and fundraising are available from NCVO. If you have any comments on any of the reports, please contact us at [foresight@ncvo-vol.org.uk](mailto:foresight@ncvo-vol.org.uk).

**Megan Griffith and Karl Wilding, NCVO Third Sector Foresight**  
March 2008



## ● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report presents a challenging picture of the future for voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) aiming to deliver public services in new ways, using ICT. On the one hand users will have increasingly high expectations of how information and services should be available online, based in part on their retail experience. In addition, national and local Government will make online service a higher proportion of the mix of media channels available to citizens. These customer-user-citizens may be using their own phones, cameras and computers to contribute to the online world, and be unwilling to accept passively what is on offer if it doesn't meet their needs. They will have louder voices.

On the other hand, the storage and management of data behind online services requires an additional set of organisational and technical skills. There will be pressure on organisations to be in many places, not just on their own site. Once started, interactive, distributed service can't be interrupted.

### Is it going to be worth it?

The world of Web 2.0 is daunting enough in its vocabulary: blogs, wikis, RSS, tags, podcasts, widgets. Yet for organisations prepared to explore not just the tools but the collaborative culture that they can support, there could be substantial rewards.

The case studies in this report provide practical examples of how interactive media is being used now, sometimes with relative low investment, and often developed by small groups.

- Patient Opinion is a forum that provides 'an architecture of participation', through which patients can share experience, gain support, and provide insights into the ways in which services can be improved. It was created by a GP, Paul Hodgkin.
- Experts Online has moved from a 'come to our site' service to 'we'll create a widget-window embedded in your site', greatly increasing take-up of advice.
- A small group of social entrepreneurs bid for a £1.2 million Government contract by inviting anyone interested to help write the proposal in public. They were shortlisted.
- United Response use videophones to connect support workers and those they are helping. This doesn't replace all face-to-face contact, but enriches the care menu.



The report identifies some common themes underlying these stories. Technologies are gaining a foothold in service delivery, and driving transformations, because of several characteristics.

- They generate, aggregate and store data. E-mail leaves data trails in ways that other conversations don't. Personal data collected for one service can be shared with another. While each instance can offer benefits, they raise issues of ethics, standards and procedures.
- ICT allows a personalised experience. Data collection, if properly handled, can enable organisations to provide tailored services and be more responsive to the needs of users.
- Communication technologies help people to network more easily, making new contacts and establishing their own exchange mechanisms. If organisations don't provide these opportunities, they may be derided or by-passed.
- Effective service delivery requires an alliance between customer/users, suppliers and investors. ICT can support open and collaborative cultures, provided organisations are prepared to work closely with stakeholders and each other.

- The behind-the-scenes back-office processes needed for service delivery can be mechanised through improved data recording and processing. So too can some front desk services - although users will still assert differing preferences for a mix of face-to-face, phone and online channels.
- Improved access to information is one of the most widely-recognised potential benefits of ICT. However, VCOs must ensure they do not disadvantage those not able or willing to use online services.

Beyond the changes that ICT brings to existing ways of doing things, they also offer the possibility of entirely new services. They enable the development of call centres and online self-help; remote support by professionals; peer-to-peer support; and the co-creation of services. Some of these display a move away from centralised to decentralised distribution and the need for changes in control systems and organisational procedures.

We can see from the case studies, transformations and examples of new services a range of opportunities and risks:

<b>Opportunities</b> 	<b>Risks</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing more personalised and comprehensive services to users</li> <li>• Enabling services users to support each other</li> <li>• Providing new channels for user feedback</li> <li>• Improving back-office systems</li> <li>• Developing innovative services through more open collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisations may find it difficult to make the changes in procedures and culture needed for ICT-enabled services</li> <li>• Data management presents difficult challenges of privacy and security</li> <li>• The wide range of preferences among users for face-to-face, phone and online services may mean organisations are overstretched in trying to provide additional channels</li> <li>• Service commissioners may not see VCOs as able to raise to these challenges and are unwilling to award contracts</li> </ul>

Overall the report concludes that there is a good fit between the opportunities provided by ICT and the values and delivery modes that may characterise the voluntary and community sector – user-led and engaged, flexible and responsive, provided mutually or given for no expectation of return. There are challenges – but ICT represents one of the most feasible routes to sustainability in service delivery.

However, while some of the changes brought by ICT are incremental, and consequently relatively easy to accommodate, others may be disruptive. Users are already organising services for themselves, and complaining more effectively if offerings are poor.

VCOs have the opportunity to be in the fore-front of developing more user-centric services. If they don't, they may find they lose their customers, their contracts and their funding.

## ● HOW ICT IS SHAPING THE FUTURE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

ICT is changing many of the public services that we use. Some of this is obvious (eg new web services) and some is hidden (new processes in the background). Notwithstanding the digital divide, which many argue persists, research suggests a significant and growing proportion of the population have web access or are interested in accessing services via 'e-channels'.<sup>1</sup> Although not all services will be 'transformed' using ICT, there remains a significant belief in government that improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and choice will result from integrating ICT into delivery. Moreover, many VCOs are experimenting with ICT to deliver services to communities that previously were too costly, dispersed or difficult to engage with. Outside the traditional sector, new ideas and initiatives are emerging, and in turn services, that would have been impossible without these emerging technologies.

Why are these technologies gaining a foothold in service delivery? There are several characteristics of ICT which are driving these transformations. ICT...

1. ... generates, aggregates and stores data
2. ... allows a personalised experience
3. ... helps to network people
4. ... can support new open and collaborative cultures
5. ... mechanises processes
6. ... improves access to information

These characteristics will shape how public services are designed and delivered in the future, in some cases improving current models and methods, and in other cases giving rise to new and innovative solutions.

### I. ICT generates, aggregates and stores data

ICT generates, aggregates and stores data. For example, an online search or email automatically leaves a data trail, unlike a phone or face-to-face conversation, the results of which would take additional effort to record. Therefore ICT is increasingly being used to develop in-depth profiles of individuals based on their online behaviour and the information they willingly supply online. This can lead to benefits, such as a more personal service (see below), but it also raises concerns about privacy and new ethical questions about how personal data is used and shared. This will become more important as it theoretically becomes easier to join-up data held by different public service providers in the name of seamless customer experience.

*By sharing personal information we surrender control in the longer term by leaving ourselves open to judgement by different groups in different ways. The drive to personalise or tailor services, which is shaped by those judgements, can lead to differences between what people experience and have access to. This can mean a narrowing of experience, can lead to social exclusion, and has significant implications for how we live together as a society.*

FYI: the new politics of personal information (Demos, 2007)

1. In 2004, MORI research for the e-citizen research programme suggested 17.4m people (46% of adults) were 'ready and willing' to access local authority services through e-channels. See [www.e-citizen.gov.uk/NP/rr/pdf/Inital\\_Research\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://www.e-citizen.gov.uk/NP/rr/pdf/Inital_Research_executive_summary.pdf)

Pulling together data from different places can add value to public services. However, the need for common standards in information and identity management is likely to impact on VCOs delivering services under contract to public bodies, as the government's strategy makes clear:

*The shared services agenda is a major cultural shift for the wider public sector. To implement it... bodies awarding funding should presume that public service organisations only deliver good value for money when they standardise and share services with others.*

Transformational government: Enabled by technology (Cabinet Office, 2005)

There are other challenges too. A discussion hosted by e-gov monitor<sup>2</sup> highlighted the following questions:

- Who owns what data and who is responsible for maintaining accuracy and currency?
- Who decides what data can be shared and with what organisations?
- Who polices data sharing? Who polices the policemen?
- Data standards – how do we share data that could potentially be held in several different formats?
- What constitutes appropriate access?

These present challenges for VCOs operating in the same environment as the public sector. The expectation that data should be shared is likely to increase and this will raise ethical issues at the individual and societal levels and some also argue that greater distrust in government will actually increase the likelihood of public services failing<sup>3</sup>. Users of services provided by VCOs may not be aware that their personal data is likely to be shared so widely. With growing public unease about the privacy and security of data following the loss of personal information from a number of government agencies, there is a risk that users will perceive VCOs as part of a bigger project holding data that people have no control over.

## 2. ICT allows a personalised experience

*The future of public services has to use technology to give citizens choice, with personalised services designed around their needs not the needs of the provider.*

Tony Blair, Foreword to Transformational government:  
Enabled by technology (Cabinet Office, 2005)

The data-driven nature of ICT means that individuals have access to, and increasingly expect, a personalised service. As Facebook and Amazon show, people expect a website to know who they are and want to be able to manipulate their online environments. For VCOs, the engagement and sense of control that ICT enables corresponds with the personalised, user-led approach to service delivery often practiced in the sector. ICT can enable VCOs to provide more personalised and smarter services that more fully meet the needs of individual users. This could include: 'mashing-up' data to provide a specific service for a neighbourhood; remembering personal details, so that users can be provided with individually tailored information and support; and, providing services when users wish to access them.

Some online shops make recommendations based on previous purchases and the choices of others who purchased similar items. In time, public information websites may do the same. For example, a search for information on housing benefit may recommend items that others who searched for the same information had accessed, or allow you to read advice posted by other users about how to navigate the process. A new generation of mobile phones are even aware of the geographical location of the user; allowing users to access even more useful and personalised information (for example, the location of the nearest dentist).

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2. [www.egovmonitor.com/node/8686](http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/8686)

3. Data sharing could sap public confidence: <http://software.silicon.com/security/0,39024655,39169116,00.htm>

Personal online profiles will allow organisations to provide individuals with the information and support that they need, based on who they are, at the right time. And, in time, users should be able to manage their own data and therefore their own interaction with VCOs.

*Ideally, users would also be able to save particular searches, access records of their email, IMs or telephone calls with agency representatives and choose to release (or not) this information to other agencies. They would also be able to sign up for personalised RSS feeds that notified them when their rates/licenses/ consultation documents are due. Essentially, enjoy a one-to-one relationship with government as a single entity.*

5 principles for govt2.0 (Jason Ryan, 29 April 2007)<sup>4</sup>

For many, personalisation of public services remains an expensive, distant goal. But as Niel McLean argues in the case of learning, ICT now offers tools to make the concept of personalisation a reality:

*Properly supported and implemented I believe that ICT will play a key role in reconciling these potential conflicts and meeting these challenges. It may be possible to achieve individual excellence while providing equity for all, through the potential of ICT to allow 'intelligent accountability' – where accountability is to individual learners for their learning, as well as to government acting on the nation's behalf. I might go further. I can think of no other sector which has managed to move, at scale, from Henry Ford's 'any colour so long as it's black' to something more tailored to individual need without using ICT.*

Personalising Learning: ICT enabling universal access (QCA, year?)<sup>5</sup>

### 3. ICT helps to network people

As a previous ICT Foresight report<sup>6</sup> explored, a new generation of websites are facilitating ever more connections between people and supporting both 'bounded' online communities where members have to register to participate, and more flexible, 'personalised' online networks. Once an online infrastructure is established, new services can emerge based entirely on the power of a network of people (for example, Freecycle<sup>7</sup>, which allows people to donate and receive goods). These services rely entirely on the network to spread the word and create a market. In the future, the public may increasingly opt out of public services in favour of these self-organised networks and the VCS could potentially show the way forward by developing, piloting and growing new web-based solutions.

*And just for a moment think ahead. Imagine what it will be like in 10 years time, as public services seek to serve people who have grown up with Bebo and social networking, MSN instant messaging, buying and selling on eBay, looking up stuff on Wikipedia, getting their music via My Space, playing multi-user games and broadcasting themselves across YouTube and its successors. Across much of culture and commerce a huge shift is underway: as technology lowers barriers to entry, people are slowly finding their voice. The people we used to call the audience are taking to the stage, or at least the stages they want to set up. And they are getting used to copying, mimicking, commenting, rating and ranking whatever they see. A public sector that does not utilise the power of user generated content will not just look old, outdated and tired. It will also be far less productive and effective in creating public goods.*

The User Generated State: Public Services 2.0 (Charles Leadbeater and Hilary Cottam, 2007)<sup>8</sup>

ICT can also network organisations, allowing them to work in smarter and more collaborative ways. For example, tools such as widgets (see the case study on page 18 provide innovative ways for VCOs to reach new audiences by offering services through other organisations' websites.

4. [www.psnetwork.org.nz/blog/2007/04/29/5-principles-govt20/](http://www.psnetwork.org.nz/blog/2007/04/29/5-principles-govt20/)

5. [www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/niel\\_mclean\\_ict\\_enabling\\_universal\\_access.pdf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/niel_mclean_ict_enabling_universal_access.pdf)

6. ICT Foresight: how online communities can make the net work for the VCS – [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/ictforesightsocialnets](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/ictforesightsocialnets)

7. <http://uk.freecycle.org>

8. [www.charlesleadbeater.net/archive/public-services-20.aspx](http://www.charlesleadbeater.net/archive/public-services-20.aspx)

## ● CASE STUDY

### Patient Opinion

**Today, it is difficult to imagine a world before Google, YouTube or Facebook, a world before instant interaction through an internet connection. Now we are accustomed to uploading photos, organising social events, signing up to campaigns, and sharing best practice through web platforms. The social networking revolution is upon us, and the tools broadly known as web 2.0 are behind it.**

Think back all the way to the 1990s when the internet was populated by information from a few tech-savvy individuals or from companies with the resources to post content. This was web 1.0, where the average person spent most of their time as a passive user, clicking at the browser. With the rise of sites like Blogger, Flickr and others, all this has changed.

Web 2.0 tools rely on the user of the internet to be providers of content or services. A good illustration is eBay, where buyers and sellers connect. Without its participants, the service itself would cease to exist. Another example is Wikipedia, where the co-creation of content makes it more timely and useful than a traditional encyclopedia. With web 2.0 tools, the substance of the connection depends on the people who create the content, not the people who created the platform.

But will a model that works for retail or information-sharing deliver something as important to our societies as the improvement of social services? Patient Opinion<sup>9</sup> aims to find out.

Patient Opinion is an independent online forum founded by Paul Hodgkin, a GP in Sheffield who wanted to make the wisdom and insights of patients available to the NHS. The traditional means of encouraging feedback – inviting a patient to sit on a working party or carrying out a survey – was not proving effective. Patient Opinion created a channel for thousands of patients both to share their own experience and to gain support from others.

Patient Opinion is exciting because it provides 'an architecture of participation' - a forum through which people can express what they feel in their own words. This is an alternative approach to interaction with the public; if the traditional NHS model is one of choice, Patient Opinion gives people voice. People's engagement with health care is multidimensional and messy and Patient Opinion accommodates this, allowing people to define the type of conversation they want to participate in and to describe their own experiences.

This opportunity for conversation is particularly important for an institution such as the NHS, which recognises the need to be less paternalistic but has problems accommodating the shift. The benefits for the NHS of fostering a culture of active patients are potentially huge: a shift from cure towards prevention or the evolution of different forms of supportive relationship, moving perhaps from a paternal doctor-patient relationship to self-managed care.

Only a decade after Google began, we are in a different online reality. It might seem unimaginable now, but in a short time, the health service could provide active patients with more scope to improve their services. Whilst an eBay for health care would need careful consideration, users will increasingly expect the level of influence that initiatives such as Patient Opinion can provide.

Molly Webb, a researcher at Demos until 2007, is currently testing how these ideas can be applied to climate change. [mwebb@theclimategroup.org](mailto:mwebb@theclimategroup.org)

## 4. ICT can support new open and collaborative cultures

By connecting people and allowing individuals to create content, websites can support more open and collaborative ways of working. The concept of 'open source' software, where a community of developers continuously improve software and make new versions available on a voluntary basis, has been broadened out into the concept of 'open source thinking' or 'open knowledge'<sup>10</sup>. Examples in the cultural field include *A Million Penguins*<sup>11</sup>, a 'wikinovel experiment' where anyone could write or edit a novel-in-progress, and *A Swarm of Angels*<sup>12</sup>, which aims to be the world's first internet-funded, crewed and distributed feature film.

ICT has the potential to facilitate better management and sharing of knowledge between peers. VCOs working in the same field (perhaps supported by an umbrella body or head office) can use ICT to collectively gather together intelligence from staff, volunteers and users and synthesise that knowledge, so that organisations can deliver a more effective service. In this way professionals can learn from each other about what works and what doesn't, so that experience and innovation can be built on. These theories are behind new initiatives like the Innovation Exchange (which aims to help social entrepreneurs learn from one another). See the case study on page 20 to read how a group of people bidding to run this exchange took the idea of openness and collaboration to a new level by creating their bid entirely in the open, inviting anyone to contribute.

*I think the public benefit comes from open source thinking: a culture where it is as easy for someone working in the public sector to be able to record information such as why do we keep doing this four times when we only need to do it once, as it is for someone who receives the service to record this information. Co-design is about the conversation that recognises these absurdities.*

ICT Foresight panel member (roundtable discussion, June 2007)

Businesses are increasingly calling upon their networks of customers to help them develop and test new products and services, and sourcing things from amateurs rather than paying professionals (eg the use of photographs taken by the public by the BBC and other media). This is sometimes termed crowdsourcing' (a wordplay on the term 'outsourcing'). Translating this to public services is fairly simple. ICT offers the potential to more easily and continuously involve service users in the design and evaluation of services. However, this relies on encouraging the public to explore the use of such technologies, an issue explored below.

*The sector talks about how it is user-led, ICT potentially has the power to get those users to help design services and make them much more effective.*

Karl Wilding, NCVO (roundtable discussion, June 2007)

ICT can help VCOs to engage more closely with their stakeholders and empower users to help in the design and improvement of services. More organisations are using their websites to have open conversations with their audiences, not just broadcasting messages to them but also giving them the opportunity to respond and have a dialogue. This can lead to better and more user-focused services and products. It can also create a stronger sense of community amongst users, volunteers and supporters who feel valued and listened to and are thus more likely to stay engaged with the organisation in the longer term. When organisations are both delivering services and also influencing local or central government about how future services should be commissioned, ICT can help VCOs to provide a voice for their users so that they are heard by commissioners<sup>13</sup>

However, the growing availability and use of new technology will mean that more people expect more engagement, leading to greater demand for opportunities to input, feed back and help shape thinking.

10. For more on this, see *Wide Open: open source methods and their future potential*  
[www.demos.co.uk/publications/wideopen](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/wideopen)

11. [www.amillionpenguins.com](http://www.amillionpenguins.com)

12. <http://aswarmofangels.com>

13. For more on this, see *ICT Foresight: campaigning and consultation in the age of participatory media*.

This will put pressure on VCOs who are not set up or able to adapt to a more open dialogue with their stakeholders. More open conversations also mean organisations will have to manage tensions between competing voices from their audiences, and work out ways to balance the mix of views.

## 5. ICT mechanises processes

ICT can make back office transactions easier; reduce workload and make more effective use of data. For example, web-based monitoring and evaluation forms can automatically aggregate and organise data. Hand-held devices could allow staff to collect outcomes data as they work; although the initial financial outlay may appear prohibitive, the cost savings over time could be significant.

ICT can organise information online to create services like NHS Direct where users do most of the work by searching for the information themselves. Time-consuming manual processes have also been greatly speeded up by ICT. For example, many library users can now renew their books and pay their fines online and automatic appointment reminders can be sent by text message.

*2010...a day in the life of 'Mary Mobile'*

*Calling to her daughters to hurry up and get dressed, Mary sets out the breakfast with one hand while scrolling through her text messages with the other. Here's one that looks important – her eldest, Amy, seems to have skipped a music lesson yesterday afternoon. Last time it happened, Amy claimed that the attendance system must have failed to register her smartcard inside her rucksack. Mary isn't so sure. But a glance at the TV screen shows that the school bus is nearly at the end of the street, so there's no time for an inquisition now.*

Cutting the wires: Mobile IT and the transformation of local services and governance (NLGN, 2006)

This ability to mechanise processes and deliver efficiency savings has driven much of the government's e-government agenda (at the expense, it has been argued, of other public service values such as democratic accountability). For some time, government has been interested in the ability of ICT to transform public services, in both front and rear of house. In part this has been about encouraging the public to use the internet to access information instead of in person or over the telephone because this can significantly cut down on the costs of wages. Certain initiatives, such as text messages to remind patients of doctors' appointments, have been shown to save significant amounts of money. Other pilots have stressed the potential to save money in the back office by adopting web-based sourcing (e-tendering and e-auctions) and procurement (e-purchasing).<sup>14</sup> As a result, government has pushed for increasing proportions of public services to be 'e-enabled'.

However, with a significant proportion of the population retaining a strong preference for accessing services face to face, developing new channels whilst retaining existing services can actually increase costs. Three 'customer segments' have been observed, each with varying attitudes to accessing online services:

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<sup>14</sup>The Benefits of e-Procurement (NePP, 2004) [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/70780](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/70780)

<b>One-stop shop – 32%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 87% trust face-to-face services more than other modes of provision</li> <li>• 65% access services outside of working hours</li> <li>• 35% would like to access more services online</li> </ul>
<b>Telephone hotline – 33%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 74% trust face-to-face services more than telephone or internet-based services</li> <li>• More than three-quarters access services outside of normal working hours</li> <li>• Less likely to want to access more services online</li> </ul>
<b>Interactive website – 35%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Around half of this group trust face-to-face services more than telephone or internet-based services</li> <li>• 90% like to access services outside of normal hours</li> <li>• 80% would like to access more services online</li> </ul>

Source: *Public services and ICT: How can ICT help improve quality, choice and efficiency in public services?* (Work Foundation, 2005)

*At Breast Cancer Care we are developing a system to support both face to face delivery and online delivery. Currently users can talk to a nurse on the phone or email a nurse. We're now building a system to record the questions that are asked and provide a template for the answers. With this we can launch a 'self service' option where users will also have the option of finding the answers online. They will still be able to call or email if they prefer, but of the services will be fed by the same system.*

Bertie Bosrédon, Breast Cancer Care (roundtable discussion, October 2007)

Take up of online services overall has been lower than expected. Government emphasis is now shifting towards training and helping people to feel confident in accessing online services.

## 6. ICT improves access to information

'Traditional' computers can provide individuals with access to information and services at a time of their choice. A new generation of devices such as mobile telephones, which operate like computers, and red-button technology have further increased access to the internet.

As explained above, ICT facilitates the storage of and access to data. When data is aggregated, organised and made available online, the resulting information can enable citizens to make better informed decisions. ICT can facilitate access to services (for example, using the internet to easily find out whether they need a flu jab, where they can get one and book an appointment online). The growth of user-generated content has meant that citizens can read the opinions of their peers in addition to the promotional messages of the supplier. This has transformed how consumers shop, with many researching prices (often using price-comparison sites), and reading customer reviews before purchasing. In time this is likely to spread to public services, with sites such as Patient Opinion leading the way (see the case study on page <>). The aggregation of information can also help organisations delivering advice services, for example, Norwich City Council established a dedicated link to its website for staff of the local Citizens Advice Bureau, with the aim of providing more efficient access to information typically required by CAB clients, although this has had a mixed evaluation (more tailored information was needed).<sup>15</sup>

15. [www.e-citizen.gov.uk/NP/poc/poc\\_detail.aspx?ProofOfConceptId=1](http://www.e-citizen.gov.uk/NP/poc/poc_detail.aspx?ProofOfConceptId=1)

## ● CASE STUDY

### Delivering online services through local partners – the widget way

**Experts Online was established in 2000.** It is a simple online question and answer service which is shared by many Third Sector online networks. However, before you could even sample the service, you had to find it, understand it and then log in with your ID and password.

In October 2006 we used the net:gain methodology<sup>16</sup> to look at the way we were using ICT to deliver our online support services. This made it clear that, as an umbrella organisation trying to support local action, our online services were not appropriate. Offline, we aim to support what is already happening without being intrusive and we work hard to transfer the knowledge and expertise of those we are supporting. Online, however, we were expecting people to ‘come to our place’ for the support they needed.

We set about a complete rebuild of our online systems. The main purpose was to enable us to operate online in the way we operate offline. That is, to put our services in places where people are already doing things, or thinking about doing things, and not expect them to know who we are and or have to find us.

#### A widget for your website

The first visible manifestation of this initiative is a widget. This has appeared on local websites up and down the country to support communities affected by the Post Office closure programme.<sup>17</sup> A widget is more than just a link or badge. Using RSS (Really Simple Syndication) the latest ‘live’ items, in this case questions answered by Experts Online, appear automatically embedded within the local website.

At the heart of this service is the existing relationship between the local website and their users. The widget adds value to the support already available through these local initiatives and bridges the gap to the Experts Online service by providing local access, including registration.

#### Barriers and opportunities

The main problem we faced before restructuring our online services was that our current software could not be adapted to operate in the way our net:gain review indicated. In the past organisations were unlikely to link their website to the Experts Online service but they are very keen on the incorporation of a widget. Through this multiple, local-level engagement we can also achieve another set of objectives around information and knowledge transfer. The answers to questions asked in one locality help those working in another. Finally, we are now able to provide access to Experts Online through Facebook where there are many groups set up to support rural campaigns.

**Paul Henderson**  
ruralnet | uk

16. Net:gain is a national programme funded by Capacitybuilders which offers TSOs training, support and a ‘route map’ to review their communications, processes and ICT strategy. See [www.net-gain.org.uk](http://www.net-gain.org.uk)

17. For example, see the widget on these websites – [www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk/postoffice.asp](http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk/postoffice.asp), [www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events/ruralservicesupport](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/events/ruralservicesupport) and [www.ruralfocus.co.uk/](http://www.ruralfocus.co.uk/)

In 2007, 61% of households had internet access<sup>18</sup>, but many still do not. People increasingly take this ‘digital divide’ into account when considering the accessibility of their services. However, it is no longer enough to think about just two groups: those with access and those without. A more sophisticated understanding of the factors that influence whether people access and engage with online services is developing, for example:

- The barriers that may prevent people from accessing services online (including skill competency or failure to see its relevance)
- The levels at which they engage (eg do they feel confident completing financial transactions, or interacting in online forums)?
- The different ways in which people access the internet particularly through mobile phones and digital television).

23 ‘e-types’ have been identified, within eight groups: e-unengaged; e-marginalised; becoming engaged; e for entertainment and shopping; e-independents; instrumental e-users; e-business users; e-experts.<sup>19</sup>

*I certainly feel that the simple idea of the digital divide ceased to be useful some time ago because it encouraged us to focus on who was connected to the internet, and pay too little attention to people’s skills, confidence, needs and use of different types of technologies. Is a heavy mobile talker and texter more or less a digital have or have-not than an occasional dial-up online shopper? Is a business user – but leave-it-in-the-office – more or less connected than a bedroom online gamer?*

E-typing dices up the Digital Divide (David Wilcox, 9 August 2006)<sup>20</sup>

VCOs will need to consider the wide variation in how people engage with online services when designing future services, ensuring that websites are accessible to all whilst providing more sophisticated services like live chat, or online forums, for those that wish to use them.

## New services enabled by ICT

Although many services will continue to be delivered in the same way (nurses will continue to administer flu jabs) ICT can, in some cases, improve services that already exist, and, in others, facilitate the emergence of new models of service delivery. Below we consider a few examples:

1. Call centres and online self-help
2. Remote support
3. Online peer support
4. Co-created services

### 1. Call centres and online self-help

Call centres and online self-help options are increasingly replacing face-to-face services; particularly in the commercial sector (banking is one well-established area, despite marketing that currently emphasises branch access). A familiar example in the public sector is NHS Direct, which includes a self-help guide, answers to common health questions, details of users’ nearest health services, and a telephone service for those with immediate health concerns.<sup>21</sup> Allowing users to search for and access useful information can be empowering. For example, in the United States, people with chronic conditions report that their online searches have affected treatment decisions, their interactions with doctors and their ability to cope with their condition.<sup>22</sup>

18. [www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=8](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=8)

19. Spatial literacy.org (ESRC e-society project) [www.spatial-literacy.org/esocietyprofiler/eclassification.php](http://www.spatial-literacy.org/esocietyprofiler/eclassification.php)

20. [www.designingforcivilsociety.org/2006/08/etyping\\_dices\\_u.html](http://www.designingforcivilsociety.org/2006/08/etyping_dices_u.html)

21. In some areas NHS direct is also integrated with out-of-hours GP services, providing the first point of contact and then referral.

22. E-patients With a Disability or Chronic Disease (Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2007) [www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/222/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/222/report_display.asp)

Helpdesks and online self-help services can allow VCOs to support more people (see the Breast Cancer Care example on page 17). Conversely, the growth of these services may result in more value being placed on face-to-face services by users (though perhaps not by funders). Many helpdesks for public services are being taken over by private contractors, and some markets in which the VCS works could present attractive profit-making opportunities for private sector organisations looking to provide large-scale outsourced services via the telephone and internet.

*In this scenario, government recognises the need for advice and invests in a national advice service with a single brand. As funding is tight, this is largely delivered remotely over the web and telephone. By 2015 a two-tier advice sector has emerged. The main source of advice is a government branded service known as Advice Direct. It offers advice on a wide range of issues including advice on issues that the advice sector did not cover in the previous decade (eg advice on food safety and selecting schools). There is a wealth of online information via the service and a public at ease with using the internet is happy to look for solutions online and self-diagnose up to a certain point. When one-to-one advice is required, there is a secure online messaging system and a telephone helpline. Some face-to-face advice is still available; however, government money for this is limited and many advice organisations have to charge fees for face-to-face consultations to sustain themselves. Fees vary around the country depending on the additional support that organisations can access, and whether they can secure deals with third parties (eg insurance companies) to cover costs. Although a single brand, Advice Direct is delivered by a number of organisations (though far fewer than received public funds in 2007) selected through competitive tendering in 2013. Those delivering the service include: private sector organisations that have identified ways to make a profit from this work; and larger voluntary advice organisations (many of which formed through mergers as plans for Advice Direct emerged around 2010).*

Advice in the future: issues and scenarios for the future of the advice sector (Performance Hub, 2007)

## ● CASE STUDY

### The Open Innovation Exchange

In 2007 I worked with Simon Berry, and a few score other people, to develop a bid for a £1.2 million contract on offer from the Cabinet Office to set up an innovation exchange to help third sector organisations share knowledge and improve public service delivery. Using a couple of online systems we developed the entire bid in public, inviting anyone who was interested to collaborate with us. We got quite a bit of attention, including finalist status in the New Statesman New Media awards because of the way we did it. We made a lot of new friends, and Simon and I have taken to calling it our most successful failure in 2007. Here's why.

First the failure bit. We were short listed and interviewed, but didn't get the job. It went to a consortium headed by the government-funded Innovation Unit.<sup>29</sup> We were up against a strong field, and we knew that the approach we took was probably a bit challenging for Whitehall...which leads to the successful bit.

When we heard of the tender we thought we should have a go, because we knew we could put together a good team with skills in event organising, knowledge sharing and online systems. On the other hand, the thought of spending weeks assembling a tender document in the conventional way was not appealing. If you don't win, there's nothing to show for it.

*continued on next page...*

**Case Study (The Open Innovation Exchange) continued from previous page...**

The clue to developing the bid in a creative and satisfying way came from the nature of the project. We believe that much innovation comes from open ways of doing things that allow crossovers between different sectors and disciplines, where conversations and stories complement documentation and project management systems. So why not produce the bid in that style, showing what we meant from the outset? I remember talking this through on the phone with my Edinburgh-based colleague Drew Mackie. 'Ahhh', said Drew. 'You are going to do an open source bid', referring to the way that some software developers are prepared to share the code they develop so others can build on top of their achievements. The equivalent in content is Creative Commons licensing, where you may, for example, allow people to use your material and develop it, with attribution, provided they license the result in the same way.

That's how the idea of the Open Innovation Exchange was born. Over a weekend my son Dan put together a website that allowed anyone who registered to write content, and others to comment. It also provided static pages to assemble the more formal substance of the bid. Simon agreed that he and colleagues at ruralnet|uk would turn the ideas into costed work packages to form the basis of the bid. Our friends Ben Whitnall and Gez Smith of Delib took responsibility for proposals on how the online side would work, and there were a wide range of other contributions. In addition to the public website we used an internal messaging and document system, Basecamp, for team working. The end result was that our entire bid (without the figures) was created in public.

The big challenge, of course, was that we could be giving our competitors an advantage. They could see our thinking, but we couldn't see theirs. We felt that our overriding advantage was that we were demonstrating how we would run the exchange if we won. In addition, as we got more and more enthused about the approach we found that open collaborative innovation is increasingly widely adopted in the commercial field.<sup>23</sup>

The project gave us the confidence and energy to do things differently. If open collaborative innovation could (almost) work in an official tendering situation, what could we do on other projects? We are now taking that approach on a number of things we are developing.<sup>24</sup> All it takes is the courage to say: 'I'm good at some things, but you may be better at others. Let's work together. And if someone has already done it, let's be delighted, not jealous'.

**David Wilcox**  
**Designing for Civil Society**  
[www.designingforcivilsociety.org](http://www.designingforcivilsociety.org)

Visit the Open Innovation Exchange – [www.innovationexchange.net](http://www.innovationexchange.net)  
 (no longer active but available to view)

23. For example, NESTA's Connect Programme supports open collaborative innovation, [www.nesta.org.uk/programmes/connect/index.aspx](http://www.nesta.org.uk/programmes/connect/index.aspx)

24. For example, ruralnet|uk are re-inventing ruralnet|online in public - asking potential users and clients to contribute their ideas on what's needed in the system and their next generation of services - [www.ruralnetonline.org.uk](http://www.ruralnetonline.org.uk)

## 2. Remote support

Webcams and live video links provide new opportunities to provide services remotely that were traditionally delivered face to face (for example, see the case study on page 24) particularly for dispersed groups, rural communities or those with access problems, such as elderly or disabled people. Some of the most developed examples are in the area of 'telemedicine' – the remote delivery of diagnosis and treatment. For example, Operation Village Health has linked doctors based in Harvard, USA with healthcare workers in Cambodia, using email and digital photos to improve both quality of care and health workers' skills and knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Telephone, email and websites can also be used to provide mentoring or telephone befriending, which open up new ways for people to volunteer. For example, in the Net Neighbours scheme, volunteers phone elderly clients for their shopping list, whilst checking up on their wellbeing at the same time. Groceries are ordered and paid for online, and the volunteers phone to check the order has been received.

There has been a rapid expansion in the use of rich media (eg video) in recent years. Video-sharing websites such as YouTube are increasingly popular and more and more personal information appliances (including phones and MP3 players) support video. In addition, digital television has increased the supply of television channels with varied and often niche content.

The opportunities for service delivery have included short videos to explain procedures or give advice (providing a bridge between an impersonal text or a website, and a face-to-face experience). Other new services have emerged, such as exercise programmes for older people, accessible at any time via digital TV 'red-button' technology.

## 3. Online peer support

*Peer support services hosted by Breast Cancer Care are growing in popularity. Our discussion forum is getting over 12,000 posts per month, three times the volume of last year. We have increased our Live Chat sessions to twice weekly and are piloting peer to peer email support which will connect a newly diagnosed patient with a trained volunteer.*

Bertie Bosrédon, Breast Cancer Care

A new generation of websites, which allow individuals to easily create online content and to network with each other, has increased the prominence of peer-to-peer information sharing and advice. Experts no longer have the status that they once had and individuals are increasingly inclined to trust their peers rather than traditional sources of authority.

*The world of health has been transformed in recent years by two trends. One has been the growing availability of online information about diseases, conditions and treatments, which has made patients much less dependent on doctors. The other has been the growth of self-help groups, often organised around particular conditions. The next stage in the evolution of these two trends will be for webspaces to systematically bring together people facing similar health problems, using open principles to validate a wider range of types of knowledge, so that the experience of having been through a mastectomy or chronic alcoholism would become as valuable as the professional knowledge of a trained doctor.*

Wide open: open source methods and their future potential (Demos, 2005)

However, embracing peer support means that VCOs must relinquish some control, as users may hold and promote diverging opinions. Other risks can include bullying, unwanted advertising and quality control. Where the quality of information is extremely important (eg health advice), moderators are required, and this can be very resource-intensive.

#### 4. Co-created services

The ability of ICT to mechanise processes, and to support cultures of collaboration and social networks has produced services which rely on, and benefit from, the effort and contributions of users. This neatly dovetails with current public policy thinking around the co-production of services.<sup>26</sup> Co-production signifies a new set of relationships between the traditional providers of public services (particularly professionals such as doctors) and users/citizens. ICT supports the continued emergence of social support networks (such as NCT's egroups<sup>27</sup>) and programmes such as the NHS expert patients.

NHS Direct allows users to do the work in searching through information and configuring the service to their needs. Other new services rely on co-production principles, where the public take responsibility for improving services. For example Fix my street.com<sup>28</sup> (built by the charity mysociety) helps people to view, discuss or report problems to their local council by locating them on a map.

ICT has also been central to an innovative partnership between Bolton Diabetes Network and the Design Council to place co-production at the heart of a public health programme to reduce levels of late-onset diabetes. A combination of traditional face to face support with new technology (eg a blog), provides an integrated, rather than a bolted on, service delivery,

*Many of the concepts that we explored rely on a database connected to the internet, with easy access for patients and professionals alike. Such a resource would allow people to keep their own records, submit test results from home, book appointments, obtain real-time advice from coaches and other care-givers, learn from online educational materials and communicate with their peers. Professionals could share information with colleagues, conduct informal on-line surveys, and analyse emerging user need patterns and trends.*

Design Council RED Health Report<sup>29</sup>

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26. Leadbeater & Cottam's discussion of technology and co-production at [www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/REDPaper01.pdf](http://www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/REDPaper01.pdf) is particularly useful (pp19-21)

27. [www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com/info-centre/egroups](http://www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com/info-centre/egroups)

28. [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)

29. [www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/#B3](http://www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/#B3) See also [www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/REDDESIGNNOTES01Bolton.pdf](http://www.designcouncil.info/mt/RED/health/REDDESIGNNOTES01Bolton.pdf)

## ● CASE STUDY

### United Response and telesupport

**Sharon has learning disabilities**, but lives independently in her own home in Littlehampton. A support worker used to spend up to an hour and a half each week visiting Sharon to help her put together her menu and shopping list. Now Sharon does the list herself using a flexible, 24-hour form of support via a stand-alone unit incorporating broadband-enabled telephone, video screen and camera.

The screen means that the support worker can watch Sharon going into the kitchen to check each item and Sharon can hold up items for them to see. This has helped Sharon to become more confident and independent and it saves both of them time. The support worker no longer travels to Sharon's house; instead they meet up in town, ready to do the shopping.

Sharon is taking part in a pilot of telesupport being run in West Sussex by United Response<sup>30</sup>, a national charity supporting 1,500 people with learning disabilities or mental health needs, which has been at the forefront of best practice in social care for over 30 years. Nine residences have now had the technology installed, along with the three United Response offices. A further two have been installed in staff member's homes to provide out of hours support.

The charity's Chief Executive, Su Sayer, has long recognised the potential of recent advances in videophone technology. A need to create a more flexible way of supporting people, which can deliver support to people in their homes, when they need it and in a non-intrusive way, led United Response to pioneer a unique, tailored form of telecare, it has termed 'telesupport', using a solution developed by Aupix.

Sayer argues that, although telesupport must never replace essential face-to-face support, it is likely to be a highly valuable additional technique as part of an overall care menu. "It is very flexible, and can fit around the schedule of the person requiring support, and their own preferences regarding privacy," she said.

*Telesupport differs from other forms of telecare (monitoring systems which allow the elderly and the disabled to live more independently) because of the **social benefits** that it can bring to people's lives, providing people with the tools they need to access their own support.*

People like Sharon also identified the potential for greater independence outside of simple support provision and urged United Response to consider it as a social tool. She now uses telesupport to stay in touch with her friend Emma and the other people that she used to live with before she moved into her own place.

"I like calling my friends on the telesupport phone, especially Emma," Sharon says. "It's better than calling her on a normal phone because I can see her face and so we can have a good giggle together. We talk about the things we have done and arrange when to meet up. I used to find keeping in contact with her difficult, but it's really easy now."

Another pilot user suggested units should be installed in GPs' surgeries to enable consultations about medication, without having to travel to the practice. With this sort of support just the touch of a button away, the impact of telecare to complement face to face care is likely to be hugely significant. By 2050, it is predicted that four-times as many people will need social care as today, which will result in a major resourcing crisis for the care sector. Telesupport may be one part of the solution.

## ● CONCLUSION

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This report has highlighted a number of tangible ways in which the integration of ICT has changed and improved the way that services are delivered. Moreover, it has identified examples of new services that ICT has enabled. In both cases, ICT has reinforced the values and delivery models that are widely argued to characterise the VCS: user led and engaged; flexible and responsive; and, provided mutually or given for no expectation of return. As such, we believe ICT reinforces the things that are good about the VCS and the way it delivers services. Although it is right to express caution in relation to some of the known difficulties of adopting and using ICT, we continue to believe that ICT represents one of the most feasible routes to sustainability in service delivery.

Many of the examples highlighted in this report are very much 'here and now'. They are incremental changes where technology may, in some cases, be bolted-on to existing services to improve accessibility or efficiency. The application of these now relatively familiar technologies has not yet transformed business or service delivery models, as has happened, say, in the music industry.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the experience of other sectors and industries suggests there is significant potential for such a disruption to occur. New technology – whether peer-to-peer networking, rich media (video) or GPS and geocoding combined with new approaches, including the 'mashing-up' of data, will, we believe, combine to disrupt traditional service delivery models.

Some of these are in place now. Examples such as fixmystreet offer a radically different vision of how services can and should be delivered. Looking five years ahead, it is feasible to imagine the disruptive application of these technologies spreading from the niche positions they currently hold. Indeed, some commentators are arguing that public services can be rebuilt from the ground up, with the groups, organisations and associations that constitute civil society at the forefront. A challenge therefore for those organisations already providing services is: will you be at the forefront of these new delivery mechanisms, or will citizens increasingly build their own solutions, probably on a non-profit basis, but outside of the institutions that provide services today?

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31. [www.3s4.org.uk/news/postcards-from-the-music-industry](http://www.3s4.org.uk/news/postcards-from-the-music-industry)



## ● FURTHER READING

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### ICT and public services

- *Public services and ICT: How can ICT help improve quality, choice and efficiency in public services?* (Work Foundation, 2005)  
[www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/PublicServicesandICTFinal%20Report.pdf](http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/PublicServicesandICTFinal%20Report.pdf)
- *Transformational Government Enabled by Technology* (Cabinet Office, 2005)  
[www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf](http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf)
- *The Power of Information: an Independent Review* (Mayo and Steinberg, 2007)  
[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/power\\_information.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/power_information.pdf)
- *Unlocking innovation: why citizens hold the key to public service reform* (Demos, 2007)  
[www.demos.co.uk/files/Unlocking%20innovation-web.pdf](http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Unlocking%20innovation-web.pdf)
- *Cutting the wires: Mobile IT and the transformation of local services and governance* (NLGN, 2006)  
[www.nlgn.org.uk/public/publications/purchase-publications/cutting-the-wires-mobile-it-and-the-transformation-of-local-services-and-governance/](http://www.nlgn.org.uk/public/publications/purchase-publications/cutting-the-wires-mobile-it-and-the-transformation-of-local-services-and-governance/)
- *The Digital Inclusion Landscape in England – Delivering Social Impact through Information and Communications Technology* (Digital Inclusion Team, March 2007)  
<http://digitalinclusion.pbwiki.com/Links+to+Resources>
- *The User Generated State: Public Services 2.0* (Leadbeater and Cottam, 2007)  
[www.charlesleadbeater.net/archive/public-services-20.aspx](http://www.charlesleadbeater.net/archive/public-services-20.aspx)
- (Demos, 2005)  
[www.demos.co.uk/publications/wideopen](http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/wideopen)
- (Paul Johnston et al)  
[www.theconnectedrepublic.org](http://www.theconnectedrepublic.org)

### The impact of ICT on the voluntary and community sector

- *ICT Foresight: campaigning and consultation in the age of participatory media* (NCVO, 2006)  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=3458](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=3458)
- *ICT Foresight: how online communities can make the net work for the VCS* (NCVO, 2007)  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=4582](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=4582)
- *ICT Foresight: charitable giving and fundraising in a digital world* (NCVO, 2007)  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=7588](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=7588)
- *Future Focus 3: how will we use new technologies in five years' time?* (Performance Hub, 2007)  
[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=7296](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?id=7296)

## ● NCVO THIRD SECTOR FORESIGHT



NCVO's Third Sector Foresight project helps voluntary and community organisations to identify and understand the strategic drivers that affect them and provides tools to help organisations transform this understanding into robust strategies that can directly improve their effectiveness.

### Voluntary Sector Strategic Analysis

This annual publication provides concise and relevant information about trends affecting the VCS, analysis of the implications and suggested strategic actions.

*“This is invaluable to me as a Chief Executive of a small/medium sized non-profit organisation, because it gives me access to thinking on strategy I could not possibly find within my limited resources.”*

### Tools for Tomorrow – a practical guide to strategic planning for voluntary organisations

This toolkit provides step-by-step guidance to small and medium-sized organisations.

*“This good value guide will be refreshing and challenging for those organisations that have an established cycle for business planning. I wish that this guide had been put into my hands seven years ago as I began to lead a medium-sized, local charity into more strategic growth and development.”*

### Foresight Network

The free Foresight Network was set up to disseminate regular information about strategic issues to leaders and planners in the VCS, and to facilitate peer support and knowledge sharing.

*“I found it very useful, especially the trends section. I often work with groups who have no idea about future trends and need to be encouraged to look outside their own four walls, so ‘seed’ information from a variety of areas is particularly useful both as an example and a starting point.”*

– (from a CVS)

### Third Sector Foresight Seminar Series

These free seminars provide space and time for leaders to explore and discuss strategic issues and share knowledge and ideas with their peers. Seminars have been held on: the changing economic landscape; changing regulation and perceptions of risk; strategy renewal during periods of growth; the impact of the Pensions Commission report on the VCS; and, local government reform.

### Online database of drivers and trends – going live in 2007

We are currently building an online database which will provide a useful source of analysis and data on drivers and trends to help VCOs understand their environment, how it is changing and the impact on their organisation.

## ● ICT HELP FOR FRONTLINE ORGANISATIONS



**The ICT Hub** provides a range of no cost and low cost services to help voluntary and community sector organisations benefit from ICT including new media technology.

The ICT Hub is a partnership of national voluntary and community organisations and the partners are AbilityNet, IT4Communities, LASA, NAVCA and NCVO.

The ICT Hub's resources are for very small, small and medium-sized voluntary and community sector organisations. To find out more about the ICT Hub visit:

**[www.ict hub.org.uk](http://www.ict hub.org.uk) or call freephone 0800 652 4737**

*“Well managed information and communications technology (ICT) can save time and money – and increase innovation”*

### **ICT Publications**

The ICT Hub has produced a range of useful and informative publications including ‘How to Cost and Fund ICT’ and ‘Guide to Managing ICT in the Voluntary and Community Sector’. These are available to download from the publications section of the ICT Hub website or contact the ICT Hub for a free copy.

### **ICT Hub Knowledgebase**

The ICT Hub online Knowledgebase provides comprehensive and extensive practical help and independent advice for small and medium-sized voluntary and community sector organisations. This user-friendly resource offers searchable information on ICT ranging from very basic help to get you started; through to issues on fundraising online, security, designing your website, using technology for video-conferencing and calls, writing an IT strategy and more technical questions on development and support of your network.

### **The ICT Hub Suppliers Directory**

Search for high quality suppliers of ICT products and services across all English regions who can demonstrate a positive track record of working specifically with the voluntary and community sector.

### **Local Support**

ICT champions working across the 9 English regions can provide direct help and support to your organisation by signposting you to local and national resources, connecting you with an expert ICT volunteer or matching you with a charity that can develop your skills through sharing their ICT knowledge and expertise. The regional champions also deliver workshops and training seminars. Their contacts can be accessed via the ICT Hub website under: ‘How can we help – Regional Infrastructure’.



This publication can be made available in large print and alternative formats on request.

Please contact NCVO on 020 7713 6161 for more information.



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