

The UK: A leading digital nation?

Our debate in Parliament
on the role of Government



#UKDigiStrategy

INTRODUCTION

As the digital economy rapidly evolves, government becomes increasingly fundamental to sustainable growth of the digital sector, and, conversely the digital economy becomes increasingly critical to the future success of government.

Recently we took ideas sourced from the tech community on what this Government must do to make the UK a leading digital nation to Westminster to discuss with expert politicians, business leaders and think tanks.





PARTY POLITICS AND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

MATT WARMAN MP

Chair, APPG for Digital Infrastructure

Matt opened the discussion saying how difficult it is to define where digital begins and ends:



Dan Morgan @danmorgan1 · 2h

.@mattwarman not in favour picking #tech winners. Digital does not exist in a vacuum. It's everywhere #ukdigistrategy @brands2life

So the Government's future Digital Strategy must find a clear focus and in Matt's mind, the critical baseline will be:

- Securing investment in the right infrastructure
- Tackling 'the biggest issue' which is the digital skills gap and preparing for a modern workforce
- Focusing on public service innovation that makes profound change, making sure digital makes a real difference to the most bureaucratic or challenging moments of life

Unexpected developments could hold back progress though and politicians will have a critical role in finding solutions and making bold decisions. So, for example, what could government do to make sure the insurance industry does not scupper the future for driverless cars in the UK?

The good news is 'politics' per se is unlikely to stand in the way of any digital ambition for the UK.



helen milner @helenmilner · 4h

Digital Economy isn't a party political position and we all agree it's very important says @mattwarman #ukdigistrategy

Undoubtedly though the top-of-mind political question for the tech sector is our future in Europe.



Veronique Barbosa @vbarbosa · Apr 19

FinTechs worried about Brexit & some prepping contingency plans, what's the govts contingency plan? asks our COO @RevolutApp #ukdigistrategy

Matt urged individual tech businesses to do more to speak out against Brexit.



Conservative MP Tells tech Firms To 'Speak Up' Against EU Brexit



ETHICAL DILEMMAS

ANTONY WALKER

Deputy CEO of techUK

The techUK chief warned of the philosophical, ethical dilemmas tech would create in coming years, calling for a “sense of humility” from the tech sector as science fiction becomes science fact.

For plenty of people automation, AI or the Internet of Things are things of a dystopian nightmare rather than a tech dream. So for that reason the industry needs to really focus on the positive.



helen milner @helenmilner · 3h

Digital should make the world a better place: fix finances; & bring everybody with us says @techUKdepCEO #ukdigistrategy

Don't assume everyone wants change either, warned Antony. Most people are there to deliver services not disrupt them. We need to recognise the 'maintainers' and bring them on the journey.



ITProPortal

Forget about disruptors, it's time to celebrate the digital 'maintainers'



19/04/2016

By Sam Pudwell, PRODUCTION EDITOR

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[sampudwell](#)

PUBLIC SECTOR NEWS

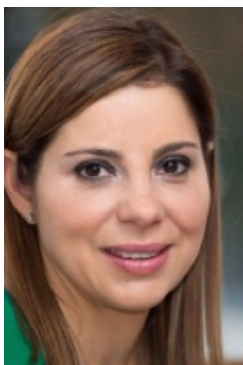
Lack of trust could hold back progress in the public sector too. Government needs to use citizen data to improve services, but this will not succeed without a social contract to make data available.

And on skills it's about enabling people to look beyond coding and applying digital to everything.



Peter Sigrist @psigrist · 5h

Point by @techUKdepCEO - coding in school is not about learning a lang but about learning you can manipulate the world #UKDigiStrategy



SUPPORTING EMERGING SECTORS DEBBIE WOSSKOW

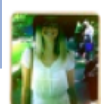
CEO of Love Home Swap

The Government's light touch approach to regulation and clear policy position has set up the UK sharing economy as a global leader said Debbie.

In the last Budget the Chancellor announced the world's first tax break for the sector, a massive shift from a few years ago when councils were fining people for letting out their own homes via the site.

Why is success of the sharing economy important?

- It helps people save money and use resources more productively across almost every aspect of our lives now from lift shares with BlaBlaCar, house swapping with Love Home Swap to everyday help from Task Rabbit
- And female participation is unusually high for the tech sector, it allows for flexible working



AdeleMcl @AdeleMcl · 3h

65% people in sharing economy are women - and we're not measuring their contribution @DebbieWossk #UKDigiStrategy

But in Debbie's view there are still some things government needs to action for the sharing economy:

- Start capturing how the sharing economy is reshaping the way we live and work. Productivity is a major challenge for the UK, but we are not

factoring in the impact of the sharing economy

- More sharing cities need to develop outside London
- Tackle the digital skills gap but remember tech entrepreneurs need business skills too
- Address the labour force question and look at workers on platforms to allow for flexibility
- Consumer trust, or lack of it, is a major priority for attracting investment and consumer confidence. Sharing Economy UK will be developing a 'fair trade' style mark for sharing economy businesses to use as a badge of trust
- Help tackle challenges in development of critical supporting products.



clairerudall @clairerudall · 3h

Insurance industry needs to innovate to provide products for the sharing economy. @brands2life @DebbieWossk #UKDigiStrategy #sharingeconomy

And politicians could lead by example.



Natasha Thomas @TashaThom · 3h

Let's get more MPs using the sharing economy - sharing rides and using Airbnb @DebbieWossk #ukdigistrategy



RETHINKING PUBLIC SERVICES

EDDIE COPELAND

Innovation Director, Nesta

Government needs to rethink its own relationship with the tech sector. The era of bringing all IT in house, led to the Government Digital Service, needs to be replaced with an era of working more collaboratively with the private sector.

But there are signs of progress. Today, Eddie said, government has a critical mass of digitally savvy civil servants who know how to talk to the IT industry.

So what could be next for public sector innovation?

- Redefine procurement to be 'challenge-based' with a focus on solving problems
- Get the basics right on data. At the moment even non-personal data sets are really being mined. This is why Eddie has successfully called for the London Mayoral candidates to commit to offices of data analytics for cities to get more projects off the ground
- Tap into private sector data. London or other cities could gain a lot

from access to Mastercard's data. Google and Apple have data on footfall.



Dan Morgan @danmorgan1 · 2h

.@EddieACopeland flips gov open data on its head. Look to private sector data such as payments to transform public policy. #ukdigistrategy

But this question ...



Agilisys @Agilisys · 5h

We asked what co-ord is underway between local and central gov in terms of investment and digital transformation? #UKDigiStrategy

could not be answered by any of the panellists. They all acknowledged there was a major problem but striking a balance between scale and local innovation would be tricky.

Eddie suggested being braver about trying out new business models. For example Nesta is scaling up one that accesses expert citizens in emergencies, reducing the burden on emergency services.

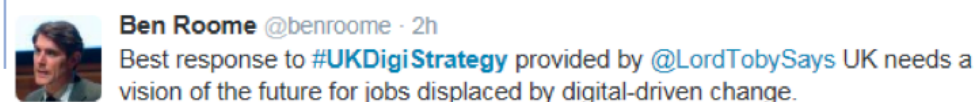


EMPOWERING CONSUMERS

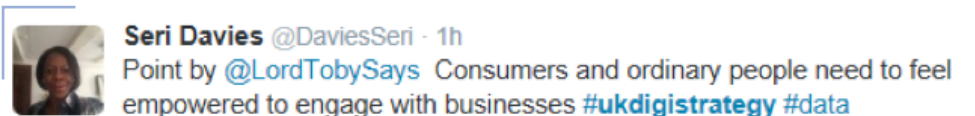
LORD TOBY HARRIS

Labour peer, PICTFOR Treasurer

Lord Harris, although not a frontbench spokesman for Labour, is very engaged with the tech community through his involvement in the Parliamentary ICT Group. He agreed with all the speakers that the Government digital strategy must be ambitious and brave. If not how do we address lack of trust, confidence or inclusion.

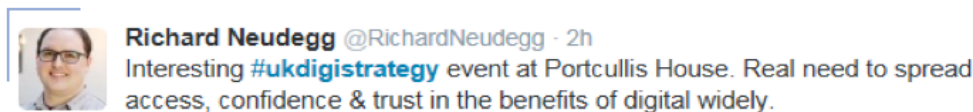



Lord Harris agreed with all the speakers that the Government digital strategy must be ambitious and brave. If not how do we address lack of trust, confidence or inclusion.



On broadband Lord Harris swerved from the Labour party line around universal access. He would prefer more targeted services, focused on bringing cities, not every single household, up to the highest standards.

And finally...





The pace of change and adoption of new tech means Government needs to ensure end to end, open collaboration with the tech community – with start-ups, the third sector, other larger businesses and of course trade associations.

At Brands2Life we work with our clients to break down barriers and create opportunities from change.

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