

Are governments keeping up with the times?

Can they keep pace with the techno-savvy customer and contemporary global challenges? Twin issues, but failing on both fronts? What role for ICT in helping out?



Preamble

People are becoming the world's worst enemy: never before has (and never again will) the global population triple in one lifetime. Few are aware of this astonishing phenomena, which is happening right now.

This poses the interesting question of whether policy makers are ready to deal with it.

For many, it's easy to neglect or deny the implications. How much longer can this mentality continue; particularly whilst the consequences are evident on a daily basis: squalid urban conditions; ill-health; poverty; food shortages? But the problems no longer just apply to the poor and undeveloped countries. There are clear signals on the horizon that the developed world must collectively address some key issues, notably: environmental matters; energy; aging; security; pandemics; public health costs; and, of course, the more immediate economic conditions that have proven to be well outside the control of any one government.

And it's because of people (too many people) and the numbers just continue to grow.

People must take responsibility for dealing with this, together with their governments, who must help lead the way. Maybe we need to learn to live in a world with less.

So how can governments transform the nature of the relationship they have with the citizens they serve in order to cause these very people to solve the problems (or not create them in the first place)? And how can governments best address a growing number of profoundly vexing challenges – many of which are now international or global in nature?

If people are the key driver behind the problems, what are the key drivers behind the solutions?

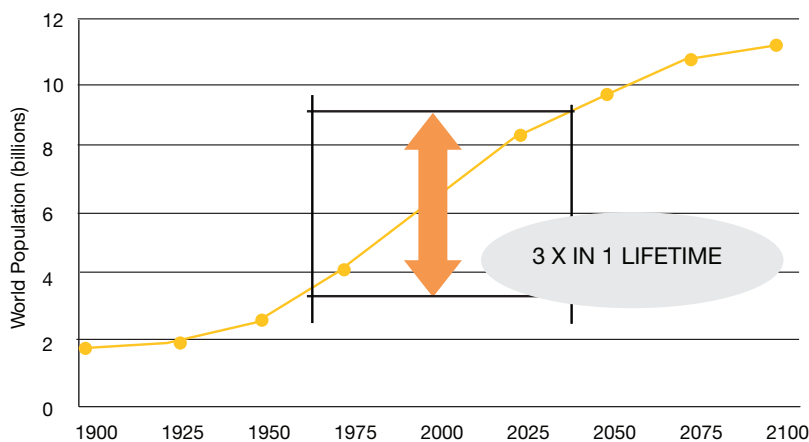
This paper looks at the role that Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) can play in addressing these challenges, and more particularly at ICTs in the arena of public services delivery – nationally and internationally.

It discusses a truly transformational agenda. One that calls for the spirit of real step change to be embraced: making public services 'twice as good, in half the time, for half the cost'. It is, arguably, only by doing so that we will achieve sufficient change to rectify what is clearly a mounting set of global challenges.

Can technology help increase the bond between the public and the public sector and really help change the whole model? Let's hope so.

But first, for those who deny the need...

Figure 1: Growth, mobility & urbanization



Source: UN Population Division and Statistics Division, 2005

Real challenges, or just a few bumps in the road?

I stated that people are becoming the world's worst enemy. Of course we have only ourselves to blame! And we haven't yet seen the worst.

The forecast for global population rise is illuminating. Consider how many generations man has existed on the planet. Consider the expectation that, in one lifetime, the population will triple. Never before, never again: in one lifetime. What are the implications of such change?

How can we expect the experts to really comprehend what the effects of such change will bring to the earth's systems? How can we expect any politician or policy maker to deal with the ramifications?

Indeed, it is fair to assume that the sovereign structures existing the world over are perhaps not the best or even the right mechanisms to address the challenges that, in so many cases, transcend any national controls.

Bugs, drugs, and undesirables do not have a habit of stopping at the border. And these days, neither has money.

Our global challenges differ between the developed world, the developing world and the undeveloped world. Though the challenges may well be different, and likely to be perceived differently, we cannot address them in isolation.

From a European perspective, it is worth reflecting on some of the challenges:

- **Energy:** forecasts of 'peak oil' are invariably flaky, however, irrespective of inaccuracy, the problem just mounts, with alternatives proving controversial

- **Rampant consumerism:** the seemingly ceaseless desire for growth and material goods
- **Diminishing relative economic power:** particularly in relation to the impending BRIC powerhouses (albeit mitigated by the greater economic force delivered through increased EU scale and influence)
- **Aging & demographic shifts:** well-rehearsed issues, with implications calling for greater workforce efficiency and a step-change in public service delivery, underpinned by a diminishing quota of taxpayers. Many regions forecast a quadrupling of 85+yr olds between now and 2025
- **Migration issues:** significantly as a result of the above, combined with dramatic global population growth. In combination with the increased mobility within countries this leads to significant societal cohesion concerns
- **Healthcare:** growing concerns associated with unhealthy youths, combined with the desire for active aging – and the resulting cost implications
- **Urbanization:** and the diminished systemic resilience of cities as a result. Where do you want to be 'when the lights go out': urban sprawl?
- **Re-scaling service governance:** many contemporary challenges defy 'nation state' paradigms if they are to be appropriately addressed, for instance:
 - The Arctic: what is our global environmental responsibility in this regard? Who incentivizes today's politician to solve tomorrow's problems?
 - Public health; public security and other such issues? Local, and international are the theatres for such matters
 - The economy

- **Information overload:** the information architecture of public service provision today is built from the 'inside out,' based on multiple silos. The volume of information collected escalates at, as yet unseen, rates. System intelligence is an admirable goal, yet a flawed concept with current business architectures
- **Disengagement:** fewer and fewer people vote or get involved in democratic processes. Yet far greater numbers of, particularly younger, generations express their views openly, get connected, and indeed 'participate' (albeit in an online society more so than, perhaps, a community one). They also associate themselves with different geographical boundaries.

These issues are not that new and there is not really one thing to blame. It is the combination of them all that has got us into the predicament we face.

The fundamental question of sustainability lurks at the core of all these.



By way of illustration

To highlight how our current landscape of society and public service delivery is so plagued by complexity, confusion, and, too often, by discontent and apathy, consider the fight against obesity in the UK. It has all the hallmarks of current-day issues.

Laudable targets were set in 2004 to halt the increase in obesity by 2010. Teams of experts squabbled about definitions and policies that affect dozens of organizations; however, the system remains wholly inefficient and ineffective. The result is not a reduction of the condition in question, but an increase, and indeed, it is an exacerbation of the longer-term chronic consequences of inaction, like diabetes, psychological disorders and increased systems cost.

We have no choice but to overcome such challenges. Perhaps it takes a different approach.

Behaviors and beliefs, of both the citizen and of the service provider, must change to make improvements.

People are the biggest enabler of change, and generational expectations are changing faster than the paradigms of our current leadership. Our governance structures are so constrictive that decisions are made at a pace that will soon be outstripped by the customer's ability to make them for us. People no longer live in compliance with national Government missives. They are losing faith in the relevance of national policies; they are losing their trust in governments to fix the contemporary issues that we face.

Information is at the core of many such systemic challenges. So alongside people change, we must also consider ICT. Information and technology is rightly seen as an important enabler of a better future. Indeed, recent Capgemini research¹ suggests that it is in many cases a driver of transformation, and if not, it is a pre-requisite for its success.

Governments are not responding fast or smart enough

- While the challenges are recognized, far too few leaders are responding with bravery and at pace
- There is a lack of collaborative leadership, which is a requirement for the delivery of more efficient joined-up multi-agency services
- The planning horizons of political leadership often preclude wise policies
- There is still too much denial and distrust as to the latent power that ICT can bring to improve matters
- Investment in ICT solutions are still made at sub-scale levels

Customers are taking charge

- Modern technologies mean that change will happen anyway, whether leaders like it or not. Customers can now do much by themselves.
- From an ICT perspective, the controlling behaviors of the public sector CIO community – the “resistant behind the firewall” – will be over-ridden by the power put in the hands of the populace:
 - From a public security perspective, the villains are more agile and informed than the peace keepers
 - From a healthcare perspective, the patient is becoming more informed through knowledge and intelligence systems than the care-giver
 - From an environmental perspective, the lobbyist is using media to outsmart the polluters
 - From a global conscience perspective, the artists, philanthropists, and indeed you and I are using ICT tools and demanding to be heard.



¹ TechnoVision 2012 research: Mapping Public Sector drivers against the seven TV2012 technology clusters

The need for a new paradigm and a new information model

Current public service delivery expectations and costs keep rising. With current trends, and without a change of delivery model, **we are at risk of reaching a point beyond which there are serious potential global ramifications:** environmental, security, economic, societal.

Somehow we must develop a far greater sense of responsibility within society to temper the demand on public services. This requires a shift in the approach and thinking of the public sector. **How can we strive to deliver services that are “twice as good, in half the time, for half as much”?** It is only through embracing the spirit underlying such a statement that we can really transform public services and truly address the contemporary challenges that global society currently faces.

There is a tipping point that we must go over to achieve this. This stark contrast is highlighted in Figure 2, particularly in the details outlined across stages 4 and 5.

Many governments today have decided to be customer-centered, yet still behave in a ‘we know best’ manner. They talk of the need for an ‘invisible government’ as if that was good. How can an invisible government influence the mindset of the voters? Influence comes from being highly visible, highly competent, and through listening. That is how trust is generated. That is the core ingredient through which transformation will be enabled. It is the ingredient that gets us over the tipping point. And yet we fail to generate trust because public administrations are out of touch with the lives and needs of the individual. If they capture the information that tells them this, it becomes lost in the

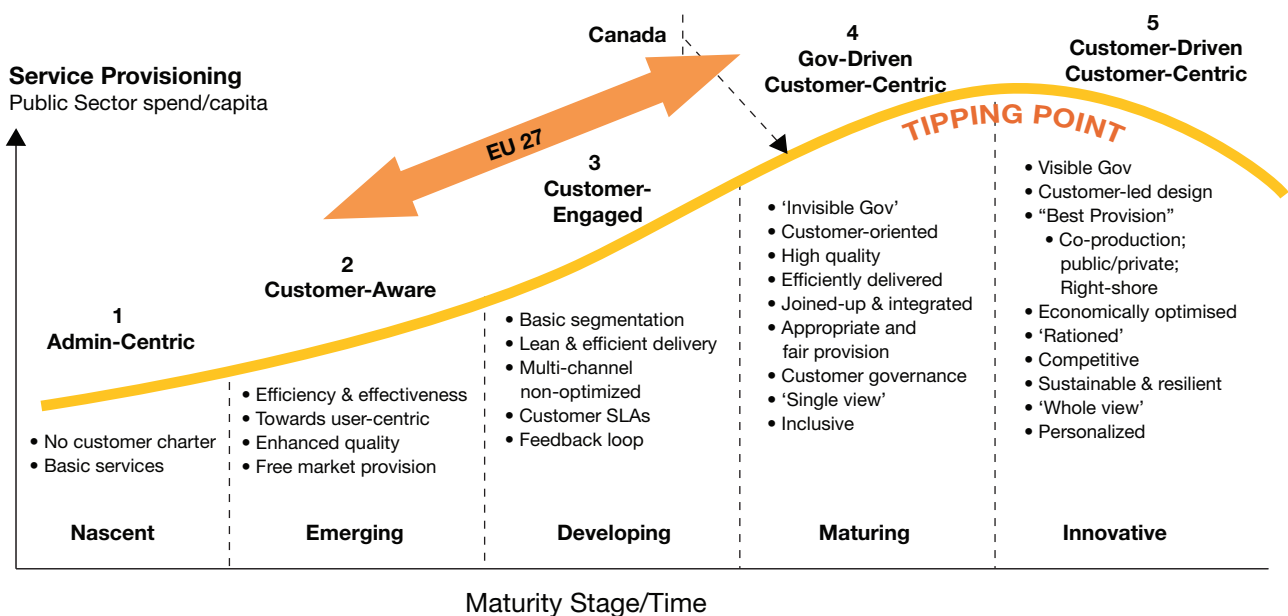
paperwork and systems of individual agencies. Indeed worse, they often handsomely lose any semblance of trust through well publicized and inappropriate information leakages.

A customer-driven model can deliver the essential paradigm shift that makes step-change feasible. Somebody somewhere has to make a start. Why not in Europe?

ICT has a substantial role to play in this journey. Much of the transformational potential is locked up in what technologies can offer.

Another way of looking at this shift, from an informational sense, is to consider the **change in the information governance model – from a model of ‘you’ to a model of ‘me’** (see Fig. 3). At present, customer information is passed into the vast bowels of departmental silos, too

Figure 2: Transforming the relationship with the customer



often never to be seen again in any coherent form. The customer experience of interfacing with public services is generally appalling. **Turn the model on its head.** Give accountability for the information to the customer – not all information, but a substantial portion. Manage the boundary well between what is securely held by administration and what is freely released to the customer, and the result can be a far more engaged customer, and a more efficient and effective system.

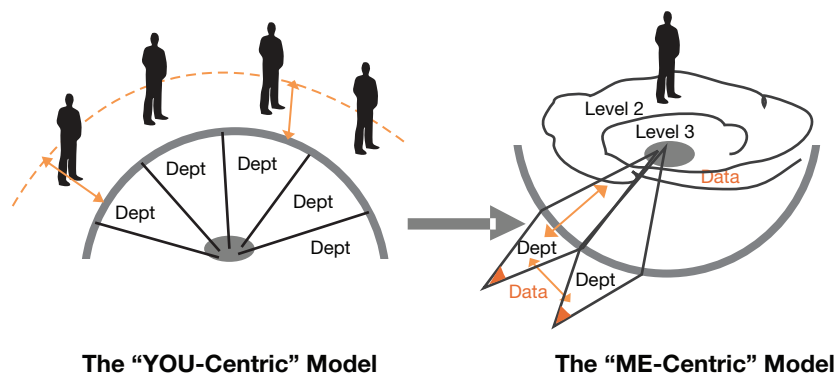
A model that gives people the choice of how ‘exposed’ they wish to be **gives the customer more control of data and builds a closer bond between public sector and populace.** This is a scary thought for many public administrations.

The point is that this will happen anyway. What people are used to through Facebook, Twitter and other such social networking tools is a completely different model. This will not go away; it will only increase. **People are already starting to take control,** to hold their own information on topics that have, until now, been considered public services – healthcare records are just the start.

The implications of this for public administrations are severe. How will they repurpose and cleanse their existing data? How fast can they transform their information architectures to be internally streamlined? How will they re-architect information across public agencies?

Mash-ups and mesh collaboration are already seen in the more progressive countries and regional administrations. These **help to build a trusted bond with the customer;** provide a more dynamic and responsive service, and improve the

Figure 3: Moving from a YOU to a ME model



overall customer experience. There are a growing number of significant examples that highlight the use of modern Gov 2.0 technologies; more typically, fairly light-touch examples where the change has been web-based with some front office implications. Very few have reached back into the bowels of public processes and databases. So one could argue that the change is only skin deep so far.

Our challenge is to accelerate this shift to avoid getting ourselves into an unmanageable state.

Considering the challenges discussed, but now on a global scale: will China get smart before it gets old, or old before it gets smart? The implications of the latter put a massive burden on the public purse in China. The implications of both put a massive strain on global resources regardless.

“Twice as good, in half the time, for half as much”

Delivering public services that are “twice as good, in half the time, for half as much” requires a trusting relationship between the public and the public sector. This is a fundamental pre-requisite to enable public services transformation – to get us over the

‘tipping point’. But it needs more than this.

We can, and indeed should, wheel out the conventional wisdom on how to make transformation efforts successful: vision, leadership, a programmatic approach, etcetera. There are, however, a few specifics that deserve greater share of mind and, for most of those involved in this discussion, ICT or eGovernment has a central role to play. Indeed, there is little now in terms of business change that is not affected by technology.

Let’s take a closer look at each of these:

- Customer insight and engagement
- Unified Access
- Information governance
- Multi-agency collaboration
- ‘Re-scaling’ service governance
- Ambient ‘macro-system’ intelligence
- New leadership models
- Leadership of the market

1. Customer insight and engagement. Quality customer engagement requires quality customer knowledge. ICT has a major role to

play. Retailers collect massive-scale data on individual wants and needs. Yet public agencies typically whittle away any chance of developing customer insight through building information architectures on a departmental or, at best, a service-based model: customer insight being the last in the queue. The opportunity to improve is massive, and through doing so, public agencies can learn how to deliver the right service, at the right time to the right customer, and indeed, consider differential pricing models to condition and serve customers better. The goal is to develop a 'whole view' of each and every customer. Not a 'single view,' as seems to be the fad at present, each individual typically exhibits multiple personas to public services.

Technologies already provide means of engagement that are efficient and far more dynamic. The rise in participative TV voting shows, like the X-Factor and gambling programs, highlights the propensity of society to engage – on things that are, or can be, made relevant and meaningful to them. Given that the elderly are more predisposed to voting and representing their communities, and that the young are 'wired 24/7', why not accept these facts and build a participatory model that factors both realities into the public service system?

With sound engagement strategies and deep knowledge of customers, trust will grow. The customer can progressively be built into the delivery chain to streamline it, reduce consumption and tailor service delivery.

2. Unified Access. The 'You' model we experience today is both costly and invariably frustrating. The faster that public administrations can deliver unified customer access (the 'Me' model) the better.

Channel shifting offers us a 100:1 cost savings lever to pull (based on cost-to-serve ratios for face-to-face of 10, phone of 1 and web of 0.1). And the digital divide debate that surrounds this is not an excuse for inaction. It is merely a factor that must be built into the solution. Cheaper channels do not mean poorer quality of service. Indeed, they frequently offer easier access, better information, and fewer errors. This factor alone makes the '2 x ½ x ½' aspiration seem far more achievable.

The combination of cost-effective multi-channel means of access (TV, Web, blogs, mobile), with massive-scale data manipulation capabilities, offers us the potential for far deeper insights into societal wants and needs. Data processing and analytical costs continue to fall relative to increasing processing capacity, thus making insight and service personalization an economic reality. Such potential is still relatively untapped within the public sector. Fear of the untried and the downside (political) risk of failure too often prevent us from innovating on such game-changing opportunities.

In order to connect more with the public, increase participation, improve trust, and develop a more responsive and responsible society we must embrace modern ICTs and Gov. 2.0 thinking, and actively connect across the multiple purpose media and channels that are available to us. Not only will this help improve local public service delivery, it will also help to redefine democracy; it will stimulate the likes of above-country single issue groups that de-politicize participation, and it will introduce new forms of intermediation to produce a real shift to participative, rather than representative, democracy.

Governments must concentrate on 'reaching out' to the customer through the front-end of their service delivery platforms.

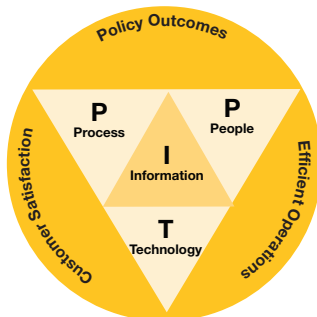
3. Information governance will become an even more vital prerequisite for successful transformation. The ever-increasing media focus on stories of data loss, combined with increasing information volumes and information exchange, present substantial challenges. This introduces a paradox. On one hand, there is a natural, and indeed supported, response of greater focus on security from within public sector organizations. However, on the other hand, the shift of data ownership and control to the customer and the large-scale increase in migration of data across organizations (in order to deliver better, more joined-up services), and to the Web, suggests the opposite phenomenon of more liberal data sharing.

The common thread is the need for a more sophisticated information governance model, and a more integrated interoperability framework (integrated in the sense that it also addresses topics like political interoperability – as is now being addressed with the EIF). The big shift is to focus on information not on technology by “putting information at the heart of the system.” The traditional behaviors of the public sector are to ‘buy from the bottom’ of the illustration in Figure 4 – i.e. purchase technologies in the hope that these will deliver business outcomes. They simply do not!

So open standards become key. So too an open dialogue with technology providers is needed to ensure that fast-changing capabilities are built into research and development programmes to service future needs. In a multi-agency setting, with a move to ‘cloud services’ the focus on interoperability and better information governance is vital. From the creation of these vast data pools of well governed information will come the business intelligence that is needed to service the goals of unified access, as well as customer insight and engagement.

4. Multi-agency collaboration is clearly the only means by which the above is plausible. It is worthwhile holding to the axiom of “the rot sits between, not within” when considering the opportunities of public services transformation. The majority of lost time, errors, system wastage and, thus, added costs, is too often not within the department or public agency, it sits between them. So LEAN methods, which consider service analysis right through the fulfilment chain, are, quite rightly, now in vogue. Substantial double-digit percentage improvements are seen to be delivered. What is needed to complement this is an informational approach that captures detail during the various steps in the chain: the data fields, the forms, the volumes

Figure 4: It’s about putting (customer) information at the heart of the system



and values. There is a re-emergence of process mapping technologies; however, this time they come with far greater analytical and optimization power, and indeed now with cloud-based collaboration process management tools. It is through open and rational analysis, involving multiple parties, that we will streamline the services across the morass of involved organizations to better deliver to the customer. That is why we see a growing focus on Administrative Burden reduction projects within Government and more open challenges to how regulation is deployed.

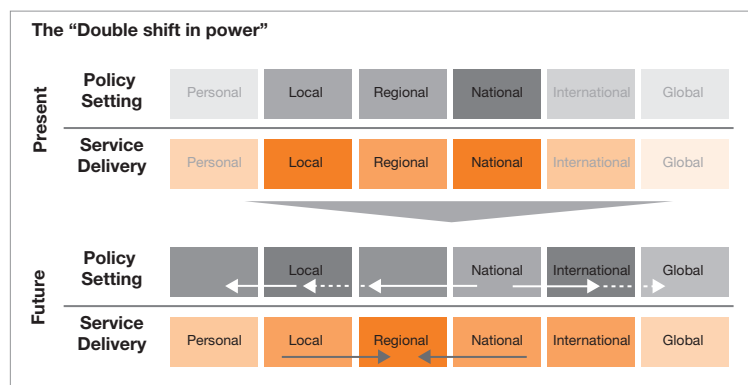
5. ‘Re-scaling’ service governance.

Our political systems were built pre-ICT revolution; they were also designed in a world with far fewer people. Are they really appropriate for today? And are they really robust enough for even the next few decades?

There is a ‘double shift of power’ happening, whereby policy setting is moving from a focus on national levels to a position where far greater influence is being applied locally (or indeed personally) and at above-national levels (as illustrated in Figure 5, where the change in shading between the ‘present’ and ‘future’ reflects this change in emphasis). Service delivery, on the other hand, is consolidating from local to (sub-) regional, also with a growth in above-national delivery.

This shift is happening now: personal opinions can be made to count, particularly through modern ICTs – the ‘Obama factor.’ Many of us now recognize that policy for many of the global issues is best dealt with at above-national levels; it is obvious that, by consolidating some of the presently locally-delivered public services, we can reap the benefits of economies of scale that current financial pressures require.

Figure 5: Double-shift of power



In some countries this is being aided by restructuring, particularly the reduction in the number of local government bodies. In others it is occurring through collaborative or shared delivery models.

The 're-scaling' of policy and service delivery boundaries is a welcome and much needed phenomenon. The inertia hindering the change is too great and there is a need to increase the pace of change.

6. Ambient 'macro-system' intelligence. Several of the contemporary issues, like public security, environment monitoring, public health, energy, or transport, are of a nature that, to make a significant improvement, we would need to establish a means to optimize or de-risk matters through monitoring. This involves collection, assimilation and response based on massive scale data systems. Satellite technologies are already in place to address environmental monitoring, and are presently being contemplated for large scale transport optimization (and charging) systems.

7. New leadership models.

Underpinning many of the challenges discussed is the vital need to change leadership mindsets and behaviors. So too, a change in leadership roles is needed. The present disabling habits of 'command and control' silo leadership must be eradicated. Dynamic, agile and collaborative leadership models are required to complement the nature of the 'Me' paradigm. To help us through the step-change, leaders must exhibit leadership behaviors, characterized more by relentless passion, obsession and persistence. Authenticity and 'earning the right' is required in collaborative multi-agency delivery. It is only such behaviors that will drive us over the tipping point. It is only such behaviors that will enable us to remain competitive internationally, and act collaboratively internationally to address the contemporary

challenges we face. These will be demonstrated by leaders giving up control and actively coaching the customer to take on responsibility. Not perhaps characteristics typified by the present day 'we know best' behaviors of public sector leaders. What will the role description of a politician, a civil servant, or, indeed, a citizen be on the right-hand side of the tipping point?

8. Leadership in the market.

Congruent with a new leadership model is a new leadership in the market too. A far greater collaborative and open approach to solving complex problems, involving input from the market, unbridled by the constraints of disabling procurement processes. The shift towards a very much more liberal dialogue with the market, taken by the likes of the Danes, is commended, yet it is not in itself enough. There must be a more obvious thread strung between

research institutes, near-to-market initiatives, and procurements. There must also be a greater use of the market as a competitive source of service innovation and provision; shifting the role of administration more to that of market maker and commissioner, rather than provider. Information, and the deep market insights it enables is a prerequisite. As an illustration of the scale of opportunity for such a shift, research undertaken into local government services in the UK indicated that 85% of local services were not truly 'democratic' in nature, yet they were provided by the public sector: posing the question of whether they were actually provided in the most competitive and effective manner.

An example of the future: The story of Mrs Ali

In 2006, Mrs Ali spent 57 days intermittently in Accident & Emergency (A&E) due to ill-health. The health system costs escalated, her quality of life was poor, and her son gave up work to support his mother. One year later, she spent zero days in A&E. The change? Telehealth. Home-based vital signs monitoring equipment transformed Mrs Ali's life, enabling her son to get back into the economy, and markedly reducing overall social services and healthcare expenditure. Twice as good? I suspect many times more – for all those concerned.

Though technology was the enabler, it was far from being the reason that this initiative was so successful. The journey has taken 4 years of dedication and commitment. At the outset, the idea was met with much scepticism and resistance. Success was built slowly through showing senior professional sceptics the 'art of the possible,' through continuous communications with the multiple stakeholders that would be required to collaborate to deliver a transformed service. It has involved taking a relationship- and patient-centered view of service delivery. Much has been done to develop a new service delivery model, reflecting the changes to reimbursement, partnership governance, and supply-market developments that are required. And importantly, a great deal has been done to architect the information systems to cater for what will be an ever-changing technological landscape, whilst ensuring sound information governance. The building of a body of evidence to demonstrate that there is real quantum improvement potential has proved vital to ensure continued support and to change the hearts and minds of those in doubt.

This initiative shows many of the hallmarks discussed in this paper.

In closing...

- The current models of service delivery as we know them are unsustainable: transformation is a requirement, not a choice
- Control is moving to the user: it will happen anyway as users can and will do things for themselves. Fight it or liberate it. To do the latter helps lift us over the tipping point
- A new relationship is required between the public and the public sector, and indeed within the public sector – with requisite new roles
- The strategy should be to safely enable this using principles of information governance
- ICTs are shifting from being just an enabler of change to becoming a real driver of transformation
- Done well it will significantly reduce costs in front line operations and markedly improve service delivery
- Done badly it could see administrations in serious trouble through lack of control.



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