The Digital Strategy in 2021
Building the approach and action plan

Purpose

This document outlines the current digital environment in 2021 alongside the Connected Community Advisor role being resourced in April 2021. It proposes the direction of the Digital Strategy action plan for the next 12 months.

Contents

Background

The Council's Digital Strategy: Digital by Design was drafted in early 2019 and consulted on over May and June of that year. It was then adopted by Council and published in October 2019 with expectation to resource the implementation.

In early 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic caused worldwide lockdowns and disruptions that are continuing into 2021. The pandemic exposed a reliance on technology and connectivity to participate in everyday life when personal movements are restricted.

In New Zealand, COVID-19 exposed at a national level the digital divide and has led to significant and developing interest, investment and resource across Central Government ministries and agencies in this space.

Overview of the 2019 Digital Strategy

VISION:	We harness digital opportunities to empower and enrich our community.	**PURPOSE**	To drive digital innovation and opportunity in Whanganui, in partnership with the community

Four focus areas and their goals and outcomes were identified in the Digital Strategy 2019:

FOCUS AREAS	GOALS	OUTCOMES
Connectivity and inclusion	We are accessible, linked in and known for it	Whanganui's digital infrastructure and networks support our image and mean that everyone can participate online
A high value creative economy	We are prepared for the future	Whanganui's economy reflects the changing nature of work and our standard of living improves
Innovation	We foster innovation and improvement through a digital lens	Whanganui stays current with digital opportunities and has a reputation for innovation
A digital Council	Whanganui District Council is future-focused and enabling	Working with Council is easy and our services and approaches are smart

The principles guiding the strategy were agreed as

| Open	- Open access infrastructure to promote competition - Open data to foster innovation - Open access to information and images through creative commons to promote innovation
Inclusion for all	Ensuring everyone has the connections, devices, skills and engagement to connect
Security conscious	Protecting privacy, understanding security risks and upskilling the community to protect themselves online
Future proofed	Working with the future in mind
Resilient	Using technology to build a more resilient community
Locally led	Working in partnership with the community
Globally relevant	Understanding relevant global trends

Digital New Zealand: A snapshot of statistics and funding 2018 to 2021

The Government has recognised that up to date data on digital connectivity and inclusion in New Zealand is a key challenge. These statistics are provided to give some context to digital connectivity and inclusion funding up to 2021.

Census 2018 access to telecommunications data[1]

The 2018 Census was New Zealand's first online census and attracted a lower response rate to previous years. Due to data concerns, results were delayed and released in September 2019 as the Digital Strategy was being finalised. Access to telecommunications systems data is rated as moderate quality by Statistics NZ.

At a national and regional level, a high percentage of access to the internet was recorded for private dwellings, however, at a Whanganui Territorial Level this drops. It shows our region in 2018 was still behind the rest of New Zealand in **having access to the internet:**

89.1%	81.1%	77.7%
New Zealand	Manawatū-Whanganui	Whanganui
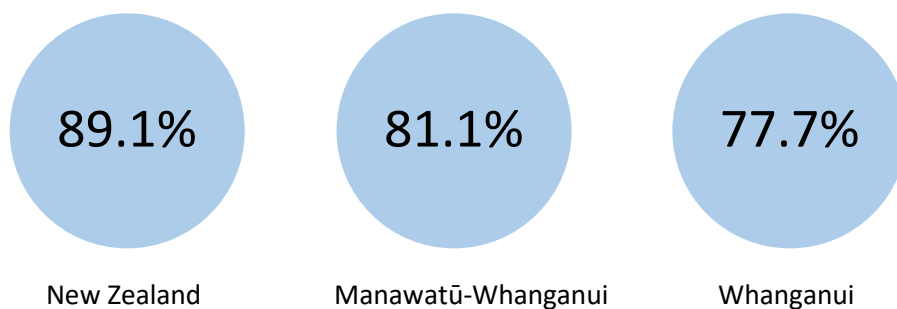
Annual Telecommunications Monitoring Report 2020

The Commence Commission New Zealand released its 14th annual telecommunications market monitoring report[2] in March 2021. It presents key industry metrics and longer-term telecommunications historical trends in New Zealand for the 2020 calendar year.

The general trends show that data usage continues to increase year-on-year, usage of older technology such as landlines and copper broadband continue to drop. COVID-19 increased the use of fixed wireless connections (broadband through cellphone towers) as a fibre alternative however this suffered with network resilience.

- **Fixed broadband data usage** per month increased 37% on 2019 to 284GB in comparison to 15% in the previous year, **mobile network data** usage increased 20% to a monthly average of 3.29GB.
- **Residential landline connections** reduced by 12%, over half of household fixed line connections now have no voice service (naked broadband), **copper broadband connections** dropped 24%
- **Fixed wireless connections** have increased 16% to 221,000. As at 30 June 2020, New Zealand ranked third highest out of the OECD countries for this connection with 4.5 subscriptions per 100 of population
- However **average download speeds** for fixed wireless connections decreased by around 25%

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[1] https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/whanganui-district
[2] Annual Telecommunications Monitoring Report 2020
https://comcom.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0030/247377/2020-Annual-Telecommunications-Monitoring-Report-Revised-version-16-March-2021.pdf

- Households on average spent $142 per month on telecommunications services in 2019 up from $135 in 2019. 41% of consumers highlighted telecommunications services as an **everyday cost of concern**

COVID-19, the digital divide and the Government response into 2021

COVID-19 is an unprecedented event impacting every country in the world. The New Zealand wide Alert Level 4 lockdown in March 2020, and subsequent localised lockdowns, brought to the forefront the digital divide that exists in New Zealand.

It demonstrated poor wellbeing outcomes for people unable to participate online when required to. This included the inability to: work remotely, access online services for essential goods and services such as groceries, or for businesses to provide such services.

Some recent statistics released include:

- The Ministry of Education distributed over 16,000 school-owned devices to students and delivered over 25,000 new laptops, Chromebooks and iPads to students by November 2020.[3]
- Better for Business insights published in December 2020 show less businesses were digitally enabled than expected with 43% of businesses having an online presence; only 5% of NZ businesses increased their presence following COVID-19[4].

Central Government therefore as part of COVID-19 recovery has continued to provide significant funding in the digital space including:

- $20 million total digital capacity funding was announced in 2020. This included funding for
    - Digital Boost, a partnership between MBIE and the private sector to support small businesses to use digital tools
    - $5 million for the Tourism Recovery Package to support digital tourism initiatives.
- New Zealand Libraries Partnership Programme provided $30 million over two years to fund and upskill librarians in public libraries so they can provide greater support for library users and help bolster reading and digital literacy.
- The Targeted Training and Apprenticeship Fund (TTAF; also known as free trades training) at sub-degree level to provide free education and training from 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2022. This was expanded in January 2021 to include Information technology fields
- $50 million for further rural broadband digital connectivity across regional New Zealand, with Manawatū-Whanganui part of the second priority group

Budget 2021 also included future digital related funding including:

- Support for small business to transition to future ways of working funding of $44 million
- Funding to improve rural connectivity by repurposing a spectrum band to promote the widespread rural rollout of 5G technology
- Increased funding in initiatives to increase digital inclusion including funding the :
    - "Continuing Digital Access for Principals and Teachers" to provide devices and applications to provide online learning and
    - Office for Seniors to address the three current priorities for action of digital inclusion, housing, and employment

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[3] https://www.digital.govt.nz/showcase/tackling-the-digital-divide-during-covid-19/
[4] https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12274-nz-business-digital-landscape-december-2020

Setting our scene: New Zealand's approach to Digital Inclusion

The Digital Inclusion Blueprint

The Department of Internal Affairs launched the Digital Inclusion Blueprint in May 2019 to define digital inclusion in New Zealand and provide a five-year strategic direction for the work towards digital inclusion.

Digital inclusion is described using 4 interdependent elements[5] which are needed for a person to be digitally included:
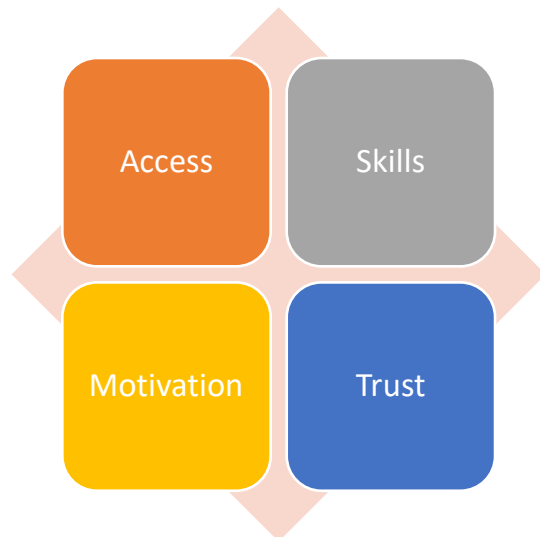
> " a digitally included person, whānau or community has convenient, reliable access to affordable, accessible digital devices and an internet connection, and can confidently use them in their day-to-day life. "

The four elements show that digital inclusion is not a one size fits all solution or investment in one area such as access. DIA estimate that 1 in 5 New Zealanders lack at least one of the four elements to be digitally included.

The Digital Blueprint also includes an Appendix on the groups at risk of not being digitally included, which includes Maori, Pasifika, Seniors, people with disabilities, and people in situations such as low incomes or low housing stability.

InternetNZ Five Point Plan for Digital Inclusion

InternetNZ is a non-profit responsible for the .nz domain and activities around their vision for an internet that is open, secure and for all New Zealanders. They provide advisory, advocacy and funding functions in this space. In May 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Digital Blueprint, InternetNZ called for the Government to implement a Five Point Plan for Digital Inclusion in May 2020

1. Affordable connectivity
2. Devices for those that can't afford them
3. Wrap around support for the newly connected
4. Digital skills for displaced workers and SMEs
5. Shovel-ready investment in telecommunications infrastructure

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[5] Department of Internal Affairs. 2019. The Digital Inclusion Blueprint, Te Mahere mō te Whakaurunga Matihiko. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs.

Implementing the Digital Strategy

Digital initiatives and innovation are already happening across the Council, our libraries, Whanganui & Partners and within the community organically. However they are not always known, connected with each other or promoted. We are not telling a cohesive digital story that everyone can contribute to and have an opportunity to participate in.

The short term goal is to raise the profile of digital initiatives and opportunities in Whanganui to help facilitate and grow what it means to be digital by design. The Digital Strategy will link into other related strategies including Climate Change, Housing, Economic and Leading Edge. Whanganui & Partners are also responsible for delivering a majority of the business related strategies.

Four elements of digital inclusion in Whanganui

Current digital data relevant to Whanganui remains an issue. Anecdotally, the community in conversations throughout April to July 2021 report that Whanganui has a high level of digital exclusion.

Below is an initial evaluation of the current state and emerging issues faced in Whanganui based on engagement with the community using the four elements of digital inclusion.

Access
Three key parts: connectivity, affordability, accessibility.

- There is no reliable up to date data on connectivity at a territorial level in Whanganui in 2021 and taking in account COVID-19 impacts. 2018 census data supports that Whanganui is behind the New Zealand average.
- While Whanganui had early rollout of ultra-fast fibre broadband in 2015, affordability remains a barrier.
- Insecure housing from housing pressures in the region also is reported as a barrier. Changes in February 2021 to tenancy laws have only just removed a barrier of landlord permission to install fibre. Within Council owned housing, fibre connectivity is done on a tenant request basis.
- Fixed wireless has been a cost effective solution in the community in response to COVID-19 however there are reports of slow or no available connections due to pressures on tower capability. Areas include Castlecliff and Whanganui East. Other people rely on accessing free wifi at public spaces only.
- It is reported that people do not have access to suitable devices that allow them the level of access required, this includes out of date devices, phones only, or extensive troubleshooting required to make them useable. A lot of people require extensive 1-on-1 support.
- Rural connectivity and mobile blackspots continue to be an issue. Many marae have benefited from the multi-agency Marae Digital Connectivity initiative from 2019 for installation and free connectivity for 5 years.
- The disabled community report barriers in Whanganui to accessing tools and devices locally to enable them to participate online

Skills
The know-how to use the internet and digital technology in ways that are appropriate and beneficial

- There is a healthy offering of digital inclusion initiatives run within the community supported by local and national funding that help a range of excluded groups within Whanganui. The

Council provided funding to SeniorNet Wanganui through a 2020/21 Community Contract to provide digital courses to seniors and the Whanganui District Library has received National Library funding in this space.

- These groups all reported similar issues with reaching the most excluded and vulnerable in the wider community who may not reach out for help or know how to access such services (see trust and motivation).
- Many courses are run within the Whanganui CBD and transportation is a barrier for attendance.
- Ongoing funding sustainability and volunteer time in this space were also reported issues.
- Whanganui & Partners continue to provide support and services to businesses in the region including digital skills. There is a focus on attracting IT businesses to the region and supporting current IT businesses to grow.
- WAHA Digital provided digital foundation skills specifically to Maori enterprise in the Taranaki and Whanganui regions however placements are completely full with no further funding in 2021
- The national initiative of Digital Boost for small business digital skills has only a 4% uptake in the Manawatū-Whanganui region as of June 2021, and predominantly in the service (17%) and retail industry (12%). 38% of signups are new businesses, the second highest being businesses of 10 years plus at 23%. Palmerston North is included in these statistics so may not represent what is happening at a Whanganui level[6].
- There are currently no pathways for technology/ICT education at a further education level and in person in Whanganui. The story of IT businesses based in Whanganui is not being told so people are unaware of potential local opportunities.

Motivation
Understanding how the internet and digital technology can help us connect, learn, or access opportunities

Trust
Trusting in the internet and online services. Including online safety, digital understanding, confidence and resilience

- Older people, including parents of children, do not understand usefulness of digital access required for learning and associate it with negative outcomes such as social isolation, cyber-bullying or addiction (such as gaming or excessive internet use[7]).
- Many people are still being reported as preferring face-to-face interaction in the Whanganui community
- As a recent example, cheques have been removed as a payment option from 1 June 2021 and support has been on an ad-hoc basis from community groups. Generally cheque users have been directed to use online payment methods.
- Several submissions on the Digital Strategy focussed on concerns over 5G technology, there have been reports of anti-5G activity when towers have been installed in Whanganui and the wider region from 2019 to date [8]

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[6] https://fyi.org.nz/request/16100/response/60884/attach/4/DOIA%202122%200134%20J%20Buckingham%20response.pdf

[7] Out of the Maze Building Digital Inclusive Communities 2018 https://report.digitaldivides.nz/barriers-to-access-motivation

[8] https://www.nzherald.co.nz/whanganui-chronicle/news/new-spark-network-tower-being-installed-in-whanganui-east-shopping-centre/QDBRVN4VFSRNI25UB4Y44MVGXU/

- Community groups report their communities have issues with online scams, families taking advantage if helping with online access, trusting online payments or services and products that can be accessed online

The next 6 – 12 month – an agile approach

There is a need for a short term adaptable and agile action plan as the digital inclusion space develops and COVID-19 funding is established and allocated.

It is likely with the raised profile, private sector businesses will look for opportunities to fund community projects or research in this area. For example, the Vodafone New Zealand Foundation on 7 July 2021 announced a six year investment into Invercargill in collaboration with the community to support their rangatahi[9]. On 23 July 2021, Datacom Group signed a strategic partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu to deliver tech projects and create pathways for Maori youth[10] in the South Island.

We want to create a safe environment where digital ideas can be shared and supported, and collectively communities and businesses are enabled to access and embrace digital projects and funding that are relevant to our region as they are wanted, needed and funded.

The overarching goals for the next 12 months are to:

- Set a baseline measure with informed data to what current connectivity and inclusion levels are in our region so we know where we are now and can determine where we want to be in the future
- Connect our region into developing local and national funding or initiatives and ensure that Whanganui receives its share of COVID-19 recovery or digital inclusion orientated funds, and any programs delivered are relevant to the wants and needs of our community and economy
- Provide community organisations with a forum, space and resources to build digital inclusion projects for their communities and share experience and knowledge
- Build the trust and motivation within Council to support and promote digital initiatives, upskilling and opportunities

Resourcing and Finance

The Connected Community Advisor role provides the internal resourcing to implement the action plan internally and externally for the next 12 months by working in partnership. Whanganui & Partners has indicated digital deliverables in their statement of intent 2021/22 that they are resourcing or funding as part of their business plan. Whanganui District Library have 2.8 FTE funded until June 2022 through The National Library under the New Zealand Libraries Partnership, an initiative established through the New Zealand Government's COVID-19 Response and Recovery fund.

Existing council resources, such as devices or communication channels, and spaces (including community centres and libraries) will be utilised to support initiatives where possible. Work will be in partnership with the community, the private sector and Government departments to create sustainable initiatives, accessing national and local funding as required. Minor expenses/costs are

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[9] https://foundation.vodafone.co.nz/vodafone-is-supporting-a-brighter-future-for-our-invercargill-rangatahi/
[10] https://datacom.com/nz/en/about-us/news/press-release/te-runanga-o-ngai-tahu-and-datacom-to-work-in-partnership

expected to be met within the current Community Wellbeing team budget or across other internally financed initiatives that deliver digital outcomes.

Measuring and reporting

A monthly digital dashboard is a priority action of this plan. This will be part of ELT reporting once established. Updates on the progress of the action plan will be provided through the Strategy and Finance Committee every two meetings in the Community Wellbeing team update. A report on the Digital Strategy Action Plan and any updates will be presented to the Strategy and Finance Committee every six months.

Indicative Priorities - Action Plan 2021-22

1. CONNECTIVITY AND INCLUSION
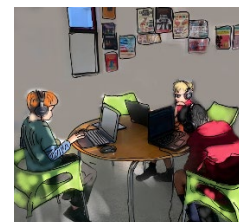
Goal:
We are accessible, linked in and known for it
Outcome:
Whanganui's digital infrastructure and networks support our image and mean that everyone can participate online

	Strategy	Key Activities	Partner with	Outcome / Measure	Timeframe
1.1	Adequately resource the coordination and implementation of the Digital Strategy.	Resource Connected Community advisor role	-	Whanganui has dedicated digital resource	Completed April 2021
1.2	Seek funding to support Council and community-led projects and programmes that contribute to the goals in this strategy.	Activities available in the library intended to raise digital inclusion literacy and showcase opportunity of technology including • Dedicated classes for seniors • Code Clubs for children • Wifi, computers, laptops and tablets available	Whanganui District Library The National Library	More Whanganui people state they have at least a basic level of digital literacy	Ongoing 2.8 FTE funded from September 2021 to June 2022

		• Book a librarian for digital support			
1.3	Provide more opportunities for cross-sector and cross-regional collaboration on digital initiatives.	Build connections and relationships with drivers of digital initiatives	Whanganui & Partners Other councils Libraries Government Agencies Nonprofits and advocacy organisations Education providers	Stakeholder list created and maintained for digital initiatives Opportunities identified for cross collaboration	Ongoing
1.4	Identify gaps in our digital network and advocate for increased connectivity and resilience.	Survey a wide range of people in their community regarding their digital access eg. COVID vaccination centre Work with Ultrafast Fibre to understand the level of fibre connections in Whanganui	Policy Whanganui Libraries Ministry of Health Community Centres and groups Ultrafast Fibre	Establish a baseline of current connectivity in Whanganui in 2021 Determine where the priorities are for connectivity and inclusion activities and partnerships	End of 2021
		Review use of Skinny Jump as a fixed wireless provider and current access barriers	Skinny Jump Providers Other councils Spark Foundation	Advocate on behalf of community to Spark regarding access and speed issues in Whanganui region	Ongoing
		Connect with Crown Infrastructure and rural broadband for future investment in region	Crown Infrastructure Whanganui & Partners Rural Community Board	Advocate and facilitate collaboration for rural community on broadband access	Ongoing (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)

| | | Support improvement of rural digital connectivity in district | Whanganui District Health Board Te Puni Kōkiri Rural Connectivity Group | Broadband access and connections in rural Whanganui increases

Facilitate collaboration with other parties (including Whanganui District Health Board, Whanganui District Council, Te Puni Kōkiri, Rural Connectivity Group). Report on progress to Whanganui Rural Community Board 2 times a year | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1.5* | Support digital inclusion programmes and encourage new opportunities for free or subsidised devices and training. | Work with community on feasibility of supporting a home devices non-profit model i.e. digits.org.nz | Whanganui Library

Digits.org.nz Community and Iwi Local business | Devices at home programme set up in Whanganui

E-waste is reduced in Whanganui

Device access at home is increased | Year One |
| | | Support and work with local community groups and organisations to provide place-based initiatives for digital inclusion | Pilot digital/tech initiatives in community spaces

Enable groups to access digital devices from library for inclusion activities | Digital devices are available to promote initiatives in a wide range of communities

Digital inclusion activities or connectivity increases across Whanganui | Ongoing |
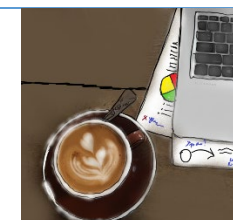
				Funding in Whanganui digital inclusion initiatives (new or ongoing)	
1.6	Investigate the viability of a community technology hub.	As part of survey/data, review community needs for hub Review opportunity within other council projects for shared space/development opportunities	Whanganui & Partners Youth Committee Community and Business Government Agencies	Opportunity for an community technology hub is investigated in related council projects	Year Two in line with: • Youth spaces and places • Davis Library extension • W&P work at the Backhouse
1.7	Encourage increases in free wifi throughout the district.	Understand where and how people access free wifi in Whanganui (see 1.4)	See 1.4	Information on how people currently access free wifi services in Whanganui is available	2021
		Promote location and accessibility of free wifi locations in Whanganui	Communications Council IT InspireNet	Resource available that is accessible and up to date to where can access free wifi Increased awareness of free wifi locations in Whanganui	2022
1.8	Further develop Whanganui's image as a connected, innovative community and share this widely - including through creative digital means.	See 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3	See 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3	See 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3	Ongoing

2. A HIGH VALUE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Goal: We are prepared for the future
Outcome: Whanganui's economy reflects the changing nature of work and our standard of living improves

Refer to: [Whanganui & Partners Securing our Economic future – Statement of Intent 2021/22](#)

	Strategy	Key Activities	Partner with	Outcome / Measure	Timeframe
2.1	Identify skills needed for the future of work and encourage the development of relevant courses, including e-learning opportunities.	Investigate online/remote ICT training programmes that are funded by TAAF until 31 Dec 2022	Whanganui & Partners Sub degree level education providers: DevAcademy, theMindLab, Te Pūkenga	Number of students who access IT/technology training in Whanganui increases	Early 2022
		Consider potential support and wrap around services or resources to encourage IT training in Whanganui	Whanganui & Partners Council IT MSD	Number of students who access IT/technology training in Whanganui increases	Early 2022
2.2	Support platforms and initiatives to assist students to become 'future-ready'.	Work with schools to access digital programmes aimed at students and teachers	Whanganui Principals Association Whanganui schools	PLD hours in Whanganui schools are recorded, including non-profit investments or activities	Investigate feasibility with schools in 2021

					Hours/programmes implemented in 2022
		Review feasibility of Recycle a Device (RAD) being implemented in a Whanganui secondary school (refurbishment of devices by students to provide to community)	Whanganui Secondary school Community Groups Recycle a Device or other similar non-profit projects	A device recycling programme is established in Whanganui Increase in students reporting skills to repair or refurbish devices	Investigate feasibility with schools in 2021 Hours/programmes implemented in 2022
		Support any place or space initiatives that involve digital assets or technology by the Youth Committee per LTP	Youth Committee WDC IT	Youth committee is supported for digital initiatives within Youth Places and Spaces	Scoping assessment 2020/21 Implementation 2021/22
		Work collaboratively to develop programmes that assist with employment & redeployment of the Whanganui workforce post Covid-19	Whanganui & Partners Regional Skills Leadership Groups Sectors Education Providers Government Agencies	In collaboration with partners, at least 1 programme of work that targets pathways for new employment & talent development - specifically for Whanganui people - created	2020/21 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
2.3	2.3 Develop and build on programmes to get businesses online.	Look at ways to increase visibility and relevance of Digital Boost in Whanganui	Whanganui & Partners	Signs up in the Manawatū-Whanganui region increase (as at June 2021, 4%)	2020/21

				Ministry of Business, Employment and Innovation		
2.4	Facilitate the use of digital technologies and smart approaches to drive innovation and productivity.	Support businesses to innovate through a collaboration space	Whanganui & Partners	1 significant project leading to new business innovation established	2020/21 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
2.5	Foster a dynamic knowledge economy and workforce.	Create a network of IT companies and professionals in Whanganui	Whanganui & Partners IT businesses	Increased awareness of IT opportunities in region IT companies are able to share resources, grow their business and attract IT professionals	Ongoing
		Attract IT related events to Whanganui	Whanganui & Partners Whanganui Events & Venues Nonprofits IT businesses	Increase the profile of technology and digital opportunities in Whanganui Increased local media reporting on digital initiatives and events in Whanganui	Ongoing

3. INNOVATION

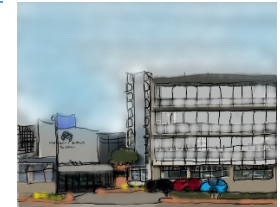**Goal:** We foster innovation and improvement through a digital lens
Outcome: Whanganui stays current with digital opportunities and has a reputation for innovation

	Strategy	Key Activities	Partner with	Outcome / Measure	Timeframe
3.1	Attract global pilot technology projects to Whanganui and become known as a technology testing 'centre of excellence'	Develop a targeted Whanganui business attraction plan	Whanganui & Partners	1 new IT sector business confirmed to set up in Whanganui	2020/21 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
3.2	Continue to release clean, accurate and machine readable open data	See 4.2	See 4.2	See 4.2	Ongoing
3.3	Develop incubator programmes for start-ups and accelerator programmes for growing businesses.	Foster a culture of entrepreneurship and capital investment within Whanganui	Whanganui & Partners	1 business accelerator/incubator programme completed	2020/21 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
3.4	Support clear government funding, angel and venture capital pathways for start-ups, growing businesses and research and development initiatives.	Increase technology knowledge onfarm by holding agri-tech event	Whanganui & Partners	1 agri-tech event to demonstrate farm use efficiency, including digital backend development insights, to attract students to primary industries delivered	2020/21 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
3.5	Work with stakeholders to find ways for technology to address waste and climate change issues.	Embed digital opportunities into climate change strategy	Climate Change Advisor Community and Businesses	Opportunity for technology focussed on measuring and reducing waste is identified	TBC, to review with Climate Change Action Plan

4. A DIGITAL COUNCIL

Goal: Whanganui District Council is future-focused and enabling
Outcome: Working with Council is easy and our services and approaches are smart

	Strategy	Key Activities	Partner with	Outcome / Measure	Timeframe
4.1	Enhance Council's digital engagement, support and online services (including the use of interactive online tools) so that anyone can interact with Council whenever, and wherever they are.	Promote our existing digital tools and services by partnering with community groups to demonstrate tools we have to different customer groups	IT Comms Customer Service IT Business Improvements Community Groups	Increase engagement, effectiveness and raise profile of council digital tools Improve access and usability of digital tools Reduce support required in person or via telephone and allow customer service to support more complex issues Receive feedback to improve our tools or their access	Ongoing – first round intended for 2021
		User testing with identified groups of digital exclusion incl. seniors and disability	Communications Customer Service CCS Disability Action	Provide opportunity to feedback on website and understand user needs	2021/22 in line with Communications team work program

		Review accessibility of PDFs usage on website and alternatives	SeniorNet Wanganui Age Concern	Improved customer satisfaction with council and website accessibility score	
		Stocktake our social media and digital channels	Communications Council IT Business Improvement	Understand digital training needs for staff Digital channels are included in Comms team toolkit for staff Awareness of how to use digital channels Council digital channels are utilised and up to date	2021/22 in line with Communications team work program
		New council digital tools are launched	Communications Council IT Business Improvement Community	'My Council' programme is launched People know how to use 'My Council' and is reflected in user uptake statistics	2021
4.2	Grow the transparency and accessibility of Council information and establish guidelines for open data approaches.	Establish a monthly digital dashboard to collate digital initiatives and measures within Council	WDC	Provide comparable baselines to measure Council success in digital space Raise awareness of digital initiatives in council Demonstrate to community that Council is embracing digital	End of 2021

|		Host GovHack in Whanganui to promote open data Look into ways to open more WDC data	Whanganui District Library WDC Proaxiom	Open data releases by WDC increase Process is established for how to release and host open data Awareness in community of open data availability increases	August 2021 Processes to be established for 2022/23 year
4.3	Establish internal and external working groups and opportunities to identify and pursue new trends in technology (See also: 1.3)	Create a community provider forum for digital initiatives	Community Groups	"Cheat sheet" for digital resources is created and assessable for non-profits More people are reached by digital inclusion programs	By end of 2021
		Establish relationships with regional and district councils in wider region	Councils	WDC is connected to and contributes to technology initiatives in wider region	Ongoing
4.4	Embed a creative, digital focus in relevant Council work to celebrate Whanganui's arts, culture and heritage.	Develop and support pathways for digital sectors	Whanganui & Partners	Mana whenua creative community is acknowledged and celebrated as globally unique Delivery of 1 digital incubator programme supported Central government investment into Whanganui digital sector leveraged	2021/22 (refer to W&P Statement of Intent 20/21)
4.5	Continue to develop and use digital tools to build Council's resilience and improve safety.	Opportunities to review use of digital tools for emergency management is taken	Emergency Management	Council's approach to risk reduction increasingly uses digital tools	Ongoing

Appendix.

2019: The Digital Inclusion Blueprint

Department of Internal Affairs. 2019. The Digital Inclusion Blueprint, Te Mahere mō te Whakaurunga Matihiko. Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs.

Four elements of digital inclusion

Motivation: Understanding how the internet and digital technology can help us connect, learn, or access opportunities, and consequently have ameaningful reason to engage with the digital world.
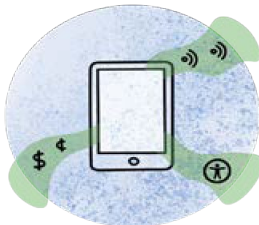
Access: Having access to digital devices, services, software, and content that meet our needs at a cost we can afford; and being able to connect to the internet where you work, live and play. Access is a broad element,which can be broken into three key parts: connectivity, affordability and accessibility.

Skills: Having the know-how to use the internet and digital technology inways that are appropriate and beneficial for each of us.

Trust: Trusting in the internet and online services; and having the digital literacy to manage personal information and understand and avoid scams, harmful communication and misleading information. This elementalso touches on online safety, digital understanding, confidence and resilience.

Groups at risk of being digitally excluded

The following were identified *The Pulse of Our Nation* as being at most risk of not being digitallyincluded[1] (Digital Inclusion Research Group, 2017):

- families with children in low socio-economic communities
- people living in rural communities
- people with disabilities
- migrants and refugees with English as a second language

- Māori and Pasifika youth
- offenders and ex-offenders
- seniors[2]

The report also identified groups in the education system and workplace who could benefitfrom increased digital skills, including:

- students without access to digital technologies in their homes
- teachers without access to professional learning and development for teaching withdigital technologies
- school leavers without a digital technology qualification
- tertiary students without the advanced digital skills required for study
- people without core digital skills seeking to enter the workforce or already in theworkforce
- managers of small businesses and not-for-profit organisations.

During engagement on the Blueprint, the following groups were also identified as being at riskof not being digitally included:

- Māori
- Pacific peoples
- people with low housing stability
- people with low incomes
- people with low literacy levels
- people with mental health conditions
- people who choose not to go online
- senior leaders in the public and private sector (skills to adapt to changing environment)
- unemployed people

As noted in the Blueprint, not everyone in these groups will face barriers to inclusion, and somepeople will fit in a number of groups and may face multiple barriers.

1   This list was developed for the report, taking into account New Zealand and international research.
2   The wording of this list comes directly from the report.